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My life changed dramatically in 1995 after an emergency appendectomy the first words you hear from the surgeon is that I can actually be thankful that he struggled to get to the appendix and was making space to move the appendix around when he found this tumour in and around my small intestine and immediately knewthat it was cancer. So apart from taking out my appendix he also removed about a meter of my small intestine and that was the beginning of my now 30+ struggle with NET cancer. If th tumour is functional, it causes Carcinoid Syndrome, which is just eleaseing so many different hormone to cause so many different problems. And every person reacts differently which makes diagnosis and treatments extremely difficult. I was also told that if they did not find the tumour I would have probably had less that a year to survive. Not the sort of news that one expects after this “minor” hiccup. So I have been not able to carry on with any full time job as I am in stage four cancer where the next step is death. And that has been the case fincece 2013.

I do not think that any person is ready to die at age 44. Not that you would have lived at the most for another year. But this episode in my life had the effect that I wanted to be 100% convinced that when I die I would join Jesus, the Father and all the people that are in heaven and to be with them. So after looking at all the book published by so many other people, I decided that the only way I can make sure that I will end up in heaven and spend the eighth day, the day without start or ending, is to go back to our workshop manual, the Bible, and find the answers to the questions I had. Every church grouping have their own sort of way of trying to tell you what they believe in, but none of them answered my questions. Even asking extremely popular Pastors and other clergy, I could not find answers to my questions. So all the books, videos, and articles onmy site at www.shama.org.za are the answers I found that helped me in my search for the truth.

So apart from receiving a small pension, we still believe that we will findsome people who will donate some money to us to fight my cancer or to give my wife her womanhood back after she had a bilateral mastectomy in her fight against cancer. I must admit that that in the past fifteen years we actually had two people donate some money to us even though my books is downloaded at arate exceeding 200 per month.

So if you want to actually donate some money to us, I have set up a QR code which you can scan with your phone and this will take you to the “buy me a coffee” site, as well as a straight forward link to my donations page at buy me a coffee.

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Theology for the man in the street

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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 it , 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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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.

Foreword

A number of 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 opened a fountain inside of me that would grow over the next nine years to where it is today. And it did not stop. Everytime I thought I had done what I was supposed to do, something else forced me to write down either a new article or as is known today as a blog, or something that I could add to the books that I thought I was done with. 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."* This one book has now grown to more than 40 books, plus numerous articles.

Over many 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.

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 honourable 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: ***"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 10:11-13)

I have partitioned the book in three sections. The first section describes how Israel left Egypt for Canaan, and what this means to our current theology, The second section about what I will have to do to become and to stay around as an overcomer, and then the third section I will describe the covenant in detail for us. I will also look at what Jesus came to do to fulfil the Old Covenant and what the consequences are to us as Christians and how it affects our common doctrines held by the various church groupings. There are churches that say you cannot only hold on to what the Bible teaches, as you also have to believe in their doctrines and statements of faith. Therefore, what we find is that some of these churches have taken their doctrine and then used the Bible to support their view. I am using a different method and the way Paul told us to do it,

and that is to use Israel as our example. So doing it this way I can take any issue, see how the LORD treated Israel when they did similar things, and that will then tell us how He will react today.

I want to emphasize that Jesus also used this method of quoting from the Old Testament when He spoke to people. Here are just a couple of passages where He used this method.

"(Luk 16:29) Abraham said to him, They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. (Luk 16:31) And he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead.

(Luk 24:27) And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luk 24:44) And He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms about Me.

(Joh 1:45) Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses wrote in the Law and the Prophets, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

(Act 26:22) Then having obtained help from God, I stand until this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said was going to happen; (Act 28:23) And they having appointed him a day, many came to him in his lodging; to whom he expounded, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them the things concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning until evening."

This has forced me to look through the lens of the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, and had me built my theology on the Old Covenant and then described how it fits in with the New Covenant. Doing it this way I can completely ignore those arguments that are built on the New Testament only. So when I find a doctrine that I cannot find any support for in the Old Covenant, I know that I can ignore it as Jesus himself declared that He came to fulfil the Old Covenant and not to bring new theologies to people.

Another basic principle is that we all know the Old Testament today, and we can thus see how the writer of the book of Hebrews points out exactly what Jesus came to accomplish in comparison with the Old Covenant. Appendix A describes this point in detail.

Why did the old Church fathers do it differently? We have to remember that the Jews tried to rid the whole of Asia and Europe of all the Christians. We just have to read the books concerning these times to see how the Jews treated the Christians. I believe that this also led to the way the gospel was spread through the writings of Paul, John and Peter, as they wanted to avoid conflict with the Jews. We see this clearly in the writings of people like John Foxe called Foxe's book of Martyrs where he describes how all the disciples were killed and some of the early church fathers. We also see it clearly in the writings of Martin Luther in his book On the Jews and their lies. "In the treatise, he argues that Jewish synagogues and schools be set on fire, their prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes burned, and property and money confiscated. They should be shown no mercy or kindness, afforded no legal protection, and these "poisonous envenomed worms" should be drafted into forced labor or expelled for all time. He also seems to advocate their murder, writing "[W]e are at fault in not slaying them". (Wikipedia).

As we as Christians are no longer under the same threat as the early Christians, it was easy for me to look at the history surrounding the Old Covenant and how we interpret it today. There are so many doctrines today that are completely incorrect and this is the easiest way to prove them wrong. We have to remember that the Roman Catholic Church saw itself as the only true church before 400AD and by that time had already cemented their doctrine as the only true message. Today 500 years after the reformation of Luther and Calvin, we still have many doctrines that came from the RCC. Luther's main problem was with the authority of the Pope and brought people back to the Biblical teachings only.

I know that there will be differences as it depends on what our basic doctrines are. From this, we will see that each person had a specific calling and anointment that the Holy Spirit gives to us. However, we all serve One LORD, one Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then we will not have a

statement like "We believe in the Holy Spirit", but will we be able to explain what He came to do in every person's life, and how He will lead us in all truth.

The last point I want to make is that the Bible was written as a handbook for Christians, and not a book for soothsayers about what is going to happen on this or that specific date. No, the Bible is to be used by Christians, people that will use it on a daily basis in their walk with Christ. It does not tell us that the Antichrist will come from Russia or Europe or the USA or wherever, but fits in perfectly with what Isaiah prophesied in chapter 1: *"21 How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of justice! righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. 22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. 23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. 24 Therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies; 25 and I will turn my hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin; 26 and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called The city of righteousness, a faithful town. 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her converts with righteousness."*

Exactly the same example given in the Old Covenant is today playing itself out in the New Covenant. There are still some promises and prophecies that have not been fulfilled yet as they were not meant to be for that time. This we can see in the book of Ezekiel that describes the same events as Revelation, where Ezekiel's version is written in Old Covenant terminology where the temple was the place where the LORD manifested Himself and the New Jerusalem where John sees the LORD being manifested.

Likewise, we find that in the Old Covenant, we always find seven nations being addressed, and in Revelation, seven churches. That in short is what you will find in this book, with the second section telling us what to do to become an overcomer, and the last part of this book will look at the Covenant of Righteousness that Jesus came to establish.

Part 1 - Introduction - How do I get to Canaan, that which the LORD has in store for me?

Who is an overcomer? How does one become someone who is an overcomer? I believe that an overcomer is someone that inherits that which the LORD has promised us. In the Old Testament we read that Israel would inherit Canaan, and in the New Testament John describes it as New Jerusalem.

How do I become an overcomer? This will vary from person to person, depending on how they believe, or how their grouping defines it. I want to use Israel as an example and what they had to do to get their inheritance, Canaan. This will then serve as an example to us how we as Christians can get to our Canaan, that which the LORD has promised us. The LORD also promised Israel that they will eventually inherit Canaan, as He says in Jeremiah 30 that He will bring His people back to Canaan, and that they will possess it. I know that the LORD wants every person to get that inheritance, as that is what the Bible declares.

I am convinced that we will inherit Canaan? In my searches through the Bible I found a number of scriptures that shed light on this subject. Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth the following: *"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)

This scripture actually declares that we can use Israel as an example of how to get to our Canaan, as we can see how the LORD reacted to them in order for us not to make the same mistakes they made.

But did Israel actually inherited Canaan? I thought for years that they did inherit Canaan after spending forty years in the dessert. But, I actually changed my mind one day after reading the following scriptures: *"6 in that day I swore unto them, to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands." 13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they rejected mine ordinances, which if a man keep, he shall live -in them; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. 17 Nevertheless mine eye spared them, and I destroyed them not, neither did I make a full end of them in the wilderness. 18 And I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their ordinances, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 22 Nevertheless I withdrew my hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I brought them forth. 23 Moreover I swore unto them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries;"*

What we find here is that the LORD never gave Israel the land of Canaan as it was when Joshua and Caleb saw it the first time. We never read again of the grapes that were so big that two people had to carry a cluster of grapes. During that forty years in the dessert, the LORD changed Canaan so that it never looked the same again.

Canaan defined.

But first what does Canaan look like? Num.14:8: *"8 If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey."*, Num.13:23 : *"23 And they came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two; [they brought] also of the pomegranates, and of the figs."*, Num.13:27 : *"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."*

How does David describe what our lives would be like when we do what the LORD requires from us, and we find ourselves in Canaan. Psalms 1 gives us the answer. *"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."*

From this we can gather that to be in Canaan means that we will bear fruit, and that everything we do will prosper.

How did Israel get to Canaan, and why were they chosen by the Lord out of all the nations?

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 chose Israel as His people?

Moses gives us the answer in Deuteronomy 7:7. "7 Jehovah 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 peoples:"

Because Israel were made to be slaves to the Egyptians, and He loved Israel, and He had a covenant with them through Abraham.

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 and that was His decision as Israel were the descendants of Abraham which the LORD made a covenant with. 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: "48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to Jehovah, 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: but no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof."

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, with the sign of the covenant as circumcision.

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? What does Peter say in Acts 10:34 and 35. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted with him." (Act 10:34-35)

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 U 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, is acceptable to Him. So 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. So you and I can also become members of His chosen nation, and we find that even in Exodus provision was made for us. We also find in Exodus 12 that the LORD addressed Israel as nation, and then when he allowed people from other nations to also leave Egypt, they were then called the commonwealth of Israel, or as I prefer to call them, the first Church in the Bible.

What do we have to do to become part of His nation? Acts 10:34-35. "34 And 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 acceptable to him."

While in the dessert, 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." So 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 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 have to 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. So 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 as he will be filled with Holy Spirit. Follow his example. Or call out to the LORD. He will guide you every step of the way.

But we first have to understand that we are lost, which is the first work of the Holy Spirit. John 16: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. 8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; 11 of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, [these] shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare [it] unto you. 15 All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare [it] unto you. 16 A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me."*

So what is the first step?

We have to be in a covenant relationship with the LORD. We have to become part of the covenant.

For me as a gentile, or stranger to Israel, I will have to 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?

Read Matthew 5 verse 17 to 48. Ensure that you understand what Jesus said.

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? *"20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

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 have to 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 have to change my heart, and that happens by being born again, as Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:4-6. *"4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and 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? I have to believe 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 have to come to the understanding 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.*

- CAN I LEAVE EGYPT FOR GOOD WITHOUT KNOWING THAT I AM IN EGYPT?

As soon as I accept the fact that I am in Egypt, I can plan to leave 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, it will always be like what 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."*

Why do I have to know that I am a sinful being? What sins do you still have in your life? How do I get rid of my sins?

What do I need before I can enter into Gods kingdom?

Righteousness.

Remedy for our problem.

I have to understand how deep the rift between me and the Lord is 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.

Read Psalm 51.

When 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 them 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 Saviour, 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 favourable relationship with God. As soon as we enter into 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 have to be perfect as our Father in heaven, is perfect.

What does it mean to have the righteousness of Jesus?

What did Jesus accomplish for us?

Covenant of Righteousness

Many times we wonder why we as Christians make such a small difference in the world. We see other religions following their rules and regulations to the tee. If we still try and talk about our religion, we are made out as being fanatical or extremists. People declare openly that they would rather do business with a non-Christian than with someone who tells you that he is a Christian. The reason is always that it is the Christians who are backstabbers and non-payers. What does it mean to be a Christian?

I would like to use the following definition: **The right to stand before God without blemish, sin or inferiority. In other words, I have to stand in a covenant relationship with our Maker, to stand as His creation before Him, our Creator, without fear. That can only be accomplished once you have received the gift of righteousness.**

What and where does this righteousness come from?

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

We always place a great emphasis on the searching of Gods Kingdom, but a lot of times we leave out the second part, the righteousness of God.

Remember the passage Matt 5: 17 - 48?

Here we find that Jesus ends this scripture by saying we have to be as perfect as our Father in heaven is. **"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** This passage is extremely difficult to understand.

We have to remember that Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and the Scribes. We also have to remember that they not only had the 10 commandments to obey, but also in total had six hundred and thirteen commandments that they had to obey. These are the same ones the practising Jews still have to obey today. What Jesus tried to convey to them, was that it was not possible to receive eternal life by being obedient to the law. Yet He still calls on them to be perfect as their Father in heaven. How is this achieved? Matt 5:20 **"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."**

What do we do today when someone gets saved? How do we make disciples?

My experience is that normally a person comes out after an altar call by the pastor or similar person, and is lead in a prayer to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour. The person is then taught that a Christian does not: smoke, drink, curse, and a lot of other bad things. He is then taught to work hard, pray, read the Bible, attend the services at church, bring your tithe, and in general just to be a good person. The person gets married, gets a good job, have kids, help in some or other ministry at church, and dies.

Now, what is wrong with that? A lot. What do we read in Acts 1 verse 8? 8 *"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Where is this Power? Your life is empty without this Power. Let's look at our own lives. Do you still suffer with pride, gossip, jealousy, self-righteousness, and having no patience? How do you try to get over it? Read more from the Bible. Pray more. Read books about how to overcome this problem. Listen to tapes and CD's. If this does not work you go for counselling and get told to pray and fast. What does the Bible teaches us?

Matt 10: 38 *"And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me."*

The Bible does not say we are going to have a whale of a time as Christians. It is going to cost me something. It is going to ask of me to take up my cross, and to follow Him, to die. We always see the cross only as something that the Lord died on for our sins, but we do not see it as a place where we have to go and to lay down our lives. We see it as a place where He fulfilled His part of the covenant. We don't see it as a place where we have to lay down our lives. But we cannot be born again if we don't die. It is

impossible to be born again while we are still alive. I have to lay down my life, my self-righteousness, at the cross in order for me to be able to be raised with a new life, and to follow Jesus. You have to die, to be born again. Then my prayer won't be "Lord I bring all my sins to you and ask forgiveness for these sins. Thank you that I am a new creation." No, my prayer will be: "Lord, I cannot save myself from death and hell. I trust you to do this. I now lay my life down before you and receive your gift. Thank you for saving me and dying for my sins".

This is also the first step of faith, as I now trust the Lord to save me. Before I died, what I did was to follow religion, now it is a life laid down to serve Him, to exalt Him, my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

What do I have to do before I can be born again? I have to realize that I am lost and that by doing anything from within myself it is impossible to receive everlasting life. I have to die from my own selfish desires, and accept what Jesus came to do for us as the only answer.

How do I know if I really died?

Let's look at some aspects that we don't want to hear. The religious person wants to reign with Jesus, but doesn't want to suffer. He wants to go to heaven, but he still wants to do his own thing. He wants that the Lord must bless him, but he doesn't want to give up anything. He will drive for kilometers to listen to sermons of power, prosperity, eternal life, and spiritual gifts, but he doesn't like listening to sermons and messages of submission, laying down self, and holiness. Why? I don't want to die. I want to be in control of my life.

The saved person says "Not I but Christ". Why? Let's look at Luke's version of the same passage.

Luke 9: 23. *"23 And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

I believe that we will face temptation on a daily basis and we have to be prepared to always remember that the cross made the difference. So I have to be ready every moment of every day, to take my errors, my sin, to the cross to receive forgiveness. Repentance is not a single experience, but an ongoing daily experience. So picking up my cross daily means that I need forgiveness on a daily basis. So I have to die of that sin every day, meaning that I have to break with it, get forgiveness and move on without continuing with or in that sin. If I don't take it to the cross, I cannot live forever. When I have eternal life, death does not have a hold on me. When I ask someone what their relationship with the Lord is like, I don't want to know what happened 20 or 10 or 5 years ago, or even what happened last month, I want to know what the Lord did for you today. Did he open up a piece of scripture for you? Or maybe even a prayer that was answered. Maybe He spoiled you by getting someone that you missed, to contact you.

What did the Lord do for you during the past week?

We saw earlier that self must die. But what does it mean? Man consists of a spirit, a soul and a body. The soul, the emotional side, your will and your thoughts are accustomed to accept certain things as normal.

Your spirit on the other hand, is not developed and knows very little of God. So when we change our human nature for our heavenly nature, our worldly ways have to make way for new ways that will glorify God. This means that I must crown Him King of every aspect of my life. I have to receive Gods commandments in my heart. I have to understand what it means to me that He is my Saviour that He builds my faith. That is why the Bible teaches us that it is impossible to please Him without faith. I have to take our Saviour, He intercedes for me every moment, before God the Father. It means that He stands between the Father and me and instead of seeing me, the Father sees Jesus.

Every aspect of my life to the cross, and receive His forgiveness and His rule over it wants. He wants receive Him as our healer, advocate, judge, and our redeemer. Every new area where I discover Him, to but who was Barnabas and what doctrines did he teach? I believe that as he and Paul always started teaching at the Jewish synagogues, they taught that there were also symbolic values attached to the physical events that happened to Israel.

I want to give you a quick background that was written by 3 other writers who wrote about Barnabas. They are Afrikaans writers. So what you will find here is a translation of their description. They are Chris van

Wyk, Nico Simpson and Frederick Marais.

"This time instead of using a book of the Bible, we will use a character from the New Testament. The person we are using is Barnabas. He is one of the little unknown gems of the Bible and in the library of biblical people. He is someone who showed by his deeds how a lifestyle is formed by what you do.

The LORD could use Barnabas love offering to finance the first Church and to encourage them and to ensure their survival. Without his voluntary actions it would have been near impossible to achieve the exponential growth that was achieved in the early years of the church.

The Church accepted Saul and his ministry as Barnabas received him and was also his sponsor. Without that the Church could have been exclusive to the Jewish nation and not expand into the other nations.

The young Mark also found in Barnabas a leader and with his encouragement not only was he instrumental in establishing peace between Mark and Paul, but also wrote the first and oldest Gospel we have in the Bible today. His gospel was used by all the other writers as the source of their Gospels.

So he was an encourager to such an extent that it became his nick name. He was a sponsor of Saul/Paul, a pioneer in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a bridge builder in Antioch between the Jews and Gentiles."

But what did he preach?

He taught the message of Jesus as documented by Mark who was with him and Paul. As it was the first written gospel, it is the message that was taught in the synagogues to the Jews and other believers. After Paul left them, he wrote two other books about Barnabas and their acts, which was never included in the Bible we have as they never came in contact with other members of the church in Asia Minor. They continued preaching and teaching in Cyprus, the country where Barnabas grew up.

The one book, the Acts of Barnabas tells us how they worked in the island and how Barnabas was captured and burned at the stake inside the synagogue. The other book, The Epistle of Barnabas, is one that I would like to quote from in order for us to understand why Moses wrote down what Israel had to do in the physical, but what the spiritual meaning of some of these laws are still today for us as Christians.

The one portion that I want to quote has to do with the animals, birds and other creatures that they, Israel, can and cannot eat. It really highlights the spiritual meaning of the physical words of Moses.

Chapter 10: "Chap. X. --Spiritual Significance Of The Precepts Of Moses Respecting Different Kinds Of Food.

Now, wherefore did Moses say, "Thou shalt not eat the swine, nor the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the raven, nor any fish which is not possessed of scales?" He embraced three doctrines in his mind [in doing so]. Moreover, the Lord said to them in Deuteronomy, "And I will establish my ordinances among this people." Is there then not a command of God they should not eat [these things]? There is, but Moses spoke with a spiritual reference. For this reason he named the swine, as much as to say, "Thou shalt not join thyself to men who resemble swine." For when they live in pleasure, they forget their Lord; but when they come to want, they acknowledge the Lord. And [in like manner] the swine, when it has eaten, does not recognize its master; but when hungry it cries out, and on receiving food is quiet again. "Neither shalt thou eat," says he "the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the kite, nor the raven." "Thou shalt not join thyself," he means, "to such men as know not how to procure food for themselves by labour and sweat, but seize on that of others in their iniquity, and although wearing an aspect of simplicity, are on the watch to plunder others." So these birds, while they sit idle, inquire how they may devour the flesh of others, proving themselves pests [to all]

by their wickedness. "And thou shalt not eat," he says, "the lamprey, or the polypus, or the cuttlefish." He means, "Thou shalt not join thyself or be like to such men as are ungodly to the end, and are condemned to death." In like manner as those fishes, above accursed, float in the deep, not swimming [on the surface] like the rest, but make their abode in the mud, which lies at the bottom. Moreover, "Thou shall not," he says, "eat the hare." Wherefore? "Thou shall not be a corrupter of boys, nor like unto such." Because the hare multiplies, year by year, the places of its conception, for as many years as it lives so many it has. Moreover, "Thou shall not eat the hyena." He means, "Thou shall not be an adulterer, nor a corrupter, nor be like to them that are such." Wherefore? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male, and at another female. (We know today that they do not change sex, but in the days of Moses that was what they believed as they did not have people doing studies on various animals) Moreover, he has rightly detested the weasel. For he means, "Thou shalt not be like to those whom we hear of as committing wickedness with the mouth, on account of their uncleanness; nor shall thou be joined to those impure women who commit iniquity with the mouth. For this animal conceives by the mouth." Moses then issued three doctrines concerning meats with a spiritual significance; but they received them according to fleshly desire, as if he had merely spoken of [literal] meats. David, however, comprehends the knowledge of the three doctrines, and speaks in like manner: "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly," even as the fishes [referred to] go in darkness to the depths [of the sea]; "and hath not stood in the way of sinners," even as those who profess to fear the Lord, but go astray like swine; "and hath not sat in the seat of scorers," even as those birds that lie in wait for prey. Take a full and firm grasp of this spiritual knowledge.

But Moses says still further, "Ye shall eat every animal that is cloven-footed and ruminant." What does he mean? [The ruminant animal denotes him] who, on receiving food, recognizes Him that nourishes him, and being satisfied by Him, is visibly made glad. Well spoke [Moses], having respect to the commandment. What, then, does he mean? That we ought to join ourselves to those that fear the Lord, those who meditate in their heart on the commandment which they have received, those who both utter the judgments of the Lord and observe them, those who know that meditation is a work of gladness, and who ruminate upon the word of the Lord. But what means the cloven-footed? That the righteous man also walks in this world yet looks forward to the holy state [to come]. Behold how well Moses legislated. But how was it possible for them to understand or comprehend these things? We then, rightly understanding his commandments, explain them as the Lord intended. For this purpose He circumcised our ears and our hearts, that we might understand these things."

If you have the time, download a copy of the book and read through it as it will really change your whole interpretation of scripture, as they did not have all these differing interpretations to look at. They had the only message as it was preached then, without all the differences we have today.

If you want to, you can download the copy I used from my website at:

<http://www.shama.org.za/boeke/THE%20EPISTLE%20OF%20BARNABAS%20-%20Mark.pdf>

Covenant

You might ask me what it is all about and where are we heading. We earlier looked at Matt. 5:48 "*Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" How do we manage to do it? Jesus showed us the way with the new covenant. Let's have a quick look at history of covenants in the Bible.

The first covenant was entered into between God and Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would be father of a big nation that will serve the Lord. The sign of this covenant was the circumcision. This covenant was confirmed with Moses before they moved out of Egypt. Here the pass over meal and the blood on the doorposts was the sign of the covenant.

Read through Genesis 15 and examine what Abram had to do. We read that he had to take a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon. Everything except the birds were cut in half, and laid down on opposite sides. The meaning of this was that should either one decide to break this covenant; the other party could do with the one breaking the covenant as was done with the goats and heifer. This is why, when God told Abraham to go and offer Isaac, he decided to do it even though God told Abraham that out of Isaac would come his descendants. The Lord had two choices as far as Abraham was concerned. Firstly, he could send a substitute, as He did, or secondly, He had to raise Isaac from the dead.

He knew the Lord could not lie, and that it was impossible to kill God. That is why he followed the Lords instructions. The other side of the coin is also true. If one of the parties in a covenant relation asked the other party to do something, he had to be willing to do the same. That is why God the Father, had to send His only Son, Jesus, to be offered. He expected it of Abraham, but now had to do it Himself.

If we now understand what a covenant relationship entails, it is easier for us to accept the fact that God sent Jesus to die on a cross for us, in order for us to be free. God's way is to work with covenants with His people, it is his nature.

But what is the new covenant?

We hear a lot about the new covenant, but do we know the meaning? We read that Jesus said that he came to fulfil the old covenant, but do we understand what He meant? According to the old covenant, the high priest had to enter into the holy of holiest to offer for the forgiveness of sins. That was also the time when all the Israelites had to go to Jerusalem for the Passover. Here they had to offer a lamb to God for the forgiveness of their sins, and to confirm their acceptance of the covenant with Him.

In the New Covenant we find that Jesus was the Lamb that was slain for my sins, and that He entered into the Holy of Holiest to offer Himself, and that God accepted the offer. That is why our sins are forgiven. All we have to do now is to believe that Jesus is our Saviour, and as a sign of this acceptance, I have to be baptised. This declares that I declare that as Jesus died and was resurrected, I died with Him in the water, but I also rose with Him.

When we study the customs of the Biblical times, we find that various items of clothing were swapped as tokens of the covenant. Let's look at this and what it means in our lives:

They had to swap their garments. This to us means that we receive His nature and character. They had to swap belts. His belt gives us His Power and Strength.

They cut their wrists and mixed their blood. This means that we receive forgiveness of sins.

Everything that was mine, now also belonged to the other person, including names. To us this means that we receive His reputation and authority, while offering us His cross as a remembrance for a permanent agreement.

Possessions were swapped. To us we receive His life, eternal life, while He takes our punishment, death, upon Him.

The covenant was sealed by eating together. Today we also have a meal, Holy Communion.

The last token is the cross at Calvary. If He did not die, I would not receive eternal life.

How do I become part of the covenant? This happens when we share communion with the Church. This is when I eat of the Bread of Life, and drink of the Blood, the wine. When do we leave Egypt? The moment when we get baptized in water by submersion we are changed from being in Egypt, to the place ruled over by the LORD. This last action portrays the death of the old man, and the resurrection of the new man. I have to choose to become part of this covenant. No one else can decide for me to enter into this relationship. I have to go to cross, and lay down my life. John 3:5-6 *"5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and 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."*

Once we come to the knowledge that we are in a covenant relationship with the Lord, we will also exhibit His power, and do His work. This Power comes from Him, and is ours as a result of the covenant. This Power is the same Power that Jesus mentions in Matthew 28 verse 18 that all Power in heaven and earth was given to Him. This is also the same Power that raised Him from the dead. As a result of the covenant, we now have access to the same Power.

PRAYER

Father I come to You again in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Father I lay down my life at the cross of Calvary, and confess that only You can save me. Please forgive my sins, as I have sinned against You only. I now receive your new life. Wash me as white as wool, and give me Your Power that You promised in Your Word. Thank You that You save me. Amen.

I can now believe that I have been saved. I can now believe that He is my Saviour.

Part three of this book does a detailed study of the New Covenant, highlights the steps to follow, and also goes into detail what it means to us today, but I would like to look at the broader picture before discussing the Covenant in detail.

Faith

Faith is one of those subjects that always cause uproar whenever it is discussed. I can remember the one time when I discussed it with some of my ex-colleagues (engineers), the reaction of disbelief I received. They even asked me if I believe the passage in Mark that if I would be bitten by a venomous snake that I would survive. My answer was that if the Bible says so, then it is so. There are of course some provisos.

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.

With this as a background, let's look at Abraham and Isaac again. The Lord tells Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham does not hesitate at all, but follows God's instruction. To Abraham God had two choices: to supply a substitute, or, to raise him from the dead. Why? God promised Abraham that out of Isaac a big nation will come. You see, Abraham knew God couldn't lie, and that He is true to His Word. He understood what a covenant relationship meant. The mark of the covenant only came twenty five years later, but Abraham believed God.

In our everyday life, we find that we can group Christians into three main groups:

1 RESIGNATION FAITH.

This is the group that continues on 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 believe that everything that happens to a person is the will of the LORD. They will even believe that things like sickness and death come from the LORD, and things like healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit and provision is from the devil. They have never analysed 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 God's character. This type of faith lacks an understanding of God's 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 very religious, but you lack the power of faith.

2 GENERAL FAITH.

This group I would think makes up the majority of Christians. This group believes that God is and rewards 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 have to examine the Word and pray and believe what the Word of the Lord proclaims.

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 tomorrow 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 have to 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 the rebirth of 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 unreprieveable 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 have to understand. Rom 8:1: *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 favourable 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 have to realise 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 discerner 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."*

Holy Communion

The Israelites had to come under the blood of the lamb. The same way we have to put ourselves under the protection of our Lamb. We have just learned what the new covenant means, and that I have to 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. So this shows us that we have to 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. So every time that we share in Holy Communion, I have to remember where I was, and what the Lord did to lead me out. That is why I have to eat of the bread, fill myself with His body, and drink the cup; wash myself clean with His blood.

Why do we have to share in Holy Communion? This is where I make the declaration that I have been saved by what Jesus did for me and that I now know that I have received Him as my saviour.

Can I join in this without admitting my sins and asking for forgiveness?

We read in 1 Corinthians 11 the following: *"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God,*

and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

Can people share in Holy Communion without being in a covenant relation with Him, or if I have fallen back into my old sinful life? No, I can't, as I will be judged. "But *let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come"*.

Not only do we find in this section the reason for sharing in Holy Communion, but we also find what it means to ask the LORD to test us when sharing in this meal. This is what Paul declares, that each time we share in Holy Communion, we ask the LORD to test us and see if there is any sins that we have not asked for forgiveness yet. Sins that we do not want people to know about, or to break with. If we are chastened by the LORD, we know that we still have to repent of sins, failing which we could end up dying. This all happens in order for us not to be judged with the unrighteous.

FIRST FRUITS.

One aspect that the Lord wanted to bring home to them early in their walk with Him is that they have to 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 gives them the guidelines for first fruits. The Lord teaches them that they have to remember this night in Egypt where every first born, whether child or beast, was killed, but He passed them over.

Ex. 13 verses 11 to 14. "*11 And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, 12 that thou shalt set apart unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb, and every firstling which thou hast that cometh of a beast; the males shall be Jehovah'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 its neck: and all the first-born of man among thy sons 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 Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:"*

The LORD tells us that every first born will be His, and has to be circumcised to be set free from thie curse of the first born. But we read later on in Ezekiel that first fruits are not required in the new temple. But why? Because Jesus was the first born of the Father, and also paid for this requirement when He was sacrificed on the cross. So we do not have to be circumcised as Jesus did away with this requirement.

How do we do it today? I have to do what Jesus told us to do. In Matthew 25 from verse 34 to verse 46, Jesus tells the disciples what is acceptable as an offer to Him. 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.

THE EXODUS CAN NOW START.

Once Israel completed the Passover, they were told to leave Egypt. We find that they also did not take a direct route out of Egypt, but that they had to use a route void of trouble spots on the way. The LORD ensured that on their way out of Egypt that they did not become involved with enemy forces and then decide to go back to Egypt, but that they could get out of Egypt without problems. That is exactly what He does today. He wants us to be able to leave our old life behind us, so that we do not end up going back to Egypt or not leaving Egypt, our sinful life and place where the devil reigns, at all. So that is what He does before we go through the water and baptism. We read in Exodus 13 the following: *"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."

But why did they start at night? It is because that is the time when everything is dark in your life, that His light will lead you to where He wants you to go, when He can come to your rescue.

Why did they have to go through the Red Sea?

Just like the LORD killed all the Egyptians in the sea, he wants us to get out from the kingship of the Pharaoh and his soldiers, the devil and his minions. So we have to be baptised in order for us to be raised from the water free from the devil and his soldiers. He wants us to be clean and without sin in order for me to keep my eyes upon Him only. That is what Paul describes for us in Romans 6, that baptism is a place of death. Not only does the enemy die in the water, but my old sinful nature is buried with Christ, and I receive everlasting life as I will be raised with Christ as a new person. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, I will be raised from the dead as a new creature, as someone who has been born again. I have changed ownership in that I now place myself under the King of heaven and earth, and leave the kingdom of the devil. I am now under the power of the LORD, in His kingdom.

Why do I have to break with my life before baptism?

Read Romans 6, as it will explain the process in detail.

This scripture shows us exactly what happens with baptism. We also read about it in Colossians 2 from verse 8: *"Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the requirements of the world, and not after Christ: 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."*

Just as Jesus died on the cross and rose again, I can now die and be raised as a new being, free from being a slave to the devil in Egypt. But I have to remember that I am still going to sin. But I will not find myself back in Egypt if it happens. As long as I do not return to my life before being baptised, I can go to the father in prayer and ask for forgiveness. This is what we learn in 1 John 1: *"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."*

Am I still seen as a sinner after being baptised? I am still a servant of Egypt? No, I have changed ownership, as I am now a child of God.

Something that we have to learn from this piece of history, is that I must believe that Christ has paved the way for me before I can be baptised. I cannot be baptised before I believe in the salvation that Christ accomplished before I can be baptised. I first have to come to the knowledge that I am born in Egypt before I can believe in that which Christ has done for me. If I get baptised before understanding what it means, I have taken a swim in the sea and returned to Egypt, a life making bricks for Satan and expanding his empire. I have not changed ownership and left Egypt behind me. Only once I realise what baptism is, can I call out to the LORD for redemption. Everything before that is fruitless. This also confirms what Peter told the people when they asked him what to do to get saved. *"Acts 2: 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 PERFORMED?

By submersion under water. That is the way Jesus was baptised. The word used in Greek is baptismo. If we look at the meaning of the word outside of the Bible, we find the word being used in a recipe for the preparation of meat. In this recipe a sauce is made, and the meat is put into this sauce overnight in order for the meat to absorb the taste of the sauce. This actually explains exactly what happens to us when we are baptised. We come out of the water and have changed in order to smell like Him, to take on His personality, to act like Him. The origin of sprinkling water over people has its origins in the Roman Catholic Church that at the same time said that you can even baptize the dead.

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 *"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 is this accomplished? 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 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.

We read here of the signs that followed the laying on of hands, what were they?

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."*

But what about people who despite following this example still does not prophesy or speak in tongues? Paul documented this problem for us, where he provides the answer. *"1 Cor 12: 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: 9 to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; 10 and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to another [divers] kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will."*

We see from this that in Israel's time, that to prophesy was a sign of having been baptised by the Holy Spirit. This is exactly what happened to the people Paul baptised. 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."*

This is what happens when the Lord pours out His Spirit. Have you experience it?

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 have to obey Him.

Were you aware of the fact that the Lord ensured that their clothes did not age, or that they did not 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."*

So 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. Mark 16:17-18: *"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." This scripture has caused many questions for many people. We have to remember that Mark spent his time with Paul and Barnabas, and that he had firsthand knowledge of what happened. That is why he is the only person to specify this in his Gospel. All the other gospels only tell us what Jesus and his disciples did after Jesus sent them out on their first mission. Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts again spent time with Paul, Barnabas and Peter and also had firsthand knowledge of how they healed the sick.

We find that Israel at a later date, also find that people are dying in their midst. Num 21: 7-9 "7 *And the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee; pray unto Jehovah, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.*"

During this time, Israel did not know what the symbolic meaning of this was, as it was a fore shadow of the work that Jesus came to do. Jesus came to earth and took our sins and inequities on Him, so that whoever calls on Him and believes in His completed work on the cross, will be healed. This scripture highlights the fact that Israel confirmed that they sinned against the Lord, and that the snakes sent to kill them was their just reward for their sins. The Lord shows us that Jesus was put on a cross to pay for our sins. All we have to do is to confess our sin, look up to the cross from where our healing will come, to Jesus who paid for this, and we will be healed. No exceptions. In Israel's case everyone was healed. So the same will happen to us. But He expects repentance. He expects us to believe that it is still His will for today. That is the healing we read of here. We are all born with a deadly illness, everlasting death. We can only be healed from this disease by accepting that Jesus paid for all our sins on the cross, and we have to place our trust in Him. This requires faith. Why? Write down Isaiah 53:4-5. We also read in Acts 10 37-38 the following: "37 *that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him*". So yes, some of us will suffer sickness but then the chances are that you are not oppressed by the devil, and then the LORD will support you in your fight against disease. David says the following: "2 *Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive, And he shall be blessed upon the earth; And deliver not thou him unto the will of his enemies. 3 Jehovah will support him upon the couch of languishing: Thou makest all his bed in his sickness.*"

The prophet Isaiah also gave us something to remember in chapter 53 verses 3 to 5. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

I have to emphasise this that we must believe and have faith in order for this healing, this everlasting death sentence, to be done away with. Why? Heb 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."

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.

Are you alone at times? Write down how you feel during those times, and ask the Lord to free you from this.

It is not only Israel that found themselves in the dessert. Jesus also had to go to the dessert to be tempted by the evil one. Mat. 4:1 "*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*" Paul also had to spend time in the dessert. After his conversion on the road to Damascus, he had to spend three years in the dessert. Gal 1:17-18 "*neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days.*"

WARFARE

The Lord wants to teach us to fight the enemy. They were not attacked by the Amelekites, 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.

What areas do you still have to tackle in your own life? Where do you know are the weak spots that you need to get rid of?

BROKEN RELATIONS

When Jethro visits Moses, we see that they embrace each other, and that Moses receives instruction from his father in law on how to organise 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 dessert.

Which relationships do you feel the Lord should still bring healing to? And which ones has He already healed?

PROVISION

As soon as you think everything is over, you suddenly realise that you are not in the Promised Land yet. You are still in the dessert. Now you only realise that the Lord wants to teach you His life. We first have to understand that we have to be dependent on Him for everything. He wants to supply us with manna and quails. He wants to provide us with water, but we have to depend on Him for this. We have to 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.

Do you have enough to supply food? Or do you have more than enough? What are you going to do with your excess or shortfall? How do you think would the LORD handle your excess or shortfall?

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 have to 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. So I have to 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.

Hebrews 13:5 *"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."*

Did you know that the Lord provided for all the people and their livestock in the desert? He looked after every single being, all 3,5 million of them. Look it up in your Bible. You will be amazed.

How do we do it today? I have to do what Jesus told us to do. 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 neighbour, 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.

Read Matthew 25 verses 34 to 46.

How should I handle my offers? Jesus already gave us the answer in the Matthew 25. This also gives us what love to our neighbour means. This is what Jesus expects from us.

Paul also gave us a recommendation of how to handle our finances in Corinthians 8: *"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: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack."* The LORD does not expect you to give something if you do not have anything. He expects equality. If you have a surplus today, give it away in order for you to receive from someone again when you have a shortfall.

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) Just remember that is the primary purpose of the Church, and that is to teach you. It is not a party scene or discotheque, no it is place to be used for teaching you about the Bible and God's will and character.

What about a building to gather in? That is something the local congregation has to 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.

So in summary, I have to give to those people who do not have the necessary means to provide for themselves, in order for everyone to have the basics in life, and that there should be parity in the local church. I also have to ensure that the person that teaches at the church has no need. *"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."* Just remember that you should be learning about what it means to be a Christian, and not only get messages to make you feel good. It should cut to the bone.

So the last question then is: How much should I give? In order for every person to have enough for his daily requirements. That there can be equality between people. So that nobody, and that includes the pastor, have a shortfall.

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.

HAS THE LORD SPOKEN TO YOU? HOW, AND WHAT WAS IT ABOUT?

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.

HOW DOES THE LORD COMMUNICATE WITH US TODAY?

What I have personally experienced is that He communicates with me firstly through His Word, the Bible. I have experienced it so many times that a scripture just unfolds in front of me. That I understand it in a way never before experienced, even if I had read this scripture a hundred times before.

Other times I happen to read a part of scripture answering a question I had, or maybe it is just a word of comfort for me.

HAS THE LORD SPOKEN TO YOU THIS WAY?

Or, how has He spoken to you? Yet other times the Lord has spoken to me through specific circumstances. Just when you think that a prayer was not answered, the Lord will make you aware of circumstances that talk directly about this request.

Yet other times a scripture will just come into your head. When you look it up in the Bible, you find an answer to a specific question you had. Other times the Lord sends someone to you who talk about a question, or just to give you a word of encouragement. There are so many different ways, through your thoughts, nature, and so many ways. One thing though stands out: The Lord wants to communicate with you.

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 have to receive the Word in our hearts.

Has the Lord written His laws on your heart yet? Are there still areas that you have to submit to Him?

I have seen many people that thought that Sinai is their destination. They have not realised that it is only a time where we learn to submit ourselves under His Lordship, a time of testing and learning. This is the time that the writer of Hebrews refers to in Hebrews 6 verse 1 and 2: *"1 Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment"*.

Can you teach people these six basic principles? This is what we need to know before we can enter Canaan.

I have seen many people stuck at this juncture because of wrong behaviour. 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 behaviour. If not, you must break with it. We want to get to Canaan. We don't want to spend additional time in the dessert that is not required. Don't make Sinai your home.

What do you still have to break with?

We also find another incident while Israel was in the dessert that had a huge impact for them, but also for us. This happened during the time that Moses went up the mountain to receive the first tablets from the LORD, and is so important that Paul also uses it in his first letter to the people of Corinth. I also quoted it

in the beginning of this book, and will quote it again here. 1Cor 10: *"1 For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and did all eat the same spiritual food; 4 and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. 5 Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."*

This refers to Exodus 32 where Israel waited for Moses to come down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. We read of this historic event where the people went to Aaron and asked him to make an idol for them as Moses was nowhere to be seen. This is where Aaron made the golden calf for them. *"3 And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4 And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf: and they said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 And when Aaron saw [this], he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."* A very interesting answer is given to Moses as to where the golden calf came from. Aaron melted the gold and the calf came forth from the fire. This shows us that we do not want to confirm that we sinned, no, it just happened without anything we did.

This is the part that Paul also quoted in his letter. But why did he quote this? There are so many symbolic events that this portion of scripture highlights for us. But in order to understand it, we have to go back to chapter 7 to see what Moses' calling entailed. *"1 And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."* So we find that Moses is called as a God for the Pharaoh, so he represents the LORD, and Aaron is his prophet, or the one declaring what the message is from God. So Moses departed up the mountain, just as Christ is currently away preparing our eternal place, and the people of Israel, in our current time the normal members of the church, exerts pressure on the leadership to accept their thinking and do what they want the leaders to do. Aaron even built an altar and called them to hold a sacrifice to the LORD the next day, with the golden calf as the special attraction. This would be the "new" way of praising the LORD. But what happened? The LORD sent Moses down to them with the original tablets which Moses and when Moses saw what they were doing he threw down the tablets and broke them showing us that the Old Covenant will be broken from the LORD's side because of adultery as they would not accept Jesus as Gods' son. It is also interesting to note that Moses had to make the second set of tablets while the first set was provided by the LORD. This shows that the first covenant will be broken by the adultery of the people of God, and that Jesus had to become a normal human being and the covenant had to be corrected from the side of man, and that He will make a second or New Covenant with those that are obedient to Him. That is the covenant that we received. Nowhere are these tablets referred to as containing the Ten Commandments, but always referred to as the tablets of the testimony of the LORD. What exactly was written on the first set was never mentioned in the Bible.

It also shows us that the apostasy will come through the Church leaders who will give in and satisfy their members and their requests, and this is already visible in the practices today where sexual sin is now acceptable in many of the mainstream churches. But we must also note that non of these people actually went into Canaan, so they did not receive their promised land, except for Joshua and Caleb, as they believed in the promises of the LORD. This will happen and is happening in our churches right now where we have to adapt all our teachings to please the people, or as it is called in Exodus idol worship. The LORD also states in this chapter that He will blot out the names of those people who participated in this act of idolatry. Only the Children of 20 years and younger, eventually went into Canaan. This blows the

whole doctrine of Calvin out of the water as the LORD gave them a choice to go into Canaan that He prepared for them or not. He then acted on their decision and they all died in the desert.

This also answers our question about who is part of the whore of Revelation 18. *"4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5 for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double [unto her] the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. 8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her."* This is also confirmed by the prophet Isaiah in his prophecy in chapter 1: *"21 How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of justice! righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. 22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. 23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. 24 Therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies;"*

What did Moses do when he saw what was happening? We find the answer a little further down in Exodus 32: *"26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Whoso is on Jehovah's side, [let him come] unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Put ye every man his sword upon his thigh, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. 28 And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29 And Moses said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to Jehovah, yea, every man against his son, and against his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. 30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33 And Jehovah said unto Moses, **Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 And now go, lead the people unto [the place] of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35 And Jehovah smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made."***

So we are told that if you find yourself involved with idolatry, like that which are found in so many churches today, that your name will be erased from the book of life. There are so many churches and people that will tell you that once saved always saved is what the Bible teaches, but this contradicts their point completely. The LORD will remove your name from the book of life if you associate yourself with those that are involved in idolatry and infidelity. This is also confirmed in Ezekiel 18. Read that chapter in your Bible and you will be shocked. Another scripture that deals with this subject is found in Hebrews chapter six : *"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 6:4-6) This is what the LORD told Moses in Exodus chapter 32 verse 34: *"Therefore now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you: behold, my Angel shall go before you: **nevertheless in the day when i visit i will visit their sin on them."***

Let's refresh our memories again. How does David define Canaan? *"Psalm 1: 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 have to 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 baptised, what happens to those that die without being baptised? We see that the Lord said that nobody under 20 years of age would die during the 40-year trek in the desert. 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 baptised.

What do you still have to lay down before entering into Canaan?

The Tabernacle

Something else that happened while Israel was in the dessert was that the Lord instructed Moses to build the tabernacle. 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 various sections in it, and in the one section, the holiest of holies, only the high priest could enter into, where the Lord would physically manifest His presence. The high priest could only enter into 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 into 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 into 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 into the presence of God the Father, **and never again have to 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.

How much time do you spend with the Lord? How do you spend it?

When we look at the layout of the tabernacle, it also shows the road we have to take to get to the holiest of holies, the place where the Father is. I have included a sketch of the tabernacle for you, but please

read Exodus 35 to 40 to see how the steps to follow the exact same steps as what the exodus describes, as well as what we find in Hebrews 6 verses 1 and 2.

CANAAN, OR BACK TO THE DESSERT

The Israelites were very 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 very 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 have to 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 will have to wait another 40 years, or maybe you will never enter into that which God had planned for you all along.

What does your life look like? Do you believe that the Lord can use you?

An interesting aspect of this piece in history is that the people of the tribes of Reuben and Gad never received their inheritance in Canaan. Instead they decided they wanted to stay on the other side of the Jordan, as they saw that there were excellent pastures for them to feed their animals. Did you know that they never again featured in the history of Israel? Even Jesus gave them a second chance, but when their pigs fled into the sea, they rejected Him again. Again choosing their material belongings over Him. I beg you not to act like them and stay in the dessert forever.

What was the first thing Israel had to do after they crossed the Jordan? Attack and smite Jericho. What strongholds do you still have to get rid of in your life?

Did Israel defeat all the enemies in Canaan at once? No. The Bible declares that we have to 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 have to utterly destroy it. Another aspect that we read about here is that the different tribes didn't 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. Are there still other gods in your life?

To end of this section I would like to ask you a question. A question that I want to ask you and that you must answer for yourself and be totally honest with yourself, as I want to ensure that you inherit that which the LORD has in store for you. It is the same question Moses asked the people of Israel.

MY QUESTION TO YOU

The question comes from Deuteronomy 30 from verse 15: "I 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.

Part 2 - What is an overcomer, and what does the lifestyle of an overcomer entail?

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 realise 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 realise that I am a new creation, and have received eternal life? Do I realise that I have been washed as white as snow, and that the Blood of the Lamb has washed away my sins? Do I realise that I have inherited the righteousness of Jesus?

But that is not where it ends. The Bible is very 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 dessert, 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 have to sow, the LORD will let grow, and you have to 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 fairly difficult to explain what it is like to take possession of something. I would like to use an everyday example in order 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 will have to listen to His statutes. If we don't, 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. So we have to 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 have to 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 have to do? I must ask the LORD what I have to 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 have to totally break with them. If I don't 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 have to 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 wrong doing, because what I am trying to cover up is still sin. I have to break with everything that the LORD points out to me. This is what Jesus meant when He declared that I have to take up my cross and follow Him. He will show me daily what I have to change to be acceptable to Him. The moment He shows me something, I have to 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 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 me. This is why the Bible declares I have to 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 saviour.

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 has to 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; "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 analyse these verses, we find what the Bible states an overcomer is. We have to 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 have to 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 actually you are not. Your strength can only be determined when it is tested.

Now I do not want to proclaim that you have to 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 have to worry about what we have to say when we are confronted as Christians, as the Holy Spirit will lead us.

So I have to 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.

So 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 have to put on the armour 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 armour. 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 armour. 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 have to 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 an 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 have to doubt it at all.

But the scripture we started off in Luke also states that I have to watchful over what you have. I have to 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 have to 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 have to 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 people 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 have to 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 have to 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 have to 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 have to 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 have to 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 have to 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. So 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 a very strong viewpoint either.

My question then is: Who is right? As an added question, we might ask that if we come to a conclusion, how will we know that the conclusion is correct. The second question is fairly 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 in Jerusalem. We have to 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 have to 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 exactly 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. So removing the yeast means that we have to 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 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 have to break with sin. I can then eat from the Lamb and drink from the cup. I have to 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 our 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 have to overcome the enemy by the Blood of the Lamb. If we stay under the blood, the enemy can't touch us. 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 counts for more than 20% of your communication.

So what does my testimony have to entail? Jesus declares in Matthew 23 verse 23 (b) *"for ye pay tithe 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? 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 have to 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 have to 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 neighbour, 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 work 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 have to be someone who can be trusted. My word and lifestyle has 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 what you baptism declares, that you are

laying down your life and that you clothe yourself with Jesus. So you declare that you have died, and that you now live a life dedicated to Him.

This is how we overcome. Overcoming is not for sissies. You must be able to stand firm. This is what the Bible declares. You will have to 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. So I have to learn here on earth to rule, as I cannot learn to do that in heaven. But what do I have to learn to rule over? Sin. I have to 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 overcomer's 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's 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 have to 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 have to 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 colour 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 realise 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 gets 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 realise that if you want to be His disciple you will have to 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 have to do. Once you have done that, you will exhibit His humbleness. That is what the Bible teaches.

All of 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 realise 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?

The one scripture that tells us one of the prizes comes from Ezekiel" *"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 a number of 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 have to 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 do these prizes 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 also 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.

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 honoured 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 **This 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 hungry, 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 fairly long quotations, but I trust that it will shed some light on what and where paradise is. It is very interesting to note that the second section ends with the same promises as what Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 25, and also prophesied in Isaiah 58.

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 lookout 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 realise 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.

We learn from Revelation chapter 5 and 20, that there are two books. The first one in chapter 5 describes all the judgements that will be the cause for the names of people not to be found in the second book, the book of life that we read of in chapter 20 from verse 12. So these are the people that are mentioned here as those who overcame.

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 knows 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 realise 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 be in agreement. 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."***

Part 3 - A new theology I bring to you, the covenant of righteousness

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. 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.

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.

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 : *"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)

What does this covenant entail?

For me, we have to start with Abraham, the father of all believers. We also have to remember that Abraham had eight sons in total. The eldest was Ishmael, then Isaac, and later on 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 also 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 also 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 have to 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 have to 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)

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)

Covenant with Christ as the Lamb: **Our hearts have to 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 have to call out to the LORD to lead me to His land, Canaan. I have to change my ways and leave my sinful life behind me. I have to come to the realisation that I cannot do anything to save myself. I have to believe that Jesus did everything required to put me in a right relationship with the LORD. I have to realise that I am a sinner and that I will perish if I continue with my life on my own. I have to start living a life of love as explained in 1 John 3. I have to 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.

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 neighbour 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 honour and glory and blessing."** (Rev 5:6-12)

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 have to 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)

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 have to 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 have to 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 have to leave Egypt, by getting baptised. 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 have to 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)

Then, like Israel we have to 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 realise 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 into 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 desert even though they were baptised as the seventh day is the day of rest, and that is what the LORD wants from us.

Most of the people who enter into Canaan will believe that they have to 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)*

The majority 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 a number of 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 captors 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 have to lose the war against God in order to become his slave and to be taken away to His Land, His Canaan. I have to place my full trust in Him in order to become completely dependent on Him for all my needs. Just like in the Biblical times He will have to provide for shelter and food, but it means that I have to 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 have to 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 have to 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 have to 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, in order 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 lees, 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 have to be separated from their lees. 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 have to examine my life, and have to eye ball and change the areas I find that I am not sure is from the LORD. It also means that I have to 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 shouldn't over 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 neighbouring 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 have to separate ourselves from the idea that our membership of our congregation ensures our everlasting life. We have to 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 has to be perfect and without blemish. This does not mean that you have to end your membership of your congregation and now become a "churchless member" of the Church of Jesus Christ. No, I have to 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 have to 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 has to 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 on Israel

What about Israel as nation and country today? They also have to 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, have to 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.

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: *"Honour, 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 realisation of the need for a redeemer, as you are one of the elect. That means that you do not have to 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 baptised. Trying to baptise 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 baptised as babies, as they still find themselves under the jurisdiction of the Pharaoh. They are still in Egypt and have to 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 also have to admit that many of the doctrines of Calvin and Luther are well motivated and based on scripture. However over the ages these doctrines have been given different meanings and now differ from what both Calvin and Luther meant.

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 have told 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 have to be continuous and have to**

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 actually 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 very 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's and a whole bunch of different people. Their prime scripture is Daniel's prophesy 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 have to 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 have to 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 Luthers 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 rapturers 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 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 into 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 fulfil 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 into. ***"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 into 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 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.

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."* 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 actually 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. So 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 favourably 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 have to 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 have to 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 realise 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. As a consequence 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 in order 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 in order 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 ourselves 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.

Appendix A - Jews - Nation or Church grouping?

Just to ensure that you understand the complete theology, I have included an article that will clear up many misconceptions we face every day. Some of this was discussed earlier in this book, but I want to include this as a separate stand-alone document. Therefore, I want to look at our belief system of today and will try to prove to you the reader that Israel was never a nation as portrayed today, but should in reality be seen as 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.

Where did the CHURCH start? To me it started with Abraham. The LORD started talking to Abraham long before He entered into a covenant with him. Abraham had to listen and do everything the LORD told him to do. So what does this teach us? There are two actions that speak volumes about this relationship. The first principle is that Abraham had to believe the LORD and then he had to obey the LORD. This to me speaks of how a church should respond. We have to believe what He tells us to do, and then have to obey Him in everything we do. This is also what we read of in Hebrews 6 verse 1: *"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,"* (Heb 6:1) So we see that Abraham had to lay down his life, repentance, and do what the LORD commanded him to do, so believe Him, which is faith..

After this we find that the covenant is started with communion, where Melchizedek brought the wine and break. *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything."* (Gen 14:18-20)

What we learn from this is that even before the LORD made the covenant with Abraham, that peoples from other nations were also serving the LORD, even to the point where they had their own priests.

Only now do we find that the LORD enters into a covenant relationship with Abraham: *"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."* (Gen 15:1-7)

What does this mean? That he believed and it counted him as righteousness. Without righteousness, it is impossible to be part of the CHURCH of the LORD. We now find that Abraham only had to supply the livestock needed for the covenant. He had to cut the heifer in two and lay the sides next to each other. The meaning being that if either one of the partners of the covenant could do this to the other partner should they break the covenant. This also features when the LORD told Abraham to go and sacrifice Isaac. So for Abraham it was not difficult to follow the instructions of the LORD, as the LORD told

Abraham that his descendants will come from Isaac. The LORD had to stay true to His word, and had two choices. Either he had to provide a substitute for Isaac, or He had to bring Isaac back from the dead if Abraham sacrificed Isaac, as the LORD promised that Abraham's family would come from Isaac. So Abraham knew that the LORD cannot lie, so he knew that if the LORD expected him to sacrifice his son, then the LORD had to be willing to do the same. He also knew it was impossible to kill the LORD, so he obeyed Him. This also points to us the first time that Jesus would become God's sacrificial Lamb for our sins. That is also, why Jesus can only come once to fulfil the covenant and pay for all sins, and not have a shuttle service during the end times.

For those who want to know more about what the Covenant of Righteousness means, it was discussed in part 3 of this book. I do suggest that you read this or if you have the time, look at the YouTube version which will run as a [playlist](#) for about 4 hours.

The next step only followed 25 years later when the LORD instituted circumcision as a sign of the covenant. A very interesting part we find here is that we find a sequence of events from this piece of history. It started with Abraham deciding to change his life and to follow the LORD, he then had to believe the LORD (faith), and then he had to have communion. Then only do we find circumcision. We find the same sequence after Jesus came to be the complete sacrifice, in that we have to repent from our sinful life, put out faith in Him alone, and then share communion. That is one reason we find so many arguments in Church today, as we find that leaders of churches have done these steps, but their hearts have not been circumcised. This is why we find so many leaders trying to justify the sins of people being enforced onto the church.

So we find that the church started with Abraham, and that every person who puts their faith in the completed works of Jesus, is part of CHURCH. Only now can we start with Israel.

So 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. ***"All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."*** (Exo 12:47-49) *"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. So they all shared the same theology and believed in the one LORD. So this already shows us that they operated 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. That is what they are referred to, as a congregation in Exodus 12 verse 47 above, and not as a nation.

This is also what the whole book to the Hebrews in the New Testament is all about.

Quite a number of very influential people including Martin Luther wanted to keep this book 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 actually has the covenant as a central theme and not Israel as a central theme.

So it was not written for Israel as nation, but to Israel or the Jews as 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)*

So I will use this as a basis to show that Israel functioned as a Church and not as a nation. But let us start at the beginning. 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 definitely 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 people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with 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 is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, "* (Deu 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 definitely 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 realise that God does not and will not change His word, we will realise 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 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 very 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 have to 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 anything, 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 than a promise to a nation. So 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? It happened 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. So 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 very little of the grouping that moved away from David in the Bible. So 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 people. In fact He always pitted the two groups against each other. And they were the "church".

So 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 have to 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 Saviour, but it always asked them to return to the LORD. So 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.

So Israel was the Church under the Old Covenant, and we are Church under the New Covenant. So 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. (Deu 30:11-20)

So just like Israel had to choose to follow the LORD, we have to 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.

So 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 have to do certain things to get saved. So they still believe you have to comply with certain rules, rules like the Sabbath etc. And then there are those of the Jewish faith today, those that rejected 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 us part of the real Church.

So the writer shows us that we do not have to 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 into 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)

So 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. So 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.

So there is now replacement theology. You either believe this Truth and receive everlasting life, or you do not believe this 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, and cannot be used to judge the unbelievers.

We also have to 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 travelled 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)

So these people were Jews, but were called Christians. So those that speaks about replacement theology only shows their lack of knowledge of the Bible.

So there won't 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. So 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 briars 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 with you to prove you 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." (1Tim 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)*

So if someone wants to place you back under the law, know that according to Paul that he is not righteous. So he will try to convince you that you have to believe his interpretation. They will tell you to ignore days like Christmas, Easter and numerous other days, but all that they are trying is to place you under the law again. *"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 a 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)

So 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.