



The Book of Moses

Written by
Louwrens Erasmus

The Book of Moses

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I receive a small quarterly pension, but it does not cover our medical expenses for either one for a month. So if you find that what you read was as Hebrews put it milk doctrines, I enjoy a milkshake every now and then which you can pay R 40 for , or if you found some meat in the book I really like “biltong” or jerky as the Americans call it and the cost is around R150 for 500grams or R300 for a kilo. And maybe it can sustain me while writing and doing research at night. This is my normal most productive time as I also support my wife who had a bilateral mastectomy a couple of years ago but is still fighting PTSD.

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Watchmen Nee - The Normal Christian Church Life

Chip Brogden - Back to the Cross – Unpublished work

Enoch – from the CCEL website

PREAMBLE

Several years ago, just after I came to know the LORD, He gave me an instruction to write down everything that He was going to tell me. At first, I did not know what to do, as I was already writing down every sermon as well as keeping a journal for my quiet time. Later that Sunday, as I was preparing a fire for our usual Sunday lunch barbecue, or as we call it a braai, the LORD open a fountain inside of me that would grow over the next nine years to where it is today. The scripture I received from the LORD that day was Jeremiah 30 verse 2. *"Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book."*

Over those nine years, a lot happened in my life, but the LORD has always been faithful and spoke to me concerning Israel and their exodus of Egypt, and how this should serve as an example to us in committing our lives to the LORD. Eventually I decided in 2001 to take up fingers and start writing what you are reading. This was done firstly in Afrikaans, my first language, and translated or re written in English starting in 2003. Only after finishing the original book did I look again at Jeremiah 30 again. I must admit that I knew the contents of verse two, but only then found out that verse three dealt with a promise that the LORD would one day bring Israel back to the Promised Land, and that they would take possession of the land. The moment I saw this verse, I suddenly realized that the LORD is always faithful, as all the time He was dealing with me; he used Israel as an example. This is then also the way I will handle most questions, through using Israel as an example in answering the questions I had. This will provide us with a definitive answer on how to take possession of and keep possession of the Promised Land.

The name of the book stems from a custom we had at home where if you suddenly had to defend your answer, you had to provide scriptural reference. If you could not do it, you would use the saying that it is somewhere in the book of Moses, probably chapter 3 verse 3. I have adapted Moses slightly to fit in with what I believe the LORD is calling us to do today.

What is the subject matter of the book about? I will look at certain questions on becoming and staying a Christian, that I as a Christian have, and will try and answer them from the Bible. Not everyone is going to enjoy the answers from the Word, but I will look at the Word and what it has to say on the subject. I will use as a guide Acts 17 verses 11 and 12. *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, **and searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."*

We find in the New Testament that Paul also used Israel as an example. He writes as follows: *"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* (1Co 10:1-13) Here then follows the book of Moses.

The book is based on the promise the LORD made to Abraham that he would become the father of a multitude of nations and that in him every person will be blessed. For this I will examine every step of

the covenant that the LORD made with Abraham, how and what Jesus did to fulfil these steps for us to receive the righteousness of Jesus. This will allow us to walk in the footsteps of the Holy Spirit every day and be obedient to God the Father, and Jesus Christ our savior.

INTRODUCTION

The book is dedicated to Hettie, my wife, and our children, who all had to live through many of these articles with me. Your support is appreciated. A special word of gratitude goes to Hettie who had to spend hours and hours listening to each article, for her honest feedback and critique. All honor goes to my LORD and Savior, for the opportunity given to me to write this book, and for what He deposited inside of me.

Life can be very strange at times. Just as we think that we have all the answers to all the questions in life, we find that we still have years of questions to be answered. Fortunately for us we will not worry about these questions anymore when we are with Jesus in heaven, as He will then be our all in all. Only then will we understand everything.

But, what do we do while still on earth? Many times, we experience situations in our lives that for us seem inexplicable, or situations that we do not want to go through. In my own life this has happened many times. Now, while writing this section, I find myself in such a situation again.

The only sure thing is that the LORD is preparing us for what He wants us to do. This is most probably why He gave us the following verses in Matthew 5 from verse 3. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*

We also find a similar section in James chapter 1. *"2 ¶ My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

These parts may not mean anything to you today but know this that when we have questions that we cannot answer that the LORD will provide the answers. How do I know that? Experience. This book was written because of questions I had, with the answers I found in the Bible.

I will also look at some subjects like what the expected behavior of is a Christian when found that you are in rebellion against society. How do you handle it? Why do I behave like this? These are some of the questions I will try to answer, as well as how am I supposed to act like when I reach the Promised Land.

I would like to ask for your forgiveness if you find that I am still struggling with rejection, or that I might say something because of rebellion. I am still on the way. I still have things inside of me that hurt so much that I cannot write about it yet. Or maybe there are certain situations that I still must handle myself. Fortunately, I know that the LORD will use everyone that commits himself to being used.

What is my passion in life? That we will all do what the LORD wants us to do. That we will be obedient. I want for every person to have a close and real relationship with the LORD. Then it will not be necessary for us to live from Sunday to Sunday, just to struggle again on Monday with habits and customs that we know is not from the LORD. That we continuously act incorrectly, but that we can fall on our faces before a Living God, Jesus Christ and ask Him what He would like us to do. Remember we are His feet and His hands. We cannot expect Him to just wipe away all our problems. We must be like Him and live like Him. If it is necessary to support someone, let us share our own belongings with him or her. Do not just pray with the person. Provide for the need. Remember we are His hands and feet, His representatives.

We live in a time where we are all accustomed to instant food, instant solutions, instant banking, and a whole lot of other instant things. In our lives we also want instant answers from the LORD. We forget that scripture declares that a thousand years is like a day to the LORD. Remember, He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He has always been like it. Remember that Abraham and Sarah had to wait twenty-five years for Isaac, and this after the LORD himself told them that they would have a son.

Similarly, this book is not meant to be an instant answer to all your questions. All I want to achieve is to get you delving into the Word of God, to get your thoughts going, and to see what the Bible is. A well-known personality in South Africa, Louis Malherbe, used to call the Bible his Workshop Manual. How does one use a Workshop Manual? See this question answered in Moses 2 Verse 9.

A NEW THEOLOGY I BRING TO YOU

A new theology I bring to you. An age-old theology based on a covenant with Abraham, of Jesus and of righteousness. This may sound like a dichotomy, but please bear with me as I will try and explain this dilemma.

I have spent the last twenty or so years trying to find a theology that I believe is the real message of hope from the Bible. After an emergency operation and another follow up operation where cancer was found to be rampant, I had to ensure that I had to take a personal interest in where I will spend eternity. Today 22 years later, I believe I have found most of the answers I had in my own search for the truth that I could underwrite. Most of the answers I had to find myself, and others from various other types of churches. This has taken me from the typical Calvinist churches, to Pentecostal, charismatic, and even home churches. Some of these churches I attended as a member, some as a visitor, some as a pastor and yet others by visiting their websites.

I would like to add a very pertinent piece of information at this point in the book, and that is that I spent more than 30 years in the computer industry covering a wide range of functions, from programming to analysis, consulting as well as sales and marketing. This taught me from a young age that you had to find answers for problems mostly on your own, and that you had truly little influence from other people.

What did I find?

I believe in a LORD whose word is consistent throughout the ages. I believe in an age-old covenant with Abraham, the fulfilment in Jesus Christ His son who showed the way to a covenant of righteousness. I would like to give an answer here to a question that I believe most people do not understand. What I found was that there is a huge difference between a testament and a covenant. A testament defines what will happen after the death of the person in question, while a covenant is effective immediately once the people has reached agreement and both people complied with the requirements of the covenant. A testament cannot be changed or annulled, while a covenant can be ended by any one of the parties if the other party should break one or more of the requirements of the covenant.

The LORD took me on a trip through the Old Testament and that is one of the reasons you will find a lot of quotations from the Old Testament throughout this document. But there is a specific reason for this. Most times when Jesus spoke to people, He used parables to detail what His Kingdom looks like and these utterances were recorded for us in the New Testament. However, something that we hardly find mentioned in the Gospels, is what Jesus told His disciples about what Moses and the prophets of old said about Him, especially when they were alone. We find in Luke 24 three different references where Jesus refers to these times.

*“Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.” And He said to them, **“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.**”(Luke 24:24-27). “When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. **Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?”** (Luke 24:30-32). “Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, **that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**” **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”** (Luke 24:44-47)*

The final part that I would like to use concerning this, is what Paul wrote to the people of Corinth : *“Moreover, brothers, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened to them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.**” (1Co 10:1-11)*

The second portion come from 2 Corinthians 3: *“Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; **for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2Co 3:12-17)*

So, my argument is that to build a steadfast doctrine, we must start with the Old Covenant as basis, and then only will we have the proper understanding of the New Covenant. We cannot build our doctrines around the New Testament as we will be wrong as we will not understand the reason Jesus came to earth, and exactly what he came to do. We can then look at the way the Tabernacle was laid out as it was a replica of what Moses saw when the LORD showed him how to do it. We can then use this information to understand the book of Hebrews and see exactly what Jesus did when He died on the cross. This also spells out the sequence of how we enter the presence of the LORD as Jesus gave us the example. But we still must decide if that is the road we want to follow, or if we want to stay outside the temple, away from presence of the Father, Jesus Christ His son, and the Holy Spirit.

What does this covenant entail?

For me, we must start with Abraham, the father of all believers. We also must remember that Abraham had eight sons in total. The eldest was Ishmael, then Isaac, and later six more sons. *“Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.” (Gen 25:1-2)* The Bible teaches us about the life of the one son He had a special covenant with, Isaac. *“But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.” (Gen 17:21)* The Bible does not teach us anything about the lives of the other sons including Ishmael even though they were sons of Abraham.

Is Israel the only nation of the LORD? No. *“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And **you will be the father of a multitude of nations.**” No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; **For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.** “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and **I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.**” I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations **for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.** “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” God said further to Abraham, **“Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.” (Gen 17:4-9)***

Ephesians chapter 2 teaches the following: *“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of*

Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit". (Eph 2:11-22)

In Genesis 14 we learn of someone else. **"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all."** (Gen 14:18-20). So even before Isaac, there were peoples from other nations that served the LORD. Israel is given to us as an example as confirmed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 11. **"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."**

Here we find that the first covenant was celebrated with communion between Abraham and Melchizedek, where Melchizedek brought the wine and bread. If we look at the book of Hebrews in chapter 5 from verse 5 we find the following scripture: **"So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; just as He says also in another passage, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek".** (Heb 5:5-10)

What does this scripture mean? Melchizedek was a priest and was appointed by the LORD himself. He was not a priest appointed because of his heritage, and not related to Abraham. Jesus was appointed as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, in other words, by the Father himself. That is the reason he instituted communion again the night before He was crucified with wine and bread. He had to show the world he was not a priest according to the tradition of the Levites, but appointed again by the Father, and made King of God's people as Melchizedek was also a king.

But what did the covenant with Israel entail? The first point I want to emphasize is that there are always two sides to a covenant. There is a positive side telling us what the benefits are, and a negative side that tells us what the detrimental effects would be if we do not keep the rules governing the covenant. If we look at Deuteronomy chapter 30 we find the rules of both sides of the covenant: **"See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it."But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."** (Deut 30:15-20)

The last part of the passage is extremely important to me. I must choose to keep my side of the covenant, and then the LORD will keep His side. The ability to choose between right and wrong was

given to us and recorded for us in Genesis 3:22 ***"Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever".*** This confirms that because of Adam and Eve's sin, they knew what was right and what was wrong. So, my whole life is about choices I make, some that are beneficial to me and some detrimental.

Steps to follow in this covenant

The second point I want to investigate is the steps required in a covenant relationship. This is clearly described to us during the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Israel had to get to Canaan, the Promised Land, and they had to confirm all the steps of the covenant during this time. That is what Israel had to do physically, and what we must do to inherit our Canaan, our destination as God's people. That is what the LORD has in store for us. I will look at what Israel had to do and then explain what we as Christians should do.

But firstly, why did the LORD decide that it was time for Israel to leave Egypt? *"Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them."* (Exo 2:23-25) *"The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. "So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. " Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them."* (Exo 3:7-9)

The LORD also tells us about the roles of the various people in this scenario. *"And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they."* (Exo 7:1-6) So Moses represents the LORD, Aaron the prophet and the Pharaoh the Satan.

With this as background, we can now look at the various steps of the covenant.

1. Circumcision

Covenant before Christ: **Circumcision, as they had to have a physical sign that they belonged to the LORD.** : *"The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it; but every man's slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it. "A sojourner or a hired servant shall not eat of it." It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it. "All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this." **But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land.** But no uncircumcised person may eat of it." The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."* (Exo 12:43-49) *"And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers."* (Deu 6:20-23)

Covenant with Christ as the Lamb: **Our hearts must be circumcised.** All people are born in Egypt, a life separate from the LORD, a life in bondage to Satan (Pharaoh). Just like Israel cried out to the LORD for mercy and for Him to lead them out of Israel, I must call out to the LORD to lead me to His land, Canaan. I must change my ways and leave my sinful life behind me. I must come to the realization that I cannot do anything to save myself. I must believe that Jesus did everything required to put me in a right relationship with the LORD. I must realize that I am a sinner and that I will perish if I continue with my life on my own. I must start living a life of love as explained in 1 John 3. I must start showing in my daily life that I am forgiven. *"So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him."* (Mal 3:18) *"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people".* Jer 31:33.

"And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord GOD. (Eze 11:19-21)

*"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; **and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.**"* (Col 2:9-12)

What does Paul say about this? *"Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed **God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.** Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law."* (Rom 3:29-31) *"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; **and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God**".* (Rom 2:29)

2. Bread

Covenant before Christ: They had to eat unleavened bread, as yeast has the same effect as sin, it makes you puffed up. Eating unleavened bread indicates that you have received forgiveness of sin. *"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* (1Co 5:6-8)

Covenant with Christ as the Lamb: Jesus is the bread of life. He was sinless as He is also God. *"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died." This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; **if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.**"* (John 6:49-51) *"While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."* (Mat 26:26)

3. Slaughter a lamb

Covenant before Christ: They had to slaughter a lamb as the blood would bring forgiveness of sin. *"Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. 'Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. **Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old;** you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.*

'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight'. (Exo 12:3-6)

Covenant with Christ as Lamb: ***"And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."*** (Rev 5:6-12) I must come to the place in my life where I need the workings of the cross in order to receive everlasting life. He gave up His life in order for us to live. Even in the time of Adam and Eve we find that they could cover their sin by hiding it behind fig leaves, but the LORD showed them that blood has to flow in order to forgive. That is why He slaughtered a goat to give them clothes to wear.

4. Blood of the Lamb

Covenant before Christ: They had to put some of the blood on the doorposts and lintels. *"For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments--I am the LORD. 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."* (Exo 12:12-13)

Covenant with Christ as Lamb: We must place ourselves under His blood. *"And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."* (Mat 26:27-28) This confirms to us that when we share communion death has no hold on me as I have received everlasting life.

5. Where was the law?

Covenant before Christ: on stone tablets. Exodus 20. Moses also highlights another aspect: *"Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers." "So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today." It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us."* (Deu 6:22-25) **So their righteousness was obtained through keeping of the law.**

Covenant with Christ as the Lamb: Written on our hearts. *"And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer 31:33) ""Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'" (Jer 23:5-6). Our righteousness will be through Christ alone.*

6. Who was the covenant applicable to?

Covenant before Jesus: Both Israel and foreigners. ***"The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."*** (Exo 12:49) ***"A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock."***(Exo 12:38) This scripture confirms that strangers became part of the covenant nation during the exodus of Egypt. This is a confirmation of what the LORD promised Abraham. ***"No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations."*** (Gen 17:5) So here we find that even before the exodus and the long trek to Canaan that Israel operated as a Church and not as a nation. That is what they are referred to, as a congregation in Exodus 12 verse 47 above, and not as a nation. One further point to make here is that when we look at the first five books of the Bible, and especially those written by Moses, we find that the word congregation, referring to those people who left Egypt, is used 250 times in these books. This I believe is enough proof that even Moses and the LORD saw them as a Church, a congregation, and not as a nation.

225 verses found, 250 matches

Exodus	48 verses found	49 matches
Leviticus	50 verses found	57 matches
Numbers	120 verses found	134 matches
Deuteronomy	7 verses found	10 matches

If we include the rest of the Old Testament, we find that they are referred to as a congregation 363 times in 330 verses.

Covenant with Christ as Lamb: There **is no change as it does not need to change**. The rules governing the covenant already made provision for everyone to become part of God's people, His nation. Jesus did not need to change any provisions as He had to come and take the sins of the world and die in order for everyone, Jew and gentile, to be saved by His blood only. This covenant is for everyone that believes that Jesus is the Lamb, both Jew and gentile. ***"In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness."*** (Jer 33:16) **We can now live in righteousness, as Jesus is our righteousness.** ***"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*** (Heb 4:16)

Righteousness

Paul writes the following to the Romans: ***"For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"--that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation"***. (Rom 10:3-10)

When do I become a member of this covenant? The first time I share communion, when I make that public announcement that I share in His blood and His body. This also means that no uncircumcised person may share in communion, as communion shows that I have submitted myself to the lordship and obedience of the LORD.

What does the New Testament teach about this? When do I become an overcomer, and how do I overcome? *"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."* (Rev 12:11)

What are the similarities with the covenant before Christ?

overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb (Blood on the door posts)

because of the word of their testimony (Circumcision)

they did not love their life even when faced with death. We must take up our cross daily and die of our own will. *"And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."*(Luk 9:23-24)

This then is a quick explanation of the covenant. We all become partakers of this covenant when we find that we need to receive forgiveness of our sins, and decide to follow Christ and lay down our lives at the cross. Everyone that knows the Bible has to follow Israel and their example of how to get to Canaan, in our case, that which the LORD has prepared for us. When we die, that is all people who became part of the covenant with Abraham; we will learn to know who the LORD really is in order to live forever in the New Jerusalem. *"And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."* (Isa 2:3, Micah 4:2)

The Holy Spirit is the one who will work in us and in every human being on earth to get us to this point in our lives. *"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."* (John 16:7-11)

This clearly shows that all people have the ability to choose as the Bible declares that the Holy Spirit came to earth to convict all people of their sin, and then to teach them the way of righteousness. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, **that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*** (Joh 3:16-18)

We must believe that Christ was the perfect offering for sin, and that only through what He did, we can receive forgiveness and everlasting life.

If you decide that this "religion thing" is not for you even though you heard about it, you will not see the thousand year rule of Christ, and will be found guilty at the final judgement. *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**"* (Rev 20:11-15)

What then is the true meaning of the covenant of righteousness?

I believe the following is an apt definition.

The right to enter into the presence of the LORD, without guilt, condemnation or inferiority. It is to be in the right relationship with Him the Creator. This can only be achieved when we have received an overwhelming gift of righteousness.

What happens after I become part of the covenant with the LORD?

We must leave Egypt, by getting baptized. That is the place where the might of Satan, in Israel's time the Pharaoh, is broken in your life and you will live a life totally devoted to the LORD. That is the time when you find out that you no longer must make bricks to expand Satan's empire, but you can now work on expanding the LORD's empire. That is the time when you find out that sin no longer has a hold on you. *"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.** What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?"* (Rom 6:11-16)

This is then what baptism means to us as Christians. The might of Satan is destroyed in baptism and I will arise as a new being from the water. I will have a change of ownership during baptism, as the Satan is drowned in the water and I arise as a follower of the LORD and under His Lordship.

Then, like Israel we must receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. *"Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. **And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again.** But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." But Moses said to him, **"Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"*** (Num 11:25-29)

How did Jesus put it? *"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." **But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**"* (John 7:37-39)

Once we reach Sinai, we will spend time to learn the LORD's ways. That is when we will receive the law written on our hearts, where we will learn to distinguish between right and wrong. That is what our local congregation is supposed to teach us, as that is what happened to Israel at Sinai. During this time in the desert the LORD will take us under His wings and provide for us like He did for Israel by providing manna and quails.

As soon as our training is completed, we will be told by the Holy Spirit what our ministry will entail in Canaan. That is when we move on from the sixth day to the seventh day of the LORD, when we realize that nothing that we can do will save us from damnation. We can only get there through faith in Jesus Christ. This is what we learn in the book of Hebrews: *"Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS"; and again in this passage, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST." Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to*

enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience." (Heb 4:1-11)

Remember that we cannot wait to enter the rest of the LORD, as each day is today. We cannot delay this calling in saying we can do it later, as the Bible clearly says that today when you hear My voice. We all have a calling on our lives, and that is to make disciples of people, to show people what true love is. That is the difference between the sixth day and the seventh day. If you do not believe that you have a calling to make disciples of all people, you will die like most of the people in the dessert even though they were baptized as the seventh day is the day of rest, and that is what the LORD wants from us.

Most of the people who enter Canaan will believe that they must serve a king like Israel did. (A king is someone that will rule over you and could be a spiritual father or your church grouping.) The first book of Samuel recorded it as follows: *"But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. **The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day--in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also. "Now then, listen to their voice; however, **you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them.**"*** (1Sa 8:6-9)

Most of these people that enter into Canaan will die whilst serving this king, while a remnant will be called to go into captivity. *"You shall also say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD, "**Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.**" He who dwells in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by pestilence; **but he who goes out and falls away to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live, and he will have his own life as booty.**"* (Jer 21:8-9)

But what does it mean to go into exile, or captivity?

Let us examine several scriptures on this subject. The first scripture is about the physical captivity. During the Biblical times it was custom for the loser of a war to be taken captive as slaves and to be taken to the captor's land. The loser lost all his physical assets and became a slave to his captor. This meant that when someone went into captivity, he had to bring out all his moveable assets, his furniture, his shoes, his rod, etc., outside of his home and then went into captivity. The only thing he left behind was his house. But what does this mean to us today? We must lose the war against God to become his slave and to be taken away to His Land, His Canaan. I must place my full trust in Him to become completely dependent on Him for all my needs. Just like in the Biblical times He will provide for shelter and food, but it means that I must do His work. He already won the war and paid the price for me. He purchased us with His blood, as He overcame death and can now free us from all our sins. I cannot go into exile by myself; I must surrender to the LORD.

The second scripture which describes our spiritual captivity comes from Jeremiah 48 verse 11: *"Moab has been at ease since his youth; He has also been undisturbed, like wine on its dregs, And he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, Nor has he gone into exile. Therefore he retains his flavor, And his aroma has not changed".* What the LORD is trying to tell us is that we cannot continue saying that I am clean, but as soon as someone disturbs me, all the murkiness in my life shows. I must allow the LORD to empty me from vessel to vessel, meaning that He will change my life by getting rid of the lees or dregs in my life. This can only be done after giving my life over to the LORD. If I do not allow Him to empty me from vessel to vessel, then I will take on the taste of the lees or dregs. I must therefore allow Him to separate me from my lees, which is contaminating my life.

This cleansing process is also something that does not happen overnight. I must allow time in between sessions for the lees to settle at the bottom again before being emptied from vessel to vessel. The LORD

explains to them here that they must decide to go into captivity, to live. It was not a forceful removal, no; it was a decision that each inhabitant of Jerusalem had to take. Only once they decided to go, could the LORD free them from their leas, that which they depended on.

We found people then that said they will stay put in Jerusalem and that they will not go into captivity, much like people today that says that they are all right; they do not must be separated from their leas. The answer that the LORD had to them was that should they stay in Jerusalem, they would either die by the sword, or the famine, or the pestilence. There are two questions we can ask to see if we fall into this category. The first question is if you still get taught at your congregation. Can you take a new convert and teach him what the life of a Christian comprises of? Do you know exactly what the doctrine of laying on of hands mean, how it should be used, and if it is still applicable today? This is what happens when we get comfortable as Christians. We stop learning. The moment this happens, we will die of starvation, because if anything in life stops growing, it is either dying or already dead. Have you learned anything this year?

The second question and that is the reason that Jeremiah gave to the people, is that they will die of the pestilence. How do I know if I have the pestilence? As soon as I declare that my group of people, be it a congregation, church group, or followers of a specific doctrine, have eternal life and that all of them will be saved, I have the pestilence. Why? Because we do not like introspection, as it means that I must examine my life and must eyeball and change the areas I find that I am not sure is from the LORD. It also means that I must look at every principal in my life to ensure that it is from the LORD and can be Biblically explained. How many habits do you have that is not from the LORD? Another symptom of having the pestilence is when I declare that people can continue with their calls for repentance and debating all the issues of the Bible, as they will someday find out that it doesn't matter at all. My life is all right, and we should not exaggerate these issues. This is the group that Jeremiah declares will die of the pestilence.

The third reason why people will die if they stay in Jerusalem is that they will die by the sword. That is the group that decide that they will separate themselves from the others, and thus remove themselves from other Christians and their congregation. They want to go out to the neighboring areas around Jerusalem, and hence will not have anything to do with those in Jerusalem. Ezekiel also declares in his prophecies the same punishment to those that leave Christianity; that they will die by the sword. We cannot survive without other Christians. It is this group that will get a hold of a passage and build a complete doctrine around it, just to justify them. The Word of God will be the sword that will judge us.

We find that some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem insisted that they wanted to return to Egypt. They took Jeremiah with them to Egypt, but none of these people ever returned to Jerusalem. *“Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am going to set My face against you for woe, even to cut off all Judah. **And I will take away the remnant of Judah who have set their mind on entering the land of Egypt to reside there, and they will all meet their end in the land of Egypt; they will fall by the sword and meet their end by famine. Both small and great will die by the sword and famine; and they will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation and a reproach. And I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, with the sword, with famine and with pestilence. So there will be no refugees or survivors for the remnant of Judah who have entered the land of Egypt to reside there and then to return to the land of Judah, to which they are longing to return and live; for none will return except a few refugees.**” (Jer 44:11-14)* The few refugees that did return to Jerusalem were the family members of Jeremiah and Baruch who were taken to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar took over Egypt, as they were forcefully taken to Egypt. **This means I cannot return to my previous life in Egypt, as I will then face the second death we read of in Revelation.** This is what we read in the book of Hebrews about the same subject: *“For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.” (Heb 6:4-6)*

The reason for this is that the LORD wants us to come out from under the ruling of our earthly king, be it our local congregation or even our church grouping and put our trust in Him alone. We must separate ourselves from the idea that our membership of our congregation ensures our everlasting life. We must declare that we belong to the Church that the LORD is building. You see He is not preparing many brides, no He is preparing His bride, and She must be perfect and without blemish. This does not mean that you must end your membership of your congregation and now become a "churchless member" of the Church of Jesus Christ. No, I must put my trust in Jesus alone. This will invariably mean that we would be willing to take a stand for God, even like Daniel did when told that he could not pray to the LORD.

This group of believers not only asks for revival, but for true reformation. What is the difference? To me revival means that I must find the method that brings life to something that was alive before and proclaim this. If there was life before, this message will then bring this person back to life again. Reformation on the other hand means that I will rid myself of everything that is not from the LORD and start anew. That is the reason the LORD uses the term of captivity or exile, as one must be separated from that which is not from Him.

How do I know this is true? The same question is asked to the believers in Revelation. *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."* (Revelation 18:4).

This subject tells us that if we do not go into captivity, we are busy with religion, and religion is the same sin as adultery, leaving us as members of the whore of Revelation 18. I know I want to be, and I am sure that you want to be part of the Bride of Christ, and hence will go into captivity.

As soon as these people have served their time in captivity they will return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem, the real church.

This then the short explanation of the everlasting covenant, and what it means to us as Christians.

What are the consequences of this covenant on our common theological viewpoints?

Consequences of the covenant of righteousness for Israel and the Jewish faith.

What about Israel as nation and country today? They also must become partakers of the covenant with Jesus. As we have noted earlier there is one law for Jew and Gentile. The nation of Israel and the country of Israel have **NOTHING** in common with the Israel of the Bible. How did Jesus put them? *"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. "When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce."The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them."But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' **"But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'** **"They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."**Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, **what will he do to those vine-growers?"** They said to Him, **"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."** Jesus said to them, **"Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?'"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."** **When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet."** (Mat 21:33-46)*

Luke documented another saying of Jesus: *"When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.**" (Luke 19:41-44)*

This shows us that Israel and its inhabitants and all people who practice the Jewish faith worldwide, must become partakers of the covenant with Jesus to receive everlasting life. Jesus is the only way, the life, He alone. That was the message that Paul, Barnabas and all the other Apostles preached. They did not have one message for the Jews and a different message for the gentiles.

In fact, when we look at the book of Acts, we find that both Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue every time they arrived in a city. Many people believe that they only preached to the gentiles, but the book of Acts gives us a different story.

Acts 13:14 *"But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down."*

Acts 13:42 *"As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Acts 13:43 Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God."*

Acts 14:1 *"In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks."*

Act 17:1 *"Now when they had travelled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Acts 17:2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, Acts 17:3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.""*

Acts 17:10 *"The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews."*

Acts 17:16 *"Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. Acts 17:17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present."*

Acts 18:1 *"After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth Acts 18:4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."*

Act 18:19 *"They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews."*

Act 11:25 *"And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; Act 11:26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."*

So, if we say that Paul knew a mystery and that mystery is that there is a difference between the Church (Christians as from the passage above) and the Jews and use that as an argument why there would be a rapture of the saints in order for Christ to come back to earth and become the physical king of the Jews, his ministry was in vain as he always went to the Jewish synagogues to convince the Jews and others that Jesus is the Christ. They were already known as Christians and the church.

The rejection of Israel is also seen in the following verses:

Jer 6:30 **“Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.”**

Jer 7:15 **“And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.”**

Jer 12:7 **“I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.”**

Jer 15:6 **“Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.”**

Jer30:12 **“For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.”**

Jer31: 36-37 **“If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.”**

Ps 53:6 **“There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.”**

Ps 78: 58-59 **“For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:”**

2 Kings 17:19-20 **“Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.”**

2 Kings 23:27 **“And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.”**

2Ch 7:19-20 **“But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.”**

Hos 4:6 **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”**

Hos 9:17 **“My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.”**

1 Th 2: 14-16 **“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”**

We also find that people are saying that the Jews must be saved first, but do not even know what the Jews are being taught by their priests and the Talmud today. But this is a small section about what they are being taught today:

“* “‘Yashu’ (derogatory for ‘Jesus’) is in Hell being boiled in hot excrement.” (Gittin 57a)

[‘Yashu’ is an acronym for the Jewish curse, ‘May his (Jesus) name be wiped out forevermore.’]

Yashu (Jesus) was sexually immoral and worshipped a brick.” (Sanhedrin 107b)

“Yashu (Jesus) was cut off from the Jewish people for his wickedness and refused to repent.” (Sotah 47a)

“Miriam the hairdresser had sex with many men.” (Shabbath 104b, Hebrew Edition only)

“She who was the descendant of princes and governors (the virgin Mary) played the harlot with carpenters.” (Sanhedrin 106a)

“Christians who reject the Talmud will go to hell and be punished there for all generations.” (Rosh Hashanah 17a)”

Just to explain the grafting in process, I would like to explain the process here.

I would like to use the example of Paul in Romans to describe how and where we fit in. *“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. **For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?** For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. **Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**” (Rom 11:11-20)*

I believe all of us know how to graft a new growth unto an older or prepared rootstock. When we buy the end product, it has the flowers or fruit that we want, and not that of the rootstock. The new growth depends on the rootstock for its nutrients and will die without it. And that is how we as Christians became children of the LORD. He removed the original growth, Israel, and grafted us into Him as the rootstock. We also know that when you allow the original plant to start bringing forth its original branches, that the plant grafted in will die. And that is what will happen to us as Church if we start following the Jewish root doctrines. We, as Church, will die. That is why there will be no rapture or anything connected to the Jews of today, as the moment we believe that they must be grafted back using a different way as what we must follow, we as Church will die. So, run from anyone teaching these false doctrines, or as the Bible calls them, the antichrist teachings. The Jews must follow the same road as us to be grafted into the rootstock. Unfortunately, nearly 80% of Americans believe this lie of the rapture, so it really makes me sick to the core when they do not see their teachings as that of the antichrist.

These were also the same Jews, the unbelieving ones, that left Paul for dead after stoning him, and which we read of in the Acts of Barnabas: *“And having bound him to take him away to the governor, and a pious Jebusite, a kinsman of Nero, having count to Cyprus, the Jews, learning this, took Barnabas by night, and bound him with a rope by the neck; and having dragged him to the hippodrome from the synagogue, and having gone out of the city, standing round him, they burned him with fire, so that even his bones became dust.”* To now try and convince people that Christ has to come to earth again to save these people, who have exactly the same status as any other non-believer, is utter rubbish and insane and in direct conflict with events in, and the message of, the Bible.

Consequences of the covenant of righteousness on Calvinism

Then what about Calvin and his doctrine of election? My own viewpoint is that it finds acceptance by people who likes philosophy. They can think and write about subjects from all sides and enjoy coming to conclusions that ask questions from their readers. These results most of the time cannot be

substantiated by the real message of the Bible. And then, like so many other people before and after him, they do not want to look at Israel as an example for us to follow, as they are worried that the LORD will reject them as He did Israel. I remember a service I attended years ago where the preacher used Israel as an example in his sermon, and he was immediately confronted by the elders following his message and nearly got shunned by them for using Israel as a parallel in his sermon. So, Calvin built a philosophy and doctrine only on the New Testament disregarding the covenant, or only taking parts of the covenant that will enhance his doctrine. But that is what happens when you build your doctrine only on selected parts of the Bible, just like the Catholics, Luther and his saying, and a bunch of other groupings. Remember that Luther and Calvin both came from the Roman Catholic Church and only modified their doctrine where they disagreed with the official standpoint. The fact that the apostles and disciples only had the Old Testament to use and to preach the gospel of Jesus is apparently not important. Acts chapter 17 teaches us the following: *"The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.** Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men."* (Act 17:10-12) I assume the only scriptures they could check were Moses and the prophets. Something else that negates Calvin as someone to follow comes from Hebrews: *"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."* Calvin's own testimony is as follows: *"Honor, glory, and riches shall be the reward of your pains; but above all, do not fail to rid the country of those scoundrels, who stir up the people to revolt against us. **Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard.**"* Calvin disqualifies himself by his own admission in not only that he took someone else's life but encourages his followers to follow him and commit murder and is certainly not something worth following. *"These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling." They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. "These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. "But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you".* (Joh 16:1-4)

They also do not believe that you must first come to the realization of the need for a redeemer, as you are one of the elect. That means that you do not must come to the cross and accept what Jesus did for you to establish the covenant of righteousness, as you are fine just as you are. With the exodus of Israel from Egypt and their rebellion over the Promised Land, the LORD did not punish the children under the age of twenty years old. No, the Bible declares it is follows: Num 14:29 ***"your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me."*** Thus, the children first had to reach the age of 21 before they were treated as adults. Only then can they decide that they need to leave Egypt and take responsibility for their own lives. Only then can they be baptized. Trying to baptize infants has absolutely no effect on their lives. That is one of the reasons Calvinists give in to temptation more quickly than those who were not baptized as babies, as they still find themselves under the jurisdiction of the Pharaoh. They are still in Egypt and must make bricks to expand his kingdom. They are members of the covenant, and that is one reason they will only learn after they die who the LORD really is. *"And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. **If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.**"* (Zec 14:17-19) What is so special about the Feast of Booths? "It had to remind them of the time the time they left Egypt. *"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. 'These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD-- burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each day's matter on its own day--*

*besides those of the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD. 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 'You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. **It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 'You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.'**" (Lev 23:34-43)*

Children that have not come of age yet is the responsibility of the father and he has to take responsibility for them and what they do. "Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father." (Gal 4:1-2)

A further major problem I have with Calvin and his teachings is his limited atonement as Jesus only came for the elect. John recorded Jesus as saying: "**And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;**" (John 16:8-9) So no person in the world will be able to say that they did know about sin and righteousness, as that is the work of the Holy Spirit. So that in a nutshell negates the limited atonement of his teaching.

I do not know how the Calvinists interpret the following passages: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die." (Eze 18:23-28)

And then the following passages Also from Ezekiel: "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." (Eze 33:8-9) This is especially necessary in what Paul describes in 11 Cor. 10 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1Co 10:11)

Consequences of the covenant of righteousness on Dispensationalist doctrine

They are trying so hard to make the Bible fit their doctrine that they sometimes say and do hilarious things, and off course also rejecting what Jesus himself said. On the cross Jesus said: "**It is finished**". But apparently not so. Jesus has to return to earth and restore the physical nation of Israel, even though He told them that He will take away their heirloom, which I quoted earlier. "**Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.**" And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." **When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.**" This parable does not have an additional section telling the Jews that they will be forgiven and that the LORD will change his mind and appoint them again as heirlooms of the vineyard. If it was to happen surely Jesus would mustld them so as He is God and knows everything.

That is exactly what Israel was expecting in the days of Jesus. They wanted a physical kingdom. Now these people are doing exactly the same, expecting a physical kingdom on earth.

I want to quote part of the doctrine of a local church that believes this doctrine. "Just because Daniel does not say that 2000 years will pass between two verses in Chapter 9, and that Zechariah 9 also not specify 2000 years between verses 9 and 10, and that Micah also does not mention the 2000 year gap in chapter 5 between verses 1 and 3, does **not mean that these prophecies must be continuous and must be fulfilled during the same time. THE KEY IS THE MYSTERY.**" Their attitude is that those who oppose this view, does not belong to the LORD as they do not understand the mystery. The fact that Paul spells out this mystery in many of his letters to the different congregations, does not carry any weight. "*Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*"(Col 1:25-27)

Another belief is that they do not believe that Jesus came to do away with the difference between Israel and the Church. But the covenant shows clearly that all people who become partakers of this covenant will be His people. Paul declares that it is the mystery which the prophets did not know of, as quoted above. If these people would only accept the Bible alone as their teachings, and not those of people. The covenant teaches us that there is no difference. These people make the same mistake as the Muslims, the Mormons and so many other people in clinging to the doctrines of man. I want to use the quotation I used earlier just to cement this fact. Ephesians chapter 2 teaches the following: "*Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.* (Eph 2:11-22)

They also teach that there will be a secret rapture of the saints when Jesus returns the first time. (According to them Jesus will return more than once, sort of like a shuttle service.) They say it will be a secret, yet they use a verse that says the opposite. "***For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.***" (1Th 4:16-17) Now I am just wondering how nobody will know about it if it says the opposite.

"*And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*" Apparently, this verse is also not applicable to them, as they can even pray a short sinner's prayer on behalf of someone and then that person is saved. The fact that only the LORD can add people to His nation does not worry them at all. "*Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, **but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon***

them, and upon the Israel of God. (Gal 6:12-16) (See circumcision earlier in this document) The last part of the passage is remarkably interesting. It is not the God of Israel, but the Israel of God, **so not the physical Israel, but the new Israel; those who choose to serve Him and become part of the covenant.**

Consequences of the covenant of righteousness on the Rapture theory

We find these people in all sorts of belief systems. They span the whole spectrum from starting at the Dispensationalists, Calvinists, Pentecostal, Israel vision, British Jews, Charismatic believers, and a whole bunch of different people. Their prime scripture is Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9 concerning the seventy weeks and that it will only be completed during and after the seven-year tribulation. According to them we as 'non-Jews', or Christians, will be in heaven, whilst Christ will rule on earth during the millennial age. According to them, there are still things for Christ to do on earth **and that He lied on the cross when He said:** *"Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."* (Joh 19:30)

This doctrine is based on the fact that we are living in a dispensation of grace, that Jesus would come to rapture the Church before, during or after the tribulation, that the Jews would be restored to their former state, and that they will be given a second chance to come to Jesus, and that Jesus would then judge the people of the earth. The advocates of this doctrine maintain that there is a difference between Israel and the Church, and then refer to a mystery that Paul says was revealed to him. These advocates then claim that only certain people have the ability to interpret certain sections of scriptures, and that Paul's mystery is one of these scriptures as it refers to the difference between the Church and Israel and the way the LORD will deal with them. They use the prophecy of Daniel regarding the seventy weeks as their main argument that the last week of this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and that this is part of the mystery of what Paul refers to. The fact that both Jesus and Paul tell us what the mystery is, and that the gospel will be preached all over the world, is apparently not the mystery. *"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."*(Col 1:25-27)

However, we have already concluded that there is no difference between Israel and the Church. How do we then interpret Daniels prophecy, and has the seventieth week been fulfilled? I know that people have written many books about the rapture and its effect, and that many people have used it as scripts for their doctorate degrees, but is this doctrine correct?

The rapture is one of those doctrines that have a very calming effect on Christians, as it gives us a sense of relief that we do not must worry about all these nasty things that will happen during the tribulation. The tribulation is only for Israel and the unbelievers, or that is what we are taught. If we however see ourselves as the new Israel, we end up with a problem in that we must face the tribulation, and then things get slightly out of hand.

Many people have written books concerning Daniel's seventy weeks, and how it must be interpreted. The first 69 weeks we find that most people agree with in that it gives us the time from the return of Israel from exile, up to the coming of Jesus. **And then we also have the fiction writers with their Left Behind series that many people take as the absolute truth, even though the writers themselves declare that their books are fiction. For this they have even received prizes as the best Christian fiction writers.**

The last week is the week that all the fuss is about. This fuss only started about 160 years ago when a certain Darby gave a different meaning to this, and now we find that most people who are not strong in their faith, are running after him. Before Darby there was no doctrine about the rapture or someone claiming that there is a difference between the Church and the latter-day Jews. This doctrine has the effect that people are spending lots of money to go to Israel and to celebrate Shabbat, to fight for Israel's

right to the temple mount, and to try and establish new sacrifices to the LORD, as Jesus did not do away with animal sacrifices. The fact that most of these Jews came from Europe are also disputed by these people. The majority of Ashkenazi Jews are descended from prehistoric European women and are the people that occupy Israel and are known as Jews today. They have very little in common with the Jews in the time of Jesus. They are the people that Hitler murdered, and they were also the theme for Luther's book, "On the Jews and their lies". In this book he urged the Germans to burn their synagogues and a host of things that I will not use in this document. This will also never be used in any sermon by any preacher, as it promotes anti-Semitism.

What a great many people do not know is that the reason the Christian Zionists believe that we now live in a period of grace that fits in between week 69 and 70 of Daniel, is that both Jesus Christ and God the Father did not know that the Jews would reject Jesus. There are so many writings that hold on to this belief. I must admit that it is extremely difficult to find a single definition of why there will be a rapture as almost every teacher of this theory has his own interpretation.

But what does the seventieth week of Daniel actually proclaim *"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."* (Dan 9:27) Daniel, in this prophecy, says that in the last week, which is seven years, a new covenant will come in effect. When we examine our Lord Jesus Christ's ministry on earth, we find that He spent three and a half years trying to convince the Jews that He was the Christ, and that they had to change their ways and accept Him as the Christ. After this period, and as Daniel puts it, in the middle of the week, Jesus was crucified. We know that Jesus was the complete and perfect sacrifice and accepted by the Father, which is why the daily sacrifice ceased in the middle of the week, as it was no longer required.

Let us examine this scripture chronologically as Daniel wrote it. The covenant that Jesus entered with the God the Father is the strong covenant that Daniel prophesied about, as it is the covenant between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This covenant was established on our behalf. We also know that Jesus Himself said that He came to fulfill and not to establish something new. That is why He was sacrificed, and that is the reason why this is the strongest covenant that can be entered. ***"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*** (Mat 5:17) This confirms then that the covenant Abraham entered was fulfilled, which required all male persons to be circumcised, and that only those that were circumcised were treated as children of Abraham. When the LORD asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac his son, the LORD declared that He would sacrifice His Son, as one rule applied to both parties of the covenant. By asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the LORD declared that He would do the same. This first covenant had to be confirmed by continually bringing sacrifices, and by circumcising all males. In addition to this the Israelites had to bring their tithes to the Levites for their service at the temple, and all first born had to be sacrificed to the LORD. The circumcision and sacrifice of the first-born was required as the LORD cursed the entire first born in Egypt as part of the plagues in Egypt. That is another reason Jesus had to die, as he had to nullify that curse.

The following is a short form summary of the vision Daniel received and the interpretation he received from Gabriël.

"At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision." Daniel 9:23

1 - *"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city" (also see Lev 25:9 "You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years")* So the seventy weeks are actually 490 years.

2 - *"to finish the transgression,"* That during this last week the ungodliness of the LORD's nation will end after they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, where the heart of stone is replaced by a heart of flesh. We will be purchased by Jesus as He died for our transgressions.

3 – *“to make an end of sin,”* That an end will be made to the time of the law, as Jesus will be the complete sacrifice for sin and the law will be abolished as measurement of our salvation.

4 – *“make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness,”* That was the prime reason for Jesus to come to earth as He would bring everlasting righteousness to those who believe that He was the Messiah, and the righteousness of fulfilling the law was done away with. So we are no longer seen as sinners, but are seen as a people washed by the blood of Jesus. We must remember that the blood of goats offered by the priests only covered our sin, while the blood of Jesus washes away our sin. So we are now washed in the blood of Jesus as per Isaiah 1.

5 – *“to seal up vision and prophecy”* To bring an end to all the prophecies surrounding the first coming of the LORD Jesus Christ.

6 – *“and to anoint the most holy”.* Jesus also had to be anointed as King, Redeemer, and Prophet.

This is what was spoken of by Gabriël to Daniel. He then goes further and explains in detail what was going to happen during this 490 years or 70 weeks.

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks”. So, 49 years after their return from exile the temple will be rebuilt.

“and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.” From the time of rebuilding the temple to the start of the ministry of Jesus would be 434 years. (62x7)

Dan 9:26 *“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off, (so during the 70th week) and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”* So, Gabriel explains to Daniel that Jesus will be cut off or killed with no benefit for Him, and then continues with what will happen to Jerusalem. The end of Jerusalem will come by the people of a prince to come, in other words someone who was not a prince in the days of Daniel, exactly as it happened when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. Gabriel says that it will be by a flood, but we find that in Daniel 11 verses 22, 26 and 40 soldiers are said to come as a flood. The last part Gabriel says that right up to the end of time there will be wars and desolations in, around and over the jurisdiction of Jerusalem, exactly as is still the case today.

Dan 9:27 *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”* Here we learn that a new covenant will be formed during the last week of the prophecy. When we look at the ministry of Jesus, we find that He went through the land of Israel for three and a half years doing wonders and preaching to the people that He is the Christ. So as Daniel puts it, in the middle of the week, thus three and a half years into the ministry of Jesus, He was crucified. We know that His sacrifice was acceptable to the Father, and that is why the sacrifices would stop, because it was no longer required, as Jesus was accepted as the complete sacrifice. That was also the start of the new covenant, or the covenant of righteousness, and was the firm covenant that Daniel wrote about. The covenant was made between God the Father and Jesus Christ His son, who took our place for our sins. Jesus declared this in Matthew 5:17: *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”* This shows that Jesus did away with the laws governing the old covenant. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, He also knew that He had to give His son as a sacrifice. And that is what Jesus came to do. He also did away with the circumcision and did away with the law surrounding the first born. We also do not need any Levites as a go between us and the Lord as we now appear before the Father covered by the blood of Jesus.

Many of the advocates of the rapture says that the daily sacrifice only ended when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., and that we cannot use this as an indicator. What they forget however, is that if we

believe that Jesus was the Christ, no sacrifices were required after His death. He was the perfect sacrifice required by the Law of Moses. So, no sacrifices were required anymore. If they want to use this as an excuse, then they actually declare that Jesus was not the Christ as the LORD still accepted the sacrifices done in the temple by the Levites.

We find another reason why Jesus could be sacrificed and why He was acceptable to the LORD, and why the Father did not look favorably on the offer of the High Priest. The following events took place the day Jesus was brought before the High Priest: *“And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.”* (Mat 26:61-65) The clothing of the High priest had to be made of a single cloth, without any seams. *“These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together. And the skillfully woven band on it shall be made like it **and be of one piece with it**, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.”* Ex 28:4-8. By tearing his clothing, the High Priest could not enter into the temple the next day for the sacrifice. The only way he could do it, was by sewing it together, but then it would have a seam, and would thus be rejected by the Father, as it did not comply with the Law of Moses. That is why the sacrifice Jesus brought was accepted, and the reason why His clothes were not torn, but the lot cast over it. *“And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.”* (Mar 15:24) Here we see that His clothes were not torn but given as complete clothing which complied with the Law of Moses.

We must remember that Jesus was crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice, and that He died six hours later. He was crucified outside the town, as He also had to complete that sacrifice that had to be slain outside the town. *“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”* (Heb 13:10-13) As mentioned earlier He also did not bring His sacrifice in the earthly tabernacle, but in the heavenly one: *“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”* (Heb 9:23-28)

When the veil was rent in the temple, Jesus was accepted in the Heavenly tabernacle. That was also the end of the first half of the last week of Daniels' prophecy.

The second half of the week was the time the apostles spent in Jerusalem to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, and ended with the vision of Peter: *“On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and*

creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” (Act 10:9-15) This was also about the same time that Stephen was killed by the Jews. This was the end of the last half of the week as seen by Daniel, and at this time we as believers became part of the LORDS’ nation. The one thing we must remember is that the Jews expected a physical king to rule over them again like in the days of Saul and David, but failed to realize that these kings only ruled over them because they rejected the LORD. *“And the LORD said to Samuel, Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.”* (1Sa 8:7)

Daniel also declares that at the end of the week abominations will start and it will continue until the end of time. Because of this, Satan is now trying to destroy all flesh, and as Daniel says, it will last till the end of the earth.

I mentioned earlier that the advocates of the rapture also refer to the mystery of Paul. These words are normally used completely out of context for them to deceive the people and to convince people of their doctrine.

To conclude the last week then; it started with the ministry of Jesus to the Jews and ended when the message of the gospel came to us as gentiles. From this we can also conclude that there will not be a separate rapture of the Church, but that we as gentiles are one with all believers. Jesus himself said that we must hold on to our faith till the end, and not to think that we will not go through the tribulation. Even in Paul’s time we had people that did not understand the message of the gospel: *“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, **Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: **From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.**”*** (1Ti 1:3-7)

So in summary, the covenant that Jesus made on the cross was the strong covenant of Daniel, as it removed the curse of the first born, and fulfilled all the sacrifices the Levites and high priest had to bring. Jesus also paid for all our sins for us to appear in righteousness before the Father without blemish or sin. So He is our righteousness, and now we can do what the writer of Hebrews says: *“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Heb 4:16) This we can only do because of what Jesus did for us.

One major problem I also have with the doctrine of the rapture and those who believe this, are that they form part of the antichrist. The apostle John gives us a very clear definition of this: *“2Jn 1:7 **For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.**”* The Jews do not believe that Jesus was the Christ, and by siding with and supporting the Jews of today, they become part of the antichrist.

Summary

So, my point of view is that we all live once, and then we die. Those that became partakers of the covenant will live with Christ in the millennial age to rid us of how to serve the LORD, about who is saved and who is condemned. After the battle in which Gog and Magog, the Satan and all the people that did not serve the LORD, will be defeated, will we appear before the white throne. Those that lived as overcomers will live in the New Jerusalem forever.

As a closing comment I would like to stress that whoever partakes in the Lord’s Supper as a sign to show his faith and to show that he enters into a covenant with the LORD, will be part of the first awakening. Exactly where we will find ourselves is a different story.

MOSES 1 - ON BECOMING AND STAYING A CHRISTIAN

Jeremiah 7: 21 - 23

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.

For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

MOSES 1 VERSE 1: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ON HOW A PERSON BECOMES A CHRISTIAN, AND THUS INHERITS AND POSSESSES CANAAN, THE PROMISED LAND?

INTRODUCTION

How do I become a child of God? I believe this is one of the most pertinent questions that must be answered today. We all see the signs and hear from various people that the end of the world is coming. Are you sure that you will be with Jesus when he returns? Many people will not be with Him, as they did not heed to what the Bible teaches us.

There are many methods used by many people, but I would like to use Israel as an example of how we can get to Canaan and inherit what the LORD promised. This is what the LORD promised in Jeremiah 30 **"and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."** I know that this is what the LORD wants to do for each one of us, as this is what the Bible declares.

Why do I think that we can get the answer from Moses? The answer comes from the book of Exodus: *"And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."* (Exo 7:1) The LORD states all through the Bible that He will talk to us through His prophets. In this passage He states that He appoints Moses as His representative and Aaron as a prophet for Moses. This means that Moses will lead the way as God, Aaron as prophet, and Pharaoh as Satan. He wants to show us how to get out from the claws of the devil and live a life in righteousness. That is the meaning of the trek out of Egypt. We as sinful creatures, must realize that we must go to Canaan, and this we can do by following Israel's example. As we are all born as sinners, (Egyptians), we must decide to join ourselves to Israel, and then follow them to Canaan. This also clarifies another question you might have: Have you ever thought why Moses could not enter Canaan? If he could, there was no need for Jesus to come as Moses would have been seen as a perfect example to lead us from Egypt to Canaan. Every denomination has their own verses that they cling on to in order to tell everyone why they believe the way they do, and many tracts and books have been written explaining the process of how to become a child of God, but here we find in Exodus that the whole process is described for us. A question that is also answered here is what was Esau's role in the history of the Bible? Esau was the eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac; but he traded his birth right to his twin brother Jacob for a mess of pottage. The same thing happened to Israel. They were the first born of the LORD, but as they rejected Jesus, we as the Church have received the blessing of the covenant. That is why we can look at what Israel did, and learn from their mistakes. Why has nobody thought of it before? (2 Corinthians 3:14) *"But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ."*

Did Israel ever receive Canaan? I was under the impression always that they must have received Canaan after forty years in the desert. However Ezekiel gives us a different view. (Ezekiel 20:6) *"In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:"* (Ezekiel 20:13) *"But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them".* Ezekiel 20:17-18 *"Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness. But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:"* Ezekiel 20:22-23 *"Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth. I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;"*

This portion of scripture declares that they never inherited Canaan as it was in the days of the spies. This also clarifies the situation why we never again read in the Bible that Israel produced fruit the size Canaan did in the days of the spies. You see that in the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness, God changed the land to what it was when they eventually entered into it.

CANAAN DEFINED

But first, what does Canaan look like? Let us look at the following verses. Numbers 13:23 *"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs."* Numbers 13:27 *"And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it".* Numbers 14:8 *"If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey."* And our spiritual Canaan? Psalms 1 verses 1 to 3 give us the answer. *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."* So, to be in Canaan means to always bear fruit, and that one would be prosperous in everything one does.

Canaan is also the place where the LORD wants to take us to on the second coming, according to Jeremiah 30. This is the place we must take possession of as Christians. However, we cannot go there if we do not follow the instructions on how to get there. Canaan is the place I trust you want to end up in after completing your earthly life.

HOW DID ISRAEL GET TO CANAAN, AND WHY DID THE LORD CHOOSE THEM?

The Bible teaches us that Joseph was taken to Egypt against his will, that the same brothers that sold him came to buy wheat from him in Egypt, and that his family was re-united again in Egypt. Over the years they became a very strong nation. This is how Israel was formed as a separate nation, and where they were chosen by the LORD as His people. We must remember that Esau was also one of Jacob's sons, but that he did not go to Egypt with his brother. The question though is, why did the LORD choose Israel as His people?

Moses gives us the answer in Deuteronomy 7: *"7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt".* Because He loved Israel, and He had a covenant with them.

I want to emphasize it that I am not for or against the doctrine of election, but rather wants to look at who were elected. The LORD chose Israel that was His decision. What about other nations? What happens to other people who are not part of Israel? Fortunately for us, other people were allowed to join them to Israel in those days. Exodus 12:48-49: *"And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; **and he shall be as one that is born in the land:** for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you".* This passage shows us that even in the Old Testament times, people from other nations could join them to Israel, and become like an Israelite. This also meant that they became part of the covenant with God as the Passover was only meant for the people who were part of the covenant nation of God. The sign of the covenant was circumcision, and that is what the people from other nations had to do.

New Testament view.

We no longer live in the times of the Old Testament and covenant, but in the New Testament times where we are no longer under the law. What is the New Testament view? Acts 10:34 and 35: *"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation **he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**"* Paul discusses this in Ephesians 2 as follows: Verse 11 *"¶ Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; 12 that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. 14 ¶ For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 15 having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"*

In this passage we see that God extends His nation to everyone who fears Him and works righteousness. These people are acceptable to Him. It does not matter any longer if you are Jewish or not, but it matters only if you are doing what He wants you to do. It only matters if you believe in the works that He did for us, and that you believe that He is the Christ. You and I can also become members of His chosen nation, and we find that even in Exodus provision was made for us. This is also confirmed by Paul in Ephesians 1 verse 4: *"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:"*

While in the desert, Moses told the Israelites that God chose them to be His people. Deut 4:37 *"And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt; 38 to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day."* For us as foreigners to Israel, we must look at what Israel had to do to get out of Egypt, what the significance is for us, and what they had to do to get to Canaan.

WHERE DO WE START?

We must know that the Israelites were in Egypt before the exodus. This was a life where they were used as slaves, but it is also the place where the LORD came to their rescue. We also must come to accept that the LORD did not decide by Himself to take them out of Egypt, but that they had to cry out to the LORD. Ex 2:23 *"¶ And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 **And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them.**"* One aspect that stands out from this passage is that the Bible also declares that it took a long time. How many times have you asked the LORD to do something for you, and then you are upset when the answer is not there the next day? We read in this part of scripture that Moses was in the desert for 40 years, and that Israel had to wait till God decided it was the right time to send Moses. Another aspect we read of in this passage is that Israel decided to follow Moses. Why Moses? Because he was sent by God and hence moved in signs and wonders. If you are looking for someone to lead you out of Egypt, look for someone who is sent by God. This person will move in signs and wonders. Follow his example.

SO WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP?

For me as a gentile, or stranger to Israel, I must come to the knowledge that I am in Egypt, and only then can I cry out to God for salvation. How do I know that I am in Egypt? What did Jesus teach to convince people that they were still sinners? How did Jesus convince the Jews that they had a sinful nature? He had a similar problem to what we have. We read in Matthew 5 verse 17 to 48 how this was handled.

Remember that Jesus was speaking to people who knew the LORDS commandments backwards. The Pharisees and Scribes divided the Law into many different sections, and everyone had to obey every part. If they did not heed to the law, they were scared that they would be taken captive again and sent to Babylon as He did in Jeremiah's time.

So how did Jesus do it? By proving to them that it does not depend on what you do, but life depends on the state of heart. How did Jesus state it in verse 20? *"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."* We also find that Jesus ends this chapter with a statement that looks impossible. Verse 48 ***"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."***

What did Jesus teach them in this passage? That it is not possible to receive salvation by being obedient to the law only. It does not matter how hard I try to earn my salvation by not sinning and just doing right, The problem is not by not sinning anymore, as even my thoughts are sinful. No, I must be convinced that my nature must change. But how? The prophet Ezekiel gave us the answer in chapter 11 verse 19: *"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh;"*. So the problem is in the heart. I must change my heart, and that happens by being born again, as Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5-6. ***"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."***

So what must happen to me? I must receive a new heart, a heart from Gods nation. I must be changed from a gentile (sinner) to a Jew (chosen one). I must come to the point where I know that as a gentile, I cannot receive the kingdom of God. I must become a member of His chosen nation. But how is this achieved? By believing that God has the power to change me from a gentile (sinner) to a Jew (chosen one). I must receive the cover of His blood. The angel of death cannot do anything to me when I am under the blood of Jesus. I must believe that the blood of Jesus has the power to change me from a sinner to His chosen one, and to forgive my sins and transgressions. I must believe that He has prepared the only way for me. **I must believe that the covenant he prepared is the only answer.**

Verse 20 of Matthew 5 gives us the key to this part of scripture: *"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

WHAT IS OUR PROBLEM THEN?

Righteousness. *I am in the way of my own salvation. By obedience to the law I will never be able to achieve salvation. It is still what I am trying to do. I am still caught up in sin. I first must understand that I am a sinful creature, that my whole being is not acceptable to the LORD. This I can only learn from the passage in Matthew 5. I must die and be born again. That is the only way.*

As soon as I accept the fact that I am in Egypt, I can plan on leaving it. If I don't accept the fact that I am in Egypt, I will always long back to Egypt. If I don't understand that I am in Egypt, the situation will always be as Charles Finney described it in Revival Fire: *"I have already intimated that pains enough had not been taken to search the heart and thoroughly detect and expose the sinner's depravity, so as to make him see the need of the gospel remedy. If I am not mistaken, there has been, in many cases, an error committed in urging sinners to submission before they are prepared to understand what true submission is. They have been urged to repent, before they have really understood the nature and dessert of sin; to believe, before they have understood their need of Christ; to resolve to serve God, before they have at all understood what the service of God is. They have been pressed to make up their minds to enter immediately upon the service of God, and have been taught that they needed only to make a resolution to obey the LORD. Hence their religion, after all, has been only a religion of resolutions, instead of a religion of faith, and love, and of a broken heart. In short, it appears to me that, in many instances, the true idea of what constitutes pure religion has not been developed in the mind, and that consequently spurious*

conversions have been distressingly numerous. I have been more and more surprised from year to year, to find how very numerous those professors of religion are who manifestly have not the true ideal of pure religion before their minds. It seems that, in many instances, the idea that love is the essence and the whole of religion, is left almost, if not entirely, out of view."

REMEDY FOR OUR PROBLEM.

I must understand how deep the rift is between the LORD and myself before I can think of the remedy. Only then will I see the need for getting forgiveness, and to be born again. What then? Only then will I accept what He has done for me. Then I can empty myself before Him like David did in Psalm 51. Whenever I read this Psalm, I stand in awe of the relationship David had with the LORD. Then I can understand that the LORD is not interested in my greatness. He wants me to be stripped of myself, and to come to Him with a broken and contrite heart, to be washed clean of all unrighteousness.

How did the LORD prepare forgiveness of our sins? Through the new covenant. But what does the new covenant mean to me?

That God is man's covenant partner. That God, through the offer of Jesus Christ on Calvary, does not hold the sins of man against him any longer, to those that believes in the covenant of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, God's perfect gift took our place and died for our sins, in order that we can be freed from the requirements of the covenant. God took His own Son as the perfect offer for our sins, as all who sin should die. The Father dealt with Jesus according to our sins, so that we can be free. In adherence to the law, no man could ever be assured of forgiveness, but now through Jesus Christ our Savior, we can now be washed clean from all our sins.

The righteousness that Jesus gives is the right to stand before God, without guilt or blemish.

In other words, it is to be in a favorable relationship with God. As soon as we enter the covenant of righteousness and adhere to the rules of the covenant, we have everlasting life. This covenant also gives us the answer to the statement Jesus made in Matthew 5 where He said we must be perfect as our Father in heaven, is perfect.

Now I can believe that Jesus has truly saved me from eternal death. Now I can believe that He is my Savior. But what is faith? We all know Hebrews 11 verse 1 that defines it as follows: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Why is faith required? Verse 6; *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* The book of Hebrews is primarily a book discussing faith and covenant. The author informs me that I must believe the message of the Bible, without doubting anything. When I doubt something, it is disbelief, and I know that without faith it is impossible to please God. We also read that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. For a full discussion of faith, see the question and answer later on under the doctrines section.

We learn from the history of Israel that Egypt was hit by various plagues. This is the way the LORD wants to show us that He is in total control of everything on earth, and all we must do is have faith in Him to take us out of Egypt. For the people in the world it is only calamities, but for us it is proof that He is in control of everything.

The Israelites had to come under the blood of the lamb. The same way we must put ourselves under the protection of our Lamb. We have just learned what the new covenant means, and that I must lay down my life at the cross. I can then ask Him to wash me in His Blood. Having done this, I am then a member of His flock, and the angel of death cannot touch me anymore. I can then proclaim like Paul did in Gal.2: 20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."*

WHAT WAS THE PASSOVER?

The Israelites had to remove all yeast from their homes and prepare unleavened bread. But why? If we look at the function of yeast, its main function is making bread rise. It will affect every single part of the bread. It is the same with sin. Any sin left in our lives, will affect the total being. It makes me totally unacceptable to God. It will puff me up, like yeast does to bread. This shows us that we must break totally and unequivocally with all sin. I cannot even leave sin in my thoughts, as it will affect my total being, and make me unacceptable to God. Every time that we share in Holy Communion, I must remember where I was, and what the LORD did to lead me out. That is why I must eat of the bread, fill myself with His body, and drink the cup, wash myself clean with His blood.

FIRST FRUITS.

One aspect that the LORD wanted to bring home to them early in their walk with Him is that they must remember to love Him. That is why in the same section where Moses gives them the instructions on how to prepare the Passover meal, he also give them the guidelines for first fruits. The LORD teaches them that they must remember this night in Egypt where every first born, whether child or beast, was killed, but He passed them over. He teaches them in Exodus 13 as follows; *"And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, 12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S. 13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. 14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:"*

How do we do it today? I must do what Jesus told us to do. Jesus still wants from us our lives, as well as our first fruits. In Matthew 25 from verse 34, Jesus tells the disciples what is acceptable as an offer to Him. We read here that Jesus declares that many will ask when they clothed someone who had no clothes, or worst still, they did we not do it. Jesus tells them that it matters how we act towards our neighbor, and not if we obeyed all the laws and commandments. This is what He wants from us. To share with everybody, so that no one has a shortfall. This is what love towards our brother means, and this is what He requires.

I also have an obligation towards those that labor in the Word. I must ensure that they receive their share. So it is our duty to ensure that the pastor, reverend, missionary, Christian worker or whatever title they might have, have sufficient to meet their daily needs. For a full description on finances, read the answer on finances in the general section.

THE EXODUS OUT OF EGYPT BEGINS.

The night after the Passover was the start of the exodus out of Egypt. They had to use a detour to get to where they were supposed to go. But why? The Bible declares that the LORD did not want Israel to get involved in a war, and then return to Egypt. No, He wanted to protect them. The same happens to us. The LORD doesn't want us to go back to Egypt again. He wants to protect us from that what He took us out from. The LORD wants to protect us before we go through the baptism in water. How does the Bible declare it? Exodus 13 verse 17-18: *"17 ¶ And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18 but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt."*

Why did it happen at night? It is normally when all is dark around you, when you don't know which way to turn, that the LORD will bring you out from your Egypt. Why did they must go through the Red Sea?

Just as the LORD drowned all the Egyptians in the sea, He wants to drown all my sins and my sinful nature, in the baptism water. That is why you must be baptized. He wants us to be clean from our sins when we rise up from the baptism water, in order for me to keep my eyes focused on Him alone. What does Paul say in Romans 6? That baptism is a funeral. Not only are my sins buried, by my sinful nature is buried. I can rise as a new creation. Just as sure as Jesus was raised from the dead, will I be raised as a new creation from the water, that I can live a new life, a life with Him. This is being born again. This scripture teaches us exactly what happens during baptism. Paul also eluded on this in Col.2: 9-12 *"9 for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, 10 and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power: 11 in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; 12 having **been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.**"*

Having been made dead to sin by baptism, I can now stand boldly before the throne of God. Why? 1 John 3 verses 8 and 9: *"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."*

As I died with Christ, I can now live with Him. As the Israelites were freed from the Egyptians, I am also freed of my sins. But we must remember that the Israelites still sinned after passing through the Red Sea. They still longed to the meals in Egypt. But it did not mean that every time they sinned that they were back in Egypt. 1 John 1: 8-10; *"8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* Having passed through the baptism water, I must remember to break down the wall that I build up through sin between God and myself.

Something that I must understand from this section is that I must believe the Word of God and His covenant before I can get baptized. I first must understand that I am in Egypt before I can start on my journey to Canaan. If I was baptized before understanding this, I basically went for a swim in the Red Sea. I have not started this journey, as I am back in Egypt after my swim. I must understand that I must change from being an Egyptian to becoming an Israelite. Only then can I, like Israel, call out to the LORD. Everything before that is useless. That is the same answer Peter gave to the people when they asked him what they had to do to get saved: Acts 2:38 ***"38 And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."***

HOW IS BAPTISM ADMINISTERED?

By immersion. That is the way Jesus was baptized. The word in Greek for baptism is baptismo, which, if we look at what the meaning was in biblical times, was to immerse something in water, or other liquid. The best example I found was that the word baptismo was used in a recipe. In this recipe, one had to take meat and leave it overnight in a sauce, fully immersed, as the meat had to take on the flavor of the sauce. This is exactly what has to happen to us, we must receive His flavor, His personality. We must smell and taste the same as Him. The use of dripping water on people has its origin in the Roman church, which at the same time also found that you could even baptize dead people. For a full description see the answer to baptism in the foundational doctrines section. For an answer to child baptism, see the question later in this section, called "What about my children?"

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The next event in the history of Israel is that they reach Mara. The water at Mara was bitter, and not acceptable for human consumption. But God had a solution. Moses had to take a tree stump and throw it into the water, in order for the water to become usable. Exodus 15:25 *25 "And he cried unto the*

LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet". When we take water, in our case the baptism water, and we add the cross of Jesus, a piece of wood, to it, we get water to drink. In our case living water. But what is living water? John 7:37-39: "37 ¶ *Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. 39 But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified".* Jesus also referred to living water when he spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well. Here he told her that whoever drinks from this water will never thirst again. To us, when we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, our words and our deeds will be life giving. It will flow as streams from our inner being. It won't be necessary to ask people to do something good; they will do it without being asked. So after baptism, I must ask the LORD to baptize me with His Spirit, in order that living water will flow from me. How do I know that I received the Holy Spirit? Acts 19 verse 4 gives us the answer. "4 *And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. 5 And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the LORD Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."* As Paul baptized and laid hands on these people, the LORD wants that the same will happen to you.

But how does this relate to the Israelites and what happened to them. When we read Exodus 15 from verse 27, we see that Israel camped at Elim, a place with 12 fountains and 70 palm trees. Is this a coincidence? Maybe the 12 represents the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 70 palm trees the 70 elders that Moses had to choose to receive the Holy Spirit. Num 11:24 "¶ *And Moses went out, and told the people the words of Jehovah: and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the Tent. 25 And Jehovah came down in the cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and put it upon the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they did so no more."*

We see from this that in Israel's time, that to prophesy was a sign of having been baptized by the Holy Spirit. This is exactly what happened to the people Paul baptized. What does Joel say in Joel 2 verse 28 "¶ *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."*

But what about people who cannot speak in tongues? Jesus declared that streams of living water would flow out of you, with or without any of the two external signs. So if I act the way Jesus did, and people can see that I am giving out living water in the form of life giving life, I am baptized with the Holy Spirit.

HEALING.

The LORD also declares to Israel while at Meriba that should Israel keep to what He commanded them that He will not place any of the diseases that He put on the Egyptians, on them. Ex 15:26 "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his eyes, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians: **for I am Jehovah that healeth thee.**" This confirms to us that the LORD wants us to be healthy, but we must obey Him.

Were you aware of the fact that the LORD ensured that their clothes did not age, nor did get sick all the time in the wilderness? That is His will. Ex 23:25-26 "25 *And ye shall serve Jehovah your God, and he will bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. 26 There shall none cast her young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil."*

In both passages we see that the LORD says that He will heal Israel. But not only will He heal them, He will not put any of our diseases we had in Egypt, on us. He declares that He will take sickness away from us, and that the number of our days will be full. But there is one proviso. "If thou wilt diligently hearken

to the voice of Jehovah thy God" The LORD demands obedience. For a full discussion on healing, look at the answer in the doctrines section.

ALONE IN THE DESERT

Many times we wonder if the LORD is still with us. This is not a strange phenomenon. The Israelites also had the same feelings. While they were travelling through the desert named Sin, which gives us a new perception of where our own sin leaves us, they complained to Moses that the LORD was not with them, as they did not have any water. How many times have you felt like the LORD is no longer with you? But the LORD answered their pleading. Ex 16:6-7 " *6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the striving of the children of Israel, and because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?*" So every time you think that the LORD has left your side, do not be dismayed, He is always there.

WARFARE

The LORD wants to teach us to fight the enemy. The Amalekites did not attack them, but the attacking was done by Israel. The LORD taught them here that with Him on their side, they could overcome the enemy. With Him on your side you can overcome. The interesting fact here is that Aaron and Hur had to keep Moses' arms with the rod up in the air. The rod all the time of the exodus, was the physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as it was always used to do the signs and wonders. So with the Holy Spirit, you can tackle all the enemies, or sin, in your life and overcome them. With the Holy Spirit the victory is yours.

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

When Jethro visits Moses, we see that they embrace each other, and that Moses receives instruction from his father in law on how to organize the people. How many times do you find that the LORD has healed relationships that were broken? This all happens in our own time in the desert.

PROVISION

As soon as you think everything is over, you suddenly realize that you are not in the Promised Land yet. You are still in the desert. Now you only realize that the LORD wants to teach you His life. We first must understand that we must be dependent on Him for everything. He wants to supply us with manna and quails. He wants to provide us with water, but we must depend on Him for this. We must learn to be totally dependent on Him. Israel also tried to test Him. When they went out to gather manna, one would gather a lot and the other one a little. But the most remarkable fact is, that when they had to measure what they picked up, the Bible states the following Ex 16:18 "*And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.*" The Bible teaches us here that the LORD kept the balance between everyone. No one had more than what he needed, and no one had less than needed.

The one problem we still face today, even in church, is that of poverty. Jesus also addressed this problem when He spoke to the Pharisees and scribes. Matt 23:23 "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone*". We must remember that the Pharisees tried so hard to be obedient to the law of Moses, that they even brought tithes of things that the LORD did not prescribe. But Jesus says to them that they do not do the most important aspect of the law, and that is to look after the needs of their own people. I must learn that, that which is left over after ensuring that I have enough for myself, I must share with those that do

not have enough themselves. This does not only include the physical means, but those needs of every person of having a right to exist. I cannot take from the poor, whether it be financial or morally, and enrich myself. If you do that, the LORD will call you a hypocrite.

DOES THE LORD STILL SPEAK TO ME?

Three months after leaving Egypt, Israel finds themselves at Mount Sinai. This is the place where the LORD wants to instruct you personally. He does not need someone else to mediate for you. He wants to communicate personally. He wants to sit on His holy mountain and talk to you. What instructions does the LORD give to Moses? Ex 19:3-6 *"3 And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: 6 and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."* As priests, the LORD wants us to communicate with Him directly, to offer to Him personally. If we do that, then we would be a holy nation unto Him.

After this event the LORD gave Moses the Ten Commandments, but do you know what Israel's answer was to the LORD? Ex 20:18-20 *"And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, **Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.** 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not."* This is the same way we act. We tell the LORD that He should rather speak through someone else, through the reverend or the pastor. We cannot accept the fact that the LORD wants to speak to us directly. Why? Because then I can always use it as an excuse not to break with sin. I can always react that God did not personally tell me this, so I don't need to break with it.

SINAI - CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART

Sinai was the place where the LORD gave Moses all the commandments we find in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Moses did not only receive them at Mount Sinai, but he also had to teach them to the Israelites. They camped here for more than a year. It is also the place where they had to build the ark and the tabernacle. All the heads over ten, fifty, hundred and a thousand had to be appointed. For us today it is a place where the LORD writes his commandments on our heart. A place where the old heart of stone is forever changed to a heart of flesh. We might even experience that there is a calling on our life, but before we can walk into this ministry, we must receive the Word in our hearts. Has the LORD written His laws on your heart yet? Are there still areas that you must submit to Him? I have seen many people stuck at this juncture because of wrong behavior. They will tell you that the LORD has not told them yet to break this wrong habit. My answer is always the same. If you can show me the habit in the Bible, I will accept the behavior. If not, you must break with it. We want to get to Canaan. We don't want to spend additional time in the desert that is not required. Don't make Sinai your home.

Lets refresh our memories again. How does David define Canaan? *"Psalm 1: Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"*. This is Canaan. This is the destiny that the LORD has for you. If you don't want to accept it, you might wait another 40 years before you get to enter again. **Did you know that all the Israelites of 20 and over that left Egypt never entered into Canaan?** The only exceptions were Joshua and Caleb. Numbers 14:28 *" Say unto them, As I live, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, **from twenty years old and upward**, that have murmured against me, 30 surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning*

which I swear that I would make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." They didn't enter into Canaan because they doubted what the LORD could do. Do everything in your power to get what the LORD wants for you, never doubting Him. **Don't build your faith on the traditions of man. Paul specialized in it. But then he met Jesus.** I trust you want to get to Canaan.

One answer we get from this scripture concerning a question that a lot of people wrestle with. If a person first has to believe before being baptized, what happens to those that die without being baptized? We see that the LORD said that nobody under 20 years of age would die during the 40-year trek in the dessert. Why? He gave them a chance to choose for themselves. He wants to ensure that you get enough time to consider His Word and His ways, before giving you a choice. Only after reaching twenty, will He expect of you to have made your own decision, and will you be judged according to your decision. We see that all the Israelites that eventually entered into Canaan still had to go through the Jordan River to be baptized.

THE TABERNACLE.

Something else that happened while Israel was in the dessert was that the LORD instructed Moses to build the tabernacle. This was built and represented what Moses saw in the spiritual and had to be represented in the physical. What did the tabernacle represent? It was a place where sacrifices could be brought to the LORD, a place where the priests could intercede for Israel and get repentance for their sin. There were three sections in it, and in the one section, the holiest of holies, only the high priest could enter, where the LORD would physically manifest His presence. The high priest could only enter this area with blood to get redemption for the sins of Israel.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TABERNACLE FOR US TODAY?

When Jesus died on the cross for us, we read that the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. This serves for us as a sign that God has removed that, which separated us from Him. Jesus entered this once and for all to bring an acceptable sacrifice for all the sins of the world, so that we can be reconciled with God. We can now exhibit the boldness described in the book of Hebrews to enter the courts of God Almighty, by placing us under the Blood of Jesus. We no longer need any other person to be a mediator between the Father and us as Jesus has been offered up for us as an acceptable sacrifice once and for all. This also means that we can enter the presence of God the Father, **and never again must wonder if we have the right to be called children of God.** It also means that if I spend time in His presence, I will be like Him, that I will carry His anointing into a world that is forever searching to find the real God.

CANAAN, OR BACK TO THE DESSERT

The Israelites were extremely glad when they reached the end of their journey. They sent out people to look at what Canaan was like, and to report back to them. The report that they heard from some of the scouts were extremely negative, while only two scouts believed that the LORD will be with them and help them to destroy the existing people. The people who heard the report did not like what they heard, because they did not have faith. They did not believe that the LORD will give the enemy into their hand, and instead insisted that they elect a new leader to take them back to Egypt. How many times today do I still hear people say that they don't believe that the LORD will do something for them? They don't believe in signs and wonders, because they don't have faith. **We must believe, have faith.** How many times have you not believed that something good will happen to you? How many dreams of people have been shattered by unbelief? We must believe that all His promises are yeah and amen. Not only the ones that are easy. No, every promise. If you don't have faith, you are going to stay in the dessert. Maybe you must wait another 40 years, or maybe you will never enter into that which God had planned for you all along.

CANAAN - EVENTUALLY!!!!

What was the first thing Israel had to do after they crossed the Jordan? Attack and smite Jericho. Did Israel defeat all the enemies in Canaan at once? No. The Bible declares that we must destroy these strongholds one by one; the same way Israel destroyed all the enemy cities. Why? You cannot fight everyone at the same time. As you take possession of Canaan, the LORD will take you from stronghold to stronghold, and expect of you to break with it. You must destroy it. Another aspect that we read about here is that the different tribes did not each go their separate ways after crossing into Canaan. No, they all moved through the land to claim each tribe's area, destroy the enemy, and only after establishing each area, did they each go their separate ways. This is the same way the LORD expects us to function. When we lead someone to the LORD, He expects us to first teach the person in every aspect of a believer's life, before allowing us to go back to our own inheritance.

Something else that happened when Israel crossed into Canaan was that the LORD's provision of manna disappeared after they had their first meal from the land. Why? Now He expects us to do the planting and reaping, now He will bless whatever you do. Deut 11 verses 11-12 **"11 but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, 12 a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."** Now we can understand what Solomon meant in Psalm 127: *"Except Jehovah build the house, They labor in vain that build it: Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To take rest late, To eat the bread of toil; For so he giveth unto his beloved sleep."* Once inside of Canaan, the LORD will bless what I do, as long as I do what He commanded me to do, and that is not to follow other gods.

WHAT DO WE MUST BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR?

Once you enter in Canaan, is it possible to lose it. Is it possible to lose one's salvation? Even in Israel's time not everybody was saved. Everyone was circumcised as a sign or emblem of the old covenant. We find in the Bible that the LORD continually sent prophets to the Israelites asking them to repent and to change their ways. Ezekiel 18 is one of the passages where the Israelites are asked to repent, and if they don't, that the LORD will have no option as to let them die. Death here was not a physical death, but a spiritual death, a death forever. We also learn from this passage that we cannot say that we are saved as a result of our parents' actions, as everyone will be judged on his own way of living. Verses 20 and 30 of Ezekiel 18 gives us clarity: *"20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. 30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the LORD Jehovah. Return ye, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin."*

As I said earlier, not all Israelites were saved. The same applies today. I cannot proclaim that because I once upon a time gave my heart to the LORD that I will be saved. No, I can lose my salvation. The above scripture proves it. It is also confirmed in Ezekiel 3 verse 20 where he writes as follows: *"20 Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thy hand."* The LORD wants that everyone will be saved, but He wants you to obey Him. You can however, climb out of His hand and follow after other gods.

This always sounds to me like very strong words, so I want to end off with a question to you.

MY QUESTION TO YOU

This question comes from Deuteronomy 30 from verse 15: *"¶ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; 16 in that I command thee this day to love Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, that thou mayest live and multiply,*

and that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 17 But if thy heart turn away, and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; 18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days in the land, whither thou passest over the Jordan to go in to possess it. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; 20 to love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

My prayer for you is that you will choose this way.

MOSES 1 VERSE 2: WHAT IS AN OVERCOMER, AND WHAT DOES THE LIFESTYLE OF AN OVERCOMER LOOK LIKE?

INTRODUCTION

Once I know that I am in Canaan, the next question I have is: What does this lifestyle entail? Will I follow in the footsteps of Israel and run after other gods, or will I keep my side of the covenant?

We all live in an era where everybody would rather read books about Biblical subjects rather than reading the Bible itself, and we all wait for the rapture and all the repercussions as explained in great detail by so many writers, that we forget one thing, and that is that we will overcome. Do we know what will be expected of us? Do we realize that we are not going to wander about in streets of gold all day and do nothing?

But what is it going to be like?

This is what I am going to try and explain. This is how we, as overcomers, of which the Bible declares, "To him that overcomes", will act like and what is going to be expected of us, when the eighth day, according to Enoch will arrive. The day without time.

OVERCOME CANAAN

Do I know exactly what is going to be required of me once I have done everything that is required of me to enter into the Kingdom of God? Do I realize that I am a new creation, and have received eternal life? Do I realize that I have been washed as white as snow, and that the Blood of the Lamb has washed away my sins? Do I realize that I have inherited the righteousness of Jesus?

But that is not where it ends. The Bible is extremely specific over what will happen to those that overcome. But what is the difference between the two subjects? I thought I only had to become a child of God and that is the end. Now you are telling me that there will be overcomers as well. What is the difference?

If we look to Israel as our example, we see that they went out of Egypt, spent 40 years in the desert, and then inherited the Promised Land. Maybe that is where you find yourself today. You have done everything that is expected of you, so you must be in Canaan. You know that this is the place where you must sow, the LORD will let grow, and you must harvest.

But is this the way it happened in the time of the Israelites?

No. They crossed the river Jordan into Canaan, ate from its fruit and wheat, and the manna stopped. Jericho was still occupied by the locals, nothing had changed, except that they lost their supply of food. They still had to fight to obtain territory. They still had to go through all the land to take possession of each tribe's territory.

HOW DO I TAKE POSSESSION OF CANAAN?

Deut 4:1 *"Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.."*

It is difficult to explain what it is like to take possession of something. I would like to use an everyday example for everybody to understand it. The example I will use, most people will hopefully experience at least once in their lives, and that is to take possession of a property, be it a house or whatever other form it might take.

But first, what does it mean to take possession of something. It is to make it your own. When a person purchases a fixed asset, it is normally accompanied by a proof of ownership document. The person whose name is on this title deed, is the lawful owner of this fixed asset. This is what the LORD expects from us when we take possession of Canaan.

A title deed always lists what limitations if any, the title deed is subjected to. This normally states things like what the property can be used for, etc. This implies that I cannot use a piece of land for a hotel if the title deed stipulates that it can only be used for a residential dwelling.

The same applies to Canaan. If we look at the title deed for Canaan it contains the following clause: *"hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you"*. We can only take possession and use Canaan for the purposes ordained by God. Canaan was not meant to be used as they pleased, but only to be used as prescribed by God. Why? God declares that He will be a God to us if we will be a nation to Him. He is the one that manufactured the title deed, so He can put whatever limitations He wants on it. I cannot today even add or change clauses on a title deed without any approval from the authorities. No, I must abide by what the title deed specifies.

The same is true for Canaan. The LORD stipulates that we must listen to His statutes. If we do not, we don't have any rights to be in Canaan. Neither can we add or change any of these statutes, as they were stipulated years ago and are part of the new covenant. In the covenant He says that He will forgive our inequities and we will inherit Canaan. Anything that is not part of this is not part of the title deed.

Now you may ask that if these provisions were stipulated so long ago, can they not be changed? Unfortunately, not. For those of you who know the Cape Town area, you will know that in Fishoek no alcoholic beverages can be sold or served for money in any public area. This provision has been on the title deed for more than 300 years now, and still applies today. The same applies to Canaan. The LORD decided on the provisions when He took Israel out of Egypt, and the same applies to us today. We must listen to His ordinances.

I trust you want to stay in Canaan. Thus, we must abide by His ordinances.

Do you also want to change the ordinances applicable to Canaan? I know this is what we all want to do. I want to sit back and tell the LORD that I have now received His commands in my heart, and therefore all the fruits explained in the Bible will now manifest in my life. Then I want to continue with my life, or maybe even return to my previous lifestyle. But this is not the way it works. If we look at nature, and we see a plant that is not growing, this normally means one of two things. Either the plant is dead, or it is dying. The same applies to us. If I don't show any growth, I am either dead or busy dying. I must exhibit growth. I cannot cross the river Jordan and sit down for a picnic on the grass opposite Jericho. No, the people from Jericho will take me on and kill me.

So what do I must do? I must ask the LORD what I must do to overcome Jericho. There will still be strongholds in your life that you must overcome. Maybe it is just my playing boss over my wife and kids. Maybe it is my game of golf on a Sunday morning. Remember one thing; you cannot be fruitful in Canaan if you don't possess the land. The enemy will play yo-yo with you if you don't destroy his strongholds.

What did the LORD tell Israel when they entered the Promised Land? Deut 7:1 *"When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."*

When I know that I am His child, I cannot have excuses any longer for any improper deeds and actions in my life. No, I must totally break with them. If I do not bring glory to the Name of the LORD with what I am doing, then it is not from the LORD. That is what the Bible proclaims.

Fortunately for us there follows another verse later in Deuteronomy 7 that provides us with a sort of a way out. Verse 22: *"And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee."*

So we don't must break with everything all at once, but only as the LORD points them out to us. But I cannot use this verse as an excuse for any wrongdoing because what I am trying to cover up is still sin. I must break with everything that the LORD points out to me. This is what Jesus meant when He declared that I must take up my cross and follow Him. He will show me daily what I must change to be acceptable to Him. The moment He shows me something, I must break with it. Israel also had to do the same thing. They did not avoid the towns in Canaan. No they destroyed them.

But what are all these strongholds? Fortunately for us the Apostle Paul did most of the homework for us. Gal. 5:19 *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."*

Paul also wrote to the Ephesians the following: 4:31 *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. 1 ¶ Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3¶ But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."*

Once all these strongholds have been broken in my life, I will be walking in victory, I will be an overcomer. Why? I have removed everything that was a barrier between the LORD and myself. This is why the Bible declares I must be an overcomer. Then will I share in everything He has in store for me, a never-ending life with Jesus Christ, His Son and my Savior.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN OVERCOMER?

The Bible declares that we are more than overcomers through Christ who loved us. What does the life of an overcomer entail? Can I share in it now, or is it only available after death?

When we look at our everyday lives, what does an overcomer or victor look like? There are many people given these titles to by the media, athletes, rugby players, cricket players, political leaders, workers, beauty queens, even lottery winners.

This principle reminds me always of a song by a local gospel singer Danie Botha called Wenners or translated into English as Winners. This is something we all want to be. We all want to stand on the winner's rostrum with a winner's wreath around our neck. We all want to show others that we are something. I am not the freckled faced little boy wandering around in the street alone. No, I am a champion for my age group. I ended up as number one. Then there is still all the pizzazz that goes with being a winner.

In the world we get two types of victors. The story of the first group normally goes like this: "Mommy, do you know that Tommy is so clever at school, he is always the smartest student in his class. He is such

a hard worker." Meanwhile, back at the ranch Tommy is not even allowed to go to the toilet because he must learn. But this is normally not what we hear. Most of these victors are victors because they are living someone else's dream.

The second group of victors are those people who want a better life for themselves and their loved ones. They want to get the best out of life. They are normally used as an example for us to follow. They will work long hours just to get somewhere, to get acceptance from their peers and loved ones. They will always strive to even higher goals, but they never get to the point where they accept themselves for who they are. They always answer you with a "I'm really sorry, but I do not have time for this right now, as the business requires all my attention"

But this is not the victor or overcomers I want to write about. The Bible tells us that we will overcome, and that specific rewards are waiting for those that overcome. But what does the term overcome, actually mean. Luke sheds some light on it for us. Luke 11:21-22 *"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."*

When we analyze these verses, we find what the Bible states an overcomer is. We must be stronger than our enemy, and guard that I do not lose my weapons and allow it to be distributed as loot. How is this achieved? Let us look at the various parts of this scripture.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:"

This is what the Bible declares. Firstly, I must be strong. I must know where my strength comes from. I must know that through Jesus I am capable of everything. I must know that only in Him am I strong.

What does your life look like today? Are you strong in your faith? Can you take on the enemy the way Jesus did in the desert? Are you sure of your strength? Just remember that you might appear strong, but you are not. Your strength can only be determined when it is tested. Now I do not want to proclaim that you must expose yourself to situations where your faith will be tested every time. No, because I know my strength is only in Jesus. Only He is my strength. The Bible declares that we do not must worry about what we must say when we are confronted as Christians, as the Holy Spirit will lead us.

I must find my strength in Christ. Only when I know what He did for me, will I be able to overcome. Only then will I be able to stand firm.

The first characteristic of an overcomer is someone who is strong.

The second characteristic of an overcomer is someone who is well armed. This is what this scripture proclaims. But what does my weapons look like? Where in the Bible do we get a description of what our weapons? There are three passages I would like to refer to.

The first scripture comes from Romans 13 verses 11-14 *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."* This passage declares that I must put on the armor of light. I am not allowed to have anything to hide. If all my works are exposed, I must be able to stay in the light. All people must be able to see that I am a child of God. I must be able to live a life where no one can bring anything against me. That is my armor. My life must witness that I am someone whose life is controlled by Christ. A life without blemish. With such a life the enemy has no hold on you.

The second scripture is from 2 Cor.6 verse 7: *"By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left"*. If I do not know that it is only through the work of Christ that I received my righteousness, I might falter when taken on by the enemy. I must know that the covenant He prepared for me is an endless covenant, and that Christ fulfilled every aspect of it. This I

must believe. This is my armor. This I can only do when I understand the message of the Bible and what the purpose was of Jesus.

The third scripture comes from 2 Cor. 10 verses 3-6: *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."* This scripture gives us more information concerning our weapons, in that they are spiritual weapons, and not carnal weapons. In other words, it is in my soul and spirit that I must know and act like one that has laid down his life for Christ. This will help me to eradicate every stronghold or custom that is not of Christ. It does not matter if it is a bad habit or even a unwanted action, I will be able to overcome it. That is what this scripture declares. My weapons will allow me to break with every stronghold of the enemy. I can overcome any and every area where there is a distance between the LORD and me. I will not doubt it at all.

But the scripture we started off in Luke also states that I must watchful over what you have. I must be watchful all the time. Only when I do that will I be able to overcome. Only then will I be able to keep my possessions that I inherited from the LORD, my future with Him.

I must be watchful all the time. That is what the Bible declares. The Bible does not declare that the enemy will not confront us. No, I must be watchful every moment of my life.

Let me give you an example. The original part of this section was written between seven and half past eight one evening. It was surprising to me that I could not get my thoughts fixed on this subject. I then decided to save everything on the computer and switch it off for the day. Just as I got up from my chair, the phone rang. The moment I answered the phone I knew something was wrong. My youngest daughter asked to speak to her mom immediately. When Hettie told her how to stop the bleeding of a wound, I knew something was horribly wrong. I heard that we would meet them at the hospital.

When the conversation ended, I heard that two persons attacked my son in law in his garden, and that he suffered a stab wound in the back. In today's lifestyle in South Africa it is not uncommon to hear of attacks on people. What got me thinking immediately on the subject that I was writing about was that they lived in a security complex. This complex had armed guards patrolling the perimeter, and electric fences around the complete complex. They have done everything possible to ensure that they do not must worry about security at home, but still he was attacked.

You see he was not watchful. He was convinced that it was not possible to still find criminals in the secured area. The only thing he wanted to do was to water his garden. You do not expect the enemy there. Not in your own garden.

But this is where the enemy will attack you. He knows that you won't go to that sleazy nightclub because you would expect him there. That is why you will not go there. But I won't expect him in my own house, let alone on the pulpit of my church. But that is where he will start sowing seeds of doubt. It is through our own people that he will take us on. He even seduced Eve in the presence of the LORD, with Him in paradise.

The enemy will not overcome someone who is watchful. It is only when I am not looking out for him that he will attack and overcome me. That is what the scripture in Luke declares. What does that scripture declare again? *"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."*

So I must be armed every moment of the day. Then my possessions will be safe. I must remember not to let my watchfulness go for a moment. What does the writer of Hebrews declare in chapter 12 verses 11 to 17? *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up*

the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." This writer knew the rules of an overcomer. He knew that I couldn't change my life at a later stage. No, I must be watchful and do it immediately; else I could end up like Esau.

Fortunately, I know this is not what we want. No, we want a life with Jesus.

WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU MUST EXHIBIT TO BE COUNTED AS AN OVERCOMER?

Depending on whom you ask this can have any number of answers. The answer from those that are not strong in their faith, would be that you only must believe and leave the rest to the LORD. Then you could find those that tell you to do this and that and the next thing that you end up totally overworked and stretched out at the end of the day. Then another group might tell you that you must live a life as Christ would have lived. And that is only three viewpoints.

One thing that is certain is that every group of people will be well armed with their correct interpretations of scripture to warrant their views. It does not matter what your view is, someone will undoubtedly always differ from you.

Even the Bible seems to have various viewpoints on this subject. If we look at Hebrews 4 verse 16 the Bible declares that we must go to the throne of God with boldness. A person who exhibits boldness has always meant to me that such a person knew exactly what to do and he does things without even questioning it. But David declares that the LORD is close to those who are meek and broken hearted. This has always meant to me that such a person did not really exhibit any self-confidence, and someone who did not have an extraordinarily strong viewpoint either.

My question then is: Who is right? As an added question, we might ask that if we conclude, how will we know that the conclusion is correct? The second question is easy to answer, as we know what the Bible declares will be in store for such a person, but the first question is a totally different kettle of fish. I will start with the second question, as this will provide some light on the first question for us.

So where do we start?

I want to start and look at the promises the Bible has for those people who are overcomers. Revelation declares that only overcomers will receive eternal life. We must overcome. But how do we overcome? The answer comes from Revelation 12 verse 11 *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*

Three different aspects come to light from this scripture.

AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

How do we overcome by the blood of the Lamb? I must make a declaration that I do not trust in myself anymore, but that I trust in the Blood of Jesus to save me from the enemy and eternal fire. Israel had to do the same thing in Egypt. They had to use a hyssop branch to mark their doorposts with the blood of the lamb that they slaughtered. This action meant that the angel of death passed them over that fearful night in Egypt. They had to confirm the covenant with the LORD.

When we look at this part of history, we find that it was subjected to certain conditions. They had to prepare the Passover meal the night before the angel of death went through Egypt. How was this done? That had to remove all yeast from their homes. The same way yeast causes bread to leaven, sin does to

our lives. We become all puffed up when we have sin in our lives. Removing the yeast means that we must break and remove all sin from ourselves. They then had to slaughter the lamb and cover their doorposts with the blood of the lamb. Why? The blood declared that they the house was cleansed, that all inequities had been removed. For us today this means that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness. But I must break with sin. I can then eat from the Lamb and drink from the cup. I must fill myself with the Lamb. That is why Israel had to totally consume the lamb that night. Nothing could be left over. They could not still long for an Egyptian burger, no, they had to fill themselves with the lamb. For us it means that my life must be so consumed by the Lamb that I will not even think of anything else. No, Jesus must be your all in all.

This also unlocks the scripture in John 6, where Jesus declares that He is the bread of life. Our life must be totally and utterly consumed with Him. I cannot leave a backdoor open to the world. Once the Israelites had applied the blood to the doorposts, they were not allowed to leave their homes again. They had to stay under the blood of the lamb. The same rule applies to us. I cannot come out from under the Blood of the Lamb. It is my protection. If I am under the Blood of the Lamb the enemy can't touch me.

This is what is meant by the passage in Revelation. We must overcome the enemy by the Blood of the Lamb. If we stay under the blood, the enemy can't touch me. This ties in with what Peter declares that if I resist the devil, he will flee from me. He cannot fight against the Blood of the Lamb. This is what the new covenant means and does for us.

AND THEY OVERCAME BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY.

What does your testimony look like? This scripture teaches us that we must be able to take a stand as Christians. Is that your witness? Remember that 80% of what you say is not spoken physically but by the way you act, while only 20% of what you say is reflected in the words you say. Verbal communications never count for more than 20% of your communication.

So what does my testimony must entail? Jesus declares in Matthew 23 verse 23 (b) *"for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."* Isaiah describes it in chapter 58 as follows: *"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 ¶ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward."*

From this we can see that our lives must prove that we have done that which the Bible asks us to do, the right must be upheld, I must be merciful to everyone, and that I must not live faithlessly. In short, I must ensure that there is equality amongst all people. The LORD did not give to me so many resources that I might sit back and not worry about anybody anymore. No, He has provided for me because He wants me to share with my neighbor, with those who cannot make ends meet. Did you decide that you should be blessed with a high intelligence? No, everything comes from the LORD, and He expects me to share it with everyone around me.

Let me give you an example. Why do we find poor people? It might be a totally useless question to you, but actually it should address a very interesting question. What did the LORD instruct Israel? Deut.15:4 *"Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:"*

The LORD says that if we do what is required of us, that there should not be anyone poor amongst us in Canaan. Why? Because He expects you to distribute that which is left over after paying for what you need, to the needy. But there is more. If you own your own business, it is your obligation to ensure that

brothers and sisters in faith have a job. You are not allowed to provide for an unbeliever before you provide for a believer. Now you might say that the believer does not have the same qualifications as the unbeliever, or maybe the believer does not provide the same quality as the unbeliever. If the person does not have the same qualifications, what is the reason for this? Does the person not have the means to get these qualifications, or maybe he never got the opportunity?

It is your duty as the stronger and wealthier one to provide the opportunity to the less fortunate person to qualify for this qualification. If the work of the person is not at the same level as the unbeliever, you should talk to the person to correct the problem. If he does not have the ability to achieve this level of education, it is your duty to supply the necessary support in what is required to have a decent life. This is what is meant when people say that they read your deeds.

I also must be someone who can be trusted. My word and lifestyle have to be trustworthy, with no hidden agendas. If I should write something, like I do, I should not try to bring across my own doctrine. No, I should only declare what the Bible declares. This is the way the first Christians lived, and this should be our aim.

My life should not be full of little add-ons. No, people must be able to declare that my life speaks of someone who is sold out to Christ.

AND THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH.

This is probably the most difficult part for any person. Are you willing to give up your life for the LORD? Will you make the same declaration as the schoolgirl in America that was killed by fellow students in the school's library that they could kill her, as she would not change her stance that there is no God? Really? Will you still do it when they start chopping you to pieces?

This is how we overcome. Overcoming is not for sissies. You must be able to stand firm. This is what the Bible declares. You must be able to stand up for Christ when professors and other so-called clergy cast doubt on the contents of the Bible and say that some items are just stories. Maybe it is a case that they have not met Jesus yet. You must be able to declare with authority what the Bible declares that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is LORD. That is how we overcome. You may be ridiculed, but as I said earlier, overcoming is not for sissies.

Part of the prize that we will receive is that we will rule with Jesus Christ. I must learn here on earth to rule, as I cannot learn to do that in heaven. But what do I must learn to rule over? Sin. I must be able to rule over my own sin before being ready to rule in heaven. I must learn to break with every sin in my life. I must not allow myself to get into situations where I might sin. When I do end up in these situations, I must be able to walk away from there without allowing sin to rule over me.

WHAT IS THE CORRECT ATTITUDE THEN?

Now that we know what an overcomers lifestyle is, we need to find out what the correct attitude of an overcomer is. I am going to be puffed up because of my lifestyle, or will I adopt a lowly lifestyle? What does the Bible declare? Will I walk over everyone in life because of who I am? Will I follow every doctrine that tells me how great I am or motivate me to be puffed up?

The Bible declares that we are more than overcomers, but there is a second part to the passage. This part says that I am more than an overcomer through Christ who loved me. I am not in an overcomer by myself, but only through Christ. The question that immediately stands out is: How do I get His attention to be loved by Him? What does the Bible teach on this subject?

The following passages will shed some light on this subject.

"Ezekiel 21:26: Thus saith the LORD GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high."

"Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"

"Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"

From the above passages, we find two attitudes that must prevail in a person. The first is that one should be humble, and the second one is meek. When I look at these verses and many more in the Bible, I see that the LORD has a special place for those that know that they are nothing. For those that know that they are not better than anyone else. For that person who knows that they are rejected, cast out, and those that are just rejected by society. Those are the people that get His attention. That is why Isaiah declares in chapter 61 that the good news is meant for those types of people.

Am I convinced that it is the case? Let us look at another verse in Scripture. Isaiah 57 verse 15: *"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.."*

This is what the Bible declares. I must humble myself. I cannot do as I please. No, the LORD dwells with him that is humble and of a contrite spirit.

Why? When I am not humble, I am still full of myself. I am still in control. I have not yet been stripped of my own dignity. I have not yet come to the place where I know that I am totally dependent on the LORD. I still think I can look after myself. I still think that when I work hard, I will be able to support my family. But are you aware of the fact that you could have a heart attack tomorrow, or that you can find out that you have cancer, or that one of your largest clients decides not to settle their account? Or maybe even the bank manager decides to call in your overdraft facility.

What am I saying? I believe you must get to the place where Job was. That you cannot prescribe to the LORD what He can or cannot do in your life. What does Jeremiah say on this subject? Jeremiah 13:23 *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."* Just as an Ethiopian has no control over the color of his skin, I have no control over what will happen in my life. If I was born with an above average intelligence, I must realize that it is a gift from God. I cannot use this as a measure to count myself higher as the one with a below average intelligence. This is the type of person the LORD can work with, those that have been totally and utterly stripped of their own selfish beings. People that get up in the morning and ask the LORD what He wants them to do today. If you have not yet reached this point in your life, ask the LORD to lead you in getting there. The easiest route I found was to follow Jesus.

We all think that the cross was a place where Jesus died. But do you realize that if you want to be His disciple you must follow Him to the cross? A disciple does what his teacher does. Have you laid down your life at the cross? Have you clothed yourself with His life afterwards? That is what you must do. Once you have done that, you will exhibit His humbleness. That is what the Bible teaches.

All these words and ideas can be combined in one word: Obedience. This is why Jesus came to earth, and that is why He was exalted.

WHY OBEDIENCE?

Deut 12:28 "Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God."

1 Samuel 15:22 *"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."*

Romans 6:16 *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"*

This is how we get the LORD's attention. When I join myself to those who are obedient? Those who do what the LORD commands, those that are humble and have a contrite spirit. The moment I do this, I will get His attention. Something that will happen almost instantaneously is that the Bible will open up for you in a way never experienced before. Then I will realize that I only have a short life on earth, but the way I live my life here will define where I will spend the rest of time. And that is the prize we all long for, an eternity with the LORD.

This brings us to the next question.

WHAT ARE THE PRIZES THAT WE WILL RECEIVE AS OVERCOMERS?

"exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high" This is what the Bible declares. Then we will be with Him in Heavenly places. But this is not all. John described several things that will happen to overcomers. Let us look at these passages. Most people probably know the promises described here, as we all want to receive these blessings. But I must remember that I can only share in the spoils if I participated in the race. This is the way Paul discussed it in Philippians 3 verse 14: *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

What does this prize look like?

REVELATION 2:7

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

If you wonder if this is not the same tree that Adam and Eve ate from, the answer is no. There were two trees in paradise, one giving life and one leading to death. The tree described here is the tree of life, so it will feed us with life giving fruit that will bring us still closer to God.

Where is paradise? What happened to it after Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden? Is paradise still guarded by angels? Have you ever wondered about this subject? The Bible does not really give us any definitive answer, yet we know that it must still exist somewhere. Even Jesus told the person on the cross that he will be with Him in paradise.

Not only will we be in paradise, but we will eat of the tree planted in paradise. How do I answer these types of questions?

Paradise is described for us fully in the Book of Enoch. This book was left out of our Bible in around 400 AD, as people believed we only needed one book that described the end times. People like Jesus, Peter, John, and James quoted Enoch in the Bible. Enoch is also the one person we know of together with Elijah that was taken to heaven alive. They are also the two witnesses people believe that John refers to in Revelation that will return at the end of time. But maybe they are not.

Paradise is described in Enoch chapters 24 and 25. As most people do not have their own copies of this book, it is quoted in full.

"Enoch 24:4: And amongst them was a tree such as I had never yet smelt, neither was any amongst them nor were others like it: it had a fragrance beyond all fragrance, and its leaves and blooms and wood wither not for ever: 5 and its fruit is beautiful, and its fruit resembles the dates of a palm. Then I said: 'How beautiful is this tree, and fragrant, and its leaves are fair, and its blooms very delightful in appearance.' 6

Then answered Michael, one of the holy and honored angels who was with me, and was their leader. [Chapter 25]: 1 And he said unto me: 'Enoch, why dost thou ask me regarding the fragrance of the tree, 2 and why dost thou wish to learn the truth?' Then I answered him saying: 'I wish to 3 know about everything, but especially about this tree.' And he answered saying: 'This high mountain which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is His throne, where the Holy Great One, the LORD of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit, when He shall come down to visit 4 the earth with goodness. And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgment, when He shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation 5 for ever. It shall then be given to the righteous and holy. Its fruit shall be for food to the elect: it shall be transplanted to the holy place, to the temple of the LORD, the Eternal King. 6 Then shall they rejoice with joy and be glad, And into the holy place shall they enter; And its fragrance shall be in their bones, And they shall live a long life on earth, Such as thy fathers lived: And in their days shall no sorrow or plague Or torment or calamity touch them.' 7 Then blessed I the God of Glory, the Eternal King, who hath prepared such things for the righteous, and hath created them and promised to give to them."

In Enoch's second book, called The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, paradise is described. Chapter 8 from verse 1: *"Of the assumption of Enoch to the third heaven 1 And those men took me thence, and led me up on to the third heaven, and placed me there; and I looked downwards, and saw the produce of these places, such as has never been known for goodness. 2 And I saw all the sweet-flowering trees and beheld their fruits, which were sweet-smelling, and all the foods borne by them bubbling with fragrant exhalation. 3 And in the midst of the trees that of life, in that place whereon the LORD rests, when he goes up into paradise; and this tree is of ineffable goodness and fragrance, and adorned more than every existing thing; and on all sides it is in form gold-looking and vermilion and fire-like and covers all, and it has produce from all fruits. 4 Its root is in the garden at the earth's end. 5 And paradise is between corruptibility and incorruptibility. 6 And two springs come out which send forth honey and milk, and their springs send forth oil and wine, and they separate into four parts, and go round with quiet course, and go down into the PARADISE OF EDEN, between corruptibility and incorruptibility. 7 And thence they go forth along the earth, and have a revolution to their circle even as other elements. 8 And here there is no unfruitful tree, and every place is blessed. 9 And there are three hundred angels very bright, who keep the garden, and with incessant sweet singing and never-silent voices serve the LORD throughout all days and hours. 10 And I said: How very sweet is this place, and those men said to me: Chapter 9 The showing to Enoch of the place of the righteous and compassionate **1This place, O Enoch, is prepared for the righteous, who endure all manner of offence from those that exasperate their souls, who avert their eyes from iniquity, and make righteous judgment, and give bread to the hungering, and cover the naked with clothing, and raise up the fallen, and help injured orphans, and who walk without fault before the face of the LORD, and serve him alone, and for them is prepared this place for eternal inheritance.**" (Different original manuscripts might refer to this as chapter 5)*

I am aware that these are two long quotations, but I trust that it will shed some light on what and where paradise is. It is remarkably interesting to note that the second section ends with the same promises as what Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 25, and also prophesied in Isaiah 59.

REVELATION 2:11

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

What is the second death? That is eternal death. The death from which you can never escape. A death with Satan and his army, in the everlasting pool of fire. We find the second death mentioned in Revelation 20 verses 11 to 14: *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast*

into the lake of fire. This is the second death.." Not something to be on the look out for. Fortunately as overcomers we will be free from the second death.

REVELATION 2:17

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

We find two promises in this verse. The first one says that we will eat of the hidden manna. Manna was the food that the Israelites ate during their trek in the dessert. This manna was a reference to Jesus, the bread of life. So we will never ever have a shortfall of what the LORD promised, as He Himself is our everlasting manna.

The second promise says that we will receive a white stone with a new name written on or in it, that only you will know. Have you ever thought that you are worth nothing? Do you realize that you are so precious to the LORD that He will give you a name that only you and He will know? That is how much He loves you. And it will be a white stone, telling you that you will be washed white with the Blood of the Lamb.

REVELATION 2:26

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:"

Can you rule over nations? That is what is expected of you. You will rule over nations that don't know the LORD. But you must do His work till the end. That is what is expected of you. Revelation 20 verses 4 to 6 enlighten us on this intriguing subject. *"4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. "*

REVELATION 3:5

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

This is probably the one promise that we can all quote. This is the one passage that we all want to remember. It gives me the satisfaction that I know that I will be with Jesus in heavenly places. It also provides us with the undisputed evidence that we will be with the LORD that Jesus would always confess my name with the Father, as long as I am an overcomer.

REVELATION 3:12

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

The LORD is on the lookout for pillars to trust on, people He can use. People that will only proclaim His Word, not His Word interpreted by our own doctrine. People that know what is expected from them. People He can trust through thick and thin. Were you aware that He wanted to use you in His temple?

Not only does He want to use you as a pillar, but that you will be in His presence forever. Not only that, but you will be a support to Him.

REVELATION 3:21

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Jesus is looking for people to reign with Him. We will not be acting like counsellors to Him and be seated on His right- or left-hand side. No, we will reign with Him. We will share His throne, just as He is sharing His Father's throne. Do you realize what it must be like to sit on a throne? That is what is expected of us and declared by the Bible. The only proviso is that we must have shared His life.

REVELATION 21:7

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

This must be the best verdict anyone could ever receive. That you would inherit all things, and that Jesus would be your God forever. That you will be counted as His son always, and that He would want to share His life with you forever and ever.

CONCLUSION.

What is the main characteristic required to be counted as an overcomer? Obedient. I must be willing to count myself as nothing like David pronounces in the Psalms, someone who is willing to be counted with slaves when it comes to the LORD. A broken spirit is a peace-making spirit. Contentious, hard-nosed people can never agree. *"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise".*

Isaiah 66 summarises it as follows: Verse 2 *"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to **him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.**"*

MOSES 1 VERSE 3: HOW DO I STAY IN CANAAN?

Another way of asking this question is to ask if I can lose my salvation. Or maybe we can phrase it as follows: What will the LORD do to ensure that I will not lose that which He promised me I will receive if I follow His commandments? It might be surprising to you that you are suffering while everyone tells you that you should be living as an overcomer in victory. I know it might be difficult to provide a correct answer to this question, as correct might be influenced by your own doctrine, but I will try and give a biblically correct answer.

Earlier this morning, Hettie and I were chatting about a case where we had to give direction to someone who was looking for answers. The one thing that stood out to both of us was the fact that people can cling to a time where they knew that they served the LORD, and does not like to be told to change their lives to fit in with what the Bible wants from them.

What do I mean? In the previous article I wrote about what it is like to be an overcomer. Those are the only people that will inherit what the Bible declares. But what happens when I find myself short of those requirements? What happens to me now?

THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL.

Let us look at Israel's history again, and what messages and pointers we can glean from their lives. Remember that the LORD chose only Israel and that we must choose to become part of His nation. This will then guide us as to how we must act, and how the LORD will respond to our actions. When Israel entered into Canaan, they were under the leadership of Joshua. Under his leadership Israel served the LORD and did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. Joshua however warned Israel that they should not turn away from the LORD, and they even built an altar to confirm their words before Joshua's death.

After his death Israel entered the Judges period where the LORD would raise people up on an as required basis. These judges would rule over Israel for short periods while they were attacked by outside nations. This was the time of Gideon, Deborah, and Samson. But why did the LORD allow Israel to be attacked by foreign nations?

We read in the second chapter of Judges that the LORD sent an angel to speak a curse over Israel, as they did not kill the local people of Canaan, as instructed by the LORD. Israel decided that the Canaanites and Azurites and other nations were not so bad and that they could be used as slaves, so why kill them. What does the Bible say? Judges 2:1 *"And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. 2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? 3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. 4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD."*

Many years later the elders ask Samuel, who was Judge, high priest and prophet at that time, that they wanted a king like all the neighboring nations. The LORD warns them against getting a king, and informs Samuel that Israel did not reject Samuel, but they rejected the LORD. The LORD then declares that the kings will be hard on them and that he will take their children for himself, their tithes he will lay claim to and that they will work for him. Israel still prefers this lifestyle as they do not want to be personally responsible to the LORD.

The Bible informs us that during the times of the kings, life was both good and bad for them. If the king did what the LORD wanted, like David, they were prosperous, but when the king did his own things like Ahab, it was bad news for them. But the LORD never gave up. He sent prophets to Israel and called on them to repent from their wicked ways and turn back to Him. If they did not heed to these calls, He

would reject them. Some of the prophets like Isaiah and others like Jeremiah were killed or banished, while others were jailed. During this time in history we find that only Judah still served the LORD and all the other tribes were serving their own gods. The people in Jerusalem wanted to go back to Egypt as they found that more acceptable that serving under the Babylonians. Some decided to do that, and they captured Jeremiah and took him with. The one thing we read about this time is that none of those people, who went to Egypt, returned to Jerusalem. What does the Bible tell us about this event? Jeremiah 44 verses 26 to 27: *"Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The LORD GOD liveth. 27 Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them."* Nobody that caused Israel to go back to Egypt ever returned to Jerusalem.

Once the people that went to Babylonia returned, Judah never had their own king again, and were ruled over by foreign kings. That is why the Jews were expecting a real earthly king when Jesus came, as they expected Him to free them from their earthly problems. They expected Him to rise up and free them from Roman rule; they expected Him to be crowned king and not to die on a cross.

An interesting snippet of information is that during the time of the kings in Israel, David was the last person anointed as king by the LORD. All the kings after him were either self-appointed or appointed by their fathers.

HOW DO WE INTERPRET THIS HISTORY FOR TODAY?

How does this passage in history affect what is happening today and what should we learn from it?

Once we decide to take possession of Canaan, we must also of necessity do what the LORD stipulates. If I still have areas in my life that I need to bring under His jurisdiction, I must do it. I cannot declare that it will not have any effect on me. No, I must break with it completely or face being tormented by it. Remember Israel also thought that they did not must kill all the other nations, but the LORD cursed them for this. Originally, He would have destroyed it for you, but now you will be free from it for periods of time, but it will torment you.

These circumstances were also found in the early church. Everyone did what the apostles taught him or her. No wonder Peter had 3000 people join them on the day of Pentecost. These people lived together every day, eating together, praying together, and worshipping together. This church lived the life the Israelites lived under Joshua and the early Judges. Paul and the disciples also had to warn the early church against becoming timid and falling away. The same thing happened when Abimelech rose and appointed himself as head of Israel. We know that in the time period 300 – 400 AD people rose up and appointed themselves as head of the Church.

Some of these, like Constantine, even paid people to get baptized and changed pagan cathedrals and priests into "Christian" places of worship. This pointed to the introduction of the period of the kings in Israel. This will also happen in my own life if I do not break with sin completely.

This is the time when you decide that it is good to have someone as your cover, because you cannot be responsible to the LORD yourself. No, you want someone else to decide for you what is wrong and what is right. This will then allow the LORD to deal with you dependent on what your "king" will do. If he is like David, you will be blessed, but if he is sinful like Ahab, you can expect hard times. Sometimes we are born into this situation as we were born in a household where the parents were already subjected to an earthly "king". But what did the LORD proclaim a king will be entitled to? 1 Samuel 8 verses 9 – 18: *"Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. 10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. 11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and*

some shall run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

These were not good words, but Israel accepted it. The same applies to us today. The king took that which originally was meant for the Levites, and he decided how to spend it. Even David decided that he will build a temple for the LORD, which Solomon did, but David decided how the Levites would serve in the temple, what instruments people would play etc. This is not accusing David of anything bad but showing that David did as the LORD proclaimed through Samuel. That is why when the king served the LORD, Israel did great, but also if the king served other gods, Israel suffered.

The same applies to us today. The leadership at church will decide how and where your offer or tithe will be used. The largest part will be used to pay for the salaries of the full-time staff. (See verse 15 above) You are not allowed to decide for yourself anymore, no you will accept what your leaders decide. You will subject yourself to their teachings and rules, even if it clashes with what you believe in, as you have decided to subject yourself. You gave up your freedom and chose to subject yourself. Now the leaders will decide who they will appoint into leadership positions. They will however be from your sons and daughters but will not be appointed by the LORD. They will work for the leader and do what he wants them to do. I am not saying that your congregation is from Satan or something. No, they are only doing as was prophesied by Samuel. I am also not saying that you won't go to heaven if you stay there, as even in David's time and thereafter, the LORD still maintained that each one of us has a personal responsibility, and that is what we will be judged on.

In church history we find various prophets trying to bring the church back to the LORD. These people point to people like David, Isaiah, Joel and Amos, who tried to bring Israel to follow the LORD again. Eventually in church history nobody was safe anymore and people had to flee for what they believed. Think about the French who fled to places like South Africa for what they believed.

The same applies to us today. How many people have been "killed" by the church in our day and age? People who question what the church preaches or does not agree with the local pastor. It happened to Isaiah, so why do we expect it to be different in our day and age? You now must make a choice. Either you go back to Egypt, or you go to Babylonia. How do I know the difference? If I decide that it does not help at all to be a Christian, or if I decide to serve the LORD according to my own preferences, then I have decided to return to Egypt. You see the LORD must fit in with the way I believe, with my lifestyle, as I know the difference between right and wrong. Remember one thing, and that is that those people who decided to return to Egypt never saw Jerusalem again.

People like a Charles Finney or a Wesley who called on the Church to repent and follow Jesus again portray this time to us. This is one reason why a denomination cannot make a difference in people's lives, because if Christianity were a movement, the LORD would have used politicians or terrorist groups to do the work of the Church. But He wants to like in the days of Israel, to come and make His home amongst us. If you break with everything that is not from the LORD, He will come and live with you.

How did it happen that Israel was captured by the Babylonians and exiled? We read the following in Jeremiah 21 verse 8 and 9: *"And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. 9 He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and passeth over to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey."* The LORD asks Israel to turn their backs on their king and follow Him. They must join forces with the Chaldeans to keep their lives. Why? Because

membership of a denomination will not get me to heaven. No, I must make a choice to follow the LORD in every way even if He tells you to break with the doctrines and confessions of your church. For everyone else it looks as if you are joining forces with the devil, but if you do not do it, you will lose your eternal life. This passage is also a confirmation of a similar passage in Revelation 18 verse 4: *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

THE CALL FOR TODAY.

I believe that we are living in this timeline today. A time when people must make a choice again to serve the LORD. If you choose not to put yourself under His jurisdiction, you will end up like the rest of Judah who never saw Jerusalem again. How do I know that for sure? There comes a day when you realize that the message you receive at church is not the message of the Bible. If you do not agree with them, then you must leave. One of the messages we hear today is that of mainstream clergy not believing in the virgin birth of Jesus. Those professors cannot believe that God would send His only Son to die for us. They tell us that homosexual behavior is acceptable as even pastors are homosexual. That Mohammed was sent to save the Muslims, that we need of a new Bible that proclaims only what we believe. We live in an era where a pastor I know declared that he saw straight through someone in church who had some uncommon business practices, but that the LORD protected him from such a person. He forgot about the passage in Ezekiel 34 where the Bible declares that the LORD holds him responsible for all the members of his flock. The LORD has to do the calling once more, and that is for you to leave the kingdom of man and follow Him.

The biggest sacrifice you will make is to leave everything behind. Like Israel had to do when they went with the Chaldeans, we must leave everything behind, and put our trust in the LORD to provide for our every need. You cannot keep a backdoor open just in case the LORD does not come through for you, no you must abandon everything. You must hand over everything to Him and trust Him to do the right thing for you. He will do it.

The time Babylonia is not an easy time. You must hold on to the LORD only as everyone will tell you that this is not from the LORD and will confront you. You will be lonely. I know of many people who are currently finding themselves in Babylonia. Like a Daniel people call on you to declare their dreams, you get glimpses of what heaven is like, but it is a lonely road. But we know from history that there will come a day when you will be called on to rebuild the temple of the LORD. A day when Jesus will call on you to build His temple following His instructions. I believe the time is coming when we will move into the era described for us in Ezra and Nehemiah where people are being raised up as leaders for His church to take possession of Israel as described in Jeremiah 30.

If you feel that you cannot make this move out from under an earthly king in Jerusalem to Babylonia, remember this was the word that the LORD gave to Israel before they had to make that choice. Isaiah 41 verse 10 to 20: *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. 11 "All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. 12 Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. 13 For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. 14 Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. 15 "See, I will make you into a threshing-sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. 16 You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel. 17 "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. 18 I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. 19 I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, 20 so that people*

may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it".

We all expect revival, but revival did not come through a king of Israel. No, the Bible teaches us different. The book of Ezra puts it into perspective for us: *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."*

I believe that we are living in this time where Jesus is standing with open arms, pronouncing that the time has come for us to rebuild Jerusalem. He is calling on us to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem before He can descend with the New Jerusalem. This is my wish, and I am convinced that this is what the LORD is waiting for.

After Israel returned from captivity, they were ruled over by other nations. But this was the time the LORD used to teach them to wait for Jesus to come. This was a time when they expected the Messiah. To us it is a time of preparing ourselves for the second coming of Christ. A time when we must build up our defenses, our Jerusalem walls. I know that this is what the LORD desires.

What a time to look out for. Remember just one thing, and that is to realize that you must expect a Savior, not an earthly king as Israel expected.

I want to end of this article with Isaiah 59 and a portion of Isaiah 49.

*"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. 4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. 5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. 6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. 7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. 8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. 9 ¶ Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. 10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. 11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. 12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; 13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. 14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. 15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. 16 ¶ **And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.** 17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. 18 **According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.** 19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of*

the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. 20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

Isaiah 49: "8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; 9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. 11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. 12 Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. 13 ¶ Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted."

MOSES 1 VERSE 4: WHAT ABOUT MY CHILDREN?

This might not be a problem for you as you might think you have all the answers, but when someone asked me how children fitted into the Israel experience, I could not answer the question immediately. I had to do some soul searching and eventually turned to the LORD for His answer. I always thought I answered the question as part of baptism and in Moses 1 verse 1: What does the Bible teach on how a person becomes a Christian, and thus inherits and possesses Canaan, the Promised Land, only to find that I didn't really answer the question.

This question can also open up a minefield if you are not careful, depending on your own background. If you come from a traditional Roman Catholic/Luther/Calvinistic background you might think that all that has to happen is that the baby must be baptized within the first three or so months and then everyone can relax, as the child now belongs to Jesus. But what about the infant that dies within the first couple of hours? What happens to them? That is why the Roman Catholic Church baptized dead persons as they could still be saved according to them. Maybe you think that the child will belong to Satan as Jesus has no say over the child if it is not baptized yet.

If you have a Pentecostal background you believe that the child must believe in the saving grace of Jesus before being baptized. As the child was brought up in a Christian home the child will be saved, even before baptism can be administered. As soon as the child is eleven or twelve years old most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches will baptize the child and then everything is all right.

But where in the Bible do we find answers to this question in the Bible? I asked the LORD to answer it for me as I did not know how to overcome everyone's objections. Even if we look to Israel's' example, we find that the children were baptized with their parents in the Red sea and therefore their sinful nature was removed. They were thus baptized with their parents and thus were part of Gods nation. Or were they?

Let us look at a couple of scriptures before we continue. The first scripture comes from Galatians four verses one and two. *"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father."* (Gal 4:1-2) This scripture confirms that a child is under the authority of its tutors and governors until the time decided on by their father. Only when the father decides that the child can stand his own ground, will the child be allowed to accept responsibility for himself.

Romans 5 verses 1-2: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* (Rom 5:1-2) This scripture points out that we are saved by faith only and not by baptism. This is an extremely important issue, as everyone rushes of to say that Peter said it is the baptism that saves us, but the Bible spells it out in Roman and Galatians as well as other books, that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only one that can save me from hell. If we examine the scripture referred to in the first book of Peter, he declares that it is near impossible to believe and not to be baptized. That is why he declares it is the baptism that saves you. Noah had to first believe that the LORD was going to destroy the earth through water before he built the ark. These scriptures all confirm that it is faith that will save us.

These scriptures also confirm various other parts of scripture. Both Galatians and Romans follow a set sequence, firstly repentance, then faith and then baptism. These verses in Hebrews give us the exact sequence. *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."* (Heb 6:1-2) Mark also uses the same sequence. *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be*

damned". (Mar 16:15-16). This scripture tells us that we would not be damned if we aren't baptized, but we will be damned for not believing. Only once you put your faith in Christ can you be baptized.

This sequence was first given to us in Exodus. Israel had to first call out to the LORD, (repentance), then call out to the LORD to save them, (faith), and then had to have the Passover meal. They then left Egypt and were baptized in the Red Sea, and at Mara were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

If we then look at our children, we find that the LORD did not expect them to believe that they would inherit Canaan, as they were still under the jurisdiction of their parents. The same is true today. The LORD expects me to take responsibility for their lives until we can trust them never to stray of His way. But that is where the problems start. We as parents do not want to take this responsibility and hence want to get them baptized for them to be responsible for themselves. No, the LORD wants us to shoulder this responsibility until we can trust them to make this decision. He will judge these children according to our lifestyles. That is why Moses declared in Deuteronomy as follows: *"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* (Deu 6:5-7)

How convinced am I? The first time Israel reached the Jordan river and were ready to inherit Canaan, they declared that they were scared to cross the Jordan, as their wives and children would suffer and die. *"And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"* (Num 14:3) The Israelites tell the LORD that they are worried about their wives and children. We do exactly the same. We declare that we want to do what is best for the children as it is them that we are worried about. The LORD gave Israel the following answer: *"Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,"* (Num 14:28-29). The LORD is not interested in my arguments concerning others; no He is concerned about my relationship with Him. If I have received the baptism as a believer, He will not judge my children, but give them the ability and chance to decide for themselves.

This also tells us that nobody is born in Canaan. No, everyone is born in Egypt, in other words all have sinned and must be saved. We all must decide for ourselves to serve the LORD, or to go to Canaan. If they never decide to get out of Egypt, they will be damned and die in Egypt, and receive a sinners judgement. Ezekiel puts it as follows: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."* (Eze 18:20) *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin."* (Eze 18:30) I know it is very harsh words, but it doesn't help putting it any other way. I as father or guardian of the child will take the responsibility for my children until age twenty. Only after that will the LORD judge them according to their own life. He did that to Israel and will do the same to us.

Something else that crept out of the woodwork while working on this issue is the covenant meal, commonly referred to today as communion. As soon as I believe that the LORD is the only one that can save me is the time I can partake of this meal. It is only a meal for believers, and hence children cannot partake of it. My children cannot share in it as they must have something to look forward to when deciding to follow Jesus. The communion must become a meal again as it was meant to be, something to go up to Jerusalem for. It must remind us that the first time we took part of it was the first time we took responsibility for our own lives and based on that death could not have a hold on me. I can now appear before the LORD without fear or anxiety as I am now clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is also the place where those that administer childhood baptism get stuck, as they never leave Egypt. This is why they must fight against the enemy every day as they never get rid of their sinful

desires and wants. You must leave Egypt for that to happen, as the Satan and his followers all die in the Red Sea and I am free from working for him.

In closing I want to mention something else. Jesus was both First born and Lamb. He had to die the death of the first-born and declare the tenth plague null and void, so that we do not must be circumcised. He could not plead the Blood of the Lamb over Him, as He was the Lamb that had to die. This means that I no longer must worry about the death of the first born, as Jesus paid the price for that. The only thing I must worry about is to teach my children to walk in the ways of the LORD, and when they come of age, to lead them to Jesus, which they must decide if they would follow Him or not. I also must ensure that they do not decide at a young age to get baptized, as they must understand the full consequences of their decision before being baptized. If we don't this scripture will remind us of what would happen to them should they decide to stray or deny Him during their teenage and young adult lives. *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame"* (Heb 6:4-6) We as parents must understand the impact of this decision and then would probably agree that we cannot allow children before their teenage years or early adult life to make this decision to follow Jesus. Once they have gone through these years will they must make the decision.

Paul tells is what the LORD felt like when He realized that Israel did not trust Him to take them into Canaan. *"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."* (1Co 10:1-6)

MOSES 1 VERSE 5: WHAT IS LOVE?

The Bible is extremely clear that the relationship between the LORD and His people are always portrayed as a love relationship between a man and his wife. Jesus himself referred to it on numerous occasions while on earth. The book Song of Solomon can be read and a whole new world would open up to us.

We are taught by almost everyone that we must love the LORD and our neighbor, but we still find intolerance between Christians from different groups and congregations. This same intolerance is even evident between a man and his wife, where sometimes not even a trace of love is to be seen in this relationship, and we find that they only live together because they do not know how to separate, or do not see their way clear to go their separate ways.

How does one demonstrate love?

This subject had me troubled for a number of years. John gives us the answer in 1 John 4 verse 20: *"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"* This passage declares that we show our love to God by loving our neighbor. But how do I show my love to my neighbor? Is it by just saying to him: "I love you?" John also gave us the answer to this question in verse 10. *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* This scripture informs us that God proved His love to us by giving Jesus to die in our place, so that we can live. In other words, He served us with an undeserved gift. And it was the best gift he, the Father, could give. He did not skimp, but He gave His only, His everything. To do or give something to someone without being asked, or without that person deserving it, that is love.

If we look at the love of the LORD, we find that the sun rises every morning, the rains fall, and the seed brings forth its food, and so the whole of creation is maintained. The LORD does everything without us deserving it or even asking for it. He serves us with His gifts. This is what love is: To serve someone with gifts without that person asking for or deserving it.

If we decide to apply this principle between my neighbor and myself, I cannot turn a blind eye when I see him without food or clothes, or any other shortfall. I must serve that person with my gift without being asked. This confirms the scripture in Matthew 25, where Jesus says that He will tell those on His right to enter into heaven because they showed their love to others, and therefore to Him, whereas those on His left is sent to receive the eternal damnation, for not showing their love.

James teaches as follows: *"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."* (Jas 2:14-17)

How do I manage to show this kind of love? It happens as soon as I enter into a covenant relationship with the LORD, and not must fear eternal damnation. John describes it as follows in verses 17 and 18: *"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."* I must realize that I can only call myself a child of God because I received His love, only because He bestowed His gift of everlasting life through the new covenant on me, without me deserving it.

There are so many people and congregations that teach their members that they only must decide to serve the LORD, and then they are declared children of the highest God. In the more traditional churches, a person only has to decide to follow their teaching and be confirmed as a member to become a child of God. In the more charismatic churches, the person only has to pray this prayer with the pastor or the person who made the altar call, and then you are a child of God. Both methods leave the love of the LORD out in their approach, and hence make it impossible to live a life of love.

What do I mean? I can only experience the love of God when I know that I need a redeemer due to my sinful nature. I must know that only through what Jesus did can I stand in a righteous relationship with the Father. Then I will know that I do not must fear the judgement day, and will it motivate me to show His love to my neighbor. The passage where Jesus told the disciples that we must love our neighbor will then make sense to me as I will know that I am no better than anybody else, as we all deserve death. But only through the love of Jesus can we live.

But who is my neighbor? I believe the closest neighbor we have, and one that we tend to forget about, is our spouse. That is the first person I must show my love to. You may ask if it is the same love we must show to our spouse as the love that we must show our neighbor. My answer is yes. The same principle still applies. I must serve my spouse with my gifts without them having to ask for or deserve it. If I as husband want to fulfil the role as priest of the household, then I must know that the role is not to boss everyone around, but to serve everyone. The priest in the Old Testament had to prepare the sacrifice, cook, and serve it to the person who brought the sacrifice. I always must put my spouse's interest above my own. I must respect my spouse and expect to serve them with my gifts.

I have seen it many times that men decide to accept the role as priest in the house, and then the trouble starts. He now has to approve everything in the household, and mommy does not move without him approving it, and as he is being held responsible, the trouble starts. Then the husband decides he is the boss, and everyone has to spark as soon as he snaps his fingers. Or even worse, he now definitely does not must listen to his wife, as he is the boss. Even if she asks for something, she is ignored, as he has never listened to her before, so why should he do it now. Or he dominates to such an extent that she either does not make any suggestions anymore, or he would do just the opposite of what she suggests. But as we have seen from the scriptures above that we must show our love by showering our gifts on them. That is true love. The same applies to the wife. How many relationships are there where the wife shouts like a real army corporal and everyone in the household must spark. That is not love. Love means that I must always bestow my gifts on my spouse, even to the point of trying to outdo my spouse without keeping score. I must put the requirements of my spouse ahead of my own.

Paul states in the first letter to the Corinthians that the man is not in charge of his own body, and neither is the wife in charge of hers. That is love. When your spouse seeks affection that you will give yourself to him or her. We must remember that there are limits. Maybe I will treat her to such an extent that she would want me to seek affection. But it requires real love. Then I will realize that I can only show my love to the LORD, by loving those that He loves.

Jesus takes this love one step further; by saying we should love our enemy. That is even more difficult than loving your family and those that love the LORD. I must ensure that my enemy can see that I love the LORD, by showering my gifts on them.

How do I show my love to the LORD? By serving my neighbor, and my enemy with love.

Why don't we see it today? I believe we are not told what true love is, as well as the fact that the church does not teach true love. Charles Finney wrote the following in Revival Fire: "*I have already intimated that pains enough had not been taken to search the heart and thoroughly detect and expose the sinner's depravity, so as to make him see the need of the gospel remedy. If I am not mistaken, there has been, in many cases, an error committed in urging sinners to submission before they are prepared to understand what true submission is. They have been urged to repent, before they have really understood the nature and dessert of sin; to believe, before they have understood their need of Christ; to resolve to serve God, before they have at all understood what the service of God is. They have been pressed to make up their minds to enter immediately upon the service of God, and have been taught that they needed only to make a resolution to obey the Lord. Hence their religion, after all, has been only a religion of resolutions, instead of a religion of faith, and love, and of a broken heart. In short, it appears to me that, in many instances, the true idea of what constitutes pure religion has not been developed in the mind, and that consequently spurious conversions have been distressingly numerous. I have been more and more surprised from year to year, to find how very numerous those professors of religion are who manifestly have not the true ideal*

of pure religion before their minds. It seems that, in many instances, the idea that love is the essence and the whole of religion, is left almost, if not entirely, out of view."

MOSES 2 - ON FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES

Hebrews 6: 1 - 2

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,
let us go on unto perfection;
not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works,
and of faith toward God,
Of the doctrine of baptisms,
and of laying on of hands,
and of resurrection of the dead,
and of eternal judgment.*

MOSES 2 VERSE 1 - WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

I could also ask the question as: What does it mean to get converted to follow Christ? This is the theme throughout this section of the book, but do we really know what it means? Do I must get baptized? I think just about every person and every religious grouping has his or her own meaning for this principle. But who is right?

As I said earlier, this is the subject that is central to this book. Why? I think the main reason is that because repentance and conversion is the one subject the church is trying to avoid. The church would rather preach messages of grace and love, but not about the first principle as mentioned in Hebrews. When someone does touch on the subject, it is a watered-down version, as the preacher really does not want to upset you by saying that there is something wrong with you. No, you were born perfect. The Lord made you that way. No, all you must do is say this little prayer and all is well.

This is the message I hear day after day from so many religious groupings. No, you do not must change at all. All you must do is bring your children to church and have them baptized and they are part of God's Kingdom. Someone might try and convince you that infant baptism does not work, and that children must decide for themselves to be baptized. If they have done this, they are all right. If you are baptized, that is what counts. That is why the roman church allowed infants to be baptized, as they were saved after baptism. The same applies to the dead being baptized by the same church, as you will still be saved. These are just some of the viewpoints.

The viewpoint of the reformed churches is that you must be baptized as an infant as soon as possible after birth as they need to become part of God's Kingdom. All children must be baptized as they belong to Satan's kingdom at birth. The basic Pentecostal viewpoint is that only people who have repented from their sin and have been baptized, are saved. The charismatic viewpoint is based on the reformed fault in that all you must do is accept Jesus as your Savior and you will be saved. Nobody would expect you to do anything more.

The question I initially asked, is what is repentance, or as I would prefer to call it, when does one become converted from being a lost sinner to becoming an inheritor of God's Kingdom? Why did I ask all these questions on baptism and repentance? The reason is that the Bible declares that only people who have decided to get reborn will be saved. Not members of this or that church are saved; no, only people who have received a heart of flesh will be saved. The subject that follows this action, baptism, is the one that everyone shouts about.

But what does this conversion mean? The one word or phrase that I would like to replace it with is to be changed. I must allow the Lord to change me for me to be acceptable to Him. No, it is not about how you feel; it is about being acceptable to Him.

Originally when I started to ask the Lord about this subject and what I should use a scripture reference for this article, I thought of using chapter 5 of the Gospel according to Matthew. However, when I opened my Bible the one morning, it opened in the book of Amos. When I started reading from this book, I suddenly realized that this book is about been changed. It is about Israel not being acceptable to God anymore, and Amos is given the task of telling them that they must change their ways in order to be acceptable to God. I will use this book as a basis for discussing what it means to be converted, changed, or to repent from one's earlier life.

But first, who was Amos? He was a herdsman who was called by the Lord as a prophet. He was called to bring a message to Israel and Judah. Did they listen to him? No, as he was not seen as a prophet by them and was told to go away from them as they did not like what his message. Amos 7: "10 ¶ Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. 12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: 13 But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court. 14 Then

answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: 15 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. 16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. 17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land." Unfortunately for both Amaziah and Jeroboam, the words spoken by Amos were fulfilled.

What was his message? A quick summary of what Israel was accused of is as follows:

because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: 1:9

because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.:1:13

because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime. 2:1

because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the ways which their fathers have walked: 2:4

because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;2:6

That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, 2:7

But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not. 2:12

Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink. 4:1

We can see from the above that the LORD did not like the way they acted. Their actions had to change. They had to do what He wanted them to do. They had to stop oppressing the poor and needy.

Another accusation against them comes from Amos 4:10 *"I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD."* The LORD informs them that it was He who caused their young men to die, but still they would not change their ways. They still did not want to become acceptable to the LORD.

So the first principle we learn from Amos is that we must change our ways in a manner to be acceptable to God. I must start by doing what is acceptable to Him. This must be the starting point. I must do justice to all, especially the poor and needy. I must allow myself to be changed by Him.

But this was the problem with the people in the book of Hebrews. They thought that they could become acceptable to the LORD by doing everything right. But we know, and they were told, that I must repent from trying to do everything right as the LORD must be allowed to do the work. I must allow Him to have control of my life. I must be able to proclaim like Paul that it is not I that live, but it is Christ who lives in me. The LORD tells us in Ezekiel that He will change our heart of stone for a heart of flesh; I will never be able to do it myself.

How do I know that? The LORD declared through Amos the following: Amos 4 Verse 4 *"Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: 5 And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD."* This passage shows us that Israel thought they only had to do that which was proclaimed in the law. They brought their tithes and offerings and attended the services at the temple. We do the same thing. If I go to church every Sunday, bring my offer or tithe to church, work in a ministry, or whatever, I will be acceptable to the LORD. But

the problem is right there; it is what I am doing. The LORD does not need me to accomplish anything on earth. He only requires obedience. This I can only do by asking Him to change me.

How is this achieved? By following Him to the cross. By laying down my life at the cross and declaring that He can do with me as He pleases. He will do it if you ask Him in all sincerity. He will then start a process inside of you of showing you everything that is not acceptable to Him.

The following passage in Amos really had a huge impact on me: Amos *"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, **prepare to meet thy God**, O Israel. 13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name."* Are you ready to meet your God? If not, the LORD also provided the answer for us in Amos 5 verse 4: *"For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live."* Seek the LORD with everything that is in you, and you will live and be ready to meet your God, that is what the Bible declares.

You might argue with me that it is not necessary as you have such an anointed church assembly. Your services are so lively and the music and worship is terrific. What does Amos tell Israel when they had the same question? Amos 5:21: *"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. 22 Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. 23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. 24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. 25 Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?"* The LORD wants us to be righteous, and to be able to judge the way He does. Israel never gave an offering to the LORD while in the wilderness. We must do what is acceptable to Him.

How do we treat someone who tells us that our lives must change? Probably the same way Israel did. Amos 5:10: *"They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly."* Did it surprise you? So next time someone utters a word on repentance, listen to him, as the LORD probably sent him.

Let us listen to the LORD, and ask Him to replace our heart of stone with a heart of flesh. Then we will be able to understand what Jesus meant in John 3 verse 5 and 6: *"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* This confirms for us that we must die of our selfish nature and be born again. I must believe that what Jesus did for us on earth is all that was required by the Father. But I must be changed. You must decide that you need a Savior. That can only be achieved if you know how far away you are from God. Read some of the other questions later on in this book concerning righteousness, and the one on finding out if to believe in the LORD will cost you anything. There are many other questions that also deal with this subject.

I would like to end this article with what the book of Amos ends with. This is what happens to us if we decide that we must be changed and allow the LORD to change us. *"11 ¶ In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. 13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."*

MOSES 2 VERSE 3 - WHAT IS FAITH?

This is the one subject that will always give reason to a debate. I remember the day when I spoke about faith at our office what the reaction of people was. One must remember that the people I worked with were all engineers, brought up in a typical exact science environment. I even had a question from one person asking me if I still believe that Mark 16 verses 16 and 7 are still applicable today in that can I still speak in tongues and if I can still ask the LORD to protect me from things like snake bites. My answer was that if the Bible declares it, so be it.

But what is faith?

What is the definition in the Bible? Hebrews 11 verse 1: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* This book in the Bible is about faith and covenant. In verse 6 it proclaims another truth: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* These two verses make it clear that I must believe in that which none of us have seen without ever doubting the LORD. If I should have any doubt, I will not be able to please the LORD, and I will not be able to lay claim to any of the promises in the Bible, as He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Let us take Abraham as an example. The LORD promises that out of Isaac will become a strong and everlasting nation. The LORD asks Abraham to offer up Isaac to Him. Abraham did not doubt the LORD at all, as Abraham understood a covenant. According to Abraham the LORD had two choices: He had to raise Isaac from the dead or He had to provide a substitute, which the LORD did. But why these options? Abraham understood that if the LORD promised something, He would let it come to pass. So if we examine the scriptures, the LORD had only these two options as He cannot lie and He told Abraham that out of Isaac would come a strong nation.

I have found that we can basically divide today's Christians in three different groupings:

1 Resignation Faith.

This is the group that continues a daily ritual, without expecting anything from the LORD. They normally do not expect anything from the LORD and will say that whatever happens must be the will of the LORD. If you should ask them if they will inherit everlasting life, their answer would normally be I hope so. They do not understand the character of the LORD, and believes that everything that happens to a person is the will of the LORD. They will even believe that things like sickness and death comes from the Lord, and things like healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit and provision is from the devil. They have never analyzed and found that the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples contain a sentence saying that the will of the LORD be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Maybe they expect to be sick and lame in heaven. Can such a faith save you? I doubt it. Do you think that you can end up in heaven saying to the LORD that I never really tested anything and hope that I am saved? This type of expression lacks faith because it does not understand Gods character. This type of faith lacks an understanding of Gods character. It does not understand that God and His word is one. With this type of faith you are putting up a smoke screen of who you are. You might look deeply religious, but you lack the power of faith.

2 General faith.

This group I would think makes up most Christians. This group believes that God is and is a rewarder of those who believe in Him. The problem with these people is that the moment there is any doubt, they would back the doubt and attribute it to God. This group of believers are believers where doubt plays a major role. They would build their faith on past experiences rather than the Word of God. They would commonly believe in the existence of Satan and his army but will doubt if we have any power over them. This group would pray to the LORD and wait for the outcome and ascribe the outcome as the will of God, rather than examining the Bible and praying according to the Bible. Let me illustrate it with an example. Let us say that John is in the situation where he knows that he will run out of funds to supply for his family within the next two to three weeks. He will now pray and wait for the result. If the LORD provides, it was His will. If He does not provide, it is also His will. You see we must examine the Word and pray and believe what the Word of the Lord proclaims.

3 Overcoming faith.

This group of people understand what faith is, and knows that faith can overcome things like you own flesh, 1 John 2:16 *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world..”* It is a faith that can overcome sin and Satan 1 John 4:4 *“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”* It is a faith that can overcome sickness Mat 9:22 *“But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.”* It is a faith that believes that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. It is a faith that believes that God and His Word is one. It is a faith that not only believes in the existence of God but also believes in Him. It is a faith that can save. John 12:46 *“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”* Overcoming faith will not give in to the opinions of man but will hold on to what the Word declares. It is a faith that knows that it is impossible to separate Him from His Word. To be on His side, is to side with His Word. If I can take the person in the previous example and transform him into a person with overcoming faith, he would have done the following. He would have looked through the Bible and found the following scriptures in Mat 6: 25 *“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”* John in this instance would have prayed in overcoming faith that the Lord should supply that which John needed, clothes and food, as the Bible declares that he does not must worry about this. Yet he is worrying about this, as this scripture has not yet manifested in his life, although the Bible declares that it will, even though John has laid down his life for the LORD and became a new creature. The LORD will provide. That is overcoming faith in action.

How do I build my faith?

How do I manage to grow in faith and believe in what the Bible says? The following nine points will help you in this.

Know that you are saved.

You can be assured of your rebirth from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. You can know of His love and His presence every moment of the day. Col 1:13 and 14:” *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*.

Know that you are a new creature.

Those people who do not understand what being born again means to someone, almost always treat people as if they were still in the flesh but fail to see the power of the LORD. 2 Cor 5: 16-17 *“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

Col 1:21,22: *"21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:"*

1Pet 1:23: *"23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."*

1Pet 2:9: *"9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*

Revelation 1:5 and 6: *"5 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, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

Know that you are in Him and He in you.

In Him, In Christ, In whom, these phrases occur more than a hundred and thirty times in the New Testament. This we must understand. Rom 8:1: *"1 ¶ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

Gal 2:20: *"20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Know that you inherited His righteousness.

This means to stand a favorable relationship with Christ. Hebrews 4:16: *"16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

Know the Power in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Our faith will be restricted if we do not know the privilege, we have in using the Name of Jesus. What is in a name: Authority, reputation, representation, and success.

Mark 16:16 -18: *"16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."*

John 14:12-14: *"12 ¶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."*

Know obedience to the Word

We must realize that God's ways are totally different from ours before we can trust in the Word of God. Our logical thinking will not help us in this regard. We will always question the reality of the Word and the reality of what God said. James 1:22 - 26: *"22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. 26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."*

Luke 8:21: *"21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it."*

Know what to confess.

Keep a hold on to your confession, as it is the key to you faith. Heb 4:12 and 14: *"12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."*

MOSES 2 VERSE 4 - BAPTISM: WHY, HOW AND WHEN?

Baptism is probably, in Christianity, the single subject why families do not talk to each other anymore, especially when they support different viewpoints. I know of people who were disinherited for taking a different standpoint.

Back to the question though. What are the different viewpoints people hold on to today?

On the one hand you will find that those people that believe that you must baptize an infant, and then you find other saying that a person first must decide to follow the LORD, and then they can be baptized. Some people might even stretch this last viewpoint to say you only need to get baptized to associate yourself with Christ. But why the different viewpoints?

Let us first look at the viewpoint of those that believe in infant baptism.

These people's viewpoints are based on several views held by people of the church during the Middle Ages. Their basic standpoint was that everyone had to belong to a Kingdom, and this was either the Kingdom of the LORD or the kingdom of Satan. Baptism would then serve to get one out of Satan's kingdom, and into the LORD's Kingdom. This also explains why the Roman church even baptized deceased people, to get them into heaven. Another reason was that baptism also served as a token of the covenant with God. In the First Covenant circumcision did this and in the New Covenant this was done by baptism. As circumcision was done to babies, baptism also had to be done to infants. This baptism would then serve as a reminder to you later in life to keep from sinning, and when you do sin, to ask forgiveness from the LORD. They also claim that as there was no longer any difference between circumcised Jews and other people, John the Baptist started baptizing people and that this would serve as difference between those that belonged to the LORD, and those that did not. This is then also the reason why you cannot be baptized a second time, as you already belong to the Kingdom of God.

What do the official church documents teach? I have included the viewpoint of the Heidelberg Catechism as well as the Westminster Catechism.

First the Heidelberg Catechism's viewpoint:

Q. 69. How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?

A. Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water, (a) adding thereto this promise, (b) that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, (c) as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away

Q. 70. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

A. It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross; (a) and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives. (b)

Q. 71. Where has Christ promised us, that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?

A. In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", Matt.28:19. And "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.", Mark 16:16. This promise is also repeated, where the scripture calls baptism "the washing of regenerations" and the washing away of sins. Tit.3:5, Acts 22:16. (a)

Q. 72. Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?

A. Not at all: (a) for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin. (b)

Q. 73. Why then does the Holy Ghost call baptism "the washing of regeneration," and "the washing away of sins"?

A. God speaks thus not without great cause, to-wit, not only thereby to teach us, that as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; (a) but especially that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really, as we are externally washed with water. (b)

Q. 74. Are infants also to be baptized?

A. Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; (a) and since redemption from sin (b) by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; (c) they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church; and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers (d) as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, (e) instead of which baptism is instituted (f) in the new covenant.

Now for the Westminster viewpoint:

Question 165: What is Baptism?

Answer: Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ has ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

Question 166: Unto whom is Baptism to be administered?

Answer: Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.

Question 167: How is our Baptism to be improved by us?

Answer: The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavouring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Compare this to the Bible

The Bible is very specific as far as when and how it should be ministered. To explain this, let us look at a couple of scriptures first. Mark 16:16 *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* Hebrews 6 verses 1 and 2 lends weight to this view : *"1 ¶ Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."* Both scriptures inform us of a sequence of events that must be followed, first of all repentance and believing in the LORD, and then baptism. If we look at the example in Exodus, Israel had to first believe that they could be saved, before going through the Dead Sea, or baptism.

Let us look at baptism in the light of the following scriptures. John 3 verse 3-8 : *"3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

The second scripture comes from Acts 19, a part that describes an event where Paul baptized some believers, an event rarely documented in Acts. Acts 19 verses 1 to 6: *"1 ¶ And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."* This scripture also advises us that we will prophesy and speak in tongues, two of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When we look at the scripture in Acts, Paul says that the baptism of John was a baptism of repentance, while the baptism in the name of Jesus is a baptism to those that believe that Jesus was the Christ, and that He fulfilled the first covenant and entered into the new covenant. This means that one first has to believe that Jesus is the Christ, before one can get baptized. John states that one has to be born again *"**Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**"* which means that one has to die before one can be born again, which corresponds to what Paul wrote in Romans 6. Acts 2 puts it as follows: *"38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* All these scriptures declare that there has to be repentance and believing before we can be baptized. Colossians 2 verse 9 to 15 puts it as follows: *"9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 **Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.** 13 ¶ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."* After reading these scriptures I find it difficult to believe that people can still believe in infant baptism, as an infant cannot decide to believe in the LORD.

Your question might be what happens then to children who die before they can be baptized? The LORD will not forsake them, just as He did not forsake the children of Israel. Numbers 14 verse 26 to 32: *"26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I bear with this evil*

*congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, **from twenty years old and upward**, which have murmured against me, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 **But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.** 32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness." The LORD did not reject the children of Israel, although they had to pay for the sins of their fathers as foretold in Exodus. They had to criss-cross the dessert for forty years, but the LORD allowed them to enter into the Promised Land. The LORD did not expect of them to decide before they were twenty years old.*

The next question that comes to mind immediately is: How is baptism administered? Is it by immersion or by sprinkling? The Westminster Catechism declares it as follows: "*Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ has ordained the **washing with water** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,*" while the Heidelberg Catechism declares "That Christ appointed this **external washing with water**". Both these documents conclude that we should be washed cleaned with water, yet when we administer baptism, the same people uses the sprinkling of water, rather than the immersion showing a complete regeneration. Baptism is an action of going through the water to get forgiveness of sins and to be regenerated as a child of the high God. If this can be achieved by a couple of drops, then it is OK. But I would rather follow the example of the Bible, where even Jesus was immersed in water. The main criterion though is to believe that you will be washed clean when going through the water baptism. And that no infant can do. John 3 verse 5 and 6 confirms this for us, as you must believe first before being baptized. "*5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"

The one interesting thing I found while researching this subject was that the original word *Baptismo* was used in those days even in recipes for food. This meant that you had to take meat and soak it in the marinade, or *baptismo* it, until it took on the smell and taste of the marinade. That is what has to happen to us also. We must take on the taste and smell of Jesus once we have been baptized. This can only occur if we get forgiven and raised up with Him and filled with His spirit.

When do we must be baptized, as an infant or as an adult? I believe you first must believe that the LORD Jesus Christ offers us forgiveness of sins before you can be baptized. Something I found the other day was when we look at the layout of the tabernacle and the temple, we find something remarkably interesting. Remember Moses had to give the instructions on what the tabernacle and later the temple was to look like after seeing what the LORD showed him what heaven looked like. We find a remarkably interesting similarity. When you had to bring a sacrifice for the LORD, you had to go to the laver, or in our terminology basin, first to be washed clean before you could bring a sacrifice. This to me confirms that you must be able to decide first if you want to follow the LORD before you can be baptized. I believe the LORD gave us the sequence of events long ago, but we have been too stubborn to accept it.

Do you know why we do not see any miracles in Church anymore? Because we do not follow the instructions of the Bible anymore. Mark 16;16: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*" When we follow the sequence given here and confirmed in Hebrews 6 verse 1 and 2, these signs and wonders will follow. Believe me. What do you must lose? Just your life. But you get the life of Christ in return. Does it not renounce my infant baptism? No, remember Paul also baptized people after they were baptized by John the Baptist. But do not get baptized because of what I say to you. Examine the Word of God, allow Him to convince you. I can only pray that you will see the light and move into the fullness that God have in store for you.

MOSES 2 VERSE 5 - WHAT IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD?

Many times, we wonder why we as Christians makes such a small impact in the world. We see other religions spending time with their gods, but we as Christians find it difficult to spend time with our God. When one does profess that you are a Christian, you get people saying that they would rather do business with a non-Christian than with a Christian, or that you are infatuated with your Christianity.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

The definition I want to give is as follows:

The right to enter the presence of the LORD, without guilt, condemnation, or inferiority. It is to be in the right relationship with Him the Creator. This can only be achieved when we have received an overwhelming gift of righteousness.

What and where does the word righteousness come from?

Mat. 6:33 *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

We put a lot of emphasis on seeking the kingdom of God, but the second part, the righteousness of God is sometimes completely missed.

Let us look at the following passages of Matthew. Chapter 5 verses 17 to 48: *"17 ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. 21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. 27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. 33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. 38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give*

*to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. 43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**"*

The last verse of the quoted scripture is exceedingly difficult to understand if we look at the preceding verses. We must remember that Jesus was talking to the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees. We must also remember that these people not only had the Ten Commandments to obey, but all the other commandments found in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Jesus tried to prove to them here that it was not possible to gain eternal life by adhering and obeying all these commandments. And yet He calls on them to be perfect like their Father in heaven. But how is this achieved? Mat 5:20: *"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

What is done today when someone decides to follow the LORD? How do we make people His disciples?

My experience is that people will answer an altar call, and then say a prayer and accept Jesus as their Savior. After that the person is told to not do the following: smoking, drinking, swearing, and a lot of other things that should not be done. At the same time, they are told to do the following: "Work hard, pray, read the Bible, attend the services, bring your tithe, and in general just be good. The person would marry, become a helper or Sunday school teacher, have kids, retire and die.

Now you might ask me what is wrong with this. Quite a lot. We read in Acts one verse eight that we will receive Power from the Holy Spirit. Where is this Power in the afore mentioned life of a believer? Your life is empty without this Power. Let us look at our own lives. Do we still suffer from sins like pride, gossip, jealousy, own righteousness, and an intolerable spirit that you cannot get rid of? How do we overcome this? Read the Bible. Listen to tapes and watch videos promising us that we will be able to overcome it. If this doesn't help, we go for counselling and are told to fast and pray. What does the Bible teach? Mat 10:38 *"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."*

The Bible does not tell us that we are going to have a whale of a time. No, it is going to cost me something. My life. It will cost me to lay down my life at the cross, pick up the Cross of Jesus, and following Him. We always see the cross only as something that Jesus died on and where He fulfilled the first covenant. But we rarely see the cross as something where I must go and lay my life down, and then to follow Him. Just remember you cannot be born again if you do not die first. It is impossible to be born again while you are still alive. No, you must lay down your life, your self-righteousness at the cross first, and then be born again. Then your prayer will not be: "LORD, I bring all my sins to you for forgiveness and thank you that I am a new creation now." No, your prayer will be: "LORD Jesus I cannot save myself. I trust you for it. I now lay down my life and receive your life in its place. Do with me as you please. Thank you for saving me." Before you died, everything you did was religion, but now you live a life to glorify our Savior, the LORD Jesus Christ.

How do I know that I have died? Let us look at several aspects that we either want to hear or that we do not want to hear. The religious person wants to reign, but he does not want to suffer. He wants to go to heaven, but he still wants to do as he pleases. He wants the LORD to bless him, but he does not want to give up anything. He will travel for miles to listen to messages of blessings, power, eternal life, spiritual gifts, or similar subjects, but he does not like messages of self-denial, subjection, and holiness. Why? I want to stay in control of my life.

The saved person says, "Not I but Christ". Why? Let us examine Luke's version of the same passage. Luke 9:23 *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."* This version tells us that it is a daily thing. I cannot assume that because I

died yesterday that I am still dead to sin today. No, I must take up my cross daily and follow Him. I must die daily. If I do not die, I cannot live forever. When I have eternal life, death no longer has a hold on me. When I ask someone what their relationship with the LORD is like, I am not interested in what it was 20, 10 or 5 years ago, No I want to know what He did for you today. Did He just reveal a passage in scripture for you, or maybe he sent someone across your path that you really missed? Or maybe He answered a prayer for you.

I mentioned earlier that you had to die. What do you must die from? Man consists of a body, a soul, and a spirit. Your soul, in other words your emotions, will or thoughts are used to doing certain things and accept certain reactions as normal. Your spirit on the other hand does not know a lot about the will of God and does not know who God is. When I change my will for His will, it is necessary for me to change my habits, which are part of my soul, to habits that glorify Him. This means that I must crown the LORD as King in every facet of my life, and this is done by receiving a new heart capable of doing His will and following His commandments, a heart of flesh.

I must understand what it means for Him to be my mediator. He is the one interceding for me daily at the Father. So instead of the Father seeing me, He sees me washed in the Blood of the LORD Jesus Christ. Similarly, there are other areas where I must crown Him as King in my life. Areas like healing, advocate, and as my redeemer. Every new area where I discover and make Him King of builds my faith. The Bible also tells us that it is not possible to please God without faith, so I must take every aspect of my life to cross, in order crown Jesus King of that area of my life.

You might ask me what this is all about. At the start of this article I quoted the scripture that told as to be as perfect as our Father in heaven is. How is this achieved? We have seen that we must die, and this is where the start is of how to be perfect like our Father in heaven. We then must move on to the new covenant. Let us look at the history of what covenants were, and how they were administered.

The first covenant we read of was between God and Abraham. Abraham was promised that he would be the father of all believers, and was given a sign, the circumcision of all males. This covenant was confirmed again by the LORD with Moses prior to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Here they were told to come under the blood of the year-old lamb they had to kill and eat the night of the Passover. But what is the new covenant? We hear people talk about the new covenant, but do we really understand what a covenant is? When we examine this subject, we find that when entered between two parties, many items of clothing as well as oaths were made between the two parties. Our covenant with Jesus left us with the following:

He gave us his coat symbolizing His nature and character.

His belt gives us His strength and power

The mixing of the Blood means we receive forgiveness of sins

We receive His Name, and with it we receive His reputation and authority, whilst giving us the Cross as a permanent agreement

We also receive His possessions, and through this we receive eternal life

We eat together at Holy Communion a meal of the new covenant

The last sign of the covenant is the blood-stained cross at Calvary. If He did not die for us, we would not be able to receive eternal life.

How do I become part of the new covenant? Through the baptism of the believer and the baptism of the Holy Spirit which denotes the death of the old man, and the resurrection of the new man. I must choose to become part of the covenant, no one else can decide for me if I can become part of it. I must go and lay down my life at the cross. John 3:5-6: *"5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be*

born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Romans 6 is a chapter in the Bible telling us exactly what baptism means in our lives as Christians.

"1 ¶ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

When we realize what the new covenant means to us, we will also start moving in the Power that is lacking in so many Christians, and will we do what He commands. This Power is the same power we read of in Matthew 28 verse 18, where Jesus declares that all power in heaven and on earth is given to Him. It is this Power that raised Him from death, and this is the Power that we as Christians get as part of the new covenant.

Let me use an example to illustrate this point. While driving the other day, Hettie had to get something from her purse and found our passports in her purse. I asked her to look at when our passports will expire, and suddenly a whole different scenario opened in front of me.

As South Africans, everyone in my family has South African passports. This entitles any one of us to go anywhere in the world and be representative of our country. It also entitles me to certain rights while in a different country. In the process of getting a passport, the government of the day in South Africa is entitled to investigate my affairs to find out if I can and have been a good ambassador for my country. This allows them to retract my passport in the event of a major crime against the state, as I am then not allowed to represent my country, as I have transgressed against the laws of the country. The same applies to my representation of God's Kingdom. I first must apply to represent His Kingdom, and if successful, must represent His Kingdom in a manner acceptable to Him. Only the LORD can appoint me to represent His Kingdom. No church group or individual has the right to issue a passport, meaning no membership of any church group allows me to say that I am a born-again believer. The moment I enter into a covenant relationship with the LORD, I will also receive the right to represent His Kingdom, and this is always accompanied by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This entitles me to represent the Kingdom of the LORD. With a passport, or in Gods Kingdom the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I can represent His Kingdom

on earth. Without it, I can do nothing. But I also must remember that if I don't do justice to my membership of His Kingdom, that my passport will be retracted. This can happen without any notice to you, as He has the right to do it. Do we always act as His representatives?

Jeremiah declared twice that Jesus would be our righteousness. Jeremiah 23:6 : *"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.. Jer 33:16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."*

Father I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ my LORD and Savior. Father I come and lay down my life before you and declare that only You can save me. LORD forgive all my sins and transgressions I did before knowing You. I now lay down my life and receive Your life. Wash me as white as snow and grant me the Power that Your Word declares I will receive. I clothe me with Your righteousness that You prepared for me through Jesus Christ. I declare also that I am only able to declare that I am Yours because of what You have done through Jesus Christ, Your Son. I also declare that through the offer of Jesus Christ I am entitled to represent Your Kingdom on earth and move in the Gifts of Your Spirit. Therefore, I ask you to baptize me with all the Gifts of the Spirit for me to represent Your Kingdom. I also declare that I will represent Your Kingdom as an honorable citizen, and that if I should transgress, that You have the right to retract these gifts. Thank you that you are saving me. Amen.

MOSES 2 VERSE 6 - HOW DO I RECEIVE THE POWER OF GOD?

Written by : Chip Brogden - Back to the Cross Chapter 2 - Unpublished work.

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. Psalms 34:18,19

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalms 51:17

The fundamental need of a disciple of Jesus Christ is not more power, but more brokenness. Most Christians today are not too unlike the original twelve disciples of the Lord. We observe the Twelve arguing over who is the greatest; asking to sit on His right hand and on His left; desiring to call down fire from heaven upon those who oppose them; refusing to wash each other's feet; protesting the need for the Lord to go the cross, even drawing the sword to defend Him in the garden.

May we see that the disciples were not endued with power from on high until they were of one mind and one accord, together in one place, after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. While it is true that they enjoyed a measure of spiritual power during the Lord's ministry on earth, we see how even this little taste of heavenly ability puffed them up. Jesus sent them forth and gave them authority over evil spirits. It happened that when they returned, they exclaimed, "Lord! Even the demons are subject to us through Thy name!" Even this small accomplishment made them rejoice and exalt in themselves. Jesus tells them this little bit of success is hardly worth rejoicing over. Later, we find the disciples rebuking others who used the Name to cast out demons. Why? Because "they are not of us." Patiently, Jesus tells them to stop forbidding the others, because "he that is not against us is for us." We see how quickly pride was able to gain a foothold.

What a tragedy it would have been to pour out the Holy Spirit in His fullness upon the disciples in such a condition! They were thoroughly unfit and unprepared to handle such power. Why? Not because they were insincere. No doubt they were very sincere. After all, they had forsaken everything and were following the Lord. Nevertheless, they were yet unbroken. They were following the Lord and even had a taste of spiritual power, but they had not yet taken up the Cross. Repeatedly Christ said they must take up the Cross, but they themselves could not understand what He meant. They even sought to prevent the Lord from taking up HIS cross. They could not be entrusted with much power because they were not sufficiently dead to themselves. The slightest accomplishment would only be grounds for foolish boasting and further arguments to see who was to be the greatest among them. Hence, they were told to tarry in Jerusalem and wait until they would be endued with power from on high. As proud men they were found arguing on many occasions, but as broken men they were finally in one mind and one accord. Thus, the Spirit came, and with the Spirit, the fullness of power.

Today the call is for unity, but we need to see that unity cannot be achieved by calling people to unity. Unity is achieved when we take up the Cross and die to our minute opinions and lay down our petty arguments and prejudices. Then, and only then, will we come to one mind. A broken spirit is a peaceful spirit and is able to abide with others. Contentious, unbroken, hard, stubborn people can never be in one accord. The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit.

More Of The Lord, Or Less Of Me?

Indeed, as the Lord calls us back to the Cross to become disciples of Jesus, He intends to first humble us before empowering us. It is not a question of His supply, nor is His Life to be measured in terms of some, more, or plenty. Either the Life is present, or it is not present. The Lord's Life is a rich Life, and it fills the believer with the ALL fullness of God. We may say of a brother or a sister, that they "really know the Lord in a powerful way" or that they are "full of life" or they have a "strong anointing." Of course, we all have different gifts and abilities as the Spirit enables us. But we should not use phraseology which implies that some brothers and sisters have more of the Lord's Life than other brothers and sisters. We categorically reject this idea. God is no respecter of persons, and He has blessed ALL of us with "every

spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3)." "For in [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:9,10)." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things (Romans 8:32)?" What are these Scriptures telling us? That we are blessed with every spiritual blessing, filled with the fullness of God in Christ, and have received all things freely through Him. No single believer is any more "anointed" or powerful than any other.

Please tell me, saint of God, what it is that you lack spiritually: for these Scriptures demonstrate conclusively that you are already filled with all that God has and is. How much is all? How full is full? How complete is complete? If there is a lack in our lives, let us readily admit that the lack is not on the Lord's part, and it is not because we are inferior to other, more "powerful" believers. The question is not how to get more of the Lord, but how to release the Life, which is already hidden within us, obscured behind the veil of our flesh. To put it another way, it is not more of the Lord that we need, but less of ourselves. We must be broken.

Christians today are encouraged to seek more power, more anointing, and more gifts. I have stood before these precious believers and led them in the singing of choruses which cry, "More love, more power, more of You in my life." To be sure such a desire is good and sincere. The Church is so hungry for the presence of the Lord. I have watched thousands stream forward in hopes of obtaining some fresh outpouring of spiritual power or anointing. I have both led them in the pursuit of more power and joined them in the pursuit. Day and night, I searched for spiritual power that I might overcome my sins, be a witness for the Lord, and have a powerful ministry, which reached thousands. But a day came when the Lord gave me revelation of Christ in me, and I in Christ. May I say that day was like walking out of one room, entering another, and closing the door behind me. From that day forward I realized that I was complete in Christ, filled with all that God has, all that He IS. From that day forward I saw that the problem is not in obtaining more from the Lord, but in allowing Him to break me and humble me that I may no more hinder Him through my own foolishness, pride, natural wisdom, fleshly lusts, and divided heart. I needed to decrease, and He would increase in direct proportion to my decrease. If I decrease but a little, He will increase but a little. But with much decrease of me there would be much increase of Him. With less of me, there WOULD BE more of Him in my life!

The Pursuit Of Power

I will state it again: most Christians eagerly, even greedily, seek the power of the God, but they resist any thing that would seek to decrease, humble, test, or prove them. They want the power, but they refuse the weakness. Stated differently, they relish the bright sunshine, gentle breeze, and singing birds, but they curse the dark night when the coyotes howl and the rain falls. When God performs as expected all is well, but when He fails to perform as expected the countenance grows dark and the soul is depressed.

And how many "Spirit-filled" believers have we met that seemed to carry about a certain power and seemed to be very spiritual while sitting in church, yet they could not control their tongue or keep a reign upon their critical spirit? Their power only gives them an occasion to glory in their flesh and compare themselves in a favorable light with others. Mark this well: any power that does not come by way of weakness will ruin people such as this. We must never seek the power of Pentecost without first tasting the suffering of the Cross. The Cross is Power disguised in Weakness. There is a saying, "Absolute power corrupts absolutely." We can just as well say that spiritual power obtained apart from the weakness of the Cross will corrupt also. Therefore, the Lord leads us first to Calvary, then on to Pentecost. We dare not bypass Calvary in our haste to experience Pentecost.

Despite this spiritual truth, observe how little attention is paid to the necessity of brokenness among those who so eagerly speak of the power of God. We should be afraid of listening to anyone who teaches us about the power of God but does not teach us about the necessity of brokenness. Invariably the power, once received, will pollute the spirit and pride will set in. Weakness, humility, brokenness,

suffering, pouring out our lives, taking up the Cross - this language seems to be lost among the seekers of power. How tragic that is!

The Seasons of the Spirit

Yes, the Lord in us is full of might and power; yet He will not intrude upon our will and overwhelm us. Sometimes we wish He would do so. But that is not His way. He desires us to cooperate with His Spirit. When we come to Him and present ourselves as instruments to be used, He begins to mould us and shape us into suitable vessels. If we see this process as beginning and ending in a one-time act of consecration, or a single moment of surrender, or a solitary life-changing event, then we underestimate just how thorough and far-reaching this process will be. It spans many years and is marked with many mountains and valleys, gardens, and deserts. The one so committed may now expect to encounter many seasons of light and darkness, sunshine and rain, heat and cold, sweetness and bitterness. At the outset one may think he will be happy, light, and carefree now that he has tasted some of the Lord's power. He will rejoice for that season, and then the sun will set, and the dark night of the soul will begin. All that was gained now seems to have been lost. The former sweetness is nowhere to be found. Everything is dreary and burdensome. When this season is accomplished, the sun rises again and the Christian rediscovers the joy of his salvation. The vows are renewed, and the spirit begins to soar. Prayer and praise now pour forth like water. Everything is effortless and spontaneous. But then, strangely enough, that season passes and the dark night sets in once again. Why is this? The Lord is teaching us to live apart from our circumstances. Eventually we will learn how to live above our environment and walk by faith, not by sight.

I remember times when I so felt the presence of God that I thought surely, I could not sin after such an experience. Remembering my many sins and failures, I surmised that was all behind me now that I had tasted of such a heavenly sphere. Failure seemed impossible. How happy I was that now I had met the Lord in a powerful way, or had some spiritual experience, or heard some special word from the Lord, for with THIS I was sure to be victorious from here onward. How utterly distressing it was to find myself less than a week later wallowing in the same sin and defeat as before! Truly perplexed, I would struggle along until Sunday, where I would go forward to receive the prayers of the saints. Once again, I was lifted into the throne room and felt as though I could reach out and touch the Lord. Surely, I need not fail again! But of course, once I left the mountaintop and descended again into the valley, I found the old lusts ever present with me, ready to reclaim me as soon as I arrived back from my latest encounter with the Lord.

Perhaps this has been your experience as well. We must learn sooner rather than later that discipleship is a process of tearing down to build up. We cannot expect to have a single mountaintop experience with the Lord and then assume from henceforth the work of the Cross is completed in us. When we are standing with the Lord in the New Jerusalem, we may lay down the Cross. Until then, we dare not entertain the thought that we have already been made perfect. We must deny ourselves and take up the Cross daily.

So, if there is a seeming difference in the "level" of anointing or power or spirituality among believers it is not because some have more of the Lord than others. Let this be an encouragement to you. Indeed, Christ is not divided, and of His fullness we all share. We are all baptized into the same Spirit. The difference is some saints are more broken than others. Some have passed through many seasons of tearing down and building up, while some after many years of experience are still resisting the Lord and refusing to lay down their lives. Some have recognized God's dealings and have submitted to them, while others have misunderstood or been totally ignorant of God's dealings with them. The ones who have been sufficiently broken eventually manifest extraordinarily little of their self, and very much of Christ. God must work long and hard with us to bring us to this place, but what a glorious day it is when we are able to bow our heads and finally surrender everything. What joy it is to look back over all that the Lord has led us through and realize His purpose in both the good times and the bad times, to behold the goodness and the severity of God in His dealings with us.

Four Examples of Brokenness: The Bread of Life

The Cross represents the principle of brokenness in the disciple of the Lord Jesus. Let us look to the Scriptures for some examples of brokenness. The night He was betrayed, we are told that the Lord Jesus "took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me (Luke 22:19)." Many times, the Lord has told the disciples and the crowds, "I am the Bread of Life." He commanded them to eat His flesh and drink His blood. This is one of my favorite passages of Scripture, and one which I refer to constantly when discussing this subject. Many turned aside and no longer followed the Lord after He said this. How can this man give us His flesh to eat? Because He is the Bread of Life.

The little communion wafers we partake of today fail to adequately represents the Bread of Life. At the Passover there was one loaf, and it was broken into pieces that all may partake of it. Today, the wafers come to us already divided. The Church is certainly divided today, so perhaps this is a good representation of our division, but it fails to show us the vital truth that to partake of the Life, there must be a breaking. There is one Loaf, not many loaves. Jesus is the Bread which came down from heaven. How may we receive Him? He must be broken for us. After blessing the bread, and breaking it, He plainly tells us, "This is my body."

It is interesting to note here that the blessing Jesus prayed over the bread is the same blessing the Jews bless their bread with today. It has not changed in centuries. The Scriptures do not record it because it was written for the Jews, and they already know it:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, which bringeth forth bread from the earth."

After the blessing, Jesus broke the bread. The Passover ceremony also calls for a portion of the bread to be wrapped in a napkin and hidden, to be retrieved later. Thus, the Lord is showing us His crucifixion and resurrection in the blessing, the breaking, and the "burying" of the bread. He is the Bread, which is come down from heaven, broken, buried, and brought forth from the earth. Our traditional communion wafer destroys this beautiful parable. Indeed, our Lord is One Loaf which is broken, that we may all share of His Life. Hallelujah! This illustrates the need for brokenness that Life may issue forth.

Example Two: A Grain of Wheat

Again, for an example of brokenness, let us look to the lord's word to us in his final hours on earth: *"and Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, i say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:23-25)."* How remarkable are the Lord's words here? He begins by saying it is time for him to be glorified. When we think of the Lord being glorified, we think of his baptism when the spirit descended upon him as a dove and the voice of god declared him to be his son. Or, we think of the mountain when his appearance became dazzling white and the brightness of his glory was shown to Peter, James, and John. How strange then that Jesus talks of being glorified by a cruel death. It seems contrary to what we have been led to believe thus far. But the lord explains why his death is necessary.

When the Lord Jesus humbled Himself and accepted the limitations of a human body, He was only able to be in one place at a time. For all the people He did heal, there were many millions who remained sick. He simply could not, as a Man, be everywhere at once. He was limited by time and space. In one place He seems frustrated with a holy frustration: *"I have come to bring a fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and what constraint I am under until it is completed (Luke 12:49,50, New Jerusalem Bible)!"* See how the Lord is restrained and seems to be aching to come forth. He is like the grain of wheat, a seed surrounded by the outer shell of His physical body.

Pick up an acorn. What are you holding in your hand? A seed, yes. But what else? A tree? Yes, once the seed is buried it will one day produce a tree. But what else are you holding in your hand, besides a tree? A forest! Because, from that seed will come a tree, and from that tree will come many more seeds, and from those seeds will come many more trees, and so on. So, what you hold in your hand is not a mere seed, but a forest.

Jesus says the Kingdom of God is *"as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear (Mark 4:26-28)."* Dear friend, this is glorious! We don't must do anything with the seed but cast it into the ground and forget about it! *"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself."* God will bring forth the fruit if we will bury the seed! Do you want to be fruitful? Humble yourself! Cast yourself into the ground and allow yourself to be broken that the fruits may come forth.

Now Jesus says if the seed will not fall to the earth and die, it will abide alone. Take the seed home and place it on your desk. Will it become a forest? Of course not. Why? That forest is inside the shell. It cannot come forth on its own. You see, the potential is there, for there is life in the seed. But the inner life is entombed by an outer shell. How do we get that which is in the shell to come out of the shell? We must bury the seed in the ground - the seed must "die" and give up being a seed. The shell must be broken and that which is within the shell may then come forth. When it dies, it brings forth "much fruit".

You see, the issue is not the ability of the Life to spring forth, but the brokenness of the vessel which holds the Life captive! It is not that we need more power, but that we need more brokenness. When we are properly broken, we will find the indwelling Christ is more than sufficient.

Example Three: The Alabaster Box

"And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as [Jesus] sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head (Mark 14:3)." The ointment here represents Anointing, or Life. I use the terms synonymously. It was very precious, but it was contained within an alabaster box. Alabaster is a kind of stone used to make vases. But the same stone was also used to make caskets! Again, we have Life encased within Death. The inward release is contingent upon the outward breaking.

How many of us cherish the vessel more than the ointment? Friends, the vessel is nothing. Let us look beyond the vessels and instruments of the Lord and only note if the precious ointment is coming forth freely or is inhibited. The vessel houses the Life and must be broken. If we wish to be containers of this heavenly ointment, let us ask the Lord to break us that the hidden fragrance and anointing may come forth.

Example Four: The Veil Of The Temple

"And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Mark 15:38)." The veil of the temple was a thick curtain which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple. What is special about the holy of holies? It is where the presence of God dwelt. No one could step into the presence, or even look behind the curtain, without falling over dead. Only the high priest could enter, and then only once a year.

But when the Lord Jesus died on the cross, the thick curtain which stood as a barrier between the presence of God and the people was split down the middle from top to bottom. Why top to bottom? To demonstrate that it was God Himself who split the veil. Had the veil been torn from bottom to top, it could perhaps be explained away that man was responsible. To tear the veil from top to bottom is indeed a miracle. What does it signify? Of course, it means the death of Christ opened the way for us to approach the throne of grace without fear of death (Hebrews 10:19,20). That is the obvious meaning. Yet we know also that the three sections of the temple - the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Outer

Court - represent the spirit, soul, and body of man. The Holy of Holies is the spirit of man where Christ dwells. In between the inner man and the outer man stands a thick veil.

We stand by our assertion that each believer is complete and contains the entire fullness of God; but we also acknowledge that the veil of the flesh must be rent in two for that fullness to come forth. How often we meet a brother, or a sister and we sense their preciousness, but there is something that prevents the Life from coming forth as it should. That "something" is the fleshly veil which remains intact. We can only hope that they will allow the Lord to rend and break them so the Life can come forth. Similarly, when we sense a lack, we should not pray for more of the Lord, or seek more power, as though the indwelling Christ is not sufficient. Instead, we may ask the Lord to break us and take away the veil that is keeping the Life from coming forth.

The Cross Accomplishes This Breaking

Now we have before us four examples from the Scriptures of what it means to be broken, and why it is necessary: the bread, the grain of wheat, the alabaster box, and the temple veil. There is yet another point to be made from these four examples. In each instance, the Lord mentions His death and resurrection. The principle of the Cross is central to each illustration. The blessing and breaking of the bread speaks of His death and resurrection; the grain of wheat speaks of His coming glorification through His substitutionary death; the alabaster box is connected to the Lord's anointing for burial (Mark 14:8); and the temple veil is rent at the moment of His death on the Cross. These are not mere coincidences.

The Lord has continually called us to deny ourselves, take up the Cross, and follow Him. We are not left to wonder what it means to take up the Cross, or what God hopes to accomplish in us when we do so. In these examples He is showing us what that means, and why it must be so. What is He saying? That we must be broken before we can bring forth Life. That to save our life we must give up our life, lay down on the altar, and offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. Only then may we truly live for God. Only then may we be vessels through which Life may flow.

One time the disciples asked the Lord, "*Increase our faith (Luke 17:5).*" Do you remember how the Lord responded to this request? It is a very strange response. Today we ask the Lord to increase our faith, increase our patience, increase our love, increase our self-control, and give us more. Strangely enough, it seems as though these repeated requests often go unanswered. We are still asking for "more", and it has been many years since we first asked. It is the same with the disciples. They ask the Lord to increase their faith. Instead of giving them more faith, He basically tells them they do not need more faith, that they have enough already. How do you like that response?

Watchman Nee was once asked to help a sister who insisted that she needed more patience. She told brother Nee of all the times she lost her temper and how terribly she behaved. She prayed and prayed for patience, but to no avail. So she asked brother Nee if he would agree with her in prayer that God would give her patience so she would no longer lose her temper. Brother Nee said, "This I cannot do." Stunned, she asked why not. "Because I can assure you that God will not answer your prayer," he answered. This sister became angry. "What do you mean God will not answer my prayer?" she demanded. "Am I so far gone that He will not hear me anymore?" "No, I do not mean exactly that," brother Nee explained. "What I mean is this: God will not give you more patience, because you have no need of patience." Now the woman was nearly beside herself with anger. "What do you mean I have no need of patience? I am always losing my temper and acting in a most regrettable manner. How can you say I do not need patience?" "Dear sister," he calmly replied, "it is not patience that you need; it is Christ."

He goes on to explain that all we have need of is in Christ, and Christ is in us. Therefore, we do not need to seek God for a little patience here, a little faith there. Instead, we must see that we are complete in Christ, and ask God to humble us and break us, that Christ would be my Patience, and that Christ would be my Faith, and that Christ would be my Righteousness, etc. We have every spiritual blessing already

in Christ, but that Life is for the most part trapped within the alabaster box. We love the alabaster box more than the ointment, but we cannot have the ointment without breaking the vessel.

Dear friend, are you an enclosed vessel, or a broken one? Is Christ bound up and restrained within your heart, or is your heart free and unfettered that He may come forth through you? Have you expressed your willingness to die to yourself that you may bring forth much fruit, or are you like the seed which refuses to die and therefore abides alone? Has the Presence been released in you and through you, or does the veil need to be torn in two?

Oh, let us go back to the cross and humble ourselves that He may have freedom of expression through us! Do we desire the presence of the Lord? Then let us ask the Lord to decrease us through the Cross, for *"the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."*

MOSES 2 VERSE 7 - WHY DID JESUS DIE AND BE RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY?

Have you ever thought about this subject? Maybe you know exactly why this happened. Something that interested me this morning while thinking on this subject was that the disciples always taught Jesus, and Him as the crucified one.

This had me thinking that maybe there are people out there that do not know what everything means to us as Christians. Why did it must happen? What did God intend to achieve with this?

I want to start with what Jesus proclaimed while walking on the earth. Mark 14:58; "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." You might even wonder why I quote this part of scripture, as it does not seem to have any relationship to His death. We might know that it sorts of points to the fact that Jesus had to die, but it does not give us a clear reason for the question at hand.

The second scripture I want to quote is from Luke 12:50; "*But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*" It is quite interesting to note that Jesus uses the word baptism, as baptism is always associated with water, and not death. Jesus uses this word specifically as He wants to tell us that it is a process He has to go through, but also wants to inform us what our baptism should mean to us.

Let us start with the first quote, the temple.

The temple as it existed in the time of Jesus, was built by the people who returned from exile in Babylon. That is why the people were surprised by what Jesus said, as this temple took forty-six years to build after they returned from captivity. They could not work out how Jesus could destroy the old temple and build a new one in just three days. King Solomon built the temple that existed before this one. The history of this temple is portrayed in 1 Kings 6, 7 and 8. Before this temple was built, Israel used the tabernacle of Moses, who received the instructions regarding the layout and function of the tabernacle from God himself.

Exodus 25 verse 8 and 9 gives us some history: "*And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*"

Why did Moses must build the tabernacle? It was a place the tribe of Israel could go to get forgiveness of sins. There they had to bring offers to the LORD for forgiveness of sins, and depending on the offence, had to pay either a dove or a lamb or whatever was prescribed. The Israelites could also bring offers to the LORD to show thanks for what He did. The only person who could bring these offers to the LORD was a priest. No other person could do this. If you wanted to bring your own sacrifice the same punishment was meted out to you as was imposed on Saul when he decided he would bring the sacrifice instead of Samuel, the priest. To Saul it meant that the LORD did not confirm his kingship, and as a result of this David was crowned as king of Israel.

But wasn't there anything before the tabernacle? No, as we read in the Bible that the tabernacle was imposed on Israel as a direct subsequence of them not doing what the LORD wanted them to do. Every person, you can confirm this in Genesis, had the right to offer a sacrifice to the LORD. There were no prescriptions on how and where it could be made, or anything to that nature at all. Sometimes, like in the case of Abraham, the LORD told people where to offer, but normally it could be done anywhere. Only after Abiram, Korah and Dathan revolted against Moses and Aaron, did the LORD impose that only Levites could do service in the tabernacle on Israel's behalf. What we can learn from this is that before the time of the exodus, every person stood in a relationship with the LORD, but only during the exodus when Israel did not want to listen to the LORD, did He impose a way of offering sacrifices to Him. This is what Jesus referred to when He said he would destroy the temple in three days. In those three days, He restored the relationship with the LORD again, so that we can all offer our own sacrifices to Him again, without going to the priest to let him do it for you.

The old way of offering sacrifices had to be completely done away with. Jesus brought the one offer that was acceptable to the Father. He was the perfect offer. He did this for us 2000 years ago. All that remains for me is to confess my sins, but this is easier said than done. We must remember that Jesus reinstated the method of offering sacrifices to the LORD that the people enjoyed before the exodus. Jesus reinstated the same method Abraham and others had where they could all bring sacrifices. But with the Holy Spirit coming to live in us as born-again Christians, we must remember that our bodies become living temples to the LORD. This also means that we must behave like temples.

This brings me to the second scripture I quoted at the start of this article. Here Jesus declares that He has a baptism to go through, and that He is distressed by it. Why was He distressed? He knew He had to die. He knew he had to fight and overcome Satan. He knew He had to get the keys of death. He had to overcome death. He had to make an end to all the human ways of pleasing the LORD, and to start a new way of pleasing the LORD.

Do you know that He had such a horrid time that He perspired blood in Gethsemane? That He could not carry His own cross to be crucified? Why? Because He carried my sins and yours with Him to the cross. This is what happens when you come to realize that you are a sinner. This is the way you and I should feel like when we come under the conviction of sin. When we realize that Jesus carried our sins to Calvary and that our sins caused Him to sweat blood. That He was ridiculed for you and me. That is the time when we realize that maybe like Jesus, I need someone to help me. And just like Jesus found Simon of Cirene to help Him carry His cross, we must look to someone that can help us, and that someone is Jesus. He did this for us 2000 years ago. But this is what Jesus meant that He had a baptism to be baptized with that He was distressed over. And that was only the beginning.

He still had to be crucified. It was the most horrific death anyone could wish for. It was meant for murderers and these types of people. He had to be on that cross from the time that the burnt offering was renewed in the morning, till it was renewed in the afternoon, as He had to be an acceptable sacrifice to the LORD. That is why He was offered outside the town, as all the sacrifices the high priest had to bring, the lamb had to be slaughtered outside the town. Read what the writer of Hebrews had to say about it in Hebrews 9: *"6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 ¶ The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 ¶ And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."* Reading through the book of Hebrews we find that it explains the new covenant in detail to us. Read through it a couple of times to ensure that everything sinks in, as it is to me certainly the most wonderful book in the Bible.

What happened to Jesus after he died and before He was resurrected? We find various scriptures shedding some light on it for us. The first comes from Psalm 68 verse 18, written by king David: *"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them."* Isn't it surprising to know that David knew what Jesus had to do? But are we sure about this? Let us look at what Peter wrote about this. 1 Peter 3 verses 18-22: *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 **By which also he went and***

preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. **21 ¶** The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: **22** Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Peter continues with this in 1 Peter 4 verse 6 as follows: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Peter is also quoted in Acts 2 verse 24: "**Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.**"

I trust that this gives you some idea of what Jesus had to do in those three days. He had to overcome death and tell the people that never formed part of the first covenant why He had to come to earth, for them to also become part of the covenant. That is why He had to descend to death, to overcome it and to fetch the dead and take them to paradise.

But why three days? Jesus proclaimed Himself that He will rebuild the temple in three days. "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." (Mat 12:38-41)

But then there is another side to the story. **He was resurrected. He overcame death.**

Read what Hosea had to say about this event. Hosea 13:14: "I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction".

Do you now understand why Jesus had to die? He died for you and me to become part of His Kingdom. That is why Jesus referred to this part as a baptism, as this is exactly what happens when we are baptized. I must realize that I cannot continue in my old life as a sinner any longer. I must have a Gethsemane experience. I can then do as Jesus said, and that is to take up my cross and follow Him to die. I must allow my sins and transgressions to be nailed to cross with Jesus, to receive forgiveness. Then I must die. As soon as I do it, Jesus will offer to Father His own blood and life in place of mine, for me to receive complete forgiveness. But remember Jesus was raised from the dead, and similarly I will receive His life and be raised never to die again. So as soon as I am raised from the water of baptism, I have received eternal life. I am now someone who will never die the death of a sinner and be thrown in the pit with Satan. Jesus overcame Satan and death, and hence I will also follow Him in overcoming death and Satan. This is what Jesus declares in must happen in John 3 verses 5 and 6: "JESUS ANSWERED, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE FLESH IS FLESH; AND THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT." We can now understand that the example set by Jesus, is that life is always preceded by death.

Now we might also be able to understand what Peter declared in 1 Peter 3 verses 21 and 22 : "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

I have a question for you as reader. What does your life reflect? A life in anticipation of Him, like a virgin waiting for her husband, or have you gone a whoring after other gods?

MOSES 2 VERSE 8 - HEALING - IS IT STILL APPLICABLE TODAY?

I know many people including many influential people have written numerous books about this subject. I would also like to write about it, and trust that maybe you would find something different and new.

I want to start with what the LORD proclaims on healing. The first scripture comes from Exodus 15 25-26 : *"there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, 26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."*

The second scripture comes from Deut 7:12 - 15 *"Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: 13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee."*

Both scriptures declare that we must obey the LORD before we can lay claim to any healing. What do both declare? To be exact, both scriptures declare that if we will listen to and obey the LORD, no sicknesses will be put on us. The LORD will not allow any sickness if you do as He commands, that is the message of the Bible.

Two other scriptures that confirm this come from Proverbs 4 verses 20 to 22, and Psalms 41 verses 1 to 3.: *"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." Psalms 41: "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. 3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."*

We can see from these scriptures that the LORD does not want us to be sick. No, He wants us to be completely free from sickness, but then we must act within His will. Then we must do what He requires.

There are however certain exceptions to the rule. We find one of these exceptions in the book of Daniel. Chapter eight and verse 27 : *"And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."* It is quite surprising to find that Daniel says that he was sick. The reason for this is that he was tired and fainted from the vision. From this scripture we find that his body was run down, and he had no power to fight any sickness. Another example we find comes from the gospel of John. John 11:1 *"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."* Fortunately for us, Jesus gave us the reason he was sick. It was for the glory of God. Why? Jesus wanted to show everyone that He had the power over death and sickness, in order for them to turn to the LORD.

Philippians have an all-together different story. *"25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that*

ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful". Why was he sick? The Bible does not give us any reason for it. A question that I immediately asked was why Paul did not pray for him, as people used cloths that Paul laid hands on to heal the sick. The Bible does not tell us if Paul prayed for him or not. If Paul did and healed him, I am convinced that it would have been documented.

This brings me to the second set of scriptures on healing, and that is the Holy Spirit gift of healing.

Where do we find it described? 1 Cor 12 verses 8 and 9: *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; **to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;**"* Other references to this comes from Matthew 10 verse 1, and Mark 16 verse 18: *"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."*

Both these scriptures have a common thread running through them, and that is to go to people. In the case of Matthew, they had to go to unbelieving Jews, and in the case of Mark, unbelievers. Why? To show in both cases the power of Jesus in healing people for them to believe in Jesus Christ. In both instances it is accompanied by another commandment, and that is to preach the gospel. This unlocks an especially important truth. The gift of healing is given to us to heal the heathens and lead them to Christ.

But what about us that already believe in Jesus Christ? James 5 verse 14 gives us the answer: *"14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

This is what we as believers should do. We must follow the example of the Bible. We must anoint the sick with oil and pray for them, but it has to go hand in hand with confessing of sins. But we must believe that it is the will of the LORD to heal us. This is the way the Jews were healed by Jesus. Some asked that He would only speak a word; other just wanted to touch Him. If we look at the example of Israel in the dessert, we find that the LORD sent snakes in amongst them to kill them for being disobedient. Israel called out to the LORD and confessed that they had sinned. Moses then gets told to make a snake and to put it on a pole. Whenever a snake bit someone, all they had to do was look up at the snake and they would be healed.

This also points the way to Jesus, who would be hung on a cross and whoever looks up at Him after confessing his sin, would be healed. Let us remember this part of scripture and practice it in our daily lives. Remember one point, it needs faith from your side.

Do I have any proof of this? Yes, I think my own life bears witness to it. On 31 August 1994 I woke up with a severe pain somewhere close to where I thought one's appendix is situated. Why I knew it was my appendix, was that my one daughter had her appendix removed about four months prior to this. I still mocked everyone and said that seeing that I forgot to get appendicitis as a teenager, I had to get rid of mine now.

Eventually at five in the afternoon I went to see the doctor, as I could not bear the pain anymore. Once there the doctor decided that I had to report at the hospital immediately, and that the specialist would examine me in between operations, and if necessary, remove the appendix still that night. I was pushed

into the operating theatre at eight, and what I heard later was going to change my life. Once the doctor made his original cut to remove the appendix, he found that he could not reach it as it was turned towards the back and that he needed more space to maneuver the appendix. He enlarged the cut and started reeling the small intestine out to make room for him to work. He and the doctor administering the narcotics were talking when he suddenly found something else in his hand. What he found was a tumor of about 15 centimeters long. The moment he looked at it, he knew what it was. It was a malignant tumor better known as characinoid syndrome, an exceedingly rare type of cancer. In fact, it is so rare that a normal general practitioner is supposed to treat only one such case in his life.

When the doctor told me afterward how it happened, we both agreed that it was the will of the LORD that this whole episode happened. If they did not find the tumor, I would have probably had another twelve months to live. To me it was the start of an exceptionally long lonesome road I had to face for the next couple of years. Two months after this incident I was readmitted for a follow up operation and a further 24 tumors were found, all malignant. I also received some damning words from the doctor that he did everything he could, but he had to leave some malignant tissue inside, as I would bleed to death if he had to remove this tissue.

The next step was chemotherapy. Unfortunately for me the oncologist did not check with my medical aid if they would pay for his services. By the time I found out that they were not willing to pay, I had an account of thousands of Rands, which I had to pay personally. I stopped this, as I could not afford to continue. At that time, I also remembered what the doctor told me the last time I saw him when he removed the stitches. He told me that he did everything he could to remove all the tumors, but that the God he and I both know, can heal me completely.

The next Sunday evening we went to a church service where a popular person was leading the service. When he called on people to come forward for ministry, I approached four elders that were standing in a group, and asked them to pray for me, using the scripture of James 5 as an example. James 5 from verse 14 *"14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* They were totally baffled, as this was the first time anyone asked for such a prayer. They were used to giving advice on family and other matters, but never have they experienced this. I told them to do as James said, they can do the praying and anointing, while I will do the believing. That was more than eight years ago at the time of writing this, and at that point there was no recurrence of cancer again.

That is my story on my own healing. But what now when you do everything, and you are still not healed? Jesus also had a case like this. Mark 8:22 *"22 ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. 24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. 25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly."*

The Bible declares that it is impossible to please God without faith. When we look at the example of John and Peter at the temple, the lame person must have believed John and Peter when they told him to stand up and walk. The same applies to the lepers that had to go and show them to the priests. In both instances they had to have faith, but also, they were healed immediately, as they believed that they would be healed instantly.

So, next time you need healing, do as the Israelites, and look to Jesus on the cross and ask Him to heal you.

But what about medicine then, can we still use it? If it is necessary to use medicine, do it. Isaiah used it to heal Hiskia. He made some cakes from figs and placed them on Hiskia's sores, and when the cakes were removed, the sores were gone too. Immediately. If the LORD wants you to use medicine, use it. We know that the LORD even used medical doctors in the form of Luke.

We must remember another scripture also. This is the one that I always keep to the end, as we must first examine our own lives before we can look at this scripture. It comes from Job 33:14-30: *FOR GOD SPEAKETH ONCE, YEA TWICE, YET MAN PERCEIVETH IT NOT. IN A DREAM, IN A VISION OF THE NIGHT, WHEN DEEP SLEEP FALLETH UPON MEN, IN SLUMBERINGS UPON THE BED; THEN HE OPENETH THE EARS OF MEN, AND SEALETH THEIR INSTRUCTION, THAT HE MAY WITHDRAW MAN FROM HIS PURPOSE, AND HIDE PRIDE FROM MAN. HE KEEPETH BACK HIS SOUL FROM THE PIT, AND HIS LIFE FROM PERISHING BY THE SWORD. **He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.** HIS FLESH IS CONSUMED AWAY, THAT IT CANNOT BE SEEN; AND HIS BONES THAT WERE NOT SEEN STICK OUT. YEA, HIS SOUL DRAWETH NEAR UNTO THE GRAVE, AND HIS LIFE TO THE DESTROYERS. IF THERE BE A MESSENGER WITH HIM, AN INTERPRETER, ONE AMONG A THOUSAND, TO SHEW UNTO MAN HIS UPRIGHTNESS: THEN HE IS GRACIOUS UNTO HIM, AND SAITH, DELIVER HIM FROM GOING DOWN TO THE PIT: I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM. HIS FLESH SHALL BE FRESHER THAN A CHILD'S: HE SHALL RETURN TO THE DAYS OF HIS YOUTH: HE SHALL PRAY UNTO GOD, AND HE WILL BE FAVORABLE UNTO HIM: AND HE SHALL SEE HIS FACE WITH JOY: FOR HE WILL RENDER UNTO MAN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. HE LOOKETH UPON MEN, AND IF ANY SAY, I HAVE SINNED, AND PERVERTED THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT, AND IT PROFITED ME NOT; HE WILL DELIVER HIS SOUL FROM GOING INTO THE PIT, AND HIS LIFE SHALL SEE THE LIGHT. LO, ALL THESE THINGS WORKETH GOD OFTENTIMES WITH MAN, TO BRING BACK HIS SOUL FROM THE PIT, TO BE ENLIGHTENED WITH THE LIGHT OF THE LIVING.*

In closing I have only one question to ask you. When you are sick, first ask the LORD for healing. If he does not heal you, go to a doctor and get medical advice and help. Do not wait until it is too late. He used doctors to save my life: He can do it in yours.

MOSES 2 VERSE 9 - HOW DO I USE THE BIBLE AS A WORKSHOP MANUAL?

I need to use the LORD's mathematics.

Isaiah 61 verse 1: *"1 ¶ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."*

This portion of scripture has always meant to me that the LORD has called you to full time ministry. It would normally be as a shepherd, as these are normally the tasks of a shepherd. But this changed the one day while Hettie and I were talking about what the LORD is busy with in our lives. I wanted to explain something to her and felt that I had to read this portion of scripture to her, when we both experienced the LORD speaking to us.

It is quite amazing how many times I thought that the LORD should listen to me. I want Him so to listen to me when I have a solution to a problem, as I have examined the problem, listed the alternatives, and decided on the best possible plan of action. That day while Hettie and I were talking, I suddenly found that He has given us the answers to almost all problems years ago and is documented for us in Isaiah. What a surprise when I found that he even used math.

What am I talking about? When we examine the part of scripture, we find that it is made up of several principles. The first principle is that the Spirit of the LORD is upon me as He has anointed me. How do I know if I am anointed by Him? When His Spirit is upon me. How do I know that His Spirit is upon me? When I prophesy, speak in tongues, or move in signs and wonders. These were the signs mentioned in the Bible, and what Jesus told us will happen when we become His disciples. So, before I try and do something, I must ensure that I am anointed by the LORD. I cannot assume that I am anointed just because I spent three or even seven years at university or at a seminary and that people should therefore listen to me. No, I must know that I am anointed by the LORD.

The next part of scripture highlights the next principal and that is the part about why I am anointed. I am only anointed to preach good tidings. That good tiding is the message of redemption paved for us by Jesus Christ. It is the message that Jesus was crucified for our sins, for us to live. I must proclaim this message wherever I go. I must be able to read through the Bible and be able to see Jesus in every part of scripture. That is how I will receive my freedom from death and hell. Jesus is our freedom. It also means to me that I must move out of Egypt. I was not called to work in Egypt; no, I am called to proceed to Canaan. He wants me to get away from that which binds me.

The next portion defines the next principal. It informs me whom this message is for. It is for the broken hearted, the captives and to those that mourn. Those people will receive the Message of hope. It is not meant for the high and mighty, the snobs and the like. To these the message of redemption is nonsense. No, it is meant for those that have been emptied of everything they are. From this we can see that the message is not meant for those that still think that they are okay. No, you must be emptied of yourself before you will understand the message of salvation.

Why? Because the LORD wants to free me from everything that binds me on earth, he wants me to get away from my prison of self-righteousness. From that which binds me to do His work. It does not matter what your past is like, no He wants to free you from it all. He wants to free you from homosexuality, pornography, your inferiority complex, or whatever you are struggling with. But this freedom is only available to those that do as He wants them to.

What is the result of all this? We will be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. All sorts of doctrines will no longer toss us about as a boat in a storm; no, we will be able to hold on to what which we believe in. We will be able to stand in righteousness in front of the throne on the day of reckoning. There we will receive our ultimate freedom. Knowing this, we can now rejoice as prisons will open, doors will open, and we can know that we have received beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Where does the math come in?

If we look at any subject like healing or some like subject, we can declare that the LORD wants to free us from it. When I proclaim to someone that the LORD wants to heal us, I must understand the following requirements for the formula to work.

Requirements:

An anointed person

Scripture to declare that the LORD wants to heal a person. This I must believe in.

I must admit that I have sinned or that I was party to sin. I must have the correct attitude and know that I am bound.

I must glorify the LORD for what he has done, and what He will do in my life.

This will always have the following result: Healing.

That is the math of Isaiah 61. Do I have any examples for this in the Bible? Yes. Paul and Silas were in prison. The LORD anointed them both; they proclaimed His Name and Word in prayer and in song. So, they utterly believed that the LORD is in control of their situation. What did they receive? Physical freedom. The doors to the prison physically opened.

Another example comes from the Old Testament. Israel is in Egypt. They know that only the LORD can save them. What did the LORD do? He freed them, but how does this fit the formula?

The LORD anointed Moses. He moved in signs and wonders. He proclaimed the Word of the LORD to the Pharaoh every time he went to see him. Israel had already called out to the LORD forty years prior. Their attitude was one of meekness, of a broken heartedness, as they knew that only the LORD could save them. The final step was to become part of the covenant. The result? They came out of Egypt.

This is what the LORD wants for every person. It does not matter what you were involved in, He wants to free you from that which binds you. He wants to free you for you to do the will of the Father, and that is to proclaim His Word on earth. We are His hands and feet, but we cannot do anything while being bound.

The only proviso is that I must approach Him with the right attitude. I must confess that only He can help me. If I still have a back door open, He will not help me, as He wants to receive the glory and honor. He does not want me to say that I helped Him in getting out of my situation. No, He wants the honor.

What have we learned today? That there is a formula described for us in the Bible that the LORD wants us to use to be freed from everything that binds us. Let us follow His ways of problem resolution, rather than our own ways. This is what I meant when I started by saying we must use our Workshop Manual, the Bible as our guide. I must know what the Bible proclaims about every question before jumping to conclusions. Sometimes the questions we have will be answered directly by the Bible, but at times it

will be necessary to use our formula of Isaiah 61. Let me give you an example. A while ago we were in Jeffreys Bay at a house when a young widow asked me if she should marry again. I referred her to 1 Corinthians 7, and after reading it she proclaimed that she was going to start looking for a husband again, as the Bible told her that she can marry again. In this instance the Bible had a direct answer, but sometimes not. That is when we can use the God's formula of Isaiah.

MOSES 2 VERSE 10 - ELECTION, IS IT STILL APPLICABLE TODAY, AND IF YES, HOW DOES IT WORK?

The doctrine of election is one area where one is hesitant to go into, as this was responsible for major splits in the church over time. But not only did the church split up, but households were torn apart. But I do not think that the LORD wanted this to happen. His Word did not come to strike down believers but came to build people in their faith. So what do we must look at to find a Biblical answer to this question?

I must say that if you have a very strong view on this subject, you might not agree with me. All I ask is that you will think about the passages that I will share as well as my deductions made from these passages.

I want to start right at the beginning. Jesus is the one speaking. Now you might tell me that to quote from the book of Revelation is not at the start, but Jesus was there in the beginning and will be there at the end. Revelation 3 verse 9: *"9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;"* We find that Jesus says to the church in Philadelphia that they have people there who call themselves Jews, but they are lying. This verse is a confirmation of a similar verse in Revelation 2 verse 9, which stated: *"9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."* These two passages give us a very important principle: Only Jews will be saved. This agrees with what Moses told the Israelites in Deuteronomy 7 verses 6 and 7: *"6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:"*

This leaves us with a major question, as we know that God will never go back on His Word, and yet He says that he chose only Israel, the smallest nation to be His children. All the Jews are descendants of Israel. So what about other people? The answer comes from Acts 10 verse 34 and 35; *"34 ¶ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."* This passage informs us that should we work righteousness and fear the LORD, we will be acceptable to Him. This however does not solve our dilemma of Revelation that only Jews will be saved. Our answer to that question comes from Numbers 15 verses 15 and 16: *"15 One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16 **One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.**"* Exodus 12 from verse 48 gives us the final answer: *"48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males **be circumcised**, and then let him come near and keep it; **and he shall be as one that is born in the land** : for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49 **One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.**"*

We find that in the history of Israel, if someone decided to stay with Israel, they were counted as being part of the nation of Israel. A very good example for us is Ruth. Although she could return to her own land, she chose to go with Naomi and be as her own daughter. The word that Ruth spoke, also shed more light on this truth: Ruth 1:16: *"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."* Ruth chose to become part of Naomi's nation, and to accept her God. Who was Ruth? She was David's grandmother. Who did Jesus descend from? David.

How do we fit all these pieces together? The LORD chose Israel to be His nation. We as gentiles must decide to join the nation of Israel to become part of the LORD's nation. How is this achieved? In the time

of Israel, it was through circumcision, which confirmed the covenant relationship. Today it is through becoming part of the New Covenant. Jesus declared it as follows: John 3 verses 5 and 6: "5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* 6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" This then confirms that we must decide to become part of the New Covenant, and that only you can decide, not your parents or anyone else. Once you have decided to do this you must follow the example we quoted earlier where Peter declared that everyone who does righteousness and fear the LORD, is acceptable to Him. Cornelius and his family decided to put their trust in the LORD and were baptized. So, we must be baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

How does Paul answer our original question? Ephesians 2 from verse 11: "11 ¶ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, ***being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*** 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 ¶ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"

I trust that this short argument on this very thorny issue, has clarified it for you. We can go on for days and weeks debating this subject. Remember Jesus also declared that we must become like a child to follow Him. I know people have written numerous books on this subject, but I trust that a child will even understand this short article.

MOSES 2 VERSE 11 - WHAT IS THE PRICE I MUST PAY WHEN I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Some people never ask this question while others wish they asked before committing their lives to Him. Sometimes we only find out later in life that we should have asked this question but did not.

I would like to answer the question with the following statement: A faith that costs you nothing, costs your life, while a faith that costs your life, costs you nothing.

What do I mean with this statement? I wonder how many people I have met that really wants to serve the LORD, and some believe they do, but yet they have never asked this question. Some even do not think that this question has any relevance.

In other articles I spent a lot of time on saying we must die and be born again. If you find that I am repeating myself, bear with me, as I must state some of those truths again.

Let us start by looking at what the LORD told Adam and Eve in paradise. Gen 1: 28 *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."* This scripture informs us that Adam and Eve had to be fruitful, subdue the earth and rule over creation.

It is actually genuinely nice to see that the LORD did not give them the Ten Commandments, but told them to rule, or have dominion over creation. The price they had to pay was to be obedient to the LORD. But we also know the history. Did they obey the LORD? No, they did not. They decided to listen to creation rather than the Creator. This act cost them their lives. Gen 3:1 *"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."*

Do we differ from the way they reacted? I do not think so. We will listen to everybody who has an opinion on the subject, but we will not listen to GOD, the Creator. We are not any different than Adam and Eve. We want to follow our own logic, but do not look at the Word of God. The Bible tells us that we cannot know God except from His Word, but still we follow our own heads.

What punishment was meted out to Adam and Eve? Gen 3:22 *"22 ¶ And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."* What does this mean to us today? Firstly, that we cannot use the argument that we did not know, as we now have the ability to distinguish between good and bad, and secondly, that we must turn to Him for answers.

As we now know that we must turn to God for our answer, and as we know that He and His Word is the same, we must look at what the Bible says about our subject. I must do a study of relevant scriptures, as the answer might not be as straightforward as we would want it to be, but I must examine His Word to find the answer I need.

Where are we today? We must remember that Adam and Eve were no longer allowed in paradise. They did not die physically, but they were spiritually dead. The LORD retracted His Spirit from them. Now we all know that when we are reborn, His Spirit comes and lives in us, and the original relationship with God is restored. But the big question of course is: When does rebirth take place? We can phrase it in a whole lot of different ways like: When does the Spirit of God become alive in us? Or: How do I know that the Spirit of God is alive in me? And then the final question: What price do I must pay for the Spirit to come and live in me?

These are just some of the questions we can ask, but eventually it all boils down to the same question: What does it cost to become a Christian?

What does the Bible say on this subject? As we have already indicated that we must find the answer from the LORD, and the Word of the LORD is expressed in the Bible, let us look at what the Bible says. Oops. Now we find some very confusing entries in the Bible in that one passage declares that it is by grace that you are saved, while another passage declares that you must take up your cross and follow Jesus. Which one is applicable?

I assume that to get to the correct answer, we must look at Jesus as our example. He asked us to make people His disciples, and a disciple is someone who does the will of his Master. If we do this, we will find the right answer.

When Jesus came to earth, He was obedient to His Father in that He left His perfect place in heaven, to become sin for us for us to live. The first thing that I must learn is obedience. The lack of obedience was also responsible for Adam and Eve to lose paradise. To rectify the situation, I must learn to be obedient. Jesus had to be completely obedient to come to earth and exchange His life for ours. If He did not do it, we would still have been under the Law of Moses. He had to be totally obedient to the Father to reconcile the relationship Adam and Eve severed in paradise. To you and me, we must start with obedience. We must learn that without obedience to the LORD, it is impossible to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

How do we define obedience? I would like to define it as follows: Obedience is to lay down my own ideas and ways, and to accept the ways and ideas of the LORD as my own, to crucify myself. I must disregard my own selfish nature and follow Jesus. This also fits in with what the Bible says. Let us look at a couple of scriptures.

*1Sa 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying** the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

*Ps 103:20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that **do his commandments**, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*

*Ro 5:19 For as by one man's **disobedience** many were made sinners, so by the **obedience** of one shall many be made righteous.*

*Ro 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of **obedience unto righteousness**?*

*Ro 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles **obedient, by word and deed**,*

*2Co 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity **every thought to the obedience of Christ**;*

2Co 10:6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, **when your obedience is fulfilled.**

Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

1Pe 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, **unto obedience** and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

1Pe 1:22 Seeing ye have **purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

One scripture that tells us exactly what it means to be obedient, and that is worth repeating, is as follows: "Ro 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of **obedience unto righteousness?**"

Paul declares that we are either obedient, which leads to righteousness and life, or disobedient which leads to death. We also read in Hebrews 5 that Jesus had to learn obedience himself through the things He suffered. I am so sorry that I learnt this passage so late in my life as I would have known earlier that to follow Christ, meant that I also had to suffer as He did. Certain scriptures only come to life when we are in a situation, and that was what Matthew 10 verse 24 did it to me. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." Only once I read this scripture, did I understand the situation I found myself in, one of being rejected by most church going people, as they only believe in bargaining with the LORD.

Jesus himself also gave us some pointers as to what it will cost to follow Him:

Mt 10:38 And he that **taketh not his cross**, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

Mt 16:24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross**, and follow me.

Mr 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, **and take up his cross**, and follow me.

Mr 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, **take up the cross**, and follow me.

Lu 14:27 And whosoever **doth not bear his cross**, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Ga 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, **save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Php 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, **even the death of the cross.**

The one verse that I want to repeat again is Mark 10:21; "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, **take up the cross**, and follow me." Jesus is talking to a rich young man. He does not only tell him to sell everything he owns, but He tells him to take up his cross, and then only can he follow Jesus.

But what does it mean to take up my cross? Philippians 2 verse 8 gives us the answer: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, **even the death of the cross.**" Jesus had to humble Himself and go to Calvary to die. The same way you and I must take up our cross

and go to the cross of Jesus, and put it down at His feet, and die, in order for me to be resurrected with Jesus. We must take our very being, our finances, our self-righteousness, our haughtiness, our proud ness, our health, our hate, and our relationship with our spouse, and subject it to the light of Jesus. This is what it will cost to follow Jesus.

In summary, we have seen that we must be obedient, and that we must take up our cross, to receive everlasting life. But how sure am I? Paul gave us the answer in 1 Cor 1:18; *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

We can also look at what Jesus told His disciples to expect when they were sent out. Matt.10: 32 *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."*

Jesus declares that to be His disciple, it will cost your life. But in return, we will receive His life.

But how do I go about losing my life? Gal 5:19 *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.** 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 **And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.** 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."*

What do I must do? I must crucify my old life by taking it to the cross and leaving it at the feet of Jesus. I must ask Him to heal me from these afflictions. He will do it if you ask Him in all honesty and humbleness. But you will decide yourself that you do not want to continue in your old life. You must turn around and walk away from your previous life.

How did Peter define it for us? 2 Peter 1:5 *"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. **10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."***

What did Jesus himself say? Matt 16:24 *"¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: **and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.** 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."*

What will it cost me to be a Christian? A faith that costs you nothing will cost your life, but a faith that costs you everything including your life, will cost you nothing. Amen.

MOSES 2 VERSE 12 - HOW DO I MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST?

We all know the final commandment that Jesus gave to His disciples. When we get to the implementation of this, there are various models people follow. Some might not even think that it is relevant anymore in our day and age. One such group believes that the LORD has His elected ones, and thus it does not even help to send someone as a missionary as you will be wasting your breath in any case. This group I will put into the grouping of those with truly little faith, or no faith at all. They would also normally only have a couple of missionaries working in their own sphere ensuring that nobody goes astray.

With them out of the way, what are the main groupings? One group of people will believe that we must send someone somewhere, where another group will believe that you should just work with the people around you. I have read so many books and articles dissecting the Word on this subject, only to find that not a lot gets done. We have a commission to fulfil, and it does not help to analyze it to find out where and how it should be done. No, we just must do it. Everyone.

How would I define the role of a disciple?

I suggest we start and analyze what the first disciples did and see how we can apply that today. They did what He asked them to do, lived with Him, and were taught by Him. They left everything behind and followed Him. Jesus told the disciples that if their parents or wives were more important than Jesus, they were not worthy of Him. They had to be like Him, as a disciple does and act like his teacher.

Jesus told Peter that He was going to make him a fisher of men. Quite an interesting example. What does it mean if we take that, and apply it to our question? When we want to become fishers of men, we must exhibit a lifestyle that is desirable by people, so that our lifestyle can be used as bait. The first point I want to make is that your lifestyle must exhibit the Word and life of Christ.

What is our modus operandi?

I want to stick to the fisherman example. When we fish, we do not catch all the fish in the river or sea, even when we use a net, as some fish will still be able to escape. Only those that eat of our bait, or land in our net, are caught. I do not know if you have ever caught a fish with a fishing rod, but it is still one of the most exciting things to me when you know that something has taken your bait. Now I must concentrate and reel him in slowly, or I will lose him. Then when I eventually get to where I can see the fish, it is so exciting to see him struggle. When I eventually land the fish, he dies, and can then be used by me either as bait, or as food.

That is the task Jesus gave us. We must become his bait to the world. We must exhibit His Word and His lifestyle. If I do not, then I am in no position to make others His disciples. No, I can only make people a disciple of what I am a disciple of. The fish, the unbeliever, must be able to see it, smell it and taste it before deciding. I can sit around and tell the fish everything about my bait, giving all the plusses and minuses, informing him that it has all the nutrients he requires and that he will never be hungry for anything anymore after taking my bait. This will not help though. The fish must see it in action and then desire to have it. He must eat it. I cannot eat it on his behalf, meaning I cannot accept the LORD on his behalf. No, the person must see my life and it must be desirable to him, before he will take it. He will then struggle, as he is not going to leave his life behind. I will use all my know-how and strength to not let the fish go. I will tell him that it is better for him to be caught than to be left in sin. He might not like it if you tell him this. Others might even struggle so hard that you will lose them. They might end up taking someone else's bait or even Satan's bait. Remember Paul said in Galatians 6 verse 5 that everyone will bear his own burden. When I eventually land him and get him to the LORD, he is going to die, as we are not building an aquarium, but we are fishing for them to become disciples, or bait.

How is this done in real life?

Exhibiting Jesus in my life does this. If I am still full of myself, I will make people like me. I will tell them of my theology and life and habits. Paul describes this for us in Galatians 6 verses 12 to 13: *"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."* I have heard so many times that people brag about how many people they led to the LORD. Most of these used some or other tract to explain why the person had to accept Jesus as Savior, and then prayed a prayer on behalf of the other person. I get totally annoyed when I hear this, as statistics show that one 7% of these people actually made a commitment to follow the LORD. My question to them normally is: If you had so many opportunities to share the full Gospel, why didn't you do it?

Let us use an example. If I go to parts in Africa that have never heard the gospel or anything from the Bible, and I tell a person there that if he does not accept Jesus as his Savior, he is going to end up hell, what do you think his reaction is going to be? He will probably say something like: "Huh? What are you talking about"? However, when he sees me healing the sick and speak life into their lives, he will also want that which I have. It does not help having all the tools in the world to share the gospel. No, I must walk that road myself, and exhibit Jesus in my everyday life. Then people would be interested in hearing about Jesus and changing their lives.

That is how to make people disciples of Jesus Christ.

MOSES 2 VERSE 13 - WHAT IS THE LORD TO YOU, AN INJECTION OR A BLOOD TRANSFUSION?

This is one of those funny sorts of questions to ask someone. But it is a lifesaving question that must be asked. We are growing up in an era where permissiveness is the rule, people do not care about authority, and where blowing up of the human ego is commonplace. We only must look at television for a couple of hours at night to see the filthy language, sexual deeds, robbery, murder, and everything else that is dished up by the media for us. Not to mention even the humanism exhibited. I must admit that when I grew up, none of this happened as we did not have TV. Even the radio stations were totally different than today.

One thing that did not change during this time is the LORD. He is still the same today as He was 50 years ago. The church might have changed the message a little so as to fit in with our modern lifestyle, but the LORD has not changed. In some churches they have changed the services drastically as we must move with the times, and we must attract the people back to the church. But is this the solution?

I have, in my own life, ended up in situations where I suddenly felt the need for God. The one time this happened, was when our son, he was only six years old, was involved in a motorcar accident. He ended up spending months in hospital. I was in such need to get an injection from the LORD just to carry me through this period, as I could not face it alone. Fortunately, He is always trustworthy. I remember the one morning ten days after the accident that I went to the hospital on my way to the office. I asked the LORD to do me a favor. It might not sound like a favor to you, in fact, you might think how I could even contemplate such a question, but to me it was asked in all sincerity. My son was in a coma because of his injuries. He had a cracked skull, multiple fractures of the left leg, and a severely damaged left foot. This foot was so severely damaged that you could see all the bones in his foot from the top, with just the skin at the bottom of his foot holding it all together. No operations could be done yet, and the nurses had to ensure that his wounds were free from infection. I could not take it anymore to see him suffer and asked the LORD to bring a change in his circumstances. I asked that when I get to his bed, that he would either regain his consciousness so that his wounds could be treated, or that he would die, and his suffering be stopped.

I know it sounds ruthless to pray like this, but do you know how I cried when I got to his bed, and when I touched his hand that he said to me "Morning daddy". The nursing staff cried with me, because when they changed his dressings five minutes earlier, his condition was unchanged. That injection carried me for several years, as I knew that when I ask something from the LORD, that He listens and answers prayer.

There were other times also when I got injections from the LORD. One of the injections I received, was a couple of days after a surgeon told me after a bladder scope that he found a tumor in my bladder, that he removed it, but that the tumor was malignant. Without panache he told me that I was going to die of cancer, as everyone I had ever known to have cancer, was either dead or dying. But I prayed to the LORD that I would see my children grow up, the youngest was not even in school yet, and that they would not grow up without a father figure in their lives. The LORD is faithful, and after three years I was declared not to have cancer anymore. In fact, it is now seventeen years ago.

I do not know what your circumstances are. Maybe you have had injections like this also. Maybe you also had experiences like I had that I am not proud of. Times in my life when I had an excuse every night why I had to have a beer after work or during lunchtime. I had excellent excuses every time as I had to meet some of my clients there to discuss business. The next moment you fall on your knees again and ask the LORD for forgiveness, and you feel that you can face the world again.

The one thing I have discovered was that these injections worked, but it only lasted a while. Then I must ask for another injection just to continue again. Others get a weekly injection at the church service

on a Sunday, or others at the weekly cell meeting. That is the place where they refuel in order to last another week.

Maybe your life is like this. The Bible declares in Ezekiel 18 verse 4 that the soul that sins must die. Where is the life of man? Lev 17:11 *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."*

Every time I received an injection from the LORD, I tried to kill the germs that were in my blood. I tried to kill that which was wrong. It is like someone who gets an injection against AIDS. It cannot kill the AIDS virus as the virus is in the blood. The injection will only make life more manageable. The portion of scripture in Leviticus declares to us what must be done to get your condition changed forever and ever. Jesus poured His blood on the altar in order for us to get His blood.

I must take myself to Him and ask Him to do a blood transfusion for me. I must get rid of my blood and my life, to receive His Blood and His Life. This is what the requires of us. We must receive a blood transfusion from Him, to live.

As soon as I have done this, my life will change. I will not even be interested in watching all the rubbish on TV. I might even decide to take the authorities on because of the sexual and satanic programs we get bombarded with. You might even decide to discover the Bible. I can promise you; it is a journey where you will never reach the end. So next time you feel that you just cannot cope anymore, or that you cannot continue with life, ask Jesus to give you a blood transfusion. But remember one thing, He comes and lives inside of you.

This is what Ezekiel declares will happen to us. Ezek 36:26 *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."*

Why do I must receive a new heart? Because a heart of stone cannot give life, only a heart of flesh can do that. But the LORD has to do the operation. I cannot change myself and declare that I am now His child. No, I must get rid of my blood and my heart and get clothed with His Blood and His heart.

So next time you need a touch from the LORD, ask Him to do a blood transfusion, and not just an injection. Why wait time the next time when I need Him? Healthy people do not need a doctor. People who have problems, that cannot continue any longer, they need the Doctor. The same is true about our spiritual life. Only once I have tried all the earthly medicine and plans, will I be ready to ask the LORD to do it. Then I am ready for a blood transfusion.

This was also what Isaiah meant when he wrote Isaiah 61. Verse 1: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."*

FURTHERMORE THEN WE BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN, AND EXHORT YOU BY THE LORD JESUS, THAT AS YE HAVE RECEIVED OF US HOW YE OUGHT TO WALK AND TO PLEASE GOD, SO YE WOULD ABOUND MORE AND MORE. FOR YE KNOW WHAT COMMANDMENTS WE GAVE YOU BY THE LORD JESUS. FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION, THAT YE SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM FORNICATION: THAT EVERY ONE OF YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW TO POSSESS HIS VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR; NOT IN THE LUST OF CONCUPISCENCE, EVEN AS THE GENTILES WHICH KNOW NOT GOD: THAT NO MAN GO BEYOND AND DEFRAUD HIS BROTHER IN ANY MATTER: BECAUSE THAT THE LORD IS THE AVENGER OF ALL SUCH, AS WE ALSO HAVE FOREWARNED YOU AND TESTIFIED. FOR GOD HATH NOT CALLED US UNTO UNCLEANNESS, BUT UNTO HOLINESS. HE THEREFORE THAT DESPISETH, DESPISETH NOT MAN, BUT GOD, WHO HATH ALSO GIVEN UNTO US HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

MOSES 3 VERSE 1: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LORD WITH ME?

This question can keep someone thinking for quite a long time. How many times have I wondered about this, thought I had the answer, only to find out that it was not the answer? I also found that several other people I met also wondered about the same question.

We must of course realize that there are different times in one's life, which could have an impact on this answer. Therefore, one cannot easily exclaim that this is your purpose in life without taking your current situation into consideration. As a child your purpose is to grow up, as young adult to find your wife or husband, as a married couple to get your own home and to bring up your children, in your forties and fifties to get your children married, and at the end of your life to meet your Redeemer. I remember at university we had a subject called Management by Objectives. We were told that as a manager you had to have objectives to meet, as without objectives your value to the enterprise could not be measured. Without objectives how could your manager measure your worth to the company?

The same question is also applicable to our lives as Christians. How do we know what our worth is without any objectives? We all say that yes, the LORD knows that I am willing to bring my share to support the local congregation, and that I am willing to help where needed. Is that how you feel? Or maybe you feel very spiritual in that you know that the LORD has called you to excel in your work to provide financially for various ministries. Although it is a very noble answer, it is unfortunately not true. The true purpose is that we must love the LORD and our neighbor as ourselves. Now you might ask me what the difference is. My answer is that the LORD does not need your means, he needs you. He wants us to know Him and to stand in a love relationship with him. This will allow us to exhibit the message of love and redemption in our lives. That is our only purpose.

How do I know that? It is the message of the Bible. Mark 16 ends as follows: "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark 16:14-20). Here we find our first objective as defined by the Bible. It does not mean that we all must study to become pastors or ministers, no, we have understood the message of the Bible, and live this message. We must realize that people read us every day, whether it be at work or in the supermarket, or even on the sports field. Everywhere we go, people will look at your actions, and this will influence their lives. Our lives must exhibit the love of Jesus in every aspect.

The Israelites called out to the LORD while they were in Egypt. He accepted their plea and called on Moses to lead them to the Promised Land, even though they had to wait eighty years for it. How many people calls out to the LORD daily, and whom can He send? The scripture in Mark teaches us that we must proclaim the Gospel of Jesus to a every creature, but without a Moses, who can He send? This is what the LORD wants you to do. He wants to use you as a Moses to lead these people into the Promised Land. He says that we will move in signs and wonders, just like Moses did in the time of the Israelites. That is why it is written in Mark that we will move in signs and wonders. Moses did it, and so can you. We only must believe it. When an unbeliever sees you moving in signs and wonders, he will know that you are sent by God, and that you can lead them to the Promised Land. What does Paul say to the Corinthians? *"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."* (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

But before you can be used as a Moses, you must place yourself in a relationship with the LORD, and get to know Him, intimately. If you do not know how, ask the LORD to send a Moses into your life. You will be able to see from his life how to live as a Moses, and then the LORD will use you. The LORD wants the same relationship with you as He had with Moses in the dessert. Every time Moses went into the tent outside the camp, the people saw the glory of the LORD descending on the tent like a cloud from heaven. That is the relationship the LORD wants with you. He wants to fill our lives with His glory. He wants us to be content with nothing less than His fullness. That is His purpose in our lives. He does not want anyone to go astray. But if you are not willing to be used like a Moses, he cannot use you. It does not help saying that you cannot talk to people, as people does not listen to your words, but they listen to your deeds. If you feel you still want to support various ministries financially, do it, if it is not your only objective as a Christian. You cannot use your contribution as a measure of what you do, but your life is what counts.

When you do act like a Moses, you must listen to what He tells you, and not follow your own doctrine. Moses followed his own wishes, and hit the rock at Meriba twice, even though the LORD told him to only speak to the rock. This cost Moses not to enter the Promised Land, and at the end of the day, his life. Even though he pleaded with the LORD, the decision was that he would only see the Promised Land from a distance. We must remember that obedience is the only offer acceptable to the LORD.

Matthew declares our objective as follows: *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* (Matthew 28:18-20). So, if you still wonder how you will receive the power to execute this objective, Jesus first said that we will receive the power before we can be used in verse 18. Remember, He is the one supplying the Power, as He is the Power.

MOSES 3 VERSE 2: WHAT IS THE WILL OF THE LORD?

Where do we find what the will of the LORD is? Can we always be a hundred percent sure of what the will of the LORD is? Are we not busy with spiritual soothsaying when we say that we know what the will of the LORD is? These are just some of the questions that spring to mind when one wonders about this subject.

Many people have been devastated or disappointed in their lives because what they thought was the will of the LORD, turned out not to be his will. They then stand on one side and are very cynical when people start talking about this subject.

How many times in my own life have I experienced the same situation? The more I searched for the will of God, the more it seemed to dodge me. I was so convinced at times that I needed to know what the LORD's will was that I can now stand back and laugh at myself.

Maybe you also had an experience or two like this in your life. I would like to highlight one of my own experiences. We were living in Port Elizabeth at the time and had to find a new home as the one we were renting was required by its owners for their own people. We were offered a home in Sea View, 20 kilometers west of Port Elizabeth, with the aim of starting a congregation in Sea View, as nobody knew of a local congregation.

Even before we could move, did we find that the people that invited us there were not keen any longer to start a congregation as they could not agree on anything. I still believed that we should start a congregation that I sent a flyer out to all the households that we wanted to start a congregation and serve the community. I was surprised to get feedback that four different groupings were already active in the area and decided to through my weight behind one of these groups.

The house we got was basically right on the edge of the land. One could throw a stone from the living room into the sea. I know because I did it. Instead of starting a congregation, I sat down in the living room behind my computer and started writing the original version in Afrikaans of this book. I sat there for hours writing and just watching the sea, the dolphins, and the whales. So, what transpired was that the LORD gave me a holiday at the sea for three months, for free. It was also His will to teach me so much about the Bible that it empowered me to write this book. That was His will for us. What I thought was His will, and what His will was, were two worlds apart.

Is that maybe your experience?

Back to the original question. How do I find out what is the will of the LORD? My first step would be to ask myself if I need to know what the will of the LORD is for me? Many times, one wants to know to make your life easier, or to know what decision to make regarding questions in my life. Maybe I want to know because I want to save myself a lot of heartache and suffering.

Let me use an example again. A while ago we went to a service at a local congregation, and the pastor said he wanted to pray for some of their members as some lost just about everything they owned in an investment scam. Apparently, some of the people even heard directly from the LORD that this was a good scheme and they would double their money in a short space of time. The prayer of the pastor was that the LORD would show them which schemes were good and which were not.

How do we reconcile this with the will of the LORD? What does the Bible declare should our attitude be towards finances? Hebrews 13 verse 5: *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* And Solomon in Proverbs? *"Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom."* (Proverbs 23:4). *"A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."* (Proverbs 28:20) *"He*

that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.” (Proverbs 28:22)

That is what the Bible declares. We should not exert ourselves to become rich. Why not? Jesus gives us the answer in Matthew 6. *“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” (Matthew 6:28-34)*

Jesus declares in this passage that we must live in faith, in complete dependence on Him. I know this is not the way we want to live. We want to be in control every moment of the day, make all our own decisions and not allow the LORD to share our lives. I then go to someone else who can tell me that what I am doing is the will of the LORD. I do not want to take responsibility for my life. If something goes wrong, then I know that I can blame the LORD, as He told me to do this. Or maybe I can blame the person who told me that it is what the LORD wanted. It is impossible, and I mean totally impossible for me to do something wrong.

What is the correct thing to do then? Can I still ask the LORD what His will is? Absolutely yes. We all know that the LORD wants everyone to have the opportunity to live for Him. This is the starting point. The next thing is that we know that we must all grow to the full purpose of Christ.

But what about His will for my life? Depending on the circumstances, the LORD still wants us to live our lives depending on Him. What about my investments? The LORD supplied us with a common sense to investigate everything, to prove all things; and to hold fast to that which is good. Should I make a wrong decision, I must take responsibility for it. What about my choice of a husband or wife? If you can make the same decision without taking finances and physical appearance into consideration, then that person is more than likely your mate. Just remember the basic guidelines of the Bible: Do not marry with an unbeliever in the hope that the person will change to your belief. No, the LORD will bring one to you that you do not must meddle with. Someone who will respect you for who you are, and not someone who will attack you with his fists every night.

Can I still ask the LORD for specific guidelines? Of course, you can. The prayer Jesus taught us, contains a very important phrase: Mat 6:10 *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”* This passage declares a very important point, and that is that His will is the same on earth as in heaven. He always wants only the best for us. Even when we think of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, where He asked that the cup could pass Him, but He still asked that the Fathers will be done. If He forced His will on the Father, the whole plan of redemption would have been gone. But we know that the Fathers will was done, so that you and I can be saved. This leads me to the point where I know that when I ask the LORD for His will in my life, that I must use His perspectives on the issue, and not mine. I will try and do what is best according to my insight, But the LORD says use my way of looking at the situation. Then we always claim that we will do so much for Him if He only does this one little thing for us. Remember, He does not need our works or promises to accomplish anything at all. He wants for us to be saved, and even that is by grace. So, when we ask something from the LORD, we must ensure that it doesn't interfere with His will.

If I ask Him for a new job, think about it before asking. Think of the impact it will have on your life. Maybe your request will make you less dependent on Him whereas His will is that He will provide for us. If what I ask will have a negative impact on my relationship with Him, do not bother asking, as He will not give it to you. All I am asking is that you examine every aspect of the situation before asking

Him, and not to look at the financial benefit only. Maybe He wants to bless you with a job that will give you more free time with your family, so look at all the aspects before deciding. I am not asking you to stay in poverty, no, the LORD wants us to have enough. But He also does not want us to go astray. He still wants us to look at Him as our provider.

The same applies to all aspects of life. Before asking the LORD, I must examine my reasons for asking what I want. Many times, He will not tell you what His will is in your life as you will not be able to bear it. When these unbearable times do arrive, the possibility is that it is not because of sin in our lives. No, many times it happens to draw us closer to God. The following scriptures will provide us with reasons why these times do happen.

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. (Daniel 12:10)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:3-9)

What is the will of the LORD in my life, and where do I find it? Know the Word of the LORD. This will give you His answers on just about every subject in life, your work, your partner in life, etc. Remember that the LORD also speaks to us through our circumstances. Maybe He will give you a dream about something you asked Him. This might only come to pass later in your life, or maybe you realize that He showed you what to do when you are in a certain situation. All we must do is use all our senses, including our spiritual sense, to listen to Him.

Let me use my own life as an example again. When we reached the end of our time in Port Elizabeth, we were in a rather precarious situation. All the people we could minister to, could not provide for themselves, let alone give us something. I tried doing what I could, but this only brought in about sixty percent of the rental for the house we were renting. I asked the LORD that morning to provide for us in a way that He knows how to. I felt that the answer was for us to return to Pretoria, as I would have a better chance there of doing some business. I did not mention it to Hettie, as I wanted the LORD to speak to her and tell her what we should do. After lunch she came to me and told me that she felt the LORD told her to go back to Pretoria.

She phoned the one ministry in Pretoria where she worked as a counsellor earlier, and was told to pack up and move back, as they really needed her to help with the ministry.

Was that the will of the LORD? For sure. We packed, arranged for the removal people to come in, everything within ten days including finding a place to stay in Pretoria again. We also could not believe the way the LORD provided for everything. The Sunday morning at the service, a person that I spoke to once while worshipping there, walked up to me and gave me all the money we needed for the move. He told me that earlier that morning the LORD told him to stop at an ATM on the way and draw the money and hand it to the person the LORD would show to him. As I got out of my car, the LORD told him to give it to me. Nobody knew that we were moving before that day. When we arrived in Pretoria, Hettie was so fully booked that for the first four months her fees covered all our expenses.

I want end of this subject, by quoting from Matthew 6:24 "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew 6:34)

Let us examine the Bible, the Word of God, and do everything that is required of us, before we worry about His will for my life.

MOSES 3 VERSE 3: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT *THIS* SUBJECT?

You might wonder what subject I am talking about, as I did not mention any subject. But that is exactly what this chapter is all about. We all want to know what the Bible has to say about a specific subject, that we are always just trying to find a verse that either allows or disallows it.

I want to answer this question by using several examples. Let us look at hypnosis. Does the Bible give us any information about hypnosis, as the term hypnosis is not mentioned directly anywhere in the Bible? The only way we can look at this subject is to see if there is any reference to similar subjects. In the Bible we find two scriptures however that tells us why hypnosis should not be practiced or used by Christians.

The first comes from Proverbs 25 verse 28. This quotation is from the Amplified Bible. *"He who has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls."* This passage declares that if you do not have control over your spirit, the enemy can come and plunder at will, as you do not have any walls to keep the enemy out. This happens during hypnosis. During hypnosis you lose control over your mind, and the person in charge of the session can implant anything he wants. A study done in the USA found that more and more psychologists are using hypnosis to implant reasons for trauma situations in their patient's lives. This now gives the patient a reason why certain situations happened to them. This is the implanting of a lie and must be avoided at all costs.

We must realize that lies are not only implanted during hypnosis, but by believing in oneself. The same study mentioned above, found that if people were asked to make up a fictional story about a traumatic event, 25% of these people will believe their story as true after time. It is not only hypnosis that can implant a lie, but if we live in a dream life, we can implant lies ourselves. This is not what the LORD wants. Such a person has allowed that his spirit, his walls, were unattended.

The second scripture is from 1 Peter 5:8 *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"* (1 Peter 5:8). This passage not only declares what happens when we are drunk but equates it to not being vigilant. When one submits oneself to someone else during hypnosis, you lose your vigilance. This is what Peter cautions us about. Under no circumstances should we lose our vigilance, as during this time the enemy has free access to me, without me knowing it.

What about depression? This is one of those difficult subjects that a lot has been written about, and where we will always find many opposing views. When a person suffers from depression, it is normally caused by circumstances in that person's life. These circumstances normally require a person to digest and work through them, or they might require the person to decide. I can say that I have been intimately involved in a depression case, and at that time could not understand what the problem was.

In most cases depression to a normal thinking person would not look like a problem. However, to the person during it, it is a crisis. But what does the Bible declare? I cannot think of a specific reference to depression in the Bible, but I can think of several people in the Bible that at some stage in their lives, suffered from it. Think about Job. He had lost everything, wife, children, cattle, and everything he had. Did he suffer from depression? For sure. How did his friends react? They tried to find the problem with Job. Was the problem with Job? Yes, but not what his friends tried to convince him of. Job had to admit that that which he feared most, had happened to him. His reaction to this problem caused his depression. What was the solution to the problem? He had to admit that the LORD knows best, and that he had to put his trust in the LORD only. Once Job accepted this and subjected himself to the LORD, everything changed. The Bible declares that he was better of then than before.

I can think of other people also, like Jonah that got angry because the LORD took away his shade and saved Nineveh. He could not accept the LORD's answer. Elijah hid himself after killing all the Baal

prophets. All these people of name entered depression, as they could not believe the way of the LORD. Think of David who hid himself in a cave with all the so-called washouts. But David also gave us the solution. He started praising and worshipping God for who He is and received his liberty. That is the way the LORD wants us to act. He does not want us questioning His every move. No, we should act in faith. Israel also asked the LORD why things were happening, but the LORD's answer through Isaiah was: *"Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"* (Isaiah 29:16)

This actually brings me to the point I want to make. We all have questions about how we should react to events in our lives. What do we do? We look for a verse that will tell us what is happening and will clear it in our own minds. We all want an instant answer to our trials and questions. But that is not the answer. When the Father decided to send His Son to die for our sins, it was not an instant cure. No, it took around 4000 years to happen. During that time, He tried to teach the people to love Him for who He was and still is before He sent His Son to die for us.

How many times have you tried to find a verse just to continue with life? Or maybe you just happened to have a verse handy for someone else who needed one. It might even have helped. How many church bulletins have I seen with lists of verses for every type of circumstance? These will help you to deal with every possible question you could get from people in need. This, however, makes us verse-Christians and not disciples.

What is my point? It doesn't help to be armed the right verse for the right question. I must grow in my relationship with the LORD to make me dependent on Him, and not on a verse in the Bible. I must know instinctively what is accepted and what is not.

We must look at nature at time and learn from them. Like a newborn animal that watches his mother's every move, what to do and what to eat, we must look at Jesus to see what to do and what to eat. He should be our teacher. We must study His word to become like Him, to become a disciple. A disciple is someone who follows in the footsteps of his Master. That is how we should live. But first we must receive Him in our lives, like Ezekiel says in chapter 36 verse 26: *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."* (Ezekiel 36:26)

I must receive Him in my heart. That will change me and will allow me to become like Him. The LORD wants us to live in such a close relationship with Him that He does not must talk to us through our circumstances. No, He want us to follow Him every day. Our problem is that we are not looking for Him, we only want answers to why things are happening, how to act, and to know what we can and cannot do.

If we look at Job again, we find that he argued with his friends, as he believed he was righteous and thus the punishment he received from the LORD was incorrect. His friends argued that he sinned and was now receiving his punishment from the LORD. Fortunately, someone told them that they should not decide by themselves what was happening, but that they should seek the LORD and ask Him.

How did Job react when he asked to LORD? *"I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (Job 42:2-6)

Verse 4 hold the key for me. ***"Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me."*** Job says that he will ask the LORD, and that the LORD will instruct him. That is what the LORD wants. He wants us to ask Him, so that He can instruct us. It doesn't help running to the

pastor or reverend or psychologist with every problem in your life. No, I must ask the LORD, and He will instruct me. How does the one friend of Job put it? *"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment."* (Job 32:8-9)

Next time you have a problem in your life that you cannot find the answer to, ask the LORD. Search the scripture to find similar situations and learn from them. Find the answer yourself. The LORD wants us to ask Him, in order for Him to instruct us through His Holy Spirit.

Remember to build you viewpoint on the message of the Bible, and not on a single verse.

MOSES 3VERSE 4: HOW SHOULD I REAR MY CHILDREN?

In today's life with all our social advances, one sometimes wonders if you are still rearing your children correctly. We are taught to fight for the rights of children, that we shouldn't use corporal punishment, that we must allow them to explore life, that we shouldn't treat any two children the same, and a lot of other ways of rearing children.

However, somewhere along the way something is amiss. Children will not subject them to authority any longer, crime figures have gone through the roof, and every generation is becoming worse than the previous. It is nothing new though. We can learn a lot from the Bible on this subject. Not only do we find examples we can use, but also some extremely strict guidelines we should follow.

Let me start by quoting several examples in the Bible. During the times of the kings in Israel, we find that each generation slipped further and further into idolatry, up to the point where the LORD decided to end it by taking Israel into exile in Babylonia. Even before this time we find a particularly good example in the Bible. Let us examine the life story of Eli and his sons.

Eli was high priest for Israel and served the LORD. But there came a day when the LORD spoke to him through a unknown prophet. This person told Eli what would happen to him as well as to his sons. We all know the story how Eli and his sons died on the same day.

Why did this happen? Why was the LORD upset? How does the Bible put it: 1Sa 2:12 – ***“Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial”***. Note that Eli their father was Belial, a wicked man; but though they had so good a father, they were very wicked men, unprofitable abandoned wretches, that cast off the yoke of the law of God, and gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness: ***“they knew not the Lord”***; not that they had no knowledge of God in theory, or were real atheists, but they were so practically; they denied him in works, they had no love to him, nor fear of him, and departed from his ways and worship, as much as if they were entirely ignorant of him.

Isn't it amazing that the Bible can declare that someone who grew up in the temple of God, did not know Him? If we look at the rules of orthodox Jews today, we will find that to become a rabbi, you must be able to recite the first five books of the Torah at age five. By age twenty-one, you must be able to recite the full Torah. Eli's sons were brought up to become the high priests, and as such had to understand the workings of the temple and what they could and could not do. They were priests.

What was their problem? They did not want to be subjected to authority. This is what we find further on in 1 Samuel 2: ***“And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand; And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.”***(1 Samuel 2:13-17).

Does that sound familiar? Isn't that what the children are doing? They have no respect for authority. Why not? We as parents have become like Eli. We allow our children to do that which is wrong, without teaching them to submit themselves to authority. How did Eli react when he was told what his sons were doing? ***“Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.”*** (1 Samuel 2:22-23) How many times have I seen and been told that we should not interfere with the children as they are only going through

a certain phase in their lives. No, they have never been taught how to submit themselves to authority. We have just given in to their demands every time. Never have they received any punishment for wrong doings.

Unfortunately, there are no phases in a child's life to work through. It is however our job as parents to educate them, and not only to give them information on how to react to circumstances that they will face in life. If we do that, there would not be any phases to work through. But that was Eli's problem too. He only told them that what they were doing was wrong. That was giving information, and not education.

What is the difference between the two subjects? To pass knowledge through to someone, is how our school system works. They are given information, and then tested to see what they can remember. To educate someone is to establish habits and to establish a way of life. It is like teaching someone to replace a plug on an appliance. If I give the person the information on how to do it, the person might still end up electrocuting himself by doing it, as he was not taught how to do it. If the person however were taught how to do it by example, and by watching how it was done several times, the chances will be slim that he will electrocute himself when replacing a plug.

The same principle applies to rearing children. Educating your children is building their character, to teach by example and by practicing how to do it, to lead the way, to prepare them for their battles in life. This means that a child should not only learn to listen only, but also learn to be obedient.

You might say that I am old fashioned, and this is an old-fashioned method. We live in a different time where we do it based on psychology. My question immediately is: Why are the results between the two so different? Earlier in life children knew how to behave. Some of today's children do not have an idea of how to behave. Proverbs put it as follows: *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Proverbs 14:12)"* If you feel strongly that the way you teach your children are correct, then I do not think that I will be able to change your viewpoint. But this proverb questions that viewpoint.

We live in an era where people tend to believe the creation more than the Creator. The LORD has been raising children for over 6000 years and taught everyone from Adam to our parents and grandparents how to raise children. We tend to believe someone who spent maybe four years at university, and maybe also have some year's practical experience. We end up the same as Eli, who did not raise His children in the fear of the LORD. We are quick to accept certain passages in the Bible but ignore others. Unfortunately, the Bible is the Word of God, and we cannot accept only the parts we like and forget about the parts we do not like. This is the way the LORD puts it to Eli: *"Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?" (1 Samuel 2:29)* You see Eli also thought he was rearing his children correctly, but that is not what the LORD thought.

How does the Bible proclaim that we should rear our children? Proverbs gives us some indication.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 23:13-14 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. (14) Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Proverbs 29:17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Remember that your action will not limit your child. We still want our children to grow up without any inhibitions and to be free. We must remember that our actions will not cause his spirit to be destroyed, but that we will be teaching him to subject his will to ours. This could save him a lot of problems later on in his life. When we use the rod with the right spirit and self-control and with love, the result will bring love.

We always hear that all children are different and therefore must be treated differently. I agree that every child has his own temperament, and personality, but that does not change the fact that every child is born with a self-centered nature. For that reason, it is necessary to bring the child to a point where they must learn to willingly submit himself to the God given authority. Following the LORD's way can only do this, and that is by using the rod. Remember that children think you have a favorite child if they are not all treated the same. This point requires faith on your side. Believe this and do what the Word of God says. The LORD will ensure that His Word will produce the correct results, if it is applied in love.

How do we apply the method of the Bible? The first principle we must teach the child is discipline. Discipline is the ability to control your will and to subject yourself to predefined requirements, and that is taught by using the rod. The pain caused by the rod, will clean the inner being of the child. This will cause the child to have a determined will to do what is right. It will also force the child to think of the consequences before embarking on doing something. Let me give you an example. A woman we know had three sons in her house. When she wanted them to do anything for her, she had to ask, ask again, and the third time shouted before they would do it. She decided to follow the Bible's way, and after the first request used the rod. These boys were incredibly surprised, as they were used to the fact that they could wait till their mother shouted before doing anything. After this incident they acted promptly after the first request.

What happened in this example, and that brings me to the second point, is that limits were set. The boys knew that they had to react after the first request, or the rod would be used. The same applies to any child. If we do not define these limits, the child will not know and hence would not know how to react. As soon as these limits are set, both child and parent can feel secure. The child will know where these limits are, and the parent will know when to discipline. The child will always try and test these limits, and the parent will know not to give in. This requires self-control on the part of the parent. An example I want to use has its origins in the USA. A field between two highways were walled in and playground equipment was placed on the grass. A group of pre-school children were taken to this spot and told they could play there. The children played without being scared at the sound of cars on the other side of the walls. Some even played up the walls separating the highway and the playground. The same children were taken to the same spot the next day and left to play. The children all huddled in the center of the playground, as the walls were removed during the night. The same applies to our children. They will go up to the edges when they know where these limits are. Some might even test these edges. The moment we remove these boundaries, the children are confused and will not know what is allowed and what not.

How will the child test these limits? By being whimsical and moody. What is the solution? Use the rod, as this is the only way to get rid of the self-center will of the child. Remember it will not destroy the child's spirit, as it will only cause responsibility and force the child to make the correct choices. The Word of God teaches that this method will cause the child to fully develop their personality and character. So next time your child decides to throw a tantrum in the shop, don't give in, use the rod. Let them know that they are disobedient.

To end of, a couple of pointers that I believe is necessary:

If a child's self-centered will is not broken, how will that child ever learn to subject his will to that of the LORD? How will he decide that he needs the authority of the LORD in his life? This can only be taught by being obedient to the parents.

Always pray for your children. Don't ever think that they do not need your prayers. Remember the Bible tells us that Jesus also intercedes for us at the Father.

I trust that you will search the scriptures and decide to rear your children the Biblical way.

MOSES 3 VERSE 5: IS IT A SIN TO HAVE SEX?

I have had this question asked many times by Christians. We live in a time where sexual perversity is at an all-time high, and where pornography is freely available. Even primary school children are boasting about their experiences. But what does the Bible teach?

Origins of sex.

For this we must go to the first book and chapter of the Bible. Genesis 1:28 *“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”* From this we see that God instructed them to multiply, which meant bring forth once own offspring, before the fall. To declare that sex is sin is a lie. Why did He institute sex? For humanity to grow, and that meant sex between a man and a woman. That was the way the LORD introduced sex, between a man and his wife, as Adam and Eve were man and wife.

What does the New Testament declare about sex?

Paul wrote extensively on this subject and declares the following in 1 Cor. 7: *“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”* (1 Cor. 7:1-5) We see here that Paul emphasizes that every man should have his own wife, and every woman her own husband, should they not be able to control their sexual desires. He also stated that neither man or woman have control over their own bodies, but that the woman has control over her husband's body and therefore must respect her desires, and the husband over his wife's body and therefore his desires.

What about sex outside the marriage?

Each scripture declares that sex is meant for married people. That is it. We do not find consent for sex outside of the marriage, except later on in 1 Cor. 7: Verse 36 *“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.”* (1 Corinthians 7:36) If sex does happen while two people are not married, the man must take the woman as his wife. No exceptions are allowed. Every other case is sin and should be repented of. This means that one has to stop doing it. If you don't that means that you are not repenting of the sin as you are continuing in it. While continuing with the sin, no forgiveness can be had. How does Paul define repentance in Romans 6: 14-16 *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* Paul points out in this scripture that when we repent of sin, we are saying that we will be obedient to the LORD, and that means to break with sin. I must act on the Word. I must repent and conversion must take place. There is no room to say that we must try it out and to see if we are sexually adaptive. No, what the LORD puts together, we will be able to adapt. We cannot follow our own rules.

What about homosexuality?

This is a question that many parents are struggling with, as our children are reared where all types of individual rights are embedded in our constitution, which are totally incompatible with the Bible. We

as Christians cannot accept these rights. Many so-called Christian magazines even proclaim that we must be tolerable towards this viewpoint. Some groupings even allow their leaders to practice this lifestyle, while other will even allow these people to marry. But, what does the Bible declare? *"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."* (Leviticus 20:13) You may wonder why they had to be put to death? The Lord declared that it is a grievous sin, and that it should not be tolerated. As soon as it is tolerated, it would be accepted as approved. This is what happened in our lives. The true Church kept quiet, and it is now acceptable. To now say it is acceptable, is a lie. Paul also wrote about this subject to the Romans. *"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."* (Romans 1:26-27) Now we still wonder where AIDS comes from.

Let me use an example. The homosexual person might use the argument that they have a different preference when it comes to sex. It sounds logical. But what about the person who also has a different preference, in that they prefer children? In our law such a person is declared a pedophile, and normally receives a very heavy jail sentence. But when it comes to homosexuality, I have my rights. It is proclaimed in our constitution. Both preferences are the same, the one children, the other, a person from the same sex. This way we all fall into the trap prepared by Satan.

But what about the person who lives such an exemplary life? They only have this one little thing in life. *"Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."* (Ezekiel 33:9) This scripture tells us that many people will end up in hell, because they do not turn from sin. Only people who repent and turn from sin, in other words, become born again, will be saved. I might sound like a prophet of doom, but that is what the Word of the LORD declares. To put your trust in the patience of the LORD, is to lie to yourself. The LORD declares His love to those who seek Him earnestly, with their whole heart, and with everything in them.

In our experiences we have found that most people with homosexual tendencies, were molested early on in their childhood. Close friends or relatives of the family molested most of these people. People you would not expect. Such a person needs help. They should go to their pastors or other Christian counsellors who have experience in handling these situations. These persons would typically lead them in a prayer of repentance, to forgive the person that molested them, and to declare that what happened to them was sin. Even though they had no control over it, they must declare that the deeds itself were sin, and that they should receive forgiveness for this. This is normally the only action required to set the wheels in motion. The LORD will then bring to the light all the sin that happened because of this, and forgiveness will be required for every action as a result of the initial molestation.

MOSES 3 VERSE 6: WHO DOES THE LORD CALL TO THE MINISTRY?

How do I know if the LORD has called me to the ministry? One can ponder on this question for a long time without ever finding the answer. I have seen people change their lives to “answer” a call to the ministry, only to see them returning to their prior lives.

How many Pastors and Ministers do you think are there who are doing an ordinary job, selling houses, insurance or something of that nature that thought that they were called to the ministry. Other people only answer the call in their forties or fifties when they realize that the LORD actually wants to use them.

To answer this question, I would like to look at some examples we find in the Bible. We will look at three people.

Firstly, we can look at the life of Moses. The Farao’s daughter brought up Moses as a prince. He attended only the best schools and received the best tuition. This is a logical conclusion, as he grew up in the palace. But at age forty, he does a deeply sorry thing. He decides to stand up for an Israelite and kills an Egyptian. Even the Israelites thought it was a stupid thing to do. Moses had to flee. Ex.2:11-14 *“And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.”*

Moses fled to the desert and ended up being a shepherd in Midian. Moses ends up marry the daughter of one of the priests of Midian. Another forty years later, Moses is called by the LORD. *“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the **backside of the desert**, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, **I will now turn aside, and see this great sight**, why the bush is not burnt. **And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see**, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.”* (Exodus 3:1-4)

I have emphasized a couple of words to illustrate the point. Why the backside of the desert? This is where you would least expect the LORD. We always seek Him in the limelight, where all the activity is. We want to share the limelight with Him. When we are the limelight, it means that we are alone, because God is at the backside of the desert. Jesus was not welcomed by an extravagant reception, neither was a hero’s funeral held for Him. No, He was crucified; the most humiliating death one could die. If it did not happen to Jesus, don’t be surprised if the LORD doesn’t show up at our glittering ceremonies on a Sunday, but where two or three are gathered in His name. What did the LORD wait for? He waited to see if Moses turned aside to see what was happening. Moses had to show his interest, before being called by the LORD. Ex 4:10-14 *“And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.”*

So when we look at Moses, we find that he had a very good schooling, but that the LORD had to humble him first before he could be used. But Moses had to be interested and not just accept everything at face

value. He also tried to deliver Israel by himself by killing an Egyptian, but had to return to Egypt as a shepherd, a work seen by the Egyptians as despicable.

What qualified Moses as someone to be used by the LORD. He was a prince, murderer, shepherd, stutterer, scared and curious. But he knew the LORD.

The next person is Paul. Now Paul was a Pharisee. Fortunately for us, he also supplied us with a very well written testimonial. *“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”* (Galatians 1:13-18) A very interesting point made by Paul, is that he also had to go to the desert, before starting his ministry.

What can we say of Paul? Excellent Bible school education, zealous, hardworking, ambitious, ardent follower of his traditions, persecutor of the Church. But found himself blinded by the LORD in order to teach him to be humble, to love his neighbor, and to teach him about Jesus.

The last person I want to look at is Peter. Who was Peter? *“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.”* (Matthew 4:18-20) Peter was a fisherman. Most probably taught how to fish by his father. I believe he only had the education required by a fisherman, which I believe does not require a four year degree or even a diploma. But is this all? *“Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.”* (Matthew 26:33-35) *“Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.”* (Matthew 26:69-75). *“Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.”* (John 18:10)

What do you think went through Peter's mind as he denied knowing Jesus? Remember that Peter sat through all of Jesus' teaching, which included the teaching where Jesus declared that if we will proclaim Him before men, He will proclaim us before His Father. But he just denied Him. Can such a person be used? Absolutely! The LORD allowed that Peter be stripped of everything that was still Peter before He could use him.

So apart from the fact that Peter was a fisherman, he had a short fuse, and you could not depend on his word. **But that was before Pentecost.**

What did Jesus declare about Peter? *“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will*

give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:16-19)

How did Peter react after receiving the baptism with the Spirit? *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:38-41)*

What did the Pharisees declare about him? *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13)*

In summary. Peter was unlearned, ignorant, unreliable, but had been with Jesus, immovable from his love for Jesus, and declared by Jesus as the rock on which the Church will be built.

What do we learn from these examples? The LORD will use anyone from any background. Education and social standing. But He will use people that choose to follow Him. Did He call you? For sure. What does the Bible declare? *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” (Matthew 28:19)* If you really must use words, then do it by all means. First complete this calling, and maybe you will find that the LORD will call you to do something else.

MOSES 3 VERSE 7: WHAT ABOUT MY FINANCES?

I can already see people sitting up with their hairs in their necks standing up straight. All you need is another person go of about my finances. I believe you will be disappointed to see what I am going to say about it. It will not be your standard Malachi 3 verse 10 sermon, as that verse will be dealt with at the end of this chapter.

During the first sitting of the Church synod in Acts 15, we find certain decisions that were the apostles decided on. These were the only decisions decoded on by the synod, and the only ones enforced on the early believers of Church. What does that scripture actually say: *“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”* (Acts 15:28-29)

WHERE DO WE START?

Let us begin at the beginning, in other words the Old Testament or covenant and its prescriptions. What you are going to read, might even shock you, but that is what is declared in the Bible.

THE LEGAL PRESCRIPTIONS

In order not to cause any confusion, I will quote the scriptures in totality, and I would like to ask you to read it very carefully. I know we have all read these scriptures, but read it and let it sink in. *“Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. **And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.** And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: **And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,** And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. **At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.”** (Deuteronomy 14:22-29)*

Did you know that the Israelites had to eat their tithes, which comprised of their first fruits, and that only a portion of the third year’s tithes was for the Levites? If you were a farmer and had 100 sheep, of which 6 ewes had lambs for the first time with no twins, then your tithe would have been 6 lambs. Even if you had 50 lambs, your tithe was only applicable to the first lambs of an ewe that had never given birth before. This meant that you could eat all six during the year, as long as it was not the third year, the year of the tithes, when the six lambs would must go to the Levite, the poor, the widows, and the strangers. Why did they must eat it? In order to have food. They were not allowed to use their total crop for commercial reasons, and then ended up with nothing to eat. No, they had to keep the first born as food for themselves.

The third year’s tithes, the year of the tithe, also had strict rules that they had to abide by. *“When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, **and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed***

things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.” (Deuteronomy 26:12-15)

It is again emphasized that the Levites should only receive part of the third years tithe. So, the Israelites had to take two thirds of their tithes over a three-year period, and eat it, and a third had to be split four ways, for the Levite, the fatherless, the stranger and the widows. We also must remember that the Levites included all the musicians, the helpers, everyone who had to work at the temple or teach the families.

It is also mentioned in Numbers that the Levites had to give a tithe of their tithe to the High Priest and the other priests doing duty at the temple. *“Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress. **And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation.** And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.” (Numbers 18:26-32)*

One point that we can learn from the quoted scriptures is that it is my responsibility to take care of those who do not have the means to take care of themselves. I must ensure that everyone has food to eat and to be able to make ends meet.

So, to summarize this section. The Israelites had to take their first fruits and tithes of grain to the place appointed by the LORD and had to eat it there. If this were too much for the party, they could exchange it for money and then treat themselves to whatever they desired. The third years' tithe had to go to the Levites and for the underprivileged.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE LEVITES?

Have you ever wondered what their purpose was, and why they never received an inheritance in Canaan? Numbers 4 gives us the answer. *“And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Numbers 4:15) “At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens.” (Numbers 4:27) “And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden.” (Numbers 4:31-32)*

From these scriptures we see that they had to carry the tent and tabernacle from one place to another. That was their task in the desert, but once they entered Canaan, each family were assigned a Levite to teach them the Law of Moses, and to bring the sacrifice of the family to the LORD. The amazing fact is that when Moses counted the Israelites, he found that the firstborn from every family, which belonged to the LORD, and the number of Levites were just about the same at 22,000. This meant that every household got their own Levite to look after. This was the reason Israel had to give the third year's tithe to the Levite, as he had to have enough to live and to support his own family.

THE VIEW OF HEBREWS

Hebrews changes all these rules again, as we find that Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, and thus the rules surrounding sacrifices and tithes had to change. But what does it inform us? ***“And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.”*** (Hebrews 7:5-14)

The book of Hebrews explains from chapter six verses 10 up to the end of the book the priesthood of, which Jesus came to establish. We find that there was never a priesthood like this before, but that is the priesthood we as new covenant Christians should belong to. The writer explains that we must believe that Jesus came to fulfil the tabernacle as depicted in scriptures, as He Himself became both sacrifice and High Priest. **From this we can then establish that Jesus annulled the need for the Levites. This in turn means that we do not must pay the Levites any longer to do their job.** Remember the scripture where Jesus declared that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days? This is what He did, and with it went the need to pay the Levites.

The whole book of Hebrews is written to explain that Jesus came according to the priesthood of Melchisedec. Before the Levitical priesthood was instituted by Moses, another priesthood existed where this priest were appointed by the LORD. In chapter 7 above, the writer explains that no tithing applied to these priesthoods, but that Abraham still gave a tenth to the priest of his spoils. The only reason Abraham gave, was because he knew that Melchisedec was appointed by the LORD. Jesus came not as priest, but as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec to establish a new dispensation where no prescribed laws are valid any longer, and at the same time declared to old Levitical priesthood that was governed by laws and various washes, null and void. I therefore no longer can go to the Old Testament to see what applies today, as those laws prescribed by Moses were fulfilled by Jesus and He established a New Covenant.

Chapter 13 gives us the new commandments of the New Covenant: *“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus*

*Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. **Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*** (Hebrews 13:1-17) Verses ten and eleven explains to us the Jesus was the sacrifice that was slain outside the camp, the offer no one had the privilege of eating, as it was burnt outside the camp. The blood from this sacrifice was then used by the high priest to enter into the holiest of holies with. This is the sacrifice Jesus came to fulfil, and that is the reason He was slain outside Jerusalem. You and I then must go outside to the cross and get forgiveness for our sins. Once we have laid down our lives at the cross, we have free entry into the holiest of holies to God the Father. Then I do not must pay the Levites any longer to do this for me. I can and must do it.

NEW TESTAMENT OBLIGATIONS

How do we then work with our finances? Jesus gave us the answer in Mathew. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and **have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**”* (Matthew 23:23) We see in these scriptures that the Pharisees even brought tithes of things not prescribed in the law of Moses, but they neglected the other tasks they had to do. Remember the third year’s tithes had to be shared between the Levites, the widows, the homeless and the fatherless. They were so busy impressing everyone with their sacrifices that they did not even bother about making a difference in the lives of everyday people. Jesus tells them what the most important aspect is of being a child of God, and that is to see that others are well looked after, and not bringing tithes to the priests.

This scripture is even used by some churches to declare that even Jesus said that you should bring tithes. Wrong. Jesus was still alive and could not tell them not to bring tithes, as that would have meant that He would tell them to sin against the law. Jesus himself was born under the old covenant and was circumcised as part of this covenant. We have just seen in the book of Hebrews that only when Jesus died, did the new covenant start with the priesthood of Melchisedec. In this priesthood there is no need to pay Levites to sacrifice on our behalf. We are priests ourselves.

Jesus gave us some guidelines as to what is acceptable: *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”* (Matthew 25:34-40) This is the sacrifice acceptable to the LORD.

This scripture is a confirmation of Jeremiah 7. *“For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.”*

(Jeremiah 7:5-7). The Bible wants to teach us here that we must do what the LORD requires. We cannot bribe the LORD with our sacrifices. He examines the heart, to the motive behind the action.

Paul gives us a guide as to what we should contribute as part of the new covenant. *“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:”* (2 Corinthians 8:12-14) The LORD does not expect from you to give if you do not have anything to give. No, He wants us to be equally yoked. He wants us to give in order that there would be equality between people. If you are blessed with lots, it is required of your to give to those who have not, in order for them to be able to give to you again at a time when you are in need.

HOW DID THE FIRST CHURCH DO IT?

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:44-47)

So how should we live then as new covenant Christians? Have you ever wondered why we find some people that are clever and others who are not? Then we get people who are good businesspeople, and other that do not have an idea of how to do business. Paul, in the preceding scripture, gives us the answer. If I am good in something, then I must help others who have a need in that area. And this does not only cover finances.

Why do I must share my money with someone else? Firstly, the first church did it. What did Jesus declare the summation of the law is? You must love the LORD god with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself. If I now decide to keep everything, I receive from the LORD to myself, then I am not doing the second part, the part concerning my neighbor. That is one reason. Another reason is that I can use it to spread the Gospel. When I start living the life as discussed in Acts, I will know when the people I meet with daily has a need. This way I will allow myself to be used by the LORD to bless these people. I am then starting to live the Gospel, and the LORD is then able to channel more and more through me. I cannot make a difference in someone's life if I keep on ignoring my neighbor and his needs.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE INCOME FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION?

Where would their money come from to see to the needs of the pastor? Paul was very specific on this issue. *“For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?”* (1 Corinthians 9:9-11). Verse 14 continues with this: *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”* Galatians also expounds on this subject. *“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”* (Galatians 6:6)

What about a building to gather in? That is something the local congregation must decide about. If everyone agrees that a building is required, then everyone should share the cost. That is the way the Israelites shared the responsibility when they returned from being exiled in Babel. You can read the full story in Nehemiah. No tithes were used for this.

CONCLUSION

Tithes were meant to supply food for the tribe of Levi who did not receive an inheritance in Canaan. It also had to provide for widows, orphans, and the stranger. Everything took the form of a sacrifice. It was given to people as food, although it was also meant as a sacrifice unto the LORD for forgiveness of sins. The book of Hebrews informs us that Jesus brought the final offer and was accepted by the Father. I do not need to pay someone any longer for bringing sacrifices to the LORD for forgiveness of sins. What do I must do? I must ensure that everyone, the pastor included, have clothing to wear and food to eat. I must ensure that there is equality. I also must ensure that the person who teaches me, does not have a shortfall, but that he shares in everything I have.

The last question: How much do I must give? That we can establish equality amongst all believers. Nobody should have a want, the pastor included. That gets rid of all the arguments surrounding this subject. Then we do not must argue if it is before or after tax, including or excluding all my fringe benefits, etc. I must give wherever I see a need. The LORD must use us as His hands and feet.

AND NOW ON TO MALACHI.

Why do the church then still use this scripture? The only reason I can think of, is that they must be mistaken, and think that they are talking to Jews in a synagogue, as that is where it can still be used. But even the Jews won't believe it, as they at least know Malachi from chapter one to chapter four. If we look at the introduction of all the chapters of Malachi, we will find that chapter one is aimed at the everyday person, while from chapter two to three is aimed at the priests. *"The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi"*. (Malachi 1:1). *"And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you."* (Malachi 2:1). That is the only reference in this book to whom the message is addressed. I would recommend that you read all four chapters of Malachi. You will then see that chapter one is aimed at the Israelites as He tells them that He still loves them but accuses them of bringing sick and lame animals as sacrifices. This already tells us that the priests were telling them that it does not matter what state the sacrifice is in they bring to the LORD. This informs us what their inner state was, they were paying lip service to the LORD.

In chapter two we find that the prophet tells the priests that they are supposed to act as teachers. *"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."* (Malachi 2:7). The prophet now spells out to them what is wrong with them. *"But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"*

(Malachi 2:8-17). From these verses we know that the priests were doing things totally contrary to what they were supposed to. But this is not the end.

In chapter three we find that the prophet informs them that the LORD is going to send someone to judge them. *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."* (Malachi 3:1) The next couple of verses deals with what the messenger will do, and only then do we find verses eight and nine, the ones used by most pastors to get money from their congregations. But, the message is to the priests, and is about the tithe that they were supposed to give to the high priest, as that is the only tithe they had to give. Remember Numbers 18? It has nothing to do with you as an ordinary person, but everything to do with them as priests. Malachi then continues in his attack on the priests. *"Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?"* (Malachi 3:14). This whole section of Malachi is a word from God against the priests, and has nothing to do with you. He tells them their heart is wrong, and they do whatever they feel like.

The book of Malachi then ends with a prophesy about the coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, and what His purpose will be. That He will establish a new order, and that we will see the difference between those that know the LORD and those that don't. Why? Because we will see it in the lives of people. They will do what the LORD expects of them, and that is to make a difference in the world.

The whole book of Malachi is not about bringing your money to the church, unless you are a Levite or Jewish priest, or if you have not heard about Jesus yet. It doesn't have anything thing to do with bringing your whole tithe to the church, as even in those days you were to leave your tithe at the entry into the city where the widow, orphan, and Levite had to collect their tithe. This means that you don't must feel guilty next time you are confronted with this passage, as the person who does that, exposed himself as someone who does not know the Bible.

What sacrifices, both old and new testament, are acceptable to the LORD?

"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. "

Did you know that the LORD was not interested in, neither did he ask for any sacrifices? *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:"* (Jeremiah 7:21-25)

Another scripture that is even more condemning that this is the following: *"Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD."* (Ezekiel 20:25-26). Remember that all that opened the womb the first time had to be sacrificed to the LORD. However, this scripture says that anything that went through fire, and meat has to go through the fire to cook, causes death. Why did the

LORD give them commandments that lead to death? Because he looks at the heart of people, the reason we do things. My request is that you should look at the reason why you handle your finances the way you do. If you tell me that you tithe and can show me that it works, I know it does. God set a commandment in order for it to work. But I want to ask you to rather believe in Jesus and Him as sacrifice.

Let us ask the LORD what and how we should live our lives, as we will then be a nation holy unto Him.

What about the sowing and reaping principle? The Bible declares that the LORD loves the cheerful giver. If you want to sow, choose wisely, and do not sow in someone else's field that has nothing to do with your life.

This paragraph was added quite a long time after writing the original article, after meditating on the subject again. What you read in the original article is correct, but we must add a couple of points. If you do not belong to a congregation, you are free to give where you see fit. Just remember the basic guidelines of the Bible, and that is to give to the poor, the less privileged (widow and orphan), and the stranger (those without an income). If you are a member of a congregation, it will be the way Samuel told the Israelites, in that the king (your congregation or group) will take your contribution. *"And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants."* 1Sa 8:15. If you do not do as your king tells, you are in rebellion, and the LORD will deal with you accordingly. Your king will however be judged one day as is explained in Ezekiel 34.

The last paragraph I am writing as a prayer. If you want to, you can pray it. "Father God, we come to you in the Name of Jesus Christ our Savior, who purchased us with His blood on Calvary. He paid the final sacrifice for us, which You accepted. Father I now ask you to break every curse that was ever put on my finances through ignorant people. I ask You to break the hold of Satan on my finances, as I did not know what the Bible taught. I ask that every blessing you have for me, will now manifest in my life. Thank you, LORD, that we can know that you are a rewarder of those who seek you. Amen.

MOSES 3 VERSE 8: WHICH IS WHICH, SIN OR DEMON?

It is, depending on your beliefs, exceedingly difficult to give an answer to this question. On the one hand you will have people that believe that there are no demons, and at the other end of the scale you will find people who credits everything to the workings of demons.

Who is right?

It is actually very interesting to note that when we look at the happenings in the Bible, we find that everything that was written before Israel went into exile, all things, both good and bad, were attributed to the LORD, and everything that was written afterward, all good was from God and all evil came from Satan.

How do I prove it?

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” (Ezekiel 5:7-13)

This does not sound like any good news to me. But these words were from the LORD. I can already see some of today's people, if they were alive at that time, breaking curses and declaring Ezekiel's words null and void.

How do I know that their writers attitude changed after being in exile? The books of Samuel were written before they went into exile, while the books of Chronicles were written after. Let us examine the same happenings.

“And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.” (2 Samuel 24:1)

“And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.” (1 Chronicles 21:1)

Does this confuse you? I did confuse me. But why did this happen, and why the different ways of writing about the same situation? The writer of Samuel attributed everything that happened to God, while the writer of Chronicles could not believe that good people like David, could do something wrong, and hence attributed bad things to Satan. This is exactly how we react also. When I do something wrong and do not want to accept the consequences, I will attribute it to demonic workings in my life. Why? Because I am alright. Me sin? You must be out of your mind. No, I am such an exemplary member of my church. Me, no I cannot sin anymore, it must be demonic.

We always want to attribute that which causes a rift between the LORD and myself, as demonic. Unfortunately, it is not what the Bible declares. *“For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and*

instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:11-20)

This scripture tells us the difference between what is right and what is wrong. The first point Isaiah makes is that we should not always believe everything we are told. No, do not fear what they fear, but fear the LORD. *“and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.”*

But why do we must fear Him? We are told that He is love. Is that what you were told? He is also the one that gives both life and death. In today's life we have forgotten how enormous a God He really is. We treat His as a something we can play with. Something we can switch on when needed, and then put away when not needed.

Let us look at several examples we find in the Bible. *“And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.” (Numbers 16:43-49)*

When we act incorrectly, or as the Bible puts it, when we sin, either forgiveness must be gotten for it or it must be required. The Bible teaches that blood must flow to receive forgiveness. This Jesus came to do, and that is why forgiveness must be asked for in His name for His blood to be reckoned for the forgiveness of sins. This is what happened in this scripture. Even though Aaron got forgiveness for the Israelites, fourteen thousand seven hundred people paid with their lives for it. They paid for this sin with their lives.

Another example is from Joshua. *“And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:” (Joshua 7:19-20)*

What was the reaction to this? *“And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.” (Joshua 7:24-25)*

This is what happens when we sin. Maybe that is why we want to give the credit to the devil when we sin. Maybe I am too afraid to face the wrath of the LORD. But unfortunately, if it looks like sin, smells like sin, feels like sin, or tastes like sin, the chances are that it is sin, unless I can blame it on the devil.

That is why we find people chasing away demons with names like rebellion, greed, fear, fornication, and all sorts of sins. All because we do not want to admit that we have sinned.

“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” This is what Jesus meant when He told the disciples to take up their cross daily, and to follow Him. I must know that I will be given choices every day to sin or not to sin. What are you going to decide?

We are all told to accept Jesus as our Savior, but once this is done, we can continue with our sinful life. That is not what the LORD wants. He wants that I will turn away from sin, and to be freed from my sinful life. What does Isaiah declare? *“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”* He wants us to live an exemplary life, and for people to see that we are His disciples.

What do we must teach then? *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”* (Isaiah 8:20) If we do not call sin a sin, and do not live as a testimony to the LORD, then we are a people who do not know what is happening. Then we cannot bear His light. I know we all want to attribute sin to the devil, but the Bible does not give us any right to do it. No, we must call sin, sin. Only then can we receive forgiveness and live in victory.

But Jesus declared that we would drive demons from people in His name. Absolutely. But then I must be able to distinguish between sin and the works of demons. Let us look at an example in the Bible again.

“And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” (Mark 5:2-5) This person had a problem. But Jesus freed him. It is unfortunately one of the few examples we find in Scriptures that describes how someone reacted that was demon possessed. In most other cases we are only told that people were freed from demons.

How did they know that these people were possessed by demons? Probably the same way we should know. We must receive and develop the gift of discernment. We must be able to discern between spirits. If someone starts walking up a wall, or starts doing other so-called wonders, like divining for water, or things that have nothing to do with serving others, the origin of this is most probably demonic, and such a person must be set free.

Always remember Hebrews 13 verse 5: *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* Don't expect that He must give you a new house or some other asset that you covet.

What if people still want to chase demons from you? It might sound very hard on them, but unfortunately, I know of people who would even try to change your personality, as everything they see, are demons. To them, the following scripture has become a reality in their lives: *“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”* (2 Peter 2:19)

So, to conclude. There is sin, and there are demons. But we need the gift of discerning of spirits to be able to know which is which.

MOSES 3 VERSE 9: HOW DO I OVERCOME REJECTION, INFERIORITY, REBELLION AND THOSE TYPES OF EMOTIONS?

What do you struggle with in life? I do not know, but I know what you mean when you tell me that people do not really like you. I think we all have had a situation in life where we got hurt. Or maybe you are that thick skinned that you do not even realize it.

But where do these feelings come from? Maybe like most people, you suggested to solve a problem and your suggestion was disregarded as being totally illogical or something like that. A lot of people might not even remember why, as you are not interested any longer. Or maybe it has always been like it, ever since you can remember. You are just the black sheep of the family.

Maybe you are in rebellion, as you never get the attention you feel you are entitled to. Maybe your parents are divorced, and you got hurt in the process, or maybe you were ill-treated by your parents or even you stepparents. Maybe your spouse is rejecting you, or the kids.

We can write down all these reasons why we have these feelings, but I want to give you some advice on how to overcome these feelings, does not matter what they are.

The first step is to identify the root cause for this feeling. I would define that as the first time you became aware of this feeling. Maybe it happened while you were playing rugby as a youngster and your dad shouted at you not to drop the ball again. Maybe it was when you realized that you were not welcome. Maybe you find that it happened while your mother was expecting you and said that they did not really plan on having you yet. That is the first step. If you cannot find it, ask the LORD to show you. The Holy Spirit will guide you to that moment. It might mean that you must open old wounds that you do not want to open. Fortunately, once these wounds are open, healing can take place.

The second step in the process is to forgive those who caused this wound. You might say that it is impossible to forgive someone who molested me as a baby, but Jesus declared that we must forgive seventy times seven times a day. I have been there and know that it is not easy. In fact, it is the most difficult thing I had to do for years. But it is necessary, as I also must receive forgiveness from the LORD for my inequities. The prayer Jesus taught His disciples state that I will receive forgiveness as I forgive those who sinned against me. If I cannot forgive, how can I receive forgiveness from the LORD?

My wife Hettie was a full time Christian counsellor for many years and gave people a pen and paper to use to draw the face of the person that caused this hurt. The person could then tell the picture exactly what they had stored up inside of them. They could deface this picture, as they wanted. What she found was that after such a session, people could forgive the ones that caused the hurt. I am not saying that the offender became the person's best friend, no, but the feeling of hatred or rejection was gone.

If we look at the Tabernacle of Moses, the sequence of event also followed this pattern. The high priest had to first offer up a sacrifice for his own sins on the brazen altar, and then washed himself with the blood of the lamb before he could risk appearing in the holiest of hollies before the presence of the LORD. That is what we must do. We first must receive forgiveness ourselves, and that can only happen when I forgive those who sinned against me.

I will not help you at all to continue in unforgiveness. I am only binding myself. I must forgive to free myself. The person who sinned against you may even be dead by now, but you are still bound by your own unforgiving. It will not cost you anything, except to bow in humility before the LORD. But it will free you from this negative influence in your life.

MOSES 3 VERSE 10: IS YOUR SIEVE CLEAN?

You will obviously ask me which sieve? A while ago the only water that came out of our warm water tap was a trickle. It didn't matter what strength you selected; it was just a trickle. I wondered what the reason was and started my investigation. It is then that I saw this sieve at the end of the tap. This got me thinking about our own lives.

What do you do when you hear a story? Do you listen attentively and are you able to tell the story exactly as you heard it? Or does the story lose something along the line? Or maybe you consciously cut out certain parts of the story because it does not rhyme with your beliefs?

We all have our own examples of this in our lives. Maybe you heard something from somebody, and the first time you told someone else the story you added something just to give it more credibility. Or maybe you left out a small detail, as it does not really matter.

When I removed the sieve, I found a whole lot of chalky stuff blocking the flow of the water. After emptying the sieve, I had to take a brush to remove some of the stuff blocking the sieve. This was a difficult task, but once completed, I could return the sieve to the tap. When I opened the tap, I showered myself with all the water that rushed through the tap.

Now my question to you is: How clean is your sieve?

The Bible declares that streams of living water will flow from us. What is your flow like? Does it drip out like my tap before cleaning it, or does it cause a flood when you open it? How does Jesus put it? *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* (John 7:38)

This scripture declares that streams of living water will flow from us. If I look around at many Christians that I meet, I sometimes wonder if there is any water at all. Why? Because their sieves are blocked. How did it happen? The impurities of our lives are blocking the flow.

What are all these impurities, and how do I clean my sieve?

Just like my basin tap, I must start at the beginning. I first must realize that the water flow is blocked. What does your life look like? Do you exhibit Jesus in everything you do every day, or not? Maybe there are moments that you are not proud of. You might even have a habit that you are not happy about. Maybe you even use a couple of choice words when a taxi swerves and stops in front of you.

The moment I realize that my sieve is dirty, I can start the cleaning process. I first must remove the sieve from the tap and require a spanner or pair of pliers for this. It is also not easy to loosen the sieve, but after exerting a lot of energy, it will come loose. The same applies to our lives. I must decide to break with everything that is wrong in my life. How tight is your sieve? You might even tell me that there is nothing wrong with your sieve, as you are not connected to a pipe with an extraordinarily strong water flow. You might even live in denial. That is normally the biggest problem. I am all right. There is nothing wrong with my life. I am just not connected to a pipe with a strong flow. That is not what the Bible declares. Jesus did not say that streams would flow from some people only. No, He declared that whoever believes in Him, streams of living water will flow from him. If it does not happen, then your sieve is blocked.

But why is it difficult to loosen my sieve? Maybe the problem is with your theology. Maybe you were brought up that one does not talk about you Christianity, as it will almost always cause words. You may even specialize in traditions of man. You say that your dad was brought up and believed this way, as well as his dad and everyone before him. Paul (Saul) was like that before he met Jesus. *"And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the*

traditions of my fathers." (Galatians 1:14) But then he met Jesus. I know we must preserve our traditions, but I should not elevate my traditions to be more important than my relationship with the LORD.

You might say that you are like Moses and that you cannot express yourself well. Remember, the Bible says streams of living water will flow from you. Give the LORD a chance to work through you; He will anoint your lips. Most times people do not read your words but your life, meaning that your life must be a life filled with living water.

What else can cause the sieve not to loosen? You might still enjoy your life as it is. You might think that by loosening your sieve and cleaning it that you might become like someone you do not really like. I do not know what your reason might be. Ask the LORD to show you, and He will.

We can then start cleaning the sieve as soon as it is loosened. We can get rid of everything that is blocking the water flow. Some of it might be easy to get rid of, other not so easy. But what are all these things that can block my sieve? Let us look at two scriptures that will shed some light on it.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21)

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;" (Colossians 3:8-9)

This is the list of things that we must shed. Some people might find it easy to remove all the blockages, while others might find it difficult. It might also reveal to you that you have been so brainwashed by people that you do not even know what living water looks like. Maybe you need to replace your sieve completely, or in religious terms your doctrine, for living water to flow through.

But what does water that brings life look like? Living water is words and deeds that benefit others, and not yourself. When you do something for someone else, you must do it as if you are doing it for yourself. Jesus himself declared the following: *"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."* (Luke 10:27). Put differently, it is as follows: I will live my life in order not to benefit myself, but other around me. If I still try and favor myself, or, if I still try and put others down, my sieve is blocked and needs cleaning.

If you do not know what I am talking about, or if you think that you are okay, investigate your life to see which water pipe you are connected to, the one leading from the LORD, or maybe Satan's pipe, your deeds will tell which one.

In conclusion, how long does the sieve stay clean? For as long as I give everything through that I receive from the LORD. The moment that I start filtering things out, my sieve needs cleaning or replacing. Seeking forgiveness from the LORD does this. Remember that sin will cause your sieve to slow down and block the water flow. Remember that this sin could completely block your sieve, but fortunately we can go to Jesus and get forgiveness for our sins. The Blood of Jesus will clean our sieves.

MOSES 3 VERSE 11: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS?

This question is extremely relevant today, especially to us in South Africa where nearly forty percent of the blacks are HIV positive. But is there a Biblical answer to this pandemic? I cannot find a direct answer anywhere in the Bible that gives us an answer to this and many of our current problems in life. What do we do? How do I then must treat people that live with HIV/Aids, especially in the light our constitution and the whole human rights issue?

To get an answer, we must, like with any other problem in life, analyze it. We must look at its origin, how it is communicated from person to person, and only then can we look at what the Bible declares about this. That is the only way I know of.

ORIGIN

To get to the origin of HIV/Aids, we must go and delve in the history books. The first report I read about this, is dated somewhere in the early eighties. In this report reference is made to case zero, a person with a very loose homosexual lifestyle. He worked at an international airways company, and according to this report most probably got the virus from having sex with an ape. Everyone who died of Aids in the first year, could be linked directly to him, and practiced a similar lifestyle.

This also gives us an indication why we are still struggling to find a cure for it, as it was a virus that spread from an animal to a human. We also have not had exposure to this condition for centuries, like with other viruses and illnesses. As far as I know, up to today, it is also not yet possible to isolate the virus.

HOW IS IT COMMUNICATED OR SPREAD?

Basically, there are two methods. The first method is by having sexual contact with someone who has the virus. The sexual method is the most prevalent method. The second method is by receiving blood from a person infected. This could happen by using a syringe used by someone who is infected, like drug addicts, and by blood transfusion.

In South Africa, the virus is spreading rapidly by sexual contact. That is why we have all sorts of campaigns for people to use condoms, the safe sex and love life campaigns. The virus also spreads from mother to child during the birth process. We are all aware of the current fights going on about the free provision of retroviral drugs to babies at hospitals. We now have a situation where in some homes the oldest and therefor the one standing in as head of the household is eight or nine year old children, as both parents and other family members have died due to AIDS. It will not be documented on the death certificate as AIDS, but normally as either a heart or lung condition.

BUT SHOULD WE, AS CHRISTIANS REALLY GET INVOLVED IN THIS, LET ALONE TRYING TO FIND AN ANSWER?

I believe that every situation in life affects my life as a Christian, and therefore demands a Biblical answer. I would like to start with what Paul said about this question. *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: **for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder,***

*debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, **that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.***" (Romans 1:26-32)

These are awful words that Paul is using here. But why does Paul do this? I want to use two examples. The first example I heard from an elderly lady. She described it as follows: If I enjoy a beer or other alcoholic drink, and decide to go to the pub and get myself drunk, the headache I will wake up with in the morning, is my responsibility. I decided to get drunk and therefore I must pay for this. I will buy my own medicines for this, and hopefully feel better after taking it. Let us take the same type of example and give it a slightly different flavor. After getting myself drunk, I end up picking up a girl and end up having sex to her. Unfortunately for me she did not tell me that she was HIV positive, and hence I will test positive eventually. The problem is now not mine, but the government's problem, and societies problem. I don't must worry about getting medicine for this, as the government or society has to provide me this free of charge. The fact that I will pay with my life is beside the point.

The second example I want to use will put the spotlight on a different aspect. If I am not happy with my spouse and decide to kill him or her, I can use a slow poison like arsenic to kill the person over time. I know of a case in our country's history where this happened. The poisoning took place over a long period of time, and only after the persons death it was found that he was poisoned. The same thing happens with HIV/Aids, except that I do not need repeat dosages to kill the person. The only difference is that if I use HIV/Aids, I am not counted as a murderer.

What do we glean from these examples? If I misuse alcohol, the problem is mine. If I sin sexually, the problem is that of government, and eventually, the taxpayer. If I use arsenic to poison someone, I am a murderer, while if I use sexual methods, it is not murder, but I can now demand medication as I have my rights even though it is sin.

Let us leave the subject there and see what the Bible tells us about similar situations. While we are looking at HIV/Aids, let us stick to sexual sins, and the effect it had on people's lives.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." (Genesis 6:1-7)

We all know the history of Noah. He and his family were the only survivors. Why? Because of sexual sin. No exceptions. The LORD already used this portion of scripture to tell us what He thinks of sexual sin. It is punishable with death. Why? Every other sin is outside our body. Sex is the only sin where we use our bodies to sin with, and as temples of the Holy Spirit, that is not allowed. The LORD will not allow His Spirit to become part of sin.

The next example also comes from Genesis. "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did

eat. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.” (Genesis 19:1-5)

Sodom was destroyed because of sexual homosexual behavior. Nothing else. No, the men of Sodom even wanted to have sex with the angels the LORD sent to Lot. What was left of Sodom? Nothing, it was utterly destroyed. That is what happens if we do not believe the LORD. We think we can continue our own ways and the LORD will accept our sins. Never. He has never done that in the history of Israel, so why would He do it to you today? I know there are even pastors and reverends not only say that nothing is wrong with it but even practice it. I have news for them, as they make the LORD out as a liar. His word declares that He is the same today as He was yesterday and as He will be tomorrow. If he destroyed everybody in the days of Noah, and Sodom in the time of Lot, why would He accept it today? We even read in the laws of Moses that anyone who would try to practice homosexuality was to be stoned immediately, with now exceptions.

You might argue that all the cases so far had nothing to do with Gods chosen nation, Israel. Lots descendants were the Moabites and Ammonites, so what about His people? *“And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months. And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there.”* (Judges 19:1-4) This section is only as a background to the next example, in order for us to better understand the whole story. They stayed a couple more days and eventually decided to go back to the Levites town, and decided to overnight in a town in Benjamin, part of Israel.

But what happened there? *“And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites. And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehemjudah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Bethlehemjudah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house. Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing. And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink. Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.”* (Judges 19:16-22) These men were from the tribe of Benjamin, in other words, part of Gods' people. Their request was not agreed to, and in their anger, they grabbed this Levites wife and raped her the whole nightlong. The next morning, they found her dead outside the house.

This Levite then cut her body in twelve parts and took it to the elders to seek an answer as to what to do. Everyone representing Israel agreed to go to the town and ask that the culprits be handed over to the elders. The people in the town did not do it, and the next part of the Bible tells us the result: *“And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these were men of valour. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these were men of valour. But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the*

rock Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.” (Judges 20:44-48).

Something that stood out to me when I read through the story, was that Israel asked the LORD what to do, and the answer was the same every time: *“(And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) (Judges 20:23)* The LORD does not tolerate sexual sin. We live at a time when we are so distant from Him that we think we can get away with it. The LORD told Israel in Exodus 20 that He want to be close to them, which they did not want. We are the same. We do not want to have the LORD with us every moment of our lives. When He is kept at a distance, it is extremely easy to think that He will not notice this sin, but when He lives inside of you, it is a different story. Then you will hate sin as He hates it. This is the God that we are afraid of. This is the God that calls you to justice. He wants to be close to you, but you must allow Him.

How do we then react to people with HIV/Aids? We must teach them not to sin any longer. The LORD will accept no loose sexual life. Teach the person that someone poisoned him or her, and that by continuing with that lifestyle, the person is committing murder. Teach them that is forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ, but then I will change my life. I will exchange my life for His. Teach the person that they are responsible for their situation, and as such, should bear their own cost for this. Teach them that they cannot demand that others should pay for their medicine, as they chose that lifestyle.

Should the state pay for the treatment of such a person? No, the person is responsible for his own medication. Let me use an example. If you suddenly find that you have cancer, do you think that the state will pay for the treatment? No, you will be expected to pay yourself. Why then should people with HIV/Aids get treated any different? The only reason they are getting preferential treatment is because they intimidate everyone around them. Does a murderer have the right to intimidate the public? In South Africa, yes. We all want to do good to them because you never know when you might get it, and I am not going to pay out of my own pocket for treatment.

But what about people who got the virus through other means apart from sex? What about babies that get the virus at birth? Do I must react the same? No, as the person did not receive the virus through sexual sin. My conduct with them should be one and the same as with anyone else who does not have HIV/Aids. In fact, I might even spend more time with these people, as they need our support.

In conclusion. Aids is the punishment the LORD is meeting out to people living in sexual sin. But I have a responsibility to bring the Gospel of Jesus to them, to teach them that there is forgiveness. The LORD still wants that every person be saved.

MOSES 4 - ON CHURCH AND THESE TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Jeremiah 7: 3 - 8

THUS SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, AMEND YOUR WAYS AND YOUR DOINGS, AND I
WILL CAUSE YOU TO DWELL IN THIS PLACE.

TRUST YE NOT IN LYING WORDS, SAYING, THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, THE
TEMPLE OF THE LORD, ARE THESE.

FOR IF YE THOROUGHLY AMEND YOUR WAYS AND YOUR DOINGS; IF YE THOROUGHLY EXECUTE
JUDGMENT BETWEEN A MAN AND HIS NEIGHBOR;

IF YE OPPRESS NOT THE STRANGER, THE FATHERLESS, AND THE WIDOW, AND SHED NOT INNOCENT
BLOOD IN THIS PLACE, NEITHER WALK AFTER OTHER GODS TO YOUR HURT:

THEN WILL I CAUSE YOU TO DWELL IN THIS PLACE, IN THE LAND THAT I GAVE TO YOUR FATHERS,
FOR EVER AND EVER.

BEHOLD, YE TRUST IN LYING WORDS, THAT CANNOT PROFIT.

MOSES 4 VERSE 1: WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST?

This is one question that could set your thoughts going for quite a long time. These are so many definitions that we can spend months just going through the Bible looking at the different views. We can argue about subjects like is it the bride, the elected, a nation, or whatever. But that is not the question.

The question is: What is the Church of Jesus Christ?

There are so many books on the subject that I think most people are not even interested in this subject anymore. So many persons have given their own interpretation that we have all lost interest in finding out what the Church of Jesus Christ is.

I want to approach this question from a different angle. I do not want to argue the case of the institutional church or the house church movement, or even look at the meaning of the word ecclesia. I also do not want to look if a Pentecostal or whatever type of church is the real church. No, I want to look at our approach to church and from these hopes to give you an idea of what Church is.

Let us look at what we think is church today. Suppose I am driving through the Karoo, a very sparsely populated area in South Africa, and I approach a small town. The first thing I will notice is the tower of a church building. I will now drive to this building and let us suppose that it is a Sunday morning, I will find that the church service is in full swing. I will enter the building and find people sitting in rows all facing in one direction. This is the place where I will find a podium or steeple. The seats on which the people are sitting will be made either of wood or plastic, or if the reverend or pastor has a long breath, it might even have padded seats. If it is a new building, the seats might even remind you of the seats at the movies, soft and individual.

Depending on the group affiliation, it will either have a church organ, or there might be musicians on a stage. It might even have separate seats for the church elders and deacons.

If we look at the church service, we will find that the people will sing a couple of songs, the preacher or someone else might say a prayer, and then certain confessions might be read. Once this is completed, the preacher would normally read from the Bible, explain to you what he just read, and maybe even explain to you the relevance of this scripture to your everyday life. Somewhere during this service, you will be asked to produce your offer for the church to meet its expenses. Someone might even read a portion of scripture trying to convince you that you are not giving it to the local church, but that you are giving it to God Himself. The service would then come to an end. The exact sequence might differ from church to church.

After the service some of the people might even stay for a while and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea together. They will undoubtedly talk about what happened during the past week, or even about the rugby or cricket game on Saturday. Once everyone is done, they will all go home.

You as stranger might also stay for a cup of coffee. You will then ask the preacher what you must do in order to become part of this group of people. He will undoubtedly go through a physical or mental checklist to find out where you come from, which groups you have affiliated yourself with in the past and if you have any proof of this. You might even be invited to attend a meeting where this subject will be addressed and any questions you have will be answered. Or he might even suggest someone visiting you to establish all these credentials before admitting you to this group.

You now go off to the next building where you also notice people congregating. This group might even clap their hands while singing, and they might break out in strange voices or tongues that you have not heard before. But, when this service is done, you find that to join this group the steps are basically the same as for the previous group. They might even tell you that they are totally different from the first group in that they have groups that meet at various houses during the week, and that you should attend one of these meetings.

When you get to this meeting during the week, you find that they will sing a couple of songs, and the leader will then pull out a piece of paper and discuss the message the preacher delivered on Sunday with the group. He might ask you some questions on how you have experienced the subject in your life, or maybe give you some pointers on how to apply this subject to your everyday life. There will normally be a time devoted to prayer, and people might have the openness to ask for prayer for themselves or for someone they know. At the end of the night, you find that the only difference between this and Sunday's service was that there was some interaction, and that instead of a general prayer time, prayer might have been more personal.

To help you in your search as to which group to join, you decide to look at what the Bible has to say about church. You suddenly remember that there was a very clever Pharisee that wrote quite a number of the Epistles in the New Testament. And seeing that you want to join a New Testament church, this is the place to look. You eventually stumble on to a section that covers this subject in 1 Corinthians 14 from verse 26: "**¶ how is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 34 ¶ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 36 ¶ What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 **But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.** 39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order."**

Your immediate reaction might be one of surprise as what you read here is not what you encountered at any of these meetings. But this is what the Bible declares. You might even argue that this type of service is impossible to have at our large gatherings on a Sunday, and that this should be what the cell meetings should be like. I would like to question that as at most cell meetings the cell leader is only allowed to do what he is given to share, nothing more. The cell leader is also not allowed to teach anything that is not allowed by the "church". But this is not what the question was, as we still must find an answer as to what Church is.

To make your task even more difficult, you remember that Paul also wrote to the Ephesians on this subject. Ephesians 4: "**1 ¶ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 ¶ With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 **For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 what we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body****

unto the edifying of itself in love. 17¶ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may must give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

This portion of scripture tells us who the Church is, who are members of this Church, and what the purpose of the Church is. Let us start at the beginning.

Acts 2:46 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**"

What does this scripture teach us? Firstly, that the early Christians met daily. That there was a remarkably close bond between them, and they all knew each other intimately. I know we have a problem with living this way today, but we should pursue this daily. They also had communion daily. Not once a month or once a quarter as we know it today, but it was part of their everyday procedure. They also did not sit there with long faces every day. No, they were full of joy for what Jesus did for them. We also learn from this passage that the LORD added to the church daily such as should be saved. Not you or I can add anybody to the church, only God can. Why? As only He has the power to offer a rebirth. People may decide on being a Christian, but the LORD does the work, the actual rebirthing of a person. Being a Christian will also then confirm that we are all members of His church.

Let us examine Ephesians 4 from verse 11 again: "*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

On examining this scripture, we come to the conclusion that the task of the Church is to educate the believers in the knowledge of Christ, to unity in faith, until we all reach the **measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**. This means that when I look at someone, I should not see the person itself, but the person in his role within the body of Christ. When we come to Christ, His Spirit is put into us and we are washed by His Blood. This means that I should act like and be like Christ. My question to you is: Do people see Christ, or do they see you? As I should be like Christ, I should also move in His anointing and his gifts. It is not a question of having received the gift of healing, but have I allowed that gift to manifest in my life.

We also must remember that we became sons and daughters of the LORD, with Jesus. We are therefore all brothers and sisters of each other, one family. From this we can see that it is impossible to chase a

brother or sister away and declare that they no longer belong to the church, as I cannot disinherit a fellow brother or sister. I do not have the authority to do this. We are also of the same Blood, the Blood of Jesus Christ. If you know more about this family life than your brother, then it is up to you to teach the younger one in what is acceptable to our Father. The same way an older brother or sister has more duties to perform in a house, applies to our Spiritual home. Those who have been around for a long time ought to be able to teach the younger Christians in what is acceptable to the Father.

This brings us back to the first part of our scripture in the Epistle to Ephesus. Here we read that some were given as Apostles, some as Prophets, some as Evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. Within our household, we have different duties for the different people. But the one thing we can learn from this scripture is that none of these people were appointed because of who they were. No, everyone was appointed after asking the LORD whom to ordain for the job at hand. Nobody was given any job just because they had attended the Bible school of Gamaliel. No, they were appointed after fasting and praying. This to me means that the LORD himself appointed them, as we read that they all moved in signs and wonders. To say today that you have an academic qualification, which took eight years to achieve, and that this qualifies you for the post of Apostle or pastor, is simply not Biblical. Only the LORD can appoint you.

Why do we as brothers and sisters get together on a regular basis? The only reason is to proclaim the name of the LORD Jesus Christ. During this time, we will minister to each other in the gifts we received from the Holy Spirit, and build each other in faith. How does Paul describe this type of meeting? Ephesians 4: 16 *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

This portion of scripture confirms that there is only one Church, and that we should build one another for us to get to the full stature of Christ.

When I now look at myself, I do not see myself anymore, but I see how Christ is taking shape in me. When I look at the people around me, I see every person in his or her role within the body of Christ. When I understand this, I will never be the same anymore. Life is not about me, but what matters is my function within the body of Christ. Then I can declare with Isaiah 61 verse 1: *"¶ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."*

This is being Church.

What about "my" church? Whatever form of church you belong to is not the issue, be it a home church, cell church, Pentecostal church, Methodist church, Anglican Church, or any other grouping. It is about being Church. These different churches are not any different from the groupings we find in the time of Jesus, with the Pharisees and the Sadducees. But Jesus did not try to convince them that He was the Christ. No, He went to people like Matthew, a tax collector, or Peter a fisher. Today's church is not any different. The best analogy I could find is to compare our churches of today with a club. You will find that a club has certain rules that specify who can be members and they have rules that you must abide by; there is a club captain or chairman that decides on how the club will function; there is a clubhouse where everybody meets; there is membership fees that one has to pay, and all the members normally have a common interest. But that is not what the Bible tells us what Church is.

You might feel that you would like to differ from me in that Israel had a Tabernacle and later a Temple in which they gathered, and that is why you feel this way. This is what you see as people getting together, a place where the Spirit of the Lord will manifest. Now we also know that Jesus came to destroy the temple in three days. During this time Jesus fulfilled every commandment and prescription

Israel had to adhere to as far as offers and the first covenant was concerned. That is why there is no temple anymore, as Jesus came to restore the relationship Israel had before being disobedient. This relationship is explained in Exodus 20 verses 18 to 20: *"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."* The Lord wants to have a relationship with each one of us, but we must realize the impact of this situation. We cannot like Israel tell Moses to stand between the LORD and us, as He promised in Ezekiel that He will come and live inside of us. Once we realize the immenseness of the situation, we will do as He commands. This is the relationship he wants with each one of us.

How is a local congregation managed? By being unanimous. No one person can be left in charge of everyone else. This leads to one assuming a higher position than the other in the church, and thus leads to someone being in charge. Even the apostles did not assume that the one was more gifted than the other. They all worked to establish a unity in the local church. This is what Jesus did before he was crucified. He washed the feet of His disciples, declaring Him to be subordinate to them. To put this into practice in the local church means that every person would rather have someone else's proposal accepted than his own.

How do I know that this is true? Know the Word of God; know the message of the Bible. Search the whole Word of God before jumping to conclusions. Let me give you a quick example of how we can misinterpret the Bible. Malachi 3 verse 8 informs us to bring the whole tithe to the temple, while Deuteronomy 14 verses 24 to 26 informs me to enjoy the tithe and spend it on whatever I feel like, even strong drink. Which one is correct? Examine the whole Word of God to find out what the true meaning of the passage is before jumping to conclusions.

One point that we must remember is that all the apostles warned against false teachers that would come from within the church to try and convince the believers of a different gospel.

So, what is church? You and me doing the will of the Father: That is Church.

MOSES 4 VERSE 2: HOW DO I JUDGE THE GENUINENESS OF A PASTOR AND THE GENUINENESS OF A LOCAL CHURCH?

Why would I try to give an answer to a question that most people do not even consider? I would like to answer the question with another question. How would you recognize someone who is ordained by God?

Let us start by looking at a couple of passages in the Bible. 2 Peter 1:1 "1 ¶ *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 ¶ **And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:** whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 ¶ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10 ¶ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. **Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.** 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, **as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; **beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices;** cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, **they allure through the lusts of the flesh,** through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19 **While they promise them liberty,** they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, *The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*"***

2Tim 4: 1 "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 **Preach the word;** be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;** 4 **And they shall turn away their ears from the truth,** and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Now that we know what the Bible says concerning false teachers, let us start at the beginning. I would like to start with the priests in the Old Testament and use this as a basis to evaluate our current situation. It is difficult to believe that there were false priests early on in the history of Israel with priests like Samuel and Elijah. But it started even before Samuel. Let us look at Eli. 1 Samuel 2 verse 11 "And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 13 And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. 17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. 18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. 19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. 21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD."

Verse 12 tells us that Eli's sons did not know the Lord. *"12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD"* The first pointer for us then in evaluating the local pastor or reverend is to look at his children. The Bible tells us that Eli's sons were sons of Belial, meaning they were worthless, or even worse, sons of Satan. They had no idea about what was happening in the temple, even though they were brought up in the temple and had to succeed their father when he died. They did not know the Lord. So, the first step in evaluating a pastor/reverend is to look at his children. Can he control them? If he cannot, how do you expect him to have authority in the local church? *"For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"* 1 Tim. 3:5. Eli's sons did not know the LORD. They wanted to do what they felt like. They were not interested in eating boiled meat; no, they wanted grilled rump steak with the fat on. As the Bible puts it: *for men abhorred the offering of the LORD*. That is why the LORD rejected them. These two sons had to become the high priest when Eli died, but they did not know the LORD. So, the first step in evaluating a pastor/reverend is to see how his children behave. If the pastor's children do not know the LORD, how do you expect him to control a local church?

How did Eli treat his sons? When he was told that they were causing Israel to sin by having sex with woman at the temple, he only told them that what they were doing was wrong. He did nothing to stop this behavior. How many pastors do you know that does the same? He never confronts his children, and likewise never any of the members of his church living in sin. How many people just live together and never marries. Some pastors prefer this, as they then do not have to worry about the divorce statistics in their congregations anymore. How many people play the lotto, gamble, sleep around, but the church says nothing as the pastor does not want to lose his income. You see the moment he addresses this problem; his members will leave and join another congregation or church group, and he would lose out on income for the church. It is easy to see if a pastor is really serving the LORD. If he is soft on sin, he is like Eli. Some pastors even teach people that it is preferable to have a trial marriage as you first must see if you can fit into this role. I know of pastors that are homosexual, but everyone accepts this behavior. I know it is subject that is causing great confusion currently in the Church, but the Bible teaches that it is a sin, and that is what we have to accept if we want a Bible believing congregation. All the examples of people having sex with people of the same sex, or with no sexual morals, were killed by the action of the LORD. Read the last three chapters of Judges, and look at Sodom and Gomorra.

Ezekiel outlines another facet of this type of pastor. *"Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"* How many pastors/reverends are there that does not tell their members the full story of the Bible, as they want to ensure that their members stay dependent on them? How many knows the full impact of the new covenant but leave their members ill informed? One of the reasons for doing this is that they want to cling to old covenant rules like tithing. If he tells his members the full story, he cannot put them on a guilt trip using Malachi 3 anymore.

The other problem we face is that all monies collected will be spent as the pastor sees fit. This is what Ezekiel describes in chapter 34 verse 3: *"Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that*

are fed: but ye feed not the flock." We must remember that according to the Bible the fat belonged to the LORD. So, this is what is happening: The shepherds are taking that which belongs to the LORD for themselves, without giving real food to the congregation. Just look at how many pastors are living in comfort while their members are living in need. One thing you can expect is at least a monthly sermon on why they should give to the "church", because if you do not, the LORD cannot bless you. They never inform their members of what Paul states in 2 Cor. 8 verse 13: *"For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:"* How many times have I seen people that was turned down by their church when they asked if the church could assist them financially. No, they are not a welfare institution. This is what I mean that they are stealing from the LORD. For a full discussion on finances, it is discussed in a separate article.

What was the judgment Eli received? 1 Sam 2 Verse 29: *"Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. 32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. 33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them."*

This scripture addresses a couple of issues.

The first issue is that the LORD announces that He has decided to change His promise. This is never taught in any church I ever attended. No, it is said, once the LORD has decided this, He will never change His views concerning you. You can now sit back and relax and continue with your life as you have done what is required. No, this passage tells us that the LORD will honor those that honor Him, and those that despise Him, shall be lightly esteemed.

The second issue is that the LORD says he will cut of the right arm of Eli and of his ancestors, meaning He will lose the power of his ministry. But what is the power of our ministry today? Again Ezekiel 34 has the answer. Verse 3: *"Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. 4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them."* How many people in your congregation have been heeled after the elders prayed for them? How many people were supported when in dire straits, and healed? Has anyone been raised from the dead? How many of the members that were members in name only were returned into the local church serving the LORD again with a new passion? Is the sermon on Sunday just a short exegesis of a Bible verse without calling on you to implement it in your life? Or maybe the Bible is quoted just to give the sermon a religious flavor. This is what the LORD is saying here. The services will continue, but they will have no effect on the people. We do not even bat an eyelid if the government wants to bring in doctrines at school that clash with our very beliefs. No, we are told, to handle these issues at home. How do we do it if these doctrines specifically address the issue on handling authority, and that parents have no legal authority over their children anymore. Similarly, government ministers enter into covenants with sangomas, (witch doctors in South Africa), and still sit in the elder's chair on a Sunday at the church service. Major sports and other gatherings are opened with rituals by sangomas and other cults, but as Christians we must accept it as we do not want to cause an uproar. This is what happens when the power of God is not there anymore. But do you realize that if His Power is not there, then He is not there either. When someone dares to differ from the pastor he is expelled immediately from the church as no one dares to take on the pastor in his church. Before you can return you are told to ask for forgiveness for coming against the LORD and His anointed. You can check this on numerous websites of local

churches. They even print it on their new member information brochures. Others proclaim again that if you do not bring you tithe for three or four months that your membership automatically ceases. They won't ask you if you have food to eat, no you are no longer a member, and hence they don't have any obligation towards you anymore. Remember, the pastor does not want to share *his* money with you.

Another sign that the LORD with all His Power is not there is when we must start new programs to ensure that the current members stay at this church, and to attract new members to the church. How many courses are there for pastors on how to grow your church, and of course how to double your income. No, if the LORD is there, He will add those that are saved. When we do have outreaches, new converts are visited maybe once or twice, and are then left to their own devices. The wolves and jackals can have a field day now, as we have done our duty. Another sign that the LORD is not there is when we must handle everyone's hang-ups, as the person is especially important. No, the LORD is important. When He does not have the first position in our church, we are busy with humanism.

And then there is the time. If the service dares to continue for one or two minutes longer than the published time, we all start looking at our watches as the pastor is wasting our time again. I did not come to listen to him; no, I came to have my ego boosted. I have now recharged my spiritual batteries and look forward to facing the week again. What or who church is does not bother me at all, as it is something the church board must address.

Then there is the issue of prayer. All people involved in the service, from the musicians to the ministry team, to the people on door duty are asked to meet for prayer before the service. When you arrive there, nobody is there. After a couple of weeks someone else sticks their head into the room, and all of a sudden, all panic breaks loose as everyone is reminded to get there in time before the service. After a while it is back to normal with nobody showing up. The alternative is that one or two people who can start at 8 and finish at 12 without taking a breath control this time. And then they did not even pray for the service. Or as I have experienced for many years, that if there is a set schedule of who should open and close meetings on a Sunday, that you must inform people two to three weeks before hand in order for them to have time to work out an appropriate prayer.

You might tell me that you know of very few of these types of churches. I can take you to so many churches where this is the case. But fortunately I can also take you to churches where you can experience the LORD every moment. Thank the LORD for this.

The Bible also declares what the end of both types of pastors will be. Ezekiel 44:6 :"**6** *And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, 7 In **that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. 8 And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. 9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel. 10¶ And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. 11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. 12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity. 13 **And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. 14 But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. 15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:*****

16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge."

My question to you is: What does your local church look like? Is the LORD there in all His power, or not?

I would like to end this with a further quote from Ezekiel 34, saying what the LORD will do in the last days. Verse 10: *"10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. 11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. 17¶ And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. 18 Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? 19 And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. 20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. 21 Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; 22 Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. 23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. 25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. 26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. 27 And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. 28 And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. 29 And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. 30 Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. 31 And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD."*

MOSES 4 VERSE 3: WHAT DO PEOPLE MEAN WHEN THEY SAY THAT YOU ARE PREACHING A GOSPEL OF JESUS PLUS?

This morning while in bed I was thinking about the types of questions that we as Christians have in our daily life. Some of these I have tried to answer, while some not. The same time another question entered my mind. It is not a question that one would always think about, but nevertheless it is a question that is often heard in discussions on Church, namely, do we preach a gospel of Jesus plus.

This took me back to a Sunday in church, when our minister at our local congregation, mentioned how pleased he was with us as a congregation as he had just returned from a three-month long sabbatical. He was so pleased as we were on fire for Jesus. During this three-month period, he visited a number of other church groupings, but unlike us they were all preaching a gospel of Jesus plus, either Jesus plus baptism, or Jesus plus obedience, or whatever their specific plus was.

While thinking on this subject, I suddenly thought that maybe you too can think that I am preaching a gospel of Jesus plus. I then asked the LORD to give me a scripture that I could use to explain my own interpretation of what it means to be a Christian. What I found is that it is not a subject that can be taken lightly, but that John must have had the same question in his time. Fortunately, he gave us a fairly clear definition. 1 John 5:1 *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."* This scripture declares that whoever loves Jesus is a child of God. So far it fits with all groupings that I have had dealings with.

In verses 2 and 3 John goes a little bit further, explaining how someone that loves Jesus will act like. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." We must love God and obey His commandments. In other words, I must act in a certain way. If I do not act in a loving way to all Christians, I am exhibiting the life of an unbeliever. People must be able to see it in my life. This now becomes a gospel of doing.

Next John states that one must be born again. *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"* (1 John 5:4-5). How is this achieved? *"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (John 3:5-6). This now becomes difficult, as one must overcome the world, which is our own self and our own sins. I must be able to rule over my sins. I must now start believing that I can live a sinless life for Jesus. I cannot cling onto this one little sin, as I then demonstrate to the world that I am not acting like a Christian. If I do not act like a Christian, the chances are that I am not a Christian. If it is sin, I must break with it. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, then you must be able to break with sin. Why? When one is born of God, His Spirit is placed within you, and we all know that His Spirit cannot sin.

Let us continue with John's definition. *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."* (1 John 5:6-8). Jesus is the one that not only went through the water to be baptized, but He also shed His blood for us to inherit eternal life. Jesus not only went through the baptism water to show us the way, but He shed His blood for us for us to receive forgiveness of sins. Both the Blood and the water point to the new covenant He has with us. You see the Father, the Word, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost witness in heaven, while on the earth, the water of baptism, the blood of the new covenant, and the Holy Ghost will witness on earth. In order to be a Christian, I must be baptized, become part of the new covenant, and move in the gifts of the Spirit.

John also warns us not believe in what people are saying, but we must believe what God witnesses about his son. *"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that*

believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God". (1 John 5:9-13)

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." (1 John 5:18-21)

How does Paul sum up people with the attitude of saying that you teach a gospel of Jesus plus? He writes to Timothy as follows: *"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." (1 Timothy 1:5-7)*

MOSES 4 VERSE 4: HOW DO I REACT WHEN CONFRONTED BY FALSE TEACHERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES?

This might sound like a silly question to answer. You might tell me that you never even thought about this type of question. But you know, I had to think about it. I want to use two incidents in my life that might shed some light on this question as we will see how people react, but also what we should learn from this.

One evening while having supper, someone knocked on the front door of our house. I must admit that I was not in the best of moods, as I had a difficult time trying to convince a prospect that it was time to decide and give me the order.

How could people at my front door upset me? Easily. It was two young women from the Jehovah's Witness that tried to convince me that their Gospel was the one and only Gospel. I explained to them that they should not even try to convince me and that they should rather believe the Bible than their own writings. As they turned and left, I suddenly found myself shouting at them that they should stop with their deception.

As I sat down again, it suddenly dawned on me that I probably did not react like a good Christian should. Did I not perhaps act like a thug or something similar. I had no reason to lose my temper. A Christian should never react this way. These were some of the thoughts that crossed my mind. I must admit that I felt terrible. What will the neighbors think of me?

Has it ever happened to you? We are told to never react this way, but in the heat of the moment, this is what happens. Maybe it is not a problem for you, but for me it was a huge problem. I felt hopeless, as they did not even want to listen to someone else's view and just continued with their deception.

I ended up asking the LORD to forgive me for the way I reacted and tried to leave the incident at that. I suddenly felt that the LORD wanted to use this incident to talk to me about this subject. I wrote down everything I could recall and then, when I started looking at what the Bible taught about this subject, found something that I did not expect to find.

We must at all times project the image of Christ in our lives. We must act like He did. Only when I started meditating on this idea, did I realize that I might have acted like Christ would have. Remember the incident in the temple? Matthew 21:12 *"¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."*

This incident gives us a look into how Jesus reacted when people did not show God the necessary respect. This is exactly what these two women did. They treated their leader's revelation, which is a lie, higher than the Word of God. They are part of the false teachers we are warned against in the Bible.

What did Jesus and the Apostles say about these people, as they also had to deal with them.

Let us see what the Bible says.

1 - Firstly Jesus:

Matt 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Matt 24:11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Matt 24:24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

2 - Secondly Paul:

2 Cor. 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

2 Cor. 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

Gal 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

3. Thirdly Peter:

2 Pet 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

4. Lastly John:

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Some of these false teachers were part of the original group of people that came to salvation through the early work of John, Paul, and Peter. The above scriptures inform us that there would be false prophets (fortune tellers), apostles, (reverends, pastors, professors) and then lastly false people, but it still does not tell us how to act when confronted by them.

I found two scriptures that will shed some light on it.

1 Cor. 16:22. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be a curse. The Lord comes! (YLT)

2 Joh. 10-11. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

When I read this, it seems to me that the first Christians did not receive these people well at all. It seems that we must learn to act like God, and that is to love those that love Him, and to hate what He hates. One statement that I found from Paul also surprised me, and this is found in 1 Cor 14 verse 38: ***"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant"***.

Jesus also declared that He did not come to earth to bring peace, but He came to cause separation according to Matthew 10 verse 34 and 35: *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law"*. Do not be surprised if people do not like you when you declare that you do not want to abide with an unbeliever.

The LORD wants us to act like He did, and that is to make a difference in people's lives, to share the Gospel, and to make people His disciples. But we must learn that if someone does not want to receive us, then we should not even greet him or her. So next time when someone tries to worm their way into your house, know that you have the right to close the door without feeling bad about it. Jesus chased them out of the synagogue, so they have no right to confront you in your own home.

The second incident happened about six months later.

That night was catastrophic to me. I firstly allowed that my wife submitted herself to another man, and then I allowed that the same thing happened to a very dear friend of ours. And all this in my own home. The Bible declares that a woman must subject herself to her own husband, and not to other men. Therefore Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 14 that a woman should be quiet during a meeting, but that

she and her husband will sort out how their relationship will function without anyone else having any say over it. No other man can give your wife any orders of how to live. If he does, then he does not act like a true Christian.

After everyone left that night, Hettie, our friend, and I sat down and discussed what happened, and why we acted the way we did. But first a bit of information as background concerning the situation that night.

A mutual friend contacted us and asked if we would open our house to another person who wanted to invite some people to find out what they thought of him going into full time ministry. He wanted to hear from us if we all thought that it was from God and wanted our input. He also invited an older man who was a so-called prophet, who would serve the people with a word from God if they felt that they needed a word from God. We decided to help this person, as the verse immediately came to mind that declared if you received a prophet that you would receive the same wage as a prophet.

Hettie had like normal, made herself attractive to me by wearing my favorite necklace and earrings. This "prophet" arrived and immediately asked her if she wanted a word from God, which she immediately agreed too. While he was busy with her, our mutual friend arrived and was immediately included in this "word from God".

What the person told her as if it was a word from God was his own doctrine. He was brought up as a member of the "Members in Christ" church, a group that believes that woman are not allowed to wear any jewels as this would make them spiritually blind and deaf, using the incident in Israel's history of the golden calf as their proof.

What I learned through the years from the Bible is that one should be careful when saying that it is a word from God. Peter describes this for us in 1 Peter 4 verse 11: *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

How do I know that it was not a word from God but a word from his doctrine? After the event I heard that he has used this at most meetings he attended.

During the meeting, my wife and our friend had to remove their jewelry as this person would not continue with them still wearing their jewelry. He then took over the meeting and bragged about all his escapades and how he ended up in the African jungle without even informing his wife where he was. All he could talk about was how great he was.

What format should we have followed at the meeting? The answer I know of is found in 1 Cor.14:26 to 33: *"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 **Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.** 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints"*

What happened here was that the person was glorifying himself, and not Jesus. He also did not know that there were four other people at the meeting who move in the prophetic gifting. His word was judged and rejected. If I want to say something and all the attention is drawn to me, it means that I have not yet been to the cross, to lay down my own life and to follow Jesus. I am not making people my disciples, but disciples of Jesus. This did not happen that night.

A question I had for myself that night was: Why did I allow it to happen? There were several reasons. The first reason was that this so-called prophet was a guest in my house and an invited guest by someone using our house as a venue. The second reason was that the LORD used this incident to teach

us how to identify a false prophet. The LORD was busy the whole week prior to this incident to talk to me concerning being watchful. Luke 11 verse 21 and 22. *"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.."*

I was not watchful that night. The person was said to be a prophet. I did not even imagine that he would take on my wife in our home.

But the LORD is always faithful and true. He gave me the answer even before I could jot down notes about this incident. The scripture comes from Amos 5 verse 13: *"Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time."*

To recap. I allowed a false prophet to take on my wife with his doctrine in my own house. I allowed it, as I was not watchful. The LORD used this incident to teach me to be watchful at all times, and about identifying false teachers. He also gave us a word of comfort before going to bed that night.

MOSES 5 – AND THE FUTURE?

THEREFORE DO NOT BE PARTAKERS WITH THEM; FOR YOU WERE FORMERLY DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD; WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS IN ALL GOODNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH), TRYING TO LEARN WHAT IS PLEASING TO THE LORD. DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE UNFRUITFUL DEEDS OF DARKNESS, BUT INSTEAD EVEN EXPOSE THEM; FOR IT IS DISGRACEFUL EVEN TO SPEAK OF THE THINGS WHICH ARE DONE BY THEM IN SECRET. BUT ALL THINGS BECOME VISIBLE WHEN THEY ARE EXPOSED BY THE LIGHT, FOR EVERYTHING THAT BECOMES VISIBLE IS LIGHT. FOR THIS REASON IT SAYS, "AWAKE, SLEEPER, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST WILL SHINE ON YOU." THEREFORE BE CAREFUL HOW YOU WALK, NOT AS UNWISE MEN BUT AS WISE, MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL. SO THEN DO NOT BE FOOLISH, BUT UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS.

(Eph 5:7-17)

MOSES 5 VERSE 1: IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH?

I want to look at our belief system of today and will try and prove to you the reader that Israel was never a nation as portrayed today but should in reality be the first Church.

Why am I saying this? Even from the days of Moses up and to the times that Jesus came they operated as a Church under the Old Covenant. It will then also clear up so many misconceptions about the difference between Church and Israel or Jews. These are the people that label you as someone preaching replacement theology the moment that you mention that the Church is also Israel or Jews. This article will try and prove that the Church has been there from the early days, and I believe that is also the way the people of the Old Covenant saw it.

The first question is why do I say that the Old Testament Israel is the Church? Before Israel left Egypt, we find the first clue. People from all nations could join Israel before the Exodus. *“And when a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home born, and to the stranger that sojourns among you.”* (Exo 12:48-49) *“You shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God.”* (Lev 24:22)

This already intimates that the people that left Egypt with Moses did not only belong to the Jewish tribe, but also included foreigners. They all had the same theology and believed in the one LORD. This already shows us that they operate as a Church, and not as a nation. This confirms the promise made to Abraham: *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be you perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made you. And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you. And I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said to Abraham, You shall keep my covenant therefore, you, and your seed after you in their generations.”* (Gen 17:1-9)

So here we find that even before the exodus and the long trek to Canaan that Israel operated as a Church and not as a nation.

This is also what the whole book to the Hebrews in the New Testament is all about.

Several very influential people including Martin Luther wanted to keep the book of Hebrews from the Bible as they believed it had no relevance to us as Christians. But they are the people who believe that the book was only applicable to Israel or Jews as a nation, and not to all believers.

But this is exactly where I start differing from them. But why? Because even today we find that most Christians see Israel as nation and not as the first Church. That is one of the most prominent teachings of today across all types of Christians. But they fail to see that the book of Hebrews has the covenant as a central theme and not Israel as a central theme.

It was not written for Israel as nation, but the Church. But what is the difference? I want to use certain texts from Paul to Corinth and John in Revelation to explain my viewpoint. Paul says the following: *“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of*

*serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened to them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.***" (1Co 10:6-11)

We find the words of Jesus as recorded by John: *"I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."* (Rev 2:9) *"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."* (Rev 3:9)

Who will end up in heaven? I believe those that are there already are people like Moses, David, Samuel, and many more of the people of the Old Testament. If we look at the New Testament it would be people like Peter, Paul, and John. You might wonder why I only mention the names of people that descended from Jacob. The reason being is that they will be there, as they belonged to the nation of the LORD, Israel. We learn from the Old Testament that only those people that were chosen by the LORD ended up in heaven, in other words only people from Israel. *"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."* (1Co 10:5)

The LORD says the following through Moses to Israel: *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; "* (Deut 7:6-9) This sounds more like a promise to a Church than a promise to a specific nation.

I want to start at the beginning. Now when I quote from the book of Revelation you might think that I am starting at the end, but fortunately Jesus is speaking. He was there right at the beginning of time, even when Adam and Eve were formed. Revelation 3:9: *"Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie--I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you."* Jesus is telling us here that even though people are from the synagogue of Satan; they are still saying that they are Jews. These people are from Philadelphia, and not Jews from Israel. This confirms the scripture from Revelation 2:9: *"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."* This piece of information is extremely important, in that Jesus is saying that all believers are Jews, and that only Jews will be saved. This confirms the scripture that I used from Moses above.

Once we realize that God does not and will not change His word, we will realize that there seems to be a problem with interpreting this verse in the light of the verses from Revelation. How is it possible then that God declares in one place that He has chosen only the Jews, and then declares later that all true believers are Jews? The answer comes partly from the book of Acts chapter 10:34-35: *"Opening his mouth, Peter said: I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."* All people who fear God and accept His righteousness, is accepted. This however still does not satisfy the requirement of Revelation, as we are still not Jews. The answer is given to us as part of the exodus from Egypt. Here the LORD gave them a commandment that they had to keep forever. The scripture comes from Numbers 15 verse 15 and 16: *"As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you."* Exodus 12 verse 48 gives us the final answer: ***"But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be***

like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."

In the history of Israel we find that whenever someone from another nation wanted to join them to Israel, they had to do whatever was required to become part of the covenant and then they were treated as people from Israel. A particularly good example is Ruth. Although she had the right to return to her people after her husband's death, she chose to go with Naomi. Her words were as follows: Ruth 1 verses 15 to 17: *"Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."* Ruth answers that she chooses to go with Naomi, and that only death will part them, but that she, Ruth will die where Naomi dies. She will worship Naomi's God, and never return to her original nation. Who was Ruth? David's great grandma. Where did Jesus come from? From David's tribe.

How do all these various pieces fit together? The LORD chose Israel as His nation. We as gentiles must chose to become Jews by joining Israel and its tribes. How is this done? The same way it was done in Israel's time, by becoming part of the covenant with the LORD. In the time of Israel, it was by circumcision, and after Christ it is by being born again. That means we must receive the righteousness of Jesus. As we know that Jesus came to fulfil the Old Covenant by fulfilling all its requirements, it now gives us the opportunity to become part of the Israel of God. ***"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God."*** (Gal 6:14-16) This sounds again more like a promise to the Church that a promise to a nation. Israel did not receive a blanket redemption from the LORD, but only those that became part of the covenant and kept His commandments, were His children.

Where do we find the first apostasy from the Church? When each tribe received their inheritance in Canaan. The Rubenites, the descendants from Gad, and the descendants from Manasseh all decided that they wanted to stay outside of Canaan, the Promised Land, and not receive that which the LORD had in store for them. They chose not to get what they were promised. If we look at the descendants of these tribes, we find that they did not feature in the history of Israel after deciding to follow their own plans. That is exactly what is happening today. People are leaving the Church and cannot be counted as Christians any longer as only people who confess Jesus as the Christ and live a life worthy of Him forms part of the real Church. This is how Hebrews 6 puts it: *"And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."* (Heb 6:3-6) That is also what happened to Saul after he visited the medium at Endor. *"Then said Saul to his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor."* (1Sa 28:7) This also meant that he died as a sinner, and did not receive everlasting life, but everlasting death. When Israel sinned, and was chastised by the LORD to bring them back to Him, they were safe. If they continued in their wickedness they died as sinners. Even after David the Church, or Israel, divided into two camps. We find extraordinarily little of the grouping that moved away from David in the Bible. They started their own "church" and was rejected by the LORD. We also see in the New Testament that Jesus did not speak to the two factions of the "church", the Pharisees, and Sadducees, but He went and spoke to the normal people. In fact, He always pitted the two groups against each other. And they were the "church".

In the history of Israel, we find that the tribes started serving other gods and religions, the same people they were supposed to exterminate when they went into Canaan. Now we find people today saying that Jesus first must return to the physical earth to save the Jewish faith people or the lost tribes although

they already made their choices years ago. The LORD did not choose a specific nation, but only those people who believe that Jesus is the Christ. That is what all the prophets tried to say. They were preaching revival messages to the Jews to get them to return to the God of their fathers. There were some specific messages that pointed to the coming Savior, but it always asked them to return to the LORD. All these messages we expect to find in the Church of today, and not messages to a specific nation.

We also found then and today that membership of a church grouping or nation can never mean that you receive everlasting life, but only belief in Jesus can make that possible.

Israel was the Church under the Old Covenant, and we are Church under the New Covenant. There is no replacement theology as people would like you to believe, but only messages to the Church of the LORD. And this all started with Moses who gave them the following choice they had to make: *"For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? **But the word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.** See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; **In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it.** But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce to you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days on the land, where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live: That you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may hold to him: for he is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.**" (Deut 30:11-20)*

So just like Israel had to choose to follow the LORD, we must make the same choice today. I do not find a blanket statement in the Old Covenant that every person will receive everlasting life. No, I only find that people who chose to follow and obey Him, were His children and His nation.

When we return to the book of Hebrews, we see that it describes the different viewpoints of the Churches. There are those that understand the New Covenant and believe that Jesus did everything to fulfil the Old Covenant. Then we find those that believe that Jesus is the Christ, but they also believe that you must do certain things to get saved. They still believe you must comply with certain rules, rules like the Sabbath etc. And then there are those of the Jewish faith today, those that reject Jesus as the Christ. And that is what the writer of Hebrews is trying to show people, that Jesus did everything that was necessary according to the law, and that He went through the Heavenly Tabernacle for us in order for us to receive everlasting life. No works will make that we are part of the real Church.

The writer shows us that we do not must work to get our way into heaven, as Jesus did away with all the works and that only faith in His completed work will bring everlasting life. That is what Hebrews 3 and 4 are about. You must have faith, because without it you are condemned, and stuck in the sixth day and do not enter the rest promised by the LORD.

That is why we find new prescriptions of how we should live our lives under the New Covenant in Hebrews chapter 13.

"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me. Remember them which have the

rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Why Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Heb 13:1-21)

These are commandments to the Church. This now enables you as an ordinary member to see if you are taught the correct message of the Bible or not. I do not find any scripture or clause in the New Covenant anywhere in the Bible that teaches that you can turn your back on the LORD, and then get a second chance. This also indicates that He chose Israel as a Church, and not as a nation or piece of real estate. And that Church includes me in you that have decided to become part of His covenant.

There is no replacement theology. You either believe the Truth and receive everlasting life, or you do not believe the Truth and die the second death. Those people who serve the LORD are part of His Israel, the Church. *“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God.”* (Gal 6:16) So the Bible only teaches the Church, the “Israel of God” and not the unbelievers.

We also must remember that the first people who became Christians were Jews, and they were also the first people to be called Christians. *“When they heard these things, they held their peace, **and glorified God, saying, Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance to life.** Now they which were scattered abroad on the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to none but to the Jews only.** And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, **spoke to the Grecians, preaching the LORD Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.** Then tidings of these things came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would hold to the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added to the Lord. **Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**”* (Act 11:18-26)

These people were Jews but were called Christians. So those that speak about replacement theology only shows their lack of knowledge of the Bible.

There will not be a rapture to allow the Jews to come to Christ and all the other people to get a second chance. If we believe that then Jesus and the Bible does not mean anything at all. Run from these people before they take you down the canyon of death with them. I know that you might feel that I am taking on people that have such a passion for Christ, **but unfortunately only those that believe the full message of the Bible will be saved.** I only confirm that which Jesus spoke about when He told them that they were rejected. *“Jesus said to them, Did you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I to you, **The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation**”*

bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet." (Mat 21:42-46) The original was already mentioned in Isaiah 5 verses 1 to 7. "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the middle of it, and also made a wine press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? why, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor dig; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." (Isa 5:1-7)

Jesus also speaks about a nation, as the true Church, the Bride, did not yet exist as He was still alive.

That is why the book of Revelation says that two thirds of the people that call themselves Christians will die the second death, as they believe the Bible, but only through their interpretation of the Bible. They will fight you to prove you are wrong and quote large parts of the Bible to convince you, but did you know that the Satan also quoted the Bible to convince Jesus, but Jesus showed him all the flaws in his quotes of scripture. My only purpose is to show you that there are incorrect interpretations of scripture, that we must take personal responsibility for our own lives, and not depend on the teachings of others to receive everlasting life. The same story is used in the Bible, there were ten woman who waited for the Bridegroom, but only five expected Him and were prepared for His coming, while the others waited for the rapture and all its stories, but they missed the wedding feast.

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw yourself. But godliness with contentment is great gain." (1Ti 6:3-6)

Paul declares the following: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside to vain jangling; **Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for murderers, For fornicators, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for enslavers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.**" (1Ti 1:5-11)

If someone wants to place you back under the law, know that according to Paul that he is not righteous. He will try to convince you that you must believe his interpretation. "Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a female slave, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the female slave was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engenders to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.** For it is written, Rejoice, you barren that bore not; break forth and cry, you that travail not: for the desolate has many more children than she which has an husband. Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. **But as then he that was born after the flesh**

persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what said the scripture? Cast out the female slave and her son: for the son of the female slave shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brothers, we are not children of the female slave, but of the free." (Gal 4:21-31)

So those that believe that Jesus is the Christ and that He came to take us from the bondage of the law are the true Church of the LORD, and not those that keep the law and boast in their heritage. *"However, then, when you knew not God, you did service to them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labor in vain. Brothers, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as you are: you have not injured me at all. You know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."* (Gal 4:8-14)

Who is the real Israel? Those people that do what the LORD commands to become part of His Covenant, and that started with Moses. So only those that choose Him are His Church.

I want to advise you right here in the beginning of the book that should you be a well-read theologian with very strict rules on how to interpret scripture, that you might not agree with my way of interpreting scripture, as we will differ on how Israel and the Church fits into history. I still want to ask you to read this book, and at the completion of the book you might find that I do not have such a weird outlook after all.

The Bible teaches us that we will not end up in an English-speaking heaven, or perhaps an Afrikaans speaking one, or maybe even a Greek speaking heaven. It is however truly clear that there is a heaven and that all Christians will be there. We are also not told that there will be an Anglican heaven, or different heavens for the different Churches groups. What will heaven look like, and who will be there? These are some of the questions I will try to answer.

Let us start at the first question. Who will end up in heaven? I believe those that are there already are people like Moses, David, Samuel, and many more of the people of the Old Testament. If we look at the New Testament it would be people like Peter, Paul and John. You might wonder why I only mention the names of people that that descended from Jacob. The reason being is that they will be there, as they belonged to the nation of the LORD, Israel. We learn from the Old Testament that only those people that were chosen by the LORD ended up in heaven, in other words only people from Israel. The LORD says the following through Moses to Israel: *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"* (Deut 7:6-9)

Now what about people from other nations? Are they also part of God's plan, His elected, and if they are elected, how does it work today?

This question is a fairly difficult question to answer, as so many people have tried to answer it and then their interpretations ended up tearing families apart, and I know of instances where people lost their inheritance because of this subject. However, I believe that God's Word is there to build up and not to tear down relationships. What does the Bible teach on this subject, and will it still be in effect today?

I know that if you have an extremely strict interpretation based on the theologian Calvin that you might not agree with me. All I ask of you is to open your mind for the Bible, the Word of God, to speak to you.

I want to start at the beginning. Now when I quote from the book of Revelation you might think that I am starting at the end, but fortunately Jesus is speaking. He was there right at the beginning of time, even when Adam and Eve were formed. Revelation 3:9: *"Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie--I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you."*

Jesus is telling us here that even though people are from the synagogue of Satan; they are still saying that they are Jews. These people are from Philadelphia, and not Jews from Israel. This confirms the scripture from Revelation 2:9: *"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."* This piece of information is extremely important, in that Jesus is saying that all believers are Jews, and that only Jews will be saved. This confirms the scripture that Moses gave to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6-7: *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples."*

Once we realize that God does not and will not change His word, we will realize that there seems to be a problem with interpreting this verse in the light of the verses from Revelation. How is it possible then that God declares in one place that He has chosen only Israel, and then later on declares that all true believers are Jews? The answer comes partly from the book of Acts chapter 10:34-35: *"Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. "*

So all people who fear God and accept His righteousness, is accepted. This however still does not satisfy the requirement of Revelation, as we are still not Jews. The answer is given to us as part of the exodus from Egypt. Here the LORD gave them a commandment that they had to keep forever. The scripture comes from Numbers 15 verse 15 and 16: *"As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. "There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you."*

Exodus 12 verse 48 gives us the final answer: *"But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."*

In the history of Israel we find that whenever someone from another nation wanted to join themselves to Israel, they had to do whatever was required to become part of the covenant and then they were treated as people from Israel. A particularly good example is Ruth. Although she had the right to return to her people after her husband's death, she chose to go with Naomi. Her words were as follows: Ruth 1 verses 15 to 17: *"Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me." ."*

Ruth answers that she chooses to go with Naomi, and that only death will part them, but that she, Ruth will die where Naomi dies. She will worship Naomi's God, and never return to her original nation. Who was Ruth? David's great grandmother. Where did Jesus come from? David's tribe.

How do all these various pieces fit together? The LORD chose Israel as His nation. We as gentiles must chose to become Jews by joining Israel and its tribes. How is this done? The same way it was done in Israel's time, by becoming part of the covenant with the LORD. In the time of Israel, it was by circumcision, and after Christ it is by being born again. John 3: 5-6 gives us the answer: *"Jesus answered,*

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

In other words, I must decide, my parents cannot decide on my behalf, to become part of the LORD's people, to be born again and to become part of Israel. The next step after this for me is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul gives us the following summary in Ephesians 2: *"Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. "* (Eph 2:11-16) Paul confirms that there is no difference between the Gentiles and the Jews any longer, as Christ made both one on the cross, and that all born again Christians are Jews, and is now called the Church.

To the Romans Paul writes the following: *"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? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. As He says also in Hosea, **"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"** "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."* (Rom 9:22-26)

Peter again declares the following in 1 Peter 2:9-10: *"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. "*

I trust that this short explanation will allow us all to accept that there is no difference any longer between believing Jew and gentile. We are all His people. It does not help to complicate things so nobody understands it. Jesus himself said that we must become like a child again to follow Him. I trust that a child will even understand my explanation.

Coming back to my question on who we will find in heaven, both the short and the long answer is everyone that became part of the New Covenant with the LORD, in other words, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, and became Jews.

Another question that is answered by the above is that we as true Church, all became Jews and can therefore lay claim to all the promises that were made to Israel.

Paul now declares the following in 1 Corinthians 10: *"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. **Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, **"THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY."** Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. **Now these things happened to them as an example,***

and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.” (1Co 10:1-12)

In conclusion, we must look at how the LORD dealt with Israel, and from this we would be able to find out how He would deal with us. We can now also look at all the promises made to Israel and claim them for ourselves. There are still many promises to be fulfilled in the Bible, as well as descriptions of what will happen at the end of our age. Let us understand what these are, and how it will impact our lives as His children.

MOSES 5 VERSE 2 – WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR US AS THE NEW ISRAEL?

To me, the most significant impact was in the way I read the Bible. I was so intrigued by what was in store for Israel after Jesus, that I could not stop reading, as I was scared that I would miss something. The other side of the coin, however, was that I had to revisit some of my own doctrines to see if it actually matches what we read in the Bible.

The first doctrine was the popular doctrine about the rapture. We find these people in all sorts of belief systems. They span the whole spectrum from starting at the Dispensationalists, Calvinists, Pentecostal, Israel vision, British Jews, Charismatics, Christian Zionists, and a whole bunch of different people. Their prime scripture is Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9 concerning the seventy weeks and that it will only be completed during and after the seven-year tribulation. According to them we as 'non-Jews', or Christians, will be in heaven, whilst Christ will rule on earth during the millennial age. According to them, there are still things for Christ to do on earth **and that He lied on the cross when He said: "Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."** (Joh 19:30)

This doctrine is based on the fact that we are living in a dispensation of grace, that Jesus would come to rapture the Church before, during or after the tribulation, that the Jews would be restored to their former state, and that they will be given a second chance to come to Jesus, and that Jesus would then judge the people of the earth. The advocates of this doctrine maintain that there is a difference between Israel and the Church, and then refer to a mystery that Paul says was revealed to him. These advocates then claim that only certain people have the ability to interpret certain sections of scriptures, and that Paul's mystery is one of these scriptures as it refers to the difference between the Church and Israel and the way the LORD will deal with them. They use the prophecy of Daniel regarding the seventy weeks as their main argument that the last week of this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and that this is part of the mystery of what Paul refers to. The fact that both Jesus and Paul tell us what the mystery is, and that the gospel will be preached all over the world, is apparently not the mystery. *"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, **the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"* (Col 1:25-27)

However, we have already concluded that there is no difference between Israel and the Church. How do we then interpret Daniels prophecy, and has the seventieth week been fulfilled? I know that people have written many books about the rapture and its effect, and that many people have used it as scripts for their doctorate degrees, but is this doctrine correct?

The rapture is one of those doctrines that have a very calming effect on Christians, as it gives us a sense of relief that we do not must worry about all these nasty things that will happen during the tribulation. The tribulation is only for Israel and the unbelievers, or that is what we are taught. If we however see ourselves as the new Israel, we end up with a problem in that we must face the tribulation, and then things get slightly out of hand.

Many people have written books concerning Daniel's seventy weeks, and how it must be interpreted. The first 69 weeks we find that most people agree with in that it gives us the time from the return of Israel from exile, up to the coming of Jesus. **And then we also have the fiction writers with their Left Behind series that many people take as the absolute truth, even though the writers themselves declare that their books are fiction. For this they have even received prizes as the best Christian fiction writers.**

The last week is the week that all the fuss is about. This fuss only started about 160 years ago when a certain Darby and included by Scofield in his Scofield Bible and gave a different meaning to this, and now we find that most people who are not strong in their faith, are running after him. Before Darby

there was no doctrine about the rapture or someone claiming that there is a difference between the Church and the latter-day Jews. This doctrine has the effect that people are spending lots of money to go to Israel and to celebrate Shabbat, to fight for Israel's right to the temple mount, and to try and establish new sacrifices to the LORD, as Jesus did not do away with animal sacrifices. The fact that most of these Jews came from Europe are also disputed by these people. The majority of Ashkenazi Jews are descended from prehistoric European women and are the people that occupy Israel and are known as Jews today. They have truly little in common with the Jews in the time of Jesus. They are the people that Hitler murdered, and they were also the theme for Luther's book, "On the Jews and their lies". In this book he urged the Germans to burn their synagogues and a host of things that I will not use in this document. This will also never be used in any sermon by any preacher, as it promotes anti-Semitism.

What a great many people do not know is that the reason the Christian Zionists believe that we now live in a period of grace that fits in between week 69 and 70 of Daniel, is that both Jesus Christ and God the Father did not know that the Jews would reject Jesus. There are so many writings that hold on to this belief. I must admit that it is extremely difficult to find a single definition of why there will be a rapture as almost every teacher of this theory has his own interpretation. I mean if you are God and know everything, how is it possible that He and Jesus did not know this. And then we find that Luther and today's biggest Christian Zionist preacher, John Hagee, both say that it is a waste of time preaching the message of salvation through Christ Jesus to the Jews.

But what does the seventieth week of Daniel actually proclaim *"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."* (Dan 9:27) Daniel, in this prophecy, says that in the last week, which is actually seven years, a new covenant will come in effect. When we examine our Lord Jesus Christ's ministry on earth, we find that He spent three and a half years trying to convince the Jews that He was the Christ, and that they had to change their ways and accept Him as the Christ. After this period, and as Daniel puts it, in the middle of the week, Jesus was crucified. We know that Jesus was the complete and perfect sacrifice and accepted by the Father, which is why the daily sacrifice ceased in the middle of the week, as it was no longer required.

Let us examine this scripture chronologically as Daniel wrote it. The covenant that Jesus entered with the God the Father is the strong covenant that Daniel prophesied about, as it is the covenant between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This covenant was established on our behalf. We also know that Jesus Himself said that He came to fulfill and not to establish something new. That is why He was sacrificed, and that is the reason why this is the strongest covenant that exists. ***"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*** (Mat 5:17) This confirms then that the covenant Abraham entered was fulfilled, which required all male persons to be circumcised, and that only those that were circumcised were treated as children of Abraham. When the LORD asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac his son, the LORD declared that He would sacrifice His Son, as one rule applied to both parties of the covenant. By asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the LORD declared that He would do the same. This first covenant had to be confirmed by continually bringing sacrifices, and by circumcising all males. In addition to this the Israelites had to bring their tithes to the Levites for their service at the temple, and all first born had to be sacrificed to the LORD. The circumcision and sacrifice of the first-born was required as the LORD cursed the entire first born in Egypt as part of the plagues in Egypt. That is another reason Jesus had to die, as he had to nullify that curse.

The following is a short form summary of the vision Daniel received and the interpretation he received from Gabriel.

"At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision." Daniel 9:23

1 - *"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city" (also see Lev 25:9 "You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years") So the seventy weeks is actually 490 years.*

2 - *"to finish the transgression," That during this last week the ungodliness of the LORD's nation will end after they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, where the heart of stone is replaced by a heart of flesh. We will be purchased by Jesus as He died for our transgressions.*

3 - *"to make an end of sin," That an end will be made to the time of the law, as Jesus will be the complete sacrifice for sin and the law will be abolished as measurement of our salvation.*

4 - *"make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness," That was the prime reason for Jesus to come to earth as He would bring everlasting righteousness to those who believe that He was the Messiah, and the righteousness of fulfilling the law was done away with. So we are no longer seen as sinners, but are seen as a people washed by the blood of Jesus.*

5 - *"to seal up vision and prophecy" To bring an end to all the prophecies surrounding the first coming of the LORD Jesus Christ.*

6 - *"and to anoint the most holy". Jesus also had to be anointed as King, Redeemer, and Prophet.*

This is what was spoken of by Gabriel to Daniel. He then goes further and explains in detail what was going to happen during this 490 years or 70 weeks.

So, you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks". So, 49 years after their return from exile the temple will be rebuilt.

"and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress." [So from the time of rebuilding the temple to the start of the ministry of Jesus would be 434 years. (62x7). Dan 9:26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off, (so during the 70th week) and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." Gabriel explains to Daniel that Jesus will be cut off or killed with no benefit for Him, and then continues with what will happen to Jerusalem. The end of Jerusalem will come by the people of a prince to come, in other words someone who was not a prince in the days of Daniel, exactly as it happened when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. Gabriel says that it will be by a flood, but we find that in Daniel 11 verses 22, 26 and 40 soldiers are said to come as a flood. The last part Gabriel says that right up to the end of time there will be wars and desolations in, around and over the jurisdiction of Jerusalem, exactly as is still the case today.

Dan 9:27 *"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."* Here we learn that a new covenant will be formed during the last week of the prophecy. When we look at the ministry of Jesus, we find that He went through the land of Israel for three and a half years doing wonders and preaching to the people that He is the Christ. So as Daniel puts it, in the middle of the week, thus three and a half years into the ministry of Jesus, He was crucified. We know that His sacrifice was acceptable to the Father, and that is why the sacrifices would stop, because it was no longer required, as Jesus was accepted as the complete sacrifice. That was also the start of the new covenant, or the covenant of righteousness, and was the firm covenant that Daniel wrote about. The covenant was made between God the Father and Jesus Christ His son, who took our place for our sins. Jesus declared this in Matthew 5:17: *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."* This shows that Jesus did away with the laws governing the old covenant. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, He also knew that He had to give His son as a sacrifice. And that is what Jesus came to do. He also did away with the circumcision and did away with

the law surrounding the first born. We also do not need any Levites as a go between us and the Lord as we now appear before the Father covered by the blood of Jesus.

Many of the advocates of the rapture says that the daily sacrifice only ended when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., and that we cannot use this as an indicator. What they forget however, is that if we believe that Jesus was the Christ, no sacrifices were required after His death. He was the perfect sacrifice required by the Law of Moses. No sacrifices were required anymore. If they want to use this as an excuse, then they actually declare that Jesus was not the Christ as the LORD still accepted the sacrifices brought in the temple by the Levites.

We find another reason why Jesus could be sacrificed and why He was acceptable to the LORD, and why the Father did not look favorably on the offer of the High Priest. The following events took place the day Jesus was brought before the High Priest: *“And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.”* (Mat 26:61-65) The clothing of the High priest had to be made of a single cloth, without any seams. *“These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together. And the skillfully woven band on it shall be made like it **and be of one piece with it**, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.”* Ex 28:4-8. By tearing his clothing, the High Priest could not enter the temple the next day for the sacrifice. The only way he could do it, was by sewing it together, but then it would have a seam, and would thus be rejected by the Father, as it did not comply with the Law of Moses. That is why the sacrifice Jesus brought was accepted, and the reason why His clothes were not torn, but the lot cast over it. *“And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.”* (Mar 15:24) Here we see that His clothes were not torn but given as complete clothing which complied with the Law of Moses.

We must remember that Jesus was crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice, and that He died six hours later. He was crucified outside the town, as He also had to complete that sacrifice that had to be slain outside the town. *“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”* (Heb 13:10-13) As mentioned earlier He also did not bring His sacrifice in the earthly tabernacle, but in the heavenly one: *“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”* (Heb 9:23-28)

When the veil was rent in the temple, Jesus was accepted in the Heavenly tabernacle. That was also the end of the first half of the last week of Daniels' prophecy.

The second half of the week was the time the apostles spent in Jerusalem to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, and ended with the vision of Peter: *“On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”* (Act 10:9-15) This was also about the same time that Stephen was killed by the Jews. This was the end of the last half of the week as seen by Daniel, and at this time we as believers became part of the LORDS’ nation. The one thing we must remember is that the Jews expected a physical king to rule over them again like in the days of Saul and David, but failed to realize that these kings only ruled over them because they rejected the LORD. *“And the LORD said to Samuel, Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.”* (1Sa 8:7)

Daniel also declares that at the end of the week abominations will start and it will continue until the end of time. Because of this, Satan is now trying to destroy all flesh, and as Daniel says, it will last till the end of the earth.

I mentioned earlier that the advocates of the rapture also refer to the mystery of Paul. These words are normally used completely out of context for them to deceive the people and to convince people of their doctrine.

To conclude the last week then; it started with the ministry of Jesus to the Jews and ended when the message of the gospel came to us as gentiles. From this we can also conclude that there will not be a separate rapture of the Church, but that we as gentiles are one with all believers. Jesus himself said that we must hold on to our faith till the end, and not to think that we will not go through the tribulation. Even in Paul’s time we had people that did not understand the message of the gospel: *“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, **Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: **From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.**”*** (1Ti 1:3-7)

So in summary, the covenant that Jesus made on the cross was the strong covenant of Daniel, as it removed the curse of the first born, and fulfilled all the sacrifices the Levites and high priest had to bring. Jesus also paid for all our sins for us to appear in righteousness before the Father without blemish or sin. So He is our righteousness, and now we can do what the writer of Hebrews says: *“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Heb 4:16) This we can only do because of what Jesus did for us.

One major problem I also have with the doctrine of the rapture and those who believe this, is that they form part of the antichrist. The apostle John gives us a very clear definition of this: 2Jn 1:7 **“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”** The Jews do not believe that Jesus was the Christ, and by siding with and supporting the Jews of today, they become part of the antichrist.

MOSES 5 VERSE 3 – WHICH NATION DO YOU BELONG TO?

If we remember correctly from verse one, we all became Jews, as we all followed the rules of the covenant and hence became part of Israel. Or did we? We find that even though all the tribes of Israel inherited Israel, only the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi were in Jerusalem during the time that Jesus wandered on the earth. Most of the other tribes did not function as Jews, in other words, church, any longer. We know that even in the time of Jeremiah people returned to Egypt, and during this time and other times of war, Israel got scattered all over the middle east and later all over the then known parts of the earth. Another point that further adds confusion is that Isaiah declares that we will find a main road between Egypt, Assyria, and Jerusalem. This tells me that not everyone will be in Jerusalem after the second coming of Christ. People will find themselves in different areas, but the one thing I find is that these people will be known by the area they occupy. This then tells us that there will be people from Egypt, Zidon, and many more countries.

We find many passages in the Old Testament that are difficult to interpret. If I think of Isaiah and what he prophesies about Israel, Egypt and Assyria, it is extremely difficult to interpret: *“In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”* (Isa 19:18-25)

The Bible commentator, Matthew Henry had the following to say about this; *“The words, “In that day,” do not always refer to the passage just before. At a time which was to come, the Egyptians shall speak the holy language, the Scripture language; not only understand it, but use it. Converting grace, by changing the heart, changes the language; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. So many Jews shall come to Egypt, that they shall soon fill five cities. Where the sun was worshipped, a place infamous for idolatry, even there shall be a wonderful reformation. Christ, the great Altar, who sanctifies every gift, shall be owned, and the gospel sacrifices of prayer and praise shall be offered up. Let the broken-hearted and afflicted, whom the Lord has wounded, and thus taught to return to, and call upon him, take courage; for He will heal their souls, and turn their sorrowing supplications into joyful praises. The Gentile nations shall not only unite with each other in the gospel fold under Christ, the great Shepherd, but they shall all be united with the Jews. They shall be owned together by him; they shall all share in one and the same blessing. Meeting at the same throne of grace, and serving with each other in the same business of religion, should end all disputes, and unite the hearts of believers to each other in holy love.”* He confirms that the various nations will serve the LORD. We find many more areas discussed in the Bible, but this will be discussed later.

We also find many different prophesies in the Bible that we are not sure of if it has happened or not. One such a prophesy which I believe gives us the key to unlocking these scriptures are found in Zechariah: *“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts:*

and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.” (Zech 14:17-21) We find this scripture after Zechariah has seen the final judgment of the end times and before the new day has started. One can then safely assume that what is meant here will happen at the end of the current dispensation. Here we find people in Egypt, and if they do not go to Jerusalem for the annual feast of the tabernacles, no rain will fall on them.

But why is the feast of tabernacles so important? It is the feast that Israel had to obey annually to remember the day the LORD took them out of Egypt and placed them in Canaan. This scripture tells me that there will be different places where we as Christians will find ourselves in, in the time to come. The moment we read the Old Testament with this in mind, we will find that many other scriptures will suddenly make sense to us.

But what does the New Testament must say about this subject? I have found two references to this in the book of Revelation. The first part is the letters to the various churches, while the second part is where John tells us of the beast with seven heads that will rise from the sea. In the Old Testament we find that the prophets always addressed their utterings to seven different nations, but in the New Testament we find it is addressed to the seven churches, and then explained further by the discussion on the beast that rose from the sea. This is the only place where we find that the seven different nations and churches are all joined to the beast that controls all seven heads. The horns of the beast are the proclamations or messages that the beast brings. The beast is Satan with his false message that he proclaims to the Church as the truth.

What can we learn from these passages in Revelation?

We daily meet people that believe differently to what we believe. But who is correct? Is there a part in Scripture that I can use that would tell me difference between what is the right way and what is the wrong way? And when I find that I am wrong, is there also a part that would tell me what to do to correct my ways?

The Bible is certainly the book that will have an answer to all these questions, but that means we must understand what each prophet declared and how to interpret it. I will use the letters to the different churches as a basis to show the difference between the different Christians. This will also allow us to examine the different doctrines people believe in, and what is acceptable to the LORD and what not. We will then also be able to see what we believe in. We will also find that the way we believe may be the same as one or multiples of these churches.

Ephesus

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev 2:1-7)

Who was this church? We find that these people knew the LORD as they are told that the LORD knows their works and their labor. They can further distinguish between the false prophets and the true prophets. They also hate the works of the Nicolaitans, in other words they teach that it is wrong to live in sin and to sleep around. To me it sounds as though these people really knew what is right and what is wrong, but the LORD still finds something wrong. They are asked to repent and do the first works again as they have left their first love.

What are the first works? The writer of Hebrews tells us as follows: *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”* (Heb 6:1-2). These people are told to repent and to do the first works again. These works are faith in God, baptism, laying on of hands, and the doctrines about the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These people do not believe in the baptism of the believer but hold on to baptism of infants. To me they are still in Egypt.

These people are also described in Ezekiel 31: *“And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness? Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen. To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.”* (Ezek 31:1-18)

We read in this part of scripture about a tree that grew very tall, although it was planted in Egypt. It became even bigger than the trees that were planted in paradise. This group of believers became a great many people, although they were in Egypt. The reason the Bible declares that they were in Egypt, was because they did not leave Egypt to start the long walk to Canaan. They decided it was better to stay with the devil they knew, than to face an unknown future. This meant that they did not follow the LORD's instructions to leave Egypt behind and go through the Red Sea, or baptism. The prophet uses the example of what happened to Israel because of their unwillingness to follow the LORD. The LORD rejected them. If you are part of this tree in Egypt, look at the example of Israel. If He rejected them, will He act any different with you? This also confirms the words of Jesus earlier: *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen”*.

One lesson we must learn right at the outset is that even if you do almost everything right, but only have this one small problem, you are still unacceptable to the LORD. We read in Exodus that the Israelites had to remove all yeast from their homes prior to Passover and eat unleavened bread. The same way a small part of yeast can cause a bread to raise, sin will cause us to be puffed up and make us unacceptable to the LORD.

The first group of Christians are those that do not believe that baptism has any influence on your life. They are told to repent and do the first works. Once this is done, they will eat from the tree in paradise and receive everlasting life.

Hebrews tells us as follows: *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”* (Heb 6:1-2)

Smyrna

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” (Rev 2:8-11)

These people only receive encouragement. The LORD knows that they always receive criticism from those who say they are Christians but are not. (*and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not,*) These people always receive words like “This doesn’t happen to Christians” from others. This criticism will normally come from people of the church in Laodicea, as Jesus tells them that: *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”* (Rev 3:19) So, if you know that you belong to the LORD, but you always must face criticism from so-called Christians, know that you are part of the Church of Smyrna. This portion of scripture also tells us that we will face hard times, but it also states that we will receive a crown. This crown confirms the scripture in Revelation 20 that says that these people will rule with Jesus for a thousand years, as only rulers wear crowns. The future of these people is described later in this book.

Pergamos

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” (Rev 2:12-17)

Here we find people who do not interpret the Word correctly, as He says He is the one with the two-edged sword. The sword being the Word of God, and as such these people will be judged by what the Bible teaches. A further complication is that they are told that they live where the headquarters of Satan is. That means that they are still in Egypt and have never moved, as they do not believe in the true meaning of baptism. To them baptism is only an emblem, and not an action of leaving my old life behind me. I can personally think of several charismatic congregations that fit this description.

A further negative point is that they hold on to the teachings of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitans, who teaches free sexual relationships. I am personally aware of a number of congregations where leaders inform their congregation that it is okay to live together as you first must see if you are sexually compatible, and that this is no sin. These churches normally advertise that people who have been through a divorce is welcome to join them as the LORD will never reject anyone, even if you were the cause of the divorce. I am sorry, but this passage teaches the opposite. The LORD will never condone free sexual relationships. He will only accept people who has repented, has been born again, and has put their total trust in Him.

The LORD declares that He will come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth, and the Word will prove them wrong. But, like in most of the churches, the people are asked to repent. He will then give them the hidden manna, which means that He will make them part of the covenant again.

Thyatira

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”. (Rev 2:18-29)

How many people do you know that will tell you that if you do not attend a service at a church, or you do not act this way, that you will not inherit eternal life? These people will attend all services every Sunday, but of faith and other gifts of the Holy Spirit, nothing is to be seen. We are okay if we attend the services every week. This is the group that is mentioned here. They have fallen into a form of godliness and will be part of the whore of Revelation 17,18 and 19.

In today's world with the so-called “new reformation”, we find people that want to research the customs of the old and New Testament and in the light of that, interpret the Bible, as they will now find the right ways to do it. Paul had the following to say to them: *“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.”* (2Co 3:14) He tells us that we do not must research the customs, but that we need to go to the Giver of all good gifts to receive Christ. Christendom is not like all other religions, as we serve a living God.

Ezekiel wrote the following about these people: *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, **the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen**; Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim, Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD.”* (Eze 25:8-11)

Jeremiah gives us a complete description of these people in chapter 48: *“Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.*

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence. How say ye, We are mighty and strong men for the war? Moab is spoiled, and gone up out of her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod! Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, and he shall destroy thy strong holds. O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done? Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled, And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim, And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon, And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near. The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD. Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision. For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy. O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth. We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it. Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting. From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods. Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished. For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth. There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD. They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him. For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD. He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones. Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives. Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab." (Jer 48:10-47)

We are taught here that the people of Moab are judged here as they do not use the Bible as the basis to distinguish between right and wrong. No, they like us, used their own norms to decide what was acceptable. Moab is also told that they did not go into captivity, and as such has not been separated from his lees: "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." This portion of scripture had me baffled for quite a long time. For months I just could not make sense of this scripture. What the LORD is trying to tell me is that I cannot continue saying that I am clean, but as soon as someone disturbs me, all the murkiness in my life shows. I must allow the LORD to empty me from vessel to vessel, meaning that He will change my life by getting rid of

the lees in my life. This can only be done after giving my life over to the LORD. If I do not allow Him to empty me from vessel to vessel, then I will take on the taste of the lees. I must therefore allow Him to separate me from my lees, which is contaminating my life. This is what the prophet describes here. We do not like to look at our own lives, but like telling others what is wrong in theirs. That is the people of Thyatira.

Jesus had the following to say to some of them: *“as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”*. We see from this that everyone will be judged on his own, and not because they belong to a certain group of people.

Sardis

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev 3:1-6)

These people have as Jeremiah and Ezekiel puts it, the pestilence. They have the looks of being perfect but are actually dead. They remind us of the people of Zidon in the Old Testament. *“Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD.”* (Eze 28:21-23)

The LORD declares that he will be glorified in their midst, for them to understand that He is not a God of afar, but one that lives amongst His people. He will send the pestilence in amongst them. But what is the pestilence? It is when I believe that I am right and everybody else is wrong. That is why they have the name that they live but are dead.

But like in most of these churches, we find also people who still believe in the original gospel and have not defiled their clothes. For these Jesus declares that He will clothe them in white garments. For those that have gone astray, there is no call to repentance, as Jesus knows that these people will never change their minds. How tragic.

Philadelphia

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh

down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev 3:7-13)

This is only the second group of people that receive no reprimand. They hold on to what is right. Like the word to Smyrna, all they must do is to hold fast onto that which they received. They should also not fear when they are taken on by those who profess to be Christians but are not. They are told that people with very sincere feelings will tell them that is wrong to suffer. These people are from the synagogue of Satan, we are told. These people normally tell you that you have such a large harvest in heaven and all you must do is believe your suffering is from the devil. People that declare that you only must give to their ministry and the LORD will give to you, as you have now bribed Him with you offering.

The Bible only declares that you must give to the poor, and not to those who wants to tell you what a large harvest the LORD has already given to them. Micah puts it as follows: *“Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic 6:6-8)*

The people of Philadelphia are told that Jesus will protect them in the time of trying that will come upon all the earth. We are told by so many people that we only must wait for the rapture as we will not be tempted or tried. However, the people of Philadelphia are told that Jesus will protect them during these trying times.

We see that these people will receive crowns, which will allow them to rule in the new millennium.

Laodiceans

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev 3:14-22)

This group has received quite a lot of attention from almost everybody. We all think that they will be extremely wicked, but we live with so many of these people without being able to identify them. How many people do you know of will tell you that the LORD wants to give you all the cattle on a thousand hills and everything else you covet? They ask you if you didn't know that you forefathers gave so much money into the Kingdom of God and that all you must do to get your share is to rebuke Satan and claim your inheritance. This will ensure that you can live in comfort. What did Jesus tell these people: *“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:”* These people will normally have photographs of houses and cars and everything else they covet on their fridges and rebuke Satan every day for not allowing them to get what they want. But Jesus tells them that they are naked and poor as they do not have Him. He is not their God. Paul tells us in Philippians who their god is: *“Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” (Phi 3:19)* These people will also declare that they will lead you in a prayer and after that you will be a child of God. You see they believe they have the power for you to be born again. Ezekiel wrote the following about these people: *“Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that*

was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:" (Eze 26:2) Even in Ezekiel's' time did the LORD know that people will declare that their churches will be filled with people as they are "Jerusalem". All you must do is join them and you are as good as in heaven. They will save everyone and lead them to Jesus, but all they accomplish is to make disciples of themselves as they have broken to gates of Jerusalem and turned it to them.

Another point Jesus makes is that He is standing at the gate knocking. He is not part of this church. When they decide to open the door He will enter and make them part of the covenant and, *"I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"*. Until this happens, these people are on their own mission, and will they continue filling their churches to the brim, build bigger and better buildings, and serve their own god.

Ezekiel wrote the following about these people. I have included quite a lengthy quotation but it actually tells us everything about them : *"Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I am the LORD. For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD. The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus; And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim. Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners:*

thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots. The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise. They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness. The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect. Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market. They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules. The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony. Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and brodered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate. Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm. Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool. Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market. Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots. Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they thy merchants. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold. Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants. These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise. The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas. Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas. Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin. The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes: And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing. And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise. In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall. All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance. The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more. The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the

emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD. And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God.” (Eze 26:2-28:26)

What alarming words to hear, that your god is Satan himself, and that you will die the death of an uncircumcised person.

What will the elect receive?

I mentioned earlier that I will investigate what the elect will receive from the LORD. The first Christians were known as “The Way”. I want to explain their way quickly, as we will go into it points wise later in this chapter. We are all born in Egypt, a life separated from God and His promises. By age twenty I must decide if I want to wander in the ways of the LORD forever, or not. If I decide not to accept the ways of the LORD, I will die the death of the uncircumcised, and spend eternity with Satan.

However, if I decide to accept the ways of the LORD, then like in Israel’s time I must join myself to His nation by becoming part of the covenant. I then must leave Egypt by being baptized, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and receive the LORD’S commandments in my heart. I will then decide to enter into the promised land or like Israel reject His promises.

Should I decide to enter Canaan, then I will trust in the LORD alone for a while, and then decide that I must become a member of a church where I can serve the LORD. This is the time of the kings in your life where you will abide with what they want you to do or move on to another church to see if you can fit into this kingdom. Like in Israel’s time we find both good and bad kings, so you must be watchful where you decide to fit in.

Eventually you will decide that you are not being taught anything new at your church anymore. Should you decide to leave your church and to be separate from church, the LORD will take you into captivity, or exile. But what does it mean to go into exile, or captivity? Let us examine several scriptures on this subject. The first scripture is about the physical captivity. During the Biblical times it was custom for the loser of a war to be taken captive as slaves and to be taken to the winning nations land. The loser lost all his physical assets and became a slave to his captor. This meant that when someone went into captivity, he had to bring out all of his moveable assets, his furniture, his shoes, his rod, etc., outside of his home and then went into captivity. The only thing he left behind was his house. But what does this mean to us today? We must lose the war against God to become his slave and to be taken away to His

Land, His Canaan. I must place my full trust in Him to become completely dependent on Him for all my needs. Just like in the Biblical times He will provide for shelter and food, but it means that I must do His work. He already won the war and paid the price for me. He purchased us with His blood, as He overcame death and can now free us from all our sins. I cannot go into exile by myself; I must surrender to the LORD.

The second scripture which describes our spiritual captivity comes from Jeremiah 48 verse 11: *“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.”* For months I just could not make sense of this scripture. What the LORD is trying to tell me is that we cannot continue saying that I am clean, but as soon as someone disturbs me, all the murkiness in my life shows. I must allow the LORD to empty me from vessel to vessel, meaning that He will change my life by getting rid of the lees in my life. This can only be done after giving my life over to the LORD. If I do not allow Him to empty me from vessel to vessel, then I will take on the taste of the lees. I must therefore allow Him to separate me from my lees, which is contaminating my life.

This cleansing process is also something that does not happen overnight. I must allow time in between sessions for the lees to settle at the bottom again before being emptied from vessel to vessel. During this time, He will provide for you super naturally, and will He separate you from your lees. During this time, He will take you away from everything people wrote that you think is worthwhile in order for Him to implant His message in your life.

The apostle John has the following to say to people that decide not to be separated from their lees: *“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”* (Rev 14:9-11)

Once He has separated you from your lees, only then will He send you back to His people, His Jerusalem, to teach His Word to the saints. Only once we reach this stage of our life will we be in a position to rule with Him in the time to come. Only then have we reached the stage as mentioned in Revelation 20: *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”* (Rev 20:4-6)

This is the prize that is waiting for those who have endured till the end. Death will have no hold on them, and as John says they will be known as priests of God and of Christ. This is the prize waiting for those that followed The Way till death. If I do not endure to the end, in other words I did not complete the full journey, I will be subjected to the final white throne judgement as explained in Revelation 20, and will I not be part of the first resurrection.

I want to give you several scriptures to read. I trust that these scriptures will comfort you, and that they will make you long for the day that Jesus will come on the clouds to judge the living as well as the dead. Here then the scriptures:

Isaiah 32: 1-9, 35, Ezekiel 37, Daniel 12 Zephaniah 3: 8-20 Zechariah 8, 9:9-17, 12, 13, 14

MOSES 5 VERSE 4 – THE END TIMES AS SEEN BY EZEKIEL

The one aspect I have learned over the years is that everything that is described in the New Testament of the Bible has already been described in the Old Testament. That is the reason when someone tries to convince me of a doctrine based on only the New Testament, I normally ignore it as it will turn out to be a doctrine based on the wrongful interpretation of the scripture. Remember that Jesus declared Himself that He came to fulfil, and not to establish new doctrines.

Many people struggle to understand the Book of Revelation, and especially the millennium kingdom, where it fits, and how and what the New Jerusalem will be.

I would like to use the book of Ezekiel to give us an understanding of the sequence of events, and that will then give us a better understanding of Revelation. The book of Ezekiel starts with a vision of the LORD. For many years people could only read this after turning thirty, as the priests were not allowed to read it in the temple. Fortunately for us Jesus came, and many people saw Him, and Jesus himself declared that those who saw Him also saw the Father. So today we can read and interpret that vision.

The next chapters then give us the background on his calling, as well as the purpose of his calling, namely, to be a watchman for Israel. The next couple of chapters we find what are wrong with the people of Israel, just as Revelation discusses what is wrong with the various Churches. This also includes various judgements.

The one judgement I would really like to emphasize is that of chapter 16, concerning Jerusalem. We are told that the LORD will take her, the Church under His wings and cover her with fine linen and silk. But she turned away from Him and became a harlot as the Church went after other gods. This portion confirms the scripture in Revelations 17, 18 and 19, where John discusses the whore, harlot, and the fall of Babylon. Fortunately, Ezekiel ends this chapter with a wonderful word as the Church will be restored. *"Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD."* (Eze 16:60-63). The next chapter is a continuation of the judgement against the Church as they did not return to the LORD in times of oppression.

In chapter 18 Ezekiel confirms that we each have a personal choice and responsibility, and that we cannot hide behind the works of our fathers, and similarly, we will not be judged because of their sins. In the next chapter we are again reminded of how the LORD treated Israel during the exodus of Egypt, and how this should be an example to us. He then continues with judgements against the Church, and what we can expect to receive. This also invalidates the doctrine of John Calvin, as it clearly states that we all have a choice to follow the LORD. He does not make some people to spend an eternity in heaven, and others to spend an eternity in hell.

Chapter 23 is a remarkably interesting chapter as it concerns two sisters Aholah, and the younger one, Aholibah. Strong's dictionary declares that the meaning of these two names are, my tent, and the second name, my tent in her. The way I see it is that the first sister represents Israel of old, where the Tabernacle of the LORD was with them, whereas the second sister represents us as the Church, because the Tabernacle is inside of us. The storyline tells us that the first sister turned her back on the LORD, and the second sister, despite seeing what the result of the first sisters' action was, does the same. Thus, I can assume from this then that the Church followed the same road as Israel, even though we know what happened to Israel. Reading through the newspapers and magazines we can see how the theologians and members of the church end up in a religion without any substance, without any Power. The teachings declare that the LORD will not punish people as He is a God of grace, but it is never mentioned that you must forsake the old road, and start a new life for Him in order to receive His grace. We are told, in South Africa, that the synod must investigate the claim that the Satan does exist, and if he is at all necessary in our religion. The next chapter continues again with judgements over the Church as they left Him and followed other gods.

We then find the judgements over the seven nations, or as John define them, the seven Churches. Chapter 33 is a repeat of chapter three in so far that Ezekiel is appointed as a watchman by the LORD. Chapter 34 was discussed in the previous chapter as it pertains to the shepherds and the coming judgements against them. There is no repeat of Chapter 35 in Revelation, as it concerns Israel as a nation today.

The next chapter discusses the restoration of the Church and the area where it will operate, and that we will find favor by the LORD again. In chapter 37 we find that Ezekiel has to prophecy over the dead bones to resurrect them, which confirms the opening of the graves in Revelation. This is the start of the thousand-year reign of Christ to restore those Christians who were misled by their pastors.

The next two chapters have most people baffled, as it concerns Gog and Magog, and their eventual demise. These two chapters describe to us the millennium reign, as well as the eventual utter destroying of Satan and his army. Satan is told the following: *“After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,”* (Eze 38:8-11) We are told here that the people will live safely in unwalled cities, but after many days Satan will rise and take on the people of the LORD again, exactly as we are told in Revelation chapter 20.

Of the ensuing battle we read that after the battle that there would be enough wood to last for fires for seven years, and that the number of people that will die in Satan’s’ army will take seven months to bury.

In the next nine chapters Ezekiel describes the New Temple and how everything will function, whereas John sees a New Jerusalem appear from the sky. The LORD showed each one of them the same picture, but at the level that they expected, to the one a temple, and to the other a city.

As we can see from this comparison John established no new doctrines and no new things were added to the covenant of old, but it was only colored in for the time that each lived. This I trust is then a summary of the prophets and their message for today. I trust that you will now look with new expectations to the Old Testament and learn from what these prophets had to say.

Similarly, I expect to continue for the next months and years, on this road of discovery that the LORD has started, in order for everyone to learn what to expect today, as well as in the future.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM 2021?

We start of the year 2021 with a totally different mindset than 2020. Where 2020 vision means perfect eyesight, our eyes were really opened by the Chinese virus when it was unleashed to the world. And we still do not even know where it will end or when it will end.

Even though we know that China really suffered, we take their politicians as honest people and their figures as gospel. However when you do your homework and look at data that is staring us in the face on the NYSE we find that 7,5 million people disappeared in February 2020, another 1,5 million in June, July and August, and another 2,5 million in November, That is information from their mobile phone supplier, who gives a month-by-month report on the number of users per month, and the west believes the Chinese. You can verify my figures here: [China Mobile Limited - Investor Relations > Monthly Customer Data](#). Here you can see that they ended 2021 with 6,6 million less subscriber as what they started with in 2020. With a population of over a billion people I find it hard to believe that people are using less cell phones than the previous year as surely there must have been new entrants into the market that could afford cell phones.

Now using the same data that is available to me as a website owner and Christian writer, I will use all the information at my disposal and I can honestly say that Christians are the worst givers when it comes to giving to people who are trying to make a living by explaining what the Bible is all about. I see myself as a Christian Apologist, so I will look at what we believe, pull it apart and either confirm it or come up with a different answer than the one every person is running after.

But why do say that they are the worst givers?

O yes, we will hang on to the Roman Catholic way of giving, as Luther had to use it to survive. That way if you want to get to heaven, you can support my ministry by giving money to my ministry and I can become rich. The moment the money drops into the bag, your sins are forgiven. So you can either translate the German to indulge or pardon. So Luther was a great guy, like we find so many great guys today using his method. The moment your donation hits his bank, your sins are forgiven and you are healed, and the false prophet can indulge himself in your hard-earned money. We find that people in this category like a John Hagee can write books without even understanding the Bible and sell 5 million copies of the four blood moons that never materialized, and we will still support him even though he is an obvious false prophet. Did any of his predictions come to fruition? No, not as far as I know. He will even try to convince you that we cannot blame the Jews for not accepting Jesus as the Messiah, as He never told them that He was the Messiah. So that is why He has to return to earth, which then plays straight into their Antichrist doctrine of the rapture. But we forget that Jesus told a parable of the young rich man and Lazarus where the young man asked Jesus to send Lazarus back to earth to tell his brothers that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. But Jesus told him they have Moses and the prophets, and if they do not believe that, then they will end up in Hell. In fact Deuteronomy says what we should do with people like him, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Copeland and so many more of these false people that are using Luther's method and people do not understand that it is straight from the Roman Catholic Church, as Luther knew all about how to use and live of other people's money while being a Roman Catholic priest. That was the one thing he never touched in any writings. So that is how all the Zionist Christians are making their money.

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. "But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you." (Deu 13:1-5) The last sentence is of

paramount importance. The teachings of the Antichrist is not going to come from people outside the church. No, it is going to and already coming from people inside the Church as leaders of huge church groupings.

So they can quickly change their minds and say that it was the custom of the Old Covenant, testament or whatever they want to call it, and it is only applicable to Israel, not to us as gentiles. Then just ask them to show you the rapture without referencing the Old Testament, as they say it is only for Israel. Tell them Daniel is not applicable to us as gentiles so they cannot use it, and see how they fight to include it even though they say that the Old Testament is only applicable to the Jews.

Meanwhile people like myself can write books and publish it without any hefty payments, and then you find that the statistics on my website shows that people only downloaded nearly 16,000 books the past year, as can be seen from the .pdf files and making up 73,54 % of all the traffic on my website. All I ask for is a donation to allow me to live. I cannot promise you eternal life as that is something that you will find in my books is a way to follow which might just give you the ability to know who the LORD is and what He requires from us to receive everlasting life. What did I get from Christians as a reward for my writings? Nothing. Zilch. Not a cent. You would rather spend money on YOUR favourite Christian Zionist writer and end up in hell following a false prophet, than trying to find a way that could lead you to salvation and heaven. Did you know that Rick Warren is also head of the Chris-lam movement, saying that Mohamed is the way to salvation for the Muslims, and Christ the way for us as Christians. He further states that we should not spend time in trying to understand the end times as that detracts from our calling as making people disciples of Jesus.

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You choose. Just remember Matthew 25: *“Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'”* Then they themselves also will answer, *'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or*

thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
(Mat 25:41-46)

So if you feel that I may have convinced you in giving something back for my years of research and writing, you can give at <https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/shamaministries>