

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

***WE MUST WALK IN THE POWER
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT***

DARELL B. DYAL

Copyright Page

Scripture taken from the New King James Version[®]. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

PREFACE

Esther, who lived 500 years before Christ, introduces this book. Kidnapped and taken to the king's harem with other beautiful young women, dream of husband and children shattered, she awaited her fate: a night in his bedchamber, after which she might live the rest of her life as a discarded concubine. Imagine the torment to her gentle soul. Yet she had a choice: resist to the limits of her constraints, or entrust herself to the God she loved, and in His presence, retain her stunning radiance.

She trusted God. He gave her grace and favor. When summoned, the king was overcome by her beauty and grace. She won his heart and he made her queen. Thus appointed by God, her obedience was used in a powerful way. Soon after she became queen the enemy manifested a heinous plan to annihilate all Jews. Haman's hatred of Esther's uncle, Mordecai, caused him to persuade King Ahasuerus to destroy the Jews. A decree established the day for destruction. *And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.*¹ After its proclamation, Mordecai, also weeping and in sackcloth and ashes, sent to Esther and commanded her to appeal to the King for the Jews.

She answered, "Everyone knows that

*...any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." So they told Mordecai...who said "Do not think...you will escape...for if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*²

Again Esther trusted God, and after prayer and fasting, went into the king's court without summon. He extended the golden scepter! Because of her obedience, the Lord delivered the Jews from annihilation and in so doing ensured that, 500 years later, the Messiah would be born to a virgin named Mary.

As in Esther's time, a dreadful calamity threatens God's people today. Jesus said:

¹ Esther 4:3

² Esther 4:1-17

*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked - I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*³

He will vomit this lukewarm church out of His mouth, a rejection of such significance that it is the last, most terrible, event of the church age. Immediately following, the One who sits on the throne in heaven summoned and revealed to the Apostle John what *must take place after this*⁴ – things signaling the beginning of the end.

For Such a Time as This is written to a beloved, but imperiled, church. It teaches how to be filled with and live in the Spirit, abide in Jesus, please God, and therein, avoid the terrible time coming upon the earth. It comforts those who, in their innermost being, want more of the Lord; who hunger for the Bread of Life and would, if they knew how, sell all they have to be with Him. It answers their questions and reveals truths of Scripture overlooked far too long. It shows how to be filled with and dwell in all the fullness of God.

The book has three parts. Part I presents the distilled essence of living in the presence of God while on earth. Purposely concise, it minimizes controversy and distraction and focuses on what the Bible says. Part II sets forth God's amazing empowerments – His Son, His Spirit and His Word – empowerments that undergird every aspect of victorious living. Part III closes the message by giving examples of fierce opposition against the work of God in the Church.

Fifty years of meditation in Scripture – thousands and thousands of hours – prepared me *For Such a Time as This*. Steeped in the Word, the book unfolds truth desperately needed today. But I did not brood over the Bible all those years to write a book; I did not do it to argue with men. I did it because I love the Word of God and the God of the Word. I sought to please Him above all things, and the way to do that is to know and obey His Word.

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your

³ Revelation 3:15-19

⁴ Revelation 4:1

testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. ⁵

Once a nondescript young man, across the decades to the surprise no one who understands Scripture, little by little He unfolded His Word to me. ⁶ *For Such a Time as This* is fueled by that experience and knowledge. The book roots in the living, powerful Word of God. After all, it is upon its truth alone that we dare entrust our immortal souls.

⁵ Psalm 119:97-104

⁶ More information about me is provided in the section, *About the Author*. I think it is both interesting and germane to the matters discussed herein, and suggest that you review it before reading *For Such a Time as This*.

CONTENT

PREFACE

PART I: LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

- 1 LOVE BEGINS HERE**
- 2 THE TEST OF LOVE**
- 3 FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT**
- 4 WALK IN THE SPIRIT**
- 5 FRIENDS WITH JESUS**
- 6 THE BODY OF CHRIST**
- 7 BURDEN OF THE SHEPHERDS**

PART II: FOUR HEAVENLY TOPICS

- 8 THE SON OF GOD**
- 9 THE SPIRIT OF GOD**
- 10 THE WORD OF GOD**
- 11 HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE**

PART III. THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL

- 12 AMALGAMATION OF EVIL**

AFTERWORD

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PART I. LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

1. LOVE BEGINS HERE

God's Son, Spirit, and Word empower a glorious union with Him.⁷ *For Such a Time as This* tells how to appropriate God's fullness in the Spirit and dwell in heavenly places while still upon the earth. Amazingly, few seize this opportunity to live with God and know the length and width and depth and height of the love of Christ. Those who do transcend the cares of mortal life. Their hearts are governed by love, joy, peace, long-suffering, faithfulness, self-control, gentleness, kindness, and goodness. They are led by the Spirit and have access to the power of the age to come. They do the work of the Father as friends of Jesus, the ways of the Lord meaning more to them than life itself. They meditate in God's Word; have, obey and teach His commandments; abide in Jesus; walk in His Spirit, and overcome the tyranny of the flesh, the lust of the world and the wiles of the devil. They travail in fasting and prayer for the Church against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places. They win crowns of righteousness and minister to, and receive ministry from, Jesus Himself. In Him they live in transcendent joy.

Such life is magnificent splendor. If there were nothing more – if there were no resurrection from the dead – still, a life so lived would be the apex of existence! But there is resurrection! There are eternal rewards; there is a marvelous inheritance. These shall be changed into Jesus' likeness, their mortal bodies clothed with immortality. They will sit with Jesus on His throne, inherit all things, have God be their God, and be His sons.⁸ They shall behold Jesus' inexpressible glory and dwell with Him and His Father in inconceivable grandeur on a new earth in a spectacular city called New Jerusalem. There they will marvel for all eternity at God's astonishing generosity to them.

For Such a Time as This describes this life and tells how to walk in it.

It starts here: Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. They were trained in religious traditions since childhood. They knew how to pray. Why ask Him? It was because they saw a difference between Jesus and themselves! He was full of the Holy Spirit and power; He was life and knowledge; He knew Father God; He was God

⁷ The majesty and significance of these magnificent empowerments are shown in chapters 8 through 10

⁸ Revelation 3:20; 21:7

Himself. By comparison, they were empty. They had not yet the Holy Spirit. They had a form of religion but not its power.

**They were like many today who go to church, glean what they can,
but leave hungering for the Bread of Life in the power of the Spirit.**

Therefore they asked Him to teach them to pray. And He opened His mouth and spoke everlasting words of truth and power. He said,

“When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”⁹

His response, alive and powerful, teaches not only how to pray, but even more, how to approach the Heavenly Father. If we can grasp this single idea our lives will be forever enriched. He told us to pray to Father God. He said the first thing we are to do is to

Hallow the Father’s Name!¹⁰

The Greek for *hallow* is *hagiazō* (make holy, consecrate; venerate: sanctify).¹¹ We are to sanctify His Great Name. This must be first, for He is first; He is worthy; He is a jealous God. He will be honored and worshipped as the Almighty God that He is.¹² Therefore, we venerate His name and worship Him. Such adulation returns untold joy to us worshippers.

And there is something else.

We come under the shadow of the Almighty.¹³ An astounding thing happens there: we surmount the constraints of natural man and enter the marvel of God’s holy presence. We transcend the attractions of this world and bask in God’s love in the Holy Spirit. The longer we worship, the greater our blessing. His peace and love overtake us.

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His

⁹ Luke 11:2-4

¹⁰ Luke 11:2

¹¹ QuickVerse 2009, Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries (G37)

¹² Joshua 24:19; Leviticus 10:3; Exodus 20:5, 34:14, etc.

¹³ Psalm 91:1

*people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.*¹⁴

Come before Him with singing; know He is God; understand what He did. He created us; He is our Shepherd; He is good; His mercy is everlasting; His truth endures forever! The more we know of Him, the more joyous it is to enter His presence. As we do, we move further from the concerns of the world and deeper into the realization that we are with Him in the heavenlies. We sense the power of His presence. We serve Him exuberantly, shouting joyfully even as David danced before Him with all his might.¹⁵ Life is in our Great God!

Our greatest privilege is to know Him. His presence invigorates, for He is the source of life. Moses was sustained by His glorious presence without eating for 40 days and 40 nights. Without Him, Ezekiel's bones¹⁶ are our bones. But the Heavenly Manna¹⁷ cries out, *breathe upon these slain that they may live*. Power and life flow into us in the Spirit. *Therefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creation, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God.*¹⁸

We exult because He is worthy. He is Almighty God. The Host of Heaven fear and worship Him, for they see Him in His marvelous glory. He is greatly, magnificently to be praised! Yes, He is our Father, but first, He is Almighty God. Honor Him. Hallow His name.

* * * * *

Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.¹⁹ To truly fear Him is to seek to obey Him. Yet who among us

Hallows the Father's name, daily?

Enters fully into His presence, morning by morning?

Partakes of Jesus, the Bread of Heaven, every day?

Many want to, but fail to consistently come into His presence. Somber reflection shouts out "Why can I not dwell with my Lord as I wish?" *For Such a Time as This*

14 Psalm 100:1-5

15 2 Samuel 6:1-15

16 Ezekiel 37:1-14, especially 9

17 John 6:29-59

18 2 Corinthians 5:17

19 Proverbs 1:7; 9:10

answers this question and teaches how to make God's presence the best part of life now and forever.

2. THE TEST OF LOVE

The Word of God shows us the intent of our hearts. Consider its test for love,

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

20

To obey is to be loved by Jesus and His Father, who then – in utmost blessing – make their home with the obedient ones. But who knows for certain what His commandments are ²¹ and whether or not they are obeyed? Jesus gave a succinct test that goes a long way toward providing this answer. They asked Him which was the great commandment, and He said,

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*²²

This astonishing statement penetrates to the essence of our being. Do we love God like that? If not, we fail the test and prove we do not love Him. We do not even know Him ...*by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*²³ Those so described, to their shame, are undone by the living Word of God. Their calamitous judgment is that neither Jesus nor His Father will abide with them.²⁴

Therefore earnest believers try to love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength – only to discover they cannot. In the flesh it is not possible to love that way,

20 John 14:21-24

21 See Part II, Chapter 10, The Word of God, Section 2. The Commandments of Christ

22 Mark 12:28-31; Matthew 22:37-40

23 1 John 2:3-4

24 John 12:48-50

or to be perfect, or to fulfill the rest of Scripture. The Lord also knows this but He requires us to understand the deplorable state of our inadequacy. When we truly know that we are unworthy and have no recourse for our treachery, our self-righteousness is finally overthrown and we are left with a poor and contrite spirit and no recourse but to tremble at before the Word that so exposes our weakness. We must reach this point in our understanding and confess our inadequacy to Him lest we attempt to approach God in unrighteous, filthy garments. When we finally reach this state His mercy can flow to us.

Consider the glory of the kindness of our God and the mercy of His heart in the following brilliant medley, ²⁵

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word...For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

He *revives the heart of the contrite ones*. In His refreshing, we embrace His provision and follow it unto the abundant life He so earnestly desires for us. The good news of the implementation of His provision is the welcome subject of chapter 3.

* * * *

Before we go there let us pause to ask “Why do we fail to love the Lord as we want, yea, as we should?” But to answer this intrusive question in privacy, let us create a hypothetical conversation between, say, an old Christian writer (W) and a typical believer (T). We can participate in their discussion without sanction and from this vantage see if their dialogue matches what we might say and whether it stands up to the question, which seems to be from the heart of God.

A Dialogue Between a Writer (W) and a Typical Believer (T)

W. Consider the great commandment, T, do you love God with all your heart; all your soul; all your mind; all your strength? Do you love Him above all things, all the time? Is He the center of your heart; the delight of your mind? Do you meditate upon Him; serve Him with all your strength?

[After an awkward silence]...

W. Well, do you?

²⁵ Matthew 5:1; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2

T. I thought that was a rhetorical question. You want me to answer?

W. Yes.

T. [After some thought.] I'm sorry to say I probably don't. But neither does anyone else. We don't have to do that. Everybody knows it's impossible. It is more a figure of speech, an ideal, than anything. It's not a literal command.

W. What did Jesus say? Did He not say it was the first, the preeminent, commandment? Do you think He would say that if He did not mean it? Do you think He was *just joking*?

T. Well, since you put it like that, I'm sure He wasn't joking. The truth is that I never thought about it as an imperative. I sort of dismissed it because, after all, everybody knows it can't be done.

W. Do you realize how disparaging that comment is? In effect you are saying that: God does not know what He is doing; or that He is unjust in that He requires something from us we cannot do. Which do you mean?

T. [Becoming a bit irritated.] I don't mean either of those!

W. Well then, what are you saying?

T. There are other alternatives. Maybe the Word doesn't mean exactly what you think it says. After all, some things are impossible.

W. Is that your answer? God cannot write simply and clearly.

T. Well, you're acting like a smart Alec. That's not exactly what I'm saying...

W. So in essence you ignore the Great Commandment because you do not think it means what it says. Still, you think of yourself as being spiritual and fit for the Kingdom of God. Right?

T. Well, I love the Lord; I really do. And I try to do my best. It's just that... [But, uncertain how to proceed, he fell silent again.]

W. There is more to the verse. It also says *you shall love your neighbor as yourself*. Do you do this?

T. [Somewhat perturbed] Nobody does that; nobody! I know that for sure.

W. So again you say: God does not know what He is doing; or He is unjust; or the Word does not mean what it says.

T. [T is totally silent, not knowing how to answer. But he does not like the way the conversation is going.]

W. Come on, speak up. There are many verses men say are impossible to obey. Let me give you another example. It is from the Sermon on the Mount,²⁶ and like all Scripture, it says what it means, means what it says, and is to be understood and obeyed. Yet, many say it is not possible to obey the Sermon, and try to *explain it away*. Are you one of those?

T. [Taking courage] I do think it is mostly ideological. It sets a high standard to show us what the goal should be. But I don't think the Lord actually expects us to achieve it. And by the way, that's not just my opinion. It's the current teaching, if I'm not mistaken.

W. Let us be specific. For example, take the verse: *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*²⁷ Like the entire Sermon, this is the command of God and is to be obeyed. Do you understand this?

T. I've heard them say the word *perfect* means *fully mature*. It means to be the best you can be, and if you do that, it will be good enough.

W. Let's get this straight: you are saying to be perfect as (the same way as) your Father in heaven is perfect, means it is O.K. for you to be imperfect because He is also imperfect?

T. That is not what I am saying, and you know it. We know God is perfect; I'm not questioning that. What I said is that I can be imperfect as long as I am the best I can be, and in that sense it is like being as perfect as God is. Know what I mean?

W. What? Say that again...

²⁶ Matthew 5:1 – 7:29

²⁷ Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 3:15

T. I said, it's perfectly normal for me to be imperfect, just as it is perfectly normal for God to be perfect. Therefore, I am perfect in my imperfection just as God is perfect in His perfection.

W. T, I think you need some fresh air. W. E. Vine, a Greek scholar of considerable renown, eliminates some of the confusion of the translation of *teleios*, the Greek for *perfect*. He said it means complete or fully mature (as you understand) but adds that the word conveys the idea of goodness without necessary reference to maturity.²⁸ His comment makes sense in the simple reading of the verse and in the standard definition of *perfect* in the dictionary. The verse means we are to be as our Father is, that is, perfect in holiness. The question is not: does that make sense to the natural man? The question is, what does the Word say? Let's read it again: *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*. I understand each of those words separately, and I understand them when they are used together in a sentence. I am sure you do too.

T. I understand what you said. It's just that the words can't mean what they say. It's not possible for us to be perfect. I wish it was, but we cannot do it. I've tried. The words have to mean something else.

W. Ah, now I see the problem. You are trying to comprehend the wisdom of God with the intellect and experience of man. You cannot do that by your own understanding. God is greater than we. His thoughts are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. We must humble ourselves (an act full of God's blessing)²⁹ before the Word and ask the Lord to reveal the verse's meaning and how we are to obey it. When we do this, He will, for He loves and seeks us; **but we come to Him only on His conditions.**

T. Don't get metaphysical on me. Certainly the Lord can speak, but He gave us common sense, and we need to use it. I wish you were right, but I say again, the words cannot mean what they say. There must be a more profound interpretation, for any honest person knows that we cannot be perfect.

W. I tell you one more time: the Word says what it means and means what it says. Why do you persist in insinuating that the Lord does not think and speak in clear, understandable sentences. After all, He

28 W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985) *teleios*, perfect, 466.

29 Isaiah 55:15; 66:2; Matthew 5:3

was/is trying to communicate with His children whom He both created and loves. He knows we are simple creatures with limited mental capacity and no spiritual insight. Certainly He chooses to speak to us in a language we can understand.

T. Well, that's a good point. The truth is, I know in my heart that what you say is true. God's Word means what it says. If we redefine every verse we do not like, we have nothing left but man's stinky religion. And having wallowed in that, I tell you, it is not enough.

W. You've got it, T! The natural man cannot be holy. In the face of the Word, we are undone. We can only tremble before it. And that is exactly what the Lord wants us to realize. The teachers you allude to, in ignorance or insolence, undermine God's plan. They confidently teach that, since it is not possible to be perfect (or to Love God, or your neighbor as yourself, etc.) the verses cannot mean what they say. Therefore, they brazenly set out to *correct* God, teaching that it means *be as good as you can*, or as they say, *be fully mature*. They scoff at the idea that the verse means what it says (that is, *be perfect* in the same way as *God is perfect*) and dilute the verse down to the level of their experience rather than asking the Lord to raise their understanding up to His Word. Then they fearlessly teach their nonsense despite the curse on those who preach a gospel different from the one we received.³⁰

Not only is their theology wrong but also their lack of faith causes them to miss the most important point: **in and of ourselves we cannot please God**; neither can we love Him as we ought; nor our neighbor as ourselves; nor can we be perfect; nor can we fulfill the rest of Scripture.

Do you understand?

T. I'm starting to. We are in a mess and need God's help. Right?

W. Yes! The natural man cannot please God; yet that fact notwithstanding, we **must be perfect**; we **must** obey God on all points. This is a paradox, but to understand it is to know that you are undone, and should be crying out to the Lord, "What must I do?"

T. Actually, W, I tried to live a perfect life. I know it cannot be done. I was so discouraged I actually gave up and started listening to those who say it means *just do the best you can*.

³⁰ Galatians 1:6-9

W. T, let's stop right here. We cannot, we must not, give up. Let me tell you one of the most important/frightening things you will ever hear. Jesus, who always spoke truth, said *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.*³¹ He will give this reward to those who overcome; those who do not will not sit with Him on His throne.

Imagine yourself in the next life. You will either sit in a glorious place of honor with the Lord on His throne, or not. Envision the loss if you trade this pearl of great price for any temporary treasure, pleasure, or excuse. If you do not overcome in this life you will be empty-handed in eternity and it will be your fault. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of porridge and when he realized his folly it was too late. No amount of tears could undo his mistake.³²

We must not give up.

T. That is shocking, W. I am embarrassed by my careless pursuit of God.

W. In the flesh it cannot be done; yet we must achieve perfection. The good news is that when we understand this, we are ready for rescue. His provision is the only way out of this dilemma. He will meet us, but only on His path. There is a way to love the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength; there is a way to be perfect; there is a way to fulfill all requirements of the Word; there is a way, and, in fact, in NT days they called it *the Way!* It was *the way* Jewish and Gentile believers were taught and urged to walk. It is discussed in the Word concerning every NT church.³³ *The way* of the Bible is *the way* for us today!

We are to be filled with and walk in the Spirit. Paul said, *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*³⁴ The fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace...; we can love God as we ought, when we are full of and walk in the Holy Spirit.

T. I know in my heart you speak the truth. I desperately want to learn the ways of the Spirit. [And he broke down. T confessed his

31 Revelation 3:21

32 Hebrews 12:16-17

33 Shown in Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, Titus

34 Galatians 5:16

waywardness. His sin forgiven, the Spirit comforted him. After some time they resumed.]

W. I rejoice with you, brother T. God is good.

T. I can hardly wait to learn the things of which you speak.

W. I need to return to our discussion to make a final, important point. It is this: there should be a progression in our learning, a more sure way to understand Scripture. You see, we must not interpret a verse based on what we think a word means (for example, *perfect*, in our discussion) even if we have insight about it in the Greek. The next step we also took. That is, we made sure we understood it in its immediate sentence. Both steps are mandatory. We also need to look at it in its broader context. In our case that is Matthew 5 through 7, the Sermon on the Mount. Look at the details of these chapters. They clarify and add depth to the meaning of *perfect*, for they are full of *impossible* requirements. Yet Jesus said we must fulfill not only the letter, but also the spirit, of the law. For example, the law says we must not commit adultery. He raised it to a higher level: *if you so much as look at a woman to lust after her, you have already committed adultery with her.*³⁵ When you study the entire Sermon, it becomes clear: He meant be perfect as our Father is perfect. In our flesh, it is impossible. And that was Jesus' point. We cannot do it without embracing God's provision, for all *our* righteousness is as filthy rags.

W. W finished by saying, Do you see how this works?

T. Scales have fallen off my eyes. The logic of man deceived me again.

So we Leave them to celebrate God's Glory in private

The last thought is this: when men rejected Jesus' teaching, He did not destroy them. He just spoke truth. However, what He said will judge in the last day.³⁶ We obey, or not. We pray *our* way and have religion *our* way, or we do it His way. But unless we obey His Word, all we have is *our* religion. Religion without obedience to God is religion without His Word. This is the precise definition of *iniquity*³⁷ and it is cursed by God. Many are guilty of religion their own way, of approaching Him with contempt for His instructions about how to do so. Their lives and prayers rarely align with His Word. But He simply spoke truth, and left each of us to choose to obey the Word or not.

³⁵ Matthew 5:27-28

³⁶ John 12:47-50

³⁷ Or *lawlessness*

But remember what He said,

“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, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’³⁸

The day comes when the Word He spoke will be manifested in power and will judge those who ignore it in these days.

³⁸ Matthew 7:21-23

3. FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Jew and Gentile believers were urged to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; to be perfect; to fulfill the Word. God gave His Son, Word and Spirit empower them to do so. It can be accomplished. The Holy Spirit is catalyst. He is the Spirit foretold by the Prophets. John the Baptist was sent in His power; He was poured out on Jesus without measure; they were baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost; the Gospel of Jesus Christ was spread throughout the world by the power of the Spirit.

This is the Spirit who fills us. In Him we partake of the power of the age to come, overcome all things, bear fruit, please God and earn eternal rewards. Let us rejoice and be filled!

The Provision of the Spirit

Joel prophesied the Spirit would be poured out.³⁹ They were filled and then preached with great power. Thousands were saved; signs and wonders testified of His anointing on their ministry. They received power for holy living and walked in the gifts and fruit of the Spirit.

His fullness is available to believers today. This chapter sets forth the path into the presence of God in the fullness of the Spirit. We already learned that to honor, worship, and hallow God's name moves us from the constraints of natural man toward liberty in the Spirit. We enter deeper into the Spirit and farther from the things of this world as we obey Psalm 100 and joyfully thank and praise and sing to God.

Ephesians expands the teaching, commanding *be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*⁴⁰ Psalms, hymns, and spiritual⁴¹ songs help us open further to the Lord. His presence glows in us. We become more aware of His power and magnificence, and understand Paul's prayer *that He would grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to*

³⁹ Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2

⁴⁰ Ephesians 5:18-19. Some apply this singularly to the church. But, while it does not exclude such, it also speaks to individuals, for we sing and make melody in *our* hearts to the Lord. *Our* hearts do not talk to each other; we sing and talk out loud together, yes; but we make melody within *our own* hearts, privately. First 1 Corinthians 14 underscores this point teaching us to *edify* ourselves in the Spirit. As individuals are edified (built up) the Body draws from that and is also built up.

⁴¹ *Spiritual songs* means what you would think, that is, what the words say, which is, *spiritual songs* means *singing in tongues*. This is clearly explained by Paul (1 Corinthians 14:14-16); and supported by Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994) 718, footnote 189, and 653-54.

*comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*⁴² What remains but to long to be changed into His likeness and dwell with Him in loving adoration? In the Spirit we radiate the humility of Jesus, for in the fullness of His presence we can be like our Master. Worldly things are as nothing to those so filled.

Paul travailed for such blessed glory.

First Corinthians 12 adds that the Spirit gives spiritual gifts to the Church. It is a blessing that He does. Consider our helplessness: natural man cannot see into the spiritual realm or engage in spiritual warfare without these provisions. But through His gifts we have access to things we cannot otherwise know. This shall be in effect until we no longer need the gifts, that is, when we see Him face-to-face. Consider,

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then (when that which is perfect has come) face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.⁴³

We will need the gifts until we see Him face-to-face, for even Paul could only see in part. Until we see Him let us trust and obey the Spirit and Word: let us earnestly seek spiritual gifts and use them that we might all learn and be comforted.⁴⁴

Twice⁴⁵ we are commanded to...*desire* (earnestly covet⁴⁶) *spiritual gifts*... (We need them. Let us thank Him, obey, and earnestly covet the Spirit's gifts.)

Pause for a moment. As straightforward as words can be written we are commanded to covet spiritual gifts! This is easy to understand. Do we do it? If not, why not? What will we say when the Lord asks why we did not live a more powerful life; why we did not covet His gifts? It will not suffice to blame some pastor. Yes, he will *receive*

42 Ephesians 3:16-19

43 1 Corinthians 13:8-12

44 1 Corinthians 14:31

45 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1

46 QuickVerse, 1 Corinthians 14:1, G2206

***more stripes,*⁴⁷ but none who ignore this exhortation will be innocent.**

First Corinthians 14 covers *speaking in tongues*. Paul said they were vital for every believer, including himself. The Lord did not give such a profound gift to withhold it from those who seek it according to His Word. The stipulation is that tongues are private, and if used in the church are to be interpreted, which is equal to prophesy. We shall focus on this gift because of its importance and the controversy that surrounds it. Pertinent passages are italicized and underlined in our text, and comments about them are inserted in parentheses.

Let us begin.

he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...in the spirit he speaks mysteries. (We speak mysteries to God that only He understands. Hallelujah!)

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself... (Praise the Lord! By speaking in tongues we edify (*build up*) ourselves in the Spirit. This is marvelous! In edifying ourselves we can be full of and walk in the Spirit, and therein overcome the flesh, please God and have spiritual fruit in our lives with which to minister to the Church. This, as supported by Jude,⁴⁸ is the only place in Scripture where we are told **how** to build ourselves up in the Spirit!)

I wish you all spoke with tongues (Paul affirms as clearly as possible: speak in tongues, believers.)

Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. (He clarifies: praying in tongues is praying in the spirit. Once you see it here, it is easy to spot elsewhere in Paul. For example, see the next verse).

*What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the S/spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the S/spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.*⁴⁹ (To Paul, praying/singing in tongues is synonymous with praying/singing in the spirit).

Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? (He said it again: praying in the spirit is praying in tongues).

⁴⁷ James 3:1

⁴⁸ Jude 20-23

⁴⁹ Fee, 121-25; 131-34; 222; 228-31. "The most viable solution to this ambiguity is that by the language 'my spirit prays' Paul means his own spirit is praying as the Holy Spirit gives the utterance. Hence, 'My S/spirit prays'."

For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. (Paul says blessing with tongues (spirit) is giving thanks well, but since it is in tongues the other person cannot understand).

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all...(Wow! Paul knew speaking and singing in tongues was crucial to living a robust, victorious spiritual life; a life he, himself, lived; a life he longed to see in the Church.)

Finally, *therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.*⁵⁰ (Paul's last comment on the matter in chapter 14: *do not forbid to speak with tongues.* That says it all.)

Let us ask again: if Paul placed such importance on speaking in tongues, why would anyone who longs for more of God not seek to join Paul in saying *I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all?* We are commanded to *speak in tongues* as one of the Spirit's gifts. Should that not be a burning desire for each of us? If we do not, why not? We must persist; we must prevail. God does not promise a gift and not give it!

In chapter 6 home meetings are discussed where worship, living in the Spirit, and gifts and fruit of the Spirit can be taught, for *...you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.*⁵¹ The voice of the Spirit must be recognized. Individual sheep must know Jesus' voice *...and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.*⁵² This is not possible outside of the Spirit.

This book is not rhetoric; it is a synthesis of Scripture. Learning to hear the voice of the Spirit is crucial. Jesus said seven times: *he who hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*⁵³ You have an ear by being filled with and walking in the Spirit.

Other Considerations

The Five Foolish Virgins⁵⁴ would have been with the Bridegroom had they been full of the Spirit. But their provision was in the natural man; and for want of oil (of the Spirit)

⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:1-35, 39 sel.

⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 14:31-33

⁵² John 10:2-5

⁵³ Revelation chapters 2 and 3

⁵⁴ Matthew 25:1-13

they were left out. We must avoid their foolishness, have oil aplenty, and be numbered with the Five Wise Virgins.

Much evil is against us. We are in desperate conflict. Our souls and the life of the Church are at risk. A ferocious enemy devours whom he can, and will do so until cast into the Lake of Fire. Until then, we must fight. Paul said...*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...*⁵⁵ In the Spirit's power, in obedience to the Word, we must press into the Kingdom and peace of God.⁵⁶ We are empowered to become His children.

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high... suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance...But earnestly desire the best gifts...And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force...Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you come short of it...There remains therefore a rest for the people of God... Let us be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall...

We must understand, believe, be filled, and persevere until we enter His rest – daily. We can take our place under the shadow of the Almighty; we can dwell securely behind the hedge of righteousness. We have been given power, armor, and gifts. Use them. We must not be with the Five Foolish Virgins who, separated from the fullness of His Spirit, were left outside.

By now some must be ready to scream out:

We hear you. We agree. We want this! But how do we actually press into the kingdom and peace of God?

Hallelujah! This is the right question. The answer is found in the life of the church in...

an Old Fashioned Prayer Meeting.

⁵⁵ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

⁵⁶ Hebrews 4:1-11

The grandfather clock passed 7:15 p.m. Elder Jensen continued his slow prayer walk within the circle of about 20 seats in his living room. Some were folding chairs fanned back from the piano on one end of the room. He knew the saints would arrive soon. Trained in the ways of the Spirit, they had fellowshiped for years. They would be on time, and arrive worshipping in the Spirit.

He was right. They entered the room almost simultaneously. Some brought children. They quickly greeted one another and took their seats. Mary sat at the piano and began to softly play hymns as the Spirit led her. There was no talking; most sat with eyes closed. An attitude of reverence permeated the room. Some began to lift their hands in worship and praise. Some prayed softly with the understanding; some in tongues. In a few minutes a chorus was started. There followed a time of singing and worship.

Elder Jensen said nothing. He knew the Holy Spirit was with them and leading the meeting. He simply joined the worship. The Lord had spoken to him earlier that day as he waited before Him in prayer for the meeting. He knew this would be a night of intercession. The enemy had come like a flood. Misunderstanding and lies between a few new believers festered. The devil sought to separate and devour.

A stillness settled. Mary stopped playing; there were no more songs. In their hearts the saints focused on the Lord, quietly waiting upon Him for they sensed He was about to speak. Individually they *checked in* to see if He wanted to speak through them. In a minute or so one said, "Brother Jensen, I saw a vision of a great red dragon. He was cunning and fierce. He was whispering to some people I couldn't see. I felt they were saved, but I'm not sure. They were in danger and didn't know it. The dragon intended to destroy them, but first he had to persuade them to leave the sheepfold."

After that, a prophesy spoke of destruction and called for prayer.

The Spirit stirred them and they began to pray earnestly, loudly. They prayed with understanding and tongues. At times someone would start a chorus, often about Jesus' Blood. A couple of times, stillness settled upon them and the Spirit gave further revelation. But for the most part, they simply, fervently prayed. They prayed for over an hour. When the burden lifted, they rested in His presence.

Then Elder Jenkins said, "Bless the Lord who has shared with us this night the privilege of laboring with Him for Jesus' beloved sheep. Before

we break for fellowship, I want to open the Word.” He reminded them that the Bible *is a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet*. Believers walk in and are guided by the Spirit, but the Spirit teaches the Word. He never directs the church to disobey or disagree with it. The elder reminded them the Word says, “*When you pray...*” and gives specific instructions to pray. He said, “The most important thing we can ask is that our Father’s *His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. We must not disobey or neglect this command. We must also know that His kingdom comes through His anointed laborers, and that the companion prayer was for Him to *send forth laborers into His harvest*.”⁵⁷ Jensen explained, again, that there should be few prayer meetings that, after worship and praise, do not begin with earnest prayers along these lines. He warned of a religion full of the ideas of man, not the Word of God.

...and thus it was at the Old Fashioned Prayer Meeting.

That is the essence of how to live an overcoming life in the Spirit. These saints did what we should all do – daily. They entered into the Lord’s presence, asking nothing but the privilege of ministering to Him, and being used by Him to accomplish His business. They encouraged one another in faith and good works. They loved each other, broke bread, and fellowshiped together in the Word and in their natural lives.

With that example in mind, let us peer back into our personal prayer closets this morning! Did we obey the Word, honor God and worship Him because He is worthy? Did we do this because we love Him and love to honor Him? Did we enter His very presence, and therein, were we filled afresh with His Spirit? Did we pray as His Word commands? Did we taste, again, the joy of being accepted and loved by Almighty God?

Those who did are among the few; those who did not, could have. They can learn, and in the power of the Spirit, overcome for both themselves and the Body of Christ. But it is a choice.

Before we leave this matter, there are two final points:

1) We are filled with the Spirit not to **do** something, but rather, to **be** like someone, that is, to be like Jesus. We are to be as He is and do as He does. *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new*

⁵⁷ Psalm 119:105; Matthew 6:9-10; 9:35-38

*creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*⁵⁸ This is accomplished in the Holy Spirit.

Out of this *new creation* flows victorious, abundant life. We reflect the grace and beauty of our Lord when we are in the fullness of His Spirit. He is gentle and lowly in heart; we can be the same. He has a burden to share with us; we need to reach out and grasp it. As He humbled Himself to obey His Father, so we must in the Spirit. As we do, we will have the sweet aroma of our Master. What a blessed fragrance for those around us.

2) The final thing is this. A ...*woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."* Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "*Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.*"⁵⁹

She touched Jesus in faith, and power flowed from Him to her. She was healed because of her faith! And so with us. Our faith in these matters of the Spirit can touch and please the Lord. We can be filled; we can speak in tongues; we can be open to the gifts; we can operate in them in obedience. By so doing, we move closer to hearing those blessed words *Well done good and faithful servant.*⁶⁰

But we do not tell the Lord what to do. He is Sovereign. He will do what He will. He may say to us, as He did the prophet:⁶¹ speak to the dry bones that they may live; or He may not. He decides. The only authority we have with Him is that which He grants us in His Word. This power is not for self-serving madness, to name-and-claim what we choose. We have no authority over God. Why would we? Our *authority* is from the Holy Spirit's quickening of the Word when activated by the will of God for His bidding. Period.

58 Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 5:17

59 Luke 8:43-48

60 Matthew 25:14-21

61 Ezekiel 37

After He proves us to be trusted friends with His business being our business and His commands being our commands, He will task us to do His bidding when He chooses, if He chooses. Then His power will be demonstrated again on the earth. And then, when we speak as commanded, the dead bones will rattle, and come together, and be encased with skin; and the breath of life will flow, and the dead bones will live again. Or not: He decides.

Those who insist on religion their own way will, one day, face His terrifying rejection. Religion is not a game; nor can it be ignored. Every man is victim or victor. God invested everything for mankind. He requires our full participation in the Holy Spirit.

4. WALK IN THE SPIRIT

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to begin the victorious walk. But we cannot stop there. We must live and walk in the Spirit.

*Live in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish... Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit** the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control and gentleness. Against such there is no law. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*⁶²

This passage is charged with vision and instruction: live in the Spirit to overcome the flesh; war with the flesh in the Spirit; overcome the flesh to inherit the kingdom of God; spiritual fruit is precursor to heavenly living; crucify the flesh to be Christ's; practice the works of the flesh to miss Christ; walk in the Spirit to live in the Spirit.

Some exclaim, "I do not believe you. 'Once saved, always saved'."

The Word says: *Those who practice such things **will not inherit** the kingdom of God.* Getting saved and living your way, because after all, ah hem, you really love Jesus is man's doctrine, not God's. Failure to overcome the flesh is death. Romans adds,

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit... For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God... Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live

⁶² Galatians 5:16-25

*according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*⁶³

Of many other somber warnings, there is this,

*Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*⁶⁴

These shocking sins are rampant in the church, including lying. Blatant liars are malicious, sleazy, and untrustworthy; they practice incessant lying and deceit. Theirs is an abominable lifestyle with a certain end. But a more subtle liar lies when necessary or convenient. A survey reported that more than 99% of its participants admitted lying at least once a day. Can you imagine that? But how many people do you think tell the truth all the time? Any time? Many appear to have lost contact with truth. They willingly lie for political, corporate, or personal agendas, excusing themselves, those who even care, by saying it is necessary for the common good.

Lying infiltrates every level of society. Telephone solicitors start conversations with blatant lies intended to exploit: *You have been chosen for...* some contrived lie. They justify such lies *to themselves* by saying they have been told to say those things, that if they do not they will lose their jobs. Yet there is no mercy or concern for people they dupe or injure in their subtlety. They sneer that the *dopes* should have known better.

God says, "Wrong!" He warns that *all liars shall have their part in the Lake of Fire*. Deceive not yourself; excuse not your flesh. Tell the truth. The Lake of Fire is forever...

We used the example of lying, but in fact the flesh struggles to corrupt every part of our mind. Maybe you always tell the truth. But do you harshly judge *stupid things stupid people do*; are you angered by traffic or standing in lines; or overcome by pornography or sexual indiscretion; or envy of others; or jealousy; or pride; or hate? The list is endless.

Walking in the Spirit is the only way to overcome the flesh. This chapter teaches how to do it. It begins with the Good Shepherd: let Him teach us. Listen to what He says;

⁶³ From Romans 8:1-17

⁶⁴ Revelation 21:5-8

look at what He did; adopt His attitude; take His yoke upon us; walk in His burden; follow His footsteps. The following passages show the way.⁶⁵

Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened and he (John the Baptist⁶⁶) saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (The Spirit filled Jesus. How much more must we be?)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (The Spirit led Jesus. How much greater is our need?)

...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. (If Jesus was anointed with the Spirit and power and had God with Him, how much greater is our need? How dare we presume to serve God without the fulness of the Spirit.)

Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. (If Jesus could do nothing of Himself, how can we presume to do anything by ourselves? He could only do what He saw His Father doing. Can we do more? If the Spirit does not reveal to us what the Father is doing, why do we think we can do anything? There is no power in the church for this reason! There will be none until we walk in the Spirit and have and obey Jesus' commands. Only then will the Spirit move according to God's purposes.)

*I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (Jesus said: *I can of Myself do nothing.* Neither can we! He said, *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*⁶⁷ We must abide in Him.)*

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (Jesus did not do His own will! What He did, all that He did, was His Father's will, and so it must be for us.)

⁶⁵ Matthew 3:16-17; 4:1; Acts 10:36-38; John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:26-30, 38 ; 12:23-26; 13:13-17; 14:10, 31; 15:10

⁶⁶ John 1:32

⁶⁷ John 15:5

The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (He gave His life; we must follow in His train: This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.⁶⁸ We start by purposely laying down our preferences for our families and our brethren. And a day may come when it might include our very lives; as it was for Him.)

You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (He washed their feet; how much more should we? Likewise, in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than ourselves.⁶⁹ How many among us consider others better than ourselves?)

Finally, we see the extreme of His obedience. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings ...Inasmuch as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.⁷⁰

Thus the Captain of our salvation walked in the Spirit. We must do the same. It begins with a mindset to obey: it is a declaration of war against sin; a resolution to study and meditate in His Word; a determination to have and keep His commandments; a commitment to be filled and stay filled with the Spirit; to seek the gifts of the Spirit and keep them stirred; to have the fruit of the Spirit well up in our lives; to listen as the Spirit speaks through and about the Word; to lay down self-determined pursuit of good works; to come to Jesus and receive His rest; to take His yoke and learn from Him, for He is gentle and lowly in heart; to submit to the Spirit as He changes us into the image of Jesus. It is to walk in communion with God Himself; it is joy and peace past imagination; it is glory beyond description.

⁶⁸ John 15:12-13

⁶⁹ Philippians 2:3

⁷⁰ Hebrews 2:5-18; 4:14-15

Scurry not past these amazing things. God does not wink at sin. He sets forth blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. He is neither mushy nor fickle. His requirements are high; His empowerments higher. But at the end, without exception, there will be non-negotiable accountability.

5. *FRIENDS WITH JESUS*

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.⁷¹

Jesus' friends are majestically blessed. Moses (who died 1,350 years before Christ) and Elijah (who was taken up alive by a chariot and horses of fire 800 years before Christ) appeared and talked to Him on the Mount of Transfiguration before His crucifixion, and are with Him still today, 2,000 years later. Many wish for friendship with Jesus, but few pay the price of obedience. This was discussed already, so we shall take a different tact here.

We ponder two examples of friendship: first, King David and Hushai; second, God and Moses. Hushai teaches a great deal. David was fleeing⁷² Absalom's usurpation. As they fled, weeping and barefoot, David was told that Ahithophel, his counselor (whose advice was as if the oracles of God) had joined Absalom. David prayed *O Lord turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!*⁷³ Shortly thereafter, Hushai – grieving for his friend, wearing torn clothing and with dust on his head – caught up with the king.

Hushai sought to go with David, even to death, for the king's life was more precious to him than his own. Instead, David sent him (life in hand) back to Absalom to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel. Hushai did not question the king's decision. He obeyed immediately and returned to the lion's den, instead of seeking sanctuary with King David.

It was good that he did.

Absalom sought Ahithophel's advice and was told: "This night let men be chosen and David pursued while he is weary and in disarray." The advice was precise. Ahithophel would have killed David and resolved the coup. But just as David had prayed, Hushai was summoned and God enabled his counsel to overthrow Ahithophel's. *Absalom and all the men of Israel said the advice of Hushai was better than the advice of Ahithophel. For the Lord had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring disaster on Absalom.*

We learn two things from this story:

⁷¹ John 15:14

⁷² 2 Samuel 15:13-19:43

⁷³ 2 Samuel 16:23

1) biblical friendship is self-sacrificing: Hushai put David's business ahead of his own and was willing to die for him as Jesus said *love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*⁷⁴

2) it requires wisdom and knowledge: Hushai had to know the king's affairs and have the wisdom to operate in that knowledge. David could not send a fool (even one who loved and was willing to die for him) on such mission. It had to be a friend he could entrust with the burden of his kingdom and life.

David's trust was not misplaced. Hushai proved faithful and able and through him, God returned the kingdom to David. For his faithfulness, Hushai lived the rest of his life with his only office of responsibility – to be the friend of David, Israel's greatest King. Thus is his position recorded in the Word of God.⁷⁵

David and Hushai portray friendship between men. Their story parallels that between God and Moses in important ways. Both Hushai and Moses were altogether loyal to their Masters; both operated with full understanding of their King's business; both were faithful until the end. Moses' relationship with the Lord is the quintessence of friendship. His story began when the Lord sent Joseph to Egypt to prepare the land for Israel. Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers, yet raised up by God to rule and preserve the world from a terrible famine. Israel prospered and multiplied in Egypt for many years and were content to remain there forever. Yet that was not to be their destiny. God had given Abraham a land of his own, where he was to become a nation set apart unto the Lord.

In the fullness of time God raised up a Pharaoh, who did not know Joseph. He mistreated Israel, who, for the first time in many years, began to cry out to God. Thus He sent Moses to deliver them from captivity and spiritual darkness unto *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*⁷⁶ This required more than extraction from Egypt. The Lord used Moses to teach Israel to know their Great God, fear Him, learn His commandments, and walk in them.

Moses spent those years with God. They talked as friends. The Lord took him into His plans and counsel; Moses brought his petitions for the people to the Lord. Moses knew God's will, and more than once stood in the gap for the integrity of his Friend's Great Name among the heathen. Moses was faithful in all God's house. The Lord's interests were his. Hushai and Moses were trusted in all things. There is no surprise that the Bible says...*there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the*

⁷⁴ John 15:12-13

⁷⁵ 1 Chronicles 27:33 NAS

⁷⁶ Exodus 19:6

*Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all the mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of Israel.*⁷⁷

The following passage shows how highly the Lord esteemed Moses,

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out. Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?” So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. So Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother’s womb!” So Moses cried out to the Lord, “Please heal her, O God, I pray!”

*Then the Lord said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again.” So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days... the people did not journey till she was brought in again.*⁷⁸

Moses’ prayers reflected his passion for God’s business. With intercession and fasting he prayed for the Lord’s people or the honor of God’s Name.⁷⁹ And the Lord regarded Moses’ faithfulness, for it was a magnificent portrayal of friendship. No

⁷⁷ Deuteronomy 34:10-12

⁷⁸ Numbers 12:1-15

⁷⁹ For example, Exodus 32:10-14

wonder Moses was one of two sent to speak to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration so long ago.

Hushai and Moses put their friends first. They were willing to die for them. They knew and watched over their friend's business exactly like Jesus did for His Father. Jesus, in turn, rewards His faithful ones with incomprehensible honor: He is their Friend, a profoundly Greater Friend than they could be, even as He is profoundly greater than they.

John 15 completes the teaching. It starts with the command to abide in, and bear fruit, for Jesus. This is not suggestion, but command,

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit... Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you will, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.⁸⁰

The paramount issue is to be in Jesus, and therein, bear fruit. We must abide in Him to do this, and we must have and keep His commandments to abide in Him. Once this is set, Jesus explained what is next. He said, *Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.*⁸¹ Bearing fruit begins with death. We are to lay down our lives (our preferences and desires, and maybe, lives) for our Lord and His sheep. If we do, His Spirit empowers us to bring forth fruit. Vine expands our understanding of bearing fruit.

He says⁸² the Greek word for *fruit* is *karpos*. Used just under 60 times in the Word, it covers natural and metaphoric applications. In the natural, it speaks of the fruit of trees, fields, and the earth produced by the inherent energy of a living organism. Metaphorically it recognizes:

1) the visible expression (love, joy, peace, etc.) of power that is actually working inwardly (by the Holy Spirit); and

⁸⁰ John 15:1-8

⁸¹ John 12:24

⁸² Vine, *karpos*, 256-57.

2) the benefits of the power of the Gospel: bearing new converts; sanctifying through deliverance from a life of sin unto holiness and service to God; the absence of uncleanness due to sin; and the sacrifice of praise, which is the effect of confession to God's name.

God created the trees to bear fruit and gave them power to do so. If they do not, they are cut down and cast into the fire.⁸³ So with us, *every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away...If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

We must bear the fruit of holy living; be above sin, do right, and avoid wrong. We are to be full of the Spirit and have His fruit and gifts flowing from our innermost being; we are to be full of love and service for our fellow man; we are to give generously, knowing we cannot out give God; we are to know and obey the Word. If not, we are as withered branches, fit only to be gathered and burned in the fire.

Obedying John 15 pleases God and prepares us for the Body of Christ.

⁸³ Matthew 3:10; 7:19

6. THE BODY OF CHRIST

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.⁸⁴

We would not know these mysteries except for this passage. They are a glorious revelation: the household of God is being built into a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. It is a mysterious, glorious, eternal relationship; it is a building with Jews and Gentiles as living stones, a dwelling place for God; it is about the creation of a holy temple, Jesus Himself being chief cornerstone; it is the Body of Christ emerging in unity and love. It is the mystery of this revelation that all NT passages on Church life build toward. The Body of Christ makes sense and fits together once we understand it.

Look at its emergence in Scripture. The first report of the early church possesses kernels of truth that seed the rest of the study and define the way of the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit anointed Peter's first sermon, and in that anointing the church was born. Exciting then, it still is today. The end of his message says

*And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Ephesians 2:19-22

⁸⁵ Acts 2:40-47

The disciples loved the Lord and each other. They rejoiced in the Apostles' teaching and in frequent fellowship prayed and broke bread from house to house. They were of one heart and soul, and grace was upon them.⁸⁶ They were permeated by God's love and walked above the cares of this world. They were in the first love for Jesus. They reflected the glory of God and earned favor with all the people. They epitomized togetherness, giving and receiving, and worshipping God.

The Gentile churches also manifested the beauty of Jesus. It was the same Gospel, the same Spirit, and the same God. It was exciting. Peter could only speak 211 words⁸⁷ to Cornelius and those with him before *the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word*. He was poured out upon them with the same results. The Spirit life was the way of the early church, both Jew and Gentile. Paul frequently talked about it in his epistles. Likewise, the fruit and gifts of the Spirit were often discussed.

First Corinthians⁸⁸ presents the uniqueness and diversity of the members of the Body and clarifies the importance to the Lord of each individual.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member

86 Acts 4:32-33

87 In the NKJV

88 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14

is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

There is a place for each one. We do not need to strive for position. We need only please the Lord and accept one another in love. First Corinthians 12 explains the source and purposes for the gifts of the Spirit in the Church.⁸⁹

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one (to every member of the Body) for the profit of all: (the Spirit's purpose is the profit of all. Understand and embrace what He is doing.) for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, (tongues are underlined to show that they were given by the Spirit as part of the gifts, in spite of the false teaching about tongues in the church today.⁹⁰) to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, (It was the Holy Spirit, not the Corinthians, not Paul, who worked these things.) distributing to each one individually as He wills (as the Spirit wills!).⁹¹

The Spirit gives gifts for the profit of all. We need all of these gifts until we see Jesus upon His return. We need them until we know as we are known. Without the gifts we have no access into the spirit realm; neither do we have spirit-inspired faith or gifts of healing; nor can we perform miracles; nor discern spirits; nor speak the secrets of men's hearts through revelation of prophecy or tongues/interpretation of tongues. But with the gifts, and through the Body's ministry of them, we can see and know the things the Spirit reveals to us for the good of the Church.

We must covet them as commanded. The errors and abuses of others must not deter us. Receive the gifts and use them as taught in the Word. They gathered daily to worship with singing and praise. Gifts were manifested. We know how they were used because Paul corrected the church at Corinth.

How is it then, brethren, when you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and

⁸⁹ 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

⁹⁰ This is discussed in Chapter 12, Situation 2, The Voice of the Enemy

⁹¹ 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

*let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and be encouraged.*⁹²

Each, in order, was to give forth the gift that all may learn and be encouraged. What were they to learn? At least three things: the message itself; how to recognize and operate in the gifts, thus being enabled to know Jesus' voice; and the discipline of orderly, edifying meetings. They knew (as a local church in close fellowship) whether interpreters were in the meetings. If so, the tongue, as a gift of the Spirit, could be given, for if interpreted, it was equivalent to prophecy.

The Body of Christ is defined as a spiritual temple in Ephesians and an integrated organism in Corinthians. There is a dynamic interface. Believers prayed, praised God, and broke bread daily. They loved and fellowshiped with one another as often as possible. They walked in the gifts in the presence of God in the Holy Spirit. It was glorious then; it still is!

Even so, life in the Body is not (primarily) about being blessed. Work must be done. Jesus

*...gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*⁹³

He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry to build up the Body until there is unity of heart and knowledge. The church is to walk above sin in holiness and perfection in the fullness of Christ. It must speak truth in love and grow up in all things. It is to be knit together by mutual giving. It must walk in the Holy Spirit according to the Word. There is no other way.

* * * * *

⁹² 1 Corinthians 14:26-33

⁹³ Ephesians 4:1-16

Sadly our fellowship and lifestyle do not duplicate theirs. We have forsaken home meetings, not just daily, but even weekly. If we try to have them we are unable to replicate their love and passion; neither can we stir the gifts that are within us, for there are no gifts. I am convinced it is not because we do not love the Lord or yearn for His presence. Rather, we lack the knowledge of the Word and the Spirit. We are hapless victims defined by the prophetic word *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*.

We cannot, we must not, perpetuate this sorry state. We must issue a *hue and cry* within the Church. We must live the way they lived. We must have Jesus in the fullness of the Spirit lest we die.

7. BURDEN OF THE SHEPHERDS ⁹⁴

The Apostles preached in the Spirit with power, and the church was born. Elders⁹⁵ were, and are, empowered to lead the church into victorious living.⁹⁶ In this chapter we shall consider their ministry to Jesus' sheep.

But first, who are His sheep?

The Sheep

Before the birth of the Church, Jesus had gone into all their

*...cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*⁹⁷

He lay down His life for His weary and scattered sheep, saying,

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*⁹⁸

⁹⁴ In this chapter *pastors* are referred to as *shepherds*, though, today, they are called pastors. The Greek, *poimainō*, is shepherd, and is translated this way in 16 of its 17 NT KJV appearances. Concerning the word, *sheep*, at times the Lord referred to His children as sheep and Himself, the Good Shepherd.

⁹⁵ This term is explained in the subsection, The Shepherds

⁹⁶ Daniel 7-12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-20; Revelation 6-20, etc.

⁹⁷ Matthew 9:35-37

⁹⁸ John 10:1-17

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He is desperately needed. He leads us to pasture, protects us from predators, and knows more than we. None of us can see into the spirit world; none can understand the Word unless the Spirit unfolds it; none can walk the path of holiness unless the Lord opens eyes and gives faith; none can purchase salvation by wealth or works; none can claim anything God has not given.

He shepherds us through the ministry gifts He gives to men.

*And He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...*⁹⁹

As we examine oversight of the local church, pause to consider the implications of His gift of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers for His purposes. (See footnote.)¹⁰⁰

We are the Body of Christ; we have access to the gifts and fruit of the Spirit; we can put on the armor of God; we can wage battle using the mighty Sword of the Spirit. We can do these things, if we do them God's way. But we are sheep who, by our nature, need protection, nurture, and guidance to fulfill our responsibility to prepare for eternity. He has given elders because we need them! Let us gladly embrace the oversight the Lord provides through those He has placed over us.

The Shepherds

This section focuses on the responsibilities of elders. A starting point is to clarify the Greek for *elders*, *overseers*, *bishops*, *shepherds*, and *pastors*. Vine provides an excellent synopsis. He says,

Elders (presbuteros) in Christian churches are those who, being raised up and qualified by the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have spiritual care for, and to exercise oversight of, the churches. To *elders* the terms bishops and/or overseers (episkopoi), are applied, given that (episkopos) means overseer, and the English term bishop, has precisely the same meaning. These were appointed as they had given evidence of fulfilling the divine qualifications.

⁹⁹ Ephesians 4:11-16

¹⁰⁰ It would be remiss to fail to reiterate that in addition to pastors and teachers, the Lord gave Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists. All NT examples of these ministries to Gentile churches have pastors/teachers ministering to local assemblies and subordinate to the Apostles, and probably, Prophets. They were never in singular, single-point control. Neither is there biblical evidence to support the argument that Jesus' gifts of Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists do not continue until today. The question is not, "Who has an office appointed by men?" Rather, it is "Who has the call and anointing of the Holy Spirit given by God?"

Elder, then, indicates the mature spiritual experience and understanding of those so described; bishop and overseer indicate the character of the work. According to divine will and appointment, there were to be bishops [plural] in every local church.

Poimayn is translated *shepherd*. Shepherds (pastors) guide as well as feed the flock, a service performed by elders/overseers/bishops. Involves tender care and vigilant superintendence.

Thus *elders* is the appropriate term for leaders of NT assemblies. (For expediency this chapter does not discuss that elders were, then, and must be, today, plural).¹⁰¹ Vine's position reflects the teaching of the Apostles. Paul called

*...for the elders of Ephesus. And when they had come to him, said...take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood...*¹⁰²

Peter wrote...*the elders who are among you I exhort...shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock...*¹⁰³

James recognized their oversight, *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*¹⁰⁴

Ministry of the Elders

With people, come problems: with an influx of people, a flood of problems. As this is true today, so it was 2,000 years ago, even during the mighty move of the Spirit at Pentecost. A complaint came to the Apostles.

Their resolution was one of the most important instructions ever given to elders; yet it may

101 Darell B. Dyal, *Limpy, the Lost Way of the Bible* (New York: iUniverse, 2005), 10-13, 43-65.

102 Acts 20:17-31

103 1 Peter 5:1-4

104 James 5:14-15

be the most ignored/disobeyed of all.

Look at the story.

*Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*¹⁰⁵

They did not disregard the need, but set forth a marvelous answer: *seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* They empowered others to share the burden. As for themselves, they demonstrated wisdom and obedience. The Lord had given them a responsibility and an anointing to protect and train the Church. They were the only ones equipped and commissioned for the task. (**This is still true today.**) If they had forsaken their assignment, or permitted it to be diluted, it could not have been done by any others. The early church would have failed.

It was a crisis that, in the wisdom and power of the Spirit, they overcame. How many do so today? How many have the wisdom and courage to focus on the only two things that can deliver the blessed sheep from the flesh and devil? This is God's requirement and they gave themselves continuously to prayer and ministry of the Word. We must follow their lead. To give oneself to prayer and the ministry of the Word is to be blessed by God, for to obey this injunction is to have and keep Jesus' commands; it is to tend and nurture His beloved sheep; it is to be faithful in all His house; it is to be His trusted friend. Therefore, we must rivet our attention to the question, "Why these two, and only these two, things?"

Continuous prayer and the ministry of the Word were practiced by the Apostles, and these two weapons must be employed by those who follow in their train. To fail to do this is, in effect, to offer the strange fire of man's religion. These are the instructions decreed for nurture of His sheep: not something else; not anything else.

Do not do something else!

Continuous Prayer

From the victory of continuous prayer Paul could pen *...though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...*¹⁰⁶ He and his helpers pulled down strongholds by such prayer. The majesty of God is unfolded under such anointing. The gifts of the Spirit, the armor of God, the fruit of the Spirit can be experienced. Doctrines of truth are appropriated under such anointing. We must understand such praying.¹⁰⁷ Look at the critical elements. Paul besought God to

...give the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself that you might know the hope of His calling; the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; and the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God...that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy...above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me...

We can grasp the intent of Paul's prayers by considering just three examples. He prayed that we might know: 1) *the hope of His calling*; 2) *the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*; 3) *the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who*

¹⁰⁶ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

¹⁰⁷ Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-20; 6:10-20; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:2-7; and Matthew 6:9-15

believe. If we could comprehend *just* these things we would be above the cares, pains, riches and enticements of this world. To know *the hope of His calling* is to realize we will be changed into Jesus' image, be as He is, and dwell with Him forever! This life's problems pale measured against such certainty. To understand the *riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints* is to know that God longs to gather His children unto Himself. To grasp the magnificence of His love draws His children to seek to please Him. And to know *the exceeding greatness of His power toward us* is to realize that we will never fail for want of power. Scripture says...*as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*. That power is now available.

Elders should pray with Paul. They should persevere until the light shines in the hearts of the sheep; until dead bones live again. Elders must understand their call, sell all they have, and give themselves to ceaseless prayer along the lines revealed by the Spirit. Let them pray fervently. *The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*¹⁰⁸ Let them expend all of their strength all of their days in such nobility. Let them not turn aside to *wait on tables*.

The Ministry of the Word

The Word is alive and powerful; it is the Sword of the Spirit; it is a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path; it teaches us what to think and not think; what to do and not do; how to live and not live; what to be and not be. The Word is the light of God upon our way, without which we are hopelessly lost. It tells how to overcome a fearsome adversary. It tells how to please God and how to be the friend of His Holy Son. The Word is so important and majestic that an entire chapter in this book is devoted to it.¹⁰⁹

The Word must be taught richly, deeply, frequently; it must be anointed by the Holy Spirit as it was through the Apostles so long ago. No wonder prayer is mandatory. The struggle is constant. Through many tears and much fasting, through worry and travail, through teaching day and night, Paul pressed on to establish the Church upon Scripture and Spirit. Sheep almost cannot be taught. Rebellion and error are but a conversation away. They lose fervor or clamor for false teachers who charm ever so craftily for their own gain. Paul, even with the power of the Spirit, had extreme doctrinal challenges with the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians – churches he taught for years. He also had to write a second letter to the Thessalonians to clarify concerns. He was constantly differentiating between the right and wrong ways to walk and think; to love; to esteem others. He suffered these

¹⁰⁸ Matthew 11:12

¹⁰⁹ Chapter 10, The Word of God

things from churches established in the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰ Listen as Paul reasons with the Galatians,

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?... I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.¹¹¹

He corrected the Corinthians about pride and sin, but did not chide them about spiritual gifts. He encouraged believers to seek them, and taught the purpose for them.

...But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all... But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills... Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification...How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn,

¹¹⁰ Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians were Spirit filled churches, for it is the Way of the Word, throughout the Acts and the Epistles.

¹¹¹ Galatians 3:1-5

*and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.*¹¹²

The struggle for purity, holiness, and victory was ongoing. If true for Paul, how much more for us? Today churches are not full of or walking in the Spirit. Most do not even understand the words. Sheep and shepherds, too, have not been taught how to be filled with and walk in the Spirit. Even fewer understand and conduct their work in accordance with Acts 6. Oversight is not a part-time job! If those the Lord calls will give themselves singularly to the work, the Spirit will anoint their obedience as He did 2,000 years ago. Our beloved spiritual children will be filled with and walk in the Spirit and will grow into the unity of Jesus Christ. It can happen; but, only one way, God's!

¹¹² 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 14:1-5, 26-33

PART II. FOUR GLORIOUS TOPICS

For Such a Time as This synthesizes God's empowerments for His people that they may live overcoming lives that please Him and earn eternal rewards. Part I summarizes the way of life in His Word. Part II describes the Father's empowerments for victorious living, including the Son of God, Spirit of God, and Word of God.

8. THE SON OF GOD

It is impossible perceive the glory of Him who is greater than we as the universe is greater than the moon. Yet we shall try.

Who Is He

Jesus – more than *Baby in a manger*, *Carpenter's son* or *Sacrificial Lamb* – is the Son of God; the Beginning and End; the Word of God; the Creator and Sustainer; the Godhead Bodily; the Lord and Savior; the Lamb of God; the King of Kings; the Lord of Lords; the Faithful and True; the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit; the True Vine; the Hope of Glory; the Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Son of Man; the First Born; the One we must befriend.

Scripture describes His glory,

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men...He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to those who believe in His name...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*¹¹³

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before

¹¹³ John 1:1-5, 10-14

*all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him (Jesus) to reconcile all things to Himself (God), by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*¹¹⁴

He created all things; by Him all things consist. He is Preeminent, the Holy Son of God. Yet He emptied Himself, took the form of a servant and died for our sin.

*...Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*¹¹⁵

His magnificent portrayal after resurrection depicts His grandeur,

*His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength...I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*¹¹⁶

114 Colossians 1:Select

115 Philippians 2:5-11

116 Revelation chapters 1 and 19; John 14:6

Such is His majesty.

Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

*The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations; it is Christ in you, the hope of glory...*¹¹⁷

Christ in you!

Jesus in us is the secret of life. He is in us by the Spirit while seated with His Father in Heaven.¹¹⁸ That is, He is in us if we have faith and obey His Word, for Jesus promised

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me...*¹¹⁹

He gave His Word. He will come in to us if we hear His voice and open the door. To open that door is to participate in ultimate glory,

*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...*¹²⁰

All things become new. In Him we can have victory over the flesh, be perfect, be His friend, and please the Father in all things. Jesus reiterates the point,

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...

We accomplish nothing without Him; we bear much fruit in Him. We have and keep all of His commandments to abide in Him, including being full of and walking in the Spirit.

Thus we close the circle: Jesus in us is God's provision, for *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life...but as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become children of God.*¹²¹ We live a holy life in His power. We wield His power

¹¹⁷ Colossians 1:25-27

¹¹⁸ Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:35; Hebrews 1:13; 10:1-18; John 14:9-10, 15-18; 16:5-15; 17:20-23, assuming we fulfill the conditions.

¹¹⁹ Revelation 3:20

¹²⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹²¹ John 3:16; 1:12

against an enemy far greater than we, one we cannot even see. But Jesus is in us in the Spirit. His gifts, fruit, armor and Word empower us to overcome the flesh, the world and the devil for His Church and for ourselves.

Let Us Minister to Him

We can minister to Jesus. Other than our obedience, it is the only thing we have to offer. Worshipping Jesus like the disciples did, seeking nothing in return, is surely precious to Him.

*Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers...As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them..."*¹²²

Their ministration attended to Him singularly, and thus engaged they were too preoccupied to eat, even as Moses on the mountain before the Lord. Rather, they fasted and ministered to Him with songs of praise and adoration. Praise Him for His mighty acts: know and recite them before Him with thanksgiving and joy; praise Him according to His excellent greatness: know and restate His magnificence to Him; thank Him for the privilege of knowing how splendid He is; thank Him for the ability to see, even dimly, His majestic glory, for the magnitude of such blessing cannot be absorbed by mortals.

Minister love to Him. *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength*, as did a woman in the city ...*when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.*¹²³ Jesus commended her love, forgave her sins and told her to go in peace. Her faith had saved her. She touched and ministered to Him by tears of remorse and poured-out love. It was all she had; it was enough.

¹²² Acts 13:1-5

¹²³ Luke 7:36-50

A Medley¹²⁴

Appended to Chapter 8

Jesus' Fearsome Price Accomplished a Wondrous Deliverance

Our marvelous Lord, Savior, and God
did these things for us and many more.

He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed...

He washed us lest we have no part in Him... Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood;...

He justified us by His blood... saved us from wrath... reconciled us to God...

Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin... There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death;...

He is the bread of life which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever... Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him;

He predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren...

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither

¹²⁴ Isaiah 53:Sel; Exodus 30:17-21; John 6:51-58; 13:8; 14: 15-17; Revelation 1:5; Romans 5:9-10; 6:6, 9, 29; 2 Corinthians 5:17

sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you...

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

9. *THE SPIRIT OF GOD*

Scripture depicts the Holy Spirit. He empowers God's children with discernment, wisdom, knowledge, strength, faith, and power. He empowers mighty deeds in the natural and spiritual worlds. God *anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power...*¹²⁵

He dwells with and in us. He is Comforter and Spirit of truth. He teaches us all things and brings all things to remembrance. He reveals Jesus, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He guides those who will hear into all truth. He speaks in the Father's authority and what He hears from God He speaks. He tells things to come. He glorifies Jesus, taking of His and declaring it to us.¹²⁶

He is holy, and requires holiness, obedience, and faith. We must walk His way, and He walks the way of the Savior. He will not walk the spiritual walk for us, but He will walk with us and give gifts to those who earnestly seek them. He will manifest His fruit in and through their lives. He will not do these things if we do not understand and obey in faith. As an example, *he that prays in an unknown tongue edifies himself*. It is unconditional, transparent, and mandatory for fullness of the Spirit. Every time we obey this verse in faith, we are edified. If we do not, we are not. But He will not obey for us. He will not edify us unless we obey the Word. If we do not speak in tongues, or if we are not earnestly seeking to do so, it is as if we are telling Him He must change His Word to our preferences. He will not bless such rebellion. But oh the glory for those who obey, persevere, press in, and taste of the glorious mystery of the power of the presence of the Comforter.

Still, who is this marvelous Holy Spirit? What is He like?

We know He is God; that He is awesome; that He is all-powerful; that He is magnificently amazing; that He is God's presence on earth today! But even so, Who is He? Reese Howells, *Intercessor*,¹²⁷ a book that reaches its climax toward the end of World War II, tells of a time when the Spirit manifested Himself in awesome power again on the earth. Headmaster Kingsley C. Priddy describes a sovereign work of God in a letter written in Wales in 1937. His letter is presented in its entirety. Its revelation is worth reading.

In the Christmas vacation of 1936 much time was given to prayer. As we approached the new year of 1937 there was an increasing

¹²⁵ Acts 10:38

¹²⁶ John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13

¹²⁷ Reese Howells, *Intercessor* (Ft. Washington: CLC Publications, 1952) 217-22.

consciousness of God's presence. The first outward sign that He was working in a new way was when one of the staff broke down in prayer, confessing her sense of need and crying to the Holy Spirit to meet her. Then we heard how the Holy Ghost had so manifested Himself in the glory of His Divine Person to some of the girl students that they wept before Him for hours – broken at the corruption of their own hearts revealed in the light of His holiness.

An awesome sense of God's nearness began to steal over the whole College. There was a solemn expectancy. We were reminded of the 120 in the Upper Room before the day of Pentecost. Like them, we only wanted to spend our time 'in prayer and supplication' – conscious that God's hand was upon us – conscious that He was about to do something. God was there; yet we felt we were still waiting for Him to come. And in the days that followed, *He came*.

He did not come like a rushing mighty wind. But gradually the person of the Holy Ghost filled all our thoughts, His presence filled all the place, and His light seemed to penetrate all the hidden recesses of our hearts. He was speaking through the Director in every meeting, but it was in the quiet of our own rooms that He revealed Himself to many of us.

We felt the Holy Spirit had been a real Person to us before; as far as we knew we had received Him; and some of us had known much of His operations in and through our lives. But now the revelation of His Person was so tremendous that all our previous experiences seemed as nothing. There was no visible apparition, but He made Himself so real to our spiritual eyes that it was a 'face to face' experience. And when we saw Him we knew we had never really seen Him before. We said like Job, 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee'; and like him, we cried, 'wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.'

In the light of His purity, it was not so much *sin* we saw as *self*. We saw pride and self-motives underlying everything we had ever done. Lust and self-pity were discovered in places where we had never suspected them. And we had to confess we knew nothing of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Person. That our bodies were meant to be the temples of the Holy Ghost we knew, but when He pressed the question, 'Who is living in your body?' we could not say that He was. We would have done so once, but now we had seen Him.

In His nature He was just like Jesus – He would never live for self, but always for others. We were people who had left all to follow the Savior,

and had forsaken all we had of this world's goods to enter a life of faith, and as far as we knew we had surrendered our lives entirely to the One who died for us. But He showed us, 'There is all the difference in the world between your surrendered life in My hands, and Me living My life in your body.'

We read the Acts afresh and found we were reading, not the acts of the apostles, but the acts of the Holy Ghost. The bodies of Peter and the others had become His temples. The Holy Ghost as a divine Person lived in the bodies of the apostles, even as the Savior had lived His earthly life in the body that was born in Bethlehem. And all that the Holy Spirit asked of us was our wills and our bodies. He made it clear that He was not asking for service, but for sacrifice. 'Our God is a consuming fire'; and if God the Holy Ghost took possession of these bodies, then *His* life was going to consume all that there was of *ours*.

Why had He manifested Himself to us in this way? He made that quite clear. It was because there was a work to be done in the world today that only He could do. No wonder the Master told His disciples not to move from Jerusalem until they had received 'the promise of the Father.' But when He had come, they would be His witnesses 'in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'

Many of us on the previous March 29, 1936, had put our all on the altar for the sake of giving the gospel to every creature. We had become willing to be any cog in the machinery that God needed. But now the Holy Ghost said, as Jehovah had said to Moses, 'I am come down to do it.' And we knew that He was as almighty as He was holy.

As those days of visitation went on, we were prostrate at His feet. We had thought that there was some virtue in our surrender: that we, with thousands of others, would be the people to evangelize the world in this generation. But now He had come, and we were out of it except insofar as our bodies would become the temples in which He would dwell and through which He would work. He said, 'I have not come to give you joy, or peace, or victory. I have not come to give you any blessing at all. You will find all that you need in Jesus. But I have come to put you to the cross, so that I may live in your body for the sake of a lost world.'

He warned us that the trials before this task was through would be so great, and the attacks of Satan so fierce, that 'flesh and blood' would never be able to hold out. He showed us that on the eve of the

crucifixion, when the real clash came with the powers of darkness, it was only the Savior who stood. And looking into the future years – the darkness of the last days of this age, the final contest between heaven and hell for the kingdoms of this world – we could see only One Person who was sufficient for these things,’ and He was the glorious Third Person of the Godhead in those whom He was able to indwell.

One by one He met us; one by one we broke in tears and contrition before Him. From one after another rose the cry, as it did from Isaiah when he too ‘saw the Lord’: ‘Woe is me for I am undone...unclean.’ One by one our wills were broken; we yielded to His unconditional terms. One by one there came the glorious realization: He had entered, and the wonder of our privilege just overwhelmed us.

The personal experience was great. We were new people. His Word became new. So often we had had to water down the Word to the level of our experience. But now the Person in us would insist in bringing our experience up to the level of His Word. We understood that crucifixion was a slow death, and that He would have much to deal with in us before He would really be free to do His work through us. But one thing we knew – He had come and He could never fail.

But far greater than anything His visitation could mean to us personally was what it was going to mean to the world. We saw Him as the One to whom ‘the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.’ On our faces before Him we could only say, from awed hearts, ‘Holy Ghost, You have come to shake the world.’

There was no excitement or enthusiasm of the flesh in those days. When His power had come upon us after March 29, 1936, we had been carried away and were singing and shouting our praises. But in these days we were so awed by the holy majesty of His Person that we hardly dared raise our voices in the meetings.

Even the grounds outside seemed filled with His presence. Walking around together we would suddenly be conscious that we were speaking in whispers. The late hours came, but no one thought of bed – for God was there. It seemed to be a foretaste of the Holy City: ‘There shall be no night there.’ Two and 3 a.m. often seemed just like midday as we communed together, prayed with some who were ‘coming through,’ or waited before God in the quietness of our hearts.

His visitation lasted for some three weeks in this special sense although, praise God, He came to ‘abide,’ and has continued with us

ever since. But no one has a monopoly of the Holy Ghost. He is God, and whatever our experience of Him, He is far greater than all we can know of Him. Whatever we know of His gifts, His manifestations and His anointings, He is greater than all of those. In whatever way He manifested Himself to us, we also recognized His mighty working in and through others. Increasingly we look to the Holy Ghost Himself, poured out on all flesh as Joel prophesied, as the only One by whom the Vision He has shown us can be fulfilled, through His prepared channels, in all the parts of the world.

Through this falling of the fire upon the sacrifice, the Spirit had sealed to Himself a company of intercessors for every creature. Tutors and school teachers, doctors and nurses, domestic and office workers, gardeners and mechanics: their duties were varied but their commission one. Many of the students themselves remained on as part of this praying and working company. There are times in God's dealings with His servants when He sets apart for Himself not just individuals but companies – baptized, as it were, by one Spirit into one body for one God-appointed purpose – and this was now one of them.

What can be added? I just whisper, even so come Holy Spirit – do Thy work in and through us. Then clasp my hand over my mouth.

10. THE WORD OF GOD

In this chapter we grapple to comprehend a glory that is far beyond us, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts higher than ours. Beseech Him to remove the veil and reveal the majesty of His thoughts. Join Moses in asking *Please show me your glory*.¹²⁸ For His Word is

*...is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It...is like fire...like a hammer which shatters a rock. It goes forth from His mouth and does not return to Him void. It accomplishes what He pleases; and prospers in the thing for which He sent it. It is the sword of the Spirit, a fierce weapon of warfare. With it He smites the nations ...I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called **The Word of God**. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which*

128 Exodus 33:18

proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. ¹²⁹

With His Word He smites even His own people when persistently disobedient: *O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, and like the early dew it goes away. Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth.* ¹³⁰ And again, *These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: ...I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.* ¹³¹

His Word is also the source of infinite good, ¹³²

The Holy Scriptures, are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Thy word...Thy word I have hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee. Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Section 1. The Word of God is Alive

¹²⁹ Hebrews 4:12; Jeremiah 23:29; Isaiah 55:11; Ephesians 6:17-18; Revelation 19:11-21

¹³⁰ Hosea 6:4-5

¹³¹ Revelation 2:12-16

¹³² 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:9,11; 119:97-104; Joshua 1:7-9

God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways His ways...for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts.¹³³ In man's finest moment he could not discern or guess the remarkable truth: **the Word of God is alive!**

*It...is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*¹³⁴

God spoke and His Word lives. It does not return to Him void; accomplishes His bidding is a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path; counsels us on all matters; tells us how to overcome the flesh, the world and the devil that we may obey Jesus and therefore please God. It is the plumb line against which the hearts of men are measured. It defines the Armor of God; controls the universe; governs spiritual warfare; is the mighty Sword of the Spirit.¹³⁵

Believers around the world love, study, preach, teach, obey, and honor the Word of God. It is a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. Meditation in it is not a religious or academic exercise: it is life and hope and joy. Its power uplifts as we ponder its glory. We feel its power and sense the Spirit's presence as He quickens it to us. God releases power through His Word to do what He says. Our way is protected, blessed and prospered to the degree that we apply ourselves to prayerful study of and obedience to Scripture.

Its Definition

The Word is so encompassing that its meaning cannot be encapsulated by one word in Hebrew, Greek or English. At least 23 Hebrew and Greek (and more than 100 English) words are used to attempt to express it; yet still we grope to understand. W. E. Vine provides a wonderful summary.¹³⁶

Two Greek expressions define *Word*. The first is *logos*, the second, *rhema*. These are used almost interchangeably, but there are subtle differences. *logos* has two functions: 1) to express the thoughts of God, and 2) to refer to *The Personal Word*, Jesus Christ. In connection with expressing the thoughts of God, it refers to the revealed will of God, or is a direct revelation of Christ; in these respects it is the message from God, delivered with His authority and made effective by His power. Also, *logos* sometimes refers to the entirety of God's utterances.

¹³³ Isaiah 55:8-9, 11

¹³⁴ Hebrews 4:12

¹³⁵ Amos 7:7-9; John 12:44-50; Isaiah 55:8-12; Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 6:10-20

¹³⁶ Vine, *logos*, Strong # 3056, 683.

Referring to Jesus, *The Personal Word*, we see His distinct, superfinite Personality, His relationship in the Godhead in intimate communion, and His deity. He was the *shekinah* glory in open manifestation. “Why was He called the *Word*?” Jesus was actually declaring (manifesting, the declarative function) *God* by personally manifesting His deity. *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*¹³⁷ Likewise, of this manifestation, Paul could say *...in Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*¹³⁸, and Jesus could tell Phillip, *Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, Show us the Father?*¹³⁹

The second Greek word, *rhema*, means “that which is spoken.” The significance of *rhema* (as distinct from *logos*) is exemplified in the injunction to *take the sword of the Spirit, the Word (rhema) of God*, which refers not to the whole Bible, but to individual scripture the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture.

The Sword of the Spirit

Consider *rhema* as the Sword of the Spirit in the following examples.

1. Temptation – We struggle against our flesh. While yielding to different temptations, from time to time, each of us fall into sin. This is aggravating and humiliating; and the more, the longer we walk with the Lord. We tend to despise ourselves for falling again, until we finally learn that it is the way of the flesh. We must face the fact that we all fail. Being angry or feeling sorry for ourselves changes nothing. The failure separates us from peace. We can wallow in impurity (which our flesh loves) until we are of no value, or we can use the Sword of the Spirit and end the problem. We choose.

How? It must begin with knowledge. We need to know the one thing we can do about our sin: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*¹⁴⁰ He does not chide; He simply requires us to confess the sin to Him. When we do, on the authority of His Word, the power of the Sword does the rest. It is a lightning bolt from God that strikes for our aid. We are restored to Him and cleansed from all unrighteousness. The mighty

¹³⁷ John 1:18

¹³⁸ Colossians 2:9

¹³⁹ John 14:8-9

¹⁴⁰ 1 John 1:9

Sword of the Spirit is powerful. It overthrows the flesh and the devil. Vine said to use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, which the Spirit brings in the time of need. Let us do so for the rest of our days.

2. Faith – *Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*¹⁴¹ How do we have faith that we may please God? ...*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.* But not just *rhema*, but also *logos*, for the more we know of God and His Word and His many acts and signs and wonders, the more our faith is built up. Faith grows as we walk with Him, experience His love, safekeeping, reality, power, and ministry. We trust Him all the more as we see Him tenderly involved in the lives and deaths of our brethren.¹⁴²

3. Prayer – The Bible tells us what and how to pray. When we pray as instructed we know – we know that we know – that we have our petition ...*this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*¹⁴³ We do not hope or guess. We pray in faith because...*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*¹⁴⁴ Because the Word tells us what to pray we have faith for what we ask, and if we ask in faith we have our petition...*whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*¹⁴⁵

*Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*¹⁴⁶ When we pray this prayer, we can pray in absolute faith because we know we ask according to His will, so we know He hears us, and if we know He hears us, we know we have our petition. He will send His laborers into His harvest. When He does they will be empowered in the same wonderful way as always. If we integrate

141 Hebrews 11:6

142 See the many examples in the Works of John Wesley, Volumes 1 and 2, Baker Books, Grand Rapids

143 1 John 5:14-15

144 Romans 10:17

145 Mark 11:24

146 Matthew 9:35-38

knowledge, prayer, and the Spirit, we unleash His Sword to accomplish God's purposes for His glory.

4. Armor – Walking in the Spirit in knowledge and obedience is powerful. It prepares us for Ephesians 6 ...*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...*¹⁴⁷ We transition from victim to victor as we put on¹⁴⁸ the armor of God against mighty spiritual foes.

5. Tongues – We have victory when we understand and proclaim the Word! *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.*¹⁴⁹ This verse is as powerful as *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life...If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*¹⁵⁰ He who speaks in a tongue builds himself up in the Spirit is better able to love and support the church. Trust God's Word. Pray in the Spirit in the midst of scoffers. It edifies; nothing can stop it.

The Word Must Not be Disobeyed

God hates disobedience. Samuel rebuked Saul, *Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.*¹⁵¹ The requirement preceded Saul, for Adam and Eve's transgression was the sin of disobedience.¹⁵² The

¹⁴⁷ Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁴⁸ As we put on "once for all" in the Greek

¹⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:4

¹⁵⁰ John 3:16; 1 John 1:9

¹⁵¹ 1 Samuel 15:22-23

¹⁵² Genesis 3:11

Lord called to Moses, saying, *‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, **if** you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, **then** you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”’.*¹⁵³ **If** you obey you shall be blessed; else, not. Israel quickly tested the Lord. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. And Moses said to Aaron, *“This is what the Lord spoke, saying: ‘by those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified’”*.¹⁵⁴ They disobeyed, had religion their way, and paid for their insolence with their lives.

God has not changed. Obedience is mandatory. Jesus said, *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, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who work iniquity!’*¹⁵⁵ Iniquity, means lawlessness, without the law, the rejection of the will of God and substitution of the will of self.¹⁵⁶ Iniquity is the antonym of obedience. The interjection of self-will is rebellion. God severely judges rebellion.

In Obedience is Great Blessing

None should be complacent. Those who have and keep Jesus’ commandments are those who love Him. Liars say they know Him but do not keep His commandments. Jesus was clear: it is impossible to please Him without obedience; without obedience, it is impossible to abide in Him; without abiding in Him, it is impossible to bear fruit; without bearing fruit, branches will be cut off and cast into the fire. Obedience is first and foremost. Without it, there is but one terrifying alternative.¹⁵⁷

153 Exodus 19:3-6

154 Leviticus 10:1-3

155 Matthew 7:21-23

156 Vine. 357

157 Synopsis of a medley of verses from John 14, John 15 and 1 John 2 and 1 John 5

Section 2. The Commandments of Christ

If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments...If you love Me, you will keep My commandments...If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love...And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments; the one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.¹⁵⁸

But what are His commandments?

This study answers the question by selecting passages that contain *words* or *commands* spoken by the Lord and seeks to uncover His meaning of each. Fourteen passages are used. All candidates such as *words*, *laws*, *commands*, *sayings*, *instructions*, *writings*, etc., are studied. The passages are copied herein and the words identified.

The result of examining the passages is a list of 23 words that encapsulate instructions, commands, information, etc., from God to man. These are identified and listed at the end of the chapter. For each of these 23 words, the Hebrew (or Greek) expression is shown as well as a brief definition, and the various ways the words are translated into English, with the highest usage's of that English translation also being shown.

The analysis reflects a clear pattern: **the words interrelate and encompass Old and New Testaments**, making one Book of the two. That Book is the Bible. It is doubly clear because Jesus and the Apostles refer to¹⁵⁹ and build the NT from the Old.

The conclusion is that Jesus' commands **include the entire Bible!** To keep His commands we need to obey all Scripture, rightly divided. This makes perfect sense for God is One God, and His Word is one Word.

Fourteen Selected Passages

1. You shall therefore impress these words ¹ [dabar]⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when

¹⁵⁸ Matthew 19:17; John 14:15; 15:10; 1 John 2:3-5

¹⁵⁹ This truth is established thoroughly in *limpy*, 130-38.

¹⁶⁰ Quick Verse, NAS Concordance.

you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth. For if you are careful to keep all this commandment ² [mitsvah] which I am commanding you, to do it, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him; then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. Every place on which the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours; your border shall be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea. There shall no man be able to stand before you; the Lord your God shall lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you. See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments ² of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known. Deuteronomy 11:18-28

2. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law ³ [torah] which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book ⁴ [sepher] of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written ⁵ [kathab] in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Joshua 1:5-8

3. I shall keep Thy statutes; ⁶ [choq] Do not forsake me utterly! How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. ¹ With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments. ² Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; Teach me Thy statutes. With my lips I have told of All the ordinances ⁷ [mishpat] of Thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, ⁸ [eduth] As much as in all riches. I will meditate on Thy precepts, ⁹ [piqqud] and regard Thy ways. ¹⁰ [orach] I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word. Deal bountifully with Thy servant, That I may live and keep Thy word. Psalm 119:8-17

4. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred ¹¹ [hieros] writings ¹² [gramma] which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture ¹³ [graphay] is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

5. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written,¹⁴ [graphw] Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word¹⁵ [rayma] that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, He will give His angels charge concerning You; and on their hands they will bear you up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, you shall not put the Lord God to the test. Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only. Matthew 4:1-10

6. In the beginning was the Word, ¹⁶ [logos] and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John 1:1-5

7. But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. ¹⁷ [didasko] The Jews therefore were marveling, saying, how has this man become learned, having never been educated? Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching ¹⁸ [didachay] is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak ¹⁹ [laleo] from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Did not

Moses give you the Law,²⁰ [nomos] and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" The multitude answered, You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You? John 7:14-20

8. Jesus therefore said, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak¹⁹ these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him. As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, If you abide in My word,¹⁶ then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:28-32

9. Jesus answered them, Has it not been written¹⁴ in your Law,²⁰ I said, you are gods? If he called them gods, to whom the word¹⁶ of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God? John 10:34-36

10. And Jesus cried out and said, He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings,¹⁵ and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings,¹⁵ has one who judges him; the word¹⁶ I spoke¹⁹ is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak¹⁹ on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment²¹ [entolay] what to say,²² [lego] and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me. John 12:44-50

11. When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, Where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment²¹ I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:31-35

12. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.²¹ And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you

forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments,²¹ and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world? Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;¹⁶ and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words;¹⁶ and the word;¹⁶ which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, ²³ [entello] even so I do. Arise, let us go from here. John 14:15-31

13. I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word ¹⁶ which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words ¹⁶ abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments,²¹ you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments,²¹ and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you,

and that your joy may be made full. This is My commandment,²¹ that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command²³ [entello] you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you. This I command²³ you, that you love one another. John 15

14. And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.²¹ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. 1 John 2:3-8

Applicable Hebrew and Greek Words

1. dabar, speech, command, commandment, saying, talk, word/s (458)/(375).
2. mitsvah, command, commandment (34), commandments (118), commands.
3. torah, direction, instruction, custom, law (188), laws, ruling, teaching.
4. sepher, a missive, document, writing, book (77), Book (47), books.
5. kathab, decree, describe, record, write (31), written (126), wrote (27).
6. choq, conditions, custom, decree, portion, statute (9), statutes (75).
7. mishpat, judge, judgment/s (62)/(40), justice(118), ordinance/s (29)/(79).
8. eduth, admonitions, ordinance, testimonies (13), testimony (43)
9. piqqud, precepts (24).

10. orach, highway, path (13), paths (19), way (15).
11. hieros, sacred thing, sacred, sacred services, temple (71).
12. gramma, that which is written, letter (5), letters (3), writings (2).
13. graphay, a writing, Scripture (31), Scriptures (20).
14. grapho, read, write (37), writing (14), written (117), wrote (20).
15. rayma, discourse, message, saying, statement, word (18), words (22).
16. logos, message, saying, statement (18), word/s (174)/(61), Word (6).
17. didasko, instruct, taught, teach (33), teaches, teaching (43)
18. didachay, doctrine, instruction, teaching (27), teachings.
19. laleo, say, speak/s (98)/(25), speaking (55), spoke (44), spoken (37), tell.
20. nomos, that which is assigned, law (61), Law (131).
21. entolay, injunction, command, commandment/s (38)/(23), instructions.
22. lego, said (1083), say (376), says (94), saying (497), tell (69), told (34).
23. entello, to enjoin, command (4), commanded (6), commandment.

11. HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Chapter 7 focuses on the elders' mission of protection and guidance of Jesus' sheep. Chapter 11 shows how elders are to study and teach His Word. First is an overview of the principles involved in study; second, the application of the principles in holy living.

Overview of Bible Study Principles

The Lord provided the biblical pattern for teaching Scripture on the road to Emmaus.¹⁶¹ He said, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded¹⁶² (diर्मēneuō, (dia, thorough, intensive, hermeneuo, to interpret); English, hermeneutics) to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.* Note what the Lord did, and did not do.

He used all Scripture concerning Himself to expound (*intensively interpret*) each verse. What He did not do was to use anything outside of Scripture to explain God's Word. Nor should we, though some urge us to use history, geography, political or cultural events to interpret what the Lord means when He says what He means. Grave risk is resides in their advice. Let us follow Jesus' principles for our study.

Five Maxims to Guide Bible Study

1. Be willing to obey the verse when it is understood. This is the prime mandate, for without it error will occur. Jesus said, *My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority ...If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...*¹⁶³ In Acts 10 regarding Cornelius and the Gentiles (whom the Jews thought unclean) the Lord taught Peter truth regarding their prophesied salvation. In a vision He told Peter to *Rise, Peter; kill and eat*. But Peter, because of his lifelong Jewish tradition¹⁶⁴ said he could not, for he had never eaten anything unclean. While, in the vision the

¹⁶¹ Luke 24:13-35

¹⁶² Vine, diर्मēneuō, G1329, 219.

¹⁶³ John 7:17; 8:31-32

¹⁶⁴ Keep in mind: 1) the fullness of time had come. The Lord was fulfilling OT prophecy; 2) He was giving His apostles a full understanding of Scripture, rightly divided; and 3) the apostles walked with Jesus Himself, and were full of and walked in the Holy Spirit, who was speaking to and teaching them the Word of God.

Lord used unclean animals, what He wanted Peter to know was that the time had come for salvation of the Gentiles. Peter obeyed, went to Cornelius, and the Lord poured out salvation and the Spirit on the Gentiles. The Lord fulfilled Scripture before Peter's eyes and he understood fully. But first he had to be open to the Lord and willing to change as he received more clarity.

2. Carefully read the verse for what it says (using its words as defined in a dictionary). Remember, Scripture says what it means and means what it says. Look for the literal interpretation of the words. If you understand them in the verse, you know what the Lord is saying. You do not need a *mysterious opinion* from one whose motives you do not know, who might tell you why the simple words do not mean what they simply say, in spite of the fact that **it is exactly what they mean**.

3. Understand the meaning in context (verse/chapter/book). Consider, the Sermon on the Mount. *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying...*¹⁶⁵ Let us make sure we understand what the verse is saying. Who did Jesus teach? the multitudes? His disciples? Both?

The question cannot be answered with the information we have at this point in the verse. You could guess either of the three answers, but you could not know for certain that you were right. The correct response would be, "Given the text so far, I do not know." We do not study the Word to guess at its meaning. We either understand what is written or we need more information. For that, we look at the context of the passage. Remember, this example is from the Sermon on the Mount, entailing chapters 5 through 7. Therefore, we examine the entire sermon. We find the answer in the last two verses. *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority...* He taught both His disciples and the multitudes (the people astonished at His teaching). If the answer had not been found in the Sermon, we would still not guess. We would seek a broader vista, which is the next point.

4. Consider the verse in the counsel of the Word. The following steps help formulate doctrinal positions: 1) write down your hypothesis; 2) test it against all related passages (at times more than a hundred verses); 3) read each verse for its literal meaning, *according to the dictionary*; 4) study to be sure that you know how the passages

¹⁶⁵ Matthew 5:1-2

interrelate; 5) if your hypothesis agrees with all verses and disagrees with none, you can consider that you have reached (or are approaching) truth. If there are differences, wait prayerfully before the Lord until you can adjust your doctrine until it complies with all passages.

But, you must read each passage for what it says, not what you want it to say! Most errors start here. Usually the mistake is made in ignorance, but it is taught as if truth, to the hurt of both speaker and hearer(s).

5. Wait prayerfully before the Lord for His clarity. We are commanded to *Study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth...*¹⁶⁶ and reminded *...God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*¹⁶⁷ Our course is clear: we apply ourselves to diligent study of and meditation in the Word, and therein, wait before the Spirit to reveal the truth of God to us.

Outside of Scripture, there are helpful aids. These can support prayerful study of the Word, but not take its place. Often they affirm what you know to be true. Many times you enjoy pearls of insight from scholars such as W. E. Vine and Kenneth S. Wuest who have helped us so much in this book. A list of useful resources appears in the follow paragraph.

6. Reference Materials – there are numerous study tools provided by Godly scholars who spent many years studying the Word in its original languages. Available in hard copy or computer software, there are many translations of the Bible, concordances, expository dictionaries of Old and New Testament words, Greek and Hebrew lexicons, Greek word studies, Bible maps, history and customs in Bible times, and special studies like Gordon D. Fee's *God's Empowering Presence*. Fee looks at the Greek text of all references to the Holy Spirit in Paul's

¹⁶⁶ 2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁶⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:10-16

epistles. He makes it possible for those of us who do not have the Greek to understand almost as if we do. It is a beneficial tool.

Help is found in such sources, but remember: they are written by men, none of whom claim or have divine authority. Each has biases that shade their doctrines to one degree or another, some severely. Still, many provide useful aids from good intentions. But the Lord did not tell us to meditate in the works of men. He said

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success...How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You...*¹⁶⁸

Application of Bible Study Principles

Here we look at what to do and not do. With a bit of overlap, we use spiritual gifts for the teaching. We do this partly to reinforce our knowledge and partly as a platform to refute false doctrines. First Corinthians 12 describes manifestations of the Spirit, tells who gives and receives them, and why. The gifts originate with the Lord, not Paul, not the Corinthians. The Spirit gives them because they unify the Body and provide access to the spirit realm, without which we are blind. Paul says a time will come when we no longer need the gifts, but until then, we do. We are to desire and use them for the good of the church and ourselves.

Paul stresses the paramount importance of love.¹⁶⁹ We are to pursue it above all things. This makes our study of the Holy Spirit even more exciting because agape love is the fruit of the Spirit, not of our natural powers. Love heightens the importance of walking in the Spirit. Paul said we must have gifts of the Spirit, governed by love, until we see Jesus face-to-face.

Chapter 14 clarifies the use of gifts. Paul teaches that, while it is vital to build oneself up in the Spirit (wishing everyone spoke in tongues; celebrating that he spoke in tongues more than the Corinthians; saying he gladly prays and sings in tongues) it is even more important to edify the church. Thus he teaches the order of and use of gifts. It is clear: Paul expects the gifts to continue until the Lord returns for His own.

¹⁶⁸ Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:9, 11, 97-105

¹⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

With that overview and our five maxims in mind, let us look at how to study Scripture.¹⁷⁰

What to Do

...desire spiritual gifts.¹⁷¹(We are commanded, twice, to do this.¹⁷² I understand these words, don't you? We are to earnestly seek the gifts: do not stop until you have them. Then be sure that you stay in the Spirit and *at the ready* to share your gifts when needed by the Body. This is clearly what this passage says, and, therefore, what we are to do. It is not complicated.)

he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...in the spirit he speaks mysteries. (We speak mysteries to God that only He understands. We are given the right to speak to Him in a glorious way He provides. That is as clear as it can be. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise.)

...He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...(By speaking in tongues we edify ourselves. In obeying, we can be full of the Spirit, walk in Him, overcome the flesh, please God and have spiritual fruit in our lives with which to minister to others. This is **the way to build oneself up in the Spirit**. That is what it says. We need to understand and obey. That is why we study the Bible.)

I wish you all spoke with tongues (Paul wished **all** believers spoke in tongues. That includes us. If any do not, why not? Let us get on with God's program.)

Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. (Praying in tongues is praying in the spirit. Tongues are not gibberish as some teach. When spoken to men, they should be interpreted by the gift of the Spirit. When spoken to God, He interprets for Himself; He needs no interpreter.)

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the Spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. (To Paul, praying/singing in tongues is the same as praying/singing in the spirit. He said: I will sing and pray with

170 Using texts from 1 Corinthians 14

171 QuickVerse, 1 Corinthians 14:1, G2206

172 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1

understanding, and I will sing and pray with tongues; since this is true for Paul, it should also be true for us.)

Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? (He said it again: praying in the spirit is praying in tongues. The uninformed cannot say *Amen* at your giving of thanks unless interpreted. That is what this verse says; not something else.)

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all... (Paul thanked God that he spoke in tongues more than all: why? He knew how crucial speaking (and singing) in tongues was to a robust spiritual life; a life he, himself, lived; a life he longed to see in the Church.)

*Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.*¹⁷³ (Paul’s final comment: *do not forbid to speak with tongues*. That says it all!)

Is that not gloriously straightforward and easy to understand? We should desire earnestly to obey. Let not men with private agendas confuse these simple instructions. We must obey the Word as the Spirit makes it clear to us.

What to Avoid Doing

Alleged teachers go to extremes to deny these straightforward verses. Their error may root in an unwillingness to change personal doctrines to more closely obey the Word. Rather, they try to bend Scripture for their own purposes. False teachers have always existed. Paul warned the Galatians about those preaching a gospel different from the one they received,

*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (anathema, given over to divine condemnation¹⁷⁴) As we said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ 1 Corinthians 14:1-35, 39 sel.

¹⁷⁴ *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, Editor Spiros Zodhiates, G331, *anathema*, p. 1688

¹⁷⁵ Galatians 1:6-9

Their fate is terrifying; yet they persist nonetheless. Consider this most infamous example,

On the next day...the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.¹⁷⁶

Can you imagine? In their hatred, they bribed guards to lie rather than bow before the God they alleged to love and serve. Their reputation was more important than

¹⁷⁶ Matthew 27:62-28:15

admitting – **even though Jesus came back from the grave** – that He was God. If such men (significant religious leaders, who were, they thought, dedicated to the practice of *obeying Scripture* to the smallest punctuation mark) can be driven by their own agendas, so can any man. We must beware; we must consistently follow true guidelines as we study God’s Word.

The Lord gave us everything we need to become children of God, but it is our responsibility to be, and stay, filled.¹⁷⁷ A critical component is to speak in tongues. According to Paul, the more the better, which is what he did. Even so, *false teachers* deny this clear teaching.¹⁷⁸ Do not be swayed by them no matter how loud their voices, how long they talk, or how many books they write. We must study, understand, and obey the Word no matter what others say or do.

Chapter 12, Amalgamation of Evil, Situation 2, The Voice of the Enemy, exposes some of the error of these false teachers.

¹⁷⁷ That this is recognized by significant Christian leaders is shown in Chapter 12

¹⁷⁸ Their folly is demonstrated in Chapter 12, Situation 2, The Voice of the Enemy

PART III. THE FOLLY OF THE FLESH

God's empowerments enable triumph unto eternal life. We have victory over the devil in the Holy Spirit, empowered by His gifts and fruit and protected by the armor of God.

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*¹⁷⁹

Yet the flesh and devil undermine truth and foster confusion in the church. Here in chapter 12, four situations highlight their treachery.

12. AMALGAMATION OF EVIL

Situation 1. Lamentations

A doctrine with some biblical support asserts that all believers are baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. And thus sealed with the Spirit. The sequence is: *if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*¹⁸⁰ And not only saved, but also *after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory...*¹⁸¹ for Jesus is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.¹⁸² *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ 1 John 4:4; Ephesians 6:10-13; James 4:11; 1 Peter 5:8-9

¹⁸⁰ Romans 10:9-10

¹⁸¹ Ephesians 1:13-14

¹⁸² John 1:29-34

¹⁸³ 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

If this is precisely so¹⁸⁴ it is a glorious beginning! No wonder the *first love* for Jesus is so real. It is in the very Spirit of God that the first love is experienced. But, not only are we baptized with the Spirit; we must stay *filled*...¹⁸⁵ What could be better? To be filled with the Spirit is to be led by and walk in the Spirit, partake of the power of the ages to come, overcome the flesh, bear much fruit, please God and earn the wondrous reward promised to overcomers.

However, for most believers this glorious life is just not the case. Christian leaders (on both sides of the *Pentecostal* debate) bemoan that few churches or individuals are filled with the joy and power of the Spirit. Kenneth S. Wuest, author and (for years) professor of New Testament Greek at Moody Bible Institute, lamented,

The position of these Galatian Christians is the position of those children of God [today] who are not conversant with the teaching regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit. They are like those converts of John the Baptist who, when confronted with Paul's question "Did you receive the Spirit when you believed?" answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit."

This [dearth] is the explanation for the fact that there is so little of the beauty of the Lord Jesus in the lives of so many earnest Christians. These are doing their best to live a good Christian life, but their own strength is not equal to the task. The Holy Spirit does all He can for them. Their lives are certainly better from what they were before they were saved. There has been a right-about-face. There is a certain amount of victory over sin. They enjoy the things of God. But as for their lives radiating the Lord Jesus, there is very little of that...

The Galatians fell from that state of dependence upon the Holy Spirit. But most Christians have never even been in that state, and therefore have not fallen from it, but because of their ignorance of this teaching, are not the recipients of His work. It would have been well if the one who introduced them to the Savior had then introduced them as well to the Holy Spirit. But alas, too often the soul winner himself is not in possession of the teaching of, and experience in, the ministry of the Spirit to the saint.¹⁸⁶

184 Several verses are excluded by this doctrine. The omitted passages have heightened Spirit manifestations, and leave no speculation at all as to whether a person was baptized with the Spirit or not. Whichever position is more correct, it remains as our responsibility to be, and stay, filled with the Spirit. This requires continuous initiative, whether or not the start is by speaking in tongues and the rest of the gifts of the Spirit.

185 Ephesians 5:18-19

186 Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Volume III, Untranslatable Riches*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 77-8.

How dreadful the emptiness of lives outside the fullness of the Spirit; how powerful the weight of the testimony of a teacher such as Wuest.

John R. W. Stott, beloved Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church, London, an Anglican clergyman and noted leader of the worldwide evangelical movement, listed as one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine in 2005,¹⁸⁷ had this to say,

The best way to begin is to stress the importance of our subject by confessing our great need of the power of the Holy Spirit today. We are ashamed of the general worldliness of the Church and disturbed by its weakness, its steadily diminishing influence on the country as a whole. Moreover, many of us are oppressed by our own personal failures in Christian life and Christian ministry. We are conscious that we fall short of the experience of the early Church of the plain promises of God in His Word. We are thankful indeed for what God has done and is doing and we do not want to denigrate His grace by minimizing it. But we hunger and thirst for more. We long for “revival,” an altogether supernatural visitation of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and meanwhile for a deeper, richer, fuller experience of the Holy Spirit in our own lives.¹⁸⁸

Even while these men lament the impoverishment, the church fails. For many years we have needed the Spirit to fill a void in believers hearts. Yet many church *leaders* deny the Word and reject Scripture’s revelation of how to be filled with the Spirit. In so doing they deny the Spirit’s ministry and fulfill Paul’s prophesy,

having a form of godliness, but denying its power.¹⁸⁹

The severity of their error cannot be overemphasized! They see the need for the Spirit but rebel at God’s provision. Why? They do not/will not speak in tongues; neither do they earnestly seek spiritual gifts! They reject this clear Bible doctrine, not only personally but also for those they teach. These men are gravely accountable for such rebellious folly.

Their judgment will be sorrow upon sorrow!

Situation 2. The Voice of the Enemy

¹⁸⁷ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, John R. W. Stott.

¹⁸⁸ John R.W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* (Great Brittan: IVCF, 1964) 3.

¹⁸⁹ 2 Timothy 3:5

To expose the *voice of the enemy* we will, again, use a hypothetical dialogue. You have already met the first speaker, W. The second, D, is new. In reality, D is a composite of false teachings; but as you will see, their error is a voice for the enemy. The name, D, which could represent *devil*, actually stands for *deceived*. You will see why as the discourse progresses, for D treasures his biases more than truth. In his determination to be seen as a great Bible teacher, he violates his own maxims for study of the Word. You will see where he strays, and may even pity him, ensnared in sin as he is, charging headlong toward damnation, risking his very soul in his far-reaching, blasphemous teaching. But pity him you must not. Remember, such men as D lead many to destruction in fulfillment of prophetic word *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*.¹⁹⁰ Instead of pity, we must trust Paul as he pronounced a terrible curse on those who tried to impose on the Galatians a gospel other than the one they had received,

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (anathema, given over to divine condemnation¹⁹¹) ¹⁹²

Deceiving God's children regarding His Word is incredibly serious. We saw the infamous example of chief priests and Pharisees bribing guards to lie about the resurrection. If such men can be blinded, so can any, including the *hypothetical composite* we call D. We must be careful; we must follow true guidelines all the time. Religion is not a game.

Listen to two who say they are teachers of the Word.

A Dialogue

W. D, we've been asked to discuss ***the power to become children of God*** that the Lord Jesus gives to those who believe in Him.

D. Well, let's get to it. The key verse would be...*as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name...*¹⁹³ (then he said as an aside) Because you are a Pentecostal, I might as well get this on the table right now: the power Jesus gives at conversion includes sealing all believers with the Holy Spirit of promise ...*if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus*

¹⁹⁰ Hosea 4:6

¹⁹¹ Zodhiates, accursed, 1688

¹⁹² Galatians 1:6-9

¹⁹³ John 1:12

*and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved...anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him...*¹⁹⁴ Let me be clear: this says you are saved if you believe. And if you are saved, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit; ergo, all believers have the Holy Spirit. Do you agree?

W. That interpretation at least derives from Scripture, but I doubt that you can prove it conclusively. Consider,

*...when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, men and women were baptized...Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*¹⁹⁵

That passage conflicts with what you say, for they did not receive the Holy Spirit when they first believed. Neither did about 12 disciples in Acts 19.

*And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all.*¹⁹⁶

When Paul found them, they were already believers, but due to incomplete knowledge, had not been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and had not received the Spirit. Thus they were baptized in Jesus name. But wait! Even after being baptized they still did not have the Holy Spirit. It was only when Paul laid his hands on the 12 that the Spirit

¹⁹⁴ Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:9; 10:9

¹⁹⁵ Acts 8:12, 14-17

¹⁹⁶ Acts 19:1-7

came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There was no doubt after that! Everyone knew they had the Spirit because they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Neither were their questions about the Jews at Pentecost nor the Gentiles at Cornelius' house.

D. (D interjected) W, you know every one of those examples can be explained away. (And though he did not realize the sad truth about what he said, that was exactly his problem. Anything in the Word that did not fit his doctrine, he contrived a way to ***explain it away.***)

W. (W continued) All I am saying is that your position does not account for any of these other passages, and you should that it is a very dangerous path to build your doctrine on a few verses and ignore any that do not seem to support your conclusion.

But I do not wish to quibble about this, for to me there is some uncertainty about the degree of initial empowerment that occurs when one believes. However, there are many subsequent exhortations to press into, and abide in, the full manifestations of the Spirit.

Rather than argue, I want to make two points about what you said: 1) the verse says Jesus gave them power to become; but He did not transform them: they still had work to do to become children of God, and they had to use the power they, themselves, were given to do so; and 2) your statement that all believers have the Spirit offers no explanation as to why church life in NT days was so much more meaningful than the anemic church today. Your position ignores a number of important matters.

And D, this is not just my opinion. John Stott and Kenneth Wuest, two notable non-Pentecostal theologians of the modern era lamented the concern about the lack of power and grace in the life of the church.¹⁹⁷

D. I know of Wuest and Stott. Great men. But let's not stray from the point: today's church has everything the NT church had, except that signs and wonders are no longer needed in the proclamation of the Gospel. They disappeared with the Apostolic age, including the gifts of the Spirit, especially the controversial speaking in tongues. *Prophecy* and *love* are the only things remaining, and W, I think even you realize that today, to prophesy means, to preach, which is what I and other pastors do in the church all the time.

197 See Situation 1 in this chapter.

W. I **do not agree** that preaching is even close to the biblical meaning of the word *prophesying*. I will demonstrate the difference in a minute, but first, I notice that, while you say today's church has everything the NT church had, you made no comment at all about: the lack of love for Jesus and for the church; about sanctification; holy living; joy; peace; longsuffering; power, etc. Let me reiterate what Kenneth Wuest said,

"The absence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church is the explanation for the fact that there is so little of the beauty of the Lord Jesus in the lives of so many earnest Christians. These are doing their best to live a good Christian life, but their own strength is not equal to the task. The Spirit does all He can for them. Their lives are certainly better from what they were before they were saved. There has been a right-about-face. There is a certain amount of victory over sin. They enjoy the things of God. But as for their lives radiating the Lord Jesus, there is very little of that..." ¹⁹⁸

It cannot be said better. Wuest was gravely concerned about the lack of the Spirit in the Church. But this does not seem to bother you at all.

D. Much more is made of this *charismatic* nonsense than is necessary. You know that the demonic shaking, wiggling, and gibbering (supposedly tongues from God) that goes on in TV broadcasts is error and discredits the faith. They are an abomination and you know it.

W. About that, I agree. Those things are wrong. They are out of the flesh of man, inspired, and often controlled, by the devil. I agree with that. But you still did not comment on a lack of spiritual depth in the church.

As an aside, have you ever asked why those things occur among people, many of whom, if you talked to them would convince you that they love and want to please the Lord?

D. I suppose not. I just disdain the sham of it, know it's wrong, and expose it every time I have a chance.

W. Well, I have thought about it, and think there are two reasons it goes on. I'm going to put them in reverse order:

1) I think the exhibitions reflect the earnest, but ignorant and misguided, longing of many of those involved for more of the Lord than they could find. They know He is real and want very much to come into His presence. They need clear teaching about how to do the very thing

they long to do. They do not need rebuke. But the *teaching* they get is fraught with error;

2) these performances on TV (that is what they are) are inspired by Satan, who is a liar and the father of lies. Paul had the following to say about such workers as these, *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*¹⁹⁹

Satan attempts to discredit genuine Spirit activity because he fears its power. His lies are effective for many recoil from Holy Spirit manifestations because of him and, to use a worn cliché, *throw out the baby with the bathwater*. The devil's wiles should change nothing: God's empowerments are as important today as in the NT. We must pursue them with greater tenacity than the devil exhibits against them. Nothing can be allowed to interrupt the Spirit's gifts.

W. (W paused, but D did not respond, so he continued). I think we should move the conversation from generalities, and look directly at the Word, and therein, consider a couple of vital matters. Is this O.K.?

D. I'd like to get to specifics. Want to suggest a starting point?

W. I think we agree that Scripture says what it means and means what it says. Right?

D. I believe that.

W. So when the Bible says *be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord... and walk in the Spirit...*²⁰⁰ we agree it is a command to follow. Right?

D. Yes... (He said, hesitantly; but wondered where this might go.)

W. The next question then is obvious: How are we to be filled with the Spirit? What do you think?

¹⁹⁹ 2 Corinthians 11:12-15

²⁰⁰ Ephesians 5:18-19; Galatians 5:16-17

D. Well, as I said, believers already have the Holy Spirit, though I do admit that He seems more visible in the lives of some than others. What we need to do is love the Lord, attend church regularly, pay tithes, study the Word, be kind to others, and in general, live good lives. When these things are done, and when we pray and confess our sins as they occur, we please the Lord, and He will ensure that we stay filled with His Spirit.

W. Let me make sure I understand. The essence of what you said was: we will be filled with God's Spirit if we try to be good Christians. Is this right?

D. Yeah, that's about it. But why do I think that isn't good enough for you?

W. I was looking for what the Word, itself, says. Let me turn it around. I will answer the question and you respond. O.K.?

D. As long as I get equal time.

W. Usually the answer is found where the command is given, that is, in its context. And that is the case here: *be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord*. Not only do we have the command to be filled with the Spirit, but we are told how to be filled: that is, by singing and making melody in our hearts. We are to use psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit.

Being filled is not about the works of man, no matter how well intended, for *all our righteousness is as filthy rags*.²⁰¹ The Spirit's fruit is manifested through us as we are filled with His presence. The starting point is with Jesus. He baptizes with the Spirit; this we cannot do ourselves. But He has given us all we need to be filled. We are to obey the Word and exercise our faith, singing songs and hymns with the understanding and in tongues, exactly as the Word says in the epistles to Ephesus, Corinth and Colosse.

D. (D interrupted loudly) **What? You cannot mean you think spiritual songs means singing in tongues! I've never heard such a thing! Tongues died out with the Apostles! Everybody knows that.**

201 Isaiah 64:6

W. Paul said *Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.*²⁰² The expression *spiritual songs* is identical in Ephesians, 1 Corinthians and Colossians. It means to sing in the Spirit, which Paul says is singing in tongues. His teaching is easy to understand and clearly supported by excellent Greek scholarship.²⁰³

D. (D was agitated.) This is nonsense. Anybody with a modicum of sense knows tongues passed away: *whether there are tongues, they will cease...*²⁰⁴ Further, the verse *...he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries...*²⁰⁵ does not mean the Corinthians were speaking to God. Fact is, they were uttering ecstatic gibberish [nonsensical phrases] to pagan gods. They were not speaking to God at all. God doesn't need tongues, and certainly doesn't want to be talked to like that. If you studied the pagan history associated with NT times, you would understand these things, and you would not go around spreading your convoluted heresy and causing trouble in the church.

W. (W thought of Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees: *...For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.*" Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.")²⁰⁶

D. (In W's silence, D continued) Tongues have no purpose today. Even in NT days they were misused. Paul made it clear: the church is more important than the individual; yet the Corinthians spent their time

202 1 Corinthians 14:13-15

203 1 Corinthians 14:14-16; clarified by Fee, 718, footnote 189, and 653-54.

204 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. D makes this assertion outside of the context of the passage: "But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." (When that which is perfect is come, **but not before then!** He ignored the fact that, to be consistent with his own interpretation, prophecies will also fail, and knowledge will cease. But no, according to him, only tongues will cease. Why just tongues? Well, later he asserts that he does the prophesying for his church, and so, obviously it has to remain, right? Oh, and by the way: never mind that the Word says "you all" can prophesy. According to D, nobody prophesies in his church but he himself or a designee. This is very different from the Word. You will see: it sounds exactly like the Nicolaitan doctrine from which it sprang.

205 1 Corinthians 14:2

206 John 9:39-41

jabbering in tongues for their own glory, rather than edifying the church.
(He paused and looked at W...)

W. Are you finished? If not, I will wait, like we said we would...

D. You're right. Sorry. That upset me. Go ahead...

W. You make six or eight heavy assertions with almost no biblical support. Each must be tested against the Word. Is that not what we agreed?

D. Proceed.

W. Shall I address them all, then you respond, or...

D. Make your spiel. I'll follow. This is taking longer than I planned; I'd like to finish.

W. I start with the worst thing first. You said something I hope you do not mean, for it is irresponsible, treacherous, blasphemous heresy. Ignoring hundreds of years of dedicated Bible translators/teams of translators, all of whom disagree with you, you glibly say the Corinthians "...were uttering gibberish to pagan gods."

D. (D lurched forward at the table. He, who was accustomed to veneration as a great Bible teacher had never been sanctioned so sharply. He was furious but managed to clasp his hand over his mouth before interrupting again.)

W. (W stared directly at D) You went even further to say "they were not speaking to God at all; that He doesn't need tongues, and certainly doesn't want to be talked to like that."

You seem to make no attempt to understand the clearly written, obvious meaning of the verse. Look at it again. See if this is not so. ...*he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*²⁰⁷ It says that he who speaks in a tongue speaks to God – that is what the Word says. He is not uttering gibberish to pagan idols. And this translation is not the work of one mysterious translator whose motive one can only imagine. I own about 20 different Translations, ranging over several

hundred years.²⁰⁸ All of them translate the verse to say speaking in *tongues to God*. They **all** disagree with you. There is no support for what you say. It is as if you change the meaning to fit some idea of your own.

Further, you say that God does not want to be talked to in that way. Where do you get such an opinion? The Word says one speaking in tongues speaks mysteries to God. For all we know, it may be that there are times when only God can or should interpret the tongues. I don't know, but could easily see many good reasons for such privacy, including the possibility that even the devil cannot understand. How precious would that be? But whether any of this is so or not, certainly, God understands these mysteries of the Spirit. How could you possibly reach such a conclusion? Look at the Word,

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*²⁰⁹ The gift of tongues is given by the Holy Spirit. How can you dare say God doesn't want to be talked to in tongues?

Finally, you completely ignore more than 100 passages that make it clear that the words *tongue* or *tongues* always mean to *communicate*, sometimes in mysteries to God, but always to communicate. **Never once in Scripture does *tongues* mean nonsensical phrases spoken to pagan gods. Not once!** (W understood why Paul cursed the Judaizers who troubled the Galatians.)²¹⁰

D. (D slammed his Bible on the table, glared at W, and abruptly left the room muttering.)

Thus the Discourse ended. I am left to resolve the mess. You can wear yourself out responding to such folly, yet, we must be careful to not leave statements like D's

208 Including the American Standard Version; Darby's New Translation; Douay-Rheims; English Standard Version; Geneva Bible; God's Word; Holman's Christian Bible; Internal Standard Version; King James Version; Modern Speech NT; New American Bible; New American Standard Version; New International Version; New Jerusalem Bible; New King James Version; New Revised Standard Version; Reina-Valera; Revised Standard Version; Wuest NT; and Young's Literal Translation

209 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

210 Galatians 1:6-9

unanswered lest they somehow contaminate the faith of a new believer. Such men as the hypothetical D, who are reputed to be great Bible teachers, do much harm even as the Judaizers did to the Galatians. When men leave the moorings of sound exegesis to support private agendas, they become voices for the devil; and he uses them liberally.

Before I wrap up the remaining loose ends, W said something I should clarify lest anyone think his comment was distorted. He said that in over 100 appearances the words *tongue* or *tongues* **always** refer to the act of communication. What he said is accurate; what he did not say was that there are other times in Scripture when *tongue* refers to the actual physical organ, like having a parched *tongue*. But W had subtracted such uses from the count, and the rest – well over 100 passages – refer to communication, exactly like he said.

Now to the final clean up. Actually, there is not much damage control to do, for W took care of most of the error. But one thing ought to be addressed: the matter of D's assertion that his preaching is prophesying. Of course that is not true. You will be able to make that determination for yourself in light of the following information.

Again, D's error started when he unilaterally, and incorrectly, interpreted a word to fit his own opinion. He said that because the infinitive *to prophesy* roots in two Greek words, *pro*, "forth" and *phemi*, "to speak", "one who speaks forth openly" – and because that is what he himself does as a preacher, he is therefore prophesying. But that is unfounded nonsense. The fact is that lawyers, actors, politicians, weathermen, etc., also speak forth openly. And certainly they are not prophesying. What D did was to ignore the entire body of Scripture concerning prophets, prophecy and prophesy. And he ignored the fact that the Greek already has five verbs and two nouns to describe *to preach* and *preacher*.²¹¹ Why would he not use those terms since he claims to be a preacher?

Observe a quick overview of Scripture concerning the terms *prophet*, *prophecy* and *prophesy*. After you review these passages you will see that D is heretical in this position also.

Let us look at two of the many examples describing prophets. The first is between the Lord and Jeremiah; the second, Hosea.²¹²

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." But the Lord said to me: "Do not say, 'I

²¹¹ Vine, 481-482

²¹² Jeremiah 1: 4-10; Hosea 6:4-7

am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,” says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant...”

O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, and like the early dew it goes away. Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth; and your judgments are like light that goes forth. For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But like men they transgressed the covenant; There they dealt treacherously with Me.

No one with spiritual discernment would declare himself **prophet**. It is a solemn business. God assigns whom He will and puts His words in their mouth, words with the power of life and death. The message is as different from a *studied-up sermon* as the sun is different from and more glorious than the moon. We dare not presume to take such office. The Lord warns,

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, ‘Hear the word of the Lord!’” Thus says the Lord GOD: “Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord. They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord!’ But the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, ‘The Lord says,’ but I have not spoken.” Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you,” says the Lord GOD. “My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord GOD.”²¹³

Consider the matter of prophecy. Look at just three examples of many.²¹⁴ You will see how different they are from a message a pastor *studies for and presents* on Sunday morning.

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

Are these not very, very different. They are alive and powerful; they reflect knowledge that cannot be known by natural means. The Spirit reveals them as God directs. They are not studied up... They are inspired by the Spirit of God.

²¹⁴ Luke 1:37-45, 67-79; 1 Corinthians 14:24-25

We close this matter with input from a trusted Greek scholar,²¹⁵

G4394 prophēteia, **prophecy**, the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. Prophecy is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means. It is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future... Its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man's heart are known to God, to convict of sin, and to constrain to worship. The difference between the prophet and the teacher is that, whereas the message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the occasion, the message of the teacher is gathered [by study] from the completed revelation contained in the Scriptures.

G4395 prophēteuō, to *foretell* events, *speak* under *inspiration*, *exercise* the prophetic *office*:—**prophecy**. To be a prophet or to prophesy, is used with the primary meaning of telling forth the divine counsels or of foretelling the future.

G4396 prophētēs, a *foreteller*, **prophet**; proclaimer of a divine message. The prophet was one who had immediate intercourse with God. It also means one from whom the message of God springs forth; or, one to whom anything is secretly communicated. Hence, in general, the prophet was one in whom the Spirit of God rested: one to whom, and through whom, the Spirit of God speaks.

Clearly, we must not attempt, as did D, to establish doctrine based on the contrived meaning of a Greek word. Neither dare we teach others based on such little information. Knowledge of Greek is helpful, but the context of the passage and its relationship in the overall counsel of the Word are far more important. D's error should caution us to carefully study and meditation in Scripture. To that end, *How to Study the Bible* (our chapter 11), should be most helpful.

Situation 3. The Rooster Effect

The Lord founded the ministry to the Jews with 12 Apostles, who subsequently added elders to their company. Paul appointed plural elders for each Gentile church. Paul, Peter, and James looked to elders to shepherd the local congregation. The epistle to the Philippians was written to the church and its elders and deacons. Plural oversight is clear throughout the New Testament.²¹⁶ So, where did the rule-of-one come from? Do you think God decided His way was inadequate and authorized men to change His plan? Of course not!

The rule-of-one is unbiblical. It has to be from the flesh of man, or the devil, or both. The Apostle John identified one such early perpetrator...*I wrote to the church, but*

²¹⁵ Vine, 492-93

²¹⁶ Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1-2; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-5

*Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.*²¹⁷ Imagine the arrogance of not receiving the Apostle John. In the Revelation Jesus denounced such usurpers and called them *Nicolaitans*. The word, Nicolaitans, derives from *nikao* (to conquer, vanquish, overcome) and *laos* (the people).²¹⁸ Yet, in spite of His somber warning, the heinous Nicolaitans emerged. Their usurpation was described in detail by J. A. Seiss, is described in the following paragraphs.

“Seiss described the emergence of that non-biblical ecclesiastical system and clergy and traced its development from the earliest historical writers all the way to modern times. The Nicolaitan system supplanted God’s church and usurped authority from the *priesthood of believers*. In effect, it made spiritually lame men (laymen) out of true believers, who, across time, lost the knowledge of how, and even the right, to minister to God. And, like Esau (the older brother of Jacob, who traded his birthright for a bowl of soup), they too forfeited glorious privileges.

Instead of exercising the highest honor given to men – the right to personally worship the Living God – like whipped dogs they submitted to the domination of ungodly Nicolaitans seeking preeminence. This usurping ministration was odious beyond description, for it hindered believing families from ministering to the Lord in song and praise and prayer; it discouraged men from offering prayer and praise as priests of their homes, from leading their families in the same; and from teaching them to live Godly lives. It stole from husband and wife the glory of offering songs in the night to the Heavenly Bridegroom; and it deprived believers of the right to meditate in the Word of God day and night, learning those things that pleased Him Who bought them at such terrible price. It was an abomination beyond description. It was, it is, absolutely, wickedly, unacceptably intolerable.

The usurpation was so sweeping that from the conversion of Constantine (AD 316) until the reformation of the 1500s, believers were disinherited even from access to the Scriptures. They were taught, and still are today in many places, that clergy alone can interpret the Bible; that they are to go to a building to be ministered to by a non-biblical order; that they were not authorized or empowered to seek God on their own. They weren’t taught or encouraged to privately worship in song and praise and study of the Word. In fact, the idea was eradicated, as was God’s plan for meeting in the homes of believers – for it was not

²¹⁷ 3 John 9; Revelation 2:6, 15

²¹⁸ Dyal, 40

possible to maintain control and preeminence in such Spirit-led scenarios.

The Lord hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans. They usurp His headship; dismantle His priesthood of believers; kept the world in spiritual adultery for 1,200 years; deprive Him of fellowship with His Beloved Bride. Their reward will justly be most severe.” ²¹⁹

Variations of supplanters like Diotrephes permeate Protestant circles. Like Diotrephes the espouse, for one church there is one boss: and I am that boss. Today he is called Pastor. In defiance of Scripture, one-man-rule has become the norm. You are called divisive if you even question the doctrine.

Today, the truth is, however, that current pastors are only partly accountable for this sorry state. After all, they inherited the tradition from their trusted leaders and teachers, and have never paused to question the practice. “After all, if those great men had religion this way, it must be right, right?”

The Word of God says, “Wrong!”

Here is a sad story. Three times Shirley and I suffered because of the folly of one-man-rule. One time we were fully engaged in a church alive with the blessings of the Lord. The Spirit’s anointing was on the pastor, musicians, singers, and congregation. Blessings overflowed. The Word was exalted; people were touched; lives were impacted. Love was real. It was the joy of the first love. There was a stirring and the Lord raised up workers from the Body. Elders were recognized. Six or eight were called to preach and went for training.

One by one they finished school and returned. Rather than take their place in an expanded ministry, however, each took his wife, extended family, friends, singers, musicians, and whoever else would go, and left to start churches where they, themselves, became the single-point ruler, the pastor. However, different from Paul²²⁰ they did not go to virgin territory to build churches by labor and prayer. They *robbed* the mother church whose Pastor was then called to minister in another city. The sheep scattered; the Spirit grieved; His anointing lifted.

It was the curse of the religion of the flesh started by Diotrephes and those like him who lusted for preeminence: a curse I call *the Rooster Effect*, about which Jesus said, “I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans.”

²¹⁹ Dyal, 41-42

²²⁰ 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

If the Lord wanted one ruler He would have established His church that way. But He set up plural oversight.²²¹ How dare we do anything else? Nadab and Abihu tried to serve the Lord their way, and their reward applies to those who follow in their train. The way, the only way, to overturn this insidious curse is to confess our ignorance and rebellion, and get back to religion according to the pattern of the Word of God.

Situation 4. A Dangerous Presumption

A man I know told a story worthy of serious consideration. Let us read it and then ask “T” and “W” what they think.

The brother said,

Early morning time with the Lord had been especially blessed during the previous week. There were several meaningful *conversations*. The Lord gave light on important matters. Worship, prayer, meditation, and waiting before Him was as good as I can remember.

But the next morning I became careless, even presumptuous...

I was as chatty as a bird in the spring. I prattled for a few minutes, talking to the Lord about this and that. Slowly I began to realize that He was incredibly silent. Immediately I knew something was wrong: I had offended the Great God. Contritely, I began to review my actions and was mortified to realize that I had brazenly entered the throne room of the God of the Universe and started chatting with Him as if we were the grandest of buddies.

BUT, WE ARE NOT BUDDIES!

HE is Eternal Almighty God; HE is Creator. HE is the source of life and power and authority in the Universe, and more. HE is to be worshipped, feared, and honored FIRST, before ANYTHING else.

As in heaven, so it must be on earth,

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever

²²¹ This was demonstrated a length. See Dyal, 10-13; 43-35

*and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created...”*²²²

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **and crying out with a loud voice**, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”*²²³

Such is His glory.

As for me, HE created me out of the dust of the earth for HIS pleasure. Nothing in me sets me apart or qualifies me to even be in His presence, let alone, to be His buddy. The only redeeming things I have HE gave me: salvation by the blood of HIS HOLY SON; HIS HOLY SPIRIT in and upon me; and the WORD OF GOD to light my path. Anything I do of value is attributed directly to these empowerments.

I was shamed by the careless way I had blundered into His presence; and confessed my folly to Him. While He forgave my transgression, it took days to recover from the shock of my error. I hope to never forget or repeat that stunning mistake.

Yes, in an act of kindness and mercy, He is my Heavenly Father; and yes, it is possible – under certain rigorous conditions – to be the friend of His Son. But He is Almighty God, and so He will be treated. He will be honored as God: all the time; every time!

Thus the man finished his powerful story.²²⁴

I am curious to hear what **W** and **T** will say. Let us listen...

²²² Revelation 4:8-11

²²³ Revelation 7:9-12

²²⁴ I am that man. My name was omitted to avoid drawing attention to myself.

W. T, that story causes me to think of God's message to Aaron by Moses, *By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.*²²⁵

T. Yeah, that's quite a story. But, don't you think it's too extreme? After all, God is a loving God. He knows we make mistakes. But He loves us anyway, right?

W. That He knows and loves us is absolutely true...

T. (Unable to wait, T burst back in.) That's it. That's exactly what I'm saying!

W. T, you didn't let me finish.

T. Oh, sorry.

W. Yes, God loves us; yes, He understands us; yes, He forgives us if we confess our sins, repent, and turn from them. But, ignorance does not give us the right to approach irreverently into His presence...

T. (Again T blurted out) You aren't saying we can't talk to God? Surely you aren't saying we can't tell Him what we think or how we feel? Don't you think we can talk to our friend as directly as we want? If we don't like something He did or didn't do, don't you think we can tell Him about it? Don't you? Doesn't He want us to be honest?

W. (W managed a pained smile) Are you finished?

T. (T was sheepish) Yes, and I'll wait until you stop before I speak again.

W. T, I will address your questions, but the point of our brother's story is that we must keep our relationship with God in perspective in our own hearts. It isn't that He doesn't love us, or that we cannot bring our petitions to Him; but it is that we must approach Him with knowledge, for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.

Consider the Word. Do you remember the reaction by men like Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, John, and others who saw heavenly messengers? They were dumbfounded. Often they passed out with fear. Yet those messengers were angels, who themselves, bow before and worship God because He is powerful and marvelous.

²²⁵ Leviticus 10:3

I assure you, no man, once taken into God's Holy Presence, would ever again have the audacity to approach Him presumptuously. No man with an understanding of the majesty and wisdom of God would even consider complaining or criticizing a decision made or action taken (or not taken) by the Lord God. Only the ignorance and rebellion of the flesh provoked by the cunning of the devil would even consider such madness.

Do you understand this?

T. I have to tell you, W, once again you have jolted my thinking. I'm certain that I was taught, maybe in Sunday school, that we have a right to talk to God like that, and that we ought to; that we shouldn't have such feelings pent up. God wants us to feel good.

W. Do you think that is really true?

T. (He was quiet for a moment, then T laughed out loud and said) I see your point. We have peace and joy as we abide in Jesus. We do that by having and keeping His Word. To know, really know, the Lord is to trust Him in all things. It is wrong to second guess Him. We do not have such right, do we?

W. We do not. We dare not! You are beginning to understand **the way** of the Lord.

AFTERWORD

Having finished the book, I am left with five concerns.

First: Jesus is God's preeminent mandate. Nothing is before Him. The lengthy discussion herein about the Holy Spirit must not detract from the Son of God. *For Such a Time as This* tells of the vital role of the Spirit, but does not put the Spirit in Jesus' place. Jesus is Savior, Lord and God. We have none before Him, for none are before Him in heaven or on earth.

Second: we must fully engage in our personal struggle for holiness against the flesh. The Holy Spirit will not do our work for us. We must *put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*²²⁶ We must fight the good fight,²²⁷ knowing that victory is attained by obedience to the Word in the power of the Spirit.

Third: to live in the Spirit is to walk in the power of the age to come and wage war against flesh and devil. The walk is ferociously assaulted. Have I properly warned readers? The danger is real. In these days of spiritual ignorance and rebellion, it is nearly impossible to stand, for the hedge of righteousness is hardly understood and grievously breached.²²⁸ Most abide not under the shadow of the Almighty,

a) for different from Jesus – who, while on earth, walked in the Spirit, did only what He saw His Father doing, said what His Father told Him to say, and proclaimed that He could do nothing of Himself²²⁹ – many do what they choose and attempt to tell God what they want Him to do;

b) much of the church is not structured biblically. Its practices are outside of the Word, and therefore God's hedge of righteousness, and is open to direct assault from a powerful enemy it cannot even see.

c) the Bible's commands for submission in the church are not embraced as the imperatives they are. This, too, opens the door for the enemy's attacks.

²²⁶ Ephesians 4:20-24

²²⁷ See the instructions to the Church throughout the NT.

²²⁸ The hedge of righteousness is clarified by Psalm 91; Job 1:1-12; Daniel 6:1-24. Together: holy living protects one from the enemy's fiery darts.

²²⁹ John 5:19-23, 30; 12:49

d) many pastors do not give themselves *continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word*; neither do they pray according to biblical examples. Thus the church is not defended from or prepared for the conflict.

Fourth: it is not possible to read *For Such a Time as This*, receive the Baptism of the Spirit with His gifts and fruit, and immediately begin to live victorious, joyous lives without further growth. Neither can it be mandated by the will of man. We cannot *snap our fingers* and begin to do the things described in this book. It can only be done *line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little*. Spiritual growth does not progress at the speed of fast-food America.

To guide this growth Jesus gave gifts to men with which to minister to His sheep,

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*²³⁰

Through their ministry sanctification and holiness are slowly built into the church by the Spirit builds the image of Jesus into the Body of Christ through ministry gifts given to the Church. Paul taught the Corinthians daily for eighteen months, the Ephesians for three years, and the rest of the church for many years.

Fifth: we must pray as instructed. If so, He will pour out His Spirit upon His laborers and send them into His harvest. If we pray along the following lines...²³¹

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

²³⁰ Ephesians 4:11-16

²³¹ Matthew 6:9-10; 9:35-38; Ephesians 1:15-19

I pray...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...

He will send laborers into His harvest; His kingdom will come. His Word promises,

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him...So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." ²³²

God has not changed.²³³ When He sends forth laborers He gives authority and knowledge to accomplish His bidding, and signs and wonders follow. God, who alone knows the hearts of men, must select and empower laborers to tend His sheep. So it has always been, for sheep cannot tend sheep. We must pray for Him to send them forth that His kingdom may come upon the earth in our time.

If we pray this way a glorious end-time harvest will be ours.

²³² 1 John 5:14-15; Romans 10:17; Matthew 21:21-22

²³³ Hebrews 13:8

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My business career was long and toilsome. Its focus was the uniqueness, personal value, and power of the individual, and management's challenge to harness, unleash, and reward that capability for the common good. To sharpen my contributions, I took a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at 47, and finished my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) coursework, all but dissertation, at 62. During those decades I worked my way up to senior management levels. Yet helping people resolve economic and emotional challenges does nothing for their eternal welfare, so when the time came, I retired from man's employ to concentrate on the far more important matter of writing about and teaching the Word of God.

What follows is a synopsis of my story.

Fifty years ago I was in the Navy stationed in Virginia. My life changed at the end of that four-year tour. The Lord touched me in a glorious way. I was saved through the ministry of a Navy buddy, a Christian family and the pastor of a church. Before that, I am sorry to say, I used profanity, well, like a sailor. But, from the day Jesus entered my heart until now I neither *speak* profanely nor *think* the words. He cleansed my heart and mind! What a wonderful demonstration of His cleansing power. And thus began my pilgrimage to know and serve my Marvelous Lord.

After the Navy I returned to Florida, enrolled at the University of South Florida, in Tampa, and became active in the Christian student fellowship. After a year, the president of that group graduated. He and the others urged me to take his office. I thought it was a mistake from the beginning, but they insisted. A young believer myself, I could not provide spiritual guidance for 25 students. For almost two years I languished under that burden, learning that I had neither answers nor spiritual power for the many needs.

Then I attended a missionary conference for college students. A speaker there profoundly impacted my life. When they gave him the microphone he cried out with resounding power

**“I am asking you,
‘Do you know God?’
I am not asking if you know about Him;
I am asking you,
‘Do you know Him’.”**

His words were electric! I knew he had stated my problem: **I did not know Jesus!** I knew about Him; I knew He had saved me; I knew He was magnificent; I knew I was learning His Word; I knew I was busy with good works and Christian fellowship. But I did not know Him. That was not what we were taught. We were living Christianity outside of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and did not even know it. My teachers said we had it all; they said nothing was missing. Alas, it was all they knew. But they were wrong. My life was about to change.

After I returned to Tampa, several of us visited the church of a new girl in our fellowship. There, for the first time, I saw the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the church. And I understood: it was He who was missing from my life. After the service I asked the pastor about the Holy Spirit. He sent me away to read the Gospels and Acts, but he told me that, before I read, to ask the Lord to reveal the Spirit's ministry to me. And my eyes were opened. I saw Him on almost every page. After weeks of study, I knew He was a *real* person, and I asked for prayer. In this way I received the baptism with the Spirit and spoke in tongues as in the Bible. The Spirit quickened a verse to me in the days that followed. It was: *the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.*²³⁴ His anointing was upon me. I knew I was a son of God. And that witness has not left until this day.

I fellowshiped there in the ensuing years. One ministry was to merchant marines docked in Tampa's port. Every Sunday afternoon young men would go to the ships and invite the sailors to church. In the evening we picked them up. Many were led to Jesus in those years. At other times we ministered with the young ladies in rest homes. We would sing, preach, pray for, and love the old ones. And we, and they, were always blessed.

About 20 of us met with the pastor six nights a week to fellowship, worship, sing, pray, be taught the Word of God and ways of the Spirit. Those were glorious days. There was no place else we wanted to be. We learned to hear the Lord's voice as we received the gifts of the Spirit,²³⁵ gifts that were manifested in many ways in those years. And why not? That was the experience of the NT Church; and what we need still today.

Let me give you a couple of examples. The background is this: for many years I was a Sunday school teacher, and from time to time visited prisoners, preached in the streets, and was a teacher at a half-way house for men recovering from drugs or prison. I also I preached at church infrequently. I listened to those in authority and tried to follow their teaching. For example, one Wednesday night I heard about a venerable old man who was asked, "To what do you attribute the greatness of your spiritual life?" He humbly responded, "Such as it is, it is due to the long walks I take

²³⁴ Romans 8:16

²³⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:31

with God every morning.” The next day I, too, was out walking before the Lord, prying another hour from my sleep. Once I heard that Watchman Nee read the New Testament monthly. That sounded good, so I started doing it too. But, since the Old Testament began to slip away, I decided to read it more. Thus, over the next two years I read the OT eight and the NT 24 times.

With that background, let me return to the times when the secrets of my heart were revealed to me. Remember, the Bible says,

*But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.*²³⁶

It was at the time that I was taking an early morning walk with the Lord. You will not be surprised to learn that I *just happened* (ah hem) to mention this spiritual feat to my friends. Of course, everybody admired the discipline and dedication of such religiosity. But over the months something began to happen. It seemed I was the only one out in the dark. I couldn't sense the Lord's presence and could not stay focused on Him despite my most determined efforts. Also, I was so sleepy I would stumble from edge to edge on the sidewalk. Finally, to top it off, it got cold. I hate to get out of bed on cold mornings. So I began to turn off the alarm. To my chagrin, in a few days I had forsaken the morning walk altogether. You would be right, however, if you guessed that I told **no one** about my failure.

The next Wednesday I arrived at church 30 minutes late, something I hate to do. I had just sat down when a prophesy rang out from the back that said,

“Where have you been my son? I have missed those morning walks with you.”

To retell the story is to bring tears again. The God of Glory had condescended to walk with me, and He was there all the time even though I did not know it. That He *missed those walks with me* was more than I could bear. It was tender love He ministered to me in that short prophecy, and I knew for certain that *God was among us*.

The second incident is also very touching. Its precedent is found in Exodus 34, where God called Moses back up Mount Sinai. When he came down after fasting another 40 days and nights in God's presence, his face was so radiant that Aaron and the elders were afraid to come to him. Moses wore a veil over his face for some time after that except when he went to meet the Lord in the tabernacle of meeting.

²³⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:24-25

My story is similar, but not nearly so significant. I was young, still single, and had met the Lord in a glorious way in the baptism with the Holy Spirit. My spirit feasted in His presence. His personal witness to me was wonderful. His anointing covered me and tarried for some time. But day by day it began to lift. Here I needed a wise counselor to tell me that this is God's way. But I did not know it. Therefore, as His anointing lifted I began to seek Him more earnestly. As I did His anointing lifted further. I reached a point where I was spending the entire morning, and sometimes more, seeking His face. This went on for several weeks.

Then He sent help. My friend, Jim, the previous president, knocked on the door. He had just arrived from Tallahassee where he was doing his masters work. His first words were, "Let's go pray." That was our joy the time we overlapped at USF and we had several prayer spots. As we walked out to his car Jim told me he had been singing and praying in the Spirit all the way down from Tallahassee, and thought he needed to come see me. He had hardly got his car moving before he said, "I see a vision. It's a man carrying a bucket of water and walking across a desert. He goes over a sand dune, but I can't see what's on the other side." It wasn't unusual for the Lord to speak to us in such ways. So, while we did not understand the vision, we were not perturbed. We continued worshipping and waiting before the Lord. Before Jim could drive the half mile to our prayer site in the woods adjacent to USF, he had seen the vision twice more. He said that each time the man was walking faster and working harder. After Jim turned the car off, he saw another episode. He said, "Now he's carrying two buckets, and still he goes over the sand dune. Then he saw the final vision, "Now I can see over the dune. He's going down to a well and emptying his buckets into it." We still didn't understand. In a couple of minutes Jim said, "You know, the funniest thing is that all he needs to do is fall on his knees at the well, and cool, clear water will come up to him." Then I understood. I was the man. I was striving to do what no one can do. I was trying to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down. I had it backwards. I needed only fall on my knees and He would give the water of life. His presence did not, could not, depend on my works.

I have been touched over and over again at the recollection of that vision. It has been a reminder to me that we do not approach the Lord by our works.

And yet I confess to being such a slow learner. Even after many years in the Spirit I continued to err on the matter of trying to do good works in the power of the natural man. Consider a final example. The background is this: 1) we are to love one another as we love ourselves; 2) the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, goodness and faithfulness. Over and over through the years I examined myself against these requirements, realized I fell short, and made resolution after resolution to do better. But I could not change. Furious resolve made no difference. I continued to fail, all the while teaching others to pursue those very things. It might be said that my desire to please the Lord was intense; and, perhaps, my efforts to live a better life, admirable. But those efforts widely missed the most important point. And

that is what *For Such a Time as This* is about. After years of striving, the Lord showed me that my efforts were off center. He caused me to meditate on two passages.²³⁷

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

I pondered these verses for weeks and slowly began to understand. I had not considered myself one who labored or was heavy laden. I knew my load was heavy, but not more than anyone else. All those years *I got up, put on my boots, and went to work*, trying each day to do better than the last. Slowly, I began to see it: life is **in Jesus**, not the power of our efforts. I had proved by many years of intense struggle that I could not attain spirituality. As light began to break in my heart, I understood what I wished I had known years before:

...we cannot live a spiritual life in the strength or resolve of the natural man. The fruit of the Spirit is the Spirit's fruit, not ours!

Why did I struggle and abuse myself to try to love as God loves? Why did I try to impose on my persona joy that wasn't there; joy that had to flow from the power of the Holy Spirit? The Word says it plainly: it is His joy, not mine. Oh the glory that broke over my spirit as I began to understand! We must be in, and full of, His Spirit; not the strength or efforts of the flesh. The secret of the Gospel is *Christ in you, the hope of glory...Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away; all things have become new, and all things are of God...*²³⁸

²³⁷ Matthew 11:28-30; Galatians 5:22-23

²³⁸ Colossians 1:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dyal, Darell B. *Limpy, the Lost Way of the Bible*. New York: iUniverse, 2005.

Fee, Gordon D. *God's Empowering Presence*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994.

Parsons' Technology. *QuickVerse for Windows*, Software. 1992.

Seiss, J. A. *The Apocalypse*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1966.

Stott, John R. W. *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*. Chicago: Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. 1964.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version, Nashville: Broadman & Holdman Publishers. 1988.

Vine, W. E. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1985.

Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. 1991.

Wuest, Kenneth S. *Wuest's Word Studies*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1978.