

Biblical Lectures, Sermons, and Topics for RAB Bible Training

By: Sr. Pastor Cyndi Higgins

Course 100-Session 101



Run Away Brides Ministries

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." "My eager desire and hope being that I may never feel ashamed, but that now as ever I may do honor to Christ in my own person by fearless courage. Joshua 1:8 (KJV); 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB); Philippians 1:20 (Moffatt)

Understanding Biblical truth and its meaning releases the power of God into and on behalf of the believer.

As Christians it is our desire to understand Biblical Truth enhancing and enabling our spiritual growth. Charting our course with the leading of the Holy Spirit, we endeavor to move from glory to glory. It is not enough to study the Word of God; we must go further and also ensure that the Word abides in us. While it is important to get the meaning of the Word, it is even more important that one abides in and lives by the true lifeblood of the Word of God. We understand the message that the Lord is trying to convey to us then the Word becomes a part of our personal life and guides us into operating in unity within the Body of Christ.

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Pastor Cyndi Higgins

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Only by the grace of God, did Cyndi Harper survive complications at birth and a violent upbringing. Many would argue that it is out of character that a survivor of both childhood and domestic abuse would love, live, and teach peace as much as she does. Perhaps one needs only to remember the words of Joseph in Genesis 50:20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Although not legally changing her name, many know her as Pastor Cyndi Higgins.

Before the 2014 release of her first two RAB books, "Run Away Brides—the Bible Study and Reconciled Bridal Relationships," she had through her eight children's books, under the name Cyndi Harper-Deiters, taught young children non-violent problem solving methods. Cyndi's successful writing and speaking career began immediately after graduating from the Institute of Children's Literature in 1993. Cyndi skillfully used Jonathan Michael the Resident Rooster, the books' main character, to teach children non-violence and the art of peacemaking. Additionally, she wrote for young adults the Historical Fiction trilogy, "River Turtle."

Cyndi studied as a volunteer Mediator with The Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan, and attended Jordan College. Already using her business degree, she changed her educational interest to literature, child-development, and computer applications. She uses the knowledge gained by her variety of studies to communicate better through her books, recorded prayers, songwriting, lesson-plans, pastoral counseling, and public speaking. In 2007, Cyndi retired from full time employment at her company, Exams Express Inc., and shortly thereafter, began her ministerial studies.

Pastor Cyndi was ordained under Dr. Morris Cerullo of Morris Cerullo World Evangelism and Bishop (Dr.) Anthony Yeboah of Free International Missions in January 2012. She is the Sr. Pastor of Barefoot Gardens Fellowship Ministries in Ada, Michigan (Grand Rapids). The local focus began in 2008 on binding up the broken-hearted through the 35-week course, "Rejoice Freedom;" she wrote and taught most of the curriculum and lessons plans for this very successful recovery program. Today she is structuring and writing all the curriculum and lesson plans for the International Mission's Ministry, 'Run-Away-Brides (RAB).™ The RAB Bible Study for Church Leaders released in January 2014 and "Reconciled Bridal Relationships" released in May 2014. Currently Pastor Cyndi is writing "Relationships Matter" and her autobiographical book of a reconciled bride to initiate the cause and inspire run-away-brides to return to Jesus. With her God-given writing talent, she creatively weaves the beautiful purpose of life. She skillfully uses her God-given gifts and her experiences in introducing God's beloved masterpiece the human-heart, soul, and spirit. The Lord has used His love, compassion, and understanding through her communication skills and He has brought thousands of runaway brides of Christ back to His embracing arms.

THE BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE WEB SITE www.bare-foot-gardens.com

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For RAB Bible Training

By

Pastor Cyndi Higgins

Barefoot Gardens Fellowship
Run Away Brides
Ministries

Introduction

The intended RAB Bible Training program's mission is to edify and encourage Christian students to think and to live the Biblical view in the world (Romans 12:1-2) and to proclaim Christ Jesus as the Lord to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:1-20). We strive to instruct disciples of Jesus Christ in spiritual matters and in natural ways in serving Him, the Church, and others in the massive diverse societies of today's world system.

Our focus is on The Lord and each believer's identity in Him. During the Christian journey to fulfill God's purpose for our individual lives, we must learn to depend upon the Word of God to fulfill one of its commissions as spoken of in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

The more our eternal conscience develops the better we cognitively and spiritually understand that Jesus Christ is our lifeblood in all matters of life and death here on earth as well as in heaven. Although each of us is an independent spirit from the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9), we learn from Christ Jesus how to become more and more like Him. As we grow in His likeness, our desire to follow Him increases.

The Scriptures are full of encouragement and applications for us on how to follow in Christ's footsteps. It is therefore imperative for the Bible student to understand that the footsteps of Jesus Christ began before they are easily recognizable as written in the New Testament. Jesus says of Himself in Revelation 22:13 ***"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, The Beginning and the End."*** Furthermore John 1:1 and John 1:14 sums up the purpose of the Bible student's need to fully take in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

We shall venture into a spiritual discovery of Biblical evidence avoiding a structural curricular. We shall become Holy Spirit opportunist abiding in His leading rather than that of a doctrinal curricular approach of precept upon precept.

Biblical evidence shall prove the believer's identity in Christ Jesus and His blood and His DNA (Divine Natural Autonomy) in us. DNA=Divine Natural Autonomy simply put means, "Christ's heavenly environmental sovereignty." Christ Jesus said of Himself in Matthew 28:18 *"...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* Beloveds inside of us the sovereign ruler over all of heaven and earth abides and His DNA flows through us to build us up in His characteristics and making us bold through Him to fulfill the great commission.

Love and Blessings;

Peter Lynn Higgins

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PURPOSE DOES NOT PRODUCE WITHOUT SEEDS

Sow Seeds for a New Harvest

Biblical Text: Luke 13

What Seeds?

John the Baptist said:

Seeds of Repentance. *"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father.' For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree thereof which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Luke 3:8-9 KJV"*

"First go and prove by the way you live that you have really repented. And don't think you are safe because you are dependents of Abraham. That isn't enough. God can produce children of Abraham from these desert stones! The axe of his judgment is poised over you, ready to sever your roots and cut you down. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire." Luke 3:8-9 TLB

"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." Luke 3:8-9 NIV

Jesus said:

Seeds of Repentance:

*"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**" Luke 13: 1-5 KJV*

*"About this time he was informed that Pilate had butchered some Jews from Galilee as they were sacrificing at the Temple in Jerusalem. 'Do you think they were worse sinners than other men from Galilee?' he asked. 'Is that why they suffered? Not at all! And don't you realize that you also will perish unless you leave your evil ways and turn to God? And what about the eighteen men who died when the Tower of Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? Not at all! And **you, too, will perish unless you repent.**" Luke 13:1-5 TLB*

"Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all of the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or

those eighteen who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them---do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! **But unless you repent, you too will perish.**" Luke 13:1-5 NIV

Oftentimes it is necessary for the Lord to humble His children to stop them from looking over the top of the mirror from their platform of self-appointed righteousness and to see into the mirror of His eyes what needs to be confessed and repented of.

- a. **Matthew 15:21-28** "But He (Jesus) did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"...
- b. Those whom Christ intends most to honor, he humbles to feel their own unworthiness. A proud heart would not have borne this; but she turned it into an argument to support her request. The state of this woman is an emblem of the state of sinner, deeply conscious of the misery of their soul.

Then Jesus told this parable: "A man had a **fig tree** growing in **his vineyard**, and he went to look for **fruit** on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the **vineyard**, **'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'** 'Sir,' the man replied, **'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year fine! If not, then cut it down.'** Luke 13:6-9

- a. **Jesus is our advocate ever interceding for us. Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25**
 - i. Perhaps we are accustomed to look too exclusively to the Savior's atoning death, not dwelling as we should upon the idea of his interceding life. See how the apostle speaks in Romans: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." And again: "Christ Jesus that died, yea rather that was raised from the dead, **who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**" He who loved us and gave himself for us ever lives to accomplish the objects for which he died; as the Interceding High Priest, he is ever interceding for the salvation of them that come unto God through him; as the Kingdom's King, having all authority given unto him in heaven and earth, he controls all things so as to carry forward to completion the work of their salvation." (Rom 5:10, 8:34 KJV)
 - ii. How was it with Peter? The Savior said: **"But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not;"** and though his faith mournfully gave way, it did not utterly give out. Jesus had made supplication for him. When the cock crowed after his third denial of his Lord and Jesus turned and looked upon him, Peter went out and wept bitterly, with the sorrow "that worketh repentance unto salvation," (2 Cor. 7:10 KJV) the sorrow of a deeply humble and really loving heart. There was a great change from that time in Peter, **for the Lord had prayed for him**, and divine grace not only preserved him from utter spiritual ruin, but overruled his own dreadful wickedness to his spiritual good.

Why Seeds of repentance?

Isaiah 55:6-9 NIV: *“Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on them, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth; It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

Repentance Sowing Requires Actions:

- 1.) Seeking God
- 2.) Calling on God
- 3.) Forsaking (leaving) wicked ways behind
- 4.) Forsaking (leaving) wicked thoughts
- 5.) Turning to the Lord

Repentance Produces God’s Actions:

- 1.) God has mercy on the seed sower
- 2.) God freely pardons the seed sower
- 3.) God produces more seeds for the sower
- 4.) God produces bread for the eater
- 5.) God speaks His Word over the seed sower
 - i. Seeds go forth from God
 - ii. Seeds return to Him a harvest (yield)
 - iii. Seeds accomplish God’s desire
 - iv. Seeds achieve God’s purpose

Why Seeds of Repentance Now?

Rev 3:19-21 *‘Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. ‘He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne....”* **“Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.” Isaiah 55:6**

Why Sow Seeds for a New Harvest?

Luke 13:10-17: “And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. ¹² And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. ¹³ And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

¹⁴ And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.

¹⁵ The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? ¹⁷ And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.”

WHY WOULD YOU CARRY OLD INFIRMITIES INTO A NEW FIELD?

Psalm 126:6. NIV “Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.”

- a. Those who go out weeping,
 - b. Carrying the seed to sow,
 - c. shall come home (will return) with shouts (songs) of joy
 - d. bringing (carrying) his sheaves with him.
-
- a. **GO OUT OF THE UNPRODUCTIVE FIELD--Leave the old field behind you with Psalm 38:3-6.** When the soul, like David's, is truly broken and contrite, it will express its feelings, regardless of men's opinions; it will pour out its sorrows to God, who hears and answers prayer (He goes out weeping). "Because of my sin...I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning," You must be with God to go out from Him. You have been with the Lord **WEEPING**.
 - b. **Come in to the NEW FIELD CARRYING new seed for sowing (Luke 21:1-4 and Acts 20:35)**—“Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.” In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” You are prepared to **GIVE to SOW** because you have been with the Lord---Whatever you have sown into your time with the Lord will result in seed you are sent out with to sow.

- c. **“Who shall come home with shouts of joy? Principle:** We reap what we sow. *“Draw near to God,”* the Bible says, *“and He will draw near to you.”* (James 4:8) Scripture teaches us, *“You will seek Him and find Him when you search for Him with your whole heart”* (Jer. 29:13), and *“If any man is willing to do his will, he shall know . . .”* (John 7:17). *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”* Luke 6:38. **UNBELIEVABLE HARVEST BRINGS US HOME WITH PURE SHOUTS OF JOY---SOULS WON OR RECONCILED—LIVES CHANGED**
- d. **Bringing his sheaves with him.** *“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.”* Revelation 22:12. The Lord brings rewards with Him, but additionally the Christian comes home bringing his/her sheaves with them, (Daniel 12:3) *“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”*
- e. Psalm 126:4-6 The beginnings of mercies encourage us to pray for the completion of them. And while we are in this world there will be matter for prayer, even when we are most furnished with matter for praise. Suffering saints are often in tears; they share the calamities of human life, and commonly have a greater share than others. But they sow in tears; they do the duty of an afflicted state. Weeping must not hinder sowing; we must get good from times of affliction. And they that sow, in the tears of godly sorrow, to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting; and that will be a joyful harvest indeed. Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be forever comforted. When we mourn for our sins, or suffer for Christ's sake, we are sowing in tears, to reap in joy. And remember that God is not mocked; for whatever a man soweth that shall he reap, Ga 6:7-9. Here, O disciple of Jesus, behold an emblem of thy present labor and future reward; the day is coming when thou shalt reap in joy, plentiful shall be thy harvest, and great shall be thy joy in the Lord.

The Upcoming Seed Lessons will include:

- 1.) Tending to the seeds you sow
- 2.) Expecting the harvest you planted for
- 3.) Fields of Reproduction
- 4.) Fields of Production
- 5.) Fields of Extension

Biblical Symbolism:

- 1.) Fig & Olive Trees represent Israel---The descendants of Abraham Rom. 11:11-16, 25-32, Hosea 9:10, Joel 1:7, Joel 2:22, Zechariah 3:10, Micah 4:4, and Jeremiah 24:1-10 and The Christian Nation by way of grafting into Abraham Romans 11:17-24. Vineyard also represents Israel--- Isaiah 5:1-7 *“The vineyard of the Lord is the Nation of Israel.”*

SEED CALLED "THE WORK OF LOVE"

New Harvest Blessing; "Blessing in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior; for no greater is He than Jesus Christ, God the Word who came to this earth to die for you and me. Let the oils of the lamp, Jesus Christ, run freely over you, lightening all things in you and around you. May all darkness scatter in ten thousand directions NEVER to gather itself again against you. May the lamp onto your feet bring you cause to stand strong and may the enduing power of the Holy Spirit hold you standing strong in the midst of the storm. May Our Father who art in Heaven who we Hallow His Awesome Name, keep His hand with you and His banner of protection over your tents and your land. May His Mighty Power heal the land of your ancestors and cause the generational sins and curses to dissolve into nothing. Let the Righteous Roar like lions and let the wicked run. I bless you with the Boldness of Jesus Christ to claim His Name as the Messiah, the Lord of Lord, and King and Kings on every highway and byway of your life. Be blessed in His eternal fullness of Joy." Amen

For those diligently working the Kingdom harvest fields selflessly, they shall yield what they cannot imagine. Genesis 2:2 makes it clear that He completed the work that He had made for Himself!

- 1.) Why did God make work for Himself?
- 2.) Was He bored being on His Throne?
- 3.) Why did God decide to create the First and Second heaven and Earth?
- 4.) Why was He pressed to make work for Himself?

He completes the work He had made for Himself. He calls His completed work, 'Very Good!'

"And on the **seventh** day God ended (completed) **His work which He had made;**
And He rested on the seventh day from all of **His work which He had made.**"
Genesis 2:2.

Genesis 2:3 "And God blessed the **seventh** day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all **His work which God created and made.**"

If we are made in His image my beloved brothers and sisters than should we not take the same actions that our Abba did?

- 1.) Should we not be stirred in our heart and spirit over a Kingdom cause and make it our work?
- 2.) Should we not be diligent and with integrity do the kingdom work which we have made for ourselves based on the Holy Spirit's stirring as spoken of in Haggai chapter 1?

What motivated God the Father and God the Word and God the Holy Spirit to create a perfect environment to sustain life knowing that Lucifer and angels and mankind would turn against them?

Why did God love so deeply the work He made for Himself knowing that it would not be enough? There would be an even greater work to be done at the highest cost to complete another work He had made for Himself.

- 1.) He would have to make it His work to leave His Throne.
- 2.) His work to become a seed.
- 3.) His work to be planted into the soil of a virgin womb.
- 4.) His work to be born in the manger of the "Tower of the Flock" in Bethlehem.
- 5.) His work to grow like any human grows.
- 6.) His work to minister after 30 years of almost silent preparation.

Then the work He made for Himself became evident to the believers and the unbelievers. What did He say about this work that He had made for Himself? He said I do the work of my Father. He said My Father is still working and I do what He is doing (John 5:1-25 specifically John 5:19-20). He said to the Father in John 17:4 "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do."

He made this work for Himself.

- 7.) His work to go to the cross to be crucified for our sins and our sicknesses
- 8.) His work to die
- 9.) His work to be buried in an earthen grave
- 10.) His work to rise from the grave
- 11.) His work to be known as The Resurrected Christ
- 12.) His work to ascend into Heaven
- 13.) His work to EVER INTERCEDE FOR US---Our Eternal High Priest
- 14.) His work TO CONTINUE LOVING THE FATHER AND US

HE, TOO, LIKE THE FATHER IS STILL WORKING---He has made more work for Himself:

The Day of Lord, He will return for His bride, The Church, His Church.

Matthew 24:31 "And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

John 5:25 "Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

1 Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

1 Corinthians 15:52 "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

1. **The Great Day of the Lord**, Zephaniah 1:14-18 "**14** "The great day of the LORD is near-- near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. **15** That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, **16** a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers. **17** I will bring distress on the people and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like filth. **18** Neither their silver nor their

gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth."

He made this work for Himself "If ye have known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." (John 14:7) We are one in the same Jesus said of Himself and the Father and of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17).

Biblical Numerology: Let's break that down---The number 2=If you have known Me (1) then you should have known My Father (2). Now, because you have known Me and have seen Me, then you have known the Father and seen the Father, because we are (1). 1+1 is not always 2 when you are working in the Spiritual Realm.

Yes my beloved brothers and sisters it is the time of perfected works in and of themselves and those doing the works of the Kingdom of God. He shall perfectly complete them. Read John 14:6-31.

John 14:31 "But that the world would know that **I love My Father**; and as the Father gave me commandment (this work) even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

So why did God make it His work to create the first and second heaven and the earth--even knowing those He created would turn from Him?

For LOVE— God so LOVED THE WORLD---He made it His work to love! He has not completed that GREAT WORK---HE CONTINUES TO LOVE PATIENTLY AND TEARFULLY! ***God so wants to be loved, He told us how we are to love Him. Deuteronomy 6:4-6*** "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart."

Matthew 22:37

"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Mark 12:30

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Mark 12:33

"To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Luke 10:27

"He answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary: The "heart" is the inner nature of the man, including his intellectual, emotional, and cognitive faculties; the "soul" is the personality, the entire self-consciousness; and the "might" is the sum of the energies, bodily and mental. Not by profession merely is Jehovah to be loved; the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, is to be yielded to him in holy and devout affection (cf. Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:33; Luke 10:27; Romans 12:1).

This is the first and great commandment of God's law, that we love him; and that we do all parts of our duty to him from a principle of love; My son, give me thine heart. We are to love God with all our heart, and soul, and might. That is,

1. With a sincere love; not in word and tongue only, but inwardly in truth.
2. With a strong love. He that is our All, must have our all, and none but he.
3. With a superlative love; we must love God above any creature whatever, and love nothing but what we love for him.
4. With an intelligent love. To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, we must see good cause to love him.
5. With an entire love; he is ONE, our hearts must be united in his love. Oh that this love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts!

End of Commentary

Love is risky business my darling brothers and sisters, but as our Father Who art in Heaven risked Love knowing it would be pain filled and much sorrow, He still chose to make LOVE His work and that is His ongoing WORK. So my beloveds all people deserve the same kind of love that Abba gives, perfect and complete, uncomplicated and unfailing and non-conditional LOVE.

I love you my darlings. It is a risk to love others and I know its pain and its sorrow well. In my years of loving, I have been betrayed, turned against, misused, abused, taken advantage of, slandered, gossiped about, falsely accused, and more! But if I truly am made in Our Father's image, I willfully forgive and openly love, even my enemies. Jesus said it must be perfect love all the time. **Matthew 5:43-48.**

I do struggle. Surely I do with this risky heart business of love. I have not attained but as Apostle Paul said and worked toward, I choose to risk it all and chase after the Prize!

SELFLESS SEED TENDING WORKS “THE PERFECT HARVEST”

John 19 “No Greater Love---How could it be---That the Lord of Lords would die for me?”

Love is stronger than death. Of all of the inventions that God has created the two most powerful are: Love (in the Spirit) and Seed (in the natural). There are the seeds of plants, shrubs, trees, etc. and the seed of man and animals. When there's love, even natural love, man is kept alive. Man procreates, the family of love grows, and the family of love survives. Extended families survive, they help each other out. Humanity survives, society survives because of love. Love is the biggest preserver of them all. His banner over us is love. There are sinners that practice more love than some Christians...and they prosper. They cover each other's back and God is attracted to their love. When God sees love, he gets more involved. Some heathen cultures are preserved because they practice love and acceptance toward each other. Some heathen cultures become extinct because they have hatred. God is to be loved because of the **perfections of his nature**, and the works of his hand, of nature, providence, and grace; and because of the relations he stands in to men, and especially to his own people; and because of his peculiar love to them; and, indeed, he is to be loved by all men for his care of them, and blessings of goodness bestowed on them; the manner in which this is to be done follows:

ATTENDING TO THE SEEDS OF REPENTANCE WE SOW

Once we have sowed our seeds of repentance, we must learn how to attend to the seeds we have sown so our harvest will meet or supersede our yield expectation.

God **made creation His work** (Genesis 2:2 KJV) “*And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*” He worked it until He finished it. He called His work---very good. Then He rested from that **work which He made for Himself**. Jesus said the Father is still working. As a farmer makes ‘farming’ his work we too must make sowing and reaping our work. We too must make growing spiritually mature and strengthening our faith **our lifetime work**.

THE ATTENDING: “Our Lifetime Work”

2 Peter 1:3-6

Apostle Peter teaches us that before we can **grow love for people**, there are steps we must take.

1. Work hard to be good. (Diligently add to your faith virtue—KJV)
2. We must learn to know God better. (Add to virtue---knowledge KJV)
3. Discover what He wants you to do. (Participate (be partakers) in the divine nature of God NIV/KJV)
4. Learn to put aside your own desires. (Add self-control NIV)
 - a. So that we will become patient
 - b. So that we will become godly
 - c. Allowing us to gladly let God have His with us.

THE GROWTH:

2 Peter 1:7 says that if we can accomplish these things (above) then God makes it possible for the next required step in how we communicate and relate to and with other people.

1. We’ll be able to enjoy other people
2. We’ll like other people
3. We’ll finally grow to love other people deeply

2 Peter 1:8 says the more we go in these ways listed above the more we will

1. Grow strong spiritually
2. Become fruitful
3. Become useful to our Lord Jesus Christ

However, Apostle Peter warns us that if we fail to do these things, **make these things our work**, then we shall consider ourselves blind or at least very shortsighted. We then forget what messes and old

FIELDS OF REPRODUCTION

Dearest Beloveds:

In Jesus Holy Name, I bless you with His Goodness, His Joyfulness, His Righteousness, His faithfulness, and His Surpassing Peace than none can Understand. May your days be filled with the blessed communion of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray to the Father that all that you are asking for in alignment with His Holy Word that it would be His perfect will to let it be so.

I ask in Jesus Precious Name that the Lord of the Hosts protects you and all of your families and your entire households vertically and horizontally. May your homes be your refuge and shelter from the storms and your relationships be the pure gold they are designed to be. I bless your marriages in Jesus Holy Name and the Covenant Union of them. Let them be sacred unto the Lord and we call the enemy a liar if he says otherwise.

I pray that the Godly offspring that sit around your table and crown your head with glory be healthy and safe. In Jesus Holy Name, I ask the Father that no sea waves spoken against you reach the shoreline of your life. In all that you have sown, I ask that the Father reap back unto you a hundred fold.

May the Holy Spirit who indwells you have His way with you and make Himself known unto you, in Jesus Holy Name. I bless you with the Oil, the Royal Wine, and the Bread of Life to be your personal companions all the days of your lives. Be blessed by the Spirit of God and know that He is the provider and protector of all things. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and ALL things shall be added unto thee. Walk in the Boldness of Jesus Christ and enter the Gates of Heaven with GREAT THANKSGIVING---PRAISE OUR GOD ALMIGHTY FOR HE IS WORTHY OF ALL PRAISE! AMEN."

Love and Blessings;
Pastor Cyndi Higgins

"Whatever exists has already been named, and what humanity is has been known; no one can contend with someone who is stronger. But God is my King from long ago; he brings salvation on the earth. It was you, God, who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter. The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and the moon. As long as earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" **Therefore**, "Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions. ***The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and the day of death is better than the day of birth.***"

Ecclesiastes 6"10; Psalm 74: 12, 17, 16; Genesis 2:22; Ecclesiastes 7:10, 8 (a), 1(b)

- 1.) The end of a thing is ALWAYS BETTER than its beginning. Don't ever say the former days were better---for you do not inquire wisely.
- 2.) God sets all boundaries, NOT PEOPLE! Psalm 74:16-17, Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26
- 3.) **GOD MADE-----Acts 17:24-30** Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) “²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. ²⁵ Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one man, He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. ²⁷ He did this so they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’²⁹ Being God’s offspring then, we shouldn’t think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination. ³⁰ “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent.”

- a. God made the world and everything in it
- b. He is Lord of heaven and earth
- c. He does not live in shrines made by hands
- d. He is not served by human hands
- e. He gives everyone life and breath and all things
- f. From one man, He made every nationality to live on the whole earth
- g. He determined when they would live (what generation)
- h. He determined boundaries of where they live (nation)

4.) **WHY DID GOD MAKE EVERYTHING, GIVE EVERYTHING LIFE, AND PREDETERMINE WHEN AND WHERE THEY WOULD LIVE?**

- a. That they might seek Him
- b. That they might reach out to Him
- c. That they might find Him
 - ii. Find that He is very near them
 - ii. In Him we live and move and exist
- d. That we would discover we are His offspring---**His reproduction.**
- e. That we would understand His divine nature cannot even be imagined by us

BUT ³⁰ “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent.”

GOD IS NO LONGER OVER LOOKING MAN’S IGNORANCE. It reads ‘having overlooked’ this is in the past tense. It is an act of God which He has already done.

GOD IS DEMANDING REPENTANCE FROM ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. It reads ‘now commands; this is present tense. It is a present command of God that all people regardless of where they are at---MUST REPENT.

We must begin to think and behave like children of God. We are His---godly offspring.

- 1.) We must know our Father God.
- 2.) We need to get to know Him, our Father God
- 3.) We must have a healthy holy fear of God (NOW GOD COMMANDS REPENTANCE)
- 4.) Our ignorance caused us to believe that God is somebody and something He is not.
 - a. His divine nature (Godhead) is not like silver and gold.
 - b. We cannot shape and mold God---He's the creator of us
 - c. By our own devices, we cannot conjure up who and what we want God to be.
 - d. God made boundaries for man.
 - e. Man does not make boundaries for God.
- 5.) Verse 24 says "God is the maker of all things."
THEREFORE GOD IS THE NUMBER ONE PRODUCER
- 6.) Verse 26 says, "God determines time before He appointed them."
 - a. We must wait upon the Lord's timing.

**THEREFORE WE AS GOD'S OFFSPRING, WE PLANT, WE SOW, WE TEND
...THEN WE WAIT UPON THE LORD....**

We cannot reproduce anything that God did not first produce---He is the FIRST PRODUCER

1. God made ALL things. It was the work of God that He made for Himself.
2. God is the Lord of Heaven and Earth
3. God gave us dominion over earth to subdue it.
4. We can plant here on earth "below."
5. Our planting on this earth below is our investment in Heaven "above."
6. God predetermined who we are **made to be---come**.
7. God appointed the generation we were **made to be---come in**.

God tells us we need to go and REPRODUCE

"Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions. ***The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and the day of death is better than the day of birth.***" Ecclesiastes 7:10, 8 (a) and 1(b)

Matthew 28: 18-20 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:** and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

REPRODUCE---Defined:

1. To make a copy of (something)
2. To produce something that is the same as or very similar to (something else)

3. To cause (something) to happen again in the same way
4. To imitate closely (sound-effects can *reproduce* the sound of thunder)
5. To make a representation (as an image or copy)

RE: The prefix re is Latin in origin and it means again or again and again.

With runaway brides of Jesus Christ or a person who has backslidden, they need a doing-over. However they cannot do it themselves. We therefore are asked by the Lord to be producers and re-producers. We are made in our Father's image and we have the same ability to produce and reproduce. However, God is telling us to re-produce in the nature of this discussion.

The field of reproduction guidelines:

Luke 10: 2 "He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

1. Know the field belongs to the Lord of the Harvest.
2. Know that the harvest belongs to the Lord of the Harvest
3. Know that the plenteous work He has made for us to do, we work it alongside of Him.
 - a. Regeneration is God's Work
 - b. Sanctification is God's Work
 - c. He has called us to work alongside Him in sowing and reaping
 - i. We convert people's thinking long enough for salvation to become regeneration and regeneration to become sanctification. God does the Saving, Regenerating, and Sanctifying. Through relationship with people, we sow a seed of conversion to cause them to answer the 'call' of salvation.
 - j. We are partners of the Lord of the Harvest.

Psalm 126:6 "He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

- k. We sow the precious seed and we bring in the sheaves with us

Commentary: "The Word is the precious seed which he bears, which he takes out of the granaries of the Scriptures; and carries from place to place, and scatters and sows, (Luke 8:11-the seed is the Word of God); compared to seed, because of its meanness in the eyes of those that know it not; because of its generative virtue and increase, which it has from God, and which, unless sown in the earth, produces no fruit: and it is called "precious seed," because either bought at a great price, when grain is dear; or because it usually is the choicest wheat that is the sowing seed; and so may denote the preciousness and value of the Gospel, dispensed by Christ's faithful ministers, which is called a sowing of spiritual things, (1 Corinthians 9:11-sown spiritual seed among you); which should be done plentifully and constantly, and with the same sort of seed or doctrine, and which requires art and skill; and is often performed weeping or with tears, because of their own insufficiency, through fear of success, and through want of it; and because of the badness of the ground, the hardness of men's hearts they have to do with."

“The Sower in tears and weeping, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him; the seed he has been to and fro in sowing springs up under a divine blessing; and, beyond his expectation and fears, produces a large and plentiful crop; which he reaps, and returns home, not with his arms full of sheaves only, but with his cart laden with them: so a faithful minister, sooner or later, is blessed with converts, who will be his joy and crown of rejoicing another day: see (John 4:35, Jesus said, “Open your eyes and look at the fields they are ready for harvest). (1 Thessalonians 2:19. “The sheaves {our glory and joy} we bring in, is it not you?” Paul asked the Church in Thessalonica, which he had founded.)”

Commentary ended

- 1.) We are the sowers and the reapers. We are to bring forth the sheaves from God’s field.
- 2.) When we **pull it up**. A crop harvested always goes in one direction. UP! Psalm 121:1 *“I will lift up my eyes to the hills—From whence comes my help? ² My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.”* Even root crops are dug up!
- 3.) A crop pulled up becomes a harvest.
- 4.) We bring the harvest to the Lord (the sheaves).
- 5.) Jesus is the head of the Church
- 6.) We are the body of Christ, **pulled up and knit together**.

Colossians 2:2-3 KJV *“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

- a. We are unified in unity---Phil. 2:2
- b. Through Romans 12:1-2
- c. Paul said imitate us 2 Thess. 1:6
- d. Become reproductions of our Father God, for we are His Godly offspring.
- e. We are REPRODUCED AND WE ARE REPRODUCERS Ephesians 5:1-2

“Then make me truly happy by loving each other and agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, working together with one heart and mind and purpose. And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy—the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? ² Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ² Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.”

Philippians 2:2; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 1:6; and Ephesians 5:1-2

FIELDS OF PRODUCTION

GOD REQUIRES EVERYTHING!

Acts 9: 36 “Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); **this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.** **37** And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. **38** Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, “Do not delay in coming to us.” **39** So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, **weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.** **40** But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. **41** And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. **42** It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. **43** And Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.”

- 1.) This woman ABOUNDED in deeds of kindness and charity. Greek word for abounded is *Perisseuo* which means giving over and above. Giving excellently. More than enough. Beyond normal.
- 2.) It is safe to say she knew JESUS INTIMATELY---they had a relationship and she knew her role. A human being is born selfish and grows up to become self-centered.
- 3.) This woman, Dorcas, abounded in deeds (works) for others in kindness and charity (love) **continually**. In other words, she did not stop working and giving to and for others. She gave and worked and in kindness and love, she gave and worked for others for their edification and building up in the Lord. We learn from this the following:
 - a. A born-again Christian is no longer as he/she was born. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit regenerates that individual and slowly sanctification begins.
 - b. One's behavioral change indicates the process has begun. Fruit begins to manifest.
 - c. A true, 'born-again' Christian renews their mind and stops conforming to the world.
 - d. A true, 'born-again' Christian gives their body as a living sacrifice-which is only the minimal and reasonable act of obedience to faith in Jesus Christ.
- 4.) Through these believers of Joppa, the Lord called Peter in to resurrect her.
- 5.) Peter did not know her only that she was a disciple of Jesus Christ and she died prematurely.
- 6.) In the region of Joppa the customary burial custom was washing the body letting it lay for 3 days before the burial unlike in Jerusalem the body was washed, anointed, and buried immediately.

- 7.) The people introduce Dorcas even though she is dead by showing him her works that which her hands had made for others.
- The works of a saint speak for themselves.
 - The legacy of a saint is broadcasted by others.
 - People do not forget the 'true-works' of a saint.
 - The Lord does not forget the 'true-works' of a saint. Hebrews 6:10 *"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."*
- 8.) The faith without works in Jesus Christ is dead faith. We cannot please God without faith. Dead faith does not please God. Dorcas' fruit of salvation was obvious to all of those around her. Surely her attitude of serving Jesus Christ personally on a daily basis caused Him to send for Peter to bring her to life. Jesus said if we do to the 'least of these' we have done this work onto Him. (See James 2:14-26 for this entire teaching) James 2:17, 20, and Hebrews 11:6 *"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?...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."* "† Many people don't realize how vulnerable and how perilous is **the life of faith**. What he means is we dare not take for granted the faithfulness of our churches or our denominations or our schools or our families - or even of our own hearts, as if vigilance and conscious endurance were not continually necessary. Without earnest attention to truth and faith, everything decays, including our own personal walk with God." † David Wells at Christian and Missionary Alliance annual meeting"

So with renewed concern for our own faith, and the faith of our church and the faith of our soul and others, let's say in the words of Hebrews 10:36, "We have need of endurance."

- 9.) This disciple of Christ who abounded continuously in the works (deeds) of kindness and love is another example of a 'true born-again' Christian who lives selflessly putting the Lord first and all others before herself. Such a beautiful living—breathing example of Christ-likeness for all those working with her and around her and those receiving salvation through her acts of love and kindness. It is no wonder that the Lord called Apostle Peter to the scene to resurrect her.
- 10.)** Give the Lord the reason in this season of your life to lift you from a dead-works'-mindset, so that you can live abundantly in the fullness of His Joy as you volunteer to do 'good-abounding-works in kindness and love. *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Hebrews 10:23-25 NIV *"It is not just what we do that matters, but how we do it. Do our actions express 'the assurance of things hoped for?'"*

Do ALL THINGS as unto the Lord. Serve your Church every day in anyway there is a call for help. It is a sin not to volunteer and do good works for the purpose of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Matthew 5:14-16*; ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ In the same way, **let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

The Bible says that faith without works is dead and dead faith is non-existent faith which equals no faith. God cannot be pleased without faith.

It is time to measure your faith level. If you lack personal inspiration from the stirring of the Holy Spirit to help in all that is possible for the Kingdom of God, you must ask yourself a very difficult question, “Am I truly a born-again Christian sold out to Jesus Christ and heaven bound?” If you cannot answer that question with bold authority and fully convinced with the peace of Christ inside of you, then I must tell you get on your knees and confess and ask the Lord to truly cause a rebirth inside of you through your confession of sins. Ask the Lord to begin the regeneration inside of you. Ask Him to help you set yourself aside so He can begin the process of your be----coming a regenerated and sanctified member of the Body of Jesus Christ. Please, go to your pastor today. Please go to the altar today. Do not wait one more moment. You do not have tomorrow promised to you. If you died in this state right this very moment, do you know if you’ll find yourself in the embracing arms of Jesus Christ beyond a shadow of doubt? Please my darling hear my plea as I type this and pray this for you today---get up out of your seat and RUN TO THE ALTAR OF JESUS CHRIST---RUN because the devil is on your heels wanting to devour you and destroy you and keep you out of the gates of heaven! Run, beloved, run!

Commentary: Acts 9:36-43 Many are full of good words, who are empty and barren in good works; but Tabitha was a great doer, no great talker. Christians, who have not property to give in charity, **may yet be able to do acts of charity, working with their hands, or walking with their feet, for the good of others.** Those are certainly best praised whose own works praise them, whether the words of others do so or not. But such are ungrateful indeed, who have kindness shown them, and will not acknowledge it, by showing the kindness that is done them. While we live upon the fullness of Christ for our whole salvation, we should desire to be full of good works, for the honor of his name, and for the benefit of his saints. Such characters as Dorcas are useful where they dwell, as showing the excellency of the word of truth by their lives.

Commentary ended

PASTORS AND THE LEADERS

Acts 9: 36 “Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); **this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.** **37**

And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. **38** Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us." **39** So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, **weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.**

Did you notice that Peter had just come from Lydda where a not so unusual healing took place? After all, people were getting rather used to the fact that people were healed by Jesus Christ through the apostles. What is strikingly different about this healing is Peter had left Jerusalem and had begun to travel about the country visiting the Lord's people. However in Joppa a miracle was going to happen that had not yet happened through any person, but Jesus Christ, Himself!

1. Let's take a look at these widows that are with Dorcas' body as they give testimony about her. They brought Peter to the upper room where Dorcas' body laid, but it says they showed all the tunics and garments that she had made while she was with them. I doubt there was a garment rack in the upper room. Is it possible they were wearing these clothes she had made? *The Jameson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* says, "All the widows—whom she (Dorcas) had clothed or fed stood by him weeping and showing Peter the coats and garments which Dorcas had made. Showing Peter these specimens only of what she had been in the habit of making."

With your permission, I am going to digress from here to bring in the matter of widows and faith and the instructions from Godly authority. They are very important with this Scripture in Acts 9 that we are studying.

Jesus Christ told us in Luke 18:1-8 that we are to pray a certain way and He used a judge who cared neither about people nor about God and 'a widow' as Characters and prayer was the subject. Listen to what Jesus says: Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me! ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ ***And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"***

2. *What qualifications are set forth in the Bible for Widows?* Widows are particularly helpless and vulnerable if they have no family to uphold their cause (this must have been this widow's case). Only justice and her persistence were in her favor. Paul told Timothy there were Church standards that qualified widows for help. Let's look at these Christian standards that Paul wrote about regarding the widows in the Church. 1 Timothy 5:3-10
 - a. "Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. The widow who is really in need and left all alone---she should:

- b. Puts her hope in God
 - c. Continues night and day to pray
 - d. Ask God for help.
 - e. She must be over sixty
 - f. Has been faithful to her husband.
 - g. Is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble."
 - h. **"Devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds."**
3. Jesus asked a peculiar question, When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? He asked this question at the end of Him telling us how to pray. Like a widow (we assume who had no family) demanding justice against her adversary from a judge who did not fear God or care what people thought.
 4. One must ask themselves what does faith have to do with who qualifies as a widow needing Church assistance? It has a lot to do with it, Hebrews 11: 1 paraphrased, "faith is two things, as verse one says. 1) It's being sure of God's promises - that they are worth putting our hope in ("the substance of things hoped for"). 2) It's being sure that the invisible God and his hand in creation do in fact exist ("the evidence of things unseen")."
 5. Jesus is saying a person who prays like this as He describes in Luke 18:1-8 and continue to do so, is in fact demonstrating faith and it was reiterated by Apostle Paul in the letter to Timothy she must pray day and night asking God to help her, she must put her hope in God. She must be well known for her good deeds and she must be devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. We now see how faith and good deeds (good works) are inseparable in our faith growth. As one matures in the Lord and continues to invest themselves in Him, He invests who He is into them. We are continuously be---coming. We are a process that in partnership with the Lord working out our salvation from the inside of us to the outside of us. This is where the fruit of our re-birth manifests itself so that our regeneration and the working of the Holy Spirit inside of us refining us through sanctification produces good fruit. **WE CAN BE PRODUCERS AS WELL AS REPRODUCERS.**
 6. To become producers and reproducers we must have faith and we must have good works and we must have Godly authority over us willing to risk 'popularity with people' to teach and instruct the Truth from the Living Word of God. Let's go back to the Scriptures in Timothy. Paul writes not only to Timothy but also to all Christian Leaders and **we know it is God speaking through Paul, 2 Timothy 3:16.** "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"
 7. We must all be nourished on the truths of faith so when the Son of Man comes, He will find faith on this earth. "*True godliness springs from God (God the Word) who appeared in the flesh, Jesus Christ. The mystery (the secret) that produces piety (devotion to godly discipline) is Jesus Christ.*" 1 Timothy 3:16 paraphrased.
 - a. **I am writing you these instructions** so you know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and foundation of truth. 1 Tim 3:14-15
 - b. If **you point these things out to the brothers and sisters**, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on truths of faith, and on good teachings you have followed. 1 Tim 4:6
 - c. **Train yourself to be godly** (self-disciplined). 1 Tim 4:7

- d. **Command and teach these things** 1 Tim 4:11
- e. **Set the example** for all believers 1 Tim 4:12
- f. **Devote yourself to public reading of Scripture** 1 Tim 4:13
- g. **Devote yourself to preaching and teaching** 1 Tim 4:13
- h. **Do not neglect your gift** 1 Tim 4:14
- i. **Be diligent in these godly matters** 1 Tim 4:15
- j. **Give yourself wholly to them** so that people can see your progress (your fruits).
- k. **Watch your life and doctrine closely** 1 Tim 4:16
- l. **Persevere in them** because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Tim 4:16

Acts 9:40 *“But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. **41** And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.”*

I do not think that Peter knew that this was the day the Lord was going to use him for the first recorded resurrection in the New Testament done by any other person other than Jesus Christ. He could have possibly believed he was going to Joppa to oversee a funeral, comfort a body of Christ mourning a great loss. Regardless of the reason, Peter came. He heard about Dorcas and he saw her deceased body. **But Peter**, but Peter---that is a word of shifting. A thought is shifted and movement is shifted, **‘but’** is a conjunction that is a game-changer. In literature the word “but” is used to draw attention to itself. **But Peter**---sent the widows and their weeping out of the room. Now, he knelt down in the quiet room and began to pray. We do not know what Peter prayed. We do know he knelt, he prayed, **and turning to the body**. He had not been praying over the body. He had to turn toward Dorcas’ body and then he said, “Tabitha arise.” He humbled himself before the Lord (kneeling) and he prayed. Sometime during the kneeling, praying, and waiting, he was told to turn toward the body and speak a commandment for a living-person, “Arise.” No other person than Christ Jesus in the New Testament had resurrected a dead person. Peter had been present when Jesus had resurrected Jairus’ daughter. Mark 5:35-43 We know that the Lord will be brought pleasure and will be honored and glorified in all that we say and do if we like Peter, will humble ourselves and pray and wait.”

Acts 9:42 *It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. **43** And Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.”*

The result of this miracle was

- 1.) Many believed in the Lord—The Lord was pleased, honored, and Glorified!
- 2.) Peter stayed because this caused a great revival to break out. Commentaries say he stayed (many days) is actually he stayed for 3 years (as noted in verse 23) pastoring there.

It is also notable to see how this sets Peter up for his next faith assignment which is going to a Gentile’s house, named Cornelius and leading him and his entire household and extended

FIELDS OF EXTENSION

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 NLT “1 Give generously, for your gifts will return to you later. 2 Divide your gifts among many, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead. 3 When the clouds are heavy, the rains come down. When a tree falls, whether south or north, there it lies. 4 If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done. 5 God's ways are as hard to discern as the pathways of the wind, and as mysterious as a tiny baby being formed in a mother's womb. 6 Be sure to stay busy and plant a variety of crops, for you never know which will grow -- perhaps they all will.”

The Kings James Version: Starts by saying it this way, “*Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.*”

“*Get your Bread up,*” is American slang for “make money.” “Bread” is a slang word for money, while “up” refers to increasing the amount of that money. This phrase is becoming more and more popular and is often heard in well-known rap and pop songs. **Slang for money which in a metaphorical sense can be traced back to the Bible.** During the 1950s the beatnik community used the term *bread* as a euphemism for money.

Bread is one of the oldest prepared foods. Evidence from 30,000 years ago in Europe revealed starch residue on rocks used for pounding plants. The word *bread* is commonly used around the world in English-speaking countries as a synonym for money as is the case with the word “dough.”

Cast—Throw something forcefully in a specified direction, in other words, toss, fling, pitch, or hurl!
Throw your money forcefully upon the waters!

The specified direction is “Upon the water(s).” Why does the Lord say, upon the water(s)? Notice it is plural.

The Hebrew Bible reads: “Send your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it.”

Hebrew Commentary: Charity should be given even to strangers; generosity will not go unrewarded.

Send forth your generosity upon the waves of the Sea and although sending NEVER GUARANTEES that it will return to you as the Sea is an environment of many troubles, you do so anyway. EXCEPT in God’s Word where He makes it a PROMISE that it will come back to you later!

Conclusion Verse 1:

What does the Word say about giving generously? “*He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done*” *Proverbs 19:17*

- Mark 10:21
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

We might think of our gifts as loans to God, who will certainly not default on what we lend Him. So in summary, the way to invest in eternity is to give your money to God and His purposes, especially to help the poor; this strategic giving has eternal significance, not only for those to whom we give, but also for us. The idea of "investing in eternity" means that we should invest with a view to maximum return in the long run. It is an axiom of wise investment strategy that long-term growth is best. If we pull our money out early, we are generally worse off than if we had given it time to multiply.

Ecclesiastes 11:2 makes it clear that you do not stop giving. It says give to seven and then to eight. You do not stop giving. We cannot say, "I already gave....And I am not giving, again." We had an old saying in America for a while. When our home phone would ring and it was a charity asking for money, we would say, "I gave at the office." We would say that because oftentimes our company did collect for different charities and we gave through the company collection. However, we did not give the caller an opportunity to tell us what charitable organization they were representing and what group of people they were going to help with the money.

Additionally the Bible says give to many and spread the giving around not to just one place.

Commentary:

Ecclesiastes 11:2: A rather literal rendering of the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 says, "Send your substance [out] over the face of the water [i.e., the sea] that you may find it [again] many days hence. Give a share to seven, or even to eight, for you cannot know what [sort of] disaster may come upon the land."

These verses are speaking about "not putting all one's eggs in one basket," but doing so from a more sophisticated managerial point of view. The phrase "give portions to seven/eight" likewise refers to prudent and careful investment of excess capital or means of production.

Therefore the command to divide portions seven or eight ways is a call to careful, prudent stewardship of whatever may be under one's charge (as opposed to unnecessary risk-taking). But this is only part of the story, of course. The message to be gained from these verses is really not so much "here's how to invest and make money," but rather "don't set your heart on riches, for everything in this world is uncertain." Most of us do not have *any* "excess capital" laying around, let alone enough to make it worthwhile to ship it off to seven or eight different places. This was certainly true of most of Solomon's original audience as well. In the history of the family of God, the privileged have been few (Matt.10:25; cf. 1Cor.1:26). ***No, these verses are first and foremost meant to produce a sense of humility in the face of life's uncertainty.***

We who live from day to day (more or less) put our trust in the Lord. Those who have an excess of worldly means are subtly reminded here by Solomon that worldly wealth is in fact a very uncertain thing, even if the momentary nature of worldly riches is often blindly ignored by most of those who possess them for a time.

Commentary Ended

Consider these teachings of scripture on the subject.

1) You cannot truly give your allegiance to God while at the same time trusting in and lusting after material gain - you can't worship both God and "Mammon" at the same time (Matt.6:24; Lk.16:13).

2) We brought nothing into this world and will take nothing out of it (1Tim.6:7-8).

3) Lust for material gain makes us vulnerable to the devil's attacks, and threatens our salvation (1Tim.6:9).

4) The love of money is a source of all sorts of evils, turning us from the faith and causing us much anguish (1Tim.6:10).

5) Greed is essentially idolatry (Col.3:5), and its practitioners idolaters (Eph.5:5).

6) Covetousness lured Balaam into sacrificing his relationship with God for the sake of money, so that his actions are proverbial for the deceptiveness of wealth (2Pet.2:15; Jude 11).

7) Envy is the true root of acquisition lust (Eccl.4:4).

8) The lust for wealth can never be satisfied by any success (Eccl.5:10).

9) Wealth can be a severe disadvantage, keeping us from God (Lk.18:23-25).

10) Where your treasure is, there is your heart also (Matt.6:19-21; cf. Lk.12:32-34).

11) What does it profit a man to gain the world but lose his life? (Mk.8:36; Lk.9:25)

12) Your life does not depend upon an abundance of possessions (Lk.12:15).

13) Storing up material things rather than striving to be rich towards God is folly (Lk.12:21).

14) Discipleship requires the willingness to put God before possessions (Lk.14:33).

15) Wealth can distort one's perspective, choking spiritual growth (Mk.4:19).

16) Nothing is permanent, not even great wealth; great wealth merely subjects the possessor to greater temptation and a higher standard of judgment (Jas.5:1-6 and Lk.12:48).

17) Covetousness is forbidden by the 10th commandment (Ex.20:17; Deut.5:21).

Thus the proper attitude for all who have been blessed with worldly wealth is not to put their faith in it or to assume that these riches will continue to grow and be secure (even if split into seven or eight portions to hedge against disaster), but rather to do as James counsels and make one's plans subject to "the Lord [being] willing" (Jas.4:13-17), to humbly act and humbly think, remembering that this world and its wealth last but a moment, but that our treasures in heaven will last for all eternity ((Matt.6:19-21).

When I was pregnant with my eldest daughter, Dustie, I lived in Arizona USA. The only job I could get hired to do was make phone calls at Christmas time asking corporations for donations for 'needy children.' That was a very difficult job. I was hung up on a lot. I was cussed out and swore at. I was lead on only to be laughed at. It was so embarrassing for me to make each call and be ridiculed from the company owners and managers. However, occasionally, there was that 'reward' for my efforts and one person would say yes. Trying to find one 'righteous and generous person' in 1973 was like finding a needle in a haystack. *It is EVEN HARDER NOW!*

Let's take a look at a man who made the worst decision of his lifetime and a woman who made the best decision of her lifetime. It all has to do with FIELD EXTENSION!

FIELD EXTENSION:

Read 1 Samuel Chapter 25

- 1.) Did Nabal know how David and his men had protected Nabel's flock and his shepherds? _____
- 2.) If Abigail knew who David was, do you think Nabal really did not know who he was? _____
- 3.) What kept Nabal from helping David? _____

- 4.) What reasons (excuses) did Nabal give that he based his decision on not to do as David had asked? _____

- 5.) What was Nabal's offense? _____

- a. He questioned David’s Reputation—Who is he? Who really is the son of Jesse? Nabal compared King Saul’s son-in-law to a slave/servant running away from his master. Verse 10
 - b. Nabal justifies his selfish decision. “I am not helping ‘men coming from who knows where!’” Verse 11
 - c. Nabal is selfish and prideful, “Why should **I** take **MY** bread and water and the meat **I** have slaughtered for **MY** shearers? Verse 11
 - d. He had more than enough to share: 25:2
 - a. He was very wealthy
 - b. 1 thousand goats
 - c. 3 thousand sheep
 - d. He was in Maon but from Carmel. David had guarded his sheep and shepherds in Carmel 25:7
 - e. He owned possessions and business and land and more in Carmel (a small village 2 miles north of Maon) 25:2
 - f. Now, Nabal was shearing his sheep in Carmel 25:2 and sheep shearing was always a time of celebration and feasts (festivals) 25:8 and 25:36.
- 6.) What held Nabal back from helping David?
- a. **His non-repentive character defects**
 - i. He was dishonest
 - ii. He was mean in his dealings. Surly defined: ill-humored; gruff. “hurled insults at David’s men.” 25:14
 - iii. He was a Calebite, a descendant of Caleb (Numbers 14:24, Joshua 14:13)
 - iv. Wicked several translations call him in this verse Ill-tempered. 25:17
 - v. Too Stubborn so that nobody can talk to him 25:17.
 - vi. He seemed to be living up to his name. Nabal means “Fool.” 25:25
- 7.) What enabled Abigail to help David and save the lives of many?
- g. **Her humbleness**
 - h. She was intelligent 25:3
 - i. She was able to think it over and solve it 25:17
 - j. She acted quickly Verse 18 “She took” Did not bake or cook---She took 25:18
 - k. 200 loaves of bread (must have been already baked) no small time operation; two hundred loaves; of bread; of what size or weight they were is not said; though it may be reasonably concluded they were pretty large, since they are not called cakes, but loaves, and since they were to be a present to David and his men, who were numerous.
 - l. 2 skins of wine; leathern bags which held a large quantity, in which they put and carried wine in those times and countries. The Septuagint version is, two vessels or casks of wine:
 - m. 5 dressed sheep—Already dressed; killed and dressed by the butcher.
 - n. 5 seahs (approximately 60 pounds) of roasted grain
 - o. 100 cakes of raisins. The bunches of grapes when dried were pressed into cakes.
 - p. 200 cakes of pressed figs. Which were dried, and pressed, and made into lumps, and she took two hundred of these; approximately two hundred pound weight of them:
- B.** She was wise and did not tell her husband what she was doing 25:19

- C. She was humble—bowed before David 25:23
- D. She took the blame for Nabal’s behavior 25:24
- E. Asked David to pay no attention to Nabal’s behavior 25:25
- F. She explained she did not see the men David had sent (she was where Nabal was) 25:25
- G. She immediately calls David Master and herself servant taking the servant position
- H. She asks David to forgive her offense 25:28
- I. With intelligence, she is able to show David that blood on his hands over this would not be wise. She said that ruining his reputation over this matter was hardly worth it.
- J. She tells David she knows who he is, “When the Lord has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel---25:30-31
- K. She asked David to remember her when the Lord has brought him success. 25:31
- L. She used good judgment and kept David from unnecessary bloodshed 25:33
- M. David accepted her gift and blessed her and sent her home in peace 25:35
- N. After Nabal’s death, David asked Abigail to become his wife 25:39
- O. She said yes as a maidservant ready to serve David and his servants 25:41
- P. She acted quickly went to David and became his wife 25:42

I am sure that Abigail did not know that her extending herself such as she did for David would result in her becoming David’s wife. We do not know what tomorrow holds for us. We do not know when and if hard times will fall on us. While we are able to help others we are to do so. We are to cast our gifts generously not because the Lord said they will return to us later, but because we are made in His image and he gives abundantly and generously. We are to be like our Lord. Today we may be doing well with our health, relationships, marriages, and finances, but the Word says, ‘we do not know what risks lie ahead.’ Do not wait until you think it is the ‘perfect’ time to give, give now while you are enabled by the Lord to do so. Whatever you have, He is the one who gave it to you.

When Abigail had returned home

- 1.) Nabal like a king was hosting a banquet in their house. He apparently did not miss any of the gifts she had taken to David 25:36. He was in high spirits (showing no remorse for turning David down) and he was drunk. 25:36. (See: Proverbs 20:1)
- 2.) In the morning when he was sober, Abigail told him what she had done. His heart failed him (had a stroke) He became like stone (paralyzed) 25:37.
- 3.) About ten days later the Lord struck Nabal and he died 25:38

EXTEND: Cause to cover a larger area; make longer or wider.

Extend oneself: Exert or exercise oneself to the utmost: *You have to extend yourself to change rather than keep on doing the same thing.*

TO CAUSE EXTENSION: 1. A part that is added to something to enlarge or prolong it; a continuation. 2. An addition that increases the area, influence, operation, or contents of something:

Bible Verses about Using our Talents

Not Selling them to the Body of Christ!

1 Peter 4:10-11 ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Romans 12:6-8 ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

Proverbs 18:16 "A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great."

1 Timothy 4:14; ¹⁴ "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you."

2 Timothy 1:6 ⁶ 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."

Matthew 5:14-16; ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Colossians 3:23-25 ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism."

Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Bags of Gold---The Kingdom of Heaven will be like: Read this from your Bible.

PASTORS AND LEADERS WE MUST TEACH THE PEOPLE THAT FAITH WITHOUT WORKS (DEEDS) IS DEAD FAITH AND THAT **WITHOUT FAITH A PERSON CANNOT PLEASE GOD!**

I am shocked as a Pastor when I am told by other pastors that their church volunteers get paid a small wage to help out in different areas of the church. I truthfully, am not a believer of that. I find it wrong at so many levels. When and where does the Bible say we have to pay people to help in the parking lot, or the children's department, or the nursery, or to help on special projects, or during or for conferences? Furthermore I personally do not believe in paying praise and worship teams or their leaders. Now, in some churches they have Music Ministers who are Bible College graduates holding degrees in music and it is their vocation being a full time church staff member. I have seen where many of these men and women also stand in as teaching pastors

for various ages, youth pastors, and counseling pastors as well. In other words, they are full time staff pastors doing a variety of jobs.

What I am speaking to is the churches that have a group of Godly-talented individuals that lead the congregation in praise and worship on Sundays or those who usher or take care of the small children or teach in classrooms, women who come and help with light office work and those men and women who help keep the church clean. They are not church staff. It is easy to identify a volunteer from a staff member they have jobs outside the church or another income sources. This makes them a volunteer using the gifts that God gave them for the purpose of building up the saints. Furthermore, it is NOT OF GOD that the volunteers using talents He gave them for the edification of the Body of Christ receive payment for them to share their God-given talents at their local body of Christ. This practice shows me deterioration of the 'body of Christ.'

The Bible says 'make your body a living sacrifice.' If we cannot get out of our beds and go to Church and volunteer to do whatever we can with our hands and our feet, our voices, our minds, and take our possessions with us that will assist in helping the Church further the Gospel of Jesus Christ then there is a real problem in the Christian Nation. Jesus told a man to give Him his donkey, **and he did**. Jesus told a man to make a place in his house for his Passover meal, **and he did**. A little boy with 5 cakes of bread and 2 fish was told to give it to Jesus **and he did** and with it he fed thousands. Jesus had women and men following His ministry working with their hands and their feet and funding the ministry. The Ministry of Jesus had money because we find Judas Iscariot dipping into the Ministry's purse (John 12:6) when we are told about Mary of Bethany. Mary poured her expensive oil/perfume unto Jesus and anointed Him. When others raised a ruckus about her abundant act of love and kindness, Jesus said, "Leave her alone, she has anointed me for my burial and she will always be remembered for 'what she has done' (Matthew 26:13).

I fear, the Church is not influencing the world anymore, but the Church has been influenced by the world. Instead of renewing our minds and not conforming to the patterns of this world, we have adopted and promoted marketing and 'selling God given talents.' I wonder how the Lord truly feels about this. We should understand that the Lord cannot come into the UNHOLY ENVIRONMENTS we may be creating.

When a church has to hire a 'professional' band with all their instruments and musicians to encourage people to come to church on Sunday, then this, I believe, is an emotional-cancer whereas the doctrine of Jesus Christ is no longer the center of gathering together. Where are we told that people have to be emotionally aroused by human efforts to seek the face of God? Is that not what the Holy Spirit does? The Holy Spirit quickens. I am fearful we have reduced His presence to emotionalism through our own flesh. Therefore, I must ask myself, if some people are not participating in Sunday service for the Godly appointed reason, why are they really there? Is it the musical entertainment? What Spiritual food did they receive while there? Will that spiritual food take them through the week and hold them together when the world's worries try to choke out of them the Word they heard on Sunday?

I just heard yesterday from one of our leaders that last Sunday one of our youth members did not come to church because he had heard about a new church in town that sets up at the local movie theater each week. They give away free movie tickets to the new people who come in each Sunday. He chose to go to their service not to hear about Jesus Christ, but to get a free movie ticket. I do not see any place in the Bible where the

Apostles, Evangelists, or the Pastors used some gimmick to get people to come and hear the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST!

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25. So often throughout the Old Testament we see people gathering and standing to hear the Law of Moses read to them. We see people coming together in homes and on temple porches and along the rivers meeting to hear more about Jesus to pray and to praise Him and worship Him.

We must understand that Dorcas/Tabitha had an intimate relationship with the Lord. The testimony given about her fruits and her love and grace toward others. Good deeds of kindness and love (charity). Dorcas/Tabitha spent her lifetime CONSTANTLY doing ABOUNDING GOOD DEEDS FOR OTHERS! And when she died prematurely, the Lord through Peter brought her back to life. Come on Church what is wrong with us? In Acts people sold their land and their possessions and took care of others and all had equal amount. Not one had more and not one had less than the other. What about the two who thought they could cheat God and swindle and hustle the Apostles? Ananias and Sapphira’s lives ended abruptly. Isn’t it possible that leaders are producing these types of wayward-thinking-Christians? If so then leaders are cheating these people from receiving true blessings from God Himself. Leaders give them money to use the talents and their hands and their feet to volunteer and some even their minds because God gave them business minds and creative minds. Perhaps we all need to re-evaluate our thinking and see if we have a Bible-view or a world-view. Jesus said we could not mix the two. He said we could not serve God and money (Matthew 6:24). It is possible we think too much like the world that we have been offering volunteers money to use what God has given them to edify and build up the Body of Christ. Well, my friends, all we have done is CHEATED OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS! Leaders, who believe this is of God to pay volunteers to further the Gospel of Jesus Christ, have robbed these saints from true blessings from Heaven. However, the GOOD NEWS is, it is not too late to turn ourselves around and run back to our Lord. If ever there was a time to begin to work on ourselves, I believe, as leaders it is now. **Jesus is coming soon!**

Final Thought:

The Bible makes it clear that payment is not to be withheld from those instructing from the Word on a fulltime basis. When you read the Bible everybody else is doing the work voluntarily out of love for Jesus Christ and for the Christian family. A truly born-again Christian does not need incentive to volunteer and help where needed. Let’s remember that the Church of Jesus Christ is His Body! He is the head and we are the body. Therefore, the Church is a living and breathing organism---It is not a man-made organization!

YOUR NOTES:

WATERS and FIELDS of REPRODUCTION

God told us who we are to be and He has called us into the faith assignments that He predestined with His foreknowledge for us. Romans 8:25-32

Romans 8:25-32 English Standard Version (ESV)

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Jesus said we are made to be---come “Fishers of men.”

Mark 1:17-18 KJV “And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and ***I will make you to become fishers of men.*** Immediately they left their nets and followed Him....”

Fish do not jump into the boat willingly. All the work is that of the fisherman.

1. We must bait them---introduce them to the Bread of Life
2. We must lure them in---Arouse their interest so they take a bite of the Bread of Life
3. We must hook them---Convert their thinking even if momentarily
4. We must pull them into the boat.

A fish does not want to be caught. The fish is doing its own thing, just out looking for some food or he was just swimming through life. It is when he sees a lure that is all shiny and colorful that he stops and looks closely. He then realizes that it is more than something pretty and shiny to look at. It is food and it appeals to his sense of taste.

Here is the problem my brothers and sisters; the world is winning over the ‘fishers of men.’ The world baits them, lures them, hooks them, and pulls them into the worldly things. Then the world and its prince devour these fish that should have been in God’s net. Now, that the world has them, they are devoured until they reach the point of being merely a skeleton. They have be----come a skeleton of who God designed and said they were to be---come.

We fishers of men have become beach combers. Finding one skeleton at a time lying in a heap of bones washed up on to the shoreline of hopelessness.

Ezekiel 37:1-14 KJV *“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, ² And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. ³ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. ⁴ Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. ⁸ And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. ¹¹ Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. ¹² Therefore prophesy and say unto them, **Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves,** and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and **brought you up out of your graves,** ¹⁴ **And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live,** and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.”*

God commands that we go in and reproduce.

RE= Do it over

A runaway bride needs a doing over. However, they cannot do it by themselves. We need to be producers and reproducers just like God our Father as we are made in His image and the indwelling living powerful Holy Spirit in us; the same Spirit that lifted Jesus Christ from the grave. The Holy Spirit is lifting runaway brides out of their watery graves of despair just as a fish is lifted up from the water.

- 1.) *A fish is Pulled UP and then becomes “A Catch.”*
- 2.) *We bring to the Lord of the Harvest, “The Catch.”*
- 3.) *We did not produce them, God Did. God made the world and all things therein. Seeing that He is the Lord of all heaven and earth.*
- 4.) *Jesus is the head of the Church*
- 5.) *We are the body of Christ, **pulled up and knit together.***
Colossians 2:2-3 KJV “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

- a. We are unified in unity---Phil. 2:2
- b. We are reformed---Romans 12:1-2
- c. We are imitators---2 Thess. 1:6
- d. Become reproductions of our Father God, for we are His Godly offspring.
- e. We are REPRODUCED AND WE ARE REPRODUCERS Ephesians 5:1-2

We are not sowing and fishing only for ourselves, dear ones.

- a. We are sowing patience
- b. We are sowing godliness
- c. We are sowing surrender

Where are the seeds of patience, godliness, and surrender coming from?

They are coming from the Seed of Repentance we sowed at the first of the year. We turned back to God. Isaiah 55:6-9 says that our sowing of repentance causes the Lord "The Lord of the Harvest," to:

1. Have mercy on the seed sower
2. Freely pardoned the sower
3. Produces New seed for the sower
4. Produces more food (spiritual and natural) for the eater
5. Speaks His Word over the sower.

We have learned from the Word of God some things about the Perfect Nature of our Lord.

1. He sends the seeds forth
2. The seeds return to Him a harvest
3. The seeds accomplish God's desire
4. The seeds achieve God's purpose

Sowers of Spiritual seeds (The Word of God---The Gospel of Jesus Christ) are the same as the Fishers of Men. Therefore, God produces the seed. God sends the sowers and the fishermen out into the fields of life to sow and to fish for souls.

He later sends the sowers out to tend to the seeds planted. The sower has an investment in the seeds they have sown into God's field, "The Kingdom of God."

If the sower does not attend to the field and the seeds sown, then the ground becomes hard and dry and filled with weeds and thorns and thistles. The rodents come and dig up the seeds and eat them. The birds pick and pick at the seeds until they are divided and opened and they eat the meat of the seed. They devour that which is the 'good' of the seed.

When harvest time comes and the reapers go out, they bring in the harvest. The harvest does not stay the same as it came out of the field. God produced a corn stalk and on the stalk are the corn cobs full of corn kernels. It comes in from the field like that. However, the workers begin to 'covert it' into something for other uses. It is the process of **RE=Redoing it.**

Reproducing it: Getting it ready to become something different, it will be---come something it has never been before. It will be milled for cornmeal and bread and muffins will be made with it. It will be canned or frozen to be eaten as a healthy vegetable. It may be dried and used for animal food. The stalks will be chopped and stored for silage or animal bedding. It may be liquidated to be---come fuel to heat homes or fuel to run engines. ***It is the reproducing that makes it useful for others! It does not benefit itself but it is only for the benefit of others and for various reasons.*** There are many spiritual gifts, different offices, and a variety of talents in the Body of Christ. Not all members of the body share the same gifts, offices, or talents. The reason being each has been 'reproduced' by the Lord. He does not call the equipped, He equips the called. None of that which He has given us is for ourselves, but for others.

2 Peter 1:3-6

³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness..."

I conclude this series and I pray you understand my heart. We each must ask the Lord to help us break strongholds and set our minds and our hearts toward the Lord. He has greater things in store for each of us. Many of us have settled for the crumbs under the table relationship-style with Our Savior and Lord. However, the Lord has a greater desire for us. Seek Him diligently and run after Him. Perhaps the auto-pilot faith glide some may be riding on is no longer enough for our Lord. He is hungry for us to be hungry for Him. Like we were when we first fell in love with Him. ***He wrote to the Church of Ephesus, "You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you; You have forsaken your first love (He was their first love). Repent and do the things you did at first."*** Rev 2:3-4, 5(b)

Jesus Christ loves us all very much and our personal relationship with Him is the most important thing there is. It is neither our works nor our gifts but it is LOVING HIM the way He asks us 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."** Mark 12:30."

YOUR NOTES:

GETTING TO KNOW GOD THROUGH WEATHER

Getting to know God is as easy as looking outside your window. It is as easy as taking advantage of nature. He freely gives to all mankind earth's sustainable wisdom. However, only those who dare to listen without reservation will harness the wind, walk on water, defy snow madness barefoot and HAIL the King of Kings in the midst of a hail storm!

The Lord spoke to Job of the days of battle, of war, "Hast thou entered into the treasure of snow or hast thou seen the treasures of hail that I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" Job 38:22-23

"Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.' On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song: "When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves—praise the LORD! "Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will praise the LORD, the God of Israel, in song. "When you, LORD, went out from Seir, when you marched from the land of Edom, the earth shook, the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water. The mountains quaked before the LORD, the One of Sinai, before the LORD, the God of Israel." Judges 4:4-7 and 5:2-5

Earthquakes released Prisoners---Acts 16:25-34

Hurricanes caused Shipwrecks---Acts 27:14-20 and Acts 27:39-44

Sun Standing Still caused a war to be won---Joshua 10:12-14

Rains caused 900 chariots to be stuck in the mud---Judges 4:13-15 and Judges 5:4 and 5:20

What does this all have to do with meeting God? It has everything to do with it. Let's see how Elihu introduces God to Job.

- 1.) How great is God? Beyond our understanding! Job 36:26
- 2.) How many years old is God? The number is past finding out Job 36:26
- 3.) He draws up drops of water Job 36:27
- 4.) He spreads out the clouds Job 36:29
- 5.) He thunders from His pavilion Job 36:29
- 6.) He scatters lighting about Him Job 36:30
- 7.) He governs the nations with His weather Job 36:31

- 8.) He provides food in abundance Job 36:31
- 9.) He fills His hand with lightning Job 36:32
- 10.) He commands lightning to strike its mark Job 36:32
- 11.) His voice is a roar and it rumbles Job 37:2
- 12.) He unleashes His lightning and sends it to the ends of the earth Job 37:3
- 13.) He roars and thunders with His voice after He sends the lightning Job 37:4
- 14.) He holds nothing back Job 37:5
- 15.) He does great things beyond our understanding Job 37:5
- 16.) He tells the snow, “Fall on the earth.” Job 37:6
- 17.) He tells the rain shower, “Be a mighty downpour.” Job 37:6
- 18.) SO THAT EVERYONE HE HAS MADE WILL KNOW HIS WORK
 - a. He stops all people from their labor Job 37:7
 - b. Even the animals take cover and remain in their dens Job 37:8
 - c. The ‘tempest’ comes out from its chamber—the cold from the driving winds 37:9
- 19.) God’s breath produces ice Job 37:9
 - a. And the broad waters become frozen.
- 20.) He loads the clouds with moisture Job 37:11
- 21.) He scatters his lightning through them Job 37:11
- 22.) He directs the clouds to swirl around over the whole earth Job 37:12
- 23.) He commands the clouds to do whatever He wants from them Job 37:12
 - a. To Punish people 37:12
 - b. To Water His earth 37:12
 - c. To Show His love 37:12

NOW GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO JOB.

God reveals His self-image of who He is. He draws for Job His self-portrait.

Job Chapter 38:

We need to be in agreement with God Almighty in the way in which He has and does order His creation to respond to Him. With snow, He has made us His captives. “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) At times weather conditions stop our many activities and plans. We are meant to have come to a stop or a slow down or a change around because of God’s predetermined purpose. Everything that you and I have to deal with is in the Perfect Hands of God! When God determined us to the exact date of our birth, we had nothing to say about it and so it goes with God’s choice of weather.

Therefore as we live in Him and move in Him and have our being in Him, we need to understand the five divine purposes of weather. In the Word of God snow is mentioned twenty-five times. Let’s breakdown His divine five purposes and discover more about our God Almighty—Jehovah.

1. **God’s Word and His Purpose:** Let’s read Psalm 148:8 “Fire (lightning), and hail, snow, vapors (clouds); and stormy wind fulfilling His word.” God’s word commands the snow to go forth unto

the earth and it does. Isaiah 55:10-11 “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven...so is my word that goes out from my mouth...it will not return to me empty, **but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**”

2. **God’s Creation Providence:** In other words, “A divine purpose for snow lies within God’s creation, wisdom, and foresight. Job 38:22-23 “*Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail, ²³ which I reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle?*” *Commentary:* “Snow is here represented as something which is laid up like treasure, and kept in reserve for use when God shall require it. Snow and hail were thus preserved for the use to which the Almighty might devote them, or for those great occasions when it would be proper to bring them forth to execute his purposes. Of course, it was to be expected that God would speak in the language which people commonly used when speaking of his works, and would not go into a philosophical or scientific explanation of the phenomena of nature. His object was not to teach science, but to produce a solemn impression of his greatness, and that is secured by such an appeal whether the laws of nature are understood or not. The simple appeal to Job here is, whether he could explain the phenomena of snow and hail. All that pertained to the snow was distinctly understood by God, and that these were facts which Job did not know of, and which he could not explain. The effect of time and of scientific investigation, in this as in other cases to which reference is made in the Bible, has been only to increase the force of this question. **The effect of the discoveries which are made in the works of God is not to diminish our sense of his wisdom and majesty, but to change mere wonder to praise; to transform blind amazement to intelligent adoration.** Every new discovery of a law of nature is fitted more to impress the mind with awe, and at the same time it becomes the basis of a new act of intelligent confidence in God. This is true of snow.

All the facts about the formation of hail were unknown in the time of Job, and hence, God appeals to them as evidence of his superior wisdom and greatness, and in proof of the duty of man to submit to him. These phenomena, which were constantly occurring, man could not explain; and how much less qualified, therefore, was he to sit in judgment on the secret counsels of the Almighty! The same observation may be made now, for **though science has done something to explain the laws by which snow and hail are formed, yet those discoveries have tended to enlarge our conceptions of the wisdom of God, and have shown us, to an extent which was not then suspected, how much is still unknown.** We see a few of the laws by which God does these things, but who is prepared to explain these laws themselves, or to tell why and how they arrange themselves into such beautiful crystallized forms?

3. **Sin and Salvation:**

God references His snow as a descriptive characteristic of ‘cleansing sins’ white as snow. Isaiah 1:18-19. Let’s jump back up to Job 38:23, “Snow, which I reserved for times of trouble,” God says of His snow and hail. There is mercy hidden in this verse. I have saved snow and hail for your times of trouble. In your troubles come reason with Me and I will mercifully wash away

your sins of scarlet and they shall be white as snow. The blood of Jesus Christ washes away our sins and we are white as snow Revelation 1:5KJV *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood.**”*

King David knew God’s cleansing power, let’s read Psalm 51:1-7 together.

4. **Pardon and Peace:**

We come to a fourth great development here that has to do with snow after you and me are saved we still sin and we fall into grief. We commit sins against others and against God. If we read Psalm 51:1-7 and we see King David’s great grief. He has committed adultery, lying, murder and more and he cries out to God, “I have sinned against thee and thee only, have I done this evil in thy sight...He is begging just as we do that he does not get what his sins deserve but that God will pardon him with ‘peace and mercy.’ Layers of snow on the ground should remind all of us of the many times God’s mercy and Jesus’ blood has covered our multitude of sins. What is sin’s paycheck? It is the wage of death. Once we are saved we are to be slaves to righteousness not slaves to sin. However, even on our best day, we sin. Paul said, Romans 7:5-6; 17-25: *“⁵ Our sinful nature used to control us. The law stirred up sinful longings in our bodies. So the things we did resulted in death. ⁶ But now we have died to what used to control us. We have been set free from the law. Now we serve in the new way of the Holy Spirit. We no longer serve in the old way of the written law... ¹⁵ I don’t understand what I do. I don’t do what I want to do. Instead, I do what I hate to do. ¹⁶ I do what I don’t want to do. So I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, I am no longer the one who does these things. It is sin living in me that does them. ¹⁸ I know there is nothing good in my sinful nature. I want to do what is good, but I can’t. ¹⁹ I don’t do the good things I want to do. I keep on doing the evil things I don’t want to do. ²⁰ I do what I don’t want to do. But I am not really the one who is doing it. It is sin living in me. ²¹ Here is the law I find working in me. When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² Deep inside me I find joy in God’s law. ²³ But I see another law working in the parts of my body. It fights against the law of my mind. It makes me a prisoner of the law of sin. That law controls the parts of my body. ²⁴ What a terrible failure I am! Who will save me from this sin that brings death to my body? ²⁵ I give thanks to God. He will do it through Jesus Christ our Lord. So in my mind I am a slave to God’s law. But in my sinful nature I am a slave to the law of sin.”*

To be pardoned: Psalm 103:10-14; 17 *“He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him, for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear him and his righteousness with their children’s children.”*

Is this not marvelous that each one of us has been washed whiter than snow? Our mortal sins which earned us death has been paid in full by the blood of Jesus Christ and we can with Jesus Christ someday say, “Oh, death where is your sting?” We are all by faith whiter than all this beautiful snow! He wants us to understand that--***being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*** (Romans 5:1) He uses snow to tell us of His love and care. He uses snow to keep us clean. All of this is designed in the Book to bring home to you and me that where we walk and where we ride and where we

slip and where we fall---are all made whiter than snow by the blood of Christ Jesus. God wants you and me to believe that everything in the Bible has been designed and presented for one purpose that we would believe that the Father sent the Son and that He came to save us, and give us glory.

Jesus Christ is the Bright Morning Star Revelation 22:16 and The Sun of Righteousness Malachi 4:2 and He washes away our sins as white as snow. How can we look ever again at the bright morning stars and the sun and the snow and not think of Jesus Christ and His promises that go with them. Snow that He said brings us mercy and warfare on our behalf. He offers us peace and pardon and with His foreknowledge He has prepared a path for us that will bring us to the place today that He designed for us. If we do not resist Him, He will cover all of our sins like He covers the ground with this snow. As we are cozy and warm inside, He wages war against the enemy of our souls.

5. The Glory of God:

We have looked at 1.) The Word of His Power 2.) The Creation and His Providence. 3.) Sin and Salvation. 4.) Pardon and Peace which are all represented by snow. Now we come to the last. There is the Glory of God.

Daniel 7:9 presents in this prophecy God as the “Ancient of Days.” By Him thrones will cast down. His Garment was “White as Snow.”

Daniel 7:9-14 KJV *“⁹I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. ¹⁰A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. ¹¹I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. ¹²As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. ¹³I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”*

When we come into the New Testament Matthew 28:3KJV “His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow.”

“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.” Somewhere in that area was this angel from Glory with this heavenly good news. Snow, snow, is the word of Glory!

Then we have the transfiguration when the Lord took Peter, James, and John apart and Moses and Elijah met them on the top of Mt. Hermon. Jesus was transfigured. Mark 9:3 KJV tells it all, “All His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.”

Revelation 1:12-15 KJV *“¹²And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; ¹³And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man,*

FAITH IN GOD OR FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD

BELIEF IN GOD OR BELIEF IN THE PROMISES OF GOD

Sociology is the science of society. It explores the influences and consequences of social behavior. You may think you make most of your own decisions based on your personal choices; however that is not exactly how it works. In deciding your college education do you really do that without any influence from family, high school teachers and counselors, friends, government, work, potential incomes?

Mark 10:32 “They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid...”

The Leader sets the pace:

1. **Jesus led the way—Determined and Resolved to reach Jerusalem to be crucified for us.**
 - a. **Luke 9:51** Jesus set out for Jerusalem.”
 - b. **Luke 13:22** “Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.”
 - c. **Jesus** had rebuked Peter when he had tried in his flesh with Satan’s help to thwart the plans of God regarding Jesus’ crucifixion. Jesus believed in God the Father, The Holy Spirit, and Himself. He had faith in all of God’s promises. **Jesus had 2 out of 2!**

The Leadership team (The 12 Disciples) sets the tone:

2. The disciples were astonished. After everything that had happened even though Jesus had told them twice that he was going to Jerusalem to be crucified and on the third day he would rise from the grave, they were astonished—{surprised, amazed, astounded, dumbfounded, flabbergasted, dazed, speechless, bewildered, shocked}. All the great crowds that Jesus was drawing in and all the miracles he had performed. How is it that Jesus was going to give all of this up and go and be crucified in Jerusalem? They followed him but yet they were dumbfounded. They had ears but had not heard what he had been telling them all along.
 - a. The disciples believed in the Lord Jesus and Jehovah God.
 - b. The disciples’ astonishment (bewilderment) is due to lack of faith in THE PROMISED RESURRECTION that Jesus spoke of. “Three days later after His death, He will rise.” **The disciples had 1 out of 2!**

The Followers echoed the leadership’s tone:

3. Those following were afraid. **They could not believe** if Jesus was the Messiah, He wasn’t going to save them NOW. That is what they had been taught. The Messiah would come and deliver them from Rome. He would be a great Warrior from the line of David and he would lead the Israelite Army to defeat Israel’s enemies. How could it be that this Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah for he was determined to go to Jerusalem and be crucified?
 - a. **Faith?** What faith could they have now? Faith in God’s promises. It had been four hundred years since a prophet came to them. Then they had John the Baptist but the enemy had him murdered. Do you mean the faith in the promises that God of Abraham,

God of Isaac, and God of Jacob had made? He had made a promise through His prophets that He was sending a Messiah. This Messiah was to come and deliver them. But, NO this Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be, but yet No they couldn't have faith anymore in God's Promises! They could not believe in this Jesus and they had no faith left in God. **They were Zero for Zero!**

Sociology reminds us that our social behavior has consequences. Every social interaction---face-to-face or email to email---text to text, changes someone's life a little. When people get together, things happen! Sociology studies the effects of your behavior---and everyone else's.

It sure had a chain reaction that day on the crowded roads to Jerusalem. Did the faithlessness of the disciples STOP JESUS? _____

Did the faithlessness and unbelief of the followers STOP JESUS? _____

It did not stop Jesus but it hurt them and tremendously so!

Now, let's back up and see what was going on before this day when they were following Jesus to Jerusalem.

Matthew 8:26 "Why were you afraid, oh ye of little faith?" {You had enough faith---why did you fear?} Was Jesus scolding them for having little faith or alluding to the fact that with little faith much could be accomplished? Even with a little faith, fear should be cancelled.

Matthew 9:23 "Your faith has healed you. She thought (BELIEVED---IN HIM) if only I can touch his garment."

Matthew 9:28 "Do you believe I can make you see?" {You have faith in the promises of healing to ask for it to be accomplished, but do you BELIEVE in Me THAT "I" CAN}

Matthew 11:19 "But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

Matthew 14:31 "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" {YOU HAD ENOUGH FAITH---WHY DOUBT?}

Matthew 15:28 "Woman you have great faith." (SHE WAS NOT A JEW---BUT SHE HAD FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD JEHOVAH) and her running after Jesus is evidence she believed He could and would deliver her daughter.

Matthew 16:7-12 "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?"

Matthew 17:17 KJV Jesus is talking to the crowd! "O faithless and perverse generation how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you...?"

Matthew 17:19-20 KJV Now after the child was cured, the disciples came to Jesus and they asked him, "Why could not we cast him (the demon) out? LOOK VERY CAREFULLY AT JESUS' ANSWER. "And Jesus said unto them, "**Because of your unbelief;** for verily I say unto you, **if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,** ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

JESUS IS STATING A FACT: YOU HAD A LITTLE FAITH---THAT IS GOOD! HOWEVER YOUR FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD FAILED YOU BECAUSE YOU DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE PERSON OF GOD TO FULFILL THE PROMISES HE MADE---YOU HAD ENOUGH FAITH (EVEN THOUGH IT WAS TINY) THAT WAS ENOUGH FAITH IN HIS PROMISES. BUT YOUR UNBELIEF IN 'HIM' CANCELLED THE ENTIRE TRANSACTION!

*“Howbeit this kind goeth not our but **by prayer and fasting.**” PRAYER AND FASTING BUILD UP YOUR ABILITY TO BELIEVE WITHOUT DOUBT THAT HE WILL FAITHFULLY DO IT!*

By prayer and fasting: Prayer and fasting builds up our belief in the Person of God and it builds up our faith in the Promises of God.

Hebrews 11:1-6 NIV *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away. “For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 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.”*

What is the difference between faith and belief?

Faith is in HIS PROMISES *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1*

Belief is in HIM *“If anybody causes one of these little ones—**those who believe in me**—to stumble, it would better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.” Matthew 18:6*

Getting into the Kingdom of Heaven has everything to do with Believing in Jesus Christ!

Matthew 18:1-5

Faith is like any bride who can depend upon the promises that her bridegroom has made to her. He promised NOT to be UNFAITHFUL in other words she could have **faith** in everything he has promised and in everything marriage and a husband’s role promises both spoken and unspoken. A little child believes in their parents. This connection is **solid**! Their belief in their parents then produces faith to believe in all the promises parents make to them. Therefore, the role of the child is **belief** that his or her parent(s) will fulfill all the promises made.

A child of God: SIMPLE!

- 1.** Jesus said believe in Him and He who sent Him, the Father!
- 2.** Accept the offer of salvation
- 3.** Go forward learning of Him and all of His parental promises
- 4.** Just have faith in those Promises

Salvation—invites—many---people---life---eternal = SIMPLE

Have you made this decision to believe in Jesus Christ and The Father? _____

Matthew 18:10 *“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”*

A person who has faith in the promises of God and believes in the person Jesus Christ as their personal savior is like one of these little children that the Lord Jesus is talking about. Do not despise these people for the Father watches over them and their angels always behold the face of the Father. In

other words they are in the presence of the Father all the time reporting about a believer not in a tattling way to harm you, but they report your enemies and their activities.

“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.” Matthew 18:11

Matthew 21:21-22 (paraphrased) Then Jesus told them, *“I assure you, if you have faith and don’t doubt Him you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, “May God lift you up and throw you into the sea; and it will happen.(22) If you believe (in Him) you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”*

Now FAITH is being sure of what we hope for—Not who you hope for **BUT WHAT PROMISES OF GOD THAT WE HOPE FOR—We have faith in HIS PROMISES AND we believe in HIS EXISTANCE even if we do not see them yet or see Him!** Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” **Hebrews 11:1 & Hebrews 11:6(b).**

This attitude and lifestyle of being IGNORANT to the Word and therefore LACKING TRUE KNOWLEDGE WILL cost you EVERYTHING! For what does a man or a woman gain if they have all the worldly possessions but he or she has lost their soul’s to HELL?

BIBLICAL IGNORANCE is not a ‘hall pass’ into Heaven!

“Many will turn away from Me,” Jesus said of the beginning of the horrors to come. “Many will betray Me and betray and hate each other (Christian—believers). And many false prophets will appear and will lead many people astray. Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.”

Matthew 24:10-12

BUT:

“For those who endure to the end will be saved. Those who believe in Christ will be saved. Those who have faith in His promises will be saved. And the GOOD NEWS about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world; so that all nations will hear it; and then finally the end will come.” Know this a homeowner who knows exactly when a burglar was coming would stay alert and not permit the house to be broken into. You must be ready all the time. For the Son of Man will come when least expected.” Matthew 24:13-14; 43-44

Abraham had faith in the promises of God. He believed God existed and therefore he walked in faith without doubt toward ALL the promises of God.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ will return someday? _____

Our Problem of faith and belief is self-made: “Your problem,” Jesus said, “Is you do not know the Scriptures or the Power of God!” Matthew 22:29

THE CREATOR AND THE CREATED SHOULD BE STUDIED TO DISCOVER THEIR LIKENESSES AND THEIR DIFFERENCES! The Bible is "The Living Word of God waiting for you to explore "Your Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be His Name."

In the Presence of God, you will not only relate to Him, but Him to you. Try today to have a conversation with the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Build up your confidence in Him and He will build up your confidence.

Hebrews 11:6(c) God rewards those who earnestly seek Him!

Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

Proverbs 5:23 "For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly."

Romans 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

Isaiah 5:13 "Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge; their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst."

John 8:32 "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Luke 11:28 "But he (Jesus) said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Jesus said to the Disciple Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:29 Are **you certain of what you do not see that it is TRUE?**

You MUST HAVE FAITH IN HIS PROMISES AND YOU MUST BELIEVE IN HIM

Do I know God the Father? _____

Do I know God the Son? _____

Do I know God the Holy Spirit? _____

Is it possible I do not know the Triune Godhead and the role each play in my life? _____

Do I have faith in ALL of God's promises? _____

Do I believe in God's very existence? _____

Do I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? _____

BELIEF ENVIRONMENT

Setting the environment for the Lord to feel invited is important in seeing the miracles each of us need. Lips can say anything and oftentimes they say what they believe a person wants to hear. It will never be enough though when it comes to believing in Jesus Christ and having faith in His promises. He knows the heart and that is all He works with. Today people are no different than the Pharisees and the teachers of religious laws. How we set the environment far outweighs the environment itself.

Mark 7:5 “So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

7:7 “These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far away. Their worship is a farce, for they replace God’s commands with their own manmade teachings.”

7:8 “You ignore God’s specific laws and substitute your own traditions.”

7:9 “You reject God’s laws in order to hold on to your own traditions!”

Mark 6:6, “He was amazed (MARVELED) at their lack of faith.”

Because of their unbelief Jesus chose not to perform miracles. He could have because He has the power to do so. **The environment of UNBELIEF caused Jesus to withhold the miracles.**

AMAZED: Astonished, astounded, shocked, stunned, startled, surprised, flabbergasted, dumbfounded, staggered, taken aback.

MARVELED: Wondered, gaped, admired, be amazed, be surprised, be impressed, be awed, gaze in amazement.

They lacked faith in the promises that He healed and performed miracles. How could they have faith in the promises of one they did not believe in?

Mark 6:3 They said, “He is no better than us. Who does he think he is? We know who he is. Why He is just so-and-so, “And they took offense at him.”

Mark 6:1-6 tells us that Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

²“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?” ³Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.”

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.”

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve WITH NOTHING EXTRA IN THE NATURAL

Jesus Creates (sets) the Environment:

Mark 6:7-11

⁷ **Calling** the Twelve to him, **he began to send them out two by two** and gave them authority over impure spirits. ⁸ These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

Mark 6:12-13 ¹² “They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them”.

WHAT IS THE DANGER OF TRYING TO CREATE (SET) YOUR OWN ENVIRONMENT INSTEAD OF WAITING ON THE LORD?

MARCH 5, 2013: (Sarah Posner Salon—Religion Dispatches)

“A headline caught my eye this morning: “Indiana’s Largest Megachurch Faces New Foreclosure Proceedings.” How many people believed this pastor, and believed that giving him money—for his family’s salaries, the car, the jet, the other excesses—would “bless” them? How many dollars did he collect by telling people that God would bless them for giving him money, that their own poverty was caused by a lack of faith and a lack of giving to him, and that God would not be merciful to them unless they demonstrated their faithfulness by giving their money to him?”

As it turns out, the story is a Christian Center, which claims to have a weekly attendance of 15,000, making it one of the largest churches in the country according to an investigation the attendance made it one of the largest churches in the country. According to an investigation by the NWITimes.com, a paper covering northwestern Indiana, the judge presiding over the foreclosure proceedings told attorneys in court, “When I saw some of the expenditures being made in this church when there was a mortgage not being paid, I was astounded.” NWITimes reports that even as the church owed close to \$100,000 a month in mortgage payments (not to mention mortgage payments on condos the church claimed to use for visiting clergy, and other unspecified bills in excess of half a million dollars), the pastor and his wife raked in “\$2.9 million in total compensation from 2008 through 2011 from organizations connected to this particular Christian Center etc.

THE PROBLEM TODAY IN AMERICA IS NOT WITH JUST PASTORS AND LEADERS BUT IT IS ALSO WITH THE LUKEWARM CHRISTIANS. THEY ARE DULL AND DUMB TO THE WAYS OF THE LORD AND THEY ARE

UNWILLING TO STEP INTO GOD'S HOLY ENVIRONMENT SO PASTORS WRONGFULLY ARE IN THEIR OWN FLESH TRYING TO CREATE (SET) ENVIRONMENTS OF BELIEF AND FAITH---SO PEOPLE WILL GIVE. MOTIVATIONS MAY BE WRONG IN THE HEARTS OF THE PASTORS AND LEADERS BUT IN TODAY'S SOCIETY PEOPLE DON'T WANT JUST SO-SO PASTORS ALL HUM-DRUM. PEOPLE WANT BIG BUILDINGS WITH ALL THE BELLS AND WHISTLES AND HUGE STAFFS AND HUGE STAGES WITH ENORMOUS CHOIRS AND ALL THE GLITTER AND GOLD THAT GOES WITH IT; MUSICIANS AND INSTRUMENTS BANDS AND PERFORMERS AND DANCERS AND FLAG WEVERS ETC...

Human beings are trying to set GOD'S STAGE: AND THEY WILL FAIL AND THEY DO FAIL! I know I have been guilty of this before, what about you?

Luke 10:1-24

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

JESUS CREATED (SET) THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THEM.

Luke 10:1-4 *“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them **two by two** ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ **Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.** ⁴ **Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.**”*

What is the environment like that Jesus sets and promotes? Luke 10:5-16

What is the Result when The Lord Sets the environment? Luke 10:17-24

Are you low on faith or is your belief system a little out of order today? _____

What happened? _____

Was your two-by-two missing and you had to be one-by-one? _____ Remember the previous lesson we are to be two-for-two in our faith in His promises and in our belief in His person.

Jesus did not send any one out one-by-one:

Elijah saw amazing miracles happen before him and through him, but even after he saw God's miraculous works and the murder of 450 Baal Prophets, he felt all alone and EMPTY. He had not one person to turn to that was IN UNITY with the lifestyle God had called for—not one other person to

build him up when he was down. ²² Then Elijah said to them, **"I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left,** (ELIJAH'S TRUTH) but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets.

GOD CREATED THE ENVIRONMENT FOR ELIJAH---**READ** 1 Kings 18: 1-4 and 20-45

Elijah Flees to Horeb ---**READ** 1 KINGS 19:1-9{a}

The LORD Appears to Elijah—And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”---**READ** 1 KINGS 19:9{b}-18

CONCLUSION:

The Call of Elisha

Until the day comes, tired Christian, that the Lord sends the other half of your two-by-two---persevere. Run only to God for what you need. Cry only to God and let Him wipe your tears. Don't run ahead of Him and try to set the stage or the environment that you THINK HE NEEDS OR WANTS! God is God and He does not need you to do for Him and there is NOTHING He wants from you but your DEVOTED LOVE. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your mind, and all of your strength.

I have days when I don't feel like I can put one more foot in front of the other. I feel like I cannot go on. I just want to end! Like Enoch---He walked with the Lord and then he was no more! I run out of oil in my lamp but I don't run to the city and try to buy more---I just sit before the Lord and I mourn what I have lost and I grieve over what I do not have---I let all my broken-heartedness go to the Lord's altar. It is a painful process but if I do this and do not involve another human being---I come out healed, restored, refreshed and refueled. I am a pastor that loves the Lord and truthfully I do not doubt Him. My disappointments are of human nature and not of spiritual nature. My flesh wants what the Spirit says 'no' to or what He says 'wait for.' The fight is not against other's flesh only my own desires. Additionally, there is a spiritual battle against the principalities, rulers-----etc. of dark places.

**CONCLUSION: LET THE LORD CREATE HIS ENVIRONMENT FOR YOU AND NOT YOU
CREATE HIS ENVIRONMENT FOR HIM! JUST SURRENDER TO THE WORKINGS OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MARVEL AT THE LORD!**

YOUR NOTES:

HIS CROWNS

Crown History:

The message of the crown has always been to declare that the wearer is a sovereign or a supreme ruler over that particular thing. In the Near East, the cradle of civilization, the earliest crowns were turbans encircled by a band of silk or other expensive material.

These cloth bands would often be embroidered by designs that often indicated the tribal deities worshipped by the chief or chieftain that wore them. In some groups the nobles or princes wore crowns or bands to indicate their rank much like they do on their military uniforms today.

The band around the turban of the chief or ruler would be such however that he would be distinguished as their leader. When a ruler conquered other countries, he would sometimes signify his multiple kingdom rule by wearing several bands of cloth or metal around his turban. He was a ruler over more than just one country. He had conquered others.

THE PAST

CROWN OF GRACE:

When He walked upon this earth, He was mocked and abused and even though He knew He was the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, He did not strike out at them when they placed a **CROWN OF THORNES ON HIS HEAD!**

John 19:1-5 “Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²**The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.** They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face. ⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” ⁵ When Jesus came out **wearing the crown of thorns** and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

Mark 15:14-20 ¹⁴ “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” ¹⁵ Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. ¹⁶ The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. ¹⁷ They put a purple robe on him, **then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.** ¹⁸ And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” ¹⁹ Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. ²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.”

Therefore, the **crown of thorns** became a **crown of mockery, a crown of shame, and a crown of substitution.**

Jesus spoke these prophetic words: “*I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*” Isaiah 50:6

AGAIN HE SPOKE OF THE MOCKERY AND SHAME HE WOULD ENDURE:

Matthew 20:19 “*And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.*” **RECOMMENDED READING 20:17-21**

Mark 10:34 “*And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.*” **RECOMMENDED READING MARK 10:31-34**

RECOMMENDED READING LUKE 18:31-33

8 HE WAS OUR SUBSTITUTION TO PAY FOR OUR WAGES OF SIN!

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

4 *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* 5 ***But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*** 6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* 7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* **RECOMMENDED READING ISAIAH 52:13 THROUGH ISAIAH CHAPTER 53**

2 Corinthians 5:21: “*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” **RECOMMENDED READING 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21**

THE CROWN OF THORNS REPRESENTED---THE MESSIAH’S CROWN—ONLY OUR PRECIOUS SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, COULD WEAR THE “CROWN OF GRACE”

“⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸ ***For by grace are ye saved through faith;*** and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” **Ephesians 2:7-10 Recommended Reading Ephesians 2:1-10.**

Your Notes:

THE PRESENT

READ REVELATION 1:1-20 (ENTIRE CHAPTER)

THE CROWN OF VICTORY

Revelation 1:18 “*I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” **Victorious over death!**

READ ALL OF HEBREWS CHAPTER 1 AND CHAPTER 2

THE CROWN OF DOMINION

The Word States:

Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Hebrews 2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Hebrews 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews: 12:2 “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

1. **Crown of Grace (Sacrificed): John 1:1-14** He was God The Word but yet on earth He was given a crown of thorns which He wore to the cross and He hung and died for us. “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” **Isaiah 53:7** This is The crown of GRACE, which Jesus Christ wore under the mockery, shame, and substitution.
2. **Crown of Victory:** 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 “(v25)“...for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” Victorious over death 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 **Recommended Reading**
3. **Crown of Dominion:** Matthew 28:16-20 ¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”** ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” **Recommended Reading Matthew Chapter 28**

THE FUTURE

REVELATION 5:12 “In a loud voice they were singing, ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.’” **RECOMMENDED READING REV CHAPTER 5**

REVELATION 19:11-16: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” **RECOMMENDED READING REV. CHAPTER 19**

In the text above: WHY DOES JESUS HAVE SO MANY CROWNS?

Back to the Crown History we began with: When the Bible speaks of our dear Savior wearing many crowns, it is declaring symbolically that He is sovereign and the Lord over all the Kings and over all the Kingdoms of the earth.

Therefore, the many crowns upon His head proclaim His authority over all the kingdoms and nations of the earth. The generations of misused power by authorities placed in positions throughout the world under the sovereignty of God COMES TO AN END UPON HIS SECOND RETURN! All the crowns are given to Christ Jesus---KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS!

Therefore our King of Kings and Lord of Lords’ is CROWNED WITH MANY CROWNS

RECAP:

- 1. **Crown of Grace (His Crucifixion).....Our Messiah**
- 2. **Crown of Victory (His Resurrection).....Our Warrior**
- 3. **Crown of Dominion (His Ascension)Our King**
- 4. **Crowned KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.....Eternal King**

Hebrews Chapters 1 and 2 is a marvelous RECAP of the Past and the Present as well as Prophecy of the future: Let’s read them together before we look quickly and very slightly into the Lord’s future crown.

Chapter 1: “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? ⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” ⁷ In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire.” ⁸ But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

¹⁰ He also says, “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.” ¹³ To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? ¹⁴ Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”

Chapter 2: “We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” ⁵ It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶ But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? ⁷ You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet.” In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.

⁹ But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹ Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.” ¹³ And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.” ¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

What does all of this mean for you today?

1. **You have a SAVIOR---MESSIAH:** In the Old Testament it means the anointed king. In the New Testament, it refers to Jesus; one who saves the people, the 'Christ'. The word messiah is Hebrew for anointed and in Greek word for Messiah is Christ. John 3:16
2. **You have a WARRIOR**—“The Battles belong to God.” In John 16:33, Jesus said for us to take heart for He had overcome the world--Proverbs 21:31 “The horse is made ready for the day of war, but power to overcome is from the Lord.” Believers, of all men, notwithstanding their tribulations, have reason to be of good cheer, since their sins are forgiven, the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, their redemption draws nigh, and they have hopes of glory; and particularly, because as Christ here says, for their encouragement under all their tribulations in the world, "I have overcome the world."

THE BELIEVERS' CROWNS GIVEN BY GOD HERE ON EARTH

This lesson's prayer from King David's Prayer: 1 Chronicles 29:10-20 and our Psalm is 103:1-22

"The human spirit is the lamp of the Lord that sheds light on one's inmost being, Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure. Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends." Proverbs 20:28, 17:9

The Earthly Present

The message of the crown has always been to declare that the wearer is a sovereign or a supreme ruler or owner over that particular thing however in today's text, we discover that the Bible uses "CROWN" for other purposes as well. A crown usually makes us think of a king who wore a crown as a symbol of his royalty and his authority. But the crown in the Bible, and also in ancient literature, had the idea not only of something worn by royalty but something used to honor someone else. For example, when an athlete would win a competition, he would be crowned. When a soldier would come home, he would be crowned as a hero. Special guests at a feast were not only given as a symbol of honor the best seats in the house, but were also often given a crown. This is the idea here in the text.

1. God **crowns humans** with glory and honor---Psalm 8:5 and Hebrews 2:6-8.....Not Contingent
 - a. God is glorified by the actual creation of mankind {our glory is our existence}
 - b. *"The glory of young men is their strength; and the beauty of old men is the gray head" Pr. 20:29*
 - c. God is honored by man's God-given authority {our honor is our dominion}
2. God **crowns us** (the humbled before Him) with salvation---Psalm 149:4.....Contingent
 - a. We must accept the salvation call and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior
 - b. Simply put, God's plan of salvation is the divine romance recorded in the pages of the Bible. John 3:16-18, John 10: 14-18, Mark 10:45
 - c. Biblical salvation is God's way of providing his people deliverance from sin and spiritual death through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the concept of salvation is rooted in Israel's deliverance from Egypt in the Book of Exodus. The New Testament reveals the source of salvation in Jesus Christ. By faith in Jesus Christ, believers are saved from God's judgment of sin and its consequence—eternal death.
 - d. When Adam and Eve rebelled, man was separated from God through sin. God's holiness required punishment and payment (atonement) for sin, which was (and still is) eternal death. Our death is not sufficient to cover the payment for sin. Only a perfect, spotless sacrifice, offered in just the right way, can pay for our sin. Jesus, the perfect God-man, came to offer the pure, complete and everlasting sacrifice to remove, atone, and make eternal payment for sin. Why? Because God loves us and desires an intimate relationship with us:
3. God **crowns us** with {uncompromising for all} love and compassion---Psalm 103:4.....Contingent
 - a. Requires our surrender to the Lord so that we become lovers of all mankind and their needs. Through Christ Jesus we are able to overcome 'selective loving and regulated compassion.' Perfect love is not calculated selectiveness it is purposed and intentional for all accompanied with unregulated compassion that aspires to put all before oneself.

4. God **crowns us {the righteous}** with blessings---Proverbs 10:6.....Contingent
 - a. *Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else and His righteousness, and he will give you everything you need" If our priority is spiritual, God will bless naturally.*
 - b. *"And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 28:2, ESV)*
 - c. ***The Unbelievers also receive BLESSINGS from the Lord---But they are not a crown***
 - d. All people are, by nature, born under wrath (Eph. 2:3) and should go to hell. Why? Because God is holy and we are sinners. Yet, we have hope in Christ. The Christian is saved by faith (Eph. 2:8) and will join the Lord in heaven. But, the unbeliever is under judgment. John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (KJV). Why does God not simply destroy them as is His right? Because of the Christians! Because God is being patient with the unbeliever, allowing them to enjoy the blessings of life in this world without the rightful condemnation of God falling upon them. This is what the Bible states:
 - e. "What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³ And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory" (Rom. 9:22-23, NASB).
 - f. As you can see, God is patient with the unregenerate. They receive a delayed judgment because of God's love for the believer. In this sense, Jesus is the Savior of the world because He holds back His judging hand from all who rightly and immediately deserve it. Judgment is delayed. This is a blessing received from God upon the unbeliever. In fact, God often blesses the unbeliever because of the presence of a believer.
 - g. "And it came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he owned, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the Lord's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field," (Gen. 39:5, NASB). **Recommended Reading Ephesians Chapter 2 and Romans Chapter 9**
5. God gives a good **wife as a crown** to a husband---Proverbs 12:4.....Not contingent
 - a. Hosea was a godly man and did not have a wife that brought him joy and honor-Hosea 3:1-5
 - b. Nabal was an ungodly man but yet he had a good wife, Abigail. 1 Samuel chapter 25
6. God **crowns the righteous** with splendor---Proverbs 16:31.....Contingent
 - a. "The hoary head or white head of old age is only a crown if it is accompanied by righteousness." Gray hair is not contingent it will happen. Question is will it be your crown?
 - b. *"Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness." Pr. 16:31*
 - c. **Definition:** Righteousness is the state of moral perfection required by God to enter heaven.
 - d. However, the Bible clearly states that human beings cannot achieve righteousness through their own efforts: *"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin."* (Romans 3:20, NIV).
 - e. The law, or the Ten Commandments, shows us how far we fall short of God's standards. The only solution to that dilemma is God's plan of salvation.

- f. People receive righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Christ, the sinless Son of God, took humanity's sin upon himself and became the willing, perfect sacrifice, suffering the punishment mankind deserved. God the Father accepted Jesus' sacrifice, through which human beings can become justified.
7. God **crowns us** with grandchildren---Proverbs 17:6.....Contingent
"Children's children are a crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers."
- a. The text speaks of a **glory and a crown**. The word "glory" in the text is used in other places in Scripture to describe the adornment, or what someone would put on, to make something attractive and desirable. That is the idea here in the text. "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers." Children's children are the crown of old men. Old men are honored by the reputation that their children and grandchildren give of them.
- b. That is the point of the proverb. In the covenant home, grandchildren are a crown that brings honor and glory to their grandparents. Children are a crown that brings honor and glory to their parents. And parents and grandparents give honor and glory to their children.
- c. In 2 Timothy 1 the apostle Paul gives an example of this. Speaking to Timothy, whom he calls his own dearly beloved son, he says that he calls to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in Timothy, and that dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice and now, he is persuaded, in Timothy also. Timothy had a mother and a grandmother who, you might say, did him proud. They were not parents and grandparents of whom he should be ashamed. But they were a crown and a glory to him.
- d. That is the way it should be in the covenant family. The grandchildren should not be ashamed of their parents and their grandparents. The father is not one to be held up for ridicule but to be prized and appreciated as a treasure. Children, covenant children, are a great value and a gift to believing parents. Believing grandparents say of their grandchildren: "I'm honored to have you as a grandchild." Children say of their aged grandparents, "What an honor to have you for my grandparents."
- e. **Now this is not a universal truth.** It is certainly not true that every parent and every grandparent or every child is a crown of rejoicing and glory to the other members of the family. That is not even true in the church. You see examples of that in Scripture. (1) Rehoboam, because of his sin, was a shame to his father Solomon and to the house of David. Think of (2) Manasseh, the son of good king Hezekiah. For fifty years his reign was filled with wickedness and he destroyed the good reputation of his father. Think of the sons of Eli, (3) Hophni and Phinehas, and what a shame they were to their godly father. And you have that the other way around as well. (4) Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, was smitten with leprosy for his sin, and this disease was passed on to his children and grandchildren, reminding them of their father's shameful deeds. (1) **Recommended Reading 1 Kings Chapter 12 and (2) 2 Kings Chapter 21 and (3) 1 Samuel chapters 2 and 4 (4) 2 Kings Chapter 5**
- f. Solomon says in Proverbs 20:9, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Of course, no one can! Solomon says in chapter 22:15, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." He is realistic. He is under no delusions here. And so it is only by the grace of God and with His blessing, that we can be a crown of glory and rejoicing to our homes.

- g. This is clear in Proverbs 3:33, where we read, “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.” It is by God’s grace, with His blessing, on account of His faithfulness and the strength of His covenant promises, that it can be said that children are a crown to their parents and parents to their children.
- 8. God **crowns godly people** with spiritual children---1 Thess. 2:19, Philip. 4:1.....Contingent
 - a. In the text this is applied to people. And the idea is that, through your association with someone else, that person brings honor and glory to you. This is the way that Paul the apostle uses the idea of crown in I Thessalonians 2:19 and 20. There he says, “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.” The apostle Paul means that when he stands before Christ on the Day of Judgment, the Thessalonian Christians among whom he labored will pay compliment to him. **Recommended reading 1 Thessalonians 1 and 2.**
 - b. Paul called them, the believers in Philippi his joy and crown. *“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, **my joy and crown**, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”* Philippians 4:1 **Recommended reading Philippians 3 and Philippians 4.**

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.

I am coming soon!

Hold unto what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”

Revelation 2:10(b) and 3:11

Crowns for the Christ-Followers who are victorious {Church Letters of Rev. 2 & 3}

The Hereafter Future Crowns

- 1. God will be a glorious crown for us---Isaiah 28:5
- 2. Christians will be a crown for God---Isaiah 62:3
- 3. God will crown us with everlasting joy---Isaiah 35:10
- 4. We will receive an everlasting crown---1 Corinthians 9:25
- 5. We will receive a crown of righteousness---2 Timothy 4:8
- 6. We will receive a crown of life---James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10
- 7. We will receive a crown of glory---1 Peter 5:4

YOUR NOTES:

Let us briefly discuss **Two different types of CROWNS:**

Barnabas/Ananias & Sapphira: Acts 4 and Acts 5

A story by Pastor Cyndi Higgins © based on Biblical Scripture:

In Acts 4 verse 36 we meet Brother Joseph a Levite from the island Cyprus which lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. The Island of Cyprus became the home of many Jews during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus, and the Jewish revolt led by the Maccabees. Although the Island was small in its one hundred miles the Zeal for the Lord was not and Jewish synagogues dotted the island's landscape. Brother Joseph was no ordinary Israelite, he was a Levite. The Levites chosen by God thousands of years before to continue with the Temple work handed down from one generation to the next as God had commanded through Moses and taught and preserved from Aaron and his sons to the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

It was Brother Joseph's uncommon love and mercy toward all people that first caught the attention of the Lord's apostles. As they watched how Brother Joseph dealt with people both converted believers and evangelized unbelievers, they decided among themselves to give Brother Joseph a new name. They gave him the name "Barnabas." Barnabas means 'son of encouragement.' As far as the apostles were concerned there was none other like him when it came to encouragement and generosity toward all mankind. God had blessed him with the gift of giving and we are told in Romans that those given the gift of giving---give generously. It came as no surprise that Barnabas sold some land he owned and gave all the proceeds to the apostles by laying the money at their feet. This is just the beginning of all of Brother Barnabas' giving as we watch him grow in the Lord and become one of the greatest evangelists to ever live and one of the most powerful and significant ones during the first century Church. I fully intend to extend this story as we gratefully follow the life of a humbled man of God and learn from his Christian lifestyle that he wore the many earthly crowns that only Jesus Christ authorizes. Yes, we see that our dear brother Barnabas gave and he gave generously so without seeking personal gain or personal recognition.

We learn from Brother Barnabas' generosity cited in just these simple verses that he, like other Christians, exercised the gift of giving as taught by the Scriptures. Acts 4:32-37

"A Crown of Mercy"

1. He had no personal claim on what he gave the Church of Jesus Christ
2. He had no personal gain from what he gave the Church of Jesus Christ
3. He was among other believers who had---they did
4. He was among other believers who could---they would
5. His ownership to any earthly possession ceased upon accepting Jesus Christ

Brother Joseph, a Levite, of the Island of Cyprus now living in Jerusalem and ministering with the other new converts was given by the Lord a crown of mercy allowing him to give without question to others and to give generously all that he had for the purpose of furthering the Gospel of Jesus Christ and taking care of the needs of other believers. He wore the "Crown of Mercy" legally and his life went well for him. Oh, yes, of course, he had his hardships in the ministry work and we shall discover ever the

more of this man as our story continues in the next lesson. As for now, I would like us to look at a set of people who illegally tried to wear a crown of mercy not given to them.

It is sad because they could have given by the stirring of the Holy Spirit without actually being crowned as those possessing the gift of 'encouragement—giving generously. As we know from history and even in our own settings within our families and inside our local Churches, many one-time gifts are given by others that comes from a Holy Spirit stirring.

Unfortunately for Ananias and Sapphira they were not 'Mercy' crowned by the Lord and not even stirred by the Holy Spirit but stirred by their own fleshly and egotistical desires to receive praise from man. In comparison to Barnabas they felt 'dejected.' Therefore, to bring lime-light unto themselves, they schemed a plan. A plan that would make them look good and make them look generous and would definitely feed their ego and give them personal glory as others listened to their boasting words and the words of others as the news of their gift traveled of how generous they were to the Church.

Their crown is one of deceit. Their pride caused them to long to be recognized for any good work they did inside the Church and when Brother Barnabas sold his land and laid all that money at the feet of the apostles, their 'envy' became a spirit of deceit and jealousy. The Spirit of Pride accompanied with the Spirit of Jealousy always travels in the company of the Spirit of Death and we see how this combination of unclean spirits resulted in just that---death. Let us turn to the Word of the Lord and read together Acts Chapter 5:1-11

“A Crown of Deceit”

1. They took personal claim in darkness—behind others' backs
2. They wanted personal gain---Recognition for their help to the Church
3. They had and they did BUT with Self-Indulgence attached
4. They could—They possessed what could help---But held back because of selfishness
5. They claimed “Squatter’s Rights” to what was not appointed to them by God

They were NOT Levites, called, appointed, anointed, and ordained by God and they had not been given the gift giving generously.

Attempting to illegally take from another regardless of what that is for personal indulgence and personal gratification stems from a Spirit of Pride such as we see exhibited by Ananias and Sapphira. Tragically we saw Christian competition spurred on with pride and covetousness which resulted in their premature deaths. This is a severe example of what can happen to humans who desire that which is not theirs nor has been allotted to them by the Lord God. In this tragic case it caused them their lives. Many things die inside of Churches, Ministries, brothers and sisters because of these unclean spirits--- 'The Crown of Mercy' is difficult for a wearer properly given it by the Lord to hold up under it at times, therefore, trying to manufacture what the Lord has not given with His foreknowledge will ALWAYS produce death in something including relationships, ministries, Churches, faith assignments, personal dreams, goals, destinies and the more because of illegal plundering!

BARNABAS RECEIVES A CROWN FROM GOD

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day---and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

2 Timothy 4:8

Brother Joseph, a Levite, of the Island of Cyprus now living in Jerusalem and ministering with the other new converts was given by the Lord a crown of mercy allowing him to give without question to others and to give generously all that he had for the purpose of furthering the Gospel of Jesus Christ and taking care of the needs of other believers. He wore the “Crown of Mercy” legally and his life went well for him. Oh, yes, of course, he had his hardships in the ministry work and we shall learn of those together.

LET US CONTINUE:

Now as we study this Man of God given the title of “Son of Prophecy/Encouragement,” let us go into his agricultural fields on the Island of Cyprus, his homeland, and imagine what his life may have been like. Joseph the Levite of Cyprus was not a poor uneducated man but one of wealth from his fertile fields.

It has been said and he most assuredly would agree that these are the best producing fields in all of the surrounding Islands. Many have passed by and written in their chronicles and journals of the fertile soil of Cyprus. She gives vast wines, and grains of all nature, and olives that press the very best oil. Such a fine Island that even Cleopatra owned her at one time in years past, so Joseph had been told as a small child while sitting at the knee of his Levite father. Many battles had been fought over this island because of the fertile soil, and the vast forests and the copper mines. As Joseph stood there looking out over his wheat fields, he wondered just how many ships had sailed the seas that were built from the wood of his homeland, Cyprus?

How could Joseph know that this would be the last day that he stood at this field of his and admired all that she had produced through the years and how the soil responded abundantly to his working-hands? Did he even sense that his life was about to change and that he would never be the same again? How many times had he gone to Jerusalem? Oh, so many that he could not count them anymore. He often went and visited with his close relative Mary and had watched John Mark grow from a toddler to now a young man. He would sail to Caesarea and then take the trade road into Jerusalem. It was Pentecost Festival and he would be at the Temple to celebrate.

What Joseph did not understand was he would never be an earnest and devoted Levite such as he had always been, no not ever again. Up to this point he had lived a life of hard work and wealth and love

and generosity. He had been the son of a good and godly man and he had strived to always make his father proud of him. Somewhere in his heart of hearts he believed he had done so. However, one could never be too sure of themselves and he would not dare to be so prideful to consider himself pleasing in his father's eyes. For many of man looks in the mirror and believes he sees one thing but in reality he does not see the truth.

When he entered the ship that day to sail for Jerusalem everything seemed quite normal. The sea was at rest and all the people boarded orderly and even the ladies with too much luggage did not seem too stressed in the noon heat. As he sat alone and meditated on pieces of Scripture, he thought of Isaiah and how he had spoken of the coming Messiah. There were parts that seemed rather strange and unattainable for his understanding. He proposed to himself that in the very near future he would take a rest and give himself adequate time to study this portion of the prophet and ask Jehovah God to open his understanding. Yes, it was settled that was precisely what he would do.

He had no inclination that he himself would become a prophet and a teacher and be called by many a 'good man.' Oh, yes, I am quite sure of it, that Joseph the Levite of Cyprus was totally unaware of what would be written of him in the book of Acts, "The Acts of the Apostles." Surely, it was beyond any person's imagination that they would even be called an Apostle---An Apostle of Jesus Christ, The Messiah. Simply put had he known the drastic changes the Lord had planned for his life, well he most likely would have stopped the ship and gone back to his field.

My darlings, it happened precisely that way. Acts presents Barnabas, an early church leader, as a model of integrity and character. He is called a Good Man in Acts 11:24, a prophet and teacher in Acts 13:1, an Apostle in Acts 14:14, and a man whom God worked miracles in Acts 15:12. Well, I know he did not suspect it of himself and since we are embellishing and telling a story of what it could have been like for Joseph of Cyprus, let's take a look at the Scriptures to be sure we are speaking its Truth.

Acts 11:24 KJV "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." Well let's take a closer look at what's going on here, so we don't wander from the truth.

We learn of Brother Barnabas' generosity cited in just these simple verses that he, like other Christians, exercised the gift of giving as taught by the Scriptures. Acts 4:32-37

Acts 4:32-37 NIV ³² "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. ³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet."

This is how we were introduced to Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus. Here is more of his story according to Scripture. We see Joseph's name is changed to Barnabas because of his encouraging and generous ways. Don't get confused that he is called, "Son of Encouragement" or "Son of Prophecy." They mean the same thing. Prophecy is a gift where a person can encourage others and sometimes they are given the ability by the Holy Spirit to speak a word of knowledge and instruction to them. Some prophets as we have seen are even able by the Lord to tell a person perhaps something about them and how something may come about for them. I don't want to get off the story—line, just check that out on your own time.

"Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers." Acts 9:31

In Damascus, during one of Barnabas' visits, he had quietly followed and listened to the preaching and teaching of Saul. Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. In the year of 37 A.D. after many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him. When he went to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples but they were afraid of him, not believing he really was a disciple. **BUT BARNABAS** took him and brought him to the Apostles. Barnabas introduced Paul to the apostles; he became Paul's character witness which secured Paul's acceptance with the apostles. Paul was received by the Jerusalem Church to be a part of it and he was given the evangelistic opportunity because of Barnabas in Jerusalem. (Acts 9:22-30) NIV

²² Yet Saul (Paul) grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. ²³ After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. ²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰ When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

We must fast forward six years to 43 A.D. where once again we see Barnabas and hear the good reports the Holy Spirit has written about him. Acts 11:19 and 20 says that some of the evangelists were men from Cyprus and Cyrene and they went to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks also telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. Barnabas, a member of the Church of Jerusalem, is sent to Antioch once the leaders hear that a Church is growing there among the 'Gentiles/Greeks.' You will see now how Barnabas' faith assignment brought forth much fruit. Including building up the Church of

Antioch with encouragement and teaching and adding Paul to the teaching/preaching team. Just so you know The Church Of Antioch, was the first and largest Church located there and it was from this Church that Paul was sent out three different times on Missionary trips (Acts 13:1-4, 15:40, 18:23). As a matter of fact it became the “Gentile Christian Church Center.”

Acts 11:21-30 NIV “²¹ The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. ²² News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. ***The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*** ²⁷ During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) ²⁹ The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. ³⁰ This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.”

Acts 11:24 Says Barnabas was

1. A good man
2. Full of the Holy Spirit
3. Full of Faith
4. His encouragement to the people to remain true to the Lord brought a great number of people to the Lord. KJV Reads, “He told them with purpose of heart---cleave unto the Lord.”
5. Non-possessive of the people inside the Church—He went and got Paul who was in Tarsus (Acts 9:10).
6. They stayed a whole year and taught GREAT NUMBERS OF PEOPLE
7. This is the first location disciples of Jesus Christ were called CHRISTIANS
8. At this point Barnabas was a Pastor, Teacher, and Evangelist
9. They were trusted by the Antioch Church members to take the money to Jerusalem

Acts 12:25 and 13:1-12

Along the year of 44 A.D. the time came for Barnabas and Saul to be launched as Missionaries. The Holy Spirit spoke to the Church of Antioch leaders about Barnabas and Saul, so they fasted and prayed and laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul (Paul) and sent them off on their missionary trip as the Holy Spirit had instructed them to do. Barnabas sailed home to Cyprus along with Paul to preach the Word of God and to do the work that the Holy Spirit told the prophets and teachers at the Church of Antioch he had called them to do. So being sent by the Holy Spirit, they went to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. Upon landing at Salamis on the Northeastern tip of Cyprus, a prosperous harbor of the Island, they immediately went to the Jewish synagogues and preached the Word of God. They were the witnesses of Jesus Christ proclaiming His Gospel and making disciples of them.

Slowly, they worked their way through the villages and synagogues and possibly house to house until they reached the Western end of the Island in the city of Paphos. The Island is at points 100 miles long and at its longest point it is said to be as much as 140 miles, although that is still controversial. While they were in Paphos, they encountered a certain sorcerer, a false prophet. He was a Jew and his name was Bar-Jesus. Bar-Jesus known as Elymas the sorcerer practiced black magic. A sorcerer is referred to as a witch and a wizard as well---any person who practices black magic falls into these categories.

The proconsul of Cyprus was an intelligent man and he had called for Barnabas and Paul for he desired to hear the Word of God. It would make one wonder what a man of his position and level of intelligence was doing hanging out with a man who practiced black magic. Nevertheless, Barnabas and Paul went to him to proclaim the Word of God. When they arrived the sorcerer tried to block their way and stop them. He did not want the Proconsul learning the truth of what he was seeking and finding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word of God. However his blocking their way was useless because Paul filled with the Holy Spirit far out matched him. Paul looked harshly at him and said, **“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right!** You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? ¹¹ Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun—and so he was.” You can read the entire Biblical account in Acts 13:6-12.

Surely, Barnabas retells the story of Acts 13:13-52 when he and Paul were violently expelled from the city of Pisidian Antioch and the entire region for preaching the truth of Jesus Christ. By the time they had arrived in this city the Lord had surely increased their boldness. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said to the Jews, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you (the Jews) first, but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, and that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’” (Acts 13:46-47) Well, the jealousy of the Jews stirred up and they aroused others to help them in persecuting Paul and Barnabas and they threw them out of their region. But just as Jesus had taught the disciples earlier, they shook the dust off their feet and went to Iconium and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13: 48-52)

Iconium caused them all kinds of trouble. Barnabas must have wondered what it would be like to walk into a city anywhere and be greeted with joy instead of anger and disbelief. They, of course, were greeted by unbelieving Jews who desired to cause them trouble, “Really,” Barnabas must have wondered-“What’s new?” The Lord had filled them with His power and His boldness so in spite of the hostility they endured, they stayed and they taught boldly in the Lord. The Lord bore witness to His grace by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. However, the city’s great population was divided and there was an attempt made on their lives by Jews, Gentiles, and their rulers. Finally, Paul and Barnabas decided it was time to leave and they went to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lyconia and that surrounding region. Praise God, Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel there too. (Acts 14:1-7)

Time for some Scripture:

“When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!”¹² Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.¹³ The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting:¹⁵ “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.” Acts 14:11-15 Read at home 14:8-15.

A weird twist of events in Lystra according to what we just read in Acts 14:7-15. This must have challenged the gentle and generous demeanor of Barnabas. He was a bigger man and built strong to farm and he seemed even much larger than he was standing next to Paul, who barely made the height of five-foot. This was one of those times, Barnabas was glad he had some height and upper and lower body strength. In his later years, I suppose, he sat and told those missionary stories that the eager ears wanted to hear. This may have seemed like one of those fish-stories whereas every time it gets told, the fish gets bigger and the struggle to pull him in is far worse than the time you told the story before. Anyways this was a very special missionary day. The story goes and it is told in the Bible, that after a man was healed, Barnabas was called the God Zeus and they called Paul the God Hermes, because Paul was the chief speaker. They both tore their clothes and RUSHED INTO THE CROWD and corrected these people IMMEDIATELY! They shouted, “Friends, why are you doing this? We are only human, like you.”

They had to be wondering what in the world---man, we are here teaching you about Jesus Christ and telling you to turn from this nonsense of worshipping all these false gods of yours and now you are trying to call us gods that have come down to be with you. Give us a break, really! Turn now to the living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things that are in them. They did their best to explain who God was. Yet it was difficult to restrain the crowd from wanting to sacrifice their oxen unto them. Surely, they may have been hungry but they were not hungry enough for this. (Acts 14:8-18)

That was bad enough for the two apostles trying to do crowd control and settle these people down who wanted to believe they were their false gods when suddenly some unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium walked into the crowd and stirred them up some more as if they were not stirred up enough already. They persuaded this same crowd who minutes earlier called them their gods to pick up stones and pelt Paul. Suddenly, Paul dropped to the ground. The crowd stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city believing he was dead, however, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city of Lystra. What a way to end a day of preaching and evangelizing! HALLELUJAH! (Acts 14:19-20)

In case you did not catch what the Holy Spirit is now calling Barnabas and well of course, Paul, too. Take a look at the Scripture and read this story from Acts 14:11-15. Take a close look at 14:14--- Yes, there it is, the Holy Spirit, is now referring to them as “apostles.” Can you just imagine if Barnabas was still alive after Dr. Luke wrote Acts and as he is sitting down looking out over the Sea as the sun is rising, he reads these words---“when the apostles Barnabas and Paul...” Wow! I doubt that Barnabas thought of himself this way. More than likely oftentimes, he was just pleased

to be alive and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and teaching people how to live before the Lord.

Back to our story: The next day Barnabas and Paul headed into Derbe and stayed for quite some time. Seeing the many new disciples of Jesus Christ converted they knew their work there was done and they left. They returned to Lystra, Iconium, and then to Pisidian Antioch. They strengthened the souls of the disciples encouraging them to continue in the faith. They shared with them that all Christians must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God. They took their time and appointed elders in every Church and they prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:21-25)

They found themselves working their way from Pisidia into Perga and they preached in Attalia along the Mediterranean seacoast. Then they sailed to Antioch where their mission had begun with the Holy Spirit requesting they be set aside for His work He had planned for them. Their work was successful because they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had completed. They returned to their local Church in Antioch where they had been sent from and commissioned from and they reported all that God had done with them and that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. What a glorious report many had received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

What about you? Have you given your life to Jesus Christ? Is He your Lord and Savior? If not, today is your day to be reborn.

They stayed with their Church in Antioch for a long time. They had been on the Mission Field for over two years between A.D. 46 and 48 (Acts 13:4---14:28). Rest was due them for they had worked hard together. They endured many hardships together. They had witnessed amazing signs and wonders, healings, and deliverances together. They helped Jew and Gentile discover the grace of Jesus Christ and their love for Jesus made it possible for them to love the believers, the unbelievers, and the new converts. Persecuted, stoned, falsely accused, chased away, and banned by many still they remained faithful to the Lord Jesus, to the faith assignment, and to each other.

The Lord had coupled them together like a wilderness Tabernacle curtain to fight the force of adversity. They left on the missionary trip predestined by God for them and they returned together.

Who other than the Lord would know how many thousands of converts to Christianity Barnabas and Paul are responsible for? Other than the Lord is there anyone or any records that can tell us how many Churches of Jesus Christ they had planted?

Who other than themselves and those traveling with them could diary all the trouble, hardships, heartaches, persecutions, and violence they must have suffered? Other than the Lord keeping records, did anyone in their traveling party keep track of how many meals they went without when they had no food and no money to buy it? How many times had they slept outside? Who kept the itinerary of the many homes they visited? Are there records of the meals cooked for them by total strangers and beds turned down for them for a good night's rest in a newly converted Christian's home? I wondered how many needles and thread and by whom did their clothes get

repaired. Did their sandals wear out before the two year journey was completed? Do you suppose they were missed by their loved ones?

I wonder when Barnabas was in Cyprus preaching and teaching alongside Paul in the Jewish synagogues did some of his family members accept Jesus Christ as their Savior? Was Barnabas admired for his hard work? Did his family and friends support him? How many family members or friends on that small island encouraged him? How many do you suppose mocked him and misunderstood him?

I don't think it would have mattered much to Barnabas who supported his God-ordained mission or who did not. Barnabas knew he was called by the Lord and the Lord set him aside for this mission's trip in 44 A.D. He had entered into Christian work shortly after that great day of Pentecost when the Church of Jesus Christ was born in 30 A.D. Yes, we can believe that his life was never the same once he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

From what the Bible tells us the friendship between Barnabas and Paul began in 37 A.D. when Paul is introduced by Barnabas to the apostles in Jerusalem. Their relationship grows stronger and deeper and we see them together again in Antioch in 43 A.D. and then back to Jerusalem in 44 A.D. before going back to Antioch and being commissioned for the missionary trip predestined by the Holy Spirit; a trip that took them just a little longer than two years to complete. I call it a trip of destiny not only for them but for the thousands who received Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Nine years after we see their friendship developing, we see them resting and staying and serving at their local Church in Antioch. We watched over a period of these ten years a real friendship and Christian brotherhood develop. We witnessed their coupling by the Holy Spirit but their story does not end there resting.

We will pick up the rest of this story of Barnabas who is Joseph, the Levite of Cyprus, friend and partner of Paul in the next lesson.

My question today for you, "Do you know the Savior, Jesus Christ? Is He the Lord of your life? Is He the Lord over your life? Is He your closest friend, the one you can talk to about anything? Do you know Jesus Christ is God the Word who took off His Godly robes and left His Heavenly Throne and came to earth as a man? He was born of a virgin and laid in a manger. He took upon Himself flesh like a man and He walked among His people, but He was rejected. He was crucified for my and your sins. He was beaten and abused for all of the ugliness we do. He was forsaken and shamed and mocked for our peace. He was scourged for our healing and for our deliverance. He is our Redeemer and He paid the price in full to reconcile you and me back to the Father. If you don't know Him as your Lord and Savior, today is your day to start a new life, and a life-long relationship with Him, Jesus Christ, The Lord and The Savior.

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off Acts 12:25 and 13:1-12 AT HOME: Read about More of their Missionary Work: Recommended Reading in Acts Chapters 13, 14, and 15.

YOUR VICTOR'S CROWN! IS IT IN JEPORDY?

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown. I am coming soon! Hold unto what you have, so that no one will take your crown.” Revelation 2:10(b) and 3:11

1. Be faithful as opposed to being unfaithful
2. Be prepared to die (physically and spiritually) for Jesus’ Name as opposed to denying Him in an unholy lifestyle or at the point of physical threats!
3. Hold unto what you have as opposed to giving up your Spiritual life

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1. Jesus will give you life as your VICTOR’S CROWN
 2. Jesus is coming soon
 3. Somebody wants your ‘Crown of Life=Victor’s Crown”

By reading just these two Scriptures above we can see that Jesus Christ is promising us **Life** and He says that **Life** is our **Victor’s Crown**. But He gives us a command about receiving this crown—He says, *“Be faithful even to the point of death.”* He says, *“Hold unto what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”*

Let your lifestyle speak for you without words being spoken in such a way that all who look including the seven eyes of the Lord will only see a life surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let’s take a look into the Scriptures, again looking at Barnabas, who is Joseph a Levite from the Island of Cyprus. We shall examine the last few verses that tell us about this Man of God before he disappears from the Biblical records but not from the Christian Faith.

We left off in the last lesson seeing Barnabas and Paul back at their home Church in Antioch getting some rest after their Missionary trip that took them from home for over two years. **It is now sometime during A.D. 48---this rest period.**

*Acts 14:26-15:4 NIV “From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And **they stayed** there a long time with the disciples. Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought **Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed**, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church **sent them** on their way, and as **they traveled** through Phoenicia and Samaria, **they told** how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.”*

The year is A.D. 49 ‘THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM”

*When **they came** to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom **they reported** everything God, had **done through them.”** Of course they must have also*

discussed this 'false or misinformed teaching' that had gone out from the church of Jerusalem unauthorized to the Gentile Christians." We see in 15:5 that even in the meeting there were those standing up and saying, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the Law of Moses."

However, we'll not go into that discussion today as we are looking into the last movements of Barnabas as written in the Word of God. We are examining his and Paul's relationship not only with one another but how they relate to others. They are relating with people who believe the opposite of what Jesus taught and with others who walk in the grace of the salvation that Jesus preached. They are in a room full of people that are all of one body of Christ, yet there is DISAGREEMENT among them.

After much discussion Peter got up---and addressed them. He reminded them how God had used him to bring the Gentiles into the "Way." He said, "God who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he did to us...Now then, why do you try to test God?" Then Peter says something very striking, "**NO! WE** believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." Acts 15:8...10.

*"The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the **signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them**. When they finished...James spoke up." Acts 15:12*

They give testimony on behalf of God that He did signs and wonders and they give testimony on behalf of the Gentiles that God performed His signs and wonders among the Gentiles. Peter said in verse 9, "He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts **by faith**."

A decision is made and the Council writes a letter and appoints some of their own men to travel with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch to deliver the decision. The Apostles and Elders wrote a letter and referred to Paul and Barnabas as they dear friends who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Along with Paul and Barnabas they were sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. The decision from the Council of Jerusalem was delivered to the Church of Antioch and the men sent from Jerusalem eventually left, however, Acts 15:35 says, "But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord." [Important note—some manuscripts include verse 34: "But Silas decided to remain there."]

Introducing Paul's Second Missionary Trip where he and Barnabas part ways!

Acts 15:36-40 "Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.' Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamyhylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord."

Recommended Reading: Acts 14:26 through Acts 15:41

This Missionary Break-Up happened somewhere between Mid A.D. 49 or early A.D. 50. Paul's Second Missionary Trip most scholars agree ended in A.D. 52, but when it began it seems to be varying between 46--50. What is more important than accurate dates is that these two men of God had an amazing relationship, BUT a BITTER DISPUTE separated them. We do find Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:6 referring to Barnabas' working and serving the Lord at the same time. It is agreed that 1 Corinthians was written about A.D. 55. Paul writes this letter to the Church of Corinth which he had established during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-7). This Church was very diverse, including men and women, rich and poor. The report from Chloe's household informed Paul of divisions in the Church, they were developing conflicting loyalties to different human teachers (1 Cor. 1:10-13). He wanted them to understand that salvation is not based on human wisdom or personalities, but on Christ crucified and the work of God in building His Church.

Recommended Reading: 1 Cor. 1:1-4:21

Paul writes a letter to this Church in Corinth that he had established upon hearing this news of division and trouble. In 1 Corinthians he has given them a list of how Christians are to live. He reminds them 1.) You are not short of spiritual gifts 2.) Christ confirmed you and will to the end 3.) God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 4.) Division is Sin—be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment. 5.) Christ is the Power and Wisdom of God. 6.) Give Glory only in the Lord 7.) We have spiritual wisdom. 8.) It is carnal Christianity where there is envy, strife, and division among Christians. 9.) Be God's fellow workers. 10.) Avoid worldly wisdom. 11.) Be good stewards of God's mysteries. 12.) Be fools for Christ's sake. 13.) Immorality defiles the Church and it must be judged. 14.) Do not sue each other. 15.) Glorify in Body and Spirit the Lord. 16.) Marriage. 17.) Live as you are called. 18.) Advice for the unmarried and widows. 19.) Don't be a stumbling block to those weaker in the faith.

#20 is where he speaks of Barnabas. I am stopping with #20 of the many things Paul wrote in this letter, but there are many more topics he discussed with the Church and everything he discussed is still applicable to the Church today and to each of us today!

Now, this letter is being written in A.D. 55 (approximately) and he is writing now under the heading of

A Pattern of Self-Denial:

1 Corinthians 9:1-13 Let's read it together.

9:6 "Or is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work for a living?"

Therefore we know that Paul knows something about Barnabas' current lifestyle that somewhere between 4.5 and 5 years after they separated, he knows that Barnabas is still working in his apostleship authority (see 9:1-2). He is speaking of how he and now including Barnabas must too have food and drink. "So why then is it," Paul asked them, "Is it seeming that only I and Barnabas are denied not having to work for a living as well as fulfilling our apostleship responsibilities?"

Recommended Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:1-27.

We can call this **circumstantial evidence**: **Circumstantial evidence** is evidence that relies on an inference to connect it to a conclusion of fact—like a fingerprint at the scene of a crime. By contrast, direct evidence supports the truth of an assertion directly—i.e., without need for any additional evidence or inference.

Even though Barnabas is now working separate of Paul, he is still living out that life devoted to Jesus Christ and to the ministering of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is ministering and acting as the Apostle that he was ordained to be by the Lord, but he is according to Paul having to use his two hands to bring food and drink to his table.

Conclusion:

CROWNS

Let's use Paul's words to close this short study of Barnabas and 'Our Crowns'

"The Need for Self-Discipline to gain your Victor's Crown that will last forever:

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into **strict training**. They do it to get a crown that will not last, **but** we do it to get a **crown that will last forever**. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Your Victor's Crown Jesus said is ETERNAL LIFE---Jesus said remain faithful even to death and all the way to your physical death. Hold unto what you have. Be therefore disciplined. Paul is telling us we must be in strict spiritual training all the time. Strict spiritual training goes beyond spiritual disciplines. It includes striking the fleshly things out of your body that you know are wrong. Do not just strike out, but aim at the sins of the flesh and the mind and the soul that have to go! Paul says, I make it my slave—my body---I don't let it do what it wants to do—it is in slavery to me (his spirit) Proverbs 20:27 says *"The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one's inmost being."* Therefore we are born-again of the Spirit of God and He dwells within us. As our self-discipline and surrender allows our spirit to grow more in the Lord Jesus Christ, the brighter that light shines on our inmost being which has been made in the image of God. The more light that comes in the stronger the inmost being becomes and the bright light cast out the darkness of sin and the slavery to sin many have been imprisoned to.

Your crown of Life---could be in jeopardy. This is the time to ask the Lord the question, "Lord, is my Victor's Crown in jeopardy?" If you feel that it is time to make a change so that none can take your crown, then this is the Lord letting you know, the two of you have work to do with each other and together. For the Lord says, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6

JESUS THE MAN IS JUDAH'S SON AND HE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE

In the next five lessons, we shall study Jesus Christ---“The God-Man”

Using the acrostic **J.E.S.U.S**, we'll discover His human and His Godly Characteristics.

JESUS THE MAN

J. UDAH'S SON

E. _____

S. _____

U. _____

S. _____

JESUS THE LORD

J. USTICE OF GOD

E. _____

S. _____

U. _____

S. _____

We will use the Holy Scriptures to uncover mysteries of Our Lord both as God and as Man. In an attempt to assist the RAB Pastors and Teachers, my personal teaching notes will be made available to you. However, due to the complexity of the undertaking in this Series, I advise you to spend personal time researching the Scriptures to inspire yourself and allow the Holy Spirit to bring revelation into your soul and spirit that I myself have not captured.

READ: Luke 1:26-38 and Luke 2:1-40 and Luke 3:23-38

We shall use the three recorded “Public Words spoken from Father God over Jesus,” as our **Dayspring** (Luke 1:78 KJV). In English we call that ‘dawn.’ Symbolically it is used for truthfulness and discernment in Hebrew. In Greek it means ‘rising’ a figurative reference to the coming of MESSIAH. *“Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring [dawn, the Messiah] from on high hath visited us.”*

1. God speaks publically at Jesus' Baptism, Luke 3:21-22 KJV *“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost, descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, **“Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”**”*
2. God speaks publically at Jesus' Transfiguration, Luke 9:35 KJV *“And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, **“This is my beloved Son: hear him.”**”*
3. God speaks publically at Jesus' hour of glorification, John 12:23-33 NIV *“Jesus replied, **‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say?’ ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’**” Then a voice came from heaven, **“I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”** ‘The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, **“This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am***

lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die."

We shall use the book of Luke as our guide as it is Dr. Luke that presents Jesus Christ, the Man. The book of Luke divides itself into three parts.

1. The first 4 chapters describe Jesus' **birth**, baptism, **genealogy** and temptation.
2. From 4:14 through 18 teaches salvation and the approach to God.
3. Chapters 19-24 King, Condemned, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Commission, and His Ascension.

Prophecy of our Lord is strung throughout the Old Testament, however, to begin our study, let's use Isaiah 42:1-6 KJV **"BEHOLD my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles (their justice). He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people (The Israelites), for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."**

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:

JUDAH'S SON:

Genesis 49:8-12 Judah's Blessing *¹
Ezekiel 21:24-27 "Until He comes..." *²
Micah 5:2-4 "But thou Bethlehem.."
Luke 3:23 and 3:33 (Line of Judah)
Rev. 5:1-5 "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah"

GOD OF JUSTICE:

Isaiah 9:1-7 "Unto us a child is born.."
Isaiah 11:1-2 "With righteousness he will.."
Psalms 2:2-12 "Break them with an iron rod"
Rev. 2:26-29 "Rule with a rod of iron."
Rev. 19:11-16 "Rule them with a rod of iron"

NOTES:

HOME STUDY: RECOMMEND READING: LUKE CHAPTERS 1 THROUGH 4.

*¹--- A Lion's cub is a symbol of sovereignty, strength and courage.

*²--- Fall of the Royal line of Judah and will not be taken back up again UNTIL JESUS CHRIST COMES!

JESUS THE ELECT AND ETERNAL ONE

Using the acrostic **J.E.S.U.S**, we'll discover His human and His Godly Characteristics.

JESUS THE MAN

J.UDAH'S SON

E.LECT ONE

S._____

U._____

S._____

JESUS THE LORD

J.USTICE OF GOD

E.TERNAL ONE

S._____

U._____

S._____

Now we will discover that Jesus is as a man, 'The Elect One' and as God he is 'The Eternal One'

1. Isaiah 42:1 KJV Father God says, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; **'Mine Elect'** which means **My Chosen One!** In whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment (justice) to the Gentiles.
2. **"Mine Elect"** in Hebrew is *Bechīrī* = *means set apart for a definite purpose. This was spoken By Father God over Jesus—the Elect in Luke 3:22 (His Baptism) and Luke 9:35 (His Transfiguration). God calls Jesus "My Son."*
3. *Mount of Transfiguration witnessed to by Peter in 2 Peter 1:16-18 NIV "For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."*
4. *"As he was praying the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightening. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when Luke 9:29-32*
5. Jesus entered into the glory in which he would reign while he was on the Mount of Transfiguration. This act constituted a typical manifestation of the king coming into his kingdom. In Matthew 16:28 and Luke 9:27 Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see (the Son of Man) coming in his kingdom. Luke says, will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." It was this transfiguration He spoke of. Recorded in Matthew 17:1-9, Luke 9:28-36 and Mark 9:2-13.
6. Mount of Transfiguration shows us that He had passed into a higher state of existence, his body apparently assuming the properties of the Resurrection body. We see **His Glory** on the Mount of Transfiguration. **His eternal state of glory** which He speaks on in John 17.

God used the four Gospels to Present His Son:

JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOSPEL PERSONIFIED!

1. *Matthew: Presents the Promised Messiah—The King of Israel*

SERVANT SON AND SON OF GOD

Using the acrostic **J.E.S.U.S**, we'll discover His human and His Godly Characteristics.

JESUS THE MAN

J.UDAH'S SON

E.LECT ONE

S.SERVANT SON

U. _____

S. _____

JESUS THE LORD

J.USTICE OF GOD

E.TERNAL ONE

S.ON OF GOD

U. _____

S. _____

**We will discover that Jesus is as a man,
'The Servant Son' and as God he is 'The Son of God'**

God stepped down from His throne and wrapped Himself in flesh. He became a man to pay the price of sin on the cross of Calvary, which is justice and mercy played out hand-in-hand.

If Father God were to write us a letter today, perhaps He would tell us something like this about His Only Son, "I so loved the world that I sent My ONLY SON—whosoever will believe on Him, shall not have to pay the price of sin, which is eternal death and damnation, but shall live eternally with My Son in My House. My house is enormous because it is My Heart and through My Beloved Son, an eternal place has been made for those who would receive My Son as their Lord and Savior.

I did not send My ONLY SON to condemn the world. That had already been accomplished through Adam's fall to the prince of the air. Satan is the accuser of mankind and the one condemning mankind to eternal damnation. Adam designed as a perfect human possessing dominion and subduing all things created on earth fell by greed. He took that one thing which he had been denied and in an instant the 'wage of taking what is only God's' cost him far more than he could ever pay.

"And (I), The LORD God, commanded the man (Adam) saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die."

Now, Adam and all of his children and all generations of mankind to come have the same irreversible debt and with each generation the compiling interest accrued to the highest level of human depravity such as the earth had ever witnessed. My heart filled with pain such as a human cannot comprehend even if I were to try. In My sickness of heart, I declared that I regretted ever making mankind.

I had one righteous man on the earth, Noah. I gave Noah very strict orders to build an ark and to take upon it every animal one after each of his kind, both a male and a female. I insisted that when ready I would flood the entire earth and destroy all of mankind except for Noah, his wife, and his three sons

and their wives. I told Noah through him, I would start a new nation of people. You can read the more of the story in one of my Works, called "The Word of God---frequently called 'The Bible.'

Your generation is not any less wicked in fact more so than that generation of my servant Noah. Almost two thousand years ago, My Son advised that so it would be in the beginning of the preparatory time of His second coming to retrieve His Church; the established Kingdom of God as it is on earth. My Son's words were my words when He spoke them privately to His disciples. He had promised them that even though He would leave them for a season, He would come to earth a second time. Therefore, they asked Him what shall be the sign of His (second) coming?

*My Son told them that day, "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things **must happen** but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:4-14)*

Today, though, I'd like you to learn more about MY ONLY BEGOTTEN SERVANT- SON. Before He stepped down from His throne and dressed Himself in flesh to be upon the earth not only among mankind but as a man Himself, He was "God the Word." Once He came to the earth many have known Him or about Him only as 'Jesus Christ.' He is My Beloved Son and He is My Servant. Far greater than that and above all things for you and others is that He is THE SAVIOR!"—Signed God Almighty

MY SERVANT:

"Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, my **chosen [elect] one** in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring **justice** to the nations. The scepter will not depart from **Judah**, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. For unto us a child is born, to us a **son is given**, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. I the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. Of the greatness of His government and peace **there will be no end**. This is **My Son** whom I have chosen, listen to Him. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." Isaiah 42:1, Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 42:6-7; Luke 9:35_(b) and Isaiah 9:7

Isaiah 49:5-7 "And, now, the LORD says---He who formed me in the womb to be **His servant** to bring Jacob (Israel) back to Him and gather Israel to Himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been My strength---He says: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the

tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make **you a light for the Gentiles** that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.’ This is what the LORD says---The Redeemer the Holy One of Israel---**to Him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the Servant of rulers;** ‘Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.”

Jesus the Suffering Servant:

“See, My Servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him---his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness---so He will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of Him. For what they were not told they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held Him in low esteem.” Isaiah 52:13-15 and Isaiah 53:1-3.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:

SON OF GOD:

Luke 1:35
Colossians 1:15-20
Mark 14:61
John 5:18
John 10:33
Philippians 2:6
John 10:33
John 17:22

SERVANT SON:

Matthew 26:39
John 4:34
John 6:38
Matthew 5:17
Luke 19:10
John 10:10 and John 10:28
Mark 10:45
Hebrews 2:14 and 1 John 3:8

1 Corinthians 15:45-47

“The people of Israel, theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced **the human ancestry of the Messiah**, who is God over all, forever praised!” HOWEVER there were those teaching false doctrine. Paul wrote to Timothy advising him, “As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work, which is by faith.” Amen. Romans 9:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:3-4

SON OF DAVID: (The Lineage God’s prophets said the Messiah would come from)

Luke 3:23 “Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of **Joseph, the son of Heli...**”HOWEVER Matthew’s genealogy doesn’t support Luke’s. Matthew 1:1, 16, “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of

*Abraham...and **Jacob the father of Joseph** the husband of Mary, and was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah."*

JESUS SAID TO THE DISCIPLES AND ALSO TO US: LUKE 24:44 "Jesus said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me **in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.**" **WE MUST READ AND ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

James 1:5 and 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

1. A person not familiar with the records and the policy of the Jewish culture in such matters of genealogy would argue that the Bible is not in agreement with Jesus' pedigree because of this apparent disagreement of who Joseph's father is, Heli or Jacob. From Heli back to David we have a completely different line from what Matthew tells us. Is this a contradiction in the Bible?
2. God saw to it that after the fall of Jerusalem, the Jews, in order to keep before their people the great teachings of the past, combined many things in a series of volumes called "The Talmud," and the orthodox Jews give far more attention to the study of the Talmud than they do the Old Testament. It is written in the Talmud that: "Jesus was the illegitimate son of **Mary of Bethlehem, the daughter of Heli.** Matthew's faith assignment in the genealogy accounting was that of Joseph's and Luke's was that of Mary's.
3. **God preserved** the records to clear up the mystery in the Bible—through the records of those who did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Their thoughts were by giving this note they would discredit Jesus as the Messiah. Most women's genealogies were not written in any records and you can see this also in the Biblical genealogies as well.
4. **Heli is the father of Mary** and according to Jewish culture and ours as well, when a man marries a woman and a woman marries a man, their father and mother become the father and mother (in-law) to each. In Israel when a man married a maiden of a certain family, her father and mother were recognized as his father and mother—"in-law."
5. Through Joseph's genealogy, Jesus is the legal heir to the throne of David—Had circumstances been different, Joseph would not have been Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth, but he would have been Joseph, the King of the Jews. Jesus is KING OF THE JEWS AND SON OF DAVID THROUGH JOSEPH'S LINEAGE.
6. The blood of Joseph did not run through Jesus' veins. According to all the prophets the coming Messiah Himself is to actually come through David's line. He is to be the Son of the house of David. He is called David's Son. Luke shows that this too was fulfilled when we find that Heli, the father of Mary, came from a Davidic line, but the line she came through was different than that of Joseph's. Her line came through a different son of David. Heli was a lineal descendant of David's son, Nathan.
7. The blood of David flowed in Mary's veins. Therefore, when our Lord Jesus Christ was placed through the Holy Spirit into the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her, he was biologically in the line of David being considered according to Jewish culture a son of David. He is the ONE that would reign forever on DAVID'S THRONE over all the earth, as the prophets spoke!
8. Revelation 22:16 Jesus is "The Root and Offspring of David."
9. At His Baptism and at His Transfiguration—Father God called Jesus HIS SON!

The Importance of Messianic Genealogy

By Wayne Jackson

There is no question but that the Old Testament contains ample prophetic testimony regarding the coming, and the identification of, the Messiah. Some scholars have argued there are more than 300 of these prophecies.

Among these are a number that foretell the genealogical lineage of Jesus, as such pertained to David, Israel's greatest king (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 89:3-4; 110:1; Isaiah 9:7; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:11). The Savior is referred to as the "son [offspring] of David" more than a dozen times in the New Testament. Both Matthew and Luke trace the genealogy of Christ through David—the former legally, through Joseph; the latter biologically, via Mary. This is clear evidence that the lineage of our Lord was employed as a powerful argument for the identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of messianic prophecy.

At the time of the Lord's birth, ample genealogical evidence was available to check a Hebrew's historical background. Such would be crucial in determining whether Christ had the necessary "genealogical pedigree" to establish his ancestry. If these records were not available, any attempt to argue for the Lord's messiahship on the ground of Old Testament prophecy—at least pertaining to his ancestry—falls flat. The fact is, however, those genealogical records substantially vanished when the Romans slaughtered and/or dispersed the Hebrew populace in A.D. 70.

Accordingly, no modern Jew could possibly argue that he is the promised Messiah, based upon the prophecies cited above, since he would be unable to establish his lineage from David.

The McClintock & Strong *Cyclopedia* is quite possibly the most thorough Bible encyclopedia ever published. It took twenty years to produce and contains seventeen million words packed into 12 large volumes, with scores of scholars involved in the project. Therein the following statement is made.

"The [Hebrew] Rabbis affirm that after the [Babylonian] Captivity the Jews were most careful in keeping their pedigrees (Babyl. Gemar. Gloss. fol. xiv, 2). Since, however, the period of their destruction as a nation by the Romans, all their tables of descent seem to be lost, and now they are utterly unable to trace the pedigree of any one who might lay claim to be their promised Messiah" (3.771; emp.WJ).

Consider the following evidence.

1. The book of Genesis alone, which contains Moses' written record (cf. John 5:46-47), contains at least a dozen genealogies. Add to these the records in Chronicles, along with those from post-exilic days recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the lists of names are profuse. No informed person would contend that tribal lineages were never recorded in written form.
2. When Luke, an "unsurpassed" historian according to Sir William Ramsay (81), wrote his Gospel account, he recorded a genealogical catalog reaching from Christ back to Adam. Where did he obtain his information? He obviously did not interview the ancients personally! Clearly, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he consulted written documents in existence then (cf. 1:3).

The Purpose of Genealogies

R.K. Harrison observed that: “Records of descent were an extremely important part of Hebrew tradition from the very beginning...” (Bromiley, 2.425). Noted scholar Joachim Jeremias has discussed at length the necessity of preserving the genealogical heritage of the post-exile Jews. Note the following.

1. In view of a special lineage that Jehovah had chosen, through whom the promised Messiah would descend, the Hebrews were prohibited from contracting marriages with Gentiles (Deuteronomy 7:1-3; Ezra 10:2)—though there were rare exceptions, e.g., Ruth, Rahab and Bathsheba. Due to Israel’s dispersal among the nations, Jews who made pilgrimages back to Jerusalem, and wished to marry, were “required to have the genealogy of their future wife checked according to [the] requirements” (69). How could this be if no written records were available?
2. Under the Old Testament law, the offices of the priests and Levites were hereditary. This position could be obtained in no other way than by inheritance. It was extremely important, therefore, that the “purity of the line” remain intact. Accordingly, “great care was taken in tracing genealogy.” “[I]f a priest could not prove his legitimate descent, he lost his rights to priestly office, both for himself and for his descendants, and [also] to priestly revenues” (214). Induction into the priesthood was not a matter of “orality” alone!
3. During the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn, certain families of Hebrew nobility were granted the privilege of “carrying wood to the Temple on certain days; this fact shows that the genealogical tradition was well preserved among the lay nobility.” An Israelite woman “who wished to marry into a priest’s family had to produce her genealogy for five generations (p. 216; M. Kidd. iv.4)...” (Jeremias, 276).

Property Rights

When the Hebrews conquered the territory on the eastern side of the Jordan River, and then likewise that between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, by divine edict they were assigned various tribal allotments. Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan (Numbers 32). After the initial victories to the west, Judah, Ephraim, and the other half-tribe of Manasseh were given their regions (Joshua 15-17). Finally, after considerable delay, the remaining tribes, by “lot,” received their portions of the land (Joshua 18-19), with the Levites receiving priestly cities.

Years passed and a gradual apostasy from the faith by Israel resulted. As a divine judgment the entire land eventually was ravaged by foreigners. Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of “Israel.” According to Assyrian records, 27,290 souls were taken into captivity—never to return as a body of people. “Judah,” in the south, progressively degenerated spiritually until finally, after three invasions between 606-536 B.C., some 70,000 Hebrews were taken to Babylon as captives, where they were to remain for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:8-11).

Finally, beginning with the reign of Cyrus the Persian (who had conquered Babylon), the Jews, some 125,000 strong by then, were permitted to return to Canaan. Many of their ancestors were now gone—into Assyria, Egypt, and various other places. In the return to Canaan, the problem was this: who should inherit what land assignment? How could any Jew prove his “right” to a certain property inheritance? Was such to be accomplished by verbal jousting? Did one person’s “say so” trump another’s contention? How might a Jew prove his right to settle in a certain tribal territory—if there were no genealogical documents to establish his ancestral history?

UTTERANCE OF GOD AND UTTERMOST GOD

Read Psalm 19

“Father God spoke in parables in the Old Testaments as well as in the New Testaments. God used proverbs, parables, stories and riddles to explain Himself. See Zech. Chapter 11---He prophesied the fall of Israel by describing Himself holding two staffs in His hands for a very long time, but then He would do something unspeakable with those staffs---the prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. See Ezekiel Chapter 17, whereas He prophesied the fall of Israel to Babylon, which was fulfilled---read Daniel.”

Father God described Himself in many ways in the Word, however, not until Jesus Christ came—did mankind get the real unveiling of who The Father really was.”

Using the acrostic **J.E.S.U.S**, we’ll discover His human and His Godly Characteristics.

**We will discover that Jesus is as a man,
‘The Utterance of God’ and as God, ‘The Uttermost God’**

JESUS THE MAN

J.UDAH’S SON

E.LECT ONE

S.ERVANT SON

U.TTERANCE OF GOD

S. _____

JESUS THE LORD

J.USTICE OF GOD

E.TERNAL ONE

S.ON OF GOD

U.TTERMOST GOD

S. _____

Matthew 13:34-35 NIV *“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open my mouth in parables, **I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.**”*

Isaiah 55:11 NIV *“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

Revelation 22:16 NIV *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star.”*

According to Webster the definition of Utterance is as follows:

UT=OUT

UTTERANCE: A noun: 1. The act of uttering 2. The power or style of speaking. 3. That which is uttered. 4. **Utter** means to pass, to speak or express audibly, as in words or thoughts, to express in any way—so as to make known—DIVULGE. 5. Complete or total. 6. Absolute. 7. Expression. Jesus Christ was the **UTTERANCE** of God the Father, God the Word, and God the Holy Spirit.

1. Matthew 13:34-35 NIV *“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open my mouth in parables, **I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.**”*
2. God says in Psalm 78:1-2 NIV *“My people, hear my teachings; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; **I will utter hidden things, things from old.**”*
3. Proverbs 1:5-6 NIV *“Let the wise listen and add to their learning, **and let the discerning get guidance**—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.”*
4. Ezekiel 17:1-2 God uses parables even in the Old Testament as an expressive way to teach so that even the uneducated of any generation can understand. *“The word of the Lord came to me; ‘Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell it to the Israelites as a parable.”*
5. Matthew 13:10-11, 16-17 NIV *“The disciples came to him and asked, ‘Why do you speak to the people in parables? He replied, ‘Because the **knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven** has been given to you, but not to them.’ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, **many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.**”*
6. John 14:10 NASB *“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in me does His works.”*

Recommended Reading Matthew 13:1-23

GETTING BACK TO DR. LUKE’S REPORT:

Jesus had sent the 72 out two by two into every town and place where he was about to go. Heal the sick and tell them the Kingdom of God has come near you. Whoever listens to you listens to me; whosoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who **sent me**. When the 72 returned they were filled with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

Luke 10:21-24 LET’S READ THIS TOGETHER—See what Jesus said about His Word---They will not pass away but be ETERNAL—Luke 21:33.

1. **Luke 16:17**
2. **Isaiah 40:8**
3. **Matthew 24:35**

Recommended reading Luke 10:1-24

John 1:1-2 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”*

COMMENTARY:¹

DEUTERONOMY 8:3

“He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

ISAIAH 55:10-11

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

The life – Jesus had just been telling His disciples about His impending death, and now He was claiming to be the source of all life. In John 10:17-18, Jesus declared that He was going to lay down His life for His sheep, and then take it back again. He spoke of His authority over life and death as being granted to Him by the Father. In John 14:19, He gave the promise that “because I live, you also will live.” The deliverance He was about to provide was not a political or social deliverance (which most of the Jews were seeking), but a true deliverance from a life of bondage to sin and death to a life of freedom in eternity.

In these words, Jesus was declaring Himself the great “I Am,” the only path to righteousness, the only true measure of righteousness, and the source of both physical and spiritual life. He was staking His claim as the very God of Creation, the Lord who blessed Abraham, and the Holy One who inhabits eternity. He did this so the disciples would be able to face the dark days ahead and carry on the mission of declaring the gospel to the world. Of course, we know from Scripture that they still didn't understand, and it took several visits from their risen Lord to shake them out of their disbelief. Once they understood the truth of His words, they became changed people, and the world has never been the same.

So how do we follow Him today? The same way the disciples did long ago. They heard the words of Jesus and believed them. They took His words and obeyed them. They confessed their sins to Jesus as their Lord and God. They believed that He died to take the punishment of their sins and rose from the dead to give them new life. They followed His example and command to tell others the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgment. When we follow Him in “the way,” we can be assured of following Him all the way to Heaven.

Lord of heaven and earth: A title for God emphasizing his sovereignty.

I am – In the Greek language, “I am” is a very intense way of referring to oneself. It would be comparable to saying, “I myself, and only I, am.”

John 14:6---Jesus said, I am the Way, I am the Truth, and I am the Life...”

John 8:58--- Jesus said “Truly, truly I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” The Jews clearly understood Jesus to be calling Himself God because they took up stones to stone Him for committing blasphemy in equating Himself with God.

John 18:4-6 When the soldiers came seeking Jesus in the garden the night before His crucifixion, He told them “I am he” and His words were so powerful that the soldiers fell to the ground. These words reflect the very name

of God in Hebrew, Yahweh, which means “to be” or “the self-existing one.” It is the name of power and authority, and Jesus claimed it as His own.

End of Commentary

According to Webster the definition of UTTERMOST is as follows:

UTTERMOST: An adjective and/or a noun—same as **utmost**. This is a double superlative which means most extreme, most distant, most farthest, most highest, to be the greatest degree of anything, to be the most that is possible.

1. Matthew 11:25-27 NIV *“At that time Jesus said, ‘I praise you, Father, **Lord of heaven and earth**, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. **Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.** All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son **and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**”*
2. Luke 10:21 NIV *“At that time Jesus full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, ‘I praise you, Father, **Lord of heaven and earth**, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. **Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.**”*

Lord of heaven and earth: Father God is only called this three times in the Bible, Matthew 11:25, Luke 10:21, and Acts 17:24 *“The God who made the world and everything in it is the **Lord of heaven and earth** and does not live in temples built by human hands.”*

Revelation 22:12-13 NIV *“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”*

Jesus Christ **Uttered the Most** above all others ABOUT GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE SON OF GOD, THE SON OF MAN, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, PAST EVENTS, PRESENT EVENTS, AND FUTURE EVENTS---HE UTTERED AS THE UTTERANCE OF GOD AND HE IS THE UTTERMOST GOD!

WORD: ²

1. Greek **LOGOS** (Aramaic *Memra*, used as a designation of God in the Targums, that is, Aramaic translation of the O.T.). The Greek word means:
 - a. A thought or concept
 - b. The expression or utterance of that thought
2. As a designation of Christ, therefore, *Logos* is peculiarly suitable because:

- a. In Christ are embodied all the treasures of the divine wisdom, the collective thought of God. [1 Cor. 1:24; Eph. 3:10-11; Col. 2:2-3]
- b. He is from eternity, but especially in His incarnation, ***the utterance of expression the Person and Thought of Deity.*** [John 1:3-9; 9; 14-18; 14:9-11; Col. 2:9] In the Beginning, Person, and Work of Christ, Deity is expressed. [John 14:8-9 AND 1 John 1:1-2]

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:

UTTERANCE OF GOD:

JOHN 3:34; 4:18-19; 4:32, 4:36, 4:43; 14:10
 MATTHEW 11:25-27; 13:34-35; 13:10-11 & 16-17
 LUKE 10:1-24
 1 CORINTHIANS 1:24
 PSALM 37:27-31; 78:1-2
 JEREMIAH 10:10-13
 COLOSSIANS 1:15; 1:18-19; 2:2-3
 EPHESIANS 3:10-11
 1 JOHN 1:1-3
 JOHN 5:25-29; 30-47
 PROVERBS 1:5-6
 REVELATION 1:5; 1:7; 1:17-18; 22:16

UTTERMOST GOD:

JOHN 4:34; 4:41; 5:24
 MATTHEW 11:25-27
 LUKE 10:1-24
 JOHN 1:1
 JOHN 1:14; 1:16-18
 ROMANS 11:36
 COLOSSIANS 1:15-17
 JOHN 14:8-9
 JOHN 1:18, JOHN 6:46
 JOHN 10:29-30
 PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8
 REVELATION 1:8; 1:17; 22:12-13

FIND THE SCRIPTURES OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DURING YOUR HOME STUDY:

- Jesus is called Lord of Lords-----
- Jesus is called King of Kings-----
- Jesus is called Name Above ALL Names-----
- Jesus is the same today, as yesterday, and shall be tomorrow-----
- Jesus is God the Word-----
- All things were created through Jesus-----
- If you have seen Jesus you have seen the Father-----
- If you have heard Jesus you have heard the Father-----
- The Father and Me are One-----
- I am in the Father and the Father is in me-----

SACRIFICIAL LAMB AND SAVIOR

Psalm 98

We will discover that Jesus is as a man, ‘The Sacrificial Lamb of God’ and ‘The Savior’ as God’

Using the acrostic **J.E.S.U.S**, we’ll discover His human and His Godly Characteristics.

JESUS THE MAN
J.UDAH’S SON
E.LECT ONE
S.ERVANT SON
U.TTERANCE OF GOD
S.ACRIFICIAL LAMB

JESUS THE LORD
J.USTICE OF GOD
E.TERNAL ONE
S.ON OF GOD
U.TTERMOST GOD
S.AVIOR

Each Gospel links the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to one of the commanded offerings as laid out by God through Moses in Leviticus chapters 1 through 5.

Jesus Christ the “Perfect Man—The Son of Man.”

Quick Sacrificial Review of how the Holy Spirit had them presented in the four Gospels:

1. **Trespassing Offering** (book of Matthew). Man’s sins trespassed against God. The death of Christ cancels the sins committed against God and man.
2. **Sin Offering** (book of Mark) Christ died for what we are and He died for what we have done.
3. **Burnt Offering** (book of John) Christ’s dying glorified God. It was Christ Jesus’ ‘Voluntary Act of Worship.’
4. **Peace Offering** (book of Luke) Peace is made by the shedding of the blood of a Lamb. Therefore, Christ Jesus made the ‘final’ peace between God and man by the shedding of His blood on the cross.

Let’s explore the “Peace Offering” a little farther. The Peace Offering is also called the ‘Fellowship Offering.’ It is meant to bring peace and wholeness ‘Shalom’ between man and God as well as a person’s internal peace. Therefore, Luke presents Jesus Christ as the Sacrificial Lamb that bridges the gap between God and man which had been caused by the fall of man through Adam and Eve. Through Jesus Christ---The Perfect Man whom was sacrificed for you and for me, we now have a peaceful fellowship (relationship) with God!

By the time Jesus Christ comes, the High Priest order is out of alignment but yet being practiced and sacrificing is still taking place to the best of abilities perhaps due to the years of exile where much was lost. Much had been lost in the holiness of the Priesthood as a whole under the iron-hand of the Roman oppression and their ancestor’s seventy years of captivity as well as the previous wars and revolt.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:

SACRIFICIAL LAMB:

ISAIAH CHAPTER 53
GENESIS 22:8
MARK 10:45
JOHN 1:29, 1:36
1COR. 5:7
ROMANS 3:25-26
HEBREWS 9:13-14, 9: 24-27
HEBREWS 7:26-28
1 PETER 1:18-19
REVELATION 5:6-13
REVELATION 6:9-17, 13:8

SAVIOR/SALVATION:

ISAIAH 52:10
PSALM 67:2
MATT 1:21
LUKE 2:11, 2:30
LUKE 3:6
JOHN 3:17
HEBREWS 9:11-12
1 PETER 1:20-21
1 JOHN 4:14
PSALM CHAPTER 98

Jesus said, *“The reason My Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father.”* John 10:17-18

Abraham was tested in Genesis 22---entire chapter---His faith tested as to giving his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, however, we discover that was not God’s intent, He provides the lamb---it was not a lamb then, but it would be, Jesus Christ—He gave a ram (substitute).

Luke 7:16 ‘God has come to help His people.’

Luke 1:68 ‘God has visited and redeemed His people’---11:20 ‘No doubt the kingdom of God has come upon you.’

Zachariah filled with the Holy Ghost prophesied---Luke 1:67-79

Luke 12:49-50 Jesus told them ‘How I wish it were already done, but I have a baptism to be baptized with—meaning His crucifixion.’

JESUS—Gentle and kind, thoughtful and loving, caring and sparing, forgiving and peaceful and these are but a few of His attributes that makes it easy to LOVE Him. Many have written songs about Him and they have become famous and some pen poems of His love and His majesty. Others stand behind pulpits on Sunday morning and share His unfailing love and try to explain His wonderfulness. Teachers with the little ones sing the song with them that Jesus loves all the little children of the world as they look at an ever-changing world globe. Youth pastors spend hours online with students trying to convince them their current difficult situation is temporary and they’ll come through it fine just hold tight to the True Vine. Mommy’s sing Jesus lullabies to their sick infants in the middle of the night. **Yes, it is true JESUS IS LOVED!**

Adult children hum “Amazing Grace” and “Silent Night” into the ears of their frail and failing elderly parents. Department stores and grocery stores and downtown megaphones sing about His arrival in a manger in a town called Bethlehem. Americans sing “America the Beautiful” and how

God shed His grace on us. Some sing “Up from the Grave He Arose---A Mighty triumph over His foes!” Some sing, “I just saw Jesus,” remembering what Mary of Magdalene said when she rushed to the others after seeing Jesus in the Garden. **Yes, it is true JESUS IS LOVED!**

People of all sorts pray to Him asking that He heal their loved one. Pastors and clergy are called in the day or the night to come to the side of a dying beloved saint or oftentimes one that the requesting party does not know if there is belief. We draw near to Jesus for comfort and for the consoling that none other can give us. Oftentimes this is the way people are introduced to Him for the very first time in the midst of their crisis. It is not that they have not heard of Him, but they have yet to meet Him.

We all have many friends and extended family that tell us often about different people in their life, some positive and some negative. Through the years we have heard often about Aunt so-and-so, we know of her through our friend, but we do not know her. Then one day we attend a social gathering at our friend’s house and finally we meet this aunt that we have either come to like or distain. How we receive the aunt is how she has been represented to us through our friend that does know her. Have you ever been shocked that when you finally meet somebody after being prepared through conversations with another that they are not at all as you expected them to be?

This is the same with Jesus Christ and how we converse about Him with others. Many of us talk about Him with every person as if they, too, know Him. We use language with Christian words such as atonement and redeemer. We often call Him the Lion of Judah and that He is Justice. We speak of Him being the Elect One and being Eternal and that He is the Alpha and the Omega and the Beginning and the End. We retell the story of Him washing the feet of His disciples shortly before He was crucified because He came to be a Servant to All! Often in our excitement we exclaim of His being the Son of God and nobody could figure it out, but that the demons knew it immediately upon seeing Him. We use ideas such as the fact that He was and is the Word of God whom became Flesh and dwelt among us and at the same time that He was a man named Jesus, he was also God. The God of Gods and the Uttermost God and that no god has been before Him and none shall come after Him and yet as a man, he was the utterance (expression) of God the Father. At Easter time or some prefer to call it Resurrection Sunday the pastors and teachers call Him the Sacrificial Lamb our Savior. He is the Savior of the World who came so that for whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. All the time we are talking about this AMAZING Lord of Lords and King of Kings of ours, we suppose the listeners know Him.

Tell me how is it that we are to truly know this Man-God that came to this earth and freely gave His life for us. Who is that one person that would die as a righteous man for the unrighteous world that he created and yet they rejected him? How is a person of such small means such as we are to explain this Man to those in our midst? We barely comprehend Him enough for ourselves. Romans 5: 7-9 *“7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were*

still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

The Holy Word tells us that person was and is Christ and that He died for us demonstrating the Love of Father God for us! Why does God love us? What is in it for God to love human beings? We are so unlovable in so many ways. We truly fall short not only of the Glory of God but of the glory of people. Where did this God come up with such an ODD idea to give Himself to redeem us? Why should He pay the price for us when we forfeited what we already had in the "Garden of Eden?" Why should He do all the work and take all the pain to reconcile us back unto Him when clearly we are undeserving in every way?

There was no choice Sin Separates Us from God

Isaiah 59: 1-3, "1Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 2But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. 3For your hands are defiled with blood And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue mutters wickedness...." BUT ROMANS 5 TELLS US JESUS BRIDGED US BACK TO GOD THE FATHER AND WE ARE NO LONGER SEPARATED FROM GOD BECAUSE JESUS HAS RECONCILED US AND OUR DIFFERENCES UNTO THE FATHER AND THROUGH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS WE ARE REDEEMED AND AT PEACE WITH GOD!

The truth is many do not know Him and that includes many sitting in the Church today. They know about Him and they accepted His invitation to His life but they are not yet in an 'I know that Guy,' type of a relationship. They are still on the outside looking in through the glass fearfully wanting to get to know Him. Something is holding them back and as they struggle to discover what that is they hunger for this One that they met. Imagine Jesus on social media and how it may seem to a person who accepted His friend request.

They have been waiting for Him to send them a Message, however He has not. In the meantime they googled Him and found out more amazing facts about Him. How, though, they wonder can they believe what they have read. The Internet is infested with people pretending to be who and what they are not. Many thieves shamefully using the name of Jesus use the Internet and social media to make up manipulative stories about their hard-luck to extort others and receive money.

Therefore, it is difficult when a person meets Jesus for the first time and accepted His friend request when He never sends a message afterward to believe what they have heard about Him is true. His timeline is the busiest on earth and His name is mentioned by far at least a billion times a day so He shows up on billions of people's social media pages in their timelines continuously. People are so interested in Him that they share His 'status—postings' constantly. He is listed as being one of those with the posting party almost a million times an hour. He is quoted over and over on every social media engine there is on the Internet today. His pictures are circulated thousands of times per minute. His majestic artwork caught by billions of cameras at sunrises and

sunsets overlooking seas and oceans and lakes and rivers and mountaintops and valleys to name a few are posted at a higher rate of speed than light itself and sound travel or so it seems.

Defining a social media friendship whereas a person accepts the request because of mutual friends or because another suggested you like that person and offer them a social media friendship. Therein lays the problem with Jesus' relationship with humans. He is not into social—media---friendships. Everybody is talking about Him online when they could have been talking to Him. Many do not talk to Him because they are waiting for Him to make the first message-contact. He says people have to make the first move and send Him the first message and then He shall respond. "Draw close to Him and He will draw close to you." [Paraphrased] James 4:8 Furthermore, "For those who," He says, "will diligently seek Him, He shall reward them for doing so." Hebrews 11:6

To me a social media friendship is like kissing somebody that has cellophane wrapped around their head and over their lips a few hundred times. A relationship that exists through a keyboard and timeless-matter and space-filled emptiness is doomed for failure. Where human thoughts and feelings are sterilized and diluted through fiber optic matter and perverted through universal dust particles misunderstandings wait. Some call me old-fashion and that I take as a compliment because I am 'fashionably-old.' Another observation I make with a heavy heart is that I personally have been involved in relationships that started by human-interaction over meals and time together and ministering together. Friends I made and relationships built on solid ground. Distance caused us to reduce our times together over the phone and then as time developed and texting, emailing, and social media messaging became available our conversations reduced to lifeless contacting until they dwindled to nothingness. I learned the hard way about fostering a relationship because if I do not attend to it with my personal touch, it will become stagnate and then it will die. I wish to resurrect some of these friendships but now the work will be all on me as it should be and the time will be a gift worth giving to embrace these beloveds' once again in my arms. God help me!

I understand that time moves and with it change comes, however, I am affirmed by God that the human heart never changes. It is like His, everlasting and eternal in its ability to love and to hate to be joyful and to be sorrowful. Jesus said it is not what goes into a man or a woman that defines them but what comes out of their heart. It is the touch of a human hand that solidifies the words written or spoken one to another. It is a gesture or the eyes or the language of the body's movement that defines the moment of interaction that cannot be replaced.

This is the same with Jesus Christ. He says "Oh taste and see that the Lord is Good..." Psalm 34:8-14—"Come unto Me all those who are heavy weary..." Matthew 11:28-30 "Come let us reason together..." Isaiah 1:18

LET'S SEE JESUS TOGETHER PERHAPS FOR SOME FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!

Jesus touched the unclean leper Luke: 5:12-16

Jesus touched the dead boy in a coffin: Luke 7:11-17

Jesus touched the blind man with his hands: John 9:1-12 and John 9:35-38

Jesus touched the deaf man's ears: Matthew 7:31-37

Jesus took children into His arms: Mark 10:13-16

Jesus wept when He saw their pain: John 11:33-37

Jesus looked at the young rich ruler and loved him: Mark 10:17-22

John 10:18 "No one takes Jesus' life, He said, He freely gives it and He freely picks it up again."

From just these few verses we can discover that Jesus Christ is the same today as He was yesterday and shall be forever physically involved with us. He is not so far off that He cannot be reached. If you are waiting for a Message from Jesus to show up on your search engine or on your social media page, I dare say, you only need to think about the fact that such a thing exists. For no idea or no thought of a human being is above that of His Maker. No thought or no idea or innovation has not been thought of that had not been before in the past. The Lord says that all things have been that are now and that nothing under the Sun is new nor shall it be. He says all things He makes accountable by demanding the past to come forth into the future.

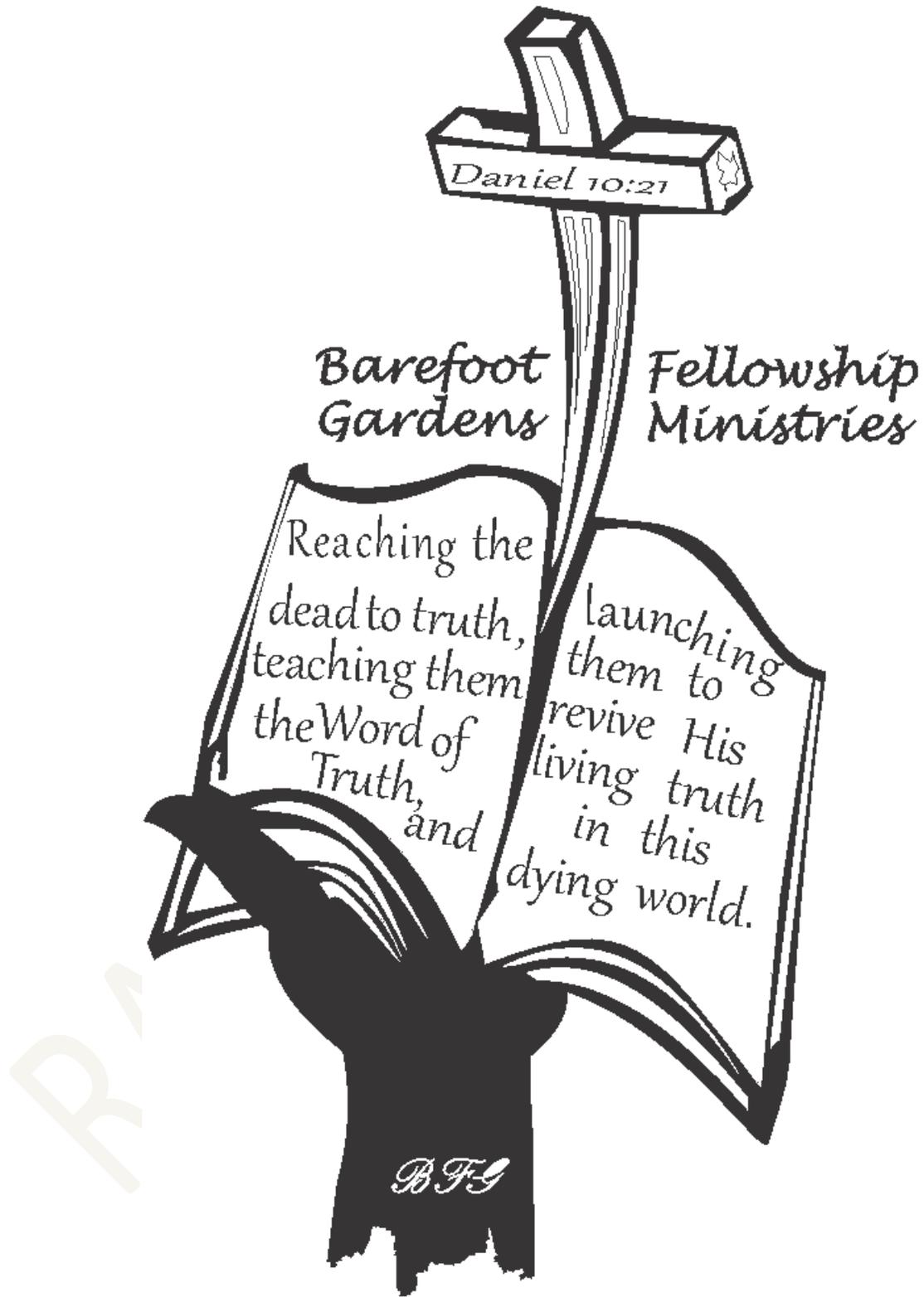
Therefore, if you have been looking for Him online, you have found Him. However, you shall not get to know Him until you spend quiet time alone with Him. He is the Word of God who became Flesh. He is still here with us and He is still conversing with us all the time. Pick Him up today "Holy Word," and start by going to the Gospels of Jesus Christ---These are His conversations and His movements as much as they were then, they still are today. He is NEVER changing. I invite you to send Him the first message and say, "Hello, Jesus, my name is_____, I'd like to get to know you. Please help me to do so."

ROMANS 5: 1-17

Faith Brings Joy

5 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

RAB MINISTRIES



Don't take any money with you, nor a traveler's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road. Luke 10:4

