

LAYING FOUNDATIONS

Laying Foundations
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FOUNDATIONS

In this text, abbreviations of the books of the Bible are as follow:

Gen	Genesis	Mat	Matthew
Ex	Exodus	Mk	Mark
Lev	Leviticus	Lk	Luke
Num	Numbers	Jn	John
Deut	Deuteronomy	Acts	Acts
Josh	Joshua	Rom	Romans
Jdg	Judges	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Ruth	Ruth	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Gal	Galatians
2 Sam	2 Samuel	Eph	Ephesians
1 Kings	1 Kings	Phil	Philippians
2 Kings	2 Kings	Col	Colossians
1 Chron	1 Chronicles	1 Thes	1 Thessalonians
2 Chron	2 Chronicles	2 Thes	2 Thessalonians
Ezra	Ezra	1 Tim	1 Timothy
Neh	Nehemiah	2 Tim	2 Timothy
Est	Esther	Titus	Titus
Job	Job	Philemon	Philemon
Ps	Psalms	Heb	Hebrews
Prov	Proverbs	Jas	James
Eccl	Ecclesiastes	1 Pet	1 Peter
Songs	Song of Songs	2 Pet	2 Peter
Isa	Isaiah	1 Jn	1 John
Jer	Jeremiah	2 Jn	2 John
Lam	Lamentations	3 Jn	3 John
Eze	Ezekiel	Jude	Jude
Dan	Daniel	Rev	Revelation
Hos	Hosea		
Joel	Joel		
Amos	Amos		
Obed	Obadiah		
Jonah	Jonah		
Micah	Micah		
Nahum	Nahum		
Hab	Habakkuk		
Zep	Zephaniah		
Hag	Haggai		
Zech	Zechariah		
Mal	Malachi		

Statement of Faith.

We believe in the fundamental truths of Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures including the following:

- The unity of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Deut 6:4, Mat 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14)
- The sovereignty of God in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgement. (Gen 1:1, Heb 1:1-2, Titus 3:4-5, Acts 17:31)
- The plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments in their original form and their entire trustworthiness and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:21, 1 Cor 2:13)
- Man's fallen condition through Adam's transgression, rendering him subject to God's wrath and condemnation. (Rom 5:12, 2 Thes 1:7-9)
- Redemption from sin solely through the sacrificial and propitiating death of our Lord Jesus. (Rom 3:25-26, 5:15-21, 2 Cor 5:19, Mk 10:45)
- The bodily resurrection of our Saviour from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of the Father in glory. (1 Cor 15:4, Heb 8:1)
- The Holy Spirit as the divine agent through whom lost and sinful man is regenerated, and by whom the believer is empowered for life and service. (Jn 3:5-6, Rom 8:9, 2 Thes 2:13)
- The justification of the sinner by the grace of God through faith alone. (Gal 2:16, Eph 2:8-9)
- The one universal Church is the body of Christ to which all true believers in Him belong. (Eph 1:22-23, 1 Cor 12:12-13, Acts 2:41-47)
- The blessed hope of Christ's return to power and glory. (Acts 1:11, Heb 9:28, 2 Pet 3:10)

We could label ourselves as "charismatic", but we realize the necessity of avoiding labels. We believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12) and the many infillings of the Holy Spirit. (Eph 5:18)

We are firmly committed to "discipling the nations" (Mat 28:19-20, Acts 1:8), and you will therefore be exposed to much teaching and impartation of this vision.

INTRODUCTION

Laying Foundations

As we grow and mature in our faith in Jesus Christ there are many areas of our lives which must adjust and change. In Acts 2:42 we read about how the early believers did this: *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer ."*

We all want to go on to maturity, but what are the basics we need to get hold of first? Hebrews 6:1-2 describes these elementary teachings in the following way: *"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."*

The material in this foundation booklet has been assembled to help do just this. All the "elementary teachings" found in the text quoted above are covered in some detail. These notes are intended as a further resource to those who are laying the foundations of their faith in Jesus Christ. It had been designed to focus attention on the basic doctrines as a whole collective without over or under emphasizing any one doctrine.

At the end of each Chapter is a chain of Scripture references which will give a quick reference as you study further and share your faith with others.

This manual is further intended to be a discipleship resource to Christians and churches.

We hope that this course and this manual will be a blessing to you and will contribute, however humbly, to the extension of God's kingdom.



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A space for you to make your own notes.

Chapter I: Salvation

But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. (Gal 3:22)

A. Man's Need Of Salvation

God's original intent was one of covenant and relationship with mankind. However, the "fall" and "sin" have caused a separation and enabled death to reign. Man's need of salvation is as a result of sin, as a holy God cannot touch sin.

A.1. Sin Separates

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God." (Isa 59:2a)

A.2. Sin Is Universal

"There is no one righteous, not even one." (Rom 3:10b)

All of mankind is party to sin:

- By birth:

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." (Rom 5:12)

"For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners," (Rom 5:19)

"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Ps 51:5)

Therefore, sin is our spiritual heritage as a result of the fall.

- By action:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23)

A.3. Sin Has A Penalty

The penalty for sin is divine judgement and death. "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom 6:23a)

"The soul that sins is the one who will die." (Eze 18:4b)

A.4. Summary

All of mankind is subject to sin. Sin separates mankind from God's intent which is covenant relationship and intimacy. Sin enables death to reign.

B. God's Provision Of A Saviour

B.1. Man Is Impotent To Save Himself

"And all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." (Isa 64:6a)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."

(Eph 2:8-9)

B.2. This Does Not Leave Us Without Hope

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (Jn 3:16)

"Jesus Christ laid down His life for us." (1 Jn 3:16a)

B.3. What Qualifies Jesus To Remove The Effects Of Sin?

- He was born to a virgin and therefore was not subject to sin passed on as a heritage (original sin, see, for example, Rom 5:12).
- He committed no sin Himself (Heb 4:15).
- Jesus suffered the punishment (wrath) of God for sin. In doing this He became the sacrifice who atones for sin and stands as a substitution in the place of sinful mankind: "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!" (Rom 5:8-9) "But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities." (Isa 53:5a/Acts 4:12)
- He broke the power of death in that He rose from the dead (see 1 Cor 15:3-6 and Heb 2:14-15).

B.4. Summary

God created man, man fell, and all are subject to the power of sin. God has provided a Saviour as the solution: the Saviour died as a substitutionary¹ sacrifice. Clearly, however, this redemption does not apply to everyone because the Bible states that some will be committed to hell at the judgement.

1. In other words, to *stand in the place of*.

C. Who Can Be Saved?

Potentially, all people can be saved. It depends on their response to the revelation of God. It is God's desire that all should be saved (1 Tim 2:4), He died for the "world" (Jn 3:16). But in actuality not everyone is saved. The question then is, "How is one saved?"

D. How Is One Saved?

Paul exhorted the people to "turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21). Jesus began His preaching saying, "The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mk 1:15). Both of these texts highlight the twofold biblical requirement for salvation: repentance and faith (see Heb 6:1-2). What do they involve?

D.1. Repentance

The Greek word "metanoia" literally means "to change one's mind." This means that repentance is not a state of remorse or feeling sorry but rather a decision. It is an act of the will rather than an issue of emotion. Of course, the decision may be accompanied by great emotion but repentance itself is the changing of our mind.

This changing of our mind and consequently of the direction of our entire life is:

A recognition of our sinfulness.

A decision to live according to God's revealed will for His chosen people.

" 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!' " (Acts 2:38a)

D.2. Faith

This requires us to put our trust in – and adhere to – the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. There is no work or action that a person can do to entitle him to justification.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works." (Eph 2:8-9a) A gift cannot be earned it can only be received.

"We have been justified through faith." (Rom 5:1a) Justification is a legal term which applies to those who have been absolved of their guilt. To be absolved from the guilt applicable to all mankind as a result of sin one must believe in the saving work of Jesus Christ. Faith then is believing God's Word.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21)

God's Word is Truth (Jn 17:17) and contains no lie. Therefore we can trust it wholeheartedly.

E. Working Out Your Salvation

From the moment we repent and believe in Jesus, we enter God's kingdom. This is described as being "born again" (Jn 3:3). From this point of entering the kingdom until the end of our earthly life, we need to live in repentance (a constant bowing to the Word of God) and faith in Jesus as Saviour.

Jesus said in Jn 10:28-30, "My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one." So once we are saved our salvation is protected by Jesus – no one can rob us of it. But the Bible also says in 2 Tim 2:12b, "If we disown Him, He will also disown us."

And so we are encouraged to persevere in our faith until we die, or until Christ returns. Hebrews 10:35-36 says, "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised." As we persevere in righteousness, good works, faithfulness and persecution, we are rewarded with eternal treasures by God (see, for example, Heb 11:26, Mat 6:1-6, Mat 6:16-21, Mat 10:41-42, Mat 16:27 and Lk 6:22-23).

F. Assurance Of Salvation – Feelings.

The Christian life is not all just exercising faith with no "experience". The believer can expect to feel and experience emotions which assure him that he is in fact a child of God. The Bible clearly points out that the Holy Spirit can bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God when it says in Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." This experience will involve our emotions.

However, we must clearly emphasize that these emotions and feelings are not continuous and permanent. They are the RESULT of faith in the Word of God and acting upon that Truth. There are times when a Christian does not feel saved. Our emotions are affected by the environment around us, and we may in fact feel very alone, and at times even deserted by God. These are the times when we do not resort to our feelings, but with maturity tell ourselves that our feelings are not important and that we are to believe the Word of God. The emotions and feelings which are the product of faith are in fact a bonus, an extra, "the icing on the cake". They are not to become the basis of our faith, nor are they to become our main objective and goal. They come as we seek to obey the Word of God, but they WILL come, and we can expect to experience feelings of excitement, peace and well-being.

G. Salvation Chain

Jn 3:16
Rom 3:23
Rom 6:23
Jn 14:6
1 Jn 1:9
Jn 1:12
Eph 2:8-9
Rom 10:9-10

H. Assurance of Salvation Chain

1 Jn 5:13
Jn 1:12
Jn 3:36
Jn 5:24
Jn 6:47
Rom 1:17
Rom 8:16
Jn 10:27-29

Chapter II: Water Baptism

"Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptised?" (Acts 8:36b)

A. What Is Baptism?

A.1. Outward Symbol

Baptism is the outward and visible symbol of an inward, and unseen, rebirth. At conversion we are "baptised into Christ" (Gal 3:27), signifying a spiritual baptism into the body of Christ. Water baptism graphically depicts what has happened to a person who has become a Christian. As they go down under the water they depict Christ's death and their own death to self. As they come up out of the water they depict Christ's resurrection and their own rising to a new life (Rom 6:1-14).

In the Old Testament the crossing of the Red Sea was a type of baptism through which the Israelites were cut off from Egypt and slavery. (1 Cor 10:2, 1 Pet 3:21).

A.2. Public Confession

Baptism is a public confession of an inward and personal commitment. In many cases it is only when Christians are baptised that persecution becomes heavy, because of the public nature of this confession of faith.

B. Why Must We Be Baptised?

B.1. Obedience

Jesus commanded it: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Mat 28:19-20a)

B.2. Jesus' Example

Jesus set the example by being baptised by John (Mat 3:13-17). When John the Baptist tried to deter Jesus from being baptised he replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

Baptism indicated He was consecrated to God and "officially" approved by Him (seen in the Holy Spirit's descent, and the Father's words of affirmation).

At Jesus' baptism, John publicly declared Him to be the Messiah. Jesus identified with man's sin although He had no need to repent Himself. His baptism was an example to His followers.

B.3. The Early Church's Example

The first converts in Jerusalem (Acts 2:37-41).
The Samaritans (Acts 8:12-13).

The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38).
Paul (Acts 9:17, Acts 22:16).
Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:33-48).
Lydia and her household (Acts 16:13-15).
The Philippian jailer (Acts 16:31-34).
Crispus and other Corinthians (Acts 18:8).

It is important to understand that baptism, in itself, doesn't save anyone, but for those who repent and believe, it is outward obedience necessary for proving inward repentance.

C. Who Must Be Baptised?

All believers must be baptised: It is not infant baptism or adult baptism, but believers' baptism. Only believers can be baptised. Baptism is the symbol of existing change, not the cause of change.

C.1. What About Infant Baptism?

Babies cannot repent. Jesus was not baptised as an infant. He was dedicated to the Lord in Luke 2:22. Children who are old enough to understand the gospel and able to exercise personal faith can be baptised. This can happen at a very young age because the gospel is simple enough for a child to understand. Backsliders who return to Christ should not be "re-baptised" as baptism is a once-for-all act, just as being born again is not a recurring event.

D. When Must We Be Baptised?

Upon conversion. In the early church people were baptised as soon as they believed. On the day of Pentecost, "Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." (Acts 2:41) Paul was baptised as soon as he believed. Conversion and baptism were almost simultaneous in the early church, often happening on the same day. See, for example, Acts 10:47-48.

E. Where Must We Be Baptised?

Anywhere! We don't need baptismal fonts etc. The nearest water after conversion will do. See, for example, Acts 8:38-40.

F. Who Can Baptise?

Any believer may baptise. It does not need to be an elder or leader. Philip, who baptised the Ethiopian eunuch, was an evangelist.

G. How Are We Baptised?

G.1. By Immersion

We baptise by immersion, not by sprinkling (Acts 8:38-39). Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. "When they came up out of the water." (Acts 8:39a). The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word, "baptiso", which means "to immerse, dip, plunge into or bury" and is always used in its intensive form meaning to completely submerge.

G.2. Into The Name Of The Father, Son And Holy Spirit

We baptise into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mat 28:18, Gal 3:27). The emphasis was that this is Christian baptism, not Jewish, pagan or John's baptism.

H. Summary

In conclusion, baptism is a simple act of obedience to the revealed word of God. It invites God's blessing and establishes us on a godly foundation. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Mat 7:24)

I. Water Baptism Chain

Acts 2:38-39

Mat 3:13-17

Mat 28:19-20

Acts 10:47-48

Rom 6:1-14

Col 2:9-15

1 Pet 3:21

Chapter III: Holy Spirit Baptism

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Mat 3:11)

There are not three “steps” to becoming a Christian, only one: repentance with faith. However, the Bible speaks of both water baptism and Spirit baptism as natural and necessary milestones subsequent to conversion. With Spirit baptism, therefore, a certain “process” of conversion is completed.

It will be difficult to understand and desire this event in our life if we do not first have some knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. So we need to begin by “introducing” the Holy Spirit.

A. Who Is The Holy Spirit?

A.1. His Person

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. For many centuries He was the “forgotten” person of the Trinity; in our time He has been restored to His rightful place in Christian thought and experience.

The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force or merely the power of God operative in the world (this is a common misconception) but a person: the Bible speaks of “Him” and “His,” not “it” and “its” and the Bible also shows Him possessing the characteristics of a person (intelligence and thought, speech and language, as well as feelings and emotions) and performing the actions of a person (for example, leading, guiding, working, giving, fellowshiping, convicting, teaching, comforting, counselling and praying).

The Holy Spirit is also not somehow less than God (another common misconception) but fully God: He is explicitly and implicitly called God in Scripture; He possesses the attributes of God (for example, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience and immortality) and He performs or shares in the works of God (for example, creation, revelation, conviction, regeneration, sanctification and resurrection).

The Holy Spirit is both a personal and a divine being and because He is a person we either have a relationship with the Holy Spirit or not (we cannot have half a person), and therefore we do not ask “How much of the Holy Spirit do I have?” but rather “How much does the Holy Spirit have of me?”

Because He is divine the Holy Spirit works in and through us on His terms and not ours: He is sovereign and so He cannot be manipulated and He is a person to whom we cannot dictate; He is holy and so will not fill an unclean vessel.

Other insights into the person of the Holy Spirit may be gained from the many names by which He is called in Scripture and from the symbols used for Him (fire, wind, water, oil and the dove).

A.2. His Work

As part of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is involved in all the works of God. He played a special role in creation, revelation, God's dealings with Israel and the incarnation of Christ. He is involved in the church: He indwells it, unifies it, gives gifts to its members for the edifying of the body, ordains and equips its leaders and stirs it to mission. He will be closely involved in the events of the end-time and in the age to come.

Perhaps the most notable work of the Holy Spirit in this age, however, is His involvement in the life of the individual believer. Even before conversion it is the Spirit who convicts a man and draws him to Christ (Jn 6:44, Jn 16:8-11). At the moment of conversion it is the Spirit that regenerates a person's spirit and causes him to be born again (Jn 3:5-8, Titus 3:5). From that moment on, therefore, every believer is indwelt by the Spirit (Rom 8:9) and thereby also sealed by Him: the indwelling is like a deposit guaranteeing the full payment (of salvation) at Christ's return (Eph 1:13-14, Eph 4:30, 2 Cor 1:22).

After conversion, for the rest of the person's life, the Spirit walks with the believer, assuring, sanctifying, fellowshiping with, leading, guiding, teaching, inspiring and giving gifts to him. We could say that the Holy Spirit bears primary responsibility for the individual believer, carrying and transforming him from convicted sinner to presented saint.

This is precisely the introduction to the Holy Spirit that Jesus gave us (Jn 14:16-18). He is our comforter/counsellor/advocate (there is no precise English translation for the Greek "parakletos," one who walks alongside us, advising us of every step of the way). And He is not just similar to (in Greek, "heteros") Jesus but "another" exactly like (in Greek, "allos") Jesus. Thus, just as to know Jesus is to know the Father (Jn 14:7-9), so to know the Spirit is to know Jesus (and vice versa).

The Holy Spirit empowers us to fulfill Jesus commands to us and imparts gifts to us to enable us to complete what we are called to. Discovering what our gifts are is a vital part of our walk with the Lord and will be focused on in future discussion.

Now that we know who the Holy Spirit is and what He desires to do in and through us, we will be more able to understand, desire and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

B. What Is Baptism In The Holy Spirit?

We have already seen that every believer is necessarily indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment of regeneration/rebirth. But the testimony of both Scripture and millions of believers is that there is an experience of receiving the Holy Spirit subsequent to conversion and beyond indwelling.

Jesus, the perfect God-man, was surely indwelt by the Holy Spirit from birth, yet He needed to be anointed by the Spirit (to receive Him in a fuller and different way) before He began His public ministry (Mat 3:16). The disciples seemed to receive the Holy Spirit before Jesus ascended (Jn 20:22) and yet had to wait in Jerusalem for a subsequent powerful infilling of the Holy Spirit before embarking on their public ministry (Lk 24:49, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:1-4).

The Samaritans believed (that is, were converted) when Philip preached to them and were therefore, from that moment, indwelt by the Spirit (Acts 8:12). Yet Peter and John still found it necessary to pray for them to “receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them” with this subsequent infilling and empowering (Acts 8:14-17).

Paul (Acts 9:17) and possibly Apollos (Acts 18:24-26) and the Ephesian disciples (Acts 19:1-6) also experienced a filling subsequent to conversion.

There is then, beyond the indwelling of the Spirit in every believer consequent to being regenerated, a definite and tangible occasion in which the Holy Spirit comes upon us and fills us, anointing, empowering and equipping us both for life (to be able to live the life God wants us to live) and ministry (to be able to do the things He wants us to do). John predicted that Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit (Mat 3:11, Jn 1:33) and Jesus clearly identified this subsequent powerful anointing as the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). “Baptism” (which means “immersion”) is here used figuratively: in water baptism we are literally immersed in water while in Spirit baptism the experience is often so overwhelming and transforming that it is as if we are being immersed in the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings a totally new dimension of God’s presence, person and power into our lives. We cannot fulfill the life or ministry God intends for us without it. It is nonsensical therefore, not to desire it (quite apart from the instruction to us from Jesus and Scripture to seek it). We can receive this baptism as soon after conversion as possible (see Acts 10:44): we do not first have to “graduate” as Christians.

C. How Do I Receive This Baptism?

While being baptised in the Holy Spirit is a profoundly supernatural experience, we should not make it something mystical or spooky. Here are some simple requirements (steps) to help us receive.

C.1. Convert

We must be born again believers. The Holy Spirit will obviously not empower and fill someone in this way whose life is not already given over to God.

C.2. Believe

We must honor and seek the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. In particular, we must believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit and also in our need of it.

C.3. Cleanse

The Spirit, who is holy, cannot and will not fill an unclean vessel. We must repent of all sin in our lives (truly intending to turn from it) and renounce any evil activity (for example, occult involvement) that might hinder or quench His coming.

C.4. Surrender

To be full of the Spirit is really to be controlled by the Spirit. If we want to be completely filled we must surrender every part of our lives to God.

C.5. Thirst

See John 7:37-39.

C.6. Ask

See Matthew 7:7 and Lk 11:11-13.

C.7. Relax And Receive

Apart from these general helps, there is no prescribed way in which to seek or receive this baptism.

D. Who Baptises, When, And What Happens?

People can be baptised when they are on their own, or when they are in a small group receiving ministry, or when they are simply part of a congregation on which the Spirit is moving. It can be helpful to have people encouraging, guiding and praying for us but this is by no means obligatory. Those ministering may exercise the laying on of hands (this is a scriptural pattern for imparting the Spirit) but again this is not a prerequisite. Any Christians can minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:10, Acts 9:17) as long as they are sincere (Acts 8:21). They need not be leaders. But those ministering are always merely a channel: Jesus is the One who baptises, He asks the Father for the Holy Spirit and pours Him out on us.

There is a similar infinite variety in the way the Spirit comes on people and in the way people respond and manifest (Jn 3:8). He comes as a mighty wind but also as a gentle breeze, as a powerful wave but also as gentle dew. That there is often a marked spiritual, emotional, mental or even physical impact when the Spirit comes upon us should not surprise us: our finite being is being encountered and filled by the infinite God! But the response differs from person to person: some laugh, others cry; some are quiet, others are boisterous; some testify particularly to joy, others to peace, love or freedom. But in some way we will know that we have been touched by God. Thus, while we can believe in faith that God has heard and answered our request to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, and should not get into a crisis when "nothing happens" immediately, we always encourage people to persevere in their thirsting and asking till there is a definite breakthrough. When the Holy Spirit fills us it's unmistakable!

E. What About Speaking In Tongues?

Various spiritual gifts may be given to the believer when he is baptised in the Holy Spirit and normally these are only discovered later. However, people often begin to speak in tongues (one of the many gifts of the Spirit) at the time of being baptised (Acts 2:4, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 19:6). Something needs to be said about this gift in any study of Spirit baptism.

All spiritual gifts, while exercised by the individual, are given for the strengthening of the body. Tongues is a part-exception: while it has public use and benefit, there is also a private use and benefit. It is impossible to exaggerate the blessing of this "private" speaking in tongues. It edifies the believer (1 Cor 14:2, 1 Cor 14:4) and greatly heightens both his worship (Jn 4:24) and his intercession (Rom 8:26).

Scripture does not record (as some have alleged) that people spoke in tongues on every occasion that they were baptised in the Spirit. We thus cannot insist (as some have done) that people must speak in tongues to be baptised in the Spirit or, conversely, that they have not been baptised in the Spirit unless they speak in tongues. Scripture clearly states that not every Christian must or will speak in tongues. But we believe that every Christian can speak in tongues (in this way tongues is another exception amongst the gifts) and for the following reasons:

Other gifts edify the Church and so not every believer has to have them in order to benefit from them. The private use of tongues edifies the individual and so every individual needs to have it in order to benefit from it. (We don't think God would want this benefit for some believers and not others.)

Paul wished that all would speak in tongues (1 Cor 14:5): he would not have said this if it were not possible.

We have never known anyone who sought this gift and did not receive it.

If it is true that every Christian can speak in tongues, and if the blessing to be gained from this gift is as we have described, then, as with the baptism itself, it would just be nonsensical not to seek and receive this gift. Our attitude should not be, "Do I really have to speak in tongues?", but, "If God's got something for me I want it!"

So ask God for this gift as you ask Him to baptise you in the Holy Spirit. God won't force this speech through your closed and immobile mouth! Speaking in tongues is a partnership of co-operation between the Spirit and the believer: you speak in tongues as the Spirit enables you (Acts 2:4). So yield your speech faculties to God. Begin to pray to Him in your home language and make a decision of faith to stop speaking your language at a certain point and to launch out with the new words that the Spirit gives you. Some are released into fluent tongues quickly while others stumble at first and have to persevere. In all cases we have to work at it, and we grow in the gift as time goes on. But we have started on a lifetime of blessing.

E.1. How Do I Remain Full Of The Spirit?

Being baptised in the Holy Spirit is only the beginning of the Spirit-filled life. The Greek tense of Paul's instruction to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Eph 5:18) is "keep on being filled." This shows that being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing, indeed lifelong, pursuit.

The Holy Spirit is a person who we live with in the most intimate relationship. Disobedience to his guiding and speaking to us will break down the relationship and we find ourselves "walking alone." This broken relationship must be restored through repentance and restoring of the relationship. We are to walk in step with the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25) and not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). Also, new situations and engaging in ministry will require a fresh new anointing/filling. This ongoing filling takes place in two main ways:

Gradual and imperceptible daily refilling that takes place through spending time with God (privately and corporately) and by walking in step with the Spirit and giving him control at each point (Paul may have had this kind of filling in mind in Eph 5:17-20).

Tangible filling at a particular moment similar to what was experienced when you were first baptised with the Spirit. To insist that this can only happen once is both to contradict Scripture (Acts 2:4, Acts 4:31) and to unnecessarily deny yourself further blessing and equipping. Through both gradual, imperceptible filling and further immersion experiences we need to seek for the rest of our lives to "keep on being filled with the Spirit" so that we can be and can do all that God desires for us. The Spirit-filled (Spirit-controlled) life is the essence of and the key to the entire Christian life.

F. Baptism In the Holy Spirit Chain.

Lk 24:49

Mat 3:11

Acts 2:1-13

Acts 2:39

Lk 11:13

Jn 7:38

Eph 4:30

Gal 5:25

Eph 5:18

Chapter IV: The Father-Heart Of God

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 Jn 3:1)

A. Introduction

The fatherhood of God is a foundational biblical truth vital to our understanding of how to respond to our God, our heavenly Father. 'Agape' (the sacrificial love of God), in the words of Leon van Daele, "is the most powerful single force in the universe", it is this love that motivated the heart of God to reach out to us. God's love is so totally different from any human love we have ever known: it is unconditional, undeserved and absolutely perfect. We do not have to work to receive this awesome love: this is something that we, as humans, find so difficult to accept."

The nature of love is described in 1 Cor 13:4-7. Most Bible scholars agree that the love described in this passage is not human love but the love of God. It is impossible for us to have this love – it is given to us by the Holy Spirit. It describes perfect, divine love: the love that our heavenly Father has for us, His children.

God's profound love for us is demonstrated in His choosing His only Son to die so that we, as fallen man, may have the privilege to know Him as our Father in heaven and spend eternity with Him (Mat 11:27).

B. Why The Father-Heart Of God?

Why devote a whole section of this manual to the Father-heart of God? Because God is a person. He can enter into personal relationships, of which one of the easiest for us, as humans, to understand is that of "father." Jesus taught those who entered the kingdom of God to regard God as their Father. He taught His disciples to address God as "our Father in heaven" (Mat 6:9).

All Jesus' teaching encourages a relationship with the Father that is intimate, close and tender. We need to understand that God as Father is the *perfect Father* – He eagerly desires that we rely on Him for:

- Care and provision in even the most practical matters of food and clothing (Mat 6:25-34).
- Protection (Mat 10:28-31).
- Provision of all good things (Mat 7:7-11).

Not all of us have had the privilege of having godly fathers. Many of our fathers have let us down in many ways on many occasions and are nowhere near perfect. Sin has destroyed countless father-child relationships to the

point that they not only function sub-optimally, but in many cases, totally break down (for example: adultery, divorce, alcoholism, sexual abuse or attitudes of disinterest).

In Genesis we see that God created both male and female in his image and so both are part of His nature and character. In order for a family to receive a full revelation of God's love, both father and mother are needed as they both represent unique aspects of God's character. Where there is a single-parent family, it is important to know that God can compensate for the missing love of a parent.

Because we are continually faced with imperfect father figures, our concept of what a father should be becomes distorted and we, often sub-consciously, transfer this to our relationship with God.

It is at this point that we need to consider what thoughts come to mind when we hear the word 'father.' Is it the loving, gentle, warm, forgiving, protecting, providing, doting father that Scripture reveals, or have we allowed our earthly fathers and other authority figures to veil who God really is as our Father?

Picture these situations:

- A young boy spends all afternoon carving what he believes to be a horse out of piece of wood. At the end of the day he excitedly waits for his dad to come home to show him his handiwork. A tired, preoccupied man finally arrives and barely casts a glance in the direction of his son.
- A young teenager going out for the night with her friends looks eagerly in the direction of her father, hoping he will show some interest in her activities. All he does is reach for his wallet and ask her how much money she needs.
- A toddler's father places him on the kitchen counter and tells him to jump and he will catch him. As the little son trustingly jumps toward his father's arms, his father turns his back. Three times this happens and finally the father reveals the moral of the exercise to his son: "Son, never trust anyone!"

These illustrations give us a picture of a parent with no time, a parent with no interest and a parent that cannot be trusted.

We need to ask God to help us set aside our preconceptions and experiences of earthly fatherhood in order that we may relate with Him as He intended. In the words of Floyd McClung, "Don't ever resent the failings of your human parents. They are just kids that grew up and had kids. Rather rejoice in the wonderful love of your Father God."

In God we have a perfect Father. We can unreservedly trust Him to always be the same: His character and attributes are both constant and consistent (Mat 5:43-45, Mat 7:9-11, Jas 1:17). Unlike the fathers in the situations above, our heavenly Father always has time for us, delights in us, longing

that we will come to him not with clasped hands, but open arms and He desires us to put all our trust in Him.

Scripture continually expounds God's passionate love and goodness toward His children. 2 Cor 6:18 states, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

C. What Motivates Us To Serve God?

Fear? Selfish gain? A desire to be successful? A need to be accepted by others? Surely if this is the motivation, we do not know God!

He is our Father and we are His children. He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19) and in response to His divine care and protection, we need to serve and obey Him. 1 John 5:3a says, "This is love for God: to obey His commands."

If we know our God as Scripture reveals Him, and also His love for us, His sons and daughters, then serving Him will not only come naturally, but will be a privilege. Think of how a young child looks upon his father with awe and passionately defends and boasts about his dad among his friends: "My dad's bigger than your dad," "My dad's cleverer than your dad," and so it goes on.

We need to be like children: we need to love and serve our heavenly Father simply because He loved us first. We need to seek out opportunities to boast about Him and to tell others of our love for Him.

D. Receiving God's Love For Us

We live in an "if ... then ..." society where acceptance is performance-orientated and therefore conditional. Many children believe that they are only worthy to receive the love of their parents if they receive a good report card, if they are successful in sport, or if they work hard around the house. Their concept of love is that it is conditional: if you perform, then you will be loved and accepted.

The 'agape' love of our God is so very different—God is love (1 Jn 4:16). Because He is love, His very nature means that we do not need to do anything to get Him to love us. All He desires is that we be found in His presence and receive His love. As with any love relationship, there needs to be both giving and receiving of love.

What is your response to God when he tells you that he loves you? Do you tenderly receive his love or do you anxiously and actively search for a way to earn His approval? 1 John 3:1a puts it this way, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"

If you have been disappointed by your natural father, soak yourself daily in scriptures that portray the qualities of your heavenly Father—for it is only truth that will set you free (Jn 8:32).

E. Your Father Revealed

Your real Father is waiting eagerly to reveal Himself to you; all He desires is that you ask Him.

E.1. Adopting Father

- Eph 1:4b-5a In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ.
- Eph 1:11a In Him we were also chosen.
- Jn 1:12-13 Yet to all who received Him, to all who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, ... but born of God.
- Rom 8:15a For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.
- Gal 4:4b-5 God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.
- 2 Cor 6:18 a I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters.

E.2. Father To The Fatherless And Defender Of Widows

- Ps 68:5a-b A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows.
- Deut 10:18a He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow.
- Ps 146:9a The Lord ... sustains the fatherless and the widow.
- Ps 68:6a God sets the lonely in families.

E.3. Covenant-Keeping Father

- Isa 54:10 "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor My covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Isa 61:8b-9 In My faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.

See also Lk 15:11-31 for the story of the prodigal son clearly depicting God's amazing love and grace in keeping covenant with His children.

E.4. Rewarding Father

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Mat 6:3-4 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Mat 10:41-42 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

Mat 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Eph 6:7-8 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

E.5. Prayer-Answering Father

Lk 11:9-13 So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

Jas 4:2d You do not have, because you do not ask God.

- Jn 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in My Name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My Name, and I will do it.
- Jn 16:23-24 In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. I tell you the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name.

E.6. Giving Father

- Mat 6:25-33 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- Ps 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart.
- Ps 34:9-10 Fear the LORD, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
- Mat 7:11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!

E.7. Forgiving And Redeeming Father

- 1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
- Lk 15:21-24 The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate.
- Mat 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Jesus' prayer at Calvary is a dramatic demonstration of God's forgiveness!

E.8. Disciplining Father

- Heb 12:7-11 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and life! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
- Prov 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the LORD'S discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in.

God's discipline as Father produces righteousness, peace and joy. Psalm 66:18 indicates God's silence as His discipline. If you are not hearing God, ask yourself: Did you obey what He last said to you?

E.9. Loving Father

- Jn 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- 1 Jn 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.
- Jn 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that He lay down His life for His friends.
- 1 Jn 3:6 No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him.
- Rom 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

*"For Your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ps 33:12-19 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

We are the "apple of His eye" (Deut 32:10, Ps 17:8, Zech 2:8), His treasured possession (Ex 19:5). At the end of the world His sons and daughters will be His inheritance: a bride (Rev 21:9-10) for His son for all eternity.

See also Lk 15:11-32 for the story of the prodigal son.

F. The Father-Heart of God Chain

Using the above scriptures, select those that have touched your heart and create your own chain here:

Chapter V: Our Hope

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
(1 Pet 1:3-5)*

A. Introduction

Our salvation is the most wonderful and significant experience and event in our lives! We are saved out of a life of sin and separation from God and into a new life of relationship and purpose with God – a life which He has prepared in advance for us. This chapter explains what is waiting for us in the future.

B. Our future destination.

Heaven is our home

The Bible tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven is that place where God lives and rules and that we are citizens of this Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the ruler of all creation and has been given all authority in creation. This is expressed in Ephesians 1:20-23 as follows:

“ . . . Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”

Our relationship with Jesus is so intimate that we are described as being “in Christ” (See Eph 1:3-13 and Col 3:3.) We live now as “aliens” on earth though our home is in Heaven (Phil 3:20).

Jesus promised the disciples that He would return to take them to a place He had prepared for them. In John 14:2-3 Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am."

B.2. We see Him Face to Face

The goal of our being in Christ is to know the Lord in such a way that there is nothing between us and that we will see Him face to face. In 1 Corinthians 13:12 we read, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." Our future is to know Him and to enjoy Him forever.

B.3. What happens at death ?

When a believer dies, his earthly body ceases to function as his spirit leaves and is immediately present with God (2 Cor 5:4-8). Death is not annihilation or ceasing to exist, but "living" forever in the presence of the Lord (Mat 22:31-32). Clearly, to be in the presence of God is far more desirable than to remain in this fallen world. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21). The life we live in the presence of God is very different from what we experience here. The Bible talks of Heaven as a place where there is no more night, no crying, tears or sorrow (Rev 22:3). There we will see God face to face and know all the answers to questions we have had while on earth (1 Cor 13:12). While Heaven is totally different from earth there is also some continuity. Read 1 Corinthians 15 for a fuller picture.

The "grain" principle presented in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 teaches us about the nature of what is to come after death.

There is a direct continuity between what is planted and dies and what comes up. The basic material of the original seed is still contained in the plant that grows up out of the buried seed.

Definite changes occur in the plant that grows up out of the seed in form and appearance. The nature of the original seed determines the nature of the plant that grows up out of it.

The illustration means that a person buried in a "lost" state will rise to a state lost to God - a "redeemed" person rises to live in God's presence.

B.4. The Resurrection of the Dead.

The biblical truth about the "Resurrection of the Dead" is the fifth of the "elementary teachings" in Hebrews 6:1-2, and it is to form part of the foundation in the lives' of believers.

Jesus' resurrection is significant, and separates Jesus from all the false messiahs and prophets, for none of them have been resurrected from the dead (Rom 1:4). We see clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 that Jesus is both the pioneer and forerunner of all believers, who will all be resurrected like He was.

At the resurrection our bodies will be changed and raised up as incorruptible (1 Cor 15:51-53). God will supernaturally reassemble our matter into a glorious new eternal body.

There will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked (Acts 24:14-16; 1 Pet 1:3-5). John 5:28-29 says, "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

This is vitally important for our faith, as it gives us an eternal perspective of life – OUR HOPE!

C. The Resurrection Chain

Heb 6:1-2

Jn 5: 28-29

1 Cor 15:20-23

Jn 11:25-26

Phil 1:21

1 Cor 15:35-58

1 Thes 4:13-18

Rev 20:1-6

Rev 20:11-15

D. What about Judgement, Rewards and Hell?

We have learned in the previous chapter about the Father-heart of God and know that He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. (Ps 145:8). We see in Hebrews 12: 23b that, "You have come to God, the judge of all men" and that God is the Supreme Authority over ALL – heaven, earth, angels and people (Ps 145:17).

All of creation will give account to God for their lives and be judged according to their deeds. Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned. Those who have never heard about the Law will be judged apart from the Law while those who sin under the Law will be judged by the Law (Rom 2:12). We read in Romans 3:19, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."

Because we are "in Christ", we have been declared "not guilty" and are free of the penalty of death, for Christ has been judged "guilty" in our place when He died on the cross for us (Col 1:21-23; Isa 43:25).

This does not mean we will not give an account of our lives before God. Romans 14:10b-13 reads, "For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."

Believers will be judged and rewards given after our “works” have been tested (1 Cor 3:13-15). This testing is not to determine our salvation but our rewards (See also Mat 25:14-30).

All unbelievers, the Antichrist and fallen angels will also be judged at the final judgement (Rev 20:11-15). Those whose names are not found in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire. (See also Mat 25:31-46).

E. Eternal Judgement Chain

Heb 6:1-2

Heb 12:22-24

Jn 5:22-30

1 Cor 3:11-15

Mat 25:14- 46

Rev 20:11-15

F. Are these “The Last Days”¹ ?

We certainly are living in exciting times! The bible indicates that the final days will be characterized by: false prophets, deceiving signs, antichrists, apostasy, selfish and self-seeking generations, a great witnessing and the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, a falling away of some that may look like very strong Christians. (See Mat 24, Mk 13, Lk 21, 1Tim 4, 2Thes 2). But despite these general characteristics, Jesus told us that no one knows the day when He will return besides The Father (Mat 24:36).

Jesus promised that He would return to the earth to gather all believers to Himself and that there would be a number of events which we could anticipate.

In no specific or chronological order they are:

The Rapture, The Millennium, The Second Coming of Christ, The New Heaven and The New Earth, Ongoing Persecution, The Wedding Feast, The Resurrections, The Great White Throne Judgement.

We live in the time between the first coming of Jesus (The Advent) and the second coming of Jesus (The Parousia). Jesus has been raised to the right hand of God and given all authority in the present age and in the age to come (Eph 1:20-23).

In Matthew chapters 24 and 25 Jesus repeatedly stated that we will not know when He will come again but are to live in the expectancy that it could be today (2 Pet 3:8-10). Our lives are not to be caught up in the events of this world, be they mundane, tragic, or popular. We are to live as strangers passing through (1 Pet 2:11-12).

1. Eschatology is the technical term for the biblical doctrines of the last days.

Peter warns us in his second epistle, "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him."
(2 Pet 3:11-14).

G. Last Days Chain

Mat 24: 36-51, 25:1-46

Dan 12:4

Jud 1:14-15

1Tim 4:1-4

2Tim 3:1-5

2Thes 2:1-12

Rev 1-22

Chapter VI: Worship

Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with tambourine and dancing, praise Him with the strings and flute, praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with resounding cymbals. (Ps 150:3-5)

The word of God calls us to live our entire lives as an act of worship (Rom 12:1). The purpose of this chapter is to teach some of the key principles of biblical worship with music and song, stirring the reader to a deeper relationship with the Father. For many, the area of worship is dictated by their preference and comfort, but it is our desire as an eldership to let the truth of Scripture fashion and shape this expression of our relationship with the Father.

A. The Heart Of Worship

“I’ll bring you more than a song,
for a song in itself is not what you have desired.
You search much deeper within,
through the way things appear,
you’re looking into my heart.

“I’m coming back to the heart of worship,
‘cos it’s all about you,
it’s all about you, Jesus.
I’m sorry, Lord, for the things I’ve made it,
for it’s all about you, Jesus!”
(Matt Redman and Martin Smith)

Worship is not just a song, nor can it be reduced to a musical progression: no, it is far more than that. The very heartbeat of worship is a natural overflow of our relationship with the Father. Man would love to label and categorize it, but mere definitions cannot express the fullness of worship as God intended it. In essence, it is an expression of our ardent adoration in response to His tender love, a discovering of Him as He reveals His wonder to us. Worship is a relationship. Let us not be ‘dazed’ by the labels, rather let us be ‘dazzled’ by our Lord. And remember that we love Him and respond to Him in worship “because He first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19). We will now study some of the expressions of worship found in the Old and New Testaments.

B. Old Testament Expressions Of Worship

There are several Hebrew words found in the Old Testament that are translated as a single English word 'praise.' Let's examine these to gain a fuller understanding of biblical worship. You will notice how they flow naturally into the New Testament.

B.1. Barak (Ps 96:2)

"To bless, to prostrate or to kneel as an act of adoration."

"But I, by Your great mercy, will come into Your house; in reverence will I bow down toward Your holy temple." (Ps 5:7) This shows a wonderful illustration of how David, who set an outstanding example of worship in the Bible, would enter the house of God to bow in adoration to his King. Examples can also be found in the New Testament, for example, Rev 4, 5 and Rev 7.

B.2. Yadah (Ps 28:7)

"To revere or worship with extended hands."

A further example in the New Testament is found in 1 Timothy 2:8 where Paul encourages the people to "lift up holy hands" as they approach the Lord.

B.3. Towdah (Ps 50:23)

"To give a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving with extended hands."

B.4. Shabach (Ps 63:3)

"To praise in a loud tone."

Shouting is not a sign of irreverence but is welcomed by the Father. Many scriptures speak of it. As examples consider Ps 47:1 and Ps 66:1, but there are many more. "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission." (Heb 5:7). Submission and reverence are attitudes of the heart, not necessarily the silencing of the emotions or the restriction of expression.

B.5. Zamar (Ps 108:3)

"To worship on an instrument."

God has made room for a myriad of instruments with all kinds of sounds and rhythms. We see that our instruments become expressions of our hearts. The instrument of our body is surely the most important of all instruments, expressing the attitude of our heart. Romans 12:1 urges us to offer our lives as a reasonable act of worship and this incorporates all that we do. See also Psalm 150.

B.6. Halal (Ps 35:18)

“To shine, to rave, to be clamorous and foolish. To abandon your reputation.”

“David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.” (2 Sam 6:14-15)

David was someone who knew to bow low in reverence, but he also understood when to honour the Lord with passionate expressions of dance and praise. This meant that his reputation as a king would be on the line as well as his preferences. He knew it was all worth it though!

B.7. Tehillah (Ps 22:3)

“To sing your ‘halals.’ The kind of worship God loves to inhabit.”

B.8. Summary

Music, dancing and extravagant outward expression were very much part of Israel’s culture. These expressions were associated with all their social events, victories and defeats, prophetic activity, coming in and going out. Therefore, when they praised the Lord it was a natural activity.

There is both the stillness of bowing before the majestic King, as well as the passion and exuberance of joy as we join with Him in rejoicing (Zep 3:17). If we give ourselves to the full expression of worship and not give in to our fears and the pressures of man, we will surely enjoy and experience the breadth of life that the Father has intended for His children!

C. New Testament Expressions Of Worship

“But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.” (Heb 8:6)¹

We must realize that Jesus did not do away with the expressions of worship found in the Old Covenant, but rather built on them releasing a fullness that the law could not bring. In the same way that we do not do away with secondary education as we move on to university (but rather use it as a springboard) so previous expressions of worship remain and are still relevant, providing the foundation of greater worship.

We should also realize the dimension of worship that Jesus introduced. Prior to His death and resurrection, the ark of the covenant of the Lord (on which the presence and glory of God rested) was separated from the Israelites by a veil (curtain). The ark remained in the Most Holy Place² of the temple and only the high priest was allowed to enter it once a year on behalf of the

1. That is, the priestly ministry of Jesus is superior to the ministry of the Old Testament priests and the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant
 2. In some Bibles the Most Holy Place is called the Holy of Holies (as in king of kings or song of songs, that is, the Holy of Holies is the most holy of that which is holy).

people. God separated His manifest presence from the people due to their sin, for sin had to be judged in the presence of a holy God. This would have resulted in their immediate death.

The sacrifice of Jesus, atoning for man's sin, made way for all who receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour to enter freely into the presence of the Most High. Jesus tore the curtain of separation at His death opening the way to the Father!

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith." (Heb 10:19-22a)

"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." (Mat 27:50-51a). See also Mk 15:38 and Lk 23:45.

This remarkable event resulted in the provision of the fullness of worship that the Father always desired: intimacy. Prior to Jesus' work on the cross this intimacy was limited due to the pervading cloud of sin. However, all of this has changed.

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (Jn 4:23-24)

In the above quote, Jesus speaks of the worship for which the Father is searching. The Greek word here translated as 'worship' is 'proskuneo' which literally means 'to come forward to kiss,' thus expressing His heart of intimacy with His people that only Jesus could usher in. This radical intimacy surely infringes on our comforts and preferred 'personal spaces' and is something with which we must grow comfortable.

Not only did Jesus usher in radical intimacy in worship, but He also called for worship in 'truth.' 'Truth' speaks of worship from the heart and incorporates a lifestyle of adoration. Romans 12:1 is a call for a life of worship:

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship." Not just on a Sunday at church meetings, but every day in every situation and with all that He has given us.

"So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet 4:11b).

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Cor 10:31).

The following scriptures give us the knowledge that worship was an integral part of New Testament life: Mat 26:30 (Mk 14:26), Eph 5:19,20, Col 3:16, Acts 16:25, Jam 5:13, 1 Cor 14:15-17, Heb 2:12, Lk 19:37, Phil 4:4, Lk 15:25 & Phil 3:3.

The book of Revelation shows us a wonderful picture of reverence and intimacy (Rev 4-5, Rev 7, Rev 11, Rev 14), clearly demonstrating the fullness of New Testament worship.

Revelation 4:8-11 reveals what worship ought to be: an increasing revelation of God when in His presence, a bowing down and laying down of 'crowns' in awe and reverence and a passionate proclamation of His majesty and might! "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power."

D. Conclusion

A W Tozer once said that we were created to worship our Father: a relationship of intimate and ardent adoration. We should worship Him on His terms and in a manner worthy of His name. Let us not be found offering God second best in this area.

Remember that there will be no more preaching, teaching, evangelism or church-planting in heaven, for there will be no need of it. Only one thing will remain as we gaze upon the beauty of His splendor and the wonders of His mighty hand: passionate praise will pour from our lips in worship of our Great King. Let us discover its dimensions, live the lifestyle, and enjoy: for worship is our eternal ministry!

E. The Worship Chain

Rom 12:1

Jn 4:23-24

1 Cor 10:31

Eph 5:19,20

Col 3:16

1 Cor 14:15

Phil 4:4

Ps 150

Chapter VII: Prayer and Fasting

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to Him? (Deut 4:7)

A. What Is Prayer?

A dictionary will give you a rather dry definition of prayer, but the Bible gives an epic picture of it being a dynamic communion with the living God – whom Jesus revealed as our loving Father. The same God who walked with Adam in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day (Gen 2-3) desires our close fellowship today.

Jesus says in Mark 12:30 that the most important commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Genuine prayer is thus everything to do with relationship and nothing to do with empty religion or ritual – it’s a love relationship involving dialogue with God.

Man is the crown of God’s creation, made in His image, for fellowship with Him. “I will take you as My own people and I will be your God” (Ex 6:7) echoes like a refrain throughout Scripture.

Remember that the Bible shows us that through Adam’s disobedience we are born sinful and that sin separates us from God (sin cannot come near His holiness). But God so loved us that He sent His son Jesus to die for us on the cross. Jesus’ death makes atonement for our sin and gives us direct access to the Father (Jn 3:16-17). While we were still sinners God reached out to save us. How much more now that we are believers, co-heirs with Jesus, is our heavenly Father concerned about us.

In the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, that is, gain access to the presence of God, and then only once a year after complex ritual requirements had been completed.

In the New Testament, under the New Covenant, Christ’s death gives all who believe in Him direct access to God’s presence. The book of Hebrews explains why priests are no longer necessary as mediators between us and God. The resurrected Jesus, our great High Priest, now seated at the right hand of the Father, is our mediator. He gives us confidence to come boldly to the throne of grace to “receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”.

John 1:12 says of Jesus: “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.” It is an awesome thing when we realize that the Creator of all things desires to have a personal relationship with us and that He knows us by name.

In Matthew 6:7-8 Jesus says: “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." God's love and knowledge of us is emphasized here. We are not strangers to Him because He lovingly created us and through prayer we can discover Him.

In Matthew 6:9 Jesus then gave a pattern for prayer. Any good Bible commentary will elucidate¹ the principles of prayer contained in this pattern. The opening line is, "Our Father in heaven." Seeing God as Father was a radical concept for the people of Christ's day. His use of the Aramaic term of endearment, "Abba", meaning "Daddy", was revolutionary.

John 20:17b says: "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." What an awesome privilege to be able to come to the Creator of the universe and be received as His child.

B. Why Should We Pray?

Throughout Scripture we see God desiring a relationship with His people. We need to pray because without communication there is no relationship. Isaiah 55:6 encourages us to "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near." Ephesians 6:18a urges, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Matthew 6:9 exhorts us to "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18a says: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances."

We need to abide in Christ for without Him we can do nothing (Jn 15:5), and we do this through a life of increasing prayer.

As we pray in the Spirit, He helps us to align ourselves with God, since He is our Teacher. "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (1 Cor 2:13). Prayer moves God's hand and changes us and circumstances.

In prayer we find grace to forgive, courage to admonish, as well as strength to persevere and zeal to run the race God has placed before us.

1. That is, to throw light on, or to explain.

C. Examples Of Prayer

C.1. Examples In The Old Testament

- Abraham (Gen 18:22).
- Jacob (Gen 32:24).
- Moses (Ps 90).
- Joshua (Josh 10:12).
- Hannah (1 Sam 1).
- Elijah (1 Kings 18:36).
- Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:14).
- Jonah (Jonah 2:1).

C.2. Examples Of Jesus Praying

- In secret (Lk 5:16).
- In public (Jn 11:41).
- In solitary places (Mk 1:35, Mat 14:23).
- Through the night (Lk 6:12).
- Before daybreak (Mk 1:35).
- During crises (Mat 26:36-44).
- After His baptism (Lk 3:21).
- Before choosing disciples (Lk 6:12).
- With loud cries and tears (Heb 5:7).
- On the cross (Lk 23:46).

D. Jesus' Teaching On Prayer

<i>Example</i>	<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Reference</i>
A friend going to borrow loaves	Importunity ¹	Lk 11
The woman and the unjust judge	Tenacity	Lk 18:1-8
The Pharisee and the tax collector praying	Humility/Penitence	Lk 18:10-14
The unmerciful servant and his debt	Charity/Forgiveness	Mat 18:21
Praying in secret and with simple, unpretentious words	Simplicity	Mat 6:5, Mat 23:14
Standing firm, watching and praying for one hour	Intensity	Mk 14:38, Mat 26:41
Two or three agreeing in Jesus' name	Unity	Mat 18:19
When you pray, believe that you have received	Expectancy	Mat 6:6

1. That is, persistent or pressing requests.

E. How Should We Pray?

Christ is our pattern. Paul says we should imitate him as He imitates Christ (see 1 Cor 11:1 and 1 Cor 4:16, Heb 6:12, Heb 13:7 and 1 Jn 2:6). "So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on My own but speak just what the Father has taught Me. The one who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him'." (Jn 8:28-29) We need to be the same, understanding that prayer is essentially a heart turned towards God at all times. Paul urges us to pray without ceasing.

Scripture shows people praying in many different ways.

- With intelligible words (Neh 1:5-11).
- In a tongue (1 Cor 14:2).
- With groans (Rom 8:23, 1 Sam 1, Ex 2:23).
- In poetry or song (see the Psalms for many examples).
- With cries (Heb 5:7, Mat 27:46).
- Silently (Neh 2:4).

F. Hindrances To Prayer

The Bible teaches that there are things that stop God from acting on our prayers. Although the Bible encourages us to turn to God in prayer because He hears us and works through our prayer, there are warnings in the Bible against certain things that hinder our prayer life with God. Below are a few examples. If we find such hindrances in our lives we need to start making adjustments.

F.1. Unforgiveness And Resentment

Matthew 5:22-24 teaches that we are not to remain angry with our brothers (primarily fellow Christians). It also teaches us that before we come to God with our gifts we should deal with outstanding issues between one another, even if the resentment is from a brother towards us. Also, 1 Timothy 2:8 teaches that we should not have disputes or anger between each other when we pray.

F.2. Unresolved Relational Tension At Home

In 1 Peter 3:7 we are taught that we should keep our relationships on the home front in a godly state to ensure that there are no obstacles in our prayer lives. Ongoing, unresolved relational tension between family members (especially husband and wife) can become a hindrance in our prayer lives.

F.3. Wrong Motives

As we get closer to God we may fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others (Gal 6:3-4). We need to beware of this because it can make our religion into a set of empty works. (See Lk 18:10-14 and 2 Chron 7:14). James 4:3 goes on to tell us that we also do not receive from God when we ask with wrong motives. We need to pray in Jesus' name (and thus in accordance with His nature) for our prayers to be effective.

F.4. Unrighteousness

In Micah 3:4 we see how God chooses not to answer His people because of their lifestyles of injustice and wickedness. We are separated from God by sin (Mat 27:46, Ps 22:1-5) and we need to ensure that we are dealing with any patterns of sin in our lives so that our relationship with Him grows: then He will be attentive to our prayers (Ps 34:15-16).

F.5. Deliberate, Unconfessed Sin

When we choose to run from God when we have sinned, we separate ourselves from God so that He does not listen to us (Ps 66:18). Rather, when we sin we should turn to Him for forgiveness and He will show mercy (Prov 28:13). We may not continue to sin deliberately thinking that God will just ignore our sin because of His love (Heb 10:26). He is Holy and desires us to seek holiness too.

F.6. Not Giving God His Right Priority In Our Lives

It is good for us to set apart special time for God (Mk 1:35). In Malachi 1:6-10 God tells us that He is not interested in second class offerings – He wants the best. He wants our best time and our best effort. Luke 14:26 teaches us that compared to God all other things take second place – even those things that are very important. God does not want a “lukewarm” church (Rev 3:16). Yes, we can pray whenever we have spare time, but God wants more than just spare time. Time devoted to prayer pleases God.

F.7. Not Praying

James 4:2b states the rather obvious: “You do not have, because you do not ask God.” We cannot complain that we are not getting answers if we aren't even asking. (See also Phil 4:6).

F.8. Not Listening

At first we may not be used to hearing God's voice (1 Sam 3:7-11). But we should persevere and ask God to speak to us through His word and by His Spirit. In time we will be able to hear Him more. As His sheep we must listen to His voice (Jn 10:27). When we read the Word and pray we develop our ability to hear God.

F.9. Summary

Amos 7:4-6 shows that when we are in right standing with God our prayers are very powerful and effective. This is our desire as we do not want God to turn a deaf ear to us (Ps 28:1-2). Because we know that God is a loving God who desires to meet with us we have confidence when we come to Him in prayer (1 Jn 5:14-15). Because we desire to be closer to Him we make adjustments to our lives. We do this by trusting in His grace and by making biblical decisions.

G. Prayer Chain

Mat 6:9
Phil 4:6
Mat 6:9
1 Thes 5:16-18a
Jn 15:5
1 Cor 2:13
1 Tim 2:8
1 Pet 3:7
Heb 10:26
Jas 4:2b

H. Fasting

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said....
(Acts 13:2)

John Wesley said, "Some have exalted religious fasting beyond all Scripture and reason; and others have utterly disregarded it." The balance, as always, lies in the truth contained in God's word.

Note also that one's lifestyle must match one's zeal for disciplines such as fasting (Isa 58). Fasting is not an alternative to a godly lifestyle, but a companion thereof.

I. What Is Fasting?

Fasting is a Scriptural discipline in which all Christians should be involved at some stage in their Christian walk. We want to give the simplest and most practical definition that we can, from which we can then work.

Fasting is abstinence from satisfying various physical appetites for the sake of prayer and seeking God.

This could include abstaining from solid food, liquids, body lotions, marital relations or any combination of these things listed. The importance of the

phrase, “for the sake of prayer,” found in the definition above is that fasting is not dieting for legalistic purposes nor is it hunger striking. Further, it must be pointed out clearly, that fasting cannot be used as a means to twist God’s arm. Rather, it is to quicken spiritual perception and enhance our prayer life and it is done in obedience to God’s word.

J. Why Should We Fast?

Jesus deals with fasting during his sermon on the Mount (Mat 6). He spoke of fasting here in the same context as prayer and almsgiving. We know that these things are part of the righteous person’s lifestyle. Of course, righteousness comes not from our works but from faith in Jesus. However, it does appear from the context that Jesus expected His followers to adopt some form of fasting in their lives.

In Matthew 6:16-18 Jesus said “when you fast” not “if you fast,” the inference being that His disciples would have a lifestyle incorporating fasting.

In Matthew 9:14, disciples of John the Baptist approached Jesus asking Him why they and the Pharisees fasted, but His disciples did not. Jesus responded by saying that they could not be expected to fast while the bridegroom was with them (referring to Himself), but a time would come when He would be taken away and then the disciples would fast. (He could not have been referring only to the three day period during which He was in the grave since the disciples fasted after His ascension. In Acts 13 we see that the leaders of the church in Antioch fasted. This indicates fasting after Jesus’ ascension.) Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven where He is interceding for us (Rom 8:34), and He expects his followers to enter into the life He taught. This includes fasting.

Now that we have discussed that Jesus anticipated that His disciples would fast, let us briefly take a look at some of the benefits of fasting.

J.1. Fasting Heightens Spiritual Awareness

From practical experience and from the account of Jesus’ fast (Lk 4:1-13) we discover that denying physical appetites creates a greater awareness of spiritual reality. It enhances our perception of what is going on in the spiritual realm. This is, of course, of great advantage in our prayer life.

J.2. Contact With The Enemy

Once again from experience and Jesus’ fast we discover that fasting can force a contact/combat situation with the enemy, or it can arise out of a combat situation. This happens because breakthrough is imminent, we are weak physically and therefore vulnerable to temptation and the enemy fears the effects of our prayers. This contact often takes the form of a battle in our minds as the enemy assaults our beliefs, accuses us or brings condemnation.

As Jesus did in His time of fasting, we are to combat these attacks with the Word of God.

J.3. Spiritual Breakthrough

When Jesus returns from His time of fasting and praying in the wilderness, Luke records these words: "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside" (Lk 4:14).

Many times when we fast and pray God releases power into our physical circumstances. In the Old Testament there is an account recorded of God's deliverance of His people in Judah from a "vast enemy army." Jehosaphat proclaimed a fast and all Judah sought the Lord's help. God spoke prophetically through Jahaziel of the deliverance of His people. Thereafter God brought about breakthrough in the ensuing battle. The account is recorded in 2 Chronicles 20:3-24.

J.4. Fasting Flushes Out Toxins¹

During a time of fasting, especially extended fasting, many believe that the body has an opportunity to expel toxins that have built up over months. Some believe that for this reason our first extended fast can be quite uncomfortable, with headaches and mild dizziness.

J.5. Time Gain In Your Daily Routine

On average people devote some 2-4 hours to eating and related activities each day. During a water fast this time can be spent in prayer or Scripture reading and study. On a simple calculation during a week of fasting, assuming we gain 3 hours each day, we gain an additional 21 hours of time to be used for prayer and the Word.

J.6. Rest For The Vital Organs

Many believe that during a time of fasting the stomach and other body organs are given a much needed time of respite. This is one of the reasons why many doctors say fasting is a healthy practice.

K. How Should We Fast?

The pattern of fasting in Scripture can be divided into three types, described in this section.

K.1. Normal Fast

An example of no solid food is recorded in Luke 4:1-2. Most scholars agree that to the Hebrew interpreter of Scripture this would be a water only type fast. Many, however, see it as a liquids only fast, in other words, including various drinks.

K.2. Partial Fast

An example of no delicacies, meat, wine or lotions for three weeks is found in Daniel 10:2-3. For abstaining from marital relations by mutual consent, see 1 Cor 7:3-5.

1. This point and the following points are physical, circumstantial and health benefits to fasting. They are not necessarily directly related to the spiritual benefits but are important to note.

K.3. Absolute Fast

For examples of no food or water see Ezra 10:6, Ester 4:16 and Acts 9:9. This is up to three days in length and never any longer. On the issue of absolute fasting Richard Foster, the author of *Celebration of Discipline*, writes: "It should be underscored that the absolute fast is the exception and should never be engaged in unless one has a very clear command from God, and then for no more than three days."

L. When Should We Fast?

We offer three basic guidelines that are useful in helping one to determine when to fast.

L.1. Called By The Spirit To Fast

In Luke 4:1-2 we see that Jesus was led by the Spirit into His time of fasting, hence we should be open to the Spirit leading us into our times of fasting.

L.2. Called To A Fast By Church Leaders

Hebrews 13:17 tells us to obey our leaders. When the leaders hear from God and call the church to fast, we obey God's word by obeying the leadership. An example of a leader proclaiming a fast can be found in Ezra 8:21.

L.3. Deciding To Fast

This is choosing a date and setting it aside as part of the disciplined lifestyle of a follower of Jesus. Caution should be exercised here especially for those who have ascetic and legalistic tendencies.

M. Cautions And Guidelines In Fasting

Fasting includes within it the component of prayer. Abstinence from food without prayer is hunger striking, not fasting. Fasting is only a part of the disciple's lifestyle.

To get started you may try shorter, partial fasts. You can build up to extended water fasts.

If there is any medical reason why you should not fast, or if you suspect any medical reason why you should not fast (for example, pregnancy or diabetics), then get qualified medical advice. If there is a corporate fast and you have a medical condition, you are pregnant or you do a lot of physical labour in your work, please speak to the elders. In this way you can still participate in some way and enjoy the benefits of the community's fast.

Seriously consider skipping gym and other strenuous physical exercise during a fast. A lifestyle of fasting has wonderful spiritual benefits and some healthy physical ones too.

M.1. Advice For Those Preparing For Longer Fasts

In preparing for a long fast you should exercise caution and cut out solids from your diet step by step. As a general guideline you should cut out the following foods, in the following order:

Complex proteins: red meat and fish.

Dairy and eggs.

Cereals: rice and wheat.

Vegetables and fruit.

Those who are embarking on a longer fast for the first time should be warned that experiencing mild dizziness and headaches is normal.

M.2. Breaking The Fast

In breaking the fast one would usually follow the preparation process in reverse:

- Vegetables and fruit.
- Cereals: rice and wheat.
- Dairy and eggs.
- Complex proteins: red meat and fish.

Note that breaking any fast of 3-40 days in an unwise way can be an extreme shock to the system. Get qualified medical advice before undertaking any long term fast.

Chapter VIII: The Bible

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
(2 Tim 3:16-17)

A. What We Believe About The Bible

We believe that it is perfectly reasonable and logical to accept that the God of Creation would choose to communicate with man (His creature), and that man, created in the image of God, would be able to understand and respond to that communication in some way.

Examples of ways in which God has communicated to man:

- Creation (Ps 19:1-4, Rom 1:18-20).
- Conscience (Rom 1:32, Rom 2:14-15).
- Jesus (Jn 14:7-9, Heb 1:3a).
- The Bible (2 Tim 3:15-17, 2 Pet 1:20-21).

To us the Bible is of extreme importance since it is the surest, clearest and most detailed account of God's revelation to us concerning His character, salvation plan and other truth. In the words of Nigel Day-Lewis, "The Bible is the divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant record of all God's revelation to mankind, and is our final authority in all matters of life and doctrine. It contains everything we need to know for salvation, and nothing can or must ever be subtracted from or added to it." The Bible is divinely inspired and therefore infallible and inerrant. The five theories of inspiration are defined as follows:

1. The Intuition theory says that the Scriptures were the product of the natural religious genius of the several human authors.
2. The Illumination theory says that the Holy Spirit merely heightened the normal powers of the authors and no special communication of truth was involved.
3. The Dynamic theory states that God directed the authors to the concepts He wanted recorded but allowed them their own choice of words.
4. The Dictation theory says the God dictated the Bible word for word to the human scribes.
5. The Verbal Plenary theory states that God directed the writers of

Scripture so that their product was His Word in their words and every part of its content is inspired.

It is this last view, which correctly captures the meaning of the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Concerning the Inerrancy of the Bible, there are four views:

Absolute inerrancy holds that the Bible is fully true in all matters, including science and history.

Full inerrancy holds that while the Bible does not aim at scientific or historic data, whatever data it does give, is fully true.

Limited inerrancy holds that the Bible is inerrant and infallible in its doctrinal references but that scientific and historical references reflect the understanding current at the time the Bible was written.

Inerrancy of Purpose holds that the Bible inerrantly accomplishes the purposes of bringing people into personal fellowship with Christ.

Because the Bible is God's inspired and perfect revelation to man, we must give it the highest possible authority in our lives (remember the above quote, "... our final authority in all matters of life and doctrine"). Writings, prophetic utterances or spiritual leading that contradict the Bible can't possibly be of God since it differs from God's unchanging truth.

Since the Bible has absolute authority in the Christian's life, it follows that we should give priority to studying it as much as we can, so that we may access the thoughts, the emotions and even the very heart of God.

B. The Structure Of The Bible

The Bible is a library of 66 books, not always arranged chronologically (as we might expect) but sometimes according to literary style. Thus the poetic and prophetic books of the Old Testament fit into the context of the history books. The Epistles¹ often are contextualized by the book of Acts (New Testament history).

Below is a brief outline of the basic structure of the Bible, giving the total number of books by literary category.

1. The letters of the apostles in the New Testament.

<i>Literary Category</i>	<i>Names of Books</i>	<i>Total</i>
Law	Genesis-Deuteronomy	5
History	Joshua-Esther	12
Poetry	Job-Song of Songs	5
Prophecy	Isaiah-Malachi	17
<i>Old Testament Total</i>		<i>39</i>

<i>Literary Category</i>	<i>Names of Books</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gospels	Matthew-John	4
History	Acts	1
Letters	Romans-Jude	21
Prophecy	Revelation	1
<i>New Testament Total</i>		<i>27</i>

The Bible did not just fall out of heaven as is. It was progressively pieced together over a period of about 2,000 years, and contributions of over 40 authors are included. The books of the Bible were all individually scrutinized and verified by various committees and councils to ensure authenticity and inspiration.

C. Ten Reasons Why We Should Study The Bible

C.1. It Shows Us God

There is no easier, better or surer way of getting to know God than through His Word. He has revealed His attributes clearly throughout the Bible and only by reading it will we find out what He is really like.

C.2. It Renews Our Minds

We live in a sin-sick world which is constantly squeezing its sinful values into our minds. Our thoughts determine our actions and therefore it is necessary to ensure that we keep filling our minds with God’s thoughts. The only way to find God’s thoughts is by reading His Word (2 Pet 3:1).

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom 12:1-2).

C.3. It Is An Aid In Spiritual Warfare

God’s word is described as the sword of the Spirit. Thus it is a weapon of warfare against the devil. We need to learn to use it the way Jesus did when He was tempted in the desert. (See Eph 6:17 and Mat 4:1-11).

C.4. It Is A Foundation For Life

Behind God's Word is His faithfulness. If we live our lives in obedience to God's Word, we will never succumb to the storms of difficult and trying times because God's faithfulness to His Word will uphold us. The key is not only to hear God's Word, but to put it into practice. See Mat 7:24-27 and Jas 1:23-25.

C.5. It Equips Us For Good Works

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Eph 2:10)

God has prepared good works for us to do, but unless we are equipped and prepared for them we won't fulfill them as we are supposed to. By reading and studying God's Word we become equipped to fulfill God's purposes.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 3:16-17)

C.6. It Shows Us Ourselves And Reveals Our Sin

When we read the Word, we see the standard of living that God has set and we also become painfully aware of the areas in which we fall short. It's like looking into a mirror to find our appearance is not presentable. This enables us to change and adjust our lives so that we can become the people God desires and also live the lives that God wants us to live (Heb 4:12).

James said, in James 1:21-25, "Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the Word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does."

C.7. It Purifies Our Lives From Sin

Having been made aware of sin in our lives, there is no better way to get rid of it than to see what God has to say about the particular sin involved, and then put God's Word into action. In this way we will learn to hate sin passionately (just as God does) and as a result our lives will be purified. (See Jn 15:3, Jn 17:17 and Eph 5:26).

C.8. It Prevents Us From Sinning

Not only does God's Word reveal our sin and purify us from sin, it also helps prevent us from sinning. If we are fully loaded with God's Word and are confronted with temptation we will be far more likely to emerge victorious (1 Jn 2:1). Psalm 119:9 puts it this way, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your Word."

C.9. It Enables Us To Preach And Teach

When we know the Word of God and that what we are preaching and teaching is founded on the Word of God then we are able to speak with confidence and authority because we know that God's faithfulness is backing us (2 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Tim 4:2). 1 Peter 4:11a states, "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God."

C.10. It Builds Faith

Because God is faithful, we know that His Word is true. God can never fail to keep his promises. Thus by reading God's Word we gain greater assurance and confidence to trust in Him. Romans 10:17 says, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ."

D. How We Should Approach The Bible

A wrong approach to reading the Bible can discourage the greatest enthusiasts. However, a correct approach can greatly enhance any individual's Bible study times and avoid unnecessary discouragement. Some helpful hints follow.

D.1. Read Book By Book

Select the book that you desire to read.

Establish the historical setting of the book. When you understand the political, cultural and spiritual context in which the book was written you will be able to understand the contents of the book much more easily because you can begin to identify with the author and recipients. We recommended the NIV Study Bible, the ESV Study Bible and the ITCC Bible Survey.

Read the book through systematically, rather than reading selected portions or jumping back and forth at random. In this way you are able to follow the author's train of thought and it will help prevent you from using verses out of their context or making them say things which the author never intended.

Remember that neither the chapter and verse numbering system nor the paragraph headings were inspired by the Holy Spirit—they were simply added in for the sake of easy reference—and sometimes the thought that the author wants to communicate can be hijacked if we stop reading at the end of a chapter or paragraph. It is best to look for a clear indication in the text that a particular thought has run its course and that a new one is about to be developed before you stop reading.

D.2. Textual Studies

It is important to note that the Holy Spirit anointed the authors of the Bible as they wrote in their native languages (Old Testament: Hebrew and Aramaic, New Testament: Greek) and that the English translations that we have today cannot always communicate the full richness of the thoughts expressed in the original languages. It is sometimes helpful, therefore, to access the original languages. There are simple, practical books to assist the reader: it is not necessary to learn ancient Greek.

The value of conducting a textual study is that we are enabled to “mine out” the richness of God’s revelation by taking any portion of Scripture (usually quite short) and, with the use of the Strong’s Concordance, Vine’s Expository Dictionary and other helps, accessing each important word and finding out what the full meaning of the original word is. This gives one a much clearer understanding of what the author wanted to say.

D.3. Topical Studies

The value of a topical study is that you are able to gather together all the scriptures relating to any topic you choose. When you have read everything that the Bible has to say about a particular topic or theme, you will have a much clearer idea of what God thinks and feels about it.

The modus operandi is simple: choose a topic or theme and look up the word(s) in the concordance. The complete concordance gives an exhaustive list of all the scriptures that contain the word. You can then read each scripture in the Bible, placing it in its context and making notes of any important points or new themes that develop. Finally, you might want to arrange the material in a logical order and file it for easy reference.

D.4. Devotional Reading

It can be very enriching to take a short portion of Scripture and read it through slowly, thoughtfully and prayerfully. With this approach, the main objective is to take the scripture and apply it in your life.

The main questions you need to ask yourself from the text are:

- What can I learn about God?
- What can I learn about myself?
- What does the text require of me?
- Where am I falling short?
- How can I apply it in my life?

D.5. Hermeneutics (How To Interpret The Bible)

Bible scholars have agreed on several “laws” or “guiding principles” which help the serious Bible scholar to interpret the Bible correctly. This is quite a vast topic which requires much time to study thoroughly since there are many “laws.”

One principle or “law” is worthy of mention, namely the law of simple meaning. This means that you accept that the Bible means exactly what it says (that it is literal) unless there is a clear indication in the text which tells you otherwise. Some poor souls desperately try to spiritualize every text and eventually end up in disastrous error.

E. Summary

The Bible is the inspired and authoritative revelation from God about Himself. It is our only infallible guide to knowing God, understanding ourselves and living a God-glorifying life. Every Christian should devote regular time to reading and studying God’s word.

F. The Bible Chain

- 2 Tim 3:16-17
- 2 Pet 1:20-21
- Jas 1:23-25
- Heb 4:12
- Jas 1:21-25
- Eph 5:26
- 2 Tim 4:2
- Rom 10:17

Chapter IX: Finances And Giving

“Put this money to work,” he said, “until I come back.” (Lk 19:13b)

A. God Is The Source of Everything.

In Psalm 24:1 we read, “The Earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” This scripture clearly reminds us that ownership of everything is Gods and that all we have has been given to us. Similarly,

1 Chronicles 29:10-13 tells us that wealth and honor come from God. This means that we never have ownership of anything and that we are stewards of all that God puts into our hands to use.

Our attitude to everything we have must be that we surrender ownership to God and allow Him to direct us in our use of all His possessions – God owns much more than the tithe! As stewards we will be held accountable (Mat 25:14-30).

We are called to focus our attention on the Kingdom of God and His purpose for us rather than allow ourselves to become caught up in the world’s system of ownership and materialism (See Mat 6:19-34).

A.1. Money Is Not Evil

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” (1 Tim 6:10a) It is the love of money and greed that is evil and not money itself. Money is neutral and can be used for both good and evil. We need wealthy, Kingdom-minded Christians who seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness (Mat 6:33). Being wealthy is not evil, but a blessing. What is important to God is what you do with your money and how you make it. (Clive Pick put it this way: “God is more interested in our financial maturity than our financial comfort”). In the Old Testament, wealth was a blessing for obedience while poverty was a curse for disobedience (Deut 28).

1 Timothy 6:17-19 gives instructions to the wealthy. Wealth is relative and we are commanded to be responsible with our riches. We cannot serve both God and money (Lk 16:13). There are two ways to get enough: one is to accumulate more and the other is to desire less. Money has no eternal value and does not guarantee success in life. It is more important to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

We are not to focus on gaining earthly comforts but to have a lifestyle of contentment.

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what

it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." (Phil 4:11-13)

*"The blessing of the Lord brings wealth,
and He adds no trouble to it." (Prov 10:22)*

See also Prov 8:17-21.

A.2. God Is Not In Need

*"I have no need of a bull from your stall
or of goats from your pens,
for every animal of the forest is Mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills." (Ps 50:9-10)*

*" 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,'
declares the Lord Almighty." (Hag 2:8)*

God does not need our money. The gold is His, the silver is His, the cattle on a thousand hills are His, and, as it so happens, God says that even the thousand hills are His. When we give, we give to the Lord, not to men (2 Cor 8:5), not because the Lord needs it, but to remind ourselves that it belongs to Him (Deut 8:18, Deut 15:15, Deut 24:17). We work because God created us to work, not because God is unable to provide or because God is desperate for our finances. Even if you feel that God desires you to be in the business world at this time, you do not need to compromise your spiritual involvement in the church so that you can "earn more to tithe more", as if God needed your money more than your heart. God does not need rich people to advance His kingdom, He needs available people.

A.3. A God Of Blessing And Prosperity

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 Jn2.KJV)

In this text the word "prosper" (in Greek, "evodoo") literally means "to help on the road" or "succeed in reaching." It clearly implies that divine prosperity is not a passing phenomenon but an ongoing state of success and well-being. It is intended for every area of our lives: the spiritual, the physical, the emotional and the material. However, God does not want one to unduly emphasize any one area, one must maintain a balance.

- *Spiritual Prosperity* - See Lk 4:18 and Lk 6:27-38.
- *Mental Prosperity* - See Phil 4:6.
- *Physical Prosperity*

Health: see 1 Pet 2:24, Mk 16:15-20 and Jas 5:16.

Wealth: see 2 Cor 9:8, Lk 6:38 and Eph 6:8.

B. Giving

We serve a wonderfully generous God. We need to reflect this in living a lifestyle of generosity. There are numerous passages in Scripture exhorting us to live generously. "It is more blessed to give than receive." (Acts 20:35b) The early believers in Acts 2:45 shared all their possessions and no one had any need.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Lk 6:38). Remember that whoever sows generously will also reap generously (2 Cor 9:6).

There are various expressions of giving in Scripture.

B.1. Tithes¹

This is when a proportion of your income is given voluntarily to your church as your contribution toward the expenses of the church. The principle of proportionate giving predates Mosaic Law (see Gen 14:20: Abraham gives to Melchizedek, the king. In Gen 28:20-22 Jacob makes a vow to God that he will give one tenth of what God gave him.) Later the Old Testament law enforced tithing for the nation of Israel (Lev 27:30-33). Tithing was part of Old Testament ethical law and not part of ceremonial law, as such we still tithe today. In the New Testament Jesus approved of tithing as can be seen in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 18:12. In 1 Timothy 5:17 Paul speaks about the remuneration of full time elders as a responsibility of the church. 1 Corinthians 9:14 says that "... the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."

As New Testament believers we are not under Old Testament law, so we are not legally required to tithe to our church; our calling is much higher: Instead of 'servants' Jesus calls us 'friends', because He has told us about what He's doing (John 15:15) and He has invited to contribute toward the building of His kingdom with all of our resources, including our finances. In that regard a voluntary tithe of 10% of your income toward church expenses is a very good way to begin this contribution process.

One can see from the above that tithing is not a law issue, that it predated mosaic law, was enforced by the law and was approved by Jesus and expounded on in the New Testament.

It is a Biblical requirement and pattern that people who are involved in full time ministry be financially supported by those who receive the ministry (1Cor 9:14). Just as in the Old Testament God commanded that the Levites should receive the tithe because they were special servants of the Lord (Num 18:21-24).

The New Testament undergirds the principle of tithing. Jesus was supported by grateful people such as in Luke 8:2-3 and Matthew 27:55. He did not provide for His and His disciples needs by supernatural means only. Judas was His treasurer and looked after financial gifts given to Jesus for the running of His ministry (John 12:6). Jesus said that the worker is worth his wages (Mat 10:9-10). In Acts 4:35 we see that money was laid at the apostles' feet for distribution. We are exhorted to share all good things with our instructors (Gal 6:6). Paul was disappointed that the Philipians were the only church that supported him in the early days of his ministry (Phil 4:15). Paul makes it clear that the Lord's money should be shared with those who are teaching and preaching the word of God (1 Tim 5:18). He argues

1. The term 'tithe' means, a *tenth*.

that it is his right to reap a material harvest from those he serves spiritually. The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel (See 1 Cor 9:1-15).

We ought to tithe to the place where we receive our spiritual blessing. The New Testament's teaching is that in normal circumstances each church should not just be self supporting; but should be able to fund missions and church plants.

The tithe was given on an annual basis in the Old Testament while on a weekly basis in the New Testament. It depends on when you are paid and should be the first-fruits (that is, the first deduction you make). See, for example, Ex 23:19a, Num 18:12 and Neh 10:35-38.

The tithe should not be divided among worthy causes, like para-church organizations, other non-profits, family or friends in need. The tithe should be reserved for the expenses of the local church (see Offerings, Almsgiving and Apostolic Giving below)

In summary, by definition, the tithe is a tenth part of one's gross (pre-tax) income consecrated to God for the ongoing expenses of the local church. A tithe is not given, it is paid. This money is used for running expenses and salaries for people in the service of God's work. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 says, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'" The tithe should thus be brought only to your local church (the storehouse), not to other ministries or other churches.

B.2. Offerings

This money is to be used for things outside of normal local church expenses. As an example, let's look at Ex 25:2 and Ex 25:8, "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give." "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you." See also 1 Chron 29:3-9, Mal 3:8, 2 Cor 8 and 2 Cor 9.

An offering is given over and above tithing. In the Old Testament the tithe was required and offerings were not. In the New Testament offerings are also free-will, for example 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Offerings could be used for special church projects, like building, or for para church giving to worthy missions or non profit organizations.

B.3. Almsgiving

Almsgiving is giving specifically to the poor. "All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do." (Gal 2:10) "For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem." (Rom 15:26).

There are numerous other scriptures supporting this category of giving:

- Mat 6:1-4 Giving to the needy.
- Mat 19:21 Selling your possessions and giving to the poor.
- Lk 3:11 Those with much sharing with those who have none.
- Acts 11:27-30 Giving gifts to the elders to administrate.
- Rom 12:8 Contributing to the needs of others.
- Eph 4:28 Working to have something to share with those who have none.
- Jas 2:14-17 Giving as an expression of good deeds accompanying our faith.
- 1 Jn 3:17 Having pity on those who are in need.

We believe our family (1 Tim 5:8) and the needy in our church have priority in receiving alms. It is wiser to give food, clothing and shelter rather than money.

B.4. Apostolic Giving

This is giving our money towards the extension of God's kingdom into the nations. We should contribute generously to His purpose of world evangelism. We are co-workers with God (1 Cor 3:9). We are to be helping Him carry out His plan of redeeming the world. We should see our giving going out all over the world, carrying the truth to the nations. Paul, the apostle, received gifts from various churches (Phil 4:14-18).

Paul did not use his right of financial support as he thought it would hinder the reception of the gospel in Corinth (1 Cor 9:16-18). In fact we see in quite a few scriptures (Acts 18:3, Acts 20:34, 1 Cor 4:12, 1 Thes 2:9, 2 Thes 3:8) that Paul was not ashamed of doing any sort of work that would help to further the gospel. He did not want to be unduly dependent on others and be a burden to them.

Firebrand, as a church, gives to New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI) and other translocal ministries, and each member is encouraged to do the same, including blessing those who plant churches.

B.5. Practical Hints

- Tithe 10% of your gross salary (taxable income) to your local church.
- The tithe should be first-fruits. Tithe when you receive your salary, wages or other income.
- Mark your contribution clearly, using a note or envelope: tithe, offering, alms or apostolic. (For example, you may mark an envelope put into the offering bowl to indicate that half the amount in the envelope is offering whilst the other half is for alms.)
- Never give out of manipulation or guilt, but rather out of conviction. It is vital to be praying for and heeding God's instruction regarding giving.
- God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:6-8). Don't give reluctantly.
- Think before giving a pledge as this should always be honored.

B.6. Summary

The spirit of the New Testament is to be generous givers on all occasions (a mindset and lifestyle of giving).

*"I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.*

*"They are always generous and lend freely;
their children will be blessed. (Ps 37:25-26)*

*"Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely,
who conducts his affairs with justice." (Ps 112:5)*

*"A generous man will prosper;
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." (Prov 11:25)*

*"A generous man will himself be blessed,
for he shares his food with the poor." (Prov 22:9)*

See also 2 Cor 9 and 1 Tim 6:18.

C. Finances And Faithfulness

What we do with our money is one of the measures God uses to test if we are faithful: to determine who is qualified to handle spiritual riches: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?" (Lk 16:10-12). If we are faithful with the little we can be trusted with more—read the parable of the talents in Mat 25:14-30:

Our faithfulness in finances finds practical expression through the way we budget and use the resources God has given.

C.1. Budgeting

A budget is nothing more than a plan that outlines how you anticipate your income and your spending. We should all budget as part of our stewardship to God in respect of how we manage our money.

C.2. Why Budget

Budgeting helps us prioritize our expenses. We must determine which of our expenses need to be paid first and the nature of these expenses – whether they are fixed (regular every month) or variable (dependent on consumption of a variable i.e. Kw/h of electricity)

Budgeting helps us monitor expenses and manage the flow of money effectively by giving us a big picture of our anticipated financial position. It helps us plan for the future.

The reasons we do not budget are either apathy, laziness, lack of knowledge, fear or a combination of these. A budget should be used as a guideline. Every day financial discipline and decision making should be within the guideline of a budget. This process is to ensure that you live within your means. The general rule of thumb is that we spend and make financial decisions only on the basis of the cash earned /received. If we do not live according to this rule we are spending cash that we do not have and are then in debt.

C.3. Debt

Debt puts under the control of others and we lose our ability to respond freely to what God may direct us to do. Debt causes us to look to man and the world's system for our provision rather than to God. The Bible has much to say about debt.

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law” Rom 13:8.

“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men” 1 Cor 7:23

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender” Prov 22:7

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” Mat 6:24

When already in financial difficulty this disobedience often leads to further debt. (Deut 15:5-6, Deut 28:1-2,12)

D. Putting Our House In Order

“In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: “Set your house in order, for you shall die, you will not recover”.’

2 Kings 20:1

Putting our finances in order is a matter of priority. When we begin to do what God requires in this area we show obedience and open the door for God's blessing. We need to make provision for emergencies and death.

If we don't think and plan ahead we put a burden on those who have to sort out our house for us. Preparation of a Will is an important and necessary act of stewardship.

It is also wise to make copies of all legal and important documents, e.g. ID documents, passports, marriage certificates, etc. and store them in a safe place. Make sure that family members will have access to such documents in the case of emergencies.

E. Rewards For Obedience

God honors obedience before sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22). Whoever gives according to God's instructions will receive untold blessing and reward.

Remember Malachi 3:10: God promises abundant blessing, both materially and spiritually. He will also protect our possessions (Mal 3:11, Deut 11:13-15, Deut 28:12) from our foes, pests, elements, powers and principalities. According to Malachi 3:12, surrounding nations will see the fruit that comes from giving to a generous God. As individuals and families, people will be able to see the spiritual richness and blessing we receive. God's purpose for the Church is that we should be as a delightful land: a paradise of fruitfulness.

God's promise that He will pour out His blessing is conditional on us being obedient to His word and giving accordingly. This is the only situation in which Scripture tells us that we are able to test God (Mal 3:10).

See also Prov 19:17, Prov 25:22, Eze 44:30, Mat 5:43-48, Lk 6:35, Lk 12:33, Lk 14:12-14, Rom 12:13, Heb 13:2, 1 Pet 3:9 and 3 Jn 8.

Jim Elliot, a missionary to the Auca tribe in the Amazon, said the following just before he was martyred at the age of 29, "He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

F. Finance and Giving Chain

Using the scriptures quoted in this chapter, select those that have touched your heart and create your own chain here:

Chapter X: The Church

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. (Eph 3:10)

One of the most foundational and most important aspects to being a Christian is membership of and involvement in the church. We thus need to examine what the church is and what it does and why this is important for us.

The word “church”, is the translation of the Greek word “ecclesia,” which means “the called-out ones,” that is, those called out from fallen humanity, the world, by Jesus: those bought by Him, those who belong to Him. This word tells us at least two important things:

- “Church” refers neither to a building nor to an organization but to a group of people. So the question is not, “What is the Church?” but, “Who is the Church?”
- The Church has a special origin and identity.

The Bible (the book of Ephesians in particular) gives us a number of pictures (analogies) of the church, which taken together, give us a fuller understanding of the identity and ethos, the structure and leadership and the mission and mandate of the church.

A. Pictures Of The Church In Ephesians

A.1. People/Nation

“Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.” (Eph 2:12-13)

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” (Eph 2:19)

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Pet 2:9-10).

This seemingly most innocuous of pictures is perhaps the most powerful. In

the Old Testament these titles were jealously guarded by and for Israel. They alone of all the nations of the earth were God's people, called out from the nations of the earth (Ex 19:5-6). Their unique origin (divine election) gave them a unique and privileged status, identity, purpose and destiny (such as a covenant with God, being recipients of special revelation, having missionary responsibility to the nations and having ancestry of the Messiah).

Now the New Testament audaciously applies these titles to the Church. To believing Jews have been added believing Gentiles to make up the one New Covenant people of God (Eph 2:14-18), the Church, which is now called "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16). The Church is the new (true) Israel, the eschatological (end time) fulfillment of the ancient people of God. Looking at a time line, the Church comes after ethnic Israel; but the Church's election preceded that of ethnic Israel: the latter was preparatory for, and has now been superseded by, the former—just as the Old Covenant was preparatory for and has now been superseded by the New (note how closely 1 Pet 2:9-10 adopts the terminology of Ex 19:5-6).

The Church, therefore, like Old Testament Israel, has a unique and supernatural origin (divine election: founded by God Himself and sovereignly chosen out of all the nations of the world) and thus also a unique and supernatural identity/ status (covenant), responsibility (mission) and destiny (the new heaven and new earth). Throughout history God seeks a people who will be His covenant partner, a people with whom He can fellowship and share His love and life eternally. (What is known as the covenant formula, namely, "I will be your God and you will be my people," is the most repeated phrase in Scripture.) The New Covenant is the perfect and final covenant, and the people of this covenant – the Church – is this people!

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'" (Rev 21:3)

This picture of the Church further tells us that:

- While the church is not primarily an organization, it does involve structure and administration; church leaders rule, govern and administrate the people of God (upholding order, righteousness and justice).
- The "citizens" have both privileges and responsibilities toward the community in which they live (just as other citizens in any secular nation).

A.2. Family/Household

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household." (Eph 2:19).

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.” (Rom 8:16-17)

See also Rom 8:14-17 and Gal 3:26-4:7.

The Church is pre-eminently a family of believers. This means that it is a group of people linked primarily by relationship and not by structure, function or even common belief and practice or shared vision and values (although some of these do add to unity). Thus the maxims: “the Church is an organism not an organization” and “friendship before function.”

We are all God’s children (Jn 1:12, 1 Jn 3:1-2) and heirs. Jesus is our elder brother and co-heir. We are brothers and sisters to all other believers. The godly, natural family is an environment of mutual love, affirmation, rest and renewal, and one in which people can grow up in a secure and unthreatening environment as they receive instruction, encouragement, support, correction and discipline. All this should be true of the church. In this picture the leaders act as parents, raising up their spiritual children—but even the youngest of believers can help their “siblings” in a variety of small ways.

A.3. Building/Temple

“In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.” (Eph 2:21)

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.” (1 Cor 3:16-17)

See also 1 Pet 2:4-8.

The Church is a building of which Jesus is both the cornerstone/foundation and chief builder. He thus ensures its growth and gives it unity. He builds according to a set plan (what is not built on the right cornerstone/foundation is not the Church). He refines each stone and fits it perfectly into the structure; the Greek word used by Peter for “stones” is not “petros” (rough stones) but “lithos” (carefully worked stones): the building thus grows qualitatively and quantitatively. Church leaders are assistant builders, helping in the refining and placing of the stones and so in the rise of the whole. This picture denotes the Church as something strong, enduring and visible to the world.

The Church is, moreover, a particular type of building, namely a temple (“holy temple,” “God’s house” and “spiritual house”). In the Old Covenant the temple was where God dwelt (it was thus both holy and glorious) and where all the nations had to come to find God and salvation. The Church is now the temple of God, the place where He dwells by His Spirit. As such it is holy (the Greek word translated “temple” in these texts is not “hieron,” used for the whole temple complex, but “naos,” the Most Holy Place), it is where God’s glory is manifest (2 Cor 3:18), and the nations of the world have to come to it to find the message of salvation (1 Tim 3:15).

A.4. Priesthood

“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 2:5)

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” (1 Pet 2:9)

See also Rev 1:6.

The Church is not only the temple where God dwells but the priesthood ministering to God in that temple. (This picture is only implied in Ephesians but is explicit elsewhere.) Unlike in the Old Covenant, where only some of God’s people were priests, in the New Covenant all of God’s people are priests, that is, the whole Church is a priesthood; all believers are priests ministering to God, their fellow believers and the world. (We have already seen that all believers are part of the new “naos,” the Most Holy Place, and thus all believers can enter and minister there.) The “spiritual sacrifices” they offer include themselves, prayer, praise, finances and evangelism. The Church, moreover, is a “royal priesthood” because it is consecrated by and ministers to the King; and it is a “kingdom of priests” because God reigns over the Church and because through its ministry the Church both extends the kingdom of God and rules with Christ. Just as the Old Covenant priests ministered on behalf of their fellow-Israelites who couldn’t come into the temple, believers in the New Covenant minister on behalf of those who cannot come into God’s presence—that is, unbelievers—through prayer, warfare, evangelism and service.

A.5. Body

“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Rom 12:5)

See also Eph 4:1-16, Rom 12:3-8 and 1 Cor 12:12-27.

The body of Christ is the dominating picture of the Church in the New Testament and it conveys at least four crucially important truths.

- Every body has a head. The head of this body is Jesus (Col 1:18). Jesus is not merely a nominal, lip-serviced head (like an honorary life-president or a constitutional monarch) but the real, day to day, hands-on head of the Church. His headship means both that He governs the Church (Eph 1:22-23) and (as a head of a river) that He is the life-source of the Church, nurturing and sustaining it (Eph 4:15-16, Col 2:19). Jesus is the only head: no one else can, or should try, ever to set himself up to be the head (a two-headed body is a monster!). Conversely, where Jesus is not allowed to be the head, there is no longer any body: that is, where the Church departs too far from the rule and pattern of the head it ceases to be part of the true body of Christ (a headless body is equally a monster!).

- Just as a body can only have one head, so a head can only have one body. There is only one true Church (a multi-bodied head is a third kind of monster!) and, whatever its appearance may suggest to the contrary, that Church does possess a unity derived from its common headship.
- Just as a physical body has many different parts, each essential to the successful function of the whole, so this spiritual body is made up of many different people, each of whom has a different gifting and ministry but whose contribution is essential for the proper functioning and effectiveness of the whole church.
- The Church, as Christ's spiritual body, continues in this age all the work Jesus began in His physical body during the Incarnation. We are the instruments through which Jesus continues His work amongst mankind.

Here leaders are the nerve system, relaying the commands of the head through the body; they ensure the health and functioning of each part.

A.6. Bride

See Eph 5:22-32.

The Church is Jesus' bride: He came to woo and win her (His love draws people to Him) and He paid the necessary price for her (He redeemed a people for Himself); now He perfects and nurtures her into full bloom; at the end of the age He will return to marry and celebrate with her in the wedding feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:6-9); like the eastern groom of old He will then take her back to His Father's house (Jn 14:2-3) and live with her there forever (Rev 21:1-3). This picture conveys the passionate and intimate love between Jesus and the Church, a love expressed chiefly in the Church's worship but also in all of her life and deeds, which stem from her love for Him. (This love is prophetically foreshadowed in the extravagant celebration of romantic and sexual love between the Lover and the Beloved in Song of Songs.) Like other pictures it reveals divine sovereign election, and with it both privilege (a favored position, Jesus' total self-giving for her) and responsibility (to submit to, serve and glorify the Groom). And as wonderful as this relationship already is in this age, it is just the courtship: the wedding, consummation and life together still await us! In this picture leaders function as eunuchs, not daring to abuse the bride for themselves but working to present her perfect to the Groom.

A.7. Army

See Ephesians 6:10-18.

God is a warrior (Ex 15:3); Jesus makes war (Rev 19:11). The church is God's army, pushing back the kingdom of darkness and extending the kingdom of light. She does this in every area of her life and ministry: in evangelism, healing, deliverance and intercession it is more overt (Mat 12:29, Mat 16:18, Mk 16:15-18, Lk 10:17-19, 2 Cor 10:3-5) but in her teaching (setting free by bringing truth, refuting error and renewing minds), pastoring (healing broken lives) and social action (for example, countering poverty either by feeding the poor or by fighting injustices that cause it) she is also involved in

spiritual warfare. In short, just as the Church continues all the other work of Jesus, so she continues His work of destroying the work of the evil one (1 Jn 3:8).

That the Church is an army involved in a battle conveys yet other aspects of the Church's life and ministry such as: knowledge of the enemy (his goals and strategies); training and fitness; armor and weapons; offensive tactics; discipline and obedience to orders. In this picture Church leaders are officers leading and commanding the army into battle.

B. Mission And Mandate

Other pictures of the Church, explicit or implicit, can be found in Scripture – for example, the Church as God's flock, field, pilgrim, servant and sacrament –

but the above seven will suffice for now. Together they give us a clear idea of who the Church is and what she is called to do. At the risk of oversimplifying, we may say that the Church has one or two main tasks in each of four directions:

- Towards God: worship and prayer.
- Towards each other: fellowship and instruction.
- Towards the world: evangelism and service.
- Towards Satan (and his allies): spiritual warfare.

The Church continues the work of Jesus. Everything Jesus came to do can be summarized thus: He came to establish the kingdom of God. Thus, in a word, the Church is called to extend the kingdom (reign) of God. In her being, she models the Kingdom; in her speech, she proclaims the Kingdom; in her action, she works for the Kingdom. The Church is both proof of, the signpost to and an agent of the Kingdom. The record of the Church's advance is the record of the coming of the kingdom of God in this age.

C. Universal Church And Local Church

Whenever the New Testament refers to "church" it means one of two things:

C.1. The Universal Church

The universal church, often just called the Church, is the total company of true believers in all places in all ages (those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life), the exact identity of which is known only to God. (Thus, while all members of the universal church should be part of a local church, not all members of local churches belong to the universal church.)

C.2. The Local Church

The local church, often just called the church, is a concrete expression of the universal church in space and time, that is, a visible community of believers in a particular place and period. Of course, where a local church departs from the rule of Jesus, the head, it is, despite its name, no longer part of the

universal church (Rev 2:5).

The universal church and the local church are the only two meanings of “ecclesia” in Scripture: the Bible never talks about denominational, national, ethnic or other churches. Everything we have said about the identity and calling of the Church in this talk has been of a general nature and applies to the universal church. Local churches may take on a specific ethos, vision etc. and the last section in this course will be given to introducing the particular headship (leadership), heartship (values) and hopeship (vision) of this church.

D. You And The Church

We began by asking:

- Who is the Church and what is her calling?
- Why is the church an important part of the life of the believer?

In answering the first we have already largely answered the second. Every true believer is by definition automatically part of the universal church from the moment of rebirth. But just as the universal church needs to be made concrete in time and space to have any impact and meaning, so the individual believer needs to be part of a local church for there to be any reality to his profession of faith. Not only is it impossible to survive and grow as a Christian in isolation, such an idea is totally foreign to Scripture. An Old Covenant convert never became an isolated “Yahweh-follower” but a member of Israel; “saint” is never mentioned in the singular in the New Testament but always in the plural. To love and belong to God is to love and belong to His people.

The Christian needs the local church both for what he receives (instruction, pastoring and fellowship) and for what he gives (gifting and ministry): growth is impossible without both. Every picture of the Church we looked at emphasizes the place and role of the believer in the church: the responsibility of every citizen for the prosperity of the nation; each member of a family has chores and can help their siblings; each stone has an exact place in the temple; every believer is a priest ministering to God and others; each part of the body must play its part for the successful functioning of the whole; an inactive soldier endangers the whole army. So find the local church where God is calling you, where you can submit to the leadership, vision etc. and get committed, involved and growing!

E. The Church Chain

1 Tim 3:14-15

Eph 1:22-23

Eph 2:19-22

Rev 1:5-6

Rom 12:5

Eph 5:25-27

2 Cor 10:3-5

Eph 3:10

Chapter XI: Laying on of Hands

“Stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Tim 1:6)

What is to be understood by this phrase, “laying on of hands”?

“Laying on of hands” is an act in which one person places his hands upon another for a specific spiritual purpose. Normally this act is accompanied by prayer or by prophetic utterance or by both.

The act of laying on of hands is not something foreign to normal human behavior. For example, when a child complains of a headache or fever, it is almost instinctive for the mother to place her hand upon the child’s head to sooth the child. Within the church, the act of laying on of hands may be considered as an extension of a natural human behavior. However, we have the authority of Scripture itself for placing this practice among the foundational doctrines of Christianity.

A. Imparting Blessing, Authority and Healing

The laying on of hands normally signifies one of three possible things.

1. The person laying on hands may thereby transmit spiritual blessing or authority to the one upon whom hands are laid.
2. The person laying on hands may thereby acknowledge publicly some spiritual blessing or authority already received from God by the one upon whom hands are laid.
3. The person laying on hands may thereby publicly commit to God for some special task or ministry the one upon whom hands are laid.

At times, all three of these purposes may be combined in one and the same act of laying on hands.

The laying on of hands is recorded in the Old Testament as an accepted practice by God’s people. An example of this would be Joseph bringing his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh to his father, Jacob, for blessing. Through the laying on of Jacob’s hands the blessing would be transmitted to his two grandsons.

A further example of Old Testament practice of laying on of hands is when the Lord said to Moses: “Take Joshua son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hands on him.” “Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israel community will obey him.” “Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the Lord instructed through Moses.” (Num 27:18-20, 23).

This act of Moses laying his hands upon Joshua was greatly significant for both Joshua and the whole congregation of Israel. By this divinely ordained act, Moses transmitted to Joshua a measure of the spiritual wisdom and honor which he himself had received from God. Joshua was publicly acknowledged, before the whole community of Israel, as God's appointed leader to succeed Moses.

In the New Testament the ministry of physical healing is found to be a purpose for which laying on of hands may be used. Jesus authorised it in His final commission to His disciples. "In My Name ... they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." (Mk 16:17-18).

Later on in the New Testament a slightly different ordinance is appointed as a means of physical healing. "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned he will be forgiven. (Jas 5:14-15).

The ordinance appointed here is that of anointing the sick with oil in the Name of the Lord.

Both these ordinances are effective only through the exercise of faith in the Name of the Lord; that is the Name of Jesus.

Again, when anointing the sick with oil, it often seems natural to lay hands on them at the same time. In this way the two ordinances become combined in one. However, this is not necessarily so. It is perfectly scriptural to lay hands on the sick without anointing them with oil or to anoint the sick without laying hands on them.

The context in which the two ordinances appear in scripture suggest that there are times when it is more appropriate to use one ordinance than the other. When accompanying the preaching of the Gospel the laying on of hands would be more appropriate. However, anointing with oil is intended primarily with those who already profess faith in Christ and are associated with some Christian church.

Sometimes complete healing is received instantly, as soon as hands are laid on the sick person. At other times, however, healing comes only as a gradual process. Sometimes the supernatural healing power of God to the body may be felt by the one on whom hands are laid. At other times, however, there is no sensation of power at all.

There are many occasions where healing doesn't come as expected. Prayer, anointing and laying on of hands are not ritualistic actions to which God is bound to respond as asked. They are requests, ways God has give us to express our faith in action. Ultimately every healing prayer will be answered. 1 Corinthians 15:53 tells us that our resurrection will be into new, incorruptible bodies; and Revelation 21:4 tells us there will be no more sickness.

B. Imparting the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts

Imparting the Holy Spirit

The next main purpose of laying on of hands, as practiced in the New Testament, is to help those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The book of Acts gives account of five occurrences where people receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In three of these cases those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit were ministered to by other believers through the laying on of hands.

1. In Samaria the apostles Peter and John laid hands on new converts and prayed for them. "Through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given." (Acts 8:18).
2. In Damascus the disciple Ananias laid hands upon Saul of Tarsus that he might receive his sight and also be filled with the Holy Spirit. In this case both physical healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit were ministered to Saul by Ananias through the ordinance of laying on of hands. (Acts 9:17).
3. In Ephesus the disciples to whom Paul ministered receive the Holy Spirit only after he had laid hands on them. (Acts 19:1-6).

Certainly this is not the only way in which people may receive baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the upper room in Jerusalem, and in the house of Cornelius those present received the experience directly, without anyone laying hands on them. However, we may say that it is both normal and scriptural for those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit to be ministered to by other believers through the laying on of hands.

Scripture warns us that this ordinance of laying hands upon believers should not be practiced lightly or carelessly. For Paul tells Timothy "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other peoples sins: keep yourself pure." (1 Tim 5:22).

If laying on of hands is to produce a real spiritual effect, then there must of necessity be a direct spiritual contact between the two believers. In this contact between two spirits there is always the possibility of spiritual harm resulting to one or both the believers. If the spirit of one believer is not altogether pure then there is the possibility that the spirit of the other believer may be harmfully affected by this defiling contact. That this danger is real is made plain by the two warnings by Paul in this context, "nor share in other people's sins" and "keep yourself pure".

Since the ministry of laying on of hands is endorsed by Scripture, how can we guard against the spiritual dangers connected with it? The answer is that there are four main safeguards for the believer.

1. This ministry should never be exercised lightly or carelessly but always in a spirit of prayer and humility.

2. The guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit should be sought at every stage: with whom to pray, when to pray, how to pray.
3. The believer who lays hands must know how to claim on behalf of his own spirit the continual purifying and protecting power of the blood of Christ.
4. The believer who lays on hands must himself be so empowered by the Holy Spirit that he is able to overcome any kind of spiritual influence seeking to work in or through the one upon whom hands are laid.

Imparting Spiritual Gifts

From the passages in the New Testament where this is referred to, it would appear that laying on hands to impart spiritual gifts is commonly associated with the exercise of the gift of prophecy.

The imparting of spiritual gifts to Christians is one scriptural way of establishing or strengthening them in their faith and spiritual experience. Paul writes to the Christians in Rome and expresses his desire to impart to them "some spiritual gift". (See Rom 1:11-12).

According to the New Testament, the supernatural spiritual gifts are an integral, built-in part of God's total plan for the church. Without these gifts in operation the church can never function on the level of power and efficiency God intended.

Consider what Paul teaches about the way in which they may be imparted. The person Paul refers to in this connection is his own co-worker, Timothy.

"Do not neglect your gift, which was given to you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you." (1 Tim 4:14).

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands., (2 Tim 1:6).

"Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight." (1 Tim 1:18).

We learn from these scriptures that:

1. Timothy received some definite spiritual gift.
2. This spiritual gift was imparted to Timothy through the laying on of hands.
3. The impartation of this spiritual gift by laying on of hands was also associated with some prophetic utterance.

The laying on of hands was the means by which the revealed Will of God for Timothy was actually made effective in his experience. The ordinance of laying on of hands was combined in Timothy's experience with the gift of prophecy as a means whereby he might be directed, encouraged and strengthened in the fulfillment of his God-given ministry.

C. Commissioning Ministers

The next purpose of the laying on of hands is connected with the sending out of apostles from a local church.

The local church at Antioch provides the clearest example of this (see Acts 13:1-4).

"The Holy Spirit said, 'set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have called them'." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands upon them and sent them off." (Acts 13:2).

The act of laying on of hands represented the open, public acknowledgement by the church leaders that God had chosen and called Paul and Barnabas to a special ministry. By laying hands upon them, the other church leaders claimed for them the special spiritual wisdom, grace, and power they would need for the successful accomplishment of their God-given task.

Appointing Deacons and Elders

The basic structure of leadership in the church is extremely simple. It consists of two – and only two – classes of administrative officers. These two classes are elders and deacons.

The main qualifications of these two offices are set out in the following passages of Scripture, Acts 6:3, 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1:5-9.

Upon the basis of these passages, we may summarize the main features of these two offices as follows: The primary task of the elders is to give spiritual direction and instruction to the church. "The elders who direct the affairs of the church are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." (1 Tim 5:17).

On the other hand, the word deacon, in its original form, means a "servant". In Acts 6:2 the primary task of the deacons is to serve. By serving in this way they free the elders to concentrate to their work of prayer and the ministry of the Word.

The New Testament pattern for elders to be ordained to their God-given task is by apostolic team members laying hands on them. Deacons are ordained through the laying on of elders hands. (see Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim 5:17-22).

In conclusion, the five main purposes indicated in the New Testament for laying on of hands are: 1) to minister healing to the sick, 2) to help those seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit, 3) to impart spiritual gifts, 4) to send out apostles and 5) to ordain deacons and elders in a local church.

D. Laying on of Hands Chain

Old Testament

Numbers 8:9 – consecrating of priests.

Number 27:22 – commissioning into leadership of Israel.

Deuteronomy 34:9 – receiving a spirit of wisdom.

Minister healing to the sick

Matthew 19:13 Mark 8:25 Luke 4:40

Luke 13:13 Acts 28:7-8

Help those seeking baptism in The Holy Spirit

Acts 8:16-17 Acts 9:17 Acts 19:1-6

Impart spiritual gifts

1 Timothy 4:13 2 Timothy 1:6 1 Timothy 5:22

Sending out apostles

Acts 6:5

Setting apart leaders to serve the local church

Acts 13:1-4

Chapter XII: Prophecy

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet 1:21)

A. The Scriptures And The Spirit Of Prophecy

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Rev 19:10e)

A.1. It's About Jesus

This text defines the witness or testimony of Jesus as being synonymous with, or at the heart of, the spirit of prophecy. These words not only define Scripture; they also define all utterances that claim to be true prophecy. Jesus Christ will be at the centre of all prophecy, as He is of the whole Bible.

A.2. Prophecy And The Bible

There is a distinction in the level of inspiration, and hence of infallibility, authority and value between the written word of God (the Bible) and prophetic “words” in the church. Prophecies are desirable (1 Cor 14:1) and helpful (1 Cor 14:3-5), but Scripture is inspired and perfectly infallible and hence our final authority. It is to be desired more than gold (Ps 19:7-11).

Prophetic words given by fallible human vessels must always be verified by checking them against the infallible word of God, the Bible. God is not confused. He will not say one thing in His word and then give you a prophetic word to the contrary.

B. Personal Prophecy

“After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, ‘The Holy Spirit says, “In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.” ’

“When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, ‘The Lord’s will be done.’ ” (Acts 21:10-14)

“Personal prophecy” refers to a prophecy relating to personal matters which the Holy Spirit prompts one person to give to another. The Bible clearly allows for personal prophecy. Nathan brought David a “word” of confrontation from God (2 Sam 12:13). Agabus warned Paul of trouble in

Jerusalem. This passage above reveals safeguards against abuses of personal prophecy and allows us to implement this biblical practice safely.

- The word will usually not be new to the person addressed but it will confirm something God has already said. From Acts 20:22-24 we know that Paul was already aware of the issue Agabus raised.
- The character of the person bringing the word ought to be weighed. Agabus's credibility was based not on his claim to have a word but on his record as a trustworthy man of God often used in the exercise of this gift (Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10).
- Christian living is never cult-like, governed by omens or the counsel of gurus. Paul did not change his plans because of Agabus's prophecy or because of the urging of others. He received the word graciously but continued his plans nonetheless.
- All prophecy is in part (1 Cor 13:9 states, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part") which means that as true as that part may be it does not give the whole picture. Agabus's word was true and Paul was bound in Jerusalem. But this also occasioned an opportunity to minister in Rome (Acts 23:11).

We should prayerfully consider a prophecy given to us as Mary did the shepherds' report (Lk 2:19). A hasty response is seldom required; simply wait on God. Occasional personal prophecy is not risky if kept on a biblical footing but neither is it to become the way we plan or direct our lives. God makes it clear in the Bible that we are His children (Jn 1:12) and that He speaks to us directly (especially through the Bible, see 2 Tim 3:16). In John 10:27 Jesus says, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." It is also obvious that if God can speak to one person about another that He can speak directly to that person Himself.

C. A Desire To Be Prophetic

We should desire to be a people who hear from God and declare His word. Isaiah 42:9 tells us that before God does anything, He announces it to us. God has chosen to work through men and, as His people, we are responsible to declare God's word (both the written Word and the new things He is wanting to say) to the world. In 1 Corinthians 14:1 & 39 we are told to desire the gift of prophecy.

We see from the above texts that it is up to us to desire and seek after God's voice. In general, God does not pick a random person and send a booming voice down from heaven to him. Rather, it is those who diligently seek God who will hear Him. (God can and does speak in an audible voice on occasion, as in 1 Sam 3:10-11, but this is fairly rare.)

Ask God questions. In Jer 33:3 God promises to answer us with great and unsearchable things. We can ask God, with a pure heart, why we are not seeing many healings and why we are not growing as we should. (God is not

scared of questions.) God will lead and direct us when we seek His kingdom (Mat 6:33). We should desire to hear from God to help others and ourselves. Furthermore, we need to be able to hear God in everyday life. We are told that Jesus only did what he saw the Father doing (Jn 5:19). In the same way, we must desire to do only what the Father wants us to do. We have to stay close to Him so that we can know what He wants us to do (in small things and greater life direction).

D. Can We Really Expect To Hear God?

In John 10:3-5 we see Jesus as the good shepherd. He desires to guide us and He wants us to know His voice. When we know His voice we will be able to discern between what is truth and what is not truth (because Jesus is the Truth, Jn 14:6) and we know that it is God's desire for us to be led into all truth (Jn 14:16-17, Jn 14:26, Jn 16:13). There are many examples of men in the Bible who heard God's voice (not necessarily an audible voice in the natural). One example is Jeremiah (Jer 1:2a, Jer 1:4-5, Jer 1:11-14, Jer 2:1, Jer 2:4-5).

1 Corinthians 2:12 tells us that God wants us to understand what He has given us and Ephesians 5:17 tells us to understand God's will. We cannot begin to understand it if we have not even heard it. (This surely applies both to His written will and His will for our lives in particular.)

E. Recognising God's Voice

Usually we can recognize human voices. We can know who is speaking to us by using our ears and listening to what the voice sounds like. However, when we want to recognize God's voice, we have to use a different test.

As with human voices, the more we hear God's voice, the more we learn to recognize it. We have many voices (such as ideas, philosophies, traditions, rules and customs) speaking to us daily and we have to discern which voice is which (1 Jn 4:1). By reading our Bible regularly we are able to hear God's voice. The Bible has been tested and proved to be God's word over and over again for the last 2,000 years. If we read our Bibles regularly we can "tune in" to God's voice.

Another test, in general, is this: does the message bring life, hope and encouragement (1 Cor 14:3), perhaps even a call to repentance, or is it a message that breaks down and destroys people? We serve a God of love and He gives messages of peace and love to build people up and draw them closer to Himself.

A good source of God's voice is also found at Christian meetings (such as church services or home groups, and even spending time with Christian friends). When we hear God's word preached, when we see God's word in action and when we hear about His ways we also become more familiar with His voice. See Ps 1:1-2 and Ps 119:9-16.

When trying to recognize God's voice, beware of "hearing" things that you may want to hear rather than hearing what God is really saying. 2 Timothy 4:3 talks of "what their itching ears want to hear." We must not tell others what they want to hear by making up things and we must not listen to those who just tell us nice things that please us. We need self control over our emotions in this area as it is an easy place to make mistakes. Often being accountable to a friend or church leader in these matters can help. If you don't want to submit what you have "heard" you may be lying to yourself sub-consciously.

F. When And How Does God Speak To Us?

Here are a few of the ways that God can speak to us:

- God can speak to us as often as we want Him to do so, through the Bible (2 Tim 3:16). We should be reading the Bible and praying every day (Lk 11:3, Jn 6:48-51).
- As with Jesus (Jn 5:19), God directs us in everyday situations. We don't have to spend hours praying and fasting before God will speak to us.
- God speaks to us when we need Him and when we call on Him (Ps 86:7).
- When others need to hear His voice, God speaks to us and asks us to deliver a message. This could be because the other party is not listening to Him very carefully (Jer 1-2) or simply because He has chosen to pass the message on through you. See 1 Kings 11:31 when Ahijah speaks to Jeroboam. Paul of course wrote to Timothy giving him instructions and godly advice. God also speaks to others who may deliver a message to us—either a general message (such as a general truth from Scripture) or a specific message (a prophetic word). "And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe." (1 Thes 2:13)
- We can also set apart times of prayer where we can pray and God can minister to us. Jesus did this often, as in Mark 6:46.
- In special times of prayer and fasting, as in Acts 13:2, God speaks to us.
- God speaks to us in many different ways, for example, through His angels (Lk 1:11), or through visions (Acts 9:10, 16:9-10) and dreams (Ge 31:11), or words of knowledge and wisdom (1 Cor 12:8). God also uses our conscience (Rom 2:15) or discernment (Phil 1:10), and He will even use circumstance (Acts 18:3).

G. What Do We Do With God's Word?

Once you desire to hear God and you seek Him sincerely, He will speak to you. If you feel you have a message from God, these are some guidelines as to what to do.

G.1. Check That It Is A Word From God

Firstly, check that it is from God. Does it contradict the Bible's message? If so, it is definitely not from God. God never contradicts His word. If it is an important issue and you feel you do not know the Bible well enough, discuss it with someone else who knows both the Bible and God better than you do.

G.2. Obey God

Once you have established that the message is from God, obey the message (Heb 3:7, Ps 95:7). In Ex 34:1-4 we can see that Moses obeyed God's instructions immediately. If we do not obey God, our hearts get harder and harder as we do not respond to Him. We start hearing God less and less, creating a downward spiral. If you find the message is not from God, discard it and try to learn from the experience as we all make mistakes. The first few times you hear from God you may be unsure if it is Him or not—but as time progresses and you get used to His voice, you will often be able to know in an instant whether it is from God or not and you can simply obey it as God speaks to you. Be secure once you know you have a message from God.

The message God gives you could be for someone you know, or perhaps your local church. It could be only for you. You have to know what to do with the word God gave you. Must you tell the person about whom God spoke to you, or must you be quiet about the issue God has revealed to you and pray into it? Must you appropriate the message into your own life or must you share it with the elders of your local church? These types of questions must be answered each time so that you can act on God's word to you in the best possible way.

It is possible that you may not understand the message God gives you. This happened to Daniel as recorded in Daniel 12:8a. You may need to wait on God until you get a better understanding or you may need to speak to a friend or elder in your church.

G.3. Keep The Word Safe

Just like other valuable information, we should record the words God gives us. This helps us as it gives us a record of the event and allows us to be faithful with the words. It also increases our capacity for more words from God if we are diligent and write down all we hear from God. Find a system that works well for you, such as using a file or small book. Small pieces of paper tend to get lost and a PC that is usually off does not lend itself to quick references.

H. Summary

God does desire to speak to His people. We must desire to hear from Him. As we seek after Him He will meet with us. God wants to communicate with us – if He didn't want to do so He would not have sent Jesus to die for us. We must make ourselves available to be God's messengers, taking both His written word and His spoken word to the people around us and into the nations of the world.

I. Prophecy Chain

Gen 49:1
1 Cor 14:1-5
Jn 10:3-5
2 Tim 3:16-17
1 Thes 2:13
1 Jn 4:1
Heb 3:7-8

Chapter XIII: Evangelism

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
(Mat 28:19-20)*

A. The Evangelistic Dilemma

It is generally accepted that the world is experiencing what theologians are calling, "a crisis in evangelization." Christians are finding themselves pressed for answers by a world with empty philosophies and so are pressured into retreating their morality into a private enclave in fear of rational and objective debate.

On the contrary, this is the hour where the Church cannot fail to make notable contributions. Lapide, the theologian, calls Jesus, "The Rebel of Love" and refers to His ministry as "boundary breaking." This same Jesus is still here and working in and through His Church, through His Holy Spirit. God's desire is for the Church to rise up and be a shining witness of His goodness, grace and love to a world that is lost in utter darkness. He wants us to "shine like stars in the universe" as we "hold out the word of life" (Phil 2:15b-16a). Can we resist His challenge to arise and let the light of Christ shine?

In His famous sermon on the Mount, Jesus says:

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Mat 5:14-16)

B. Three Characteristics Of Evangelism

We will briefly examine three characteristics of evangelism. This list is not meant to be exhaustive.

B.1. The Calling and Commission

"Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall." (2 Pet 1:10)

"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (Eph 4:1b)

The purpose of the following points is to highlight the importance of our call – which is a call to all:

- There needs to be a “confidence of calling”: There has to be a clarity of call in each of us. Chris Wienand has said, “If there is a confidence of calling in you, you will lead and others will follow.”
- Fulfilling the great commission is not an option, nor is it an issue of convenience, it needs to be a conviction of the urgency of the call. “Genius” has been defined by some as “complete and utter attention to the job at hand.” Wayne Meyers says that some “need a sanctified kick,” that we need to put the capital “C” back into the “great omission,” that we cannot move at the speed we moved at last year – we have to hasten the pace and that Jesus’ second coming depends on our first going. God has not omitted anyone from the great commission (Mat 28). He qualifies, Satan disqualifies. Jesus has this to say in Matthew 12:30, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”
- In the midst of worship (Isa 6, Acts 13:2) in His presence, He gives us instruction for service and we make ourselves available for service. Examples include Elijah, Paul, Barnabas and Isaiah.
- Understanding your commission will put passion in you for purity, give you a heart for people and prepare you to pay the price. We need to ask God for a soul-winning spirit.

B.2. The Cost and Challenge

The following points are intended to issue a challenge to us to move beyond counting the cost of our calling in God, and into paying the price to usher in God’s reign and to do it willingly and faithfully:

- God is recruiting an “emergency task force” willing to pay the price. A “Pollyanna world-view” (David Bosch) will not be willing to dig the trenches of war on its knees. Will we too go from counting the cost to paying the price? “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’” (Lk 14:28-30) Wayne Meyers said that God is looking for an army, not an audience, to leave big footprints in our history books.
- God uses the ordinary but available and transforms them into the extraordinary but submitted. He chooses the foolish things of this world to shame the wise so that no one may boast before Him. (See 1 Cor 1:27-31). He is raising up a people from among the “foolish” with faith in the unseen who carry the testimony of God’s amazing daily acts—believing beyond belief that “with God all things are possible” (Mat 19:26, Heb 11). C T Studd said, “Some will live under the shadow of a church bell but let me build a mission one step from hell.”

- We need a people undaunted by the challenge. When asked what was the secret of his success, William Duma replied, "By being indulgent to others and very hard on myself." Courage is defined by Ernest Hemmingway as "grace in adversity." If Paul Yonggi Cho had not uttered those commissioning words, "If not me then who, if not here then where, if not now then when?" there would have been a gaping hole in South Korea where there are now millions of believers.

B.3. The Character and Capacity

Without the "character" we won't have the capacity to cope with the call to "go and make disciples of all nations." The following, however, represent only a very brief list of certain necessary character attributes and principles:

- Witnesses, laborers, harvesters and those who sow are made, not born. We are not born with love and compassion. Like enthusiasm, says Gordon Macdonald, it comes only with obedience (1 Jn 4).
- We are not born with the desire to sow and preach the gospel of the Kingdom: "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field' " (Mat 9:37-38). But God is in the transformation business. He transformed prostitutes into women of God, weaklings into mighty men of valor.
- We must be a tender-hearted people, experiencing compassion for the lost, the unreached and the forgotten.
- We are to be a people leaping out of ourselves. Smith Wigglesworth said that there are two things that will cause us to leap out of ourselves: purity and faith. He also said, "God has no room for the person who looks back, thinks back or acts back" (from the book "The Secret of his Power"). In Luke 9:62 Jesus said, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."
- We cannot be focussed on ourselves, but rather we must be humble. Ed Silvoso writes, "Whenever you focus on yourself and your work, even if it is your work for God, you make it very easy for your enemy to make you focus on the many less-than-perfect details in order to ruin your victory celebration." It is reported that God spoke to Smith Wigglesworth once and said to him, "Wigglesworth, I am going to burn you all up, until there is no more Wigglesworth, only Jesus."

C. Practical Principles For Evangelism

Here are a few things to remember:

- We are called to make disciples of Christ and not decisions for Christ. We labour not only to bring people to Christ but also to present them mature in Him, reflecting His image with glorious clarity.
- We are called to be witnesses—this means that our lifestyle as well as our words should reflect God’s goodness, grace and love.
- We must make disciples of Christ, not disciples of ourselves.
- Remember that Jesus’ life has to do with both presence and power.
- Overcome fear, apathy and tiredness. It was John Wimber who said, “Most major miracles happen after almost everyone has gone home.”
- Alf Cooper says there are two keys of evangelism: concern for the people and zeal for the Lord.

D. Practical Helps For Evangelism

- The key to each area is not necessarily a “method” but a person.
- The method must meet the need. Every door has a key: find it.
- Work in teams.
- Tell people who you are and what you are doing (common courtesy).
- Don’t peddle your Christianity (see 2 Cor 2:17).
- Ask questions. If you are not sure, don’t guess.
- Follow up.

E. Evangelism Chain

Rom 3:10-12

Rom 3:21-24

Rom 10:11-15

Isa 6:8

Jn 20:21

Mat 28:19-20

Acts 1:8

Mat 5:14-16

Chapter XIV: Spiritual Warfare

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
(Eph 6:12)*

A. Introduction

The reality of spiritual warfare is attested to by both Scripture and the testimonies of many individuals. Scripture speaks of “good” and “evil” (Mat 5:45, Jn 3:20) of two opposing “kingdoms” (Mk 4:26-30, Lk 11:18) and of agents for good and evil, “battling” against each other: that is, God and Satan (Job 1-2), angels and demons (Rev 12:7, Dan 10) and also “sons of the kingdom” and “sons of the evil one” (Mat 13:38, 1 Jn 3:2, 1 Jn 3:7-10). The Bible is full of the language of war, such as battle, fight, struggle, strive, resist, attack, enemy, armor, soldiers, advance, oppose and confront. The warfare is real. However, it is not material but spiritual: forces of evil and evil philosophies.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:12)

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” (2 Cor 10:4)

Jesus’ words and experience also attest to the reality of spiritual warfare. He often spoke about it and He experienced/engaged in it. He was tempted by the devil (Mat 4, Mk 1:12, Lk 4), He was resisted by evil men (Herod and the Roman authorities) and He confronted the kingdom of darkness by casting out demons, healing the sick and raising the dead. His supreme confrontation was, of course, on the cross and His supreme victory over the forces of evil was demonstrated by His resurrection.

Many individuals, believers and unbelievers, the demonized, the delivered and the delivering, testify to the reality of spiritual powers, whether of good or evil. In fact, it is a hunger for the reality of spiritual power which tempts people to dabble in the occult.

Spiritual warfare originated with the fall of Satan. Satan was an angelic being created by God to guard His throne, a prominent and privileged position. From Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 we see that Satan had great beauty, splendor and wisdom. However, he fell from his privileged position because of the sin of proud ambition. Not content to be highly exalted, he wanted to be above God and was thrown out of heaven (Eze 28:17, Isa 14:13-14) with possibly a third of the angels, who sinned with him (Rev 12:7-9).

In his humiliation Satan became angry, hateful, bitter and violent (Rev 12:12c). His goal, from that moment till now, is to have revenge on God by:

- Attacking and destroying God's works of creation (man and the universe) and His works of redemption (Israel, Christ and the Church).
- Promoting an alternative world system of which he is the head.
- Gaining glory and worship for himself. He begins his revenge by tempting Adam and Eve with the same sin of proud ambition ("you will be like God," see Gen 3:1-6). By sinning, man lost his place in Eden and shared with Satan the dominion over the earth he had received from God (Gen 1:28, Lk 4:5-6). Thus we can see how evil was brought to earth by Satan with the co-operation of man.

God's response to this first act of revenge was to proclaim immediately Satan's ultimate destruction (Gen 3:15) and to begin immediately His great plan of redemption, first through Israel, then through Jesus and the Church.

Before we look at the nature of the warfare in which the Church is involved, it is important to understand the extent of that warfare and to know that the enemy is limited in time, space, deed and power. Satan and his demons are limited in time because their final destiny (absolute defeat) is definite. When Jesus returns, the judgement spoken by God in Genesis will be put into effect (Mat 8:29, Rev 12:10-12, Rev 20:10, Rev 21:4-8, Rev 22:15). Demonic powers are limited in space. They are created, not divine and are therefore not omnipresent. They are limited in deed. In the book of Job we see that God limits what Satan can do to His servant (Job 1:12, Job 2:6). They are limited in power:

- Satan is not co-equal with God.
- Fallen angels are outnumbered (only one third fell with Satan).
- The enemy's power was severely reduced with Christ's incarnation and resurrection (they were "cast out," "bound" and "disarmed" according to Mat 4:23-24, Lk 4:38-41, Col 2:15, 1 Jn 3:8b, and Rev 1:18).
- Jesus gives believers power and authority to do the same.
- Jesus, through His death and resurrection, has bound the strong man and we can now rob him of his possessions (Mk 3:27, Mat 12:29). We are involved in "mopping-up operations." (See Mk 6:7-13, Lk 10:17-19, Mk 16:17-20, Rom 16:20 and 1 Jn 4:4).

Note that the book of Revelation is clear: God is not "battling." This is not a struggle for God, but rather a meticulously planned strategy of salvation towards the goal of complete freedom from sin and the causes of sin (temptation)¹.

Satan musters up all his energies for war, and God judges him in an instant.

1. See Matt 13:41 and 2Pet 1:4. Note how, in the church, we go out of our way to prevent even the possibility of sin. See Matt 18:6-9, Rom 14:20-21, 1Cor 8:13 and 1Cor 10:32

B. The Warfare

The enemy will do everything in his power to destroy the Church. He tries to do this in two ways.

B.1. He Destroys Believers Himself

Satan destroys us through robbery. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (Jn 10:10) This includes disease, death (wars, abortion, crime, disasters and evil rule) and destruction (property, finances, relationships and family).

It is possible for Christians to be demonized, that is, to be hindered and influenced by demonic forces in an ongoing way until released from their power. The enemy gains access to our lives in three ways:

- When we give him access (a foothold becomes a stronghold). This may be through sustained sin of which we do not repent (including sexual immorality, pornography, gambling, drunkenness, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, manipulation, domination and love of money). We can also give the enemy access through involvement in the occult (including ouija boards, tarot cards, fortune-tellers, chrystology, alternative medicines (such as reflexology), martial arts, yoga, cults, eastern religions, ancestor worship, divination, spiritualism, black and white witchcraft and Satanism). See Acts 5:3, Eph 4:27 and Jas 4:1-10 where the context is carnality giving the devil access.
- Through generation curses: demonic strongholds can sometimes be passed down to second and third generations. (Our experience shows that Freemasonry can cause women to battle with gynecological difficulties such as severe menstrual pain, complicated births or barrenness.) Examples include alcoholism, immorality, divorce, manipulation, suicide, physical and sexual abuse. See Ex 20:5 and Ex 34:7. See also Hos 4:12-13 where Scripture talks of a "spirit of prostitution" and "therefore your daughters turn to prostitution."
- Through traumatic experiences, such as rejection, divorce, murder, rape, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. See Jn 10:10 and 1 Pet 5:8-9.

The way we deal with these is usually deliverance. However, be careful of having a neurotic attitude to difficulties and issues in your life: the cause may not be demonization but simply immaturity, weakness of character, the sinful nature or unrenewed thinking. If the cause is demonic it will usually become obvious to others.

The following action can be sufficient to cut off an individual from the influence of demonic powers:

- Repent (confess, completely turn away from sin and go in the opposite direction). See Jas 4:1-10.
- Renounce (this includes destroying any artifacts connected to the sin, occult practice, curse or trauma). See Acts 19:17-20.
- Receive the Holy Spirit (for complete healing, restoration and wholeness). See Jn 4:4.
- Resist the devil. "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you."
(Jas 4:7-8a)
- Continue to walk in righteousness and freedom.

B.2. He Gets Us To Destroy Ourselves

- Temptation: In Luke 4 we can identify at least three ways in which the enemy tempts us. First, testing God, that is, pride (Lk 4:9-12), second, lust of the flesh (Lk 4:3-4, Gen 3:6) and third, corrupting the means to get the end (Lk 4:5-8) (for example, money by fraud, getting your spouse's co-operation by manipulation or domination, gaining success by cutting corners or by cheating, gaining position by promoting yourself or grasping for leadership rather than serving and waiting for God's promotion). The way we resist temptation is through self-control (Gal 5:22-23, 2 Pet 1:5-7, 1 Cor 7:5) and vulnerability. It is the hidden areas of our lives which keep us in bondage. Our armor against the attack of the enemy is the breastplate of righteousness (Eph 6:14): we are declared holy through faith in Christ's atoning death on the cross and we are being made holy by the work of the Holy Spirit in us (1 Cor 1:2, Col 1:22, Rom 12:1). Also, in fighting temptation we need not despair "for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb 4:15-16).
- Accusation (Rev 12:10, Zech 3:1): "Satan" in Hebrew means "accuser." Satan brings false accusations (lies, see Jn 8:44) or he comes and accuses us about past sins and failures. The way we reject accusation is through the Word of God, that is, Scripture and prophecy (1 Tim 1:18-19). Our armor is the belt of truth (Eph 6:14).
- Deception (2 Cor 4:4, Gen 3:4-13, Gal 3:1): We overcome deception in unbelievers by preaching the gospel and praying for revelation (2Cor 10:4-5). We prevent deception in believers by being devoted to doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:42, 1 Tim 4:13-16). Our armor against deception is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17).

- Doubt (Ge 3:1, Mk 4:15, Jas 1:6-8): We resist doubt with faith (Jn 20:27-29, Mat 17:20, Mk 11:22, 1 Cor 16:13, 2 Cor 16:13, 2 Cor 5:7). Our faith needs to increase (2 Cor 10:15, 2 Thes 1:3). How does it grow? “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Rom 10:17) Our armor against doubt is the shield of faith (Eph 6:16). A shield is useless unless lifted up and placed in a protective position: we need to activate our faith.
- Discouragement: Discouragement often follows after accusation, doubt and unresolved difficulties (Ps 42:3, Ps 42:9-10, Ps 77:7-9, Lam 3:19-20). We overcome it with praise. We worship God, we take our eyes off the difficulties and focus on the greatness and faithfulness of God. We stop listening to accusations and wallowing in doubt and begin to remind ourselves of God’s word, that is, the Truth (Ps 42:5-6, Ps 77:10-15, Lam 3:21-24, Isa 61:3). As we clothe ourselves with praise we conquer despair. Another way we combat discouragement is with prophecy (1 Cor 14:3): the word of God encourages! Our armour here is, therefore, the belt of truth (praise brings us back to the truth about God and His promises) and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph 6:14,17)
- Rebellion: Rebellion is independence from God: doing things our way instead of His way, refusing to believe or obey God’s word, resisting God’s pattern (see, for example, the story of Saul’s rebellion in 1 Sam 15, especially 1 Sam 15:22-23). Independence from God is in fact co-operation with the devil (1 Sam 15:23, Deut 18:10) who was the first rebel and he seeks to sow rebellion in both believers and unbelievers. We warfare against rebellion with humility (acknowledging who we really are, see Phil 2:3-8 and Isa 14:14: Satan’s ambition) and submission to the Lordship of Christ (obedience, see Heb 12:9 and Jas 4:6-7). We also need to submit to one another, especially to those placed in authority over us by God (Rom 13:1-5, Heb 13:17, 1 Pet 2:18, Eph 5:21, Col 3:18, 1 Pet 5:5-6).

C. Prayer And Fasting

However, there is another kind of warfare in which we engage. It is like sending in the air force to destroy the enemy’s air cover and to provide the army with protection as we begin to advance into enemy territory. This is the warfare of prayer and fasting. See Dan 10:2-14 and Dan 10:20.

As we pray and ask God to send His angels to war in the heavenlies against demonic principalities and powers, our ability to advance into enemy territory with protection and penetration is secured. It is important to remember that our mandate is to take the land: it is no good simply praying for God’s kingdom to be advanced and then never getting on with the job.

“The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.” (Rev 8:4-5)

D. Conclusion

The mandate of the Church is to extend the kingdom of God. This we do by making disciples of nations, preaching the gospel, binding up the broken-hearted, setting the captives free, feeding and clothing the poor, loving our enemies, becoming peacemakers and defending the oppressed. In doing this we will be resisted by the enemy and we therefore wage spiritual warfare against him.

Put another way, we are the army of God commissioned and equipped by Him to take possession of the land of the enemy. In order to do this we need to be fit soldiers, for which we engage in personal warfare as described above.

Finally, as we wage spiritual warfare we need to remember God’s hugeness, His great strength, His complete power, His awesome authority and we need to remember Christ’s saying that the gates of Hades will not overcome the Church (Mat 16:18). Therefore, we can wage warfare with confidence and the assurance of victory.

E. Spiritual Warfare Chain

Eph 6:12

2 Cor 10:4

Jn 10:10

Jas 4:7-10

Mat 4:10-11

Col 2:15

Eph 4:27

1 Pet 5:8-9

Chapter XV: Vision, Values And Vehicles

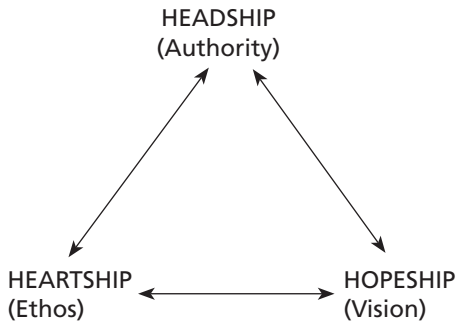
A. Introduction

The apostolic and prophetic foundations (Eph 2:20) are essential to the individual, the families, the local churches and may we suggest, even into society. Jesus said in Mat 7:24, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." The questions that need to be answered are:

What are these foundations in the individual's life?

What are these foundations in the life of the local church?

Furthermore, one needs to know how to put these foundations into practice to ensure stability, security and mobility.



B. Headship (Authority)

It is of absolute importance that as believers we understand the authority structures in our lives as well as the church. Although this matter is covered in depth during leadership forums, the following key areas are critical to understand.

B.1. God And His Word

We must be under the authority of God and His word. It is of vital importance that the Scriptures are the framework against which every aspect of church life, be it individual or corporate, gets measured: in both wine (life, power and energy of the church) as well as in wineskin (structure, form and pattern). We must have absolute confidence that it weighs positively against the breadth of biblical truth. We have sought to walk this through at every level possible. It is obvious that we read Scripture through certain spectacles. These must however be erased and removed, so that the authentic exegesis of Scripture allows us the true life of God. Often we read Scripture through the spectacles of our personality, our culture and our religious experiences. These will inhibit an authentic and objective understanding of biblical truth. Yet, when we know the truth, it will set us

free. Our quest is to bring ourselves under God and His word, without any sense of apology and certainly minimizing hindrances and interpretation prejudice.

B.2. Local Church Leadership

The Bible is consistently clear that the elders are the highest authority in the local church. Acts 20 and 1 Pet 5 are possibly the two clearest texts that help us understand and discern the role of the elders in local church life. Their responsibilities include:

- Godly government and administration.
- Overseeing and keeping the big picture and the whole picture before the church.
- Leading and guiding.
- Pastoring and nurturing.

The elders are not democratically elected but rather recognized for what they are doing in the local church and ordained through apostolic ministry. The elders are men who, with their wives, have exuded certain character quality, both in themselves, their families, in the church and in the world. In addition to the quality of their lives, they have a clear understanding of the doctrines of Scripture and have exuded giftings that are helpful and necessary to effect their task successfully. Most crucial is that there needs to be a clear calling on their lives from God.

In some denominations the diaconate is the highest authority. In other streams the deacons are simply there to perform all the lesser desirable chores under the guise of service. An understanding of the biblical mandate for the deacons surely gives them the appropriate profile that they hold. In Acts 6 the early apostles clearly identified and ordained the deacons to office. Their tasks and roles include:

- Serving and supporting the elders.
- Releasing the elders from certain tasks so that the elders can spend time praying and studying.
- Dealing with the logistics of growth in the local church.
- Seeking to resolve relational tensions.
- Administrating cultural challenges.
- Expanding and exploring their own giftedness.
- Allowing the word of God to prosper.

In our present day churches, these men and women would include those who run home groups as well as possibly head evangelism teams, worship teams and the like.

B.3. Apostolic, Prophetic Teams

For us, one of the sad indictments against the Church is its meandering away from the Scriptural patterns. The Church seems to be more comfortable talking about cardinals, archbishops, superintendents and so forth, than in talking about apostles and prophets. Scripture would not establish them if they were not important to local church life. Apostolic, prophetic teams are essential to bringing the Church into:

- Unity.
- Maturity.
- Stability.
- Edification.

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Eph 4:11-16)

Not only do they provide unity, maturity, stability and edification to the local churches, they also inspire the local churches whom they serve, support and lead, to greater and more corporate participation in making disciples of the nations. Dudley Daniel says that the apostolic teams provide an administration suitable for the kingdom of God, by:

- Raising up apostolic teams.
- Planting churches and bringing churches to maturity.
- Developing churches with apostolic/prophetic cultures
- Networking with other apostolic and prophetic teams to impact the nations of the world.
- Discipling the nations by planting New Testament churches that in turn will impact these societies.

What a great privilege it is to share in a vision that straddles the globe and seeks to impact every culture and sub-culture to usher in the Lord’s return.

C. Heartship (Ethos)

As much as the mother provides the heartbeat and atmosphere in the home, so too, every local church has an ethos that is both Christian in its general application, but also relevant to that local church’s unique flavor and heartbeat. As we seek to outwork what God has called us to, we want to be:

- Radical.
- Relevant.
- Real.
- Relational.

An honest study of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation shows that God is radical and relational. From His relationship with Adam through His commitment and love to the people of Israel, from Abraham, Moses and Joshua through the prophets, to the incarnate Christ, relationships in the church provide a key to understanding church life. We are certainly not an organization, a business or an institution. As far as the relational realities go, we are a family who seek to walk out this ethos in a casual, but honest approach in our faith. These values can best be summarized as:

Loving and living out God's Word. His word is the only authority for life and conduct.

Prayer is essential in all we do. All biblical expressions of prayer are important to us, as we see the face of God in all we do.

To have a lifestyle of heartfelt worship. We express our worship in heartfelt and creative ways relevant to the times we live in, endeavoring to keep Christ central always.

Friendship before function. Developing strong and accountable relationships is important to us, expressing our love in hospitality.

Family is important in all we do. We strive for all ages, races and cultures to be integrated into the family of God, for such is the kingdom of heaven.

Winning souls. Evangelizing by reaching into our community, our nation and the nations of the world with the Gospel.

Caring and discipleship. Growing individuals in Christ and releasing them into their God-given potential as the priesthood of all believers.

Generosity. We aim to resource all aspects of ministry with our finance, time, gifting and people. We also aim to bring all our people into financial freedom and responsible prosperity.

To build team at every level. Through our friendships we function with a desire to empower and involve everyone to serve God's purpose in our generation.

Developing godly, transparent and accountable leaders. Godly leaders are servant leaders who lead by example.

To have an apostolic prophetic heart. To be disciples who are "seeing" and "going" in obedience to the great commission.

These, in a precise form, represent our desire to live out New Testament Christian community. It is of crucial import that we find the application of

our faith within the bounds of these values. They bring honesty and transparency to our leadership and help us discover the joys and delights of authentic, Christian community.

D. Hopeship (Vision)

“Where there is no revelation (‘vision’ KJV) the people cast off restraint (‘perish’ KJV) Prov 29:18.

It should certainly not surprise us that every individual believer, every family, every local church, the apostolic, prophetic team to whom we relate and the universal church, are all part of the inheritance that God has given to us.

“Lord, You have assigned me my portion and my cup; You have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.” (Ps 16:6)

It is an awesome privilege to know that we have such a multidimensional inheritance. In many Christian circles this inheritance is seen as something that is purely personal. This is not authentically biblical. Scripture provides an inheritance that extends way beyond the individual and their sense of blessing, well-being and delight. When we understand this truth, it begins to draw us into the joys, delights, privileges and responsibilities of local church and apostolic teams into the nations.

D.1. Apostolic

“Ask of Me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.” Ps 2:7 (See also Acts 1:8; Mat 28:19-20)

By apostolic we are referring to the heartbeat of God for us to go and seek the nations of the world and see them touched by the power of the gospel. We see local churches being established and through those local churches, the discipling of the nations. We want to see the nations impacted and influenced.

We want to see every ethnic group and every nation experiencing the privilege of the gospel and leaving them with the decision of what they will do with Christ.

D.2. Prophetic

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”. Rev 19:10

We want to be prophetic both to the Church and the world. To the Church our prophetic commitment is to pull down and uproot everything that does not fall into the orb of God’s biblical pattern and power. To the world we want to be prophetic, to restore God’s biblical order into every aspect of society. We believe that the gospel is there to impact the political, legislative, educational, economical, social, sporting, commercial and artistic arenas. Like John the Baptist challenging the king, we believe that the prophetic people of God are to challenge the world. Whether in matters of abortion or pornography, illegitimate financial practices or selfish political power, it is the Church’s mandate to arise and to stand.

D.3. Evangelistic

Someone once said that the church is the only organization that exists for its non-members. This accurately expresses the heart of love for those who are lost, and the focus of the church is toward them. We clearly see this in the ministry of Jesus.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost”. Lu 19:10

It is our commitment to see the gospel go forth. We believe that Jesus is the only way to the Father. There is no possible route of salvation other than through Him. We believe that the Church is the vehicle of God to bring salt and light to a dying world. Using all legitimate avenues at our disposal we want to impact the world with the power of this gospel and walk in the boldness of Scripture to see their lives touched and changed.

D.4. Pastoring, Teaching And Training

“Therefore, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity”. Heb 6:1

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others”. 2 Tim 2:2

Our vision is to see men and women come into wholeness. It is our desire furthermore, to take every individual believer, under the guidance and instruction of the Spirit and through the teaching and exposition of the Scriptures, and to move them from spiritual infancy into maturity and adulthood. We want to see every believer move from glory to glory, from freedom to freedom, from imperfection to perfection, from faith to faith and from strength to strength. That is our mandate as leaders and our passionate commitment. We believe that men and women are sent to us for a season of training and equipping to be raised up and then released into their destiny.

This envisioning arm of every local church is of profound importance. Not only do we want to take people beyond the essential truths found in Hebrews 6, into the breadth of biblical doctrine and understanding, but we also desire to address relevant and current issues and bring a biblical, ethical apologetic on each. We also believe Scripture continuously works the foundational areas of our lives. As we mature in God, take on greater responsibilities in the world, have an increased profile in the life of the church and extend our relational boundaries, so we need the continuous adjustment of our foundations that Scripture brings. Teaching enables us to outwork those circumstances with ever increasing growth, revelation and understanding.

E. Our Vehicles

Our “vehicles” are the ways in which we accomplish our vision and values.

Every believer is to meet congregationally and in homes. (Acts 2:42-47; Heb 10:25).

Also, everyone should devote themselves to ‘the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer’. Acts 2:42. Therefore, churches will meet congregationally and in homes for various focuses and at different times during a week. Then, each church makes it a priority to attend the relevant meetings the New Covenant Ministries team organizes. These are held both locally and internationally.

These would take the format of city celebrations, leadership training and opportunity for ministry into the nations.

F. Summary And Conclusion

In many ways this is a summary of our vision, values and vehicles. We want to conclude by bringing a major focus to our mandate into the nations. In Mat 28:18-20 Jesus clearly says, as He takes leave of His disciples, that our primary mandate is to go and make disciples of all nations. Beyond discipling the individual, Christ clearly hands on the baton of taking the gospel to the nations of the world.

In Luke 19:10 we are told that the reason the Son of Man came was to seek and save the lost. His primary reason was to sniff out all the broken, bruised, sinful people of the world, that is you and me, and bring us back into a vital reconciled relationship with God, with ourselves, with our fellow man and with nature. For this reason our mandate to make disciples of the nations should be an increasing one, and certainly not decreasing. In Acts 1:8 Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives and He reiterates this call. He is effectively saying that we must take the gospel from our neighborhoods to the nations.

This needs to be the conviction of every individual believer and of every church. As much as we are involved in our priestly functions, in our homes, our churches and our neighborhoods, so we need to embrace the priestly function of evangelizing the unreached (Rom 15:16). We conclude by giving you a list of texts that shows this thesis is a thread that runs throughout Scripture from Genesis through to Revelation. To become part of what we’re doing is not only to bow to the authority structures of Scripture and to the values that we believe are inherent in the biblical code, but also to give yourselves, with growing revelatory passion, to take the gospel into the nations of the world. May God knit you in and make you a vital part of and cog in this awesome responsibility.

“Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.” (Ps 2:8)

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' " (Isa 6:8)

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mat 28:19-20)

"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.' " (Mk 16:15)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known." (Rom 15:20a)

"And with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." (Rev 5:9d)

"On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Rev 22:2b-c)

