

The Journey of Israel

*A study of the spiritual journey of believers from salvation to maturity and
glory in Christ*

Dr. Brian J. Bailey



ZION CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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ISBN # 1-890381-92-6

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Produced and Distributed by:

Zion Christian Publishers
Waverly, New York 14892

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Dedicated

*To our Beloved Lord Jesus Christ,
who as the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day,
leads His people out of Egypt and
into the Promised Land.*

*And to my dear wife, Audrey,
who was such a faithful pilgrim partner
to me along our own particular spiritual journey to Zion.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank all of the following people for their enormous contributions to this book:

Rev. Brian Alarid, the Senior Editor of the second edition, for all of his hard work in the editing and revision of the original book.

Elizabeth Humphreys, the Assistant Editor of the second edition, for all of her hard work in the editing of this book.

Mercy Alarid, Joyce Aw, Mary Humphreys, Pastor Daniel Humphreys, Sarah Humphreys, and Caroline Tham, for their excellent assistance in the proofreading of the second edition of this book.

Dr. Paul and Betsy Caram, the editors of the first edition, for all of their efforts in compiling and editing the first edition of the book, without which the second edition would not be a reality.

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PREFACE

To gain an understanding of our spiritual journey, we must study the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land and eventually to Mount Zion.

This historical journey undertaken thousands of years ago is a type of our spiritual journey as believers from earth to heaven, and from newborn babes in Christ to mature fathers and mothers in the faith. It serves as a road map to show us where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are going.

The journey of the children of Israel was a historical event. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob left the land of Egypt in which they had been held captive. God liberated them through the hand of the prophet Moses, who then guided them under the Lord's protection from Egypt to the plains of Moab—a period of time lasting over forty years.

After the death of Moses, they were given a new leader—Joshua, who took them over the River Jordan and into the Promised Land. However, they did not conquer the whole land and come into rest until many years later when God raised up King David. David subjugated all the enemies in the land, and led the children of Israel to their final resting place, Zion, the holy hill of the Lord.

In *The Journey of Israel*, three main themes will be considered. As we look step by step at the journey of the children of Israel, we will also see from the life of Moses the preparation that goes into the life of a leader whom God uses to lead His people on in their journey. In addition to this, we will also consider the seven feasts of the Lord, which are woven into the Journey, and their relevance for the Church of Jesus Christ today.

This book is presented with the prayer that the same Lord who brought the children of Israel from the land of Egypt to Zion, will likewise bring you, dear reader, from spiritual Egypt (this world) to Zion, which represents spiritual maturity and the glory of God.

Dr. Brian J. Bailey

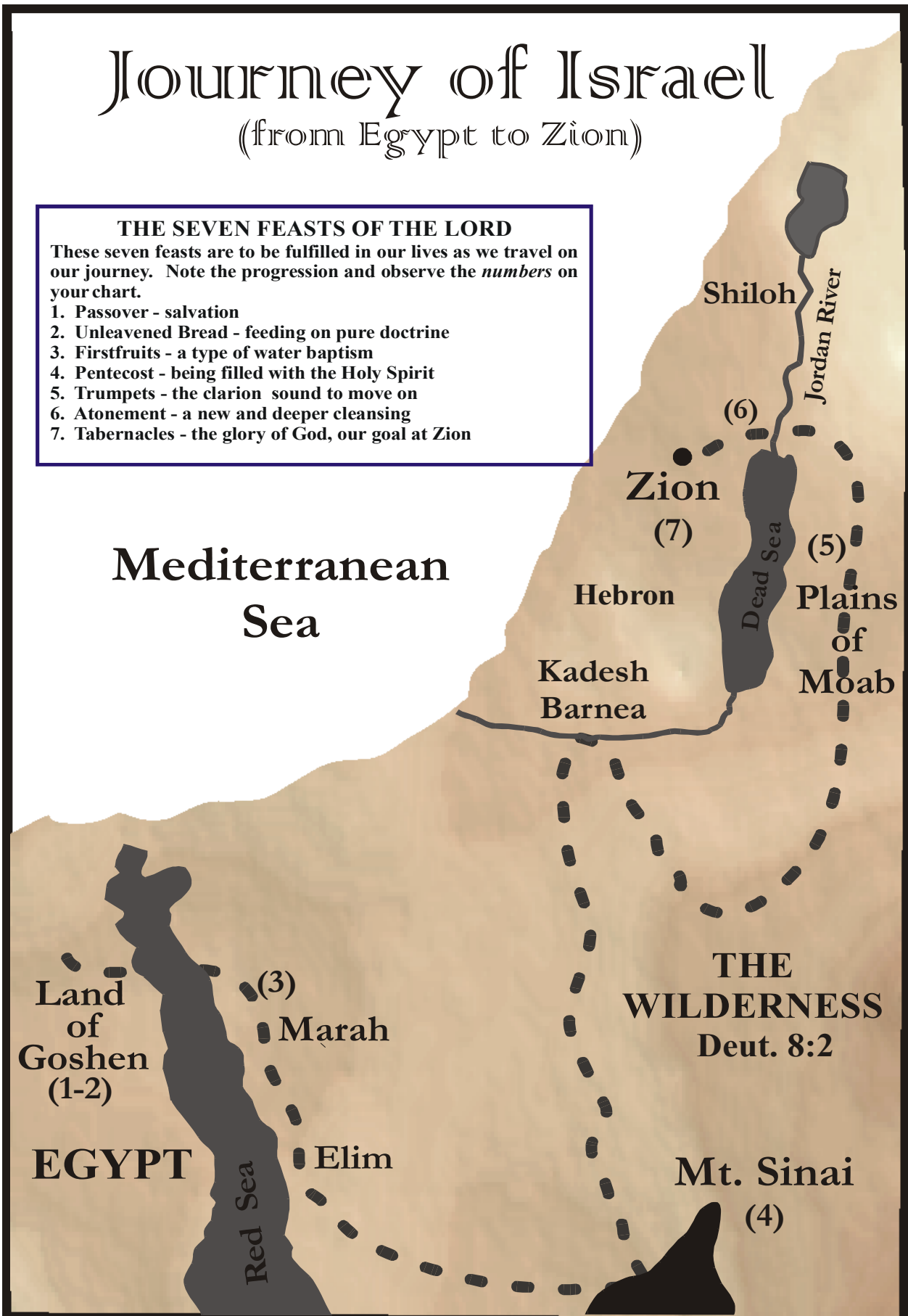
Journey of Israel

(from Egypt to Zion)

THE SEVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD

These seven feasts are to be fulfilled in our lives as we travel on our journey. Note the progression and observe the *numbers* on your chart.

1. Passover - salvation
2. Unleavened Bread - feeding on pure doctrine
3. Firstfruits - a type of water baptism
4. Pentecost - being filled with the Holy Spirit
5. Trumpets - the clarion sound to move on
6. Atonement - a new and deeper cleansing
7. Tabernacles - the glory of God, our goal at Zion



INTRODUCTION

The journey of the children of Israel, which took the Israelites from Egypt to their eventual destination, Mount Zion, was in the words of the Apostle Paul, “*written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the [age] are come*” (1 Cor. 10:1-11).

We may, therefore, confidently state that this historical journey is an *allegory* depicting the spiritual journey of believers. It portrays the journey of a believer from salvation to maturity, until he comes “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

In this book we will examine each stage of a Christian’s journey as follows: As soon as a person is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, he has begun a journey. The final destination is Mount Zion, but before a person arrives at spiritual Mount Zion, there are many things he must first experience.

After the Israelites left Egypt (a type of salvation from this world), they crossed the Red Sea. The believer, therefore, must also experience water baptism, for the crossing of the Red Sea is a type of water baptism (1 Cor. 10:2).

Then he must progress in his Christian walk to Mount Sinai, which typifies the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After that he must continue, enduring the trying wilderness experience, cross over the River Jordan, experience circumcision of heart, and enter the Promised Land.

From there, as he conquers the enemies within and without, he will finally enter into the true rest of God, which is equated in the Word of God with ascending spiritual Mount Zion. God says of Zion in Psalm 132:14, “This is my rest forever: here will I dwell.”

It is eternally rewarding for us to contemplate the journey of the children of Israel from a historical as well as an eternal perspective. It is a road map for our lives—it shows us where we have come from, where we are going, and what we can expect along the way.

Certainly the journey was conceived and not simply foreknown in the mind and heart of God before the foundation of the world. Hebrews 4:3 clearly states that “*the works were finished before the foundation of the world.*”

Therefore, in order to grasp the background of the journey of the children of Israel, we should briefly

consider God's plan for the ages from Adam to Abraham. Abraham is the father, not only of the children of Israel, but of all those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The First Ten Generations

The first dispensation of ten generations, covering the period of time from Adam to Noah and the Flood, lasted approximately 1,656 years. However, only nine chapters of Genesis are devoted to this period. It was a time of longevity of life. During this time in man's history, there was a tremendous prophetic flow, and nearly all future truths were revealed.

Genesis 1-9 records the creation story, the fall of man, the promise of salvation, the first murder, the introduction of polygamy, and the division of mankind into two lines—the sons of God and the sons of man (the good and the evil). Enoch, a man who walked closely with God, prophesied of the Second Coming of Christ and its ensuing judgments (Jude 1:9). The first rapture took place when Enoch was caught up to heaven.

Then came the crossing of the godly and ungodly lines through intermarriages, which produced a wicked offspring and oppressions that in turn brought the first worldwide judgment in the form of a flood. God raised up Noah to build an ark during this time of moral decadence and great violence to preserve the human race.

The Next Ten Generations

The second dispensation from *Noah to Abraham*, again ten generations in duration, comprised about 300 to 400 years. This period was marked by the divisions of the nations into three branches. From Noah came *Shem*, the promised seed, *Ham*, the cursed seed, and *Japheth*, who was given a promise that he would dwell under the protection of Shem. From these three men came forth all of the races of the world.

Even after God had destroyed all the previous inhabitants of the earth for their rebellion, preserving only Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, the new generation, descendants of the godly Noah, quickly degenerated again. Ham produced a wicked seed; his grandson Nimrod was the founder of Babel (Gen. 10:6-10), where evil came to its head through this evil man. This city of great wickedness became the source of all false religions. The inhabitants of Babel rose up against the Lord and built a tower to magnify and glorify mankind. As a result of this outright rebellion against the Lord, God's judgment once again came upon the earth. God divided the nations at this time and confused their languages.

From this state of chaos, mixture, and wickedness, God called and chose Abraham of Ur of the Chaldees. The Lord spoke to Abraham and told him to leave his hometown and go to a land that He would show him—the land of Canaan, which would later become his inheritance and the inheritance of his seed.

The Covenant of Abraham

God made a covenant with Abraham, and promised him that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates, the land inhabited by the ten nations of Cush.

The Lord said to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-14: *“Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation [Egypt], whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”* Thy seed refers to the descendants of Abraham through his son, Isaac.

It is very clear from the Word of God that the Lord foreordained the journey of the children of Israel before the foundation of the world. Many years before Abraham had a son, God foretold the children of Israel’s sojourn in Egypt by saying they would be strangers in a land that was not promised to them, and be subjected to slavery and bondage while they were there.

However, this sojourn in Egypt was not God’s ultimate plan for them. They would only be there about 400 years, for God promised that they would come out of Egypt. The Lord also spoke of the ten plagues that Moses would execute upon the Egyptians, saying that He would judge that nation that kept them in bondage. The Lord then spoke of the future journey out of Egypt that the children of Abraham’s grandson, Jacob (Israel) would take.

The covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 15 involved a promise to give the whole land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed forever. Under normal circumstances, to make a covenant there are conditions that each party must fulfill. It was customary in the days of Abraham to seal covenants by dividing an animal and then walking in between the divided parts of the animal.

However, God did not make His covenant with Abraham in this way. This covenant was sealed in a most unusual manner. Instead of the two participants, God and Abraham, walking through the divided animals, someone else walked through it. We read in Genesis 15:12, *“And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.”*

In my own experience of this phenomenon, I had the feeling of utter helplessness, a complete and desperate inability to accomplish anything. Yet, this is exactly what God desires us to experience before He makes a very significant promise to us or before we enter a new stage of our Christian walk.

Abraham never passed between the divided animals. While he was in a deep sleep with a horror of great darkness upon him, two other parties passed between the divided parts. *“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates”* (Gen. 15:17-18).

The Smoking Furnace is a symbol of God the Father, of whom it is said, *“Our God is a consuming fire”* (Heb. 12:29). The Burning Lamp is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who declared, *“I am the Light of the World.”* Also, Psalm 119:105 says, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* Jesus, the Word of God, is the Burning Lamp.

Abraham was standing upon the threshold of a new experience that would impact countless lives. God was making a promise to him that was going to affect not only the future of millions of his own seed, but the whole of mankind. Yet, in actuality, the promise of Canaan land was in no way dependent upon Abraham or his seed, because it was the Father and the Son who agreed together to give them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Thus the covenant is immutable and cannot be broken, for it was made between God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ.

God the Father and His beloved Son later brought the children of Abraham into Egypt, then into the wilderness, and finally into the land of Canaan, or Palestine as we know it today. The land of Palestine is God’s land, and He has given it to Israel, not to the Palestinians, who are the descendants of the Philistines in the Bible.

The journey of Israel was conceived, not simply foreknown, in the mind and heart of God before the foundation of the world. Hebrews 4:3 clearly indicates this: *“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”* Thus, we see that before the foundation of the world, God orchestrated Israel’s journey from Egypt to Zion. The Lord showed the whole picture to Abraham, who believed God and inherited the land of Canaan in his seed by an immutable covenant God made with Himself. The Lord also spoke to him of the bondage his seed would endure in the nation of Egypt for 400 years, and of God’s judgment upon that nation (by the ten plagues). He promised Abraham that his offspring would come forth with great substance. Israel literally spoiled the

Egyptians when they made their exodus. Thus we understand that God engineered the whole destiny of Israel.

From Abraham to Moses

After the death of Abraham, his son Isaac dwelt in the land of Canaan with his son Jacob. Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel, had twelve sons, from whom came the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob's favorite son, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers, and later was imprisoned in Egypt. From the despair of the Egyptian prison cell, God triumphantly raised up Joseph to be the Prime Minister of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh.

In order to accomplish His word to Abraham, the Lord sent Joseph to Egypt to prepare a place for his brethren and to bring deliverance (Gen. 45:5-8). After establishing Joseph in Egypt and warning him in a dream, God sent a famine to prompt the sons of Jacob to come down to Egypt, where they were reunited with Joseph. Then, in God's perfect timing, Jacob and his household numbering seventy people moved to Egypt.

There is a very important truth brought out here. In Genesis 46:27, there were seventy people in Jacob's company. There is a law of Biblical interpretation called *the law of first mention*. The first mention of something in the Bible very often contains the key to its spiritual interpretation. For example, the first occurrence of the number "thirteen" occurs in Genesis 14, where certain kings rebelled in the thirteenth year. Therefore, the number *thirteen* in Scripture can represent *rebellion*.

The number "seventy" in Scripture represents *eldership*, for there were seventy elders of the children of Israel (Num. 11:16, 24-25). What is worthy of note here is that there were both men and women in Jacob's company of seventy, which speaks of eldership. Therefore, Scripture clearly validates and authenticates female ministers and leaders. This is meant as an encouragement to female ministers who are so often wrongfully opposed in many Christian circles today. Women have a very important role to play in the Body of Christ, and we must not minimize their importance.

Continuing in our flow from the life of Abraham to Moses, we see that God had ordained and prepared the way for Jacob to go to Egypt. Psalm 105:17-24 says: *"He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And he increased his people greatly;*

and made them stronger than their enemies.”

There is a definite progression in God’s plan. After God spoke to Abraham that He would send His seed to Egypt, Joseph was taken to Egypt as a slave to accomplish this. To accomplish this, Joseph was taken to Egypt. God then elevated Joseph to be the highest ruler of Egypt under Pharaoh. This enabled Jacob and his sons to move to Egypt, where Joseph cared for them.

The children of Israel multiplied and flourished in Egypt, which produced jealousy in the hearts of the Egyptians. Later, another Pharaoh arose who did not know Joseph and made the Israelites slaves. God turned the hearts of the Egyptians “*to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants*” (Psa. 105:25). Remember, God never hardens hearts that love goodness and truth; He only hardens hearts that constantly choose evil.

The Life of Moses the Deliverer

God set everything in place to bring to pass His perfect plan. Israel was in bondage, bemoaning their circumstances. The Israelites were in desperate need of a redeemer. This prepared the way for Moses to come as their deliverer. Psalm 105:26 says, “*He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.*” The Lord chose Moses to set His people free from Egyptian oppression and slavery.

For each phase of His plan of redemption, God chooses certain vessels whom He endows with great grace and wisdom. These divinely appointed leaders appear at specific epochs in history to accomplish God’s ordained purposes and to bring His people into the specific phase of the inheritance that has been determined for their generation. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, the prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ all appeared in God’s appointed time on the canvas of history to fulfill God’s great plan for the ages.

In the New Testament era, God used the apostles to lay the foundation of the Church. The Apostle Paul was specifically anointed and commissioned to preach to the Gentiles. It was Paul who established the major doctrines and tenets of our faith upon which the Church is founded. Later in Church history, men of God like Wycliff, Luther, and Wesley were used by the Holy Spirit to bring the Church out of the Dark Ages and to lead it out of the abysmal decadence into which it had fallen.

This book, however, concentrates mainly on the life of Moses the deliverer, the man that God raised up to lead his generation out of Egyptian bondage. In order to glean some very important truths, we must study the life of Moses in detail because he is the leader of the journey, and his life gives us insight into completing our own personal spiritual journey.

The life of Moses falls into three distinct periods of forty years:

1. *Called*—from birth until he fled Egypt (40 years)
2. *Chosen*—in the desert wilderness of Arabia (40 years)
3. *Faithful*—to the ministry entrusted to him (40 years)

The reason we have used these three headings is that Moses, as a faithful leader, is an example for us to follow. Everyone who reads these words has been called to be a leader in various levels. Revelation 17:14 says, “*They that are with [the Lamb] are called, and chosen, and faithful.*”

Not every believer is called to the fivefold ministry (Eph. 4:11), but every believer is called of God for a specific purpose and mission in life. However, it is not enough to be called of God, we also must be chosen by God. Jesus clearly stated in Matthew 22:14, “*Many are called, but few are chosen.*”

In considering the difference between being *called* and being *chosen*, it would be very beneficial to look at the life of David, whose life clearly depicted these three stages. David is also a key in the journey of Israel and his life will be examined later in this study, for it was David who brought Israel to true rest, subduing all their enemies, capturing the last stronghold of Zion, and bringing the glory of God in the ark of the Covenant to Mount Zion.

David was called by God when he was about seventeen years old. Samuel went to Bethlehem, David’s hometown, and anointed David with oil. This was the first of David’s three anointings. At this anointing, he was *called* to be the king of Israel. Between his first anointing, being *called* to be king over Israel, and his second anointing at Hebron, when he was chosen as king over Judah at the age of thirty, there was a period of about thirteen years. Nearly ten of those years were spent in the wilderness being pursued by Saul. What happened when David received the second anointing? He was placed in his ministry. Being chosen by God is the act of being placed or installed by God into our ministry or calling.

The third step in our Christian life is to be faithful in the ministry or position that God gives us. Moses was not only called and chosen, but he was found faithful, as we read in Hebrews 3:5: “*Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after.*” When God tested Moses, he was found faithful. In order to show ourselves faithful, we must do exactly what God has given us to do without veering off His path for our lives.

These three very distinct divisions are found in our lives as well. Every believer is called of God. After we are called by God, we enter the preparation period. If we obey God and pass our tests, then we will be chosen by God and He will place us in our calling or ministry. However, that is not the end of the

matter. When we are in the ministry or calling that God has given to us, we must be found faithful.

Another important aspect of this truth is that there are progressive steps into the ministry, as David's life clearly illustrates. David was called at the age of about seventeen and anointed in Bethlehem. At Hebron, he was chosen by God and installed as the king of Judah. However, David's original calling was to be king over all Israel, not just king of Judah. God first puts us into one level of ministry and tests us there. David was tested for seven-and-a-half years as the king of Judah. When he proved himself faithful in little, he was anointed a third time and promoted to be the king over all Israel.

This is an unbreakable principle of God's Word—if we will be faithful in little, God will entrust us with more; however, if we are not faithful in little, God will not entrust us with more. We read in Luke 16:10, *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”* Christ also said in the Parable of the Pounds in Luke 19:17, *“Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”* Dear reader, strive to be faithful, by the grace of God, in every task that the Lord gives you in life. If you are faithful, the Lord will abundantly bless and reward you.

Often there is a long period of time between being called by God and being chosen by God, as we see in the account of David's life. When God initially places us into our calling or ministry, He usually places us in a lower level of ministry. After we have proven ourselves faithful at that level, He promotes us into the fullness of what He has ordained for us.

Thus we see that there are levels of ministry. It may be in your life that God will place you as an assistant pastor, then as a pastor, perhaps of a smaller church. Once you have proven yourself faithful in these appointments, He will promote you to the fullness of what He has purposed for your life.

Overview of The Journey

There were basically seven phases to the journey of Israel. This journey began in the land of Egypt. From there God led them in the exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea. Israel then spent forty years in the wilderness until Joshua led them across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. Many years later, King David captured Jerusalem and Mount Zion, the last strongholds in Israel, and obtained the full inheritance God had for Israel. The following are seven distinct phases of the journey of Israel:

1. The Land of Egypt
2. The Exodus

3. The Red Sea
4. The Wilderness
5. The Jordan River
6. The Promised Land
7. Mount Zion

The Three Main Divisions of the Journey

The seven main phases of the journey of Israel may be grouped into three main divisions:

1. From Egypt to the Jordan River (under Moses)
2. The Crossing Over into Canaan (under Joshua)
3. Full possession of Canaan and Mount Zion (under David)

The Three Main Leaders of the Journey

The three main leaders of the journey of Israel were:

1. Moses, who led Israel from Egypt to the Jordan River
2. Joshua, who led Israel from the Jordan River into the Promised Land
3. David, who led Israel into full possession of their inheritance, including Mount Zion

Moses brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and led them to the Jordan River, to the border of their inheritance. Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, but did not bring them into full rest (Heb. 4:8). The people were slack and left many enemies in the land (Josh. 13:1; 18:2-3).

Several generations later, David captured the stronghold of Zion, which became God's resting place (Psa. 132:13-18). Israel did not complete their journey from Egypt to Zion until the seventh year of the reign of David (2 Sam. 5:1-7). After David was anointed for the third time, at the age of thirty-seven, he captured Zion and placed the Ark of the Covenant there.

The journey took a total of 443 years to reach the ultimate goal of Mount Zion. It was begun 480 years before the construction of the Temple of Solomon (1 Kgs. 6:1), which began in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Mount Zion was conquered in the seventh year of David's reign when he was anointed King of Israel, after he had been King of Judah for seven-and-a-half years (2 Sam. 5:5). David reigned for a total of forty years (2 Sam. 5:4).

To arrive at this conclusion mathematically we must look at the following: 480 years minus the first 4 years of Solomon's reign equals 476 years; 476 minus the 33 years of David's reign after he captured Mount Zion equals 443 years. Therefore, the complete journey of Israel from the Exodus until they reached Mount Zion took approximately 443 years. Today, God's Spirit will enable His Church to complete this entire journey within our generation.

The Seven Feasts of Israel

The celebration of the seven feasts of Israel took place under the leadership of Israel's three main leaders:

1. Moses

- (2) Feast of Passover (in Egypt)
- (3) Feast of Unleavened Bread (in Egypt)
- (4) Feast of Firstfruits (across the Red Sea, in type)
- (5) Feast of Pentecost (at Sinai)
- (6) Feast of Trumpets (in the plains of Moab, in type)

2. Joshua

- (6) Feast of Atonement (across the Jordan River at Gilgal, in type)

3. David

- (7) Feast of Tabernacles (in Jerusalem under Solomon after David took Zion)

The seven feasts of Israel were fulfilled during the journey of Israel from Egypt to Zion, either literally or in type. The Church, the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), will also spiritually experience all seven feasts.

1. Passover—represents salvation. Israel was saved by the blood of the lamb in Egypt. In the same way, we are saved by the blood of the Lamb of God.

2. Unleavened Bread—represents feeding on the pure Word of God. Israel began eating unleavened bread as soon as they were redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb. We must continually feast upon the pure word of God after we are saved by Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb.

3. Firstfruits—represents water baptism and resurrection life. When Israel crossed the Red Sea, it severed them from the past and destroyed the powers that were trying to pull them back to Egypt. When we are water baptized, many bondages are broken in our lives.

4. **Pentecost**—represents the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Israel came to Mount Sinai in the third month, which is the month of the Feast of Pentecost. At Sinai, there were all the signs that accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Israelites saw the fire of God, heard the voice of God, had provision, miracles, healing, and were conscious of God's presence.

5. **Trumpets**—represents a new call to move on. God was speaking to His people to move on from the wilderness, to go on into the Promised Land, and on to Zion. We must move on from the Pentecostal experience to all that God has for our lives.

6. **Atonement**—represents the afflicting of the soul, a deeper cleansing, and circumcision of heart. After Israel crossed the Jordan River, they were circumcised at Gilgal, and then began to deal with all of the enemies in the land, including the thirty-one kings. These kings represent ruling lords of the self-life which must be slain with the sword.

7. **Tabernacles**—represents the glory and power of God. Years later, King David captured Mount Zion, the final stronghold in the land, and placed the Ark of the Covenant on top of Mount Zion in the tent he had prepared for it. Zion was God's special dwelling place. Solomon, David's son, then took the Ark of the Covenant from Zion's summit and placed it in the Temple, and the glory of God extended to the nations of the world.

Summary of the Journey of Israel

GENESIS: The journey of Israel was conceived by God before the world began (Heb. 4:3). Not long after the flood, God made a covenant with Abraham and his seed, promising them all the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:18-21). In Canaan was Mount Zion, the place of His habitation. The Lord also made it very clear to Abraham that *before* his descendants inherited the land, they would *first* be strangers in a foreign land (Egypt) and be afflicted 400 years. Afterwards, God would judge that nation and bring Israel out with great substance (Gen. 15:13-14).

Clearly God had engineered the whole journey long before it took place. The Lord sent Joseph into Egypt. Then a famine forced Jacob and his family to relocate to Egypt. They remained in Egypt for several hundred years, growing into a nation of about three million people. Following the life of Joseph, another Pharaoh ascended to the throne and imposed slavery upon Abraham's descendants.

EXODUS TO DEUTERONOMY: In due time Moses was born, seven generations after Abraham. The Lord instituted the Passover and offered salvation from death by the blood of a sacrificed lamb, typifying salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Moses executed the

judgments of God upon Pharaoh and Egypt. Then he brought the children of Israel out of their bondage and directed them toward the Promised Land. Thus, the journey began.

Their destination was not only the Promised Land, but Mount Zion, the Lord's dwelling place (Ex. 15:17). The call of God is never just to a ministry or to an inheritance, but to a *Person*—the Lord Jesus Christ. From Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea (a type of water baptism). Then they came to Mount Sinai in the third month, the time of the Feast of Pentecost. Sinai represents the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Yet the ultimate call was not to camp around the mountain of Sinai (a type of the Pentecostal experience).

Mount Sinai was in the wilderness. The call was to a greater mountain—Zion. Upon failing all ten tests in the wilderness, God pronounced at Kadesh-Barnea that the present generation would never enter into His rest. Rest was across Jordan in the Promised Land, and ultimately at Zion. Thus the children of Israel wandered aimlessly for another 38 years until that generation died.

JOSHUA: Joshua led the children of that judged generation across Jordan into the Land of Promise. The crossing of the Jordan River represents dying to self. Their hearts were different after they crossed the Jordan River. Israel no longer desired to return to Egypt. They experienced circumcision at Gilgal, and their carnal and fleshly nature was dealt with. Joshua proceeded to lead them in battle against thirty-one kings, who represent the ruling lords of the inner life. Every area of the self-life must be dissected piece by piece by the Word of God.

JUDGES: Joshua had declared, *“How long are ye so slack to possess the land?”* (Josh. 18:3). God said to Joshua, *“There remaineth much land yet to be possessed”* (Josh. 13:1). Joshua never brought the children of Israel into full rest (Heb. 4:8). The book of Judges records how Israel settled for compromise and coexistence with their enemies after Joshua's death. Many territories were still controlled by their enemies, including Zion, which was held by the Jebusites.

1-2 SAMUEL: Several generations later, David, a man after God's own heart, became king. At age 37, he captured the fortress of Zion and placed the Ark of the Covenant in a tent on top of Mount Zion. Zion became known as the holy mountain. The glory, power, worship, and intimacy at Zion was far greater than anywhere else along their journey. Finally, 443 years after Israel started their journey from Egypt, they reached their destination, Zion.

1-2 KINGS and 1-2 CHRONICLES: David's son, Solomon, built the temple and brought the ark of glory down from Zion and placed it in the temple. The glory of God was so great in the temple of Solomon that the priests could not even stand up (1 Kg. 8:1-11). Nations came to hear the wisdom of

God and to see the glory of God that was manifested in this temple. Thus the goal of every believer is to finish *his* spiritual journey from Egypt to Zion, to come to glory, and then to bring this glory to the nations.

Part One

THE LIFE OF MOSES

From Egypt to the Jordan River

Chapter 1

HIS EARLY LIFE

Chapter 1 Outline

1. His genealogy
2. His birth
3. Raised in Pharaoh's court
4. Refusal of Egyptian sonship
5. Defense of his people
6. Flight from Egypt

In Chapter 1, we will consider the early life of the prophet Moses. This covers the first forty years of his life. We are introduced to Moses' parents in Exodus 2:1-2: "*And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.*" Thus we see Moses' father, Amram, was from the tribe of Levi.

The names of Moses' parents are not revealed here, but Exodus 6:20 tells us that their names are Amram and Jochebed: "*And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.*"

1. HIS GENEALOGY

In order to truly appreciate Moses' background and upbringing, we need to know the background and character traits of his family. Therefore, we will now consider Moses' genealogy. We are all products of our parents and grandparents. Our parents and ancestors have passed on certain traits and characteristics to us—some good and some bad. It is important for us to have an understanding of our personal genealogy to know what has been passed on to us from our ancestors.

The purpose of marriage is to produce a godly seed and to pass on godly traits to one's children. This is clearly seen in Malachi 2:15-16: "*And did not he make one [in marriage]? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away.*"

The Lord's purpose in instituting marriage was that parents would serve Him and produce godly children. The Lord desires holy marriages that bring forth holy children. Broken homes and homes of strife produce tremendous problems in the children. God declares very strongly that He hates divorce and the division of the family.

Producing Like Kind

Everything in nature brings forth after its kind. Genesis 1:12 makes this very clear: "*And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*"

An apple tree will only produce apples. Even with all the good intentions in the world, an apple tree will

never produce a pear. That is an irrevocable law of creation. Also, apple trees produce different types of apples depending on the strain of apple. Many years ago, my wife and I lived in the state of Washington, where the Golden Delicious apple was produced. It took scientists many years to develop and perfect the *Golden Delicious* apple. Fruit depends on its stock.

This is not only true of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, but also of humans. We reproduce in our children what we are. We are a product of our parents and grandparents. To a large extent, our genealogy determines what kind of person we are.

However, I must qualify this last statement. Many people think that they do not have a chance of succeeding in life because they have ungodly parents. This is absolutely false! It is true that our parents pass on to us our nature, but when we come to Christ, we become new creatures in Him. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* We have to nurture the new creation and new nature within us, which is renewed with true knowledge. In this truth lies the hope of victory.

By the grace of God, we can be different from our parents. Consider King Josiah for a moment. His father, Amon, and grandfather, Manasseh, were two of the most wicked kings of Judah who ever lived. Yet Josiah made a decision in his heart that he was going to be different. He was crowned king when he was eight years old, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of his life (2 Chron. 34:1-2).

God took the son of Jeroboam I, the founder of the northern kingdom of Israel who set up golden calves and led the Israelites into pagan worship, because God saw that he had a good heart toward Him. *“And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam”* (1 Kgs. 14:13).

The Tribe of Levi

Moses was from the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. 23:14), who was the third son of Jacob and Leah (Gen. 29:34). Levi's name comes from a root word meaning “to unite” or “to join.” Truly, the tribe of Levi was joined to God when they declared they were on the Lord's side by standing for righteousness against the other tribes of Israel at Mount Sinai. Thus, the Lord chose Levi for the priesthood, to minister before Him.

Levi had a streak of anger in him, as evidenced by his and Simeon's deceitful and violent revenge on Shechem for the rape of their sister, Dinah (Gen. 34). Jacob's dying prophecy illustrates this deep-

seated anger within Levi and Simeon: *“Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel”* (Gen. 49:5-7). In spite of his anger, Levi was a man who walked with God and his descendants later received the priesthood.

The most important thing in life is God’s opinion and testimony of a person. In Malachi 2:4-6, we read God’s testimony of Levi: *“And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.”* The Lord made a covenant of life and peace with Levi because he and his descendants feared the Lord. God makes covenants with those who fear Him (Psa. 25:14).

I want to consider for a moment the lives of Moses’ parents, Amram and Jochebed. Exodus 6:16-18 tells us that Amram was a descendant of Levi through Kohath. Amram was the grandson of Levi, which makes Moses the great-grandson of Levi. We read in Exodus 6:20: *“And Amram took him Jochebed his father’s sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.”* Amram married his aunt, Jochebed, and they had three children together: Miriam, Aaron, and Moses (Num. 26:59).

Amram and Jochebed’s three children illustrate spiritual development, for there was an evident progression in the anointing and blessing upon these three children. Miriam and Aaron were born before Moses. Miriam was a *prophetess*; Aaron was a *prophet* and a *high priest*; Moses, born last, was the greatest of the three children. He became like God to Pharaoh, speaking on God’s behalf (Ex. 7:1). Spiritually, Moses ranks above Aaron, and Aaron ranks above Miriam (Mic. 6:4). Therefore, as Amram and Jochebed progressed in their spiritual lives, their children progressed as well.

The truth I want to bring out is that the spiritual state of parents has a tremendous effect upon their children. Often the parents’ spiritual state at conception determines the spiritual condition of the child. As parents progress and mature in their spiritual lives, their children benefit. We can clearly see the spiritual progression of Moses’ parents through the lives and ministries of their children.

It is a well-known fact that children take on the nature of their parents. I remember the story of a minister who complained bitterly to the Lord about the nature of his children. The Lord replied to him,

“They took on your nature when you conceived them.” I can tell you, that brought repentance and a mighty change in his life.

Many years ago, a friend of ours said to the Lord in despair: “Dear Lord, I can see in my boys everything that is wrong in me. What have I produced?” The Lord said to her, “Begin to sow a new crop.” In other words, God was saying to her, “You are reaping what you have sown, but now start sowing a different seed in them.”

She hearkened to the word of the Lord and began to train her children in the right way. She began to firmly, but gently discipline them. She consciously chose to begin planting within them the truths of God’s Word and those good seeds gradually overcame the bad seeds she had sown in their lives. As a result, they both became wonderful Christian men and graduated from Oral Roberts University at the top of their class. The key to the turnaround in the lives of these two young men was their mother’s determination to stop sowing in them the wrong seeds and to begin sowing the right seeds.

If you have children who are rebellious or have gone astray because of things you have done, do not be discouraged. Put your hope in God. Begin to sow the right seeds in them and try to uproot the wrong seeds that you sowed in their lives. If you sow the right seed, you will reap the fruit of it. And remember, it is never too late to start sowing good seeds.

I mention this to balance what I have said about spiritual reproduction. This principle of taking on the nature of our parents applies positively for Moses, but for others it applies in a negative sense. There is no inherited sin or bondage that we cannot overcome by the grace of God through prayer. Paul said in Romans 5:20-21: “... *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*” Where sin abounds in our life or genealogy, grace can much more abound! Grace can reign in our lives as we walk in righteousness.

Many people have all kinds of problems because of the lives of their forefathers. These inherited sins and bondages cannot be ignored. When we counsel people, we must never forget that there is a reason people act the way they do. Often their behavior can be traced back to their parents and their family line. The lives of the parents and grandparents not only determine the nature of the children, but also their spiritual problems or blessings.

If we walk in holiness, we can receive the promised covenant of Isaiah 59:21: “*As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of*

the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” Pray that you will only pass on good things, like the anointing and the word of the Lord, to your natural and spiritual children.

Both blessings and curses can be passed on from one generation to the next. If a person walks in righteousness with the Lord, he can pass on his mantle and anointing to his children. Years ago, I met a minister who had a problem with cancer. I was prompted by the Holy Spirit to ask him, “Did your parents and grandparents have this problem?” He responded, “Yes, for many generations everyone in my family has died of cancer reasonably young.” The spirit of cancer had been passed on from generation to generation. We prayed that the spirit of cancer would be bound and broken so that it would not be passed on to his children.

It is essential to realize that not only is a nature passed on from parents and grandparents, but also blessings and curses. Blessings and curses continue in a family line until they are stopped. Knowing people’s genealogy is very important when you counsel them because it can give you insight into their problems.

The Lord gave me a vision when I was speaking at a Women’s Aglow meeting in New Zealand a number of years ago. The whole audience was female, except for the advisors who were male pastors. In this vision, I saw the hearts of three generations: a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter.

The grandmother had a little weed in her heart, which the Lord told me represented a specific bondage in her life. She passed that weed on to her daughter, and in her daughter, it became a very strong bush. Her daughter, in turn, passed that bondage on to her daughter.

However, in the heart of her daughter it was no longer a weed or a bush, but a full-grown tree. Thus the problem that the grandmother had was passed on to her daughter and from her daughter to her granddaughter, all because neither the grandmother nor the mother allowed God to deal with it. Bad habits and sins, and also blessings and anointings, generally increase in each successive generation.

We must realize that unless problems are dealt with in our lives, we pass them on, and they become even more powerful in the lives of our children. It is crucial to deal with every area of sin and rebellion in our lives. If we do not, they will be reproduced in our children and increase in strength in them.

Parents have an awesome responsibility to keep their hearts pure so they do not pass on anything ungodly to their children. We will reproduce ourselves in others for good or bad. Let us pray that we only pass on the blessings and nature of God to our natural and spiritual children.

Spiritual Reproduction

I want to consider now briefly the importance of spiritual reproduction, which, in other words, is reproduction in our spiritual children and grandchildren. The basic goal of Christianity is twofold: First, to know God and become like Him; and second, to make disciples and impart to them the knowledge and character of Christ.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (NIV). God’s desire for us is that we make many disciples, but He wants us to impart the right things to them.

The importance of what we pass on to our spiritual children was illustrated to me many years ago in a church service. The pastor asked me to open the service because he was going to arrive a little late. The worship service went very well and then there was a time of worship in the Spirit.

As I was meditating upon the Lord, all of a sudden the old wooden floor of the church began to shake. I could not imagine what was happening. When I opened my eyes, I saw someone jumping up and down. This man became red in the face and then he prophesied so fast that no one could understand what he had said. Although his prophecy may have been from God, it was not a blessing to anyone because of the manner in which he delivered it.

Shortly afterwards, the floor shook again and someone else gave a message in tongues in the same way that this man had prophesied. Then someone else gave the interpretation, using exactly the same gestures and tone of voice. After all this, I thought it was time I should say something, but before I could say anything, the pastor arrived and prophesied in the exact same manner as the members of his church.

I realized that this pastor had reproduced in his congregation his manner of operating in the spiritual gifts. However, it was not proper because it distracted from the message that the Lord wanted to deliver to the church. In this case, it was not a matter of correcting the church members. I had to first talk to the pastor after the church service.

The whole point of this story is that the pastor reproduced himself in his congregation. They even prophesied and spoke in other tongues like he did. It is a maxim of life that we produce like kind. Hosea 4:9 says, *“Like people, like priest.”* The members of a congregation usually imitate the pastor. They often speak and act just like him.

The tone that a leader sets in the church will be reproduced in the congregation. The congregation follows their pastor's example. In reality, most people do not see Jesus; they see the pastor. They assume that their pastor is like Jesus. If the pastor shouts; his congregation usually shouts. If the pastor is quiet; his congregation is usually quiet. Obviously, this is a broad generalization, but it is often the case.

A number of years ago, my wife and I oversaw a Bible school in Switzerland. One day my wife went to visit the principal of the Bible school and his family. While my wife was visiting them, she noticed their little four-year-old boy walking back and forth with his hands behind his back as he talked. His parents said to him, "David, what are you doing?" He replied, "I am acting like Brother Bailey." Apparently, I held my hands behind my back when I preached. This was a habit to which I was totally oblivious, but in the mind of that little child, that was preaching.

We must realize that we reproduce ourselves in others. Therefore, it is vital for us to be good role models. We must have good habits because we will reproduce ourselves in our spiritual children. Pastors must be an example to their congregations.

Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:12,15-16: *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."*

We also must have pure doctrine. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* Paul took great care to only teach his followers, and especially Timothy, the pure truth of God's Word. He instructed Timothy to teach to others what he had taught him.

2. HIS BIRTH

Before considering Moses' birth, we should first consider the background and events that led up to his birth. We read in Exodus 1:6-8: *"And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph."*

Prior to the birth of Moses, God sent Joseph to Egypt to prepare a place for his brothers. Later, Jacob

and his sons moved to Egypt, where Jacob, and later Joseph and his brothers, died. The children of Israel continued to prosper and increase in number in the land of Egypt, at which time there arose in Egypt a king who had not known Joseph.

This Pharaoh was very wicked and he afflicted the children of Israel, as seen in Exodus 1:9-11: *“And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.”*

Born Under Slavery

Pharaoh’s cruelty to the children of Israel is recorded in Exodus 1:13-14: *“And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.”* The lives of the Israelites were made bitter and they cried out to God in their bondage. This is the environment into which Moses was born. The backdrop to Moses’ birth is the slavery of his people and their need for a deliverer.

Many people believe that a bad environment corrupts a person’s character. Some assert that if a child is raised in the ideal social conditions, he will be a good child. However, when we study the Word of God, we find that some of the greatest men of God were born and raised in terrible environments.

Moses was born into a nation of slaves. In Egypt, there was affliction, murmuring, bitterness, and everything not conducive to a child’s upbringing. We can also think of a more famous child—the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in Nazareth. Nazareth had such a terrible reputation that Nathaniel said, *“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”* (Jn. 1:46). It was a terrible place, yet that is the place where God chose His Son, Jesus, to be raised.

Children are covered by the mantle and anointing of their parents. Through faith and prayer, they can be preserved even in the most difficult environments. I want to bring this point out very clearly from Scripture.

We read in Isaiah 53:2 concerning Christ, *“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.”* Jesus was a tender plant in a dry ground. The nation of Israel, and especially Nazareth, was in a terrible spiritual condition when He came. Yet He triumphed over His

situation and fulfilled God's will for His life, and so can each one of us. Faith can overcome every adversity and obstacle.

The birth of Moses is recorded in Exodus 2:1-2: *“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.”*

Many people are called by God to raise their children on the foreign field or in one of the ghettos of this country. They might think to themselves, “What will our child become?” Remember Moses and the Lord Jesus Christ. Your children can become “a tender plant out of a dry ground” like Christ if you will pray for them and seek to train them in the ways of God.

In summation, Moses was born in a time of affliction, grief, and bondage, when the Israelites were governed by a hostile king. They were serving hard taskmasters. Also, Pharaoh, being stirred up by Satan, commanded that all the Hebrew male children were to be killed.

We read in Exodus 1:15-16: *“And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.”*

A genocide of this nature can be seen in three places in Scripture. The first time occurred when Pharaoh sought to kill all the Hebrew male children. The second time was at the birth of the Lord Jesus, when Herod gave a similar commandment (Mt. 2:16). The third time will be when Satan seeks to destroy the newly born man-child at the end of the ages (Rev. 12:2-4).

Hidden By His Mother

It was the faith of his parents that preserved Moses from the king's commandment to kill all of the Hebrew male children. This is developed in Hebrews 11:23: *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.”* Our faith can overcome every adversity that our children may experience. It is especially important for pastors to be filled with faith, because if they are, their faith will be transmitted to the parents in their churches and the children will be protected.

The faith of Moses' parents was transmitted to Moses. In Hebrews 11:24-29 we read that Moses' life was a life of faith, just like his parents' lives. We can only impart to others what we have. If someone

needs \$100 and you only have \$10, you cannot meet their need. You can only give what you have.

The lame man at the temple gate asked Peter and John for alms. Peter said to him, *“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk”* (Acts 3:6). Peter did not have any money to give this poor, lame beggar, but he had faith in Jesus Christ and he was able to impart that faith to this man. And the lame man was instantly healed! Moses’ parents are numbered in Hebrews chapter 11 with the heroes of faith. If you are a parent, seek to be like Moses’ parents and impart faith to your children. It is very important for parents to be filled with the right things because they can transmit them to their children. Parents are held accountable for what they impart to their children. Therefore, parents should seek the Lord and ask Him to purify their lives of anything that is not of God.

Rescued by Pharaoh’s Daughter

After three months, Jochebed could not hide Moses any more. As an act of faith in God, she put him in a little ark (or basket) in the river. Moses’ sister Miriam watched from afar off to see what would happen to him (Ex. 2:3-4). Then Pharaoh’s daughter came down to the river to bathe herself and she found baby Moses in the little ark. She had compassion on Moses, knowing that he was one of the Hebrew children (Ex. 2:5-6).

At this point Moses’ sister drew near and asked Pharaoh’s daughter if she wanted her to get a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for her. The account continues in Exodus 2:8-10: *“And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child’s mother. And Pharaoh’s daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.”*

The savior of Israel, Moses, who would become the principal adversary of the Egyptians, was saved and nourished by the daughter of Pharaoh, Israel’s adversary (Ex. 2:5-10). Ecclesiastes 2:26 illustrates a divine principle: *“For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.”* God uses the wicked, including Satan, to nourish, serve, and bless the righteous.

God used ravens to feed and sustain the prophet Elijah while he was in hiding by the brook Cherith (1 Kgs. 17:4-6). In the Word of God, ravens, which are unclean animals (Lev. 11:15), can represent the

ungodly or unclean spirits (cf. Prov. 30:17; Isa. 34:11). Many times God uses sinners to take care of His saints.

Also, Pharaoh's daughter paid Jochebed, Moses' mother, to take care of him: "*And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it*" (Ex. 2:9). Because Moses' mother acted in faith, God orchestrated circumstances so that not only would she not lose Moses, but she would be paid by the Egyptian court to take care of her own son. What a miraculous turn of events! The king's evil commandment was turned around by his own daughter and used to bless the righteous.

Beloved, never forget the words of Romans 8:28, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" As God said to my wife many years ago, Romans 8:28 works all the time or it never works. God is working right now to cause circumstances to turn for your good. Just set your love on Him and expect things to turn around in your life!

3. RAISED IN PHARAOH'S COURT

Moses was raised in Pharaoh's court as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, as we read in Exodus 2:10: "*And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.*" God preordained Moses to be raised in Pharaoh's court so that he would receive the training necessary to later become the leader of the nation of Israel. God trained Moses in the finest secular school of his days.

Wisdom

Acts 7:22 records that during this time something was happening in the life of Moses: "*Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*" The prime prerequisite for leadership is *wisdom*, for wisdom comprises all other learning skills. David taught Solomon the value of wisdom in Proverbs 4:7: "*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*"

In Daniel 1:4, those who were chosen from among the children of Israel to stand before the king of Babylon were required to have the following qualifications: "*Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the*

learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” It was essential for Moses to learn wisdom to stand in the presence of the king, as it was for Daniel.

We need wisdom in every area of our lives; however, I would like to highlight three areas of our lives, in particular, in which we need the Lord’s wisdom: time, finances, and people. A wise person knows how to handle his time, his finances, and people. Those who lack wisdom waste their time, mishandle their finances, and mistreat people.

1. TIME: As believers and especially as leaders, we must wisely manage our time and make every minute of the day count. Moses prayed in Psalm 90:12, “*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*” Paul said in Ephesians 5:16, “*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*” Moses was going to be responsible for the entire nation of Israel and have tremendous demands upon his time. Therefore, it was crucial for him to learn how to manage his time wisely. In order to succeed in life, we must not waste our time.

2. FINANCES: A leader must have financial integrity and good judgment.

3. PEOPLE—A leader must appreciate the people God entrusts to him and care for their needs.

A Right Attitude Toward Secular Training

Another important fact concerning the upbringing of Moses was his attitude toward his secular training. It is extremely important that we have a right attitude toward our secular training and occupation. It is vital that we apply ourselves in our studies, especially in the realm of languages. John Ruskin, one of the great authors in my homeland, England, once made this statement: “The educated person is not necessarily the person who knows seven languages; the educated person is the one who knows his own language.” Be diligent to study and become the best communicator you can possibly be, especially if you are called to be a minister.

God prepares us in the secular realm for our spiritual calling. After I graduated from Bible school, I was earnestly seeking the Lord to know my next step in life. I sincerely wanted to take a pastorate like so many of my classmates were doing. However, God clearly spoke to me that I was to go back home and work for a season. I was disappointed at this direction from God, but the Lord used it to prepare me for the pressures that I would encounter in the ministry. After I worked for a time, the Lord released me to go to France as a missionary.

Therefore, we must not despise our secular training. This is especially important in times of revival. My

wife and I had the privilege of being involved in a mighty revival in New Zealand a number of years ago and the Lord taught us many things from that experience. In the blessing of revival God pours out His Spirit and multitudes get saved and start attending church. However, one of the pitfalls of revival is that many people downplay the importance of their secular employment. Having been touched by God, they think that the only thing that counts in life is preaching or witnessing for God and nothing else.

Their mentality is that they will give up their jobs and just live by faith. What they do not realize, though, is that faith only comes from God, and God only gives us faith to accomplish His purposes. He has preordained our secular employment for a purpose.

I am not saying that God does not call some people to quit their secular employment to serve Him. As soon as Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John, they immediately left their fishing nets and followed the Lord (Mt. 4:18-22). Levi quit his job as a tax collector the moment Jesus called him to the ministry (Mk. 2:14). However, it is very important that we walk in the will of God and stay in our secular employment until God tells us enter the ministry full-time.

Isaiah 28:23-26 speaks of the fact that God gives skills in the secular realm as well as in the spiritual realm, and both are very important: *“Give ear and hear my voice, listen and hear my speech. Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? When he has leveled its surface, does he not sow the black cummin and scatter the cummin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in its place? For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him”* (NKJV).

It is God who teaches the farmer how to sow seed and harvest, and which instruments to use. Thus it is God who gives the farmer the necessary and appropriate wisdom to raise his crops. Isaiah 28:29 sums this up by saying, *“This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”* Wisdom for farming does not sound very spiritual, but it is very necessary for life.

Think for a moment of all the people in Scripture who were renowned for wisdom. Moses, Solomon, and Daniel are a few examples that might come to mind right away. Moses’ training was in a secular court in Egypt. Daniel’s training was in a secular court as well, in Babylon. Solomon did not have that advantage. Although Solomon was very wise, he failed in life. I am trying to stress the importance of our secular training. Parents and pastors should pray with young people and find out what God’s will is for their life and what secular occupation or skills the Lord wants them to learn. We should pray for everything in life, particularly for our employment.

How can we determine what occupation God has ordained for a person? Often the key lies in one's *desire*. It is God who places the desire for a certain occupation in a person's heart. When that occupation or talent is something God wants him to pursue, he will also have the *skills* and the *temperament* to perform it. These three things are a very good rule of thumb for determining which occupation God has ordained for a person:

1. Desire
2. Skill
3. Temperament

There was a young lady in Switzerland who told my wife and I that she wanted to be a pastor. We replied, "Pray to see if God has called you to that ministry." In prayer, God quickened to her Hebrews 5:4, which says, "*No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*"

God spoke very clearly to her that He had not called her to be a pastor, and that she could not have that honor because God had not given it to her. As she was somewhat downcast, we tried to encourage her by saying, "Let us pray and ask God what He has called you to do." After we prayed, she said, "I really feel God wants me to be a medical doctor." We prayed and felt the witness that she should study to become a doctor.

Years ago in Switzerland there were so many people who wanted to be medical doctors that the government created a very difficult Greek examination in order to select the best students. This young lady was concerned because she did not know Greek. We said to her, "If God has called you to be a medical doctor and the Swiss government has put this mountain in your way, God is able to take you over this mountain."

God did just that! He gave her the ability to learn Greek and she scored a very high grade in her examination. Today, she is a physician and is also married to a physician. She has a lovely family and is a real blessing to her church. She is very happy and blessed by God because she is in God's ordained vocation for her life. God knew that she did not have the skills or abilities necessary to be a pastor and that she would be happiest as a doctor. God always knows best. That is why it is so important for us to seek Him to find out His will for our lives.

It is very important to understand that in revival the attitude of so many is to minimize the importance of their occupation. However, in the Word of God, it is clear that our occupation is very important because God uses it to develop characteristics and abilities within us that will be used eternally. Our

God-ordained secular occupation prepares us for our earthly and heavenly calling. God used the fishing trade to train Peter to become an evangelist and fisher of men. God used David's background as a shepherd to prepare him to be the shepherd of Israel, not only in his earthly life, but also in the millennial reign of Christ (Ezek. 34:23; 37:24).

Not everyone will preach in heaven. There are many other skills that are necessary to operate the kingdom of heaven. One of the things that amazes anyone who sees heaven is its similitude to earth. There are buildings, houses, books, rivers, lakes, and many other things. A whole kingdom must be run. In His wisdom, God governs this earth and He equips people to administer His commands. Therefore, every believer is important in God's eyes and has a significant role to play in His kingdom, even if that role is not one of the fivefold ministries.

To receive all of the blessings God has ordained for our lives, we must have the right attitude toward our secular occupation. Remember, your God-ordained occupation will equip you for your earthly and eternal ministry.

4. REFUSAL OF EGYPTIAN SONSHIP

We will now look at the next forty years of Moses' life from his refusal of Egyptian sonship to his stay in the Arabian desert. We read in Hebrews 11:24-26: *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."*

Moses was an amazing man! He refused the honors and privileges of Egypt, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. Even while he was growing up in Pharaoh's court, surrounded by people who served pagan gods, the Lord revealed his call to him. Moses made a *commitment* in his heart to the will and call of God for his life.

Our commitment to the Lord's call for our lives is very important. Christ said in Matthew 22:14, *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* Few are chosen because few make a real commitment to the call of God. This is one of the difficulties and hardships of being a leader. Many people acknowledge that God has called them and follow the call of God and enter the ministry. However, unless they have made a true commitment in their hearts, they will not be willing to endure all the reproaches, difficulties, and hardships that the call of God brings upon their lives.

Jesus spoke of the cost of following Him in Luke 9:23-24: *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”* In order to serve God, we must deny ourselves, bear our cross daily, and give up everything for Jesus. We must put the will of God before everything in our lives, including family, friends, and our personal ambitions (Mt. 10:37). Moses denied himself of the pleasures and riches he could have had in order to serve God.

Moses made a commitment to follow God’s call for his life. Not only had he recognized and acknowledged the call, but he was so committed to God’s will for his life that he refused the pleasures of Egypt and chose to suffer affliction with the children of Israel. The result of that decision can be seen in the narrative of Scripture—he became one of the greatest men who ever lived.

5. DEFENSE OF HIS PEOPLE

The Word of God tells us that when Moses was forty years old, it was in his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. When he saw one of the Hebrews being beaten by an Egyptian, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

We read in Acts 7:23-25 concerning Moses’ defense of his people: *“And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not”* (see Exodus 2:11-12).

Moses knew the call of God upon his life long before he was forty years old. He nurtured his call in his heart from a very early age. Others must have had knowledge of Moses’ call as well. Acts 7:25 says that Moses *“supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand, would deliver them.”* This phrase leads us to believe that there must have been a general knowledge of the call of Moses among the children of Israel. When God has called a person, He confirms it to others as well. For example, it must have been known by many throughout all Israel that David was anointed by Samuel to be king.

The story of Moses’ defense of his people continues in Acts 7:26-28: *“And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?”* (see Exodus 2:13-14). The next day when Moses went to visit his brethren

again, he tried to settle a dispute between some of them. The Hebrews rejected Moses because he had killed the Egyptian.

6. FLIGHT FROM EGYPT

I would like to consider now an interesting situation recorded two different ways in Scripture. We read in Exodus 2:14b-15: *“And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian.”*

When Pharaoh learned that Moses had killed an Egyptian, he sought to kill him; thus, Moses fled from Egypt to the land of Midian. Exodus 2:14-15 paints a picture of Moses fleeing from Pharaoh for fear of his life. Acts 7:29 conveys the same idea: *“Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of [Midian], where he begat two sons.”*

However, Hebrews 11:27 gives a heavenly perspective to this incident. The Spirit of God inspired Paul to write in Hebrews 11:27: *“By faith [Moses] forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”* God’s record of Moses’ flight from Egypt is quite different from Moses’ record of the same incident. Man often looks at an action and hastily concludes, “That was a failure.” Many have assumed that Moses fled to get away from the king, but God, who sees the hearts of man, looked into the heart of Moses and records that it was “by faith” that he fled from Egypt.

God always sees the real reason, the motive behind a person’s actions. God looks at our response to what He speaks to us. The Lord says, “By faith Moses fled.” That is how Moses’ flight from Egypt is recorded in heaven for all of eternity. In heaven, we will be shown the record of our lives, and I am sure it will be quite different from what people think of us upon earth. Be very careful about judging others.

Pastors are called by God to care for people. Many times people say about a person, “He failed in this certain situation.” However, God often records it quite differently. Pastors should ask the Lord: “Lord, why did they do that? How do you see this person? Please allow me to see this person as You do.”

It is very important to see others as God does. That is one of the privileges and responsibilities of leadership. Leaders who counsel others must see them through God’s eyes and understand their motives.

When you understand why a person does the things he does, then you can accurately address not only

his actions, but the source of the actions. If a tree produces bad fruit, it is not enough to deal with the bad fruit. You must deal with the source of the bad fruit. Pray that the Lord will help you to see others through His eyes.

Chapter 2

IN THE ARABIAN DESERT

Chapter 2 Outline

1. Moses helps Jethro's daughters
2. Moses marries Zipporah
3. The purpose of the wilderness
4. Moses was chosen by God

MOSES HELPS JETHRO'S DAUGHTERS

As we read in Exodus 2:15-17, Moses fled from Egypt to Midian and there performed a very heroic act: *“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.”*

Moses must have been very despondent and discouraged after he was rejected by his own people and had to flee Egypt for fear of his life. All of his aspirations had been crushed. After he slew the Egyptian, Moses thought that the Israelites would embrace him as their leader, but instead they rejected him. However, in his moment of despondency, he still stood for righteousness by defending Jethro's seven daughters, who were complete strangers to him, and watered their flocks.

2. MOSES MARRIES ZIPPORAH

We see the result of Moses' actions in Exodus 2:18-22: *“And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.”* Jethro (or Reuel) gave Moses his daughter, Zipporah, and welcomed him into his family. Moses spent the next forty years shepherding Jethro's flocks (Ex. 3:1).

This courageous act was the key to the next forty years of his life, leading him to his wife and a place to stay and work. It released God's provision for his life for the next forty years. Our actions and attitudes, even in the valley of despair, are very important. When we go through trials and wilderness experiences, God sends people to care for us and comfort us. The Lord spoke to a widow to sustain the prophet Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:9). We should be sensitive to the Lord to know if He wants us to help or comfort someone in their time of need.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE WILDERNESS

Why did God cause Moses to spend forty years of his life in the backside of the desert? What was the purpose of this forty-year wilderness journey in Moses' life? There were many reasons, but I would

like to highlight only four of them at this point.

1. God wanted Moses to understand sheep. We read in Exodus 3:1, “*Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.*” Moses spent forty years in the wilderness as a shepherd of Jethro’s flocks. God had a definite purpose in giving Moses this seemingly insignificant task for forty long years. God likens His people to sheep in Isaiah 53:6: “*All we like sheep have gone astray.*” God was teaching Moses how to be a gentle shepherd.

David also learned to lead people by first caring for a flock: “*He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands*” (Psa. 78:70-72).

2. God wanted Moses to know what it was like to be a stranger, thereby developing compassion in his life for others. Moses had two sons in the wilderness. The name of his firstborn son was Gershom, which means “stranger.” We read in Exodus 2:22: “*And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.*” Moses knew what it was like to be a stranger. He had to know the heart of a stranger in order to take the children of Israel out of Egypt, where they were strangers, and take them into another a strange land.

The Lord gave very specific instructions to the Israelites regarding the treatment of strangers (see Ex. 22:21; Lev. 19:10; 23:22; Deut. 10:18-19; 24:20-21; 26:12-13). We read in Exodus 23:9, “*Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*” Not only could they not oppress strangers, but they were commanded to love them as themselves: “*And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God*” (Lev. 19:33-34).

We need to understand what it is like to live in a foreign country. Being a stranger involves experiencing loneliness, a different language, different customs and food, a different culture, and a need for friendship and understanding. In order to have compassion on others, we need to know what it feels like to be a stranger.

Living in a strange land can be very lonely and frightening. I felt like a complete stranger when I was a missionary to France. Even though I had studied French for many years, I had great difficulty in

understanding what the little children were talking about. The academic French I had learned in England was quite different from the French they were speaking. It was a very difficult experience for me.

Even when you know a foreign language, it is often hard to completely grasp it because every language has its own spirit and unique thought patterns. A problem we had in one of the islands of the South Pacific illustrates this point. A former student of ours from France pastored a church in New Caledonia. In French, he said to a Canadian missionary who was visiting him, "I am going on vacation."

The Canadian missionary did not understand the French word that the pastor had used for vacation, so he looked it up in a French dictionary and concluded from its multiple definitions that the pastor had said that he was retiring. While the pastor was on vacation, this missionary asked a friend of his to become the new pastor of the church. We arrived just after the pastor had returned from vacation. You can imagine what a disaster the misunderstanding turned out to be. It is important to understand the spirit of people in order to truly comprehend their language.

Ministering or being a missionary in a foreign nation is very difficult. Even if you speak the same language, their culture and way of doing things is completely different to yours. Our missionary organization, Zion Fellowship International, has missionaries all around the world. So many of them have personally told me about the deep loneliness they experience on the mission field. Loneliness is something every leader, pastor, and missionary has to overcome by the grace of God.

3. God wanted Moses to become acquainted with the wilderness. It was vital for Moses to be familiar with the land through which he would later lead the children of Israel en route to the Promised Land. In order to lead others, it is necessary that we first go where we want to take them. Otherwise, we will not know how to lead them; we will not know the obstacles along the way; and we will not know how to react when problems arise. God must take leaders into what He has in store for the whole congregation or ministry and give them a foretaste of the inheritance. This will enable us to be well acquainted with the path and know how to lead others.

The wilderness is a formation period. God tailors the wilderness experience for every leader so that they will understand the attitudes and reactions of the people they will later lead. We must experience the wilderness ourselves so that we can help and encourage others when they go through their wilderness experience. Without that preparation, leaders tend to be very critical of their people because they do not understand what they are going through. One of the marks of a great leader is his or her ability to understand what people are going through and point them in the right direction.

4. God wanted to develop humility in Moses' life. When Moses killed the Egyptian in defense of

the Hebrew who was being beaten, he was not completely dependent upon God. He thought that he would be able to fulfill God's call upon his life as the deliverer of the children of Israel. However, when he came out of his wilderness experience, he did not even feel capable of speaking to Pharaoh or the Israelites (Ex. 4:10).

God sent Moses into the wilderness for forty years to develop humility in his life. This is one of the main purposes of the wilderness for every believer, as described in Deuteronomy 8:16: *"Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end."*

Humility makes us completely dependent upon God. We realize that we are nothing and that we cannot do anything without the Lord's help. Even Jesus Christ was completely dependent on His Father, saying in John 5:19, *"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."* We must learn to have this same dependence upon the Heavenly Father as well.

Four Purposes for Moses' Wilderness Experience

1. God wanted Moses to understand sheep.
2. God wanted Moses to know what it was like to be a stranger, thereby developing compassion in his life for others.
3. God wanted Moses to become acquainted with the wilderness.
4. God wanted to develop humility in Moses' life.

4. MOSES WAS CHOSEN BY GOD

As we have already said in the Introduction, the three principal steps in the Christian life are (Rev. 17:14):

1. Being called by God
2. Being chosen by God
3. Being found faithful by God

In Chapter 1, we considered the call of God upon Moses' life, which covered the first forty years of his life. In Chapter 2, we have considered the second period of forty years in Moses' life when he was chosen by God in the wilderness. Jesus said in Matthew 22:14, *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

Where are we chosen by God? We are chosen in the “furnace of affliction,” as seen in Isaiah 48:10: *“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”* It is in fiery trials that God purifies us and chooses us.

1 Peter 1:7 says, *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”* Our attitudes in the wilderness and times of affliction determine whether or not we are chosen by God. Moses passed his tests in the wilderness and was chosen by God and commissioned at the burning bush.

These three steps can be seen in David’s life as well.

1. David was called by God at a young age to be the king of Israel.
2. David was chosen by God nearly thirteen years later after many years of trials and afflictions and after he lost everything at Ziklag.
3. David was faithful, first as king of Judah and later as king of Israel.

It was David’s attitude at Ziklag when he lost everything he had, including his family, that ushered him to the throne. Only a few days later Saul was killed and David was anointed as king of Judah. At Ziklag, even his own men wanted to stone him, but David encouraged himself in the Lord (1 Sam. 30:6). Therefore, seek always to have the right attitude in trials, beloved, and the Lord will reward you.

Chapter 3

THE RETURN TO EGYPT

Chapter 3 Outline

1. The burning bush
2. Circumcision at the inn
3. Moses meets Aaron
4. Gathers the elders

1. THE BURNING BUSH

In the third chapter of Exodus, the Lord met with Moses at the burning bush. We read in Exodus 3:1-2: *“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*”

At the burning bush, Moses had a fresh meeting with the Lord and was commissioned by Him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. After every wilderness experience, we need to meet with the Lord afresh and receive a fresh charge or commission from Him. Often our commissioning takes place after a wilderness experience or a time of affliction, as with Elijah who was recommissioned after he went through a period of depression.

The first step in our Christian life is to be called, but then we must be commissioned by God. The Lord may have called us to a specific ministry, but we have to wait until God commissions and anoints us to begin the ministry. We cannot send ourselves on a mission; we must be commissioned and sent out by God (Isa. 6:8).

This is clearly brought out in Romans 10:15: *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”* This same principle applies to the mission field. Missionaries must be commissioned and sent out by God.

The Fire of God

The burning bush that was not consumed by the fire is a great phenomenon. Fire is characteristic of several things in the Word of God:

1. The Old Testament sacrifices were burned and consumed by fire (Lev. 2:3; 5:12).
2. Fire represents the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of burning purifies our carnal nature (Isa. 4:4).
3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit includes being baptized in the fire of the Lord (Acts 2:4; Mt. 3:12). When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire, the power of God burns and consumes all of the dross of our carnal nature.

4. Fire is a type of the presence of God (Ezek. 1:27; Ex. 13:21; 24:17). Hebrews 12:29 says, *“For our God is a consuming fire.”*
5. We should ask the Lord to commission us and bring His fire into our lives to enable us to fulfill His purpose for our lives.

Holy Ground

There is an amazing truth seen in Moses’ response to the burning bush. We read in Exodus 3:3-4: *“And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.”*

When God saw that he turned aside, He called Moses out of the midst of the bush. Moses’ heart was alert to take notice of the new thing that God was doing. If we are going to be used in the last day revival, we must be sensitive to God and recognize when He is doing something new. The Lord says in Isaiah 43:19, *“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.”* When God does a new thing in our days, will we be alert enough like Moses to recognize it and move when God moves?

Everything depended on Moses turning aside at that moment. Moses was not expecting God to speak to him that day and especially not through a burning bush. God often speaks to us when we least expect it. God speaks to us in church and in our times of personal devotions, but He can also speak to us while we are working, going about our daily routine, sweeping the floors, or even cooking. We must be sensitive to the voice of the Lord and be in a constant posture of prayer because we never know when God might speak to us.

God told Moses in Exodus 3:5 that he was standing on holy ground: *“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”* What made the ground holy? It was not different than any other piece of ground. The presence of God sanctified the ground and made it holy because God is holy. It is the presence of God that makes a piece of ground, a building, or a person holy.

Shoes collect dirt and nothing unclean can stand before God’s holiness. Therefore, God commanded Moses to take off his shoes. Holiness is a separation from the world and a separation unto God. Holiness has that joint connotation of being separated from sin and joined unto God.

The story continues in Exodus 3:6: *“Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.”* By telling Moses that He was the God of his father, God was acknowledging the faith of Moses’ father, Amram. As we have noted before, in Hebrews 11:23 the parents of Moses are included in the list of the heroes of faith. It is clear that the faith of Amram was transferred to Moses.

Many children from Christian families go astray, often because they have not developed their own personal relationship with the Lord. When they repent and come back to God, they meet the God of their father and mother. In his letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul acknowledged the faith of Timothy’s mother, Eunice, and also the faith of his grandmother, Lois. *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also”* (2 Tim. 1:5). The faith of God was transferred from one generation to another to another.

God’s Concern for His People

In Exodus 3:7-10, God opened His heart to Moses and expressed His deep concern for His people: *“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”*

There are seven points that I would like to highlight from God’s message to Moses in Exodus 3:7-10:

1. “I have surely seen their affliction” (v. 7).
2. “I have heard their cry” (v. 7).
3. “I know their sorrows” (v. 7).
4. “I have also seen the oppression of the Egyptians” (v. 9).
5. “I am come down to deliver them” (v. 8).
6. “I am come down to bring them up out of the land of the Egyptians, unto a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (v. 8).
7. “I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt” (v. 10).

Points 1-4 show that God saw the afflictions of the children of Israel. Points 5-7 show God's reaction to the affliction of His people.

From this passage, we see that God not only was aware of what was happening to the children of Israel, but He was also deeply concerned for them. Isaiah 63:9 says, "*In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*" When we are afflicted, God is afflicted as well.

Be encouraged, beloved; God sees the heartaches that you are experiencing and He has not forgotten you. Remember, God does not always answer our prayers immediately, just as in the case of the Israelites. However, in His perfect time, He will deliver you from your affliction because He is a loving and merciful God.

Promise of Israel's Deliverance

God's promise to deliver Israel in Exodus 3:8 reveals a very important truth: "*And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*" The Lord took the children of Israel OUT OF Egyptian bondage to lead them UNTO a land flowing with milk and honey.

When God delivers us from a problem, a situation or a bondage, His desire is to lead us into something better for our lives. Deliverance is essentially a two-step process: (1) being delivered from something bad, and (2) being brought into something good. It is essential that we grasp this truth for our own lives. God not only wants to deliver us from this world, but He wants to bring us into the fullness of our inheritance.

This truth can be illustrated by the transplantation of a tree. Before a tree is uprooted, another place is first prepared for it. Understanding this principle is essential for counselors. When you counsel people, apply this principle to their situation. If they want to make a change of direction in their lives, ask them if God has already prepared another place for them. It would not be wise for a family to pack all the furniture in their house and move out without having somewhere else to go.

I have counseled many people who have told me that God was delivering them out of their current situation. When I asked them what they were going to do next, they did not have any idea. We must

not leave our current place or situation until God releases us, and He will not release us unless He has already prepared another place for us. God never moves without first having a clearly defined plan, and neither should we!

The Response of Moses

Moses meekly responded to the Lord's commission by saying, "*Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*" (Ex. 3:11). Moses responded to the Lord with the humility and meekness of a true leader. Notice the difference between Moses' attitude after forty years in the wilderness and his attitude before his wilderness experience.

Forty years before he had killed the Egyptian and tried to rally the children of Israel around his leadership in his own strength. The result was a bitter failure. However, after forty years of being humbled in the wilderness, Moses was truly dependent on the Lord.

He said to the Lord, "Who am I that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" The Lord wants us to have this same humble attitude and sense of unworthiness.

Three Things Favoring the Leadership of Moses

In reality, Moses was the most qualified man to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. There are three principal things that favored Moses as God's chosen deliverer:

1. Moses was raised in Pharaoh's court.
2. Moses was trained for authority and leadership.
3. Moses was an Israelite, knowing both the Egyptian and Hebrew mentality.

1. Moses was raised in Pharaoh's court. The upbringing of Moses in the court of Pharaoh prepared him to confront Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses knew how to stand in the presence of a king.

The Lord could not send someone to Pharaoh who did not know how to act in the presence of a king, which is a very awesome experience. In Daniel 1:4, the young men were chosen on the basis of their ability to stand in the king's palace.

When I was a child, my father had a private audience with King George VI of England. He took me with him to Buckingham Palace. It is an experience that I will never forget. Before we were permitted

to see the king, we were instructed on how to act in his presence. Moses' preparation in the court of Pharaoh uniquely prepared him to be the deliverer of Israel.

2. Moses was trained for authority and leadership. The deliverer of Israel had to be someone who knew how to lead and govern. Moses was trained in the highest court of his day. As the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he would have been prepared for leadership and authority.

When my wife and I went to Africa for the first time, a veteran missionary to Africa told me that the three qualities necessary to minister in Africa are authority, ability, and forgiveness. I believe the same principle applies to ministry in any nation. It is essential for leaders to have God-given authority. We cannot command authority; authority comes from God alone.

Leaders also must have the ability to minister. People expect ministers to have the answer to every Bible question and the solution to every problem in life. The first time I ministered in Africa, I taught on the book of Deuteronomy in a very primitive tribe. These pastors knew their Bibles very well and they asked me difficult questions from obscure Bible verses.

When I taught on Deuteronomy 23, I bypassed verse 18 because I thought it was irrelevant for that Bible class, but the senior minister wanted to know what it meant. Deuteronomy 23:18 says, "*Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*" I told him that it simply means that churches cannot accept the offering of a prostitute.

There was complete silence in the classroom, and I realized I had touched on a very sensitive subject. So I asked them what they had been doing. To my shock, I was informed that the richest people in those villages were the village prostitutes. The pastors had been accepting their offerings because they needed the money to sustain the churches. They were confronted by the Spirit of God with a very difficult decision. Being extremely poor, they depended on the offerings of the prostitutes, but what they were doing was contrary to the Word of God. I asked everyone to bow their heads and pray with me.

As we were praying, the Lord gave me a word of wisdom. I said to the pastors, "How many of you are getting enough money?" No one raised his hand. I continued by saying: "Perhaps this sin is the reason for your financial difficulties. Let us ask the Lord to give you grace to go back to your pulpits next Sunday and declare that you will not accept the prostitutes' money." It took about half an hour of prayer for these pastors to consecrate themselves and make the commitment to do the right thing. Eventually, one by one, these pastors said, "Yes, Lord, I will be faithful to Your Word." Then we prayed that God would honor their consecration.

We visited that town a few months later and I noticed that all of the faces of the pastors were shining because God blessed them tremendously after they obeyed His Word and stopped accepting the prostitutes' offerings. They were able to put roofs on their homes and churches. God will always honor us when we honor His Word. The Lord says in 1 Samuel 2:30, "*Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*" The point of this story is that ministers must be prepared to be effective leaders, and that includes having a thorough knowledge of God's Word.

The third quality essential for leadership is forgiveness. Leaders must be able to forgive and forget. We cannot nurture offenses or hurts in our hearts or have a habitually combative or hostile attitude toward others. Regardless of what others do or say to us or about us, we must ask the Lord to help us forgive them and forget the offense. People can be very cruel at times. When they ask us to forgive them, we must be able to say to them, "I forgive you. God bless you," and forget the offense. Obviously, some sins require that they be put on probation before they are restored, but we must always forgive immediately.

3. Moses was an Israelite, knowing both the Egyptian and Hebrew mentality. Moses had the distinct advantage of not only understanding the mentality of his own people, the Israelites, but also the mentality of the Egyptians because he was raised in Pharaoh's court.

"I AM THAT I AM"

In Exodus 3:13-15, Moses received a revelation of God's name. "*And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*"

The Lord revealed His name to Moses as, I AM THAT I AM. This was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This appearance to Moses occurred nearly 1,500 years before the "I AM" became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14). When Jesus was on earth He affirmed, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58). The name "I Am That I Am" means, "I always was and I always will be." Hebrews 13:8 declares, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*"

The revelation of the Lord's name was the fifth revelation that Moses received at the burning bush. In

this passage, we see that Moses received five revelations from God:

1. A revelation of God's holiness (v. 5).
2. A revelation of the fear of the Lord (v. 6).
3. A revelation of God's concern for His people (v. 7).
4. A revelation of God's plan (v. 10).
5. A revelation of God's name (v. 14).

We need a revelation of God's name as well. God has many names. He desires to reveal His name that corresponds to the ministry to which He has called us. There is an impartation that comes with the revelation of one of God's names.

For many years, my wife and I traveled nonstop all over the world, ministering in over a hundred countries. Then the Lord called me to stop traveling for a time and pastor a large church with several thousand members. It had been several years since I had pastored full-time and I realized that I needed the mantle of a pastor again. The Lord graciously answered my prayer. My character and mannerisms changed while I was pastoring.

The mantle and anointing of a traveling Bible teacher is very different from the anointing of a pastor. On a weekly basis, pastors must feed everyone in their congregations, giving the milk of the Word to new believers and the meat of God's Word to the mature believers. However, Bible teachers normally minister to mature believers and must seek to provide them with the meat of God's Word, a fine steak dinner, as it were.

At that time, the Lord gave me a vision of Himself from behind. He was sitting upon a rock in the middle of a field overlooking a flock of sheep. The Lord caused me to understand that these sheep were the people in the church. I saw a very mature sheep come up to the Lord and rub against His leg. The Lord caressed him and after a little while the sheep walked off perfectly content.

I said to the Lord, "What are You trying to tell me?" He said, "You are not looking after the people in your church." I replied, "But Lord, after every service those who need counseling come and the secretary takes their name and schedules an appointment for me to meet with them. We pray for everyone who is sick." God replied, "You are only taking care of the sick and those with problems. You are not taking care of those who are well. All of the sheep need to feel the touch of the shepherd's hand. They are joined to the shepherd. You need to shake hands with everyone in the church."

The next Sunday I explained the vision to my congregation, saying: "After the last verse of the last

hymn, the song leader will take over. Please wait until I have gone to the back of the church before you are dismissed because I want to shake your hand.” What ensued was amazing. Many people came up to me and said, “We had seen you from afar before, but now we get to actually touch you.” This whole episode showed me there is an impartation from the shepherd to the sheep. The sheep need to feel the touch of their pastor.

The Lord revealed His name, the Good Shepherd, to me through that experience. With that revelation of His name, the Lord imparted to me the nature of the Good Shepherd so that I could fulfill my calling as a pastor. Every pastor should ask the Lord to reveal Himself to him as the Good Shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11,14), which means that He is good at being a shepherd. Therefore, if you want to succeed in your ministry as a pastor, ask the Lord for a revelation of the Good Shepherd.

The Preparation of the People

So far we have considered the preparation of the leader, Moses. Now I would like to briefly consider the preparation of the children of Israel. It is not enough for the leader to be prepared; the people must be prepared, as well, to follow the leader. The Lord had to orchestrate events to cause the children of Israel to be willing to leave Egypt.

One of the reasons that the Lord caused the taskmasters to afflict them was to make them uncomfortable in Egypt. Otherwise, they would not have wanted to leave. You will recall that after they left, they continually wanted to return to Egypt, remembering the leeks, the garlic, the melons, and all the other savory things of Egypt, which is a type of this world.

Several things took place that prepared the children of Israel to leave Egypt:

1. They were under bondage to a cruel king (Ex. 1:10).
2. Cruel taskmasters afflicted them with burdens (Ex. 1:11).
3. Their lives became bitter (Ex. 1:14).
4. They were in an “iron furnace” (Deut. 4:20).
5. They had to irrigate the seeds with their feet (Deut. 11:10).

The children of Israel had to irrigate the Egyptians’ crops by pumping a little wheel with their feet. It was very hard work to pump the water from the Nile through the different levels up to the land of Goshen. Their life was extremely difficult, yet this helped condition their hearts to want to leave Egypt.

They were under bondage to a cruel king and cruel taskmasters. This can have a spiritual application

to us as believers as well. Let me try to illustrate this. A pastor friend of mine was sent to a church that was riddled with problems. He asked us to pray for him because there was a division in the church and many people were leaving. The Lord spoke to my wife and me in prayer that the problem was the immorality of the previous pastor. My friend said to me, “That is true, but he confessed it.”

We prayed again and the Lord showed us the spirit of immorality over the church. Spirits have different forms, some very peculiar. This particular spirit of immorality had a long tail and it was hooked into the foundation of the church. We asked the Lord, “What does this mean? The former pastor confessed his sin, so it should have been cleansed.” The Lord revealed to us that even though the pastor had repented, the church members had not forgiven their former pastor. Their unforgiveness caused the spirit of immorality to remain.

When we shared this with our friend, he asked us to come to his church. When we arrived, the Lord gave us a further revelation that there was a demonic king or ruling spirit of immorality over the church and that there were many other “taskmasters” under that ruling spirit operating in the church.

The spirit of immorality reigned over that church because the people would not forgive their former pastor. As a result, many people were involved in adultery in the church. In addition to the ruling spirit of immorality, there were other spirits, like the spirit of lust, which brought with it the spirit of rebellion, which, in turn, brought jealousy. Jealousy produced hardness of heart in the people and division came as a result of the people’s hard hearts.

This, in turn, brought a spirit of deceit and discouragement over the people. All of these spirits (or taskmasters) were operating under the king or ruling spirit of immorality over the church. That spirit of immorality brought in adultery, lust, rebellion, jealousy, hardness of heart, division, deceit, and discouragement.

The point I am trying to make is that we not only have to deal with the king (or ruling spirit), but also with the taskmasters (the secondary spirits). The children of Israel had to be delivered from the king, Pharaoh, but they also had to be delivered from the taskmasters. Believe God for a complete breakthrough in your life, in the lives of your loved ones, and in the people of your church so that they are completely free to serve the Lord with their whole hearts.

The Three Signs

Moses knew his people very well. He said to the Lord in Exodus 4:1, “*But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto*

thee.” Consequently, the Lord gave Moses the power to perform three signs that would give him credibility and acceptance in the eyes of the Israelites.

In the New Testament, God used signs and wonders to confirm His word through His servants. We read in Mark 16:20, *“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”* Acts 5:12 records, *“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch.”* Jesus said, *“Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe”* (Jn. 4:48). We want to pray that the Lord will give us signs and miracles as well to open people’s hearts to the Gospel message.

In Exodus 4:2-9, the Lord gave Moses three signs:

1. Moses’ rod turned into a serpent.
2. Moses’ hand became leprous and then was restored to health.
3. Moses turned the water into blood.

1. Moses’ rod turned into a serpent. We read in Exodus 4:2-5: *“And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.”*

Moses threw his rod to the ground and it became a serpent. A rod is a symbol of authority (Psa. 110:2; Rev. 2:27; 12:5). The serpent is a symbol of Satan (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9; 20:2). Therefore, this sign depicts Moses as having authority over Satan. Likewise, we must have authority over Satan wherever God places us. The serpent also was a symbol of Pharaoh, whose crown featured a serpent. Therefore, Moses not only had authority over Satan, but he also had authority over Pharaoh.

2. Moses’ hand became leprous and then was restored to health. We read in Exodus 4:6-8, *“And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.”*

Moses put his hand in his bosom and it became leprous. Then he put it back in again and it was made whole. Leprosy is a symbol of sin! Miriam, Gehazi, and King Uzziah were all stricken with leprosy as a punishment for their sins (Num. 12:10; 2 Kgs. 5:27; 2 Chron. 26:19). Therefore, this sign depicts that Moses had authority over sin. As believers, we need to have authority over sin.

It was crucial for Moses to have authority over sin in his own life in order to lead the children of Israel out of their physical and spiritual bondages. We can only help others overcome sin in their lives to the degree that we conquer sin in our lives. We cannot deliver someone from a sin or habit in their lives if we are bound by the same sin.

This principle is illustrated in Acts 19:13-16: *“Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”*

During a deliverance service, the pastor of the church calmly and gently prayed for a woman who needed to be delivered from a terrible spirit of pride. A young man in the church approached the lady and arrogantly shouted, “In the name of Jesus, I command you, spirit of pride, to come out!”

The demon in the lady replied: “I am not going to come out for you. There is more pride in you than in her.” We must be clean ourselves in order to have authority to cast out demons.

3. Moses turned the water into blood. We read in Exodus 4:9: *“And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.”* This was a dual sign. It brought death and judgment upon those who opposed Moses, but salvation and life to those who believed in the Lord.

Moses' Submission to Jethro

The humility of Moses can be seen in Exodus 4:18, *“And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.”*

Although he was about eighty years old and had just met with the living God, Moses still humbly

submitted himself and his new direction to his father-in-law, Jethro. Moses was submissive to the man that God had placed in authority over him. Moses asked for his blessing and consent.

It is so important that we do things the right way and that we respect those whom God has placed over us, whether they be our parents, boss, or pastor.

Moses' Message to Pharaoh

In Exodus 4:21-23, we see the message that the Lord gave Moses to speak to Pharaoh: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.”*

God warned Moses in advance that Pharaoh would harden his heart and would not listen to him. He spoke to Moses regarding the tenth and final plague, the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt, saying: “Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him, go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.” In essence, God said that if Pharaoh would not let His firstborn, Israel, go, He would kill the firstborn of Egypt.

2. CIRCUMCISION AT THE INN

Exodus 4:24-26 records the circumcision at the inn: *“And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.”*

This is an amazing account. Moses had just been commissioned by God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. The Lord gave him power, authority, and three signs to perform. Moses obeyed the word of the Lord and took his family with him to Egypt. On his way to Egypt, the Lord sought to kill him. The Lord sought to slay Moses because he was not practicing what he preached. He had not circumcised his son.

The token and requirement of the covenant God made with Abraham was circumcision, as seen in Genesis 17:7-10: *“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after*

thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.” The condition of the covenant was circumcision and the promise of the covenant was that Abraham’s descendants would inherit the land of Canaan.

Moses was the minister of the covenant. His calling was to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. The condition for dwelling in the Promised Land was circumcision and Moses was not even practicing it in his own family. This was a complete denial of his own message.

I want to be very candid about this point. Our preaching will not save us. Even performing God’s task for our life will not save us. We must practice what we preach in order to be saved. I have known many ministers around the world who ruined their lives, and yet they had been mightily used of God, manifested God’s authority, had fruit in their ministries, and even performed miracles. God rejected them because they did not practice what they preached. They were doing the will of God in the sense that they were preaching, but their own lives were contrary to the message they were preaching to others.

Many people have said to me, “God will never reject me because I have prophesied, and my prophecies have come to pass.” The basis of our salvation is the blood of Jesus Christ, not our good works or prophecies. The blood of Jesus Christ is only effectual in our life as we walk in the light, as clearly stated in 1 John 1:7: *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Preaching, ministering, healing the sick, and performing miracles will not save us; only walking in the light will. A great ministry will not save us. It is Jesus’ blood and righteousness that assures us of eternal life. First John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

I wish I could say that everyone I have taught in Bible schools around the world will make it to heaven.

Regrettably, many of my former students have left the path of righteousness. At a conference where I was scheduled to speak, a minister said in his sermon: “There were ninety students in our Bible school. Today only three are in the ministry; the rest are not in the ministry and some are even bartenders.”

Many Christians seek the Lord for His will and are willing to go to the mission field or make any sacrifice that God requires of them. However, they are not willing to allow God to deal with sin and disobedience in their lives.

The ministry is far more important to many believers than having a clean heart. I have been repeatedly surprised at what people are willing to do for the Lord, but often those who are willing to make the greatest sacrifices are backslidden in heart. They are willing to do anything for God except put things right in their lives. They have prayed, “Lord, I will make any sacrifice for You.” However, God has His standards for sacrifice.

Samuel addressed King Saul’s motives for making sacrifices in 1 Samuel 15:22-23: *“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. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”*

“Hearken” means to listen to God and do what He says. Saul was willing to make many sacrifices, but that is not what God was interested in. God wanted Saul to deal with disobedience in his life and begin to hearken to Him and obey Him. We must realize that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Rebellion and disobedience to God’s voice truly are very serious sins.

Zipporah’s Act of Righteousness

Moses was saved from being slain by the Lord at the inn by his wife’s act of righteousness. It appears that in many ways Zipporah walked closer to God than Moses during the forty years in the wilderness. We read in Exodus 4:25-26: *“Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.”*

Zipporah took the initiative to circumcise their son because Moses had not done it. In this regard, she was more faithful to God than Moses, who apparently became very discouraged in the wilderness and was slack in keeping God’s commandments in his household. This caused a great conflict between Moses and Zipporah.

Zipporah saved Moses' life. A godly wife can make all the difference in a minister's life. A wife can make or break her husband. She can either push him closer to God or encourage her husband in the wrong way. Spouses spur one another toward love and good works (Heb. 10:24).

Zipporah did not lose her moral convictions during the time in the wilderness, whereas Moses had. Often women hold up under pressures and trials far better than men.

3. MOSES MEETS AARON

In Exodus 4:27-28, Moses met with his brother, Aaron: *"The Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him."*

This meeting was very important because Aaron would become Moses' assistant and he had to catch the vision before it could be imparted to others. The key is for the leader to impart his vision to his assistant pastor or the vice-president of his ministry. The pastoral leadership of a church must be in unity for the church to succeed. Amos 3:3 says, *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"*

4. MOSES GATHERS THE ELDERS

The Lord revealed this principle to Moses in Exodus 3:16, *"Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt."*

After meeting with Aaron, the next step was for Moses to gather the elders of Israel and reveal God's plan to them, as recorded in Exodus 4:29-31. *"And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."*

The order of God's revelation is very clearly demonstrated for us here. He first revealed His plan to Moses, then Moses revealed it to Aaron; together Moses and Aaron shared it with the elders of Israel, after which they shared it with the congregation of Israel. God speaks first to the leader of a church or organization. God reveals to senior pastors His will for their churches. They, in turn, should share it

with their assistant pastor, and then with the church board or leadership. The final step is to share it with the congregation. We can see the application of this principle in the business world as well. The president of a company should share his vision and goals with the vice-president of the company, then with the board of directors, and then with the shareholders, if any.

This is a very important Biblical principle and I cannot underestimate its importance. I have seen many pastors make tragic mistakes because they ignored this principle. Their churches did not embrace what God was saying because the leadership neglected these vital steps. In some cases, the end result was a church split. Pastors should not announce a fresh direction for the church without first sharing it with their pastoral staff and church leaders.

The whole congregation of the children of Israel believed and embraced Moses' message. They even bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord. Why did they embrace his message? Because it was not only Moses who declared the message. Aaron and the elders of Israel fully endorsed the direction for the nation. Moses spoke with the authority of a united leadership team. There is tremendous power in unity.

Chapter 4

IN EGYPT

Chapter 4 Outline

1. Initial rejection by Pharaoh
2. Increase of burdens
3. Rejection by Israel
4. Again Israel will not listen
5. Moses made as God to Pharaoh
6. Confrontation of the magicians
7. The ten plagues
8. Institution of the Passover
9. The journey to the Red Sea
10. Pharaoh's pursuit

INITIAL REJECTION BY PHARAOH

After the children of Israel embraced their message, Moses and Aaron went and declared the word of the Lord to Pharaoh. His initial rejection of their message is seen in Exodus 5:1-4: *“And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.”*

Let us consider the significance of Egypt and Pharaoh. Egypt’s national monuments are the pyramids, which housed the mummies of the Pharaohs. In this sense, Egypt, which specialized in the embalming of the dead, represents death. It also represents this world, because the end of this world is death and hell (Rom. 6:21), which is in the center of the earth (Ezek. 32:18).

A serpent was engraved on Pharaoh’s crown. As we have noted before, serpents represent Satan. Therefore, Pharaoh represents Satan, the prince of this world. Pharaoh can also represent the governing demonic spirit over our city or locality. If the Lord promises to give you your city or locality for Christ, know that you will receive opposition from the devil. We cannot receive a spiritual breakthrough until we have broken the power of the governing spirit over our area.

2. INCREASE OF BURDENS

In addition to rejecting Moses’ message, Pharaoh retaliated by increasing the burdens of the Israelites. Pharaoh’s cruel treatment of the Israelites is recorded in Exodus 5:5-10: *“And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.”*

Pharaoh instructed the taskmasters to increase the labor and burdens of the Israelites. Not only would the Israelites have to work more now, but they would also have to gather their own straw to make the

bricks, without reducing their quota of bricks per day, and the taskmasters beat the Israelites when they were unable to complete this impossible task.

3. REJECTION BY ISRAEL

Instead of improving, things deteriorated for the Israelites after they embraced Moses' message. We read in Exodus 5:20-21: *“And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.”*

The same people who had accepted the signs and believed the message of Moses and Aaron now confronted them. The children of Israel blamed the situation on Moses and Aaron, and even asked God to judge them. Their support for Moses and Aaron dissipated very quickly because it was very superficial. We must realize that Satan will oppose us when we seek to obey the voice of the Lord. Often, things get worse before they improve. The taskmasters, which represent bondages, increased the Israelites' burdens. Often our bondages or problems will increase after God speaks to us.

When a pastor seeks to implement God's new direction for the church, the congregation might embrace it at first, but when things get worse, sometimes they begin to doubt and blame the pastor for the problems. The leader is always blamed when something bad happens. People might say to their pastor, “We used to worship the Lord and have glorious services. Now it is hard to meet with God. Did you really hear from God? We have missed God. It is all your fault!” This was the same attitude that the children of Israel adopted toward Moses.

Leaders must be prepared for opposition from the devil and sometimes from their own people. When a leader hears from God and seeks to take his church or ministry in that direction, Satan will oppose him. Satan will cause things to happen to discourage the people and try to make them lose faith in their leader. Some people might become sick and the bondages of others might increase.

How did Moses handle the Israelites' rejection? He went to the Lord in prayer. We read in Exodus 5:22-23: *“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.”* The solution for every trial we face in life is to go to the Lord and seek His counsel. The Lord is our all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

Moses recognized the hand of God in the increase of the Israelites' burdens, saying, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?" In other words, he was saying, "God why have You let this happen?" We must recognize the sovereignty of God in our lives as well. It is futile to simply blame the devil for everything that happens to us. We must understand that nothing can happen to us, just as in the life of Job, unless God permits it. We must seek the Lord and ask Him what He is doing in our lives.

Moses told the Lord in Exodus 5:23 that He had not delivered His people. Moses was under the impression that it would be a quick deliverance. He was not prepared for a long and arduous battle. Moses had given the children of Israel the impression that their deliverance from Egypt would be very quick. Often leaders do not have a clear understanding of how long it will take for God to accomplish His will and purposes. When God speaks, we expect it to happen tomorrow. However, often many things must take place in order for God's will to come to pass. Sometimes it takes a long time, even years, for His will to come to pass.

The Lord answered Moses by saying, "*Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land*" (Ex. 6:1). In essence, the Lord was saying that by the time He was finished with Pharaoh, he would be happy to let the children of Israel leave.

God does not show us the whole picture of what will happen because we would not be able to bear the knowledge of all the troubles, pressures, and trials we will face. Therefore, in His wisdom the Lord gives us a revelation of His ultimate will and a glimpse of what the end will be like. He does not elaborate much on what is going to happen between now and the attainment of the vision. The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 6:1, "*Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh.*" The Lord told Moses that he would see the final result, but He did not tell him about all the opposition and delays that he would face before the final result.

In Exodus 6:2-3, the Lord met with Moses and gave him a fresh revelation of His name, Jehovah. "*And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.*"

In Exodus 6:4-8, the Lord gave Moses several wonderful promises for the children of Israel: "*And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens*

of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.”

4. AGAIN ISRAEL WILL NOT LISTEN

After this fresh meeting with God, Moses was strengthened. He had fresh courage to speak to the children of Israel again. However, they rejected his message again and would not listen to him. “*And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage*” (Ex. 6:9). In the midst of increased burdens, the children of Israel were very discouraged and had lost all hope and faith. One of the problems is that they did not hear from God themselves; they only heard God’s message through Moses. This problem was inherent in Israel, surfacing again in the wilderness. They did not listen to the Lord’s voice or obey His Word. Consequently, they failed the tests He put before them.

The Lord’s reaction to Pharaoh’s stubbornness and refusal to allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt is seen in Exodus 6:10-13: “*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.*” The Lord gave Moses and Aaron a charge to speak to Pharaoh. They were to command Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt.

5. MOSES MADE AS GOD TO PHARAOH

In Exodus 7:1, Moses received a fresh anointing, a new level of authority, and a greater spiritual mantle, and was elevated to a higher ministry. “*And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.*” The NIV says, “*Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.’*” No man before Moses had been made like God to another human being! This means that God trusted Moses to accurately represent Him and precisely deliver His message.

After Moses received a new revelation of the Lord's name and a fresh anointing, the Lord also gave him a greater revelation of the struggles to come with Pharaoh. *"Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt"* (Ex. 7:2-3). This fresh revelation enabled Moses to bear the knowledge of the opposition he would face from Pharaoh.

God will do the same in your life. He will show you a glimpse of what He has called you to and along the way He will make things clearer, but He normally does not show you all of the struggles and pressures that you will experience along the way. If we knew everything that would happen, we would not be able to bear it. Many Bible school students think that they have attained unto God's calling for their lives when they enroll in school, but that is really just the beginning. On the road to a successful ministry, there will be many trials, but God will give us the grace to overcome and triumph.

The Lord forewarned Moses that Pharaoh would not hearken to him because he had hardened his heart. His disobedience would release God's judgments upon the land of Egypt. Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three years old when they confronted Pharaoh.

We read in Exodus 7:4-7: *"But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh."*

6. CONFRONTATION OF THE MAGICIANS

Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh and his magicians in Exodus 7:10-13: *"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."*

The names of the magicians are not recorded in Exodus, but Paul reveals their names as Jannes and Jambres in 2 Timothy 3:8: *"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist"*

the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” Aaron threw down his rod before Pharaoh and his magicians and it became a serpent. Jannes and Jambres threw down their rods and they became serpents as well. However, Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.

This illustrates a very important truth. Satan and those under his influence can perform miracles as well. Miracles, prophecies, and other spiritual manifestations are not proof of God’s Spirit or favor upon a person. Jesus declared in Matthew 7:22-23: *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

All the gifts of the Spirit can be counterfeited by Satan. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:13-14: *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light”* (NIV).

Many years ago, I witnessed what I thought was a powerful demonstration of the gift of prophecy and the word of knowledge by a certain man. He accurately revealed every detail of another person’s life. I was quite amazed, but then the Lord opened my spiritual eyes and I saw a fallen angel revealing all of that information to him. We should ask the Lord to give us discernment to distinguish between the works of His Holy Spirit and the works of the devil.

Pharaoh Hardens His Heart

We read in Exodus 7:13-14 that Pharaoh hardened his heart: *“And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh’s heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.”* God hardened Pharaoh’s heart because Pharaoh had already hardened his own heart. Every time Pharaoh hardened his heart, God responded in like manner and further hardened his heart.

Paul said in Romans 9:17-18: *“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”* Pharaoh hardened his heart ten times and God hardened Pharaoh’s heart ten times. God hardens the hearts of those who habitually practice evil.

Romans 9:19-23 further develops the theme of God’s sovereignty: *“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that*

repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.”

The Lord’s statement that He hardens whomever He chooses to harden and He has compassion on whomever He chooses to have compassion illustrates the sovereignty of God. However, we need to understand the delicate balance between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man.

Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart? The answer can be clearly seen in Exodus 1:8-11: *“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.”*

Pharaoh rose up against the children of Israel and set his heart against God’s people. When Moses confronted him with the word of the Lord to let the children of Israel leave Egypt, he hardened his heart and refused to let them go, even increasing their burdens. When God saw Pharaoh’s response, He responded in like manner and further hardened his heart so that He could bring down His judgments upon Egypt.

We must never forget that Pharaoh had a choice. He could have softened his heart and let the children of Israel go with his blessing, but instead he hardened his heart. Therefore, Pharaoh put himself on the path toward destruction; God merely confirmed him in the path that he had already chosen for his life. Man has been given a free will and the ability to make his own choices. God’s sovereignty and man’s will always work together. We are not puppets on God’s strings.

God does not arbitrarily choose to show mercy on one person and harden another person. Psalm 18:25-26 shows us the reason that God shows mercy to some and not to others: *“With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.”*

Jesus said in Matthew 5:7, *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”* God deals with

us according to the condition and disposition of our hearts. If we are merciful, He will show us mercy. If we are honest with Him, He will be honest with us. However, if we are deceitful, then God will allow us to be deceived.

We read in Daniel 2:21, *“And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.”* To whom does God impart wisdom? The wise receive wisdom. To whom does God impart knowledge? To those who have understanding.

Jesus said in Luke 19:26, *“For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.”* This illustrates the Biblical principle that we receive more of what we already have. If we have a merciful heart, we will receive more mercy. The saying, “Money begets money,” is very true. It takes money to make money.

When people fail to understand the balance between God’s sovereignty and the free will of man, they tend to blame God for man’s failures. Some people have even said that Pharaoh should not be blamed because he had no choice but to do what God had predetermined that he would do. Others say the same thing about Judas. It is true that God knew the wrong choices that Pharaoh would make and therefore planned his life accordingly and used him as a vessel of wrath.

However, the choices were Pharaoh’s to make. God gave him the opportunity to make the right decisions, but he refused, even saying in Exodus 5:2, *“Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”* Therefore, Pharaoh willfully disobeyed the Lord. It was a way of life to him. God sets us in the course that we have chosen for our lives. If we choose to serve God and obey Him, He will honor that decision and give us the grace to obey Him.

7. THE TEN PLAGUES

In Exodus 7, we see the onset of the ten plagues. We must understand the reason for the execution of these judgments. Not only was God judging Pharaoh and the Egyptians through these ten plagues, but He was also judging the gods of the Egyptians. The Lord made this very clear in Exodus 12:12: *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the **gods** of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.”*

Numbers 33:4 confirms this as well: *“For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the*

LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.”

The gods of the Egyptians were evil, demonic spirits and God used the ten plagues to judge them and show them to be false gods. Jethro said in Exodus 18:11, “*Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.*”

God’s primary battle is against the gods of this world, who receive their power and influence from Satan. Zephaniah 2:11 says, “*The LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.*”

Paul said in Ephesians 6:12, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”

1. The Waters Became Blood (7:20-25)

We read in Exodus 7:20-25: “*And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.*”

The Nile River was the principal waterway in Egypt. It was sacred and worshipped as a god by the Egyptians. God turned the waters of the river into blood, thereby judging one of their gods. All of the fish in the river died and the Egyptians could not drink the water.

2. The Frogs (8:1-15)

In the second plague, the Lord caused the land of Egypt to be overrun with frogs. The frog was another Egyptian god. Therefore, God caused the Egyptians to hate the very frogs that they worshipped. In the Word of God, a frog represents an unclean spirit, and false prophecy in particular. This

is illustrated in Revelation 16:13: *“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”*

The Egyptian magicians were also made to perform this miracle, but they were not able to make the frogs return to the rivers and ponds. Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to ask the Lord to take away the frogs (Ex. 8:8). The next day Moses caused the frogs in their houses and fields to die and only the frogs in the rivers remained. However, after they died, Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the children of Israel leave Egypt.

We read in Exodus 8:10-15: *“And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”*

3. The Lice (8:16-19)

The third plague was lice, as recorded in Exodus 8:16-19: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”*

The Lord smote the land with lice because the Egyptians also worshipped their land. All of the dust of the land became lice. The Egyptian magicians were able to duplicate the first two plagues, but they could not duplicate this plague because it was an act of creation. The magicians recognized the hand of God, saying to Pharaoh in Exodus 8:19, *“This is the finger of God.”* Simon the sorcerer also recognized the hand of God (Acts 8:9-24). It is often true that the false recognize the true far more readily than the true recognize the false. However, Pharaoh would not listen to his own magicians and further hardened his heart.

4. The Flies (8:20-32)

The fourth plague was a swarm of flies, as recorded in Exodus 8:20-21: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.”*

Beelzebub, which means “lord of the flies,” is one of Satan’s titles. The fourth plague was a judgment upon the land of Egypt, but also upon Satan. We read in Luke 11:14-15: *“And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.”*

Jesus responded to this charge in Luke 11:18-19 by saying: *“If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.”*

God made a difference between His people and the Egyptians. He protected them from this judgment. God said in Exodus 8:22-24: *“And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.”* Pharaoh then attempted to negotiate with Moses regarding Israel’s departure from Egypt in verses 25 and 28, which we will look at further on in our study.

5. The Murrain (9:1-7)

The fifth plague was a murrain or plague upon Egypt’s livestock, as recorded in Exodus 9:1-3: *“Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.”*

The Egyptians worshipped idols and gods in the form of cattle. Apis-Seraphis was the sacred cattle god at Memphis. Their cattle gods and idols can be seen in Egyptian and British museums. It is apparent that the Egyptians' idol worship made an impact upon the Israelites because they made a golden idol in the form of a calf in the wilderness (Ex. 32:4). God judged this Egyptian god (see Ezekiel 20:6-17).

Again the Lord made a difference between His people and the Egyptians. The cattle of the Egyptians died, but the Israelites' cattle was preserved, as seen in Exodus 9:4-7: *“And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.”* The Lord was showing Israel that it was far better to serve Him, the only true God, than to serve the false gods of Egypt.

6. The Boils (9:8-12)

The sixth plague was boils, as recorded in Exodus 9:8-10: *“And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.”*

The plague of boils was especially painful because it attacked their flesh. The Egyptians were very sensual and immoral, as depicted in ancient Egyptian artwork. Therefore, God was judging their sensuality and immorality.

The magicians could no longer even stand before Moses because they were afflicted with the boils as well. Even after all of this, Pharaoh still would not humble himself before the Lord God. We read in Exodus 9:11-12: *“And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.”*

7. The Hail (9:13-35)

The seventh plague was hail mixed with fire (Psa. 78:47). It was a judgment upon the agriculture of Egypt, which the Egyptians worshipped. They also worshipped Osiris, the god of fire. The trees and herbs of the field were destroyed, along with every man and animal that was in the field at the time of the judgment.

We read in Exodus 9:22-25: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.”*

Those who feared the Lord and responded to the warning He gave before the hail came down were preserved. Those who neglected the warning and remained in the field were destroyed, as recorded in Exodus 9:19-21: *“Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.”*

Pharaoh even acknowledged his sin and confessed that the Lord was righteous and that he and his people were wicked, saying in Exodus 9:27-28, *“I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.”* However, when the hail stopped, Pharaoh hardened his heart again and would not let the Israelites leave (Ex. 9:34-35).

8. The Locusts (10:1-20)

The eighth plague was the locusts (Psa. 78:46). Egypt worshipped Sebeh, the insect god. Moses had power over this god and mocked it by commanding locusts to cover the land and devour everything that the hail had not destroyed. God judged the Egyptians' food supply and they were stricken with hunger.

We read in Exodus 10:13-15: *“And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.”*

In Exodus 10:7, Pharaoh’s officers pleaded with him to let the children of Israel leave Egypt. Pharaoh made his third offer to Moses to let the children of Israel leave, with the condition that the Hebrew children had to remain in Egypt (Ex. 10:8-11).

9. The Darkness (10:21-23)

The ninth plague was complete darkness upon Egypt for three days, while the children of Israel had light, as recorded in Exodus 10:21-23: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.”* One of the principal gods of Egypt was Ra, the sun god. They worshipped the sun perhaps more than any other god. Even Pharaoh’s name means “sun.” Therefore, when God brought darkness upon the land of Egypt, He broke the power of the sun god.

10. Slaying of the Firstborn (Exodus 12)

The tenth plague was the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt. The Lord said in Exodus 12:12-13: *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”*

We read in Exodus 12:29-31: *“And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh*

rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.” The firstborn children and livestock of the Egyptians were slain by the Lord, including Pharaoh’s firstborn. What was the purpose of the slaying of the firstborn? Israel was God’s firstborn, and Pharaoh would not release them. In effect, God said to Pharaoh, “If you will not release My firstborn, I will slay your firstborn.”

The Egyptian gods that God judged through the Ten Plagues

Plague	False god judged
The water became blood	The Nile River
The frogs	The frog god
The lice	The land
The flies	Beelzebub, Lord of the flies
The murrain	The cattle god
The boils	Sensuality
The hail	The agriculture god & Osiris, the god of fire
The locusts	Sebeh, the insect god
Darkness	Ra, the sun god
The slaying of the firstborn	Their firstborn

Pharaoh’s Four Proposals of Compromise

Pharaoh made four proposals for the children of Israel to leave Egypt, but each of them had conditions attached. In Exodus 10:24, Pharaoh made his fourth proposal for the children of Israel to leave Egypt, this time with the condition that they left their flocks and herds in Egypt. Satan uses subtle forms of compromise to try to ensnare the people of God.

1. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to worship the Lord in the land of Egypt (Ex. 8:25).
2. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to leave Egypt, but not go very far (Ex. 8:28).
3. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to leave Egypt, but for their women and children to remain in Egypt (Ex. 10:8-11).
4. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to leave Egypt without their flocks and herds (Ex. 10:24).

1. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to worship the Lord in the land of Egypt. Exodus 8:25 says, *“And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.”*

Moses responded in Exodus 8:26, *“It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?”*

The spiritual lesson seen here is that Satan wants Christians to try to serve God in the world. Satan knows that if we stay in the world, we will be corrupted by the world and compromise God’s moral values. Paul said in Romans 12:2, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

2. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to leave Egypt, but not go very far. Pharaoh said in Exodus 8:28, *“I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me.”* If Satan cannot keep us in the world, he attempts to allure us to stay close to the world. As long as we stay close to this world, we are within striking distance for Satan. It is clear that Demas never fully detached himself from his attraction to the things of this world, and they eventually lured him back to the world. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:10, *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.”*

3. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to leave Egypt, but for their women and children to remain in Egypt. We read in Exodus 10:8-11 (NIV): *“Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. “Go, worship the LORD your God,” he said. “But just who will be going?” Moses answered, “We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD.” Pharaoh said, “The LORD be with you—if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil. No! Have only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that’s what you have been asking for.” Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh’s presence.”*

If he cannot succeed with his first two compromise proposals, then Satan seeks to deceive us into leaving our families behind in the world. I have know so many Christians and even ministers who seek to live godly lives, but they allow their children to be worldly. Others seek worldly prosperity for their children at the expense of their spiritual welfare.

4. Pharaoh proposed for the Israelites to leave Egypt without their flocks and herds. Pha-

Pharaoh said to Moses in Exodus 10:24, *“Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.”* Pharaoh’s fourth compromise proposal would allow the Israelites to take their children with them, but they would have to leave their flocks and herds behind. Without their flocks and herds, the Israelites would not have had anything to sacrifice and offer unto the Lord. This represents being so entangled with the affairs of this life that we have no time, energy, or substance to offer unto the Lord.

8. INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER

As we stated in the Introduction, we will develop the seven Feasts of the Lord in this study on the Journey of Israel as they relate to our lives. Believers are called to spiritually celebrate these seven feasts. The Lord instituted the Passover just prior to the tenth and final plague, the slaying of the firstborn. As we have already noted, Egypt represents the land of death. The Passover represents salvation by the blood of the lamb because the blood on the door posts of the Hebrew homes preserved their lives. The antidote for death is the shedding of the blood of the lamb.

In the narrative of the Passover, I want to consider chiefly the spiritual applications of the Passover for believers. The Passover contains many spiritual lessons and symbols. Paul said in Hebrews 10:1, *“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”* Biblical types and symbols are shadows of the truths they represent. A shadow gives us the basic outline or profile of the real image but they are not necessarily the exact image of what they represent.

The Passover was celebrated in the first month, as seen in Exodus 12:2: *“This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”* This speaks to us of the fact that we spiritually celebrate the Passover at the beginning of our Christian walk when we are born-again. As we have already noted, the Passover represents salvation by the blood of the Lamb. Our Christian experience begins at salvation, or Passover.

The Lord said in Exodus 12:3, *“Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.”* The children of Israel were commanded to take a lamb for every house on the tenth day of the first month. The number “ten” represents the law or the Ten Commandments. The fact that the lamb is taken on the tenth day means that it was to fulfill the law. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”* The Lord Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb and He fulfilled the law.

The Passover lamb had to be without blemish, as seen in Exodus 12:5, *“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats.”* Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, was without blemish or sin. He was the perfect sinless sacrifice for the sins of this world. First Peter 1:19 says, *“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

The sinless Lamb of God took our sins upon Himself. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:21, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* Hebrews 4:15 shows us that Christ was tempted in every point just like we are, but He never sinned in any way: *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* Hebrews 9:28 says, *“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.”*

Another aspect of the Passover lamb was that it could not have any broken bones, as seen in Exodus 12:46: *“In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.”* A broken leg is symbolic of disobedience. In olden times, shepherds would break the legs of disobedient and wandering sheep so that they would not wander away more.

This was also prophetic of the Lord Jesus. Psalm 34:20 says, *“He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.”* We read in John 19:33-36 that none of Jesus’ bones were broken: *“But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”* The Lord fulfilled every aspect of the Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:6).

We read in Exodus 12:6: *“And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.”* The lamb was to be taken on the tenth day and slain on the fourteenth day in the evening. During those four days, the lamb was inspected to ensure that it had no blemishes. Christ our Passover Lamb was inspected by four people: Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate. They could find no legitimate fault with Him. In much the same way, we will be inspected by four groups: the world, the Church, Satan, and the Lord.

Exodus 12:6 tells us that the whole congregation of Israel killed the Passover lamb. It was the Jews who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. Pilate said to the Jews in Matthew 27:22, *“What shall I do then*

with Jesus which is called Christ?” What was the Jews’ response? “They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.” Pilate did not want to accept the responsibility for sending an innocent man to the cross. The Jews said to him in Matthew 27:25, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”

The Israelites had to take the blood of the lamb and put it on the sides and tops of the door frames of their homes, as seen in Exodus 12:7: *“And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.”* Remember, the blood of Christ does not benefit us unless we apply it to our lives.

We read in Exodus 12:8-10: *“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.”*

The Israelites were instructed to roast the flesh of the lamb with fire and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The flesh of the lamb had to be roasted with fire to ensure that all of the nutrients of the lamb were conserved. We can only partake of Christ as we are willing to pass through the fiery trials—that is the price of receiving and keeping the truth that is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The flesh of the lamb and unleavened bread both represent the Word of God. Jesus is the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14) and the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35). Jesus said in John 6:53, *“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”*

In the communion service, we symbolically partake of the Lord’s body and blood by partaking of the communion elements. John 1:14 says, *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”* The flesh of the Passover Lamb, Christ, represents His Word. We must feed upon God’s Word.

We read in Exodus 12:11 the manner in which the Israelites were to eat the Passover meal: *“And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S passover.”* They were to eat the Passover in the following manner:

1. With their loins girded
2. With their shoes on their feet
3. With their staff in their hand

The Lord gave the Israelites these three instructions on how to eat the Passover because they were about to embark on a journey, the exodus out of Egypt. They had to be ready to leave Egypt right after they ate the Passover lamb. They had to have their long flowing garments tucked in or girded around their loins, their shoes had to be on their feet, and their staff had to be in their hand. The spiritual lesson here is that as soon as we accept Christ as our Savior, we begin a spiritual journey. We have to prepare ourselves to leave this world, represented in this case by Egypt.

The Lord said in Exodus 12:13, *“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”* In order to be preserved and protected from death, the Israelites had to apply the blood of the lamb to their homes. It is the same with believers. In order to be preserved from death and hell, we must apply the blood of Christ to our lives by accepting Christ as our Savior. The blood of Christ is our protection and it is His blood that washes us of our sins (Heb. 9:22).

We read in Exodus 12:15, *“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.”* The Feast of Unleavened Bread was instituted at the same time as the Passover (Ex. 12:17; Lev. 23:6).

The Israelites were instructed to keep the Feast of Passover (Ex. 12:14) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:17) forever as a memorial for all generations. The Israelites were to eat unleavened bread for seven days (Deut. 16:3-8). The number seven represents “completion.” Leaven is a symbol of sin (1 Cor. 5:6-8), hypocrisy (Lk. 12:1), and false doctrine (Mt. 16:12). The spiritual lesson here is that after we get saved, we should eat the pure, unadulterated Word of God for the rest of our lives.

From the very first day, the Israelites had to remove all leaven from their homes. As believers, we should begin removing all of the leaven from our lives as soon as we get saved. The Lord has His part in our purification and sanctification, but we also “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). We have to take the necessary steps to remove all areas of sin from our lives and homes.

This can include purifying our homes and lives from ungodly magazines, pictures, books, artifacts, and TV programs. David said, *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes”* (Psa. 101:3). We must be very careful especially with books, because many books, even religious books, have evil spirits. Also, some artifacts from foreign countries have evil spirits. Numbers 33:52 commands us to destroy all pictures that are not wholesome, for an evil spirit can gain an entrance into our lives through our eyes if we look at evil and ungodly pictures. It is crucial that we begin dealing with sin in our lives as soon as

we get saved, putting everything in order in our homes.

In Exodus 12:15, the Lord said that whoever ate leaven during the seven day feast would be cut off. Sin is very dangerous and can lead to our ultimate destruction if we do not deal with it. Jesus echoed this same theme in John 8:34-35: *“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.”*

The Israelites also had to dip hyssop into the basin of blood that was applied to the door frames of their homes. We read in Exodus 12:22, *“And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel [the top of the door post] and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.”* Hyssop was a small bushy plant with numerous small flowers in bunches. David prayed to the Lord in Psalm 51:7, *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”* In the Bible, Hyssop is associated with purging or cleansing. Therefore, we could state that the blood-dipped hyssop represents the spiritual truth that the blood of Christ cleanses us.

The power of the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, can be seen in Exodus 12:23, *“For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”* As we have said before, the blood of Christ protects us from judgment and the power of Satan. It is clear from Scripture that Satan is controlled by God. He can only do what God permits him to do.

We are protected by God only as we stay covered with the blood of Christ. How do we continually cover ourselves with His blood? First John 1:7 gives us the key: *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”* The blood of Christ continually cleanses us from all sin and covers us as we walk in the light—in obedience to the Lord.

Spiritual Lessons from the Passover

1. The Passover was celebrated in the first month. We experience the Passover at the beginning of our Christian walk when we are born-again.
2. The Passover lamb was chosen on the tenth day, which represents the law. Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, fulfilled the law.

3. The Passover lamb had to be without blemish. Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, was without blemish.
4. The Passover lamb could not have any broken bones, which are symbolic of disobedience. Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, had none of His bones broken on the cross symbolizing that He was the obedient Lamb of God.
5. The Passover lamb was inspected for four days. Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, was inspected by four people and we will be inspected by four people or groups of people as well: the world, the Church, Satan, and the Lord.
6. The whole congregation of Israel killed the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day. The whole congregation of Israel crucified Jesus Christ.
7. The Israelites had to apply the blood of the lamb to their homes in order to be protected. We must apply the blood of Christ to our lives in order to be preserved from judgment.
8. The flesh of the lamb had to be roasted with fire and eaten by the Israelites. We must pass through fiery trials in order to partake of the Lord.
9. The Israelites had to eat the flesh of the lamb and unleavened bread, both of which represent the Word of God. Therefore, we must feed upon the Word of God.
10. The Israelites had to eat the Passover with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand because they were about to embark on a journey out of Egypt. As soon as we get saved, we must be prepared to leave the world and begin our spiritual journey.
11. The Israelites had to remove all leaven from their homes for the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As believers, we must begin removing all sin from our lives as soon as we get saved.
12. The Israelites had to dip hyssop, which represents purging and cleansing, into the blood of the Lamb. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.

9. THE JOURNEY TO THE RED SEA

Enrichment After Trials

Exodus 12:35-36 illustrates the Biblical truth that enrichment comes after trials: *“And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed [or asked] of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent [or gave] unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.”*

The NIV adds clarity to this passage: *“The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.”*

The Israelites did not borrow gold, silver, and clothing from the Egyptians in the sense that they gave the Egyptians the impression that they would return the items. Why then would the Egyptians willingly give the Israelites all of these items? There were two reasons:

1. The Lord gave the Israelites favor with the Egyptians.
2. The Egyptians were desperate for the Israelites to leave Egypt because they did not want to experience any more of God’s judgments. Therefore, they were willing to do whatever the Israelites asked of them in order to get them to leave Egypt. This is made clear in Exodus 12:33, *“And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.”*

This was a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:14, *“And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”* Psalm 105:37 recalls this event as well: *“He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”* It is a principle of God that He enriches us after trials. In essence, Israel was receiving in one night their back wages for the several hundred years that they had been slaves in Egypt.

Psalm 66:10-12 says: *“For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a*

wealthy place.”

After Job’s trial, the Lord enriched him and blessed him with double what he had before his trial. *“Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold”* (Job 42:11).

Isaiah 61:7 promises, *“For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.”* Zechariah 9:12 is a promise to prisoners of hope: *“Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee.”* Be encouraged, beloved. After we pass through trials, hardships, sorrows, and heartaches, the Lord will enrich and enlarge us. Enrichment can come in many forms: natural, spiritual, and economic.

Rameses to Succoth

The first part of the journey of the children of Israel was from Rameses to Succoth (Num. 33:5), as seen in Exodus 12:37, *“And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.”* There were more than six hundred thousand men above the age of twenty, not including women and children (Ex. 38:26; Num. 1:45; 2:32; 11:21). With women and children, there were probably between two and three million Israelites at the time of the exodus.

The Mixed Multitude

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them” (Ex. 12:38). A number of Egyptians and people from other races left Egypt with the children of Israel. This mixture of people caused problems because the non-Jewish people were not firm believers in Jehovah and caused division among the people.

I would like to compare this to the Parable of the Net. Jesus said in Matthew 13:47-48: *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.”* When revival comes, all kinds of people, some good and others bad, join the Church. That is why we must be careful with mixture

The Bones of Joseph

We read in Exodus 13:19 that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. *“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.”*

This refers to Genesis 50:24-25, which says: *“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.”*

Joseph made the children of Israel promise to take his bones with them to the Promised Land when they left Egypt. Joseph was a man of extraordinary prophetic vision.

Hebrews 11:22 tells us, *“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”* Although he died before the time of the fulfillment of God’s promise regarding the Promised Land, Joseph entered into the promise by faith. Although people might die before a promise is fulfilled, by faith they can appropriate and enter into the blessings of future generations.

Succoth to Etham

From Succoth, the children of Israel journeyed to Etham. We read in Exodus 13:20-22: *“And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”* As they traveled, the Lord went before them during the day in the form of a pillar of cloud and during the night by a pillar of fire.

Etham to Pi-hahiroth

From Ethan, the children of Israel traveled to Pi-hahiroth, near Migdol and Baal-zephon, as recorded in Exodus 14:2: *“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.”*

“Baal” means “lord,” and “Zephon” comes from a Hebrew root word meaning “hidden” or “dark”.

Therefore, one of the meanings of Baal-zephon is “the lord of darkness.” The Lord brought them into a dark experience in order to give them a great victory and destroy their enemies. It was God who led them there and it is God who often leads us into periods of darkness. Isaiah 50:10 speaks of servants of God who are in darkness in the will of God: *“Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.”*

10. PHARAOH’S PURSUIT

The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart and caused him to pursue the children of Israel so that He could execute His complete judgment on him and the Egyptians (Ex. 14:5-12). *“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so”* (Ex. 14:3-4).

When the children of Israel saw that Pharaoh was pursuing them, they said that they wished they had not left Egypt. *“And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?”* (Ex. 14:10-11). They resented Moses for leading them out of Egypt.

When troubles come, many Christians have the attitude of the children of Israel. They want to return to the world, saying: “We should have stayed in the world. It was much easier there than serving God.”

The children of Israel said in Exodus 14:12, *“Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.”* How soon people forget! They were slaves in Egypt and were terribly mistreated, but now they wanted to return to their bondage there.

Paul addressed this problem in the lives of the Corinthian believers, saying 2 Corinthians 11:20, *“For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.”* The NIV says, *“In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face.”* It is a sad fact of life that many people, even Christians, love their bondages and do not want to be delivered from them.

A number of years ago, several ministers prayed for a lady who had about sixty demons. They were able to cast out most of the demons, but a few of them were very strong and deeply entrenched in her life. My wife and I were asked to come and help them pray for the last few demons to be cast out. By God's grace, through prayer we were able to cast out all of the demons except one.

While we were praying for the last demon to be cast out, an amazing thing happened. A fallen angel came and strengthened the demon's resistance to prayer. The fallen angel made his presence known by speaking in an audible voice, "May I respectfully remind you that man was created a little lower than the angels."

We knew that God wanted to deliver this lady and that He was able to do so. We said to her, "You can be delivered if you want to be delivered." However, she did not want to be delivered of that last demon. The demon wanted to come out because it could no longer stand the power of God, but the lady would not allow it to leave. She wanted to hold on to her bondage, so there was nothing more we could do for her. Later that night she said to her friends, "I could have been delivered tonight, but I wanted to hold on to my bondage."

Chapter 5

THE RED SEA TO SINAI

Chapter 5 Outline

1. The Crossing of the Red Sea
2. The Song of Moses
3. The Bitter Waters
4. The Lord our Healer
5. Elim
6. The Need for Food
7. The Need for Water
8. War against Amalek
9. Delegation

11. THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

The Fear of Israel and the “Fear Not” of Moses

When the children of Israel saw that Pharaoh was pursuing them, they were overcome with fear (Ex. 14:10). Moses tried to dispel their fears: *“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace”* (Ex. 14:13-14).

Fear and doubt are two of Satan’s greatest weapons against believers. We must overcome fear in our lives. First John 4:18 gives us one of the keys to overcoming fear: *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”* As we set our love upon the Lord, fear will be conquered in our lives. Leaders must be able to overcome fear themselves and help the people they lead overcome fear. Moses boldly said to the children of Israel, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”

In their fear and hastiness, the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt. The worst time to make a major decision is during times of darkness and difficulty when everything is going wrong. Never make a major decision when you are despondent or discouraged. This is true not only of a time of God-ordained darkness, but in times of backsliding as well. Sadly, many people fail to understand that their time of darkness is ordained by God for their good, or they grow impatient and try to spark their own light, rather than wait upon God.

Many people backslide during times of darkness (Isa. 50:11). Regretfully, I have seen many people backslide and marry in their backslidden state. People generally marry the wrong person when they are backslidden. It is essential to wait upon God and trust in Him to take us through these times of darkness, for He never leaves us in a cave, but always brings us through a tunnel, into a light more glorious than before. Wait upon Him, beloved, and do not try to make your own light in the darkness, or make major decisions in times of great difficulty when you do not have a clear word from the Lord.

“Go Forward”

The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 14:15, *“Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the chil-*

dren of Israel, that they go forward.” When we do not know what to do and God is silent, we must stay the course and continue going forward. When we go into a time of darkness and we are confused about God’s direction for our lives, we should remember the last thing that God spoke to us and do it. Many years ago my wife and I were in the Cameroon, West Africa. We did not know what we were supposed to do next. We were considering returning to England or going to America or Zaire. We wrote to our missions board asking for direction as to whether or not we should go to Zaire, but we did not receive a response. Then the Lord spoke to us that the angel of the Lord would go before us and would be waiting for us in Zaire.

We were staying in a town called Myuka, which is known as *the white man’s grave*. Even the country’s brochures warn visitors not to go there. The heat was so intense that we had to go to bed every afternoon from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. After lying on the bed for a time, we could see the outline of our bodies from the perspiration on the bed sheets. The average life expectancy in that town was only forty years.

One afternoon I was on my bed staring at the wall and I saw some ants walking going across a board where kerosene had been spilled. Ants depend on their scent for their sense of direction, and the kerosene had caused them to lose their own scent. I could tell that they were confused and were not sure where to go. However, some of the ants continued on their course through kerosene, even though they were not sure where they were going. Once they got through the kerosene patch, they regained their scent and were able to make it to their destination. The Lord spoke an awesome truth to me through this experience: “There are kerosene patches on your trail. Pursue the course and you will eventually pick up the trail again.”

Therefore, even though we had not received a reply from our missions board, we decided to stay the course and go on to Zaire. On the plane trip to Zaire, the Lord spoke to me several times, “My angel will be with you.” I told my wife that we should let everyone else get off the plane before us.

When we got off the plane, I saw someone holding up a sign with my name on it. God said, “See, I told you My angel would be there waiting for you.” Because we stayed the course that we had determined to take before we went into a period of darkness, we were able to come out of that darkness and see the Lord’s direction very clearly.

What is my point? If you are going in the direction that God has ordained for your life and all of a sudden things become very confusing and you are not able to hear from God, do not panic and do not go back. Stay on the course and eventually you will come out of the darkness, or kerosene patch as it were, and be able to sense the Lord’s direction for your life once again.

The Darkness and the Light

The Lord caused the pillar of cloud to divide the camp of Israel from the camp of Egypt. The Egyptian camp was in complete darkness, whereas the Hebrew camp was full of light. *“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night”* (Ex. 14:19-20). God was controlling the enemy. God is always the Master of every situation.

The Dividing of the Waters

In Exodus 14:21-22, the Lord divided the waters of the Red Sea and the children of Israel passed over on dry ground. *“And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”* Some people say that the children of Israel were able to cross the Red Sea because it was very low. However, it would have required a greater miracle than the dividing of the waters to drown the whole Egyptian army, including their horses, in a puddle of water.

The Troubling of the Egyptians

As the Egyptian army pursued the Israelites, the Lord troubled them. We in Exodus 14:23-25: *“And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.”* The Lord troubled the Egyptians and caused the wheels of their chariots to come off. They recognized that the Lord was fighting against them and decided to retreat.

The Return of the Waters

The Lord caused the waters of the Red Sea to come crashing back down, drowning the Egyptians, as recorded in Exodus 14:27-28: *“And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the*

LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.” God saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians.

Paul said in Hebrews 11:29, *“By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”* The Israelites were able to cross the Red Sea because they did it in faith. The Egyptians presumed to follow them and were drowned. As Romans 14:23 says, *“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”*

The Symbolism of the Crossing of the Red Sea

The crossing of the Red Sea is a very significant event in history. Reference is made to it many times in Scripture (Num. 21:14; Deut. 11:4; Josh. 2:10; 4:23; 24:6; Neh. 9:9; Ps. 106:9-11,22; 136:13-15; Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:29). It contains many spiritual lessons. Primarily, the crossing of the Red Sea symbolizes water baptism.

We read in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2: *“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.”* Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:11, *“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.”* The crossing of the Red Sea was recorded to serve as an example to us of water baptism.

After we are saved by the blood of the Lamb (symbolized by the Passover), the next major step in the Christian life is to be water baptized (symbolized by the Red Sea). Water baptism is an act of righteousness and obedience (Mt. 3:15).

The crossing of the Red Sea accomplished five primary things in the children of Israel:

1. The Red Sea separated the children of Israel from Egypt.
2. The Red Sea delivered them from bondage.
3. The Red Sea broke Pharaoh’s power over them.
4. The Red Sea destroyed their enemies who tried to take them back to Egypt.
5. The Red Sea promoted faith in the Lord and their leader.

Water baptism accomplishes five primary things in believers’ lives:

1. Water baptism separates us from the world.
2. Water baptism breaks many bondages in our lives.
3. Water baptism breaks Satan's power over our lives.
4. Water baptism breaks the influence of those who seek to allure us back into the world.
5. Water baptism promotes faith in the Lord and our leaders.

During the Charismatic movement, many Pentecostals emphasized the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is wonderful, but they minimized the importance of water baptism. The importance of water baptism cannot be overemphasized. It accomplishes many things in our lives. Water baptism is a clear declaration that we have decided to follow Jesus and we have turned our backs on the world.

Egypt represents bondage, as Moses said in Exodus 13:3, *"Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage."* Water baptism can deliver us from many bondages of our old life, including many erroneous traditional teachings. It also breaks Satan's power over our lives and the influence of those who seek to allure us back into the world.

We read in Exodus 14:31, *"And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses."* The Red Sea promoted faith in the Lord and their leader, Moses. Water baptism also promotes faith in the Lord and our leaders. It causes faith to increase in our lives.

The crossing of the Red Sea accomplished many things in the lives of the Israelites, but it did not remove the love for Egypt in their hearts. Throughout the wilderness journey, the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt whenever something went wrong (Ex. 14:11-12; 16:3; 17:3; Num. 11:5,20; 14:4). They were out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of them.

There is a saying, "You can take the boy out of the farm, but you cannot take the farm out of the boy." You can take a person out of his environment, but that does not mean you have taken the environment out of him. It is the same with water baptism. It separates us from the world, but it does not completely purify our hearts from the love of this world.

The Feast of Firstfruits

As believers, we spiritually celebrate the Feast of Passover when we give our lives to Christ and the Feast of Unleavened Bread as we constantly meditate on God's Word (Psa. 1:2). The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were celebrated in Egypt.

The third feast is the Feast of Firstfruits. We read in Leviticus 23:10-11: *“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.”*

The day after the Passover sabbath, the priest was to present the first sheaf of the new crop as a wave offering before the Lord. If the firstfruits of their harvest was accepted by God, then it signified that the rest of the harvest would be accepted as well.

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-21, Paul said that Christ was the firstfruits from the dead: *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.”* Therefore, in this sense the Feast of Firstfruits represents resurrection life.

Water baptism also represents resurrection life. Paul develops this theme in Romans 6:3-5: *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”*

Colossians 2:12 reaffirms that water baptism represents resurrection life: *“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”* Water baptism identifies us with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. After we are baptized in water, we should begin to walk in newness of life.

Therefore, we can associate the crossing of the Red Sea, which represents water baptism and resurrection life, with the Feast of Firstfruits, which also symbolizes resurrection life. Although there is no record that the children of Israel celebrated this feast when they came out of Egypt, as it was not instituted until later, it was to be celebrated the day after the Passover sabbath. We know that they left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea after they celebrated the Passover. The feasts will be developed in more detail later in the book.

2. THE SONG OF MOSES

In Exodus 15:1-22, we see the “Song of Moses.” We read in Exodus 15:1-2: *“Then sang Moses and*

the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

In Revelation 15:3, we see the victorious saints of God in heaven singing the song of Moses: "*And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."*

Complete Victory

Moses' song was a celebration of the Israelites' *complete* victory over their enemies, Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Israelites did not have complete victory over their enemies when they left Egypt, because the Egyptians were still alive and there was always the threat that they would attack Israel again. God hardened Pharaoh's heart and caused him to pursue the Israelites because He wanted His people to have complete victory over their enemies. This illustrates a spiritual lesson for believers.

We must make sure that our spiritual enemies and bondages are completely destroyed. David said he pursued his enemies relentlessly until they were utterly consumed (2 Sam. 22:38-41). We must deal with the root of our bondages and sins in order to fully triumph over them so that they can never again afflict us. If we do not deal with the root of our bondages, they will eventually overcome us again.

John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:10, "*And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."* Do not stop seeking the Lord until He has completely delivered you from the root of all your bondages, especially curses and sins that have been passed on in your family from generation to generation. Ask God to break that sin or curse in your life so that it will not be passed on to your children.

In prayer, we also must completely break the power of our spiritual enemies. Paul said in Ephesians 6:12, "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* We are in a spiritual war against the demonic and Satanic powers of this world. We must bind these evil spirits and commit them to hell so that they will not attack anyone else. Many churches suffer because there is a demonic force in their city or location that will not permit them to grow or flourish. These spirits must be broken by the power of God through prayer.

Mount Zion

Moses spoke of Zion as the ultimate destination of the children of Israel in Exodus 15:17: *“Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.”* The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt to lead them into the Promised Land, but His real purpose was to take them to Mount Zion, His dwelling place. That generation did not make it to Zion. Several hundred years passed before David fulfilled this prophecy by conquering the fortress of Zion.

The mountain spoken of in Exodus 15:17 does not refer to Mount Sinai, because it was not in the land of their inheritance. It can only refer to Mount Zion. This is confirmed in Psalm 78:54, *“And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased,”* and Psalm 78:68, *“But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.”*

As we have noted before, the journey of Israel represents the spiritual journey of Christians. Therefore, since we have clearly established that the ultimate destination of the children of Israel was Mount Zion, we can also state that the ultimate goal and destination for believers is heavenly Mount Zion.

This is reaffirmed in Hebrews 12:22-23: *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”* Our calling as believers is to heavenly Mount Zion, which is God’s dwelling place. The Lord wants to impart the vision of Zion to each and every believer so that we live our lives with purpose.

It is very important for believers to have a spiritual vision for their lives and know where they are going. We must not settle for anything less than God’s best for our lives. Many years ago, I actually died physically and the angel of the Lord took me to heaven. After I crossed over the river into heaven, I was shown the whole of my life in cameo form. The Lord showed me that I had died before my appointed time and had not fulfilled God’s course for my life. Mercifully, the Lord allowed me to return to earth and gave me another opportunity to finish His course for my life.

Since that experience, I have had a tremendous burden for believers to fulfill God’s will and goal for their lives. The Lord has an inheritance for each one of us, but we will not enter into that inheritance if we do not press on in God.

The Lord had ordained for the generation that left Egypt to enter the Promised Land. However, they died in the wilderness because of their disobedience and lack of faith. When we stand before God, we will have to give an account for our lives and whether or not we fulfilled His course for our lives.

Miriam the Prophetess

In Exodus 15:20-21, Miriam took a timbrel and led the women in song and dance unto the Lord: *“And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”* The Word of God designates Miriam as a prophetess. Therefore, it is clear that God has called women to the fivefold ministry as well as men (Eph. 4:11). There is an unscriptural resistance to female ministers among believers in many countries. Therefore, we need to embrace those whom God has called to the ministry. Women need to realize that they have an important part in the kingdom of God and can be used as effective ministers of the Gospel.

3. THE BITTER WATERS

One thing we have to prepare people for in the Christian life is disappointments. After the Red Sea, the children of Israel traveled for three days in the wilderness and were unable to find water. Then they found water at Marah, but it was bitter and they could not drink it. We read in Exodus 15:22-24: *“So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?”*

There will be times of bitterness in our journey as believers. We must know how to overcome bitterness in our personal lives because bitterness is very dangerous. Hebrews 12:15 says, *“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.”* A root of bitterness in one person can defile many others. Bitterness reproduces very quickly.

Bitterness comes into our lives when we fail to appropriate God’s grace to overcome disappointments and hurts. We will experience many disappointments in life; we might be disappointed in a person, a situation, or even ourselves. However, there is always available grace for every trial and for every circumstance. It is always possible to overcome and triumph.

What is the key to overcoming bitterness? The key is seen in Exodus 15:25: “*And [Moses] cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them.*” The bitter waters of Marah became sweet when Moses cast a tree into them.

The tree is a symbol of the cross upon which Christ was crucified. We can overcome bitterness by going to the cross of Christ. We must surrender our rights and give all of our bitter feelings to the Lord. Then we must forgive the person who wronged us and forget the wrong that was done to us. As we do those three things, the Lord will purify our hearts of bitterness.

Three keys to overcoming bitterness:

1. Take your experience and bitter feelings to the cross of Christ.
2. Forgive the person who wronged you.
3. Forget the wrong that was done to you.

Forgiveness is rooted in forgetfulness. We cannot truly forgive unless we can forget the wrong that was done to us. The life of Joseph shows us how to forgive and forget. We read in Genesis 41:51, “*And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house.*” Joseph named his firstborn son Manasseh, which means “forgetfulness.”

Joseph said that the Lord caused him to forget all of his toil and suffering. The name of Joseph’s second son was Ephraim, which means “double fruitfulness.” Therefore, we see that it is forgetfulness that leads us to a fruitful Christian life.

When my wife and I lived and ministered in Switzerland, we operated a Bible school inside of a hotel. We had people from all over Europe pass through the hotel and many of them asked to counsel with us. Some of these counseling sessions lasted for several hours as they confessed all of their sins and struggles to us. Then we would pray for them and God would give them breakthroughs in their lives.

However, I began to feel like a cesspool because I had the knowledge of all their sins. When I saw those people again, I could remember everything they had told me. I prayed and told the Lord that I could not continue like that. He spoke to me, “Ask Me for your Manasseh (forgetfulness). When you have finished counseling, go back to your room and ask Me for your Manasseh.” As I began to practice that, the Lord caused me to forget everything that I had been told. I could even see the people that I had counseled and not remember their sins.

That experience has made a tremendous difference in my life. Every time people hurt me or do something against me, I pray and ask the Lord to give me a Manasseh (forgetfulness) so that I can forget what they have done to me, which will enable me to forgive them. At times, I have forgotten the offense to such a degree that afterwards I could not remember why I was supposed to forgive a person. God can give us holy forgetfulness like He did to Joseph.

Colossians 3:12-13 shows us how to apply the Manasseh principle to our lives: *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”* We are instructed to “put on” forgiveness just as we would a garment or a hat. Forgiveness starts with a decision to forgive. By an act of our will, we can put on forgiveness and forgive those who have wronged us and forget what they have done to us.

The ability to forget is necessary for counseling. People need someone they can trust with their past and their innermost feelings. They need a counselor who will not share their secrets with others and will not treat them any different just because they know all of their sins. Every time after I counsel with people, I ask the Lord to help me forget everything except that which He wants me to remember. This has worked so effectively in my life that many times people have asked me if I remember what they told me and I could not even remember counseling with them. Forgetfulness is very powerful. It is a safeguard against bitterness.

Forgetfulness should be practiced first in the home. Husbands and wives must be able to forgive each other and forget the things that the other has done. Many people have told me in counseling everything that their spouses have done wrong in their thirty years of marriage. The problem is that they are harboring all of those hard feelings against their spouses instead of forgiving them and moving on in their marriage. Many marriages fail because of a lack of forgiveness and forgetfulness. Parents must be able to forget the bad things that their children have done and refrain from continually bringing them back up, thus grievously hurting the children.

Forgiveness is also essential for ministers and pastors. Just as the children of Israel constantly criticized Moses and blamed him when anything went wrong, pastors experience a tremendous amount of criticism. For leaders to be successful, they must be able to forgive and forget what people do to them. As we practice this, God will give us victory in our lives and then we can impart that victory to others.

It is also important for us to have forbearance so that we are patient with others. Paul said in Ephesians 4:1-2, *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation*

wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” Forbearance is the ability to tolerate problems in a person’s life until God deals with them.

God has His own order for dealing with issues and problems in our lives. Often we might ask the Lord to deal with an area in our lives that we are concerned about, but instead He deals with something else. This teaches us to have forbearance and patience with others. We must be able to forbear flaws and problems in other people’s lives. Forbearance is vital for a successful marriage and ministry.

Pastors must be able to forbear the problems of their church members, which can include jealousy, anger, criticism, and bitterness. God hand picks pastors for congregations, and also hand picks congregations for pastors. He uses the congregation to work out His nature in His ministers.

My wife and I have known many people with serious problems in their lives, so serious that we thought we would have to break fellowship with them. However, God spoke to us: “I will deal with those areas in their lives in My time. I am using those things to develop forbearance in your lives.”

4. THE LORD OUR HEALER

The Lord said in Exodus 15:26, *“If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.”* This was a revelation of the Lord’s name, Jehovah-Rapha, which means, “The Lord our Healer” or “The Lord that healeth thee.”

Divine healing is a foundational doctrine of the Gospel and a vital aspect of the Christian life. The Lord wants us to know Him as the Lord our Healer. First Peter 2:24 says, *“By whose stripes ye were healed.”* Healing was provided for in the atonement.

In the Great Commission, the Lord said in Mark 16:15-18: *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”*

Healing was one of the Lord’s primary ministries. We read in Matthew 4:23, *“And Jesus went about*

all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” The three main ministries of Christ were: teaching, preaching, and healing. The Lord wants His Church to manifest the gift of healing (1 Cor. 12:9) and perform greater miracles than He performed (Jn. 14:12).

5. ELIM

From Marah, the children of Israel traveled to Elim, as recorded in Exodus 15:27: *“And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.”* This is also recorded in Numbers 33:9. There were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees in Elim.

Why does Scripture record that the children of Israel stopped in Elim along their journey and that Elim had twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees? Remember, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:11, *“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.”* Therefore, there is a spiritual lesson for us in this account of Elim.

The number “twelve” represents government. There were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve disciples. The number “seventy” represents eldership (Num. 11:16). It is worthy of note that the numbers “twelve” and “seventy” are both mentioned in reference to Elim. Jesus had twelve disciples and He also sent out seventy disciples (Lk. 10:1-17). Therefore, I believe that there are several truths in the account of Elim regarding church leadership.

There were twelve wells in Elim. A “well” represents a source of water used to quench the thirst of others. Jesus said in John 4:14, *“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”* We must have a well of living water springing out from our hearts to others (Jn. 7:38).

Now that we can see the spiritual significance of the number twelve and wells in Scripture, we can make the analogy that leaders (represented by the number twelve) should be a well of life to others, as spoken of in Proverbs 10:11: *“The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.”*

Leaders must make sure that the spiritual well of their own hearts is not stopped up. The water of life must freely flow out from them to those to whom they minister. When ministers live on past experiences

with God and do not have a present-day intimate relationship with Christ, their spiritual well becomes stopped up.

The church of Sardis shows us the danger of living on past experiences with God. We read in Revelation 3:1, *“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”* The church of Sardis had a name that it lived, but it was spiritually dead. The church was trying to live on its reputation of what God had done there in the past, but God did not accept that.

I attended Bible school with a wonderful couple. When I saw them five years later, they were living on their past experiences with God. They were not seeking God and had not progressed in their spiritual lives. As a result, the level of our conversation was not the same as it had been five years before. Praise God for what He has done in our lives in the past, but we need fresh meetings with Him today. As leaders, the river of life must flow freely from the well of our hearts to others.

There were also seventy palm trees in Elim. A palm tree is a symbol of righteousness, as seen in Psalm 92:12, *“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.”* Isaiah 61:3 says, *“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”*

Therefore, since palm trees represent righteousness and the number seventy represents eldership, we can state that righteousness is one of the qualifications for eldership. Elders must be righteous and straight like palm trees. Righteous people should surround themselves with others who are righteous.

In summary, the first spiritual lesson of Elim is that leaders should be wells of life for others. Elim was an oasis in the desert. In much the same way, leaders should be an oasis to their churches. The second lesson is that elders must be righteous and straight like palm trees.

6. THE NEED FOR FOOD

Traveling from Elim to Mount Sinai, the children of Israel stopped in the wilderness of Sin on their way to Sinai. We read in Exodus 16:1-3: *“And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the*

wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

We must remember that the purpose of the wilderness journey was to test and prove the children of Israel (Deut. 8:2,16). Therefore, throughout the wilderness journey we will see the various trials that God used to test Israel. Israel was now tested in the area of hunger.

The Lord will test us in this area as well. We will go through times of financial lack and perhaps even hunger. The Lord's desire is to produce faithfulness in us. He wants us to learn to be grateful for little and faithful in little (Lk. 19:17). God wants to know if we will serve Him even when our stomach is not fully satisfied.

The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 16:4, *"Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."*

The Lord performed a miracle to meet their needs. He caused bread, called manna, to rain down upon them from heaven. However, He only gave them a certain portion each day. They were given rations. Again, the purpose was to "prove them" to see whether or not they would walk in God's law.

Sometimes, God only provides for our bare necessities and limits our financial resources. We receive everything we need in order to survive, but not everything we want. We must learn to be content with God's provision. I have known so many missionaries who have failed because they were never content with the Lord's provision for their lives. They wanted a better car or a better house because they wanted their children to be raised in a better neighborhood. We must overcome complaining, especially if we are leaders. When ministers complain, it affects their whole lives. Their messages become very bitter and they infect others with the spirit of complaining.

In order to triumph over economic trials, we must crucify our desires and preferences so that we thank God for whatever He chooses to provide for us. Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:6, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain."* The attitude of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:11-13 shows us how to be content with God's provision: *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

Contentment is a divine quality; it is not something that comes naturally to us. Paul said that he “learned” how to be content with little and with much. The only way to learn how to be content with little is to go through a period of having very little. Ezekiel went through a period in which he could only eat and drink in limited amounts (Ezek. 4:9-11). We must learn how to live with what God gives us. We also have to learn how to handle abundance without lavishing it upon ourselves.

God will test us economically. This was one of the ten tests that the children of Israel failed. If we want to make it through the wilderness to the Promised Land and Mount Zion, we must learn to be content with God’s provision in every area of our lives (Num. 14:22-23).

Israel’s Disobedience

The Lord told the Israelites that they were not to keep manna from one day to the next (Ex. 16: 19). They were to gather as much as they needed for one day and consume it that day (Ex. 16:4). However, some of the Israelites disobeyed, as recorded in Exodus 16:20: *“Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.”*

The Israelites were instructed to gather a double portion on the sixth day so that they would have enough manna for the seventh day and would be able to rest on the sabbath (Ex. 16:22-26). Regretfully, some of the Israelites disobeyed this commandment as well (Ex. 16:27). The Lord reprimanded them in Exodus 16:28, saying, *“How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?”*

7. THE NEED FOR WATER

The Israelites Murmur Against Moses Again

The children of Israel left the wilderness of Sin and traveled to Rephidim, where they pitched their tents. At Rephidim, the Lord tested the children of Israel again, this time with a lack of water. *“And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink”* (Ex. 17:1).

The people criticized Moses and even wanted to stone him, something David experienced as well (1 Sam. 30:6). *“Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said,*

Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?” And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me” (Ex. 17:2-4). The Israelites wanted to return to Egypt. They had an evil heart of unbelief and lacked faith (Deut. 32:20).

We must be careful about looking back to the world. I knew a minister and his wife in France who had been school teachers before they became pastors. They constantly focused on what they had given up to serve God. They complained, saying, “We have given up fifteen years of seniority to be in the ministry.”

Lot’s wife turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:26). She looked back because her heart was still there. The children of Israel did not make it to the Promised Land because their hearts never really left Egypt. Throughout the wilderness journey they wanted to return to Egypt.

They always compared their present conditions to their former lives in Egypt. Ecclesiastes 7:10 warns against this: “*Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*” We must ask the Lord to take the love of this world out of our hearts so that we do not want to return to it.

Going to the Rock

The Lord’s solution for the lack of water was for Moses to strike the rock in Horeb. Moses struck the rock in faith and water came out, enough for all of the children of Israel. We read in Exodus 17:5-7: “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 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. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?”*

Moses obeyed the Lord and went before the people to Horeb. Absolute obedience is essential for leaders. Leaders must go before the people, even as shepherds went before the sheep to search for fresh pastures. A pastor’s responsibility is to go ahead of his people and search out what his congregation needs. A pastor is the head of the church, under Christ, and he must lead the congregation.

8. WAR AGAINST AMALEK

While Israel was at Rephidim, Amalek came and made war against Israel, as recorded in Exodus 17:8-16. Amalek was Esau's grandson (Gen. 36:12), and his descendants bore his name. Esau was a man of fleshly and carnal desires. Therefore, Israel's war with Amalek represents the Christian's battle against carnal desires and besetting sins.

Exodus 17:16 shows us that every generation has to battle against Amalek: "*For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*" Every believer has to get his own personal victory over his carnal nature.

This also applies to leadership. Leaders have to fight against carnality in their churches. Paul had to address this issue in the Corinthian church. Notice that it was Amalek who attacked Israel (Ex. 17:8). Evil spirits of carnal desires will attack your church and the members of your church. As a leader, you must deal with carnality in your own life so that you have the moral authority to break the power of these spirits in prayer.

In Israel's battle against Amalek, the Israelite army led by Joshua prevailed as long as Moses held up his hands, but Amalek prevailed when Moses let his hands down. The battle against carnality is very difficult and strenuous.

It can wear us out, as the battle with Amalek did Moses. Moses needed Aaron and Hur to help him hold up his hands. Senior pastors need their assistant pastors and church leaders to help them fight the battle against carnality in the church.

9. DELEGATION

Exodus 18 records the visit of Jethro. He brought Moses' wife and his two sons to him in the wilderness. In this chapter, Jethro counsels Moses to delegate authority and responsibility because the burden was too great for Moses to carry alone. For this reason, delegation could also be termed "Jethrogation."

While visiting, Jethro observed Moses trying to personally serve as a judge for all of the people, doing everything himself. We read in Exodus 18:13-16: "*And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morn-*

ing unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.”

Jethro gave Moses excellent counsel in Exodus 18:17-20: *“And Moses’ father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Harken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.”*

Jethro told Moses that he could not continue trying to do everything himself because he would wear himself out. He told Moses that his main responsibility was to be the people’s representative to God. He had to go to God on their behalf, but he would not be able to if he was too busy caring for everyone himself.

We read in Exodus 18:21-23: *“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.”*

Jethro counseled Moses to select truthful, God-fearing men to assist him in the ministry. He told him to appoint leaders to oversee a thousand people, a hundred people, fifty people, and ten people. The principle of delegation does not work unless we choose the right people who have good character.

When Moses delegated authority, he had time to oversee his leaders and only handle the cases that his leaders could not handle. We read in Exodus 18:24-26: *“So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.”*

Delegation of authority is something that every leader must learn. The art of leadership is based upon

the ability to delegate authority and responsibility to others. As a pastor's church grows, he must devote more time raising up leaders who can help him in the ministry. In order for a church to be able to handle growth, a strong leadership team must be in place, including the pastoral staff, the church board, elders, deacons, and cell group leaders.

Exodus 18:20 illustrates the fact that a minister's primary responsibility after his relationship with God is to teach his congregation the ways and laws of God and show them by example how to live a godly life. *"And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."*

Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* Leaders must instruct the whole congregation, but especially their leaders so that they can, in turn, teach others. A wise leader will devote his time to raising up leaders within his church or ministry. When a church grows to several thousand, it is impossible for the pastor to personally teach everyone in the church. When our church in New Zealand grew to several thousand members, we depended on our church leaders to help us minister to every member of the congregation.

One person can oversee ten thousand people or more if he is well organized and has a team of qualified leaders helping him. Moses was responsible for about two to three million people. He presided over probably the largest church in history, as the congregation of Israel is called "the church in the wilderness" in Acts 7:38.

However, some churches stop growing when they reach a certain point. They cannot seat all of the people in one service, so they have several services on Sunday. In these cases, it is sometimes best to divide the church into several satellite churches so that each church can continue to grow and multiply. When there are multiple services on Sunday to accommodate all of the people, often the church members do not feel united with the members who attend a different service. Nonetheless, the most important thing in life is to know God's will and do it.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the New Testament Church had a problem with multiplication, as recorded in Acts 6:1: *"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations."* When a church or ministry grows very quickly, as was the case with the New Testament Church, often some people feel left behind or neglected.

We read in Acts 6:2-4: *"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said,*

It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

The twelve apostles were no longer able to effectively oversee the church by themselves. They needed deacons to assist them with the practical and menial aspects of the ministry so that they could devote their time to the spiritual aspects of the ministry. Ministers must also make sure that they put the spiritual aspects of the ministry first, like prayer, seeking God for fresh direction for the church, and the study and teaching of His Word.

As the President of several ministries—including a Christian university; a worldwide association of Bible colleges and schools; a fellowship of pastors, churches, and missionaries; and my own church—I have to constantly delegate responsibilities and authority. I have had people ask me questions like what color they should paint the garbage cans at our Bible school. Leaders cannot be bogged down with little details like that; they must delegate those responsibilities to others. The top leaders of a church or ministry organization should only handle the situations that the leaders under them cannot handle.

The whole of God’s universe functions on the principle of delegation. He equips people for certain responsibilities. The main responsibility of ministers is the teaching and preaching of God’s Word. It is clear in the Early Church that the senior ministers gave themselves to prayer and the study of the Word. Ministers should not devote the majority of their time to the church building or the menial tasks of the operation of the church. Church buildings can consume a minister’s time if he is not careful.

Now, at times ministers might be called upon to help in the menial affairs, especially when the church or ministry is small. Many years ago, I had the responsibility of overseeing the building of several thousand houses for people in Guatemala after an earthquake. I even hammered a few nails myself. However, the ultimate goal is that we should raise up leaders who can relieve us of those responsibilities so that we can devote our time to the spiritual aspects of the ministry.

When we give people responsibilities, we must also give them the authority to carry out those responsibilities. Once we have appointed someone to a position, we must allow them to do their job. Obviously, that does not mean that we do not oversee them, but that we give them authority and freedom to make certain decisions on their own.

Chapter 6

MOUNT SINAI

Chapter 6 Outline

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1. THE TRIP TO MOUNT SINAI

In Exodus 19:1-2, the children of Israel traveled from Rephidim to Mount Sinai in the third month. *“In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.”*

The children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai in the third month. The feast of the third month is the Feast of Pentecost. It was celebrated fifty days after the Passover (Lev. 23:16; Deut. 16:9-10). As know from Acts 2, the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Therefore, we can make the analogy that Mount Sinai represents the Pentecostal experience. As we consider the events at Mount Sinai, we will develop how they parallel the many wonderful blessings that come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

2. CALLED INTO HIS PRESENCE

First of all, the Israelites were called into the presence of God. *“And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel”* (Ex. 19:3). The Lord spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai and gave Him many promises for the children of Israel.

We see two things here: the presence of God and the voice of God. When we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are brought into a new level of God’s presence where our spiritual ears are opened to hear the voice of God in a greater way.

Borne on Eagle’s Wings

The Lord told Moses that He had born the Israelites on eagles’ wings: *“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself”* (Ex. 19:4). God wants us to be “eagle Christians.”

Eagles have amazing vision. They are able to see things close by and also things very far away. God wants us to have eagle vision so that we are able to pay attention to the details of life and also have a long-range vision for our lives.

Psalm 119:105 says, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* The Word of

God is a light unto our feet that allows us to see the next few steps we are going to take when we are walking. His Word also shines light upon our path so that we can see further ahead to know where we are going. That is what it means to have “eagle vision.”

This verse came alive to us when we were missionaries to Cameroon. It would get dark very early in the evening. There were no roads where we lived, only pathways full of snakes. When we wanted to go somewhere at night, we would carry a lamp in our hands to see the path ahead, but we would also strap a little lamp to our shoes so that we could see right in front of us as well. My wife was very afraid of snakes, so she was especially careful.

One night while in Cameroon, the Lord gave my wife a dream about encountering a snake on the path the next day. He told her not to be afraid of it, because it would be afraid of her and flee from her. God has given us dominion over the animal kingdom. The next day the dream came to pass. Eagles are not afraid of snakes; in fact, they even prey on them.

Therefore, God wants us to be “eagle Christians” who do not fear evil spirits or the devil. When a spirit appeared during the middle of the night to a woman we knew, she said to the spirit: “What are you doing disturbing my peace and rest? Go away!” As “eagle Christians,” God also wants us to have authority over the devil and evil spirits. The darkness does not overcome the light; the light overcomes the darkness.

God’s Peculiar Treasure

The Lord said in Exodus 19:5, *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.”* The children of Israel were God’s peculiar treasure. Believers are also God’s special treasure because He has paid such a great price for us. Paul said in Titus 2:14, *“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

In Exodus 19:5, the condition to all of God’s blessings was obedience. In the same way, the qualification for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is obedience. Peter said in Acts 5:32, *“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”* We must obey God in order to receive the Holy Spirit. Often there is an area of disobedience in a person’s life that hinders them from receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

A pastor friend of mine once held a service to pray for people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

A lady came forward crying out to God, “Lord, please baptize me in the Holy Ghost!” The pastor thought in her heart, *Surely this lady is going to receive.* Then the Lord spoke to her that He was not going to baptize this lady in the Holy Ghost because she was living in disobedience to Him.

On another occasion, a man was praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Lord said to him, “Go to the other room and release your bird from the bird cage.” The bird had not been born in captivity; he had captured it and placed it in a cage. The Lord had compassion on that bird, but He was also testing this man to see if he would obey Him. As soon as he released the bird, he was filled with the Spirit and began speaking in other tongues.

Sometimes God requires an act of obedience before He will give us the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is easy to tell people that all they have to do is believe, but sometimes they also have to obey God in a certain area of their lives in order to receive. Therefore, when people are praying to receive the Spirit, it is wise to tell them to wait on the Lord and ask Him to reveal if there are any areas of disobedience in their lives that He wants to deal with in order for them to receive.

A Kingdom of Priests

The Lord said in Exodus 19:6, “*And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*” God’s plan was for the whole nation of Israel to be kings and priests. However, they forfeited this promise through disobedience. The priesthood was given to the tribe of Levi and the kingship was given to the tribe of Judah.

The Church of Jesus Christ has been given all of the blessings that He had intended for Israel. Therefore, God wants us as believers to be kings and priests unto Him. Peter said in 1 Peter 2:5,9 “*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*” Remember that kings and priests are not born, they are made (Rev. 5:9-10; 1 Sam. 2:8).

3. SANCTIFICATION OF THE PEOPLE

We read in Exodus 19:10-11: “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.*” The Lord instructed Moses to sanctify the people and tell them to wash their clothes because He was going

to appear to them in three days. The word “sanctify” means to consecrate and make clean. We also must sanctify ourselves in order to see the Lord’s glory.

4. MOSES RECEIVES THE LAW

In Exodus 20, the Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments, written on two stone tablets. There are two parts to the commandments: the first four commandments deal with our duties toward God and the last six commandments deal with our duties toward others.

The Ten Commandments still have significance for our lives. Jesus did not come to destroy the law, He came to fulfill it, saying in Matthew 5:17, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”* We also must fulfill the law. How do we fulfill the law? Paul gives us the answer in Romans 8:4: *“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* As we walk in the Spirit and deny our carnal desires, we fulfill the law.

The Lord also promised a new covenant to Israel in Jeremiah 31:33, which we as the Israel of God enter into in this dispensation, as we are faithful to seek Him for it: *“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”* The new covenant is the law of God written on our hearts and in our minds. Paul reiterates this for us in Hebrews 8:10, confirming that it is not only for Israel in the Millennium, but for us today, as we walk in obedience to His Word.

The Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, representing the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with the Spirit, we should receive a fresh appreciation and respect for God’s laws.

The Ten Commandments

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me (20:3).
2. Thou shalt not make any graven images or serve them (20:4-5).
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain (20:7).
4. Keep the sabbath day (20:8).
5. Honor thy father and thy mother (20:12).
6. Thou shalt not kill (20:13).
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery (20:14).

8. Thou shalt not steal (20:15).
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor (20:16).
10. Thou shalt not covet (20:17).

In Exodus chapters 21-23, the Lord gave Moses more laws and judgments for Israel.

5. THE COVENANT CONFIRMED WITH ISRAEL

In Exodus 23:20-33, God marvelously confirmed His covenant with Israel. The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 24:1-2, *“And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.”*

The Israelites promised to obey the Lord. Obedience is the condition for the fulfillment of every promise God gives us. We read in Exodus 24:7-8: *“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”*

6. FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE MOUNT

Moses spent forty days and nights in the mount (Ex. 24:18). We read in Exodus 24:9-10: *“Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.”* The Lord met with them and allowed them to see Him.

When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Lord opens our spiritual eyes in a new way to see Him. Many people begin to have visions of God after they are filled with the Spirit. This does not mean that God cannot show us visions of Himself before we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, but it is the infilling of the Spirit that opens our spiritual eyes to see God.

7. THE TABERNACLE PATTERN

During those forty days on the mountain top, the Lord gave Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle. We read in Exodus 25:9, *“According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”*

It was very important that Moses built the Tabernacle and everything related to it according to God's pattern, because it was a shadow of the heavenly Tabernacle. We read in Hebrews 8:5, "*Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.*" It is also very important that we do everything in our lives according to God's pattern and blueprint.

The Tabernacle had three sections:

1. The Outer Court (100 x 50 x 5 cubits)
2. The Holy Place (20 x 10 x 10 cubits)
3. The Holy of Holies (10 x 10 x 10 cubits)

I would like to make some analogies from the measurements of the Tabernacle. The linen wall around the Outer Court was 5 cubits high. The length of the Outer Court was 100 cubits and the width was 50 cubits. The surface area of the linen wall was 1,500 square cubits ($100 + 100 + 50 + 50 \times 5 = 1,500$). There were approximately 1,500 years from Moses and the giving of the Law to Christ. Therefore, the Outer Court can represent the Old Testament Age.

The volume of the Holy Place was 2,000 cubic cubits. The Church Age lasts for a period of approximately 2,000 years. Therefore, the Holy Place can represent the Church Age. The volume of the Holy of Holies was 1,000 cubic cubits. The Millennial reign of Christ upon earth is 1,000 years. (The volume of the Outer Court was not considered in this analogy because it did not have a roof or covering.)

Thus we can make the following analogy:

1. The Outer Court symbolizes the 1,500-year Old Testament Age
2. The Holy Place symbolizes the 2,000-year Church Age
3. The Holy of Holies symbolizes the 1,000 year Millennial reign of Christ

Remembering that Mount Sinai represents the Pentecostal experience, we can state that the baptism of the Holy Spirit gives us an understanding of God's purposes for the ages.

8. THE GOLDEN CALF

The children of Israel grew impatient waiting for Moses to return from Mount Sinai. We read in

Exodus 32:1, *“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”* They asked Aaron to make them gods.

Aaron yielded to their pressure and made a golden idol in the form of a calf. Then he declared that this false god had brought them out of Egypt. Aaron was a prophet of God and Moses’ assistant. He was a witness and participant in all of the miracles and plagues in Egypt. He knew without a shadow of a doubt that it was Jehovah who had brought them out of Egypt, but he yielded to the desires of the people.

We read in Exodus 32:2-4: *“And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”*

Aaron tried to combine the worship of the golden calf with the worship of Jehovah, as recorded in Exodus 32:5: *“And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.”* Aaron brought in a mixture of worship, combining idol worship and the worship of the Lord. Sadly, there is also a mixture in the worship of many churches that must be corrected.

During a worship service in a Swiss church years ago, the Lord opened my spiritual eyes to see the angel of the Lord and a demon on the platform. There was an anointing in the church, but there was also a demonic influence. The root cause of mixture in worship is a lack of wholeheartedness.

The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 32:7, *“Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”* In Exodus 32:9-11, The Lord told Moses that He was going to destroy the children of Israel and make a greater nation from him (Ezek. 20:15).

In Exodus 32:11-14, Moses interceded for his people and turned away God’s wrath from them. The Lord made Moses a tremendous offer to make a great nation of him, but he refused because of his profound love for his people.

Moses was also concerned for God’s honor and reputation. He told the Lord that if He destroyed the

children of Israel, the Egyptians would say that He was a cruel God who led them into the wilderness simply to destroy them. Moses' attitude was completely unselfish. He did not think of himself at all. He thought of God's honor and the lives of his people. May we seek to emulate this attitude.

9. THE BREAKING OF THE TABLES OF THE LAW

When Moses came down from the mountain and saw what his people had done, he broke the tables of the law (Ex. 32:19). Then he burnt the golden calf, ground it to powder, scattered it on the water, and made the Israelites drink it (Ex. 32:20).

Then Moses confronted Aaron, saying, *"What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?"* (Ex. 32:21). Instead of accepting responsibility for his actions, Aaron cast all of the blame on the Israelites, saying in Exodus 32:22-24: *"And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."*

Then Aaron lied to Moses by saying that he threw the gold into the fire and the golden calf came out. In reality, Aaron had formed it with a graving tool, as recorded in Exodus 32:4: *"And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."*

10. THE LEVITES RESPOND TO THE CALL

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" The Levites responded to the call and stood on the Lord's side. The other eleven tribes did not choose to stand on the Lord's side. We read in Exodus 32:26, *"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him."*

The cost of standing on the Lord's side was that the Levites had to take a stand against their own brethren. We read in Exodus 32:27-28: *"And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that*

day about three thousand men.” It was this decision that caused the Lord to give the Levites the priesthood.

Every believer will be tested in this same area. Who comes first in our lives: friends and family or the Lord? Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”* We must always put God before friends, family, and our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we want to be popular, we will not make it to Zion. When David finally captured Mount Zion many years later, it was mainly the Levites who dwelt there.

11. MOSES’ INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL

Moses interceded for Israel again in Exodus 32:31-32: *“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”*

Moses’ attitude resembles the attitude of the Apostle Paul in Romans 9:1-3: *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”* True leaders intercede to God for their people, even when they are rebellious.

12. GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES FACE TO FACE

Leaders experience many trials, pressures, and sorrows. Moses was constantly criticized by his own people. At one point, they even wanted to stone him. They disobeyed him and disregarded his words. Aaron, who in essence was his assistant pastor and brother, betrayed him by making the golden calf and leading the Israelites into idolatry while Moses was on the mountain. However, instead of forgetting about them and leaving them behind, Moses sought to bring them closer to God and lead them into their inheritance.

Leaders are responsible to bring not only themselves into God’s fullness, but their people as well. Sometimes leaders go through situations in which they suffer for the sins of others. A congregation can hold its leader back. Joshua and Caleb were ready to enter the Promised Land, but they were delayed for thirty-eight years because of their people. Therefore, leaders should seek as much as possible to lead their congregations into God’s best for their lives.

Leaders face pressures that others do not; therefore, they should receive special compensations. In the business world, the President, Chief Executive Officer, and Board of Directors receive special financial rewards from their companies as compensation. Some business leaders even receive cars, homes, and all expenses paid trips.

I am not suggesting that the Church should function in this way, but Christian leaders should receive some form of compensation. The spiritual compensation of ministers is an intimate relationship with the Lord. The Levites were not given an inheritance in the Promised Land; their inheritance was the Lord Himself (Deut. 10:9).

The compensation Moses received was that God spoke to him face to face as a man speaks to his friend, as seen in Exodus 33:11: “*And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.*” Moses had an intimate relationship with the Lord that the rest of the people did not have.

Moses was blessed with the presence of God upon his life. We read in Exodus 33:13-14: “*Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*”

Moses prayed in Exodus 33:18, “*I beseech thee, show me thy glory.*” Moses did not ask anything for himself; all he wanted was to see God’s glory. We must fine-tune our desires so that we only desire one thing in life—the Lord Jesus Christ.

David said in Psalm 27:4, “*One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.*” As king, David could have had anything he wanted, but all he wanted was the Lord.

The Apostle Paul manifested this same wholehearted desire for the Lord, saying in Philippians 3:8, “*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*”

Believers, and especially leaders, will be destroyed if their desires and affections are not completely upon the Lord. We will fail if our greatest desire is to have a large church, a beautiful building, a great deal of money, popularity, a prestigious position, or a highly successful ministry. All of those things can

be good in and of themselves, but we must not set our heart upon them. Our heart must be totally devoted to the Lord and His presence.

If we have God's presence, no one can take it away from us. Everything else can be taken away from us, but we will not lose our joy because our heart is upon the Lord. The Lord said of Mary, "*Mary hath chosen the better part that cannot be taken away from her*" (Lk. 10:39-42). She just sat in the presence of the Lord.

I have known very successful ministers who have prosperous international ministries. They told me that their ministries did not mean anything to them because all they were interested in was meeting with God. They said they would walk away from their large ministries if it meant they could know Christ better. We should make the Lord our one, all-consuming desire and pursuit in life. That way, even if we lose everything else, we still have the only thing that is of any value, an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

We should not grasp for an earthly ministry or position. Paul said in Philippians 2:5-6: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" (NIV). Do not grasp for ministry; it cannot satisfy you.

13. THE SECOND PERIOD OF FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE MOUNT

Moses spent a second period of forty days and nights on the mount with God. (Compare Exodus 34:28 with Exodus 24:12-18.)

Five Ways the Lord Wants to be Known

In chapter 34:6, the Lord described Himself to Moses. Jehovah's description of Himself to Moses shows us five ways in which the Lord wants to be known:

1. God is merciful
2. God is gracious
3. God is longsuffering
4. God is abundant in goodness
5. God is abundant in truth

Goodness means "incapable of doing evil." Years ago, the Lord appeared to me and said, "Touch me;

I am altogether good. I am incapable of doing evil.” Jesus said in John 14:6, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* God is merciful, longsuffering, gracious, and abundant in goodness and truth. We must major in these five qualities as well.

However, it is important to realize that the first thing God wants man to know about Himself is that He is merciful. Only monarchs and heads of state can show mercy to the condemned by pardoning them. The highest revelation of God in the Tabernacle of Moses is the Mercy Seat, which rested above the Ark of the Covenant.

We read in Exodus 25:22, *“And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”*

14. MOSES WEARS A VEIL ON HIS FACE

We read in Exodus 34:29-30: *“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.”*

When Moses came down from the mountain, his face shone with the glory of God. The Israelites could not bear to look at him, so he had to cover his face with a veil when he spoke to them, as recorded in Exodus 34:33-35: *“And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”*

In 2 Corinthians 3:7-9, the Apostle Paul states that the Church will experience greater glory than Moses: *“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.”*

The Lord desires to bring us into His glory, as seen in Hebrews 2:10: *“For it became him, for whom*

are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

15. THE TABERNACLE IS BUILT

The construction of the Tabernacle began in Exodus 36. In Exodus 40, the Tabernacle was completed and erected (Ex. 40:2,33). While still encamped at Sinai, Moses was given all the ordinances for the feasts and offerings, and all the rules for the priesthood (Lev. 27:24). The Tabernacle was God’s sanctuary, as seen in Exodus 25:8: *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”*

Moses brought the congregation of Israel out of Egypt. This represents the salvation experience. Then he led them through the Red Sea, which symbolizes water baptism. From there, he took them to Mount Sinai, which typifies the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The next major event was the construction of the Tabernacle, which can represent a church.

A pastor should seek to lead his people into salvation, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Then, if he does not already have a permanent building, he should lead the church in a building project, as Moses constructed the Tabernacle. Pastors should not seek to purchase or build a large building until the blessing and anointing of God are flowing in their churches. God’s anointing will release the finances necessary for the building project.

16. CONSECRATION OF AARON AS THE HIGH PRIEST

In Leviticus, all the ordinances and laws for the feasts and offerings of Israel were instituted. In Leviticus 8, God told Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons. We read in Leviticus 8:6, *“And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.”* Before we can be consecrated, we must be spiritually washed.

Then Moses anointed Aaron in Leviticus 8:12: *“And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.”* It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that will sanctify us and consecrate us for ministry.

A truth easily overlooked here is Moses’ greatness and graciousness in consecrating Aaron as the High Priest. His brother Aaron was the one who introduced idolatry to the children of Israel with the golden calf while Moses was on the mountaintop with God.

It is essential that we forgive people and do not hold their failures against them. God is able to completely restore those who have failed. If your assistant pastor turns against you or lets you down, forgive him and if he repents, be willing to restore him to the ministry.

17. THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE

In Numbers 1, a census of the tribes was taken. As we noted before, there were over 600,000 Israelites who left Egypt (Num. 1:19-46). Then the camp was divinely organized to facilitate orderly mobility when they marched toward the Promised Land (Num. 2). The tribe of Levi was separated from the rest of Israel for the service of the Tabernacle (Num. 1:47-54).

18. THE PASSOVER IS KEPT

In Numbers 9, the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Passover. A year had now passed since they had left Egypt. At this point, they had been at Sinai for about ten months (Num. 9:1-14). Everything was now made ready to advance to Kadesh-Barnea near the Canaan border.

19. MOSES ENLISTS THE AID OF HOBAB

In Numbers 10:11-13, the children of Israel left Sinai and journeyed toward Canaan: *“And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.”* They left Sinai in the second month of the second year, having arrived in the third month of the previous year. Therefore, they stayed in Sinai for about eleven months.

In Numbers 10:29,31, Moses asked Hobab, his brother-in-law, for his help: *“And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses’ father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.”*

Moses, who intimately knew the Lord, was dependent upon experts in various field to help him. Moses pleaded for Hobab’s input and help. This shows the great humility of Moses. He could have had the attitude that he did not need anyone’s help because he was God’s prophet and he had seen

God face to face. It takes humility to depend on others.

We should ask the Lord to surround us with specialists. It is absolutely impossible for one person to know everything. Isaac Newton, who lived in the seventeenth century, was one of the last men who knew something about everything. At that time, knowledge had only been increased to a certain degree and it was still possible for one man to know something about everything. However, today that is not possible. Therefore, ministers should ask the Lord to give them specialists in every area of the ministry, including craftsmen and sound technicians.

Ten Steps in the Life of Moses the Leader

To conclude our study of the time that Moses and the Israelites spent at Mount Sinai, I would like to list the ten steps in the life of Moses the leader from his calling until he reached Mount Sinai.

1. Called
2. Cooling period (his forty years in the desert)
3. Commissioned at the burning bush
4. Circumcision of his son
5. Country and city
6. Confrontation of Pharaoh
7. Coming out of bondage
8. Crossing over the Red Sea
9. Caring for the people of God (in the wilderness)
10. Coming to Mount Sinai

As Moses is a pattern of leadership for all ages, leaders will experience these ten steps in their lives. First, they must be called. Second, they will experience a cooling period after they have been called. During that time, they may not do anything related to ministry, just as Paul spent seven silent years in Tarsus. Third, they will be commissioned to begin their ministry. Fourth, they will begin to experience spiritual circumcision of their hearts (Deut. 30:6). Fifth, God will reveal to them the country and city to which He has called them.

Sixth, they will have to confront the powers over the city in which they are ministering that are hindering their people from moving on with God. Seventh, they will have to lead their people out of bondage. Eighth, they will lead their people into water baptism (symbolized by the Red Sea). Ninth, they will have to care for the people that God has entrusted to them. Tenth, they will have to bring their people into the baptism of the Holy Spirit (symbolized by Mount Sinai).

Chapter 7

MOUNT SINAI TO KADESH-BARNEA

Chapter 7 Outline

1. God's fire consumes murmurers
2. The mixed multitude lusts for meat
3. Moses cries out to the Lord
4. The seventy elders are appointed
5. Moses' generous attitude toward other prophets
6. Those who lusted for meat are buried
7. Moses endures the criticism of Aaron and Miriam

1. GOD'S FIRE CONSUMES MURMURERS

In Numbers 11:1-3, the children of Israel complained once again even after all God had done for them. Therefore, God consumed them with fire. *“And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.”*

2. THE MIXED MULTITUDE LUSTS FOR MEAT

The mixed multitude was not content with God's provision of manna; they lusted for meat. We read in Numbers 11:4-6: *“And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”*

God provided the Israelites with food, but they wanted the food that they were accustomed to in Egypt: cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic, and meat. One of my former students encountered this problem in Cameroon. He wanted to move a pastor from one church to another, but the pastor objected because the food in that city was different from the food to which he was accustomed.

We will be tested in this area as well. God gives us enough food to eat, but sometimes He does not give us food to which we are accustomed. For instance, English food is very plain, while French food is superb. While I was a missionary in France, I was given very rich food that I was not familiar with. Although the French food was delicious, I craved English fruitcake. God was gracious to me and another British missionary gave me an English fruitcake.

By God's grace, we have to overcome our appetites, especially if we are called to minister in another country. We must be willing to eat whatever is set before us (1 Cor. 10:27). One of my friends, a missionary to Africa, ate only rice for nine months. Another friend in South America lived on bananas for several years. He said to me, “I did not know that it was possible to serve bananas in so many different ways.” We must be grateful for the food that the Lord provides us with and not complain about it.

Food preference is a universal problem. In many countries, we provide food for the pastors who

attend our pastors' conferences. I was amazed to hear that many of the pastors in a certain country did not feel like they had eaten because we did not serve them rice, even though they had eaten meat and vegetables.

Leaders face tremendous pressures. Moses had to endure the constant complaining of the Israelites. I have had many pastors say to me, "I do not know if I can take it any longer. I cannot bear to go up to the pulpit again because my people complain constantly. Nothing I do pleases them! I do not know if I can take it another day." It is not easy being a leader. Moses faced the same pressures. How did Moses handle it? He took the matter to the Lord.

3. MOSES CRIES OUT TO THE LORD

We read in Numbers 11:10-11: *"Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?"* What a difficult place for Moses to be in. The people were weeping; God was angry at them; and Moses was in the middle of the conflict. It was a tremendous burden for Moses.

Years ago, in the midst of a very problematic situation, the Lord gave me a vision of two millstones. One stone was moving in one direction and the other in the opposite direction ensuring a collision. The Lord showed me that He was moving clockwise, but the people in that place were moving counter clockwise, contrary to the Lord's direction. Then I saw a little olive being crushed between the two millstones. The Lord spoke to me that I was the olive being crushed between the two millstones moving in opposite directions. An olive must be crushed in order to produce oil, which is a type of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Jas. 5:14). The key to the release of the anointing in our lives is that we must be broken. As Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:8, we must be "pressed out of measure."

Nursing Fathers and Mothers

Moses said to the Lord in Numbers 11:12-13: *"Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat."* Moses asked the Lord if he was supposed to care for all of the children of Israel as a nursing father.

This illustrates a very important truth. The Lord needs "nursing fathers and mothers" in His Church to

care for others and help bring them to maturity. We read in Isaiah 49:23, *“And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.”*

Several years ago, the Lord gave me a vision of a multitude of babies and said to me: “Multitudes will be birthed into the kingdom of God in the coming revival. I need nursing fathers and mothers who will care for them.” We do not have the same expectations of infants as we do of ten year olds. Young children require a lot of attention and care. As in the natural, so in the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46). Many people are going to come into the Kingdom and we need to be prepared to care for them as nursing fathers and mothers.

“I am not able to bear this people alone.”

In Numbers 11:14-15, Moses said to God: *“I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.”* Moses felt so overwhelmed by the burden of having to care for all of the Israelites that he even asked the Lord to take his life. I have known many ministers who have asked the Lord to take their lives because they could not handle the pressures and conflicts of ministry any more. Many people rush into ministry out of their desire to do something for Him without realizing pressures of leadership. As a result, they become easily discouraged.

The life of Moses is a pattern for leadership. Therefore, if you are called to leadership, you will experience many of the same pressures that Moses faced. Often, in addition to internal church conflicts, ministers face pressures from their communities for taking a stand for righteousness. The only way to triumph is to totally depend upon the Lord and trust in Him. If you are called to leadership, it is vital that you study Moses’ life so know what to expect and how to overcome.

4. THE SEVENTY ELDERS ARE APPOINTED

The Lord gave Moses the solution to handling the burden of leadership in Numbers 11:16-17: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.”*

The Lord instructed Moses to gather seventy elders to help him carry the burden of leadership. God took some of anointing of the Holy Spirit that was upon Moses and placed it upon the seventy elders. In other words, the Lord had imparted to Moses the mantle, anointing, and grace necessary to lead the children of Israel. However, one man cannot lead several million people all by himself. Therefore, the Lord took a portion of the anointing and grace that was upon Moses and placed it upon the seventy elders.

In order to fulfill our ministry or God-given task, we must have the anointing of the Holy Spirit and God's grace. The Lord gives us the necessary anointing to carry the load that He has given us. The mantle, anointing, and grace increase as our ministry increases. Paul said in Ephesians 4:7, "*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*" The Lord gives us grace according to our level of ministry and responsibilities. Grace is divine enablement. God gives us the amount of grace that is necessary for us to accomplish the tasks He gives us.

5. MOSES' GENEROUS ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER PROPHETS

In Numbers 11:25, the Lord took a portion of the anointing that was upon Moses and placed it upon the seventy elders: "*And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*" When the seventy elders received the same anointing that was upon the prophet Moses, they began to prophesy.

We read in Numbers 11:26-28: "*But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.*"

Joshua was upset that Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp. He told Moses to forbid them to prophesy, saying, "You are supposed to be the one prophesying, not them." I have known many ministers who had the same attitude as Joshua, telling their congregations that only the pastors of the church can prophesy.

Moses, on the other hand, adopted a very gracious and generous attitude toward them, saying in Numbers 11:29, "*Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!*" Moses wanted every one of God's

people to prophesy under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The desire of a true minister is to see everyone in his church flourish and even go on to greater heights than he himself has attained. The aim of teachers should be to impart to their students everything that they have learned over a period of perhaps twenty or thirty years. In so doing, their students will be able to build upon what they have learned and attain unto a higher level of understanding than their teachers.

6. THOSE WHO LUSTED FOR MEAT ARE BURIED

In Numbers 11:31-32, the Lord miraculously provided quails for the children of Israel to eat: *“And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day’s journey on this side, and as it were a day’s journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp.”*

However, this miraculous provision also brought judgment upon those who lusted after the meat, as recorded in Numbers 11:33-35: *“And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibrothhattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted. And the people journeyed from Kibrothhattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.”*

7. MOSES ENDURES THE CRITICISM OF AARON AND MIRIAM

In Numbers chapter 12, Moses had to endure the criticism of his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam. The two who were nearest to Moses turned against him at this moment and criticized him because of his marriage to an Ethiopian woman. It appears that Miriam was the chief culprit as her name is mentioned first and God smote her with leprosy. However, Aaron echoed her criticism, which he should not have done.

There is reason to believe that Zipporah, Moses’ first wife, had died. She is never mentioned again in Scripture. Moses then married an Ethiopian woman. This passage is vague and inconclusive, for Ethiopia had a mixture of races, both white and black. Nonetheless, Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses, and God was angry with them. Moses endured their criticism with a spirit of meekness (Num. 12:3). Aaron should have been grateful that Moses restored him to the ministry after the golden calf incident, but instead he joined in Miriam’s criticism against him.

The Lord's response to their criticism of Moses is remarkable: *"Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed"* (Num. 12:6-9).

The Lord takes criticism against His ministers personally (Ex. 16:8; 1 Thess. 4:8). We must be very careful about criticizing leaders. Even though Saul was backslidden, David was careful not to criticize him or kill him when he had the chance to do so. God made a clear-cut distinction between Moses and other prophets. God said that He spoke to Moses "mouth to mouth" and that Moses was permitted to see His face (Ex. 33:11).

God judged Miriam with leprosy for criticizing Moses (Num. 12:10). How did Moses respond to Miriam's punishment? Did he rejoice in being vindicated by God? He cried unto God in Numbers 12:13, *"Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee."* The true greatness of a person can be seen in their attitude toward those who criticize and attack them. The Lord turned Job's captivity when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10). Leaders face pressures from both within and without. At times, they are even criticized by those they love the most. Through it all, leaders have to remain firm and steadfast like a pillar. It takes many years and many pressures to form a true leader.

8. THE PURPOSE OF THE WILDERNESS

1. To deal with sin in our lives. The Lord uses the wilderness to deal with sin in our lives. In Leviticus 23:17, the offering on the day of Pentecost was mixed with leaven, which represents sin. Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Ghost does not deal with all of the sin in our lives. The pressures and trials of the wilderness experiences in our lives deal with different areas of sin, such as unbelief, complaining, and criticism.

2. To produce faith and meekness in our lives. We read in Song of Solomon 3:6: *"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?"* By comparing the nine spices and fruits in Song of Solomon 4:12-14 with the nine fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, we can understand the spiritual significance of myrrh and frankincense. Myrrh represents meekness and frankincense symbolizes faith. In the wilderness, the Lord seeks to increase our faith in Him. Also, as seen in the life of Moses, He seeks to develop meekness in our lives.

3. To produce trust and dependence on the Lord in our lives. We read in Song of Solomon 8:5, *“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.”* The Lord wants to bring us out of wilderness experiences leaning upon Him and trusting in Him with all of our hearts.

4. To make us experts in spiritual warfare. In Exodus 17, the children of Israel were confronted with the Amalekites. They had to learn how to do warfare in the wilderness so that they would be prepared to defeat the enemies in the Promised Land. In our lives, the Lord desires to make us experts in spiritual warfare through wilderness experiences (Psa. 18:34). Song of Solomon 3:8 illustrates this: *“They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.”*

We read in Judges 3:2, *“Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof.”* The Lord wants to make us experts in spiritual warfare because, as Paul said, we *“wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Eph. 6:12).

5. To humble us. We read in Deuteronomy 8:2 that one of the purposes of the wilderness was to humble the children of Israel: *“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”* Deuteronomy 8:16 reaffirms this: *“Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.”*

6. To test (prove) our obedience. Deuteronomy 8:2 says, *“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”* All of the blessings of God come through obedience. Even Jesus had to learn obedience, as seen in Hebrews 5:8: *“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”*

7. To teach us contentment. In the wilderness, the Lord desires to teach us contentment with His provision. The children of Israel had a hard time learning this lesson. Many of them were never content with God’s provision. When He gave them manna, they wanted meat. Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:6, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”*

We should seek to have the attitude of Esther who was content with whatever she was given, as seen in Esther 2:15: *“Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king’s chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.”*

8. To teach us to overcome bitterness. At Marah, the children of Israel were confronted with bitter water. When Moses cast a tree into the water, the bitter water became sweet. This shows us the key to overcome bitterness. We must take our bitter experiences to the cross of Christ and allow Him to make them sweet.

9. To give us the treasures of darkness. We read in Isaiah 45:3, *“And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.”* In the wilderness, we experience many times of darkness in many forms. There are certain things that God can only teach us in darkness. The Lord wants to give us the treasures of darkness in the wilderness.

10. To choose us in the furnace of affliction. The Lord says in Isaiah 48:10, *“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”* The wilderness is a place of testing. Jeremiah 2:6 says, *“Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?”* As Jesus said, many are called, but few are chosen. It is in the furnace of affliction that we are chosen by God.

The Purposes of the Wilderness

1. To deal with sin in our lives
2. To produce faith and meekness in our lives
3. To produce trust and dependence on the Lord in our lives
4. To make us experts in spiritual warfare
5. To humble us
6. To test (prove) our obedience
7. To teach us contentment
8. To teach us to overcome bitterness
9. To give us the treasures of darkness
10. To choose us in the furnace of affliction

Chapter 8

KADESH-BARNEA

Chapter 8 Outline

1. The twelve spies are sent to view the land
2. The evil report of the ten spies
3. The attitude of Joshua and Caleb
4. The Lord seeks to destroy the unbelieving
5. Moses pleads for the honor of God
6. Review of the ten trials in the wilderness
7. God returns Israel to die in the wilderness
8. Moses contends with the presumptuous

1. THE TWELVE SPIES SENT OUT TO VIEW THE LAND

Numbers chapters 13 and 14 cover the account at Kadesh-Barnea, located on the border of the Promised Land. In Numbers 13:2, the Lord instructed Moses to send twelve spies to view the land: *“Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.”*

These twelve spies spent forty days in the Promised Land. Their activities are recorded in Numbers 13:21-25: *“So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.”*

2. THE EVIL REPORT OF THE TEN SPIES

The twelve spies returned and ten of the spies gave an evil report in Numbers 13:27-28: *“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. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.”* They testified that the land of Canaan was a land flowing with “milk and honey” just as God had promised, but said that they were unable to possess the land because their enemies were greater than them.

Their evil report continued in Numbers 13:31-33: *“But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”*

When God gives us an inheritance, there will be spiritual enemies that we have to defeat in order to possess it. We must not fear evil spirits. First John 4:4 tells us, *“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.” Our enemies are afraid of us; their only hope is that we do not know it.

The ten spies thought that the heathen nations in the land of Canaan were too strong for them to defeat, but, in actuality, they were afraid of the children of Israel. Rahab said in Joshua 2:9-11: *“I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”*

In their journey towards Jordan there were two kings who were conquered by Israel, Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og King of Bashan (Deut. 2-3). Sihon would not let Israel pass through his lands, for the Lord hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate so he would fight against Israel. Consequently, the Lord destroyed him and gave Israel the lands of Sihon and Og. This is a very important lesson for our lives. We should always seek to have a sweet, amenable, and meek spirit so that we may be spared in times of judgment and obtain our inheritance (Mt. 5:5).

We read in 1 John 4:18, *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”* We must overcome fear of the devil and evil spirits. It is the love of God that will enable us to overcome fear. We should not fear the devil, but the Lord. The fear of the Lord is a love for righteousness and a fear of doing anything that displeases Him (Psa. 112:1; Prov. 8:13). We should seek to do everything that pleases the Lord, even in the same way that a godly wife seeks to do everything that pleases her husband and fears displeasing him.

In Numbers 14:1-4, we see that the negative report of the ten spies discouraged the whole congregation of Israel: *“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.”*

Whenever there were problems or trouble, the children of Israel wanted to return to Egypt, saying in verse 4, “Let us return into Egypt.” What was the problem? They were out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of them. They had not been purified from the love of Egypt.

As Christians, we must ask the Lord to purify us of the love of the world. Otherwise, that attraction will pull us back into the world. That is exactly what happened to Demas, as Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:10: *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”*

The journey of the children of Israel is repeated time and time again in local churches. There are churches that decide to move on with God and other churches that decide to stay where they are. I was invited to speak at one charismatic convention, but before I arrived they told me, “We do not want anything too deep. We only want you to speak on salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” They did not want to move on with God. The Lord allows people and churches to stay where they are at if they do not want to move on with Him.

Several years ago while visiting a church in Australia, the Lord quickened this passage from Numbers to me for the church. I admonished them that God had a purpose for them and wanted them to move on with Him. Then the pastor of the church led the church in prayer. I will never forget what followed. One of the elders stood up and prayed: “Lord, we are well content with the wilderness. We do not want to go on. We are comfortable here.” This elder had an evil spirit of unbelief and he negatively influenced the whole church. The same spirit that was in the Israelites in the wilderness dominated the people of that church.

Several years later I went back to the same church for the installation of another pastor. While I was preaching, the Lord spoke to me to have a man in the church bind my hands with my belt. The Lord spoke to me to say to the church, “You have bound the hands of every pastor I have sent you.”

Then the Lord gave me a flashback of that prayer meeting seven years before. I said to the church, “That evil spirit in that elder stopped you from going on with God, but now God is appointing another pastor. He will take you into God’s purposes for this church.” I was completely unaware that the elder who had prayed that prayer was sitting in the balcony. Mercifully, I did not know, because if I had, I may not have been able to say that in front of the whole church. The whole congregation began weeping and acknowledged that they had hindered their pastors. They consecrated themselves to move on with God. Since that time the church has experienced a real move of the Holy Spirit.

May we seek to be different from the children of Israel who refused to believe that the Lord could give them the Promised Land. Let us seek to have the same triumphant attitude as Joshua and Caleb.

3. THE ATTITUDE OF JOSHUA AND CALEB

Not all of the twelve spies adopted a negative attitude. Joshua and Caleb were different. They were full of faith. Caleb said in Numbers 13:30, *“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”* Caleb was confident in the Lord that they were able to possess the Promised Land. The Lord said of Caleb in Numbers 14:24, *“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.”*

We read in Numbers 14:6-9: *“And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.”*

The key to inheriting the promises of God for our lives is to please the Lord, as stated in Numbers 14:8: *“If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us.”* If we please the Lord and He delights in us, He will fulfill all of His promises. Jesus said in John 8:29, *“And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”* We should always seek to do the things that please the Lord, for that is the key to inheriting His promises for our lives.

4. THE LORD SEEKS TO DESTROY THE UNBELIEVING

The Lord was so displeased with the children of Israel that He wanted to destroy them again, saying to Moses in Numbers 14:11-12: *“How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”* This was the second time Moses was tested in this same area (Ex. 32:10).

5. MOSES PLEADS FOR THE HONOR OF GOD

Moses again interceded for his rebellious people who had broken his heart again and again, saying to the Lord in Numbers 14:13-16: *“Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for*

they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.” Moses again refuses the honor of becoming a greater nation.

Moses called on the mercy of God and asked God to show mercy to the children of Israel in Numbers 14:17-19: *“And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”*

The Lord responded to Moses in Numbers 14:20: *“And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word.”* This is an amazing verse. The Lord pardoned the people according to Moses’ words.

Jesus said John 20:23, *“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”* We have the power, according to the will of God, to pardon people’s sins. We should intercede to the Lord on behalf of our cities and nations.

6. REVIEW OF THE TEN TRIALS IN THE WILDERNESS

There were ten main trials or tests in the wilderness, and the children of Israel failed every one of them. The Lord said in Numbers 14:22, *“Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these **ten times**, and have not hearkened to my voice.”*

It is very important for us to review the ten trials of the children of Israel in the wilderness because we will also be faced with the same trials in our Christian walk. After the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the pattern for our lives, was baptized, He went into the wilderness for forty days. We read in Matthew 4:1, *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”* After the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, they went into the wilderness for forty years. In our lives, we will also experience trials and wilderness experiences.

Since they had failed their first nine tests, the children of Israel naturally failed their tenth test at Kadesh-Barnea. They conditioned themselves for failure. If a student fails his first nine tests, the chances are that he will fail his tenth test.

Every trial should be a steppingstone to greater heights in God. However, because the children of Israel failed their tests, the tests became stumblingblocks that hindered them from moving on with God. Therefore, we must seek to pass the trials and tests that we experience so that we will succeed in life.

The Ten Trials in the Wilderness

- 1. Opposition from the world:** When the children of Israel left Egypt, Pharaoh came after them and tried to take them back into bondage. Worldly friends and temptations try to lure new Christians back into the world.
- 2. Bitter water:** At Marah, the children of Israel were confronted with bitter water. Every believer will suffer bitter experiences and disappointments. The key to overcoming bitterness is to take our bitter experiences to the cross of Christ.
- 3. Hunger:** In the wilderness, the children of Israel experienced hunger. This represents economic trials. We will experience times when we do not have much money or the things that we really want.
- 4. Thirst:** The children of Israel experienced thirst in the wilderness. Thirst represents dry and boring experiences.
- 5. Idolatry:** In Exodus 32, the children of Israel made the golden calf and worshipped it. We will be tested in the area of idolatry. Many Christians have idols in their heart (Ezek. 14:3). Anything that replaces our reliance upon God or comes before our love before Him is an idol.
- 6. Complaining:** The children of Israel constantly complained about their circumstances. Complaining causes us not to find favor with God. Philippians 2:14 says, *“Do everything without complaining or arguing”* (NIV).
- 7. Unthankfulness:** The children of Israel never learned to give thanks to God. They were unthankful for the manna He provided for them; they wanted quails. Unthankfulness is one of the first steps to backsliding (Rom. 1:21). Paul said in Colossians 3:15, *“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”*

8. **Gluttony:** The children of Israel gorged themselves with quail and the Lord slew many of them. Their appetites were not consecrated to God. We must overcome gluttony, which is a lust for food, and every other kind of excessive desire.

9. **Criticism:** The children of Israel constantly criticized their leaders, Moses and Aaron. Even Aaron and Miriam criticized Moses. We must overcome criticism. Jesus said in Matthew 7:1-3: *“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”*

10. **Unbelief:** The children of Israel failed their tenth and final test at Kadesh-Barnea, which was right on the border of the Promised Land. The ten spies infected the whole congregation with fear and unbelief. Hebrews 3:19 says, *“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”* We must overcome unbelief with faith.

7. GOD RETURNS ISRAEL TO DIE IN THE WILDERNESS

The Lord’s punishment for their disobedience was that they would not enter into the Promised Land, but would die in the wilderness. The Lord said in Numbers 14:29-31: *“Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.”*

In Numbers 14:32-34, the Lord said that they would wander in the wilderness for forty years and then die: *“But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.”* The ten spies who returned from the Promised Land with an evil report died from the plague (Num. 14:37-38).

The only two people from the generation (above the age of twenty) that came out of Egypt and entered the Promised Land were Joshua and Caleb. They were ready to enter the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea, but they were hindered and held back by the children of Israel. Leaders are often hindered

and delayed from entering God's promises by their congregations. However, leaders should not abandon their congregations for this reason, even as Joshua and Caleb did not abandon the children of Israel. They had to wait another thirty-eight years to enter the Promised Land.

Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land because he allowed his spirit to be provoked by the Israelites (Psa. 106:33). Leaders must be careful not to make the same mistake that Moses made. However, if the children of Israel had not been so rebellious, Moses would not have lost control of his spirit and he could have made it into the Promised Land.

Nevertheless, Moses represented the law and the law can never lead us into God's promises for our lives. Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Joshua represents the new order of grace, which alone can lead us into God's promises for our lives.

8. MOSES CONTENDS WITH THE PRESUMPTUOUS

After God told the children of Israel to return to the wilderness, many of them repented and wanted to enter into the Promised Land. However, it was too late. God would no longer allow them to enter into the Promised Land, but some of them tried any way and were slain by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

We read in Numbers 14:40-45: *“And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.”*

Hebrews 4:7 says in reference to the journey of Israel, *“Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”* The children of Israel presumed to enter the Promised Land, but it was too late. God limits a day for us to obey Him and respond to the voice of His Spirit.

Jesus said in Luke 13:25, *“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us;*

and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.” Therefore, let us always listen, respond, and obey when God speaks to us because there is no guarantee that we will have another opportunity to do so.

Chapter 9

KADESH-BARNEA TO PISGAH

Chapter 9 Outline

1. The rebellion of Korah
2. The rod of Aaron
3. The death of Miriam
4. Moses provoked to sin
5. Moses and Aaron are not permitted to enter the Promised Land
6. Edom refuses Israel passage
7. The death of Aaron
8. Israel becomes discouraged
9. The brazen serpent
10. The well of springing water
11. Balaam's wickedness
12. The new generation numbered
13. The choosing of a new leader
14. The choice of the inferior inheritance
15. Moses repeats the Law to the new generation
16. Prophetic utterances for the last days
17. The death of Moses

Chapter 9 covers a period of thirty-eight years. Israel arrived at Kadesh-Barnea about two years after the exodus from Egypt. At Kadesh-Barnea, they failed their tenth and final test. God was so grieved with that generation that He swore in His wrath that they would never enter into the land (Psa. 95:8-11; Heb. 3:7-19). Their journey from Kadesh-Barnea until the end of the wilderness when Moses died on Mount Pisgah spans thirty-eight years (Deut. 34:1-8).

1. THE REBELLION OF KORAH

Two Hundred and Fifty Join the Insurrection

Numbers 16 records the rebellion that Korah led against Moses and Aaron along with Dathan, Abiram and two hundred and fifty Jewish princes. They wanted equal rights with Moses and Aaron, but the root problem was jealousy. They said to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16:3, *“Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?”*

Korah’s rebellion was very serious. The attack was directed at Moses, but in reality, it was also an attack on God, who had appointed Moses as the leader of the children of Israel. We read in Numbers 26:9, *“And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD.”*

The Apostle Jude warns us against committing the same error as Korah: *“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core”* (Jude 1:11).

God despises insurrection and rebellion against leadership. Lucifer, Satan’s name before his disobedience, led a rebellion in heaven against God, as recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14: *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”*

Lucifer wanted God’s position in heaven, in the same way that Korah wanted Moses’ position. Lucifer wanted equal rights with God. Lucifer infected a third of the angels with his offense against God and they were cast out of heaven along with Lucifer. Since that time, there has been a spirit of rebellion against God’s established leadership structure.

In the Church today, there is an evil spirit that operates through people to undermine God's established authority and leadership. Many people downplay the authority of pastors, when in reality, he is not on the same level as elders and deacons. Ephesians 4:11 makes it very clear that it is God who has established pastors in the Body of Christ.

Korah wanted to be on the same level as Moses, but it was God who had elevated Moses above the elders and princes of Israel. Moses said to Korah in Numbers 16:9-10: *“Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?”*

As a Levite, Korah was a minister of the Tabernacle, but he was not satisfied with his God-given position. Korah wanted a position and ministry that God had not given him. The Levites had been given the privilege of taking care of God's house. They were anointed to assist and help the priests, the Aaronites. However, only the family of Aaron could be priests (Num. 3:5-10). Only God can appoint a person to the priesthood or the fivefold ministry.

This point is made in no uncertain terms in Hebrews 5:1,4: *“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins... And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”*

Every leadership position in the Church, especially the fivefold ministry positions, must be appointed by God, not by man. We read in Ephesians 4:11 that it is God who appoints people to the fivefold ministries: *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”*

The twelve apostles did not appoint themselves as apostles, the Lord Jesus appointed them after spending the night in prayer, as recorded in Mark 3:13-14: *“And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.”*

It is the Lord who chooses what role we play in the Body of Christ, as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:27-29: *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all*

teachers? are all workers of miracles?” Not all are called to be apostles, prophets or teachers. The point of Paul’s teaching on the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12 is that each member of the Body of Christ is important in God’s eyes and contributes to the overall success of the Body.

In a ministerial ordination service, the presbyters publicly recognize those who have been appointed by Christ as ministers in the Church. It is a public recognition that they had been ordained by God to the ministry. Man can recognize the ministry that God has given to a person and install them into that ministry, but they cannot appoint them to that ministry. The ministry gifts are appointed by God alone.

Every ministry and position in the Church must be appointed by God, including elders, deacons, teachers, treasurers, church secretaries, and even greeters. A few years ago, I visited a church and the pastor wanted me to install new church staff members. The church needed a new secretary. We considered the ladies in the church whom we thought would make good secretaries. Then God sovereignly spoke to me that every church position, including a church secretary, must be ordained by Him. Then the pastor and I prayed earnestly to know whom God had chosen to be the church secretary.

We read in 1 Chronicles 9:22 that even the porters (or doorkeepers) had to be ordained and installed by David and Samuel, the two greatest prophets of their era: *“All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office.”*

Moses and Aaron Plead For the Congregation

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16:21, *“Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.”* Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and pleaded for the congregation, *“O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?”* (Num. 16:22).

Korah and the Rebellious are Destroyed

The Lord destroyed Korah and the rebellious in Numbers 16:32-35: *“And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.”*

After the Lord judged Korah and his followers, the Israelites complained and blamed Moses and Aaron for their deaths, saying in Numbers 16:41: *“But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.”* Many in the congregation felt that Moses, Aaron, and God were too harsh in their punishment of Korah. In criticizing them, they were saying, in effect, that they had more compassion than God. This is an example of false mercy and compassion.

We must be very careful not to sympathize with those who rebel against God’s appointed leaders. Those who sympathized with Korah and his followers were smitten by God with a plague (Num. 16:45-50).

In Numbers 16:45-48, Moses and Aaron again interceded on behalf of the congregation of Israel: *“Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.”* The number of people who died in the plague totaled 14,700, but more would have died had Moses and Aaron not interceded on their behalf. Prayer can save many lives!

2. THE ROD OF AARON

In Numbers 17, God commanded the heads of the twelve tribes to be represented, each with a labeled rod. The rod that budded would show which tribe God had chosen for the priesthood. God chose Aaron’s rod, signifying that He had chosen the tribe of Levi. Sometimes God has to make it very clear whom He has chosen and whom He has not chosen.

The miracle of Aaron’s rod budding, signifying God’s choice, is recorded in Numbers 17:8, *“And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.”*

On the day after they placed the twelve rods before the Lord, the rod bearing Aaron’s name budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds. This was a tremendous miracle. God caused life to come out of a dead rod, and it blossomed. This was God’s sign that he had chosen Aaron to be the High Priest. Then

Aaron's rod that budded was placed inside the Ark of the Covenant to be a testimony. This dead rod that brought forth life represents the resurrection power of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul prays that the Ephesian believers will know *“what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places”* (Eph. 1:19-20). We want to experience the power of Christ's resurrection, which is mightier than the power of death and hell.

The desire and longing of Paul's heart is revealed in Philippians 3:10: *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection...”* The Greek word Paul uses for *know* means “a personal knowledge gained by experience.” Paul did not desire a mental appreciation and understanding of the power of Christ's resurrection; he wanted to experience that power and know it firsthand.

Paul exclaims in Romans 8:11, *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”* We want the Holy Spirit to quicken our mortal bodies and cause us to experience the power of His resurrection. This experience is symbolized by Aaron's rod that budded.

3. THE DEATH OF MIRIAM

In Numbers 20:1, Miriam died and was buried. *“Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.”* This was at the end of thirty-eight years of wandering after their refusal to enter the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea in Numbers 14.

4. MOSES IS PROVOKED TO SIN

Again there was a lack of water in Numbers 20:2-3: *“And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chided with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!”*

In Numbers 16, they blamed the death of Korah and his followers on Moses, now they say that they wish they had died with them. Moses saved their lives through his intercession for them, but they were completely ungrateful for everything he had done for them. If you want to be praised and thanked for

everything you do, then you will be disappointed by ministry and leadership. Leadership is a lonely and thankless calling.

The children of Israel continued their criticism of Moses in Numbers 20:4-5: *“And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.”*

The children of Israel could not cope with the difficult conditions of the wilderness, but in reality, they should not have been in the wilderness. If they had obeyed God at Kadesh-Barnea, they would have already been in the Promised Land. There is grace to overcome every obstacle when we are in God’s perfect will for our lives, but when we disobey Him, it is very difficult to overcome.

How did Moses and Aaron respond to the Israelites’ criticism? Again they went into the presence of the Lord and fell on their faces in prayer. *“And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them”* (Num. 16:20). When people criticize and attack us, our response must be to go to the Lord in prayer. David said in Psalm 109:4, *“For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.”*

What was the Lord’s solution for the lack of water? In Numbers 20:8, the Lord instructed Moses to speak unto the rock. God said that the rock would provide enough water for all of the Israelites and their animals. *“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.”*

In his frustration, Moses lost control of his spirit and struck the rock in anger, calling the Israelites “rebels” in Numbers 20:9-11: *“And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”*

Moses was provoked in his spirit and said to the children of Israel, *“Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?”* (Num. 20:10). Moses lost his temper and mocked the Israelites,

resorting to name-calling. Psalm 106:32-33 records this event as well: *“They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.”*

Under no circumstances is it right for Christians to mock or revile others. We should follow the example that Christ set for us, as described in 1 Peter 2:23: *“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”* Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal, but then he fled from the evil queen Jezebel and became so discouraged that he wanted God to take his life (1 Kgs. 18:27; 19:1-3).

We read in 2 Peter 2:11, *“Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.”* This theme is repeated in Jude 1:8-9: *“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”*

When Michael the archangel contended with Satan for the body of Moses, presumably in preparation for his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, he did not bring a railing accusation against him. When we speak to demons, fallen angels, or Satan, we should be wise and not lose control of our spirit, and much more so when we speak to people, who were made in God’s image. We have no right to taunt, mock, or rail against them because the only thing that makes us different is the grace of God. When Lucifer led the rebellion in heaven, he took one third of the angels with him. On top of the Mercy Seat that covers the Ark of the Covenant, there are two cherubim facing each other. They represent the fact that Michael and Gabriel, and two thirds of the angels, were preserved by the mercy and grace of God from Lucifer’s rebellion. Therefore, when Michael confronted Satan, he did not mock his fallen peer or rail against him because he knew that he was preserved from the same fate as Satan only by the grace of God.

When D.L. Moody was walking along the streets of Chicago, he saw a drunkard come out of a tavern and stumble his way down the street. He said, *“There goes Dwight Moody but for the grace of God.”* Paul said in Galatians 6:1, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”*

We should be careful about reviling demons, the devil, the wicked, or backslidden Christians because we are only kept by the power of God (1 Pet. 1:5). When we command demons to come out in the name of Jesus, we should avoid calling them names.

In spite of Moses' disobedience, water miraculously came out of the rock in abundance (Num. 20:11). In His mercy, the Lord still provided water for the children of Israel. Sometimes the Lord performs miracles through people who are in disobedience to Him, as in the case of Moses. Miracles are not proof of God's favor on a person's life.

The Lord Jesus makes this point in Matthew 7:21-23: *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

5. MOSES AND AARON ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND

God's punishment for Moses' actions was that He would not allow him or Aaron to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. God said to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 20:12, *"Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."*

God has tremendous standards for leaders. Ministers are held to the highest standard. Moses had sacrificed much for the children of Israel and would have made it into the Promised Land had it not been for their disobedience at Kadesh-Barnea. Because of them, he was denied what was most precious to him—the Promised Land.

Why was God so angry with Moses for striking the rock? We need to understand that the rock, throughout Scripture, represents Christ. This is clearly brought out in 1 Corinthians 10:4: *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."*

This was the second time the children of Israel needed water. The first time, God told Moses to smite the rock (Ex. 17:6). Moses smote the rock with his rod the first time and water came out, signifying that Christ would be crucified. A rod can also represent judgment (2 Sam. 7:14; Lam. 3:1). Christ was stricken for our transgressions so that the waters of life could flow out to the thirsty and dying souls of this world.

In Zechariah 13:7, the prophet Zechariah prophesied that Christ the Good Shepherd would be smitten, *"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the*

LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”

In Numbers 20, the Lord gave Moses clear instruction to speak to the rock. He did not tell him to smite the rock. If the rock, which represents Christ, was struck twice, it would signify that Christ had to be crucified twice. That is not possible. Paul said in Romans 6:9-10: *“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”*

Moses had a problem with anger in his life. It was an inherited iniquity in his family line from Levi. He struggled to overcome anger. After he killed the Egyptian, he spent forty years in the wilderness. During that time, God was tempering his volatile nature. Numbers 12:3 states that Moses was the meekest man in the world. Meekness is the antidote to anger. It seemed as if Moses had conquered his weakness; however, in Numbers 20, Moses' anger rose up again. We should ask the Lord to show us our weakness and the antidotes to our weakness. If we have a problem with anger, we should ask the Lord to develop meekness in our lives. If we struggle with hatred, we should ask God to develop His love in our hearts.

6. EDOM REFUSES ISRAEL PASSAGE

In Numbers 20:14-21, Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom to ask him for permission to pass through the land of Edom. We read of Edom's refusal in Numbers 20:18-21: *“And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet. And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.”*

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, who was also called Edom (Gen. 25:30; 36:8). Esau was Jacob's brother and the children of Israel were descendants of Jacob. Therefore, the Edomites and Israelites were close relatives. However, the Edomites refused to allow the children of Israel to pass through their land.

Esau and his descendants were never able to forgive Jacob and his descendants. Unforgiveness is a terrible sin. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-15: *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father*

forgive your trespasses.”

The Edomites had a unique opportunity to help the Israelites, but they refused and even threatened to kill them if they crossed through their land. We should help those in need when it is in the will of God. Proverbs 3:27 says, *“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”*

7. THE DEATH OF AARON

The death of Aaron is recorded in Numbers 20:23-29. *“And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel”* (Num. 20:28-29). The death of Aaron left Moses all alone without anyone left alive from his age group. The older generation had already died. Aaron had been the only one with whom Moses could really fellowship. I am sure Aaron’s death made Moses very lonely.

8. ISRAEL BECOMES DISCOURAGED

After the children of Israel defeated the Canaanites in Hormah (Num. 21:1-3), we read in Numbers 21:4 that they became very discouraged: *“And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.”*

The way was extremely difficult, but again, I must point out that it was a consequence of their disobedience. Proverbs 13:15 says, *“The way of transgressors is hard.”* Proverbs 14:14 says, *“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.”*

In their discouragement, the children of Israel again complained against God and Moses, saying, *“Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread”* (Num. 21:5). They despised the Lord’s provision of manna. They also had forgotten all of the Lord’s miracles.

9. THE BRAZEN SERPENT

The Lord was displeased with the children of Israel and punished them by sending fiery serpents

among the people. Many Israelites died from the serpents' bites. *"And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died"* (Num. 21:6).

The children of Israel said to Moses in Numbers 21:7, *"We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people."* After their criticism, Moses did not hold a grudge against them, but forgave them and even prayed for them. Moses had the heart of a true leader. Leaders must be very forgiving because their people will disappoint them many times.

We read the Lord's solution for the fiery serpents in Numbers 21:8-9: *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."*

God instructed Moses to make a brass serpent and put it on a pole. Any one who looked at the brass serpent would live. Jesus made reference to this in John 3:14-15: *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."* Verse 15 is a beautiful verse to use in evangelism. People only have to look to the Lord and they will be saved. Jesus said in John 12:32, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*

10. THE WELL OF SPRINGING WATER

We read in Numbers 21:17-18: *"Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah."* This easily-overlooked passage has great spiritual significance.

In Scripture, wells can represent salvation. We read in Isaiah 12:3, *"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."* Speaking to the woman at the well, the Lord Jesus said in John 4:14, *"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* When we receive Christ as our Savior, He puts within our hearts a well of bubbling water.

However, as the wells that Abraham dug were stopped up by the Philistines, so the well of the water of life within us can be stopped up. We read in Genesis 26:14-15: *"For he had possession of flocks,*

and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines **envied** him. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth." The Philistines represent envy. Envy will stop up our spiritual wells.

We read in Genesis 26:18-21 of two other things that can stop up our spiritual wells. "*And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.*"

Isaac named one of the wells "Esek," which means "strife," and another well "Sitnah," which means "hatred." Strife and hatred can also stop up our spiritual wells. Therefore, we see three primary sins that can stop up our spiritual wells are envy, strife, and hatred.

There are two keys to unstopping our spiritual wells found in Numbers 21:17-18. The first key is that we should sing unto the well of our hearts, even as the children of Israel sang to the well. The water of life will continue to flow out from us as we continually sing and worship the Lord.

Singing and worshipping the Lord are spiritual exercises that Paul describes in Ephesians 5:19, "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" Paul also said in Colossians 3:16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

Joshua and Caleb maintained a rejoicing spirit, which nourished their faith and kept their spiritual wells from being stopped up. This was the key to their lives that caused them to make it through the wilderness and into the Promised Land (Num. 14:6-9).

The second key to keeping our spiritual wells unstopped or unstopping them after they have been blocked is found in Numbers 21:18: "*The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah.*" The elders of Israel dug the wells under the direction of the lawgiver, Moses, with their staves. The elders of Israel represent the leaders of a church. If your spiritual well has been stopped up, go to your pastor or spiritual leader for help in unstopping your spiritual well.

11. BALAAM'S WICKEDNESS

In order to make it through the wilderness into the Promised Land and on to Mount Zion, we must overcome the snares of Balaam. Balaam kept many Israelites from entering into the Promised Land. Balaam's life is recorded in Numbers 22-25. He was a prophet of God who backslid and began practicing enchantments and witchcraft. Balaam was no ordinary prophet, for God appeared unto him. However, there were other loves in his heart (the love of money and position) that caused him to backslide.

He was peculiar because of his double life. There must have been a consecration to God earlier in his life because he had tremendous gifts from God, and God Himself appeared to him. God would not have appeared to a spiritist medium. There was spiritual mixture in Balaam's life. He operated at times under the true anointing, but at other times he operated under a spirit of witchcraft.

Balaam's life can be characterized by five main things:

1. Greed
2. Idolatry
3. Inducing others to commit fornication
4. Witchcraft
5. A mixture of the true anointing and a false anointing

Peter upholds Balaam as an example of greed in 2 Peter 2:14-15: *"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."* Jude 1:11 says: *"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."*

We read in Revelation 2:14 concerning the "doctrine of Balaam," which basically induced people to worship idols and commit fornication: *"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."*

Joshua 13:22 describes Balaam as a "soothsayer," or a person who practiced divination and witchcraft: *"Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them."*

It is possible to live under the direction of two spirits, at one time moving under the anointing and then moving under an evil spirit. There are many *Balaams* in the Church today. Balaam had tremendous power with his prophetic ministry, but unfortunately he became involved with two different streams of spiritual power. To the degree that we operate in God's power, to that same degree we can begin to operate under a Satanic influence if we do not walk uprightly.

It is not rare for a person to have dual anointings like Balaam. Saul is a classic example of a man of God who has operated under the anointing, but because of disobedience in his personal life, has begun to operate under another spirit. We read in 1 Samuel 10:10-11: *"And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"*

After his constant rebellion, which is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23), Saul lost the anointing and came under the influence of an evil spirit. We read in 1 Samuel 16:14: *"But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him."*

However, at times Saul still ministered under the anointing of God, as recorded in 1 Samuel 19:24, *"And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?"* Therefore, we can clearly see that prophesying under the anointing of God is not proof of God's favor on a person's life or of personal righteousness.

In much the same way, Balaam operated under a true anointing at times, but at other times under a false anointing. He heard from God and the Lord appeared to him, but he also practiced witchcraft. Balaam's motives were corrupt and they led him off the path of righteousness. We must continually examine our motives in prayer so that we do not end up like Balaam.

In Numbers 22:1-14, Israel pitched their tents in the plains of Moab en route to the Promised Land. The Moabites were afraid of Israel. Therefore, Balak the king of Moab sent his elders to offer Balaam money to put a curse on the Israelites. They viewed Balaam as a man with great spiritual power. Balaam told them to stay overnight so that he could seek the Lord's guidance. God appeared to Balaam and told him not to go with the men. He told Balaam that he could not curse the Israelites because they were blessed by Him.

Then Balak sent greater nobles to Balaam to make him a better offer, saying in Numbers 22:17, *"For*

I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.” When he was offered more money and honor, Balaam went back to God hoping to persuade God to change His mind and allow him to go (Num. 22:19).

We read in Numbers 22:20-22: *“And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.”* These verses have baffled many Bible scholars.

Balaam wanted to go with these men because of the money and position they offered him. God had already told him he could not go, but he asked him again any way. This time God told him that he could go with them, but He was angry with him and sought to kill him while he was on his way (Num. 22:22-23).

The donkey upon which Balaam was riding saw the angel of the Lord with his sword drawn and turned aside to avoid him. Balaam did not see the angel and became furious at his donkey’s strange behavior. Balaam became so angry that when God enabled the animal to speak to him, he argued back with her. The Lord then opened his eyes to see the angel and Balaam humbled himself before God. The angel of the Lord said to Balaam in Numbers 22:32, *“Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me.”*

Then Balaam confessed in Numbers 22:34, *“I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.”* Balaam knew in his heart that he should not have gone with Balak’s men to curse Israel. He knew that what he was doing was not right.

What are the lessons we can learn from the account of Balaam? Just like Balaam, many Christians know that something is not the will of God for their lives, but they continue to ask God until He says, “Yes.” Then they do what they wanted to do and say that God told them to do it and even confirmed it with prophecies or visions. However, God is not pleased with them and they do not fulfill God’s perfect will for their lives.

God grants people the desires of their hearts. David said in Psalm 20:4, *“[The Lord] grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.”* He repeats this theme in Psalm 21:2, *“Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.”* If we

are dead set on having something that we know is not God's will for our lives, often God will allow us to have it, but we will not be blessed.

The children of Israel were not content with manna, so God gave them quails, but He was not pleased with them. As a result, spiritual leanness came into their lives and many of them died. Psalm 106:14-15 says about them: *"But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."* The children of Israel who came out of Egypt did not make it into the Promised Land because they wanted their own way, not God's.

If we want something that is not God's will for our lives, but we pray for it anyway, it can become an idol in our life. We read in Ezekiel 14:4, *"Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols."* God answers people's prayers according to the idols of their hearts.

Therefore, we should make a commitment to the Lord's perfect will for our lives, even as Jesus said to the Father, *"Not my will, but thine be done"* (Lk. 22:42). We should always ask God to only answer our prayers if they are in line with His plan for our lives. First John 5:14 says, *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to his will**, he heareth us."*

Balaam knew that he was unable to curse Israel because God had told him they were blessed (Josh. 24:9-10), but he was consumed by greed and the love of money, which is "the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Therefore, because he personally was not able to curse Israel, he told Balak how to bring God's judgments upon Israel. He counseled Balak to send Moabite women to commit fornication with the Israelites, thus bringing God's judgment upon Israel. The immorality with the Moabite women also led to idolatry, for many of the Israelites also worshipped their heathen gods (Num. 25:1-5).

This is also brought out in Numbers 31:16: *"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."* It is confirmed in Revelation 2:14: *"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."*

God hates those who cause others to sin (Rom. 14:3). Proverbs 28:10 says, *"Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall*

have good things in possession.” Jesus said in Matthew 18:6, *“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea”* (NIV).

There are *Balaams* in the Church today who lower God’s standards, promote worldliness, endorse immorality, and encourage divorce and remarriage, which is adultery in God’s eyes (Mt. 19:9; Mk. 10:12; Rom. 7:1-3). They are ministers who were anointed by God in the past, but have begun teaching false doctrines under a false anointing. In order to make it through our own personal wilderness journey to the Promised Land and reach spiritual maturity, we must overcome the sins and traps of people like Balaam.

12. THE NEW GENERATION NUMBERED

In Numbers 26, the new generation was numbered. This census was taken after the forty years of their wilderness wandering. The first numbering was at Sinai in Numbers 1 when they first came out of Egypt. In the second numbering, all of the first generation had died, except for Caleb and Joshua. *“But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun”* (Numbers 26:64-65).

13. A NEW LEADER IS CHOSEN

Moses said to the Lord in Numbers 27:16-17: *“Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.”*

It is the God-given responsibility of a leader to anoint and appoint a successor who will give continuity of vision and bring the people of God into all that the Lord has promised the founder of the work. The new leader should seek to bring the congregation into God’s promised inheritance for them. Depending on the promises and God’s overall purposes, it can sometimes take several generations, as was the case with Israel. Joshua brought them into the land, but it was left to David to bring them into the rest of God at Mount Zion, subduing all the territory and the enemies in the land.

Leadership changes must be decided by God. The Lord had already shown Moses, who was one hundred and twenty years old at this time, that his life was nearly over. Previously, Korah and his

followers had tried to overthrow Moses' leadership and install themselves in his place. However, now under the direction of God, Moses prays for God to give the congregation a new leader.

Qualifications for Leadership

Several qualifications for leadership can be seen in Numbers 27:17: "*Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.*" We see two important qualifications for leadership in Numbers 27:17:

1. A leader must go out and go in before his people.
2. A leader must lead people into God's purposes for their lives.

"Which may go out before them." When sheep need new pasture, the shepherd leaves them in the corral and goes out to find new pasture for them. Remembering that sheep represent Christians (Isa. 53:6; Jn. 10:14), this speaks to us that pastors and leaders must constantly seek the Lord for new truths, revelation, experiences, and a fresh anointing. Sheep cannot feed on the same pasture land forever. In the same way, believers need new truths to feed upon; otherwise they lose the vitality of the Christian life.

Shepherds must inspect that pasture to ensure that there are no poisonous weeds that can kill their sheep. In the same way, leaders must seek for fresh truth and ensure that they preach a balanced message without erroneous doctrines that could harm God's people. Psalm 78:71-72 says of David, the shepherd of Israel, "*From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*" Likewise, leaders must skillfully guide their people and feed them the pure Word of God with integrity of heart.

"Which may lead them out, and which may bring them in." After shepherds have found new pasture, they go back to their sheep and lead them into the new pasture. Leaders must take their people from old truths to new ones. As Peter said in 2 Peter 1:12, we must be established in "the present truth."

Leaders must not teach their people doctrines that they have not carefully inspected themselves. There are many erroneous doctrines circulating in the Church today. We must test the fruits of doctrines first (2 Tim. 2:6). We should take counsel with other godly men concerning every new wave of doctrine that comes into the Church.

The responsibilities of a shepherd, which are also the responsibilities of a pastor, are as follows:

1. Feed the sheep
2. Guide the sheep
3. Inspect the sheep
4. Cleanse the wounds of the sheep
5. Lead the sheep into new pastures
6. Lay down his life to protect the sheep

A leader should be birthed and brought up in the same organization as the founder of the ministry. Joshua was trained under Moses (Ex. 24:13; 33:11). He had a different spirit and had fully followed the Lord. When Abraham went to war, he took three hundred and eighteen servants who were trained in his own house (Gen. 14:14). Those who have been brought up in the same spiritual house as the founder or leader of a ministry have the same mind, vision, and goals. Joshua fulfilled all of these requirements.

The Charge (Num. 27:18-23)

Joshua stood before the high priest, Eleazar, and the congregation as Moses laid his hands on him and gave him a charge. Three very important things happened at this ceremony:

1. The whole congregation of Israel recognized Joshua's authority (Num. 27:22).
2. Joshua received the mantle of grace from God to fulfill his office as the new leader (Num. 27:20).
3. Moses imparted the spirit of wisdom to Joshua (Deut. 34:9).

I have seen men transformed by the impartation they received in a ceremony similar to this one. Men have received authority, ability, maturity, and wisdom beyond their years when God's mantle comes upon them. The laying on of hands is a powerful thing. Paul said to Timothy, "*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*" (1 Tim. 4:14). The laying on of hands can impart spiritual gifts and ministries to people; it is one of the foundational doctrines of the Church (Heb. 6:2).

14. THE CHOICE OF THE INFERIOR INHERITANCE

Numbers 32 records the sad account of the two-and-a-half tribes who chose their inheritance on the wrong side of the Jordan River. Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh did not choose God's best for their lives (Num. 32:33).

They said in Numbers 32:5, "*Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.*" The real promises and blessings of God, including Mount Zion, were across the Jordan River, but these tribes were content to remain where they were.

They settled for second best because they had much cattle and thought that the land east of the Jordan River was a good place for their cattle. Their hearts were attached to the things of this world. Years later when God judged Israel, Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were the first tribes to be taken into captivity.

One of the heartaches of leadership is that people determine the level of inheritance they receive. Not everyone in the Body of Christ obtains God's best for their lives. We want to strive for God's best for our lives and not stop short, even as Paul said in Philippians 3:14, "*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*"

15. MOSES REPEATS THE LAW TO THE NEW GENERATION

The Book of Deuteronomy is a series of sermons and exhortations given by Moses to the new generation at the time when they were about to enter into the Promised Land. Their parents, the generation that had come out of Egypt, had failed and died in the wilderness. In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses looked back and reviewed everything that had happened to the children of Israel since they left Egypt. Then he looked ahead to the conquest of Canaan land, their inheritance, and the fulfillment of God's promises to the new generation.

From the Greek, Deuteronomy literally means "*The Second Law.*" It is a repetition to the new generation of the laws that God had given Israel on Mount Sinai forty years before. In Deuteronomy, Moses is preparing the second generation to enter into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy is also filled with cautions and warnings. God foresaw that all of the blessings He was about to bestow upon His people would cause many to grow lax, forget the Lord, and turn to vanity. Therefore, Moses urged them not to forget the Lord after He had brought them into His blessings. He

pointed out not only the way into the inheritance across Jordan, but also how to remain in the inheritance after they possessed it. If they did not obey the Lord, the land of their inheritance would spew them out (Lev. 20:22).

Basic Outline of the Book of Deuteronomy

- I. Looking Back: Deuteronomy chapters 1-11
 - A. Review of the way since Sinai (Deut. 1-3)
 - B. Review of the Law from Sinai (Deut. 4-11)

- II. Looking Ahead: Deuteronomy chapters 12-34
 - A. Final rules and warnings to Israel before entering their inheritance (Deut. 12-30)
 - B. Final words and actions of Moses (Deut. 31-34)

16. PROPHETIC UTTERANCES FOR THE LAST DAYS

In Deuteronomy chapters 29 to 32, Moses gave several prophetic utterances for the last days (Deut. 32:29). Moses spoke of future judgments upon Israel and their restoration.

17. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Moses brought Israel from Egypt unto the Plains of Moab, near to the place where they crossed Jordan. At the Plains of Moab, just before he died, Moses sounded out a new call to Israel, to go over Jordan and into the Promised Land. It was time for Israel to finish their wilderness wanderings and enter the land of inheritance.

Although there is no Scriptural record that they kept the Feast of Trumpets at this time, in type, that is what Moses was doing. In essence, he was blowing the trumpet and telling Israel it was time to move on afresh with God. Remember, the trumpets were blown when it was time for the children of Israel to move afresh (Num. 10). Therefore, in type, we can place the fifth feast, the Feast of Trumpets, at the plains of Moab.

18. THE DEATH OF MOSES

Deuteronomy ends with Israel reaching the eastern side of the Jordan, the plains of Moab that overlooked the Promised Land. Moses gave his last sermons to Israel at the plains of Moab. Then Moses ascended Mount Pisgah which was near Jericho and beheld the Promised Land (Deut. 34:1-3).

We read in Deuteronomy 34:4-6: *“And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day”* (34:4-6). God would bury the body of Moses Himself because it would be needed many years later for Moses’ appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:3; Jude 1:9).

Part Two

THE CROSSING OVER
INTO CANAAN

Chapter 10

JOSHUA THE NEW LEADER

Chapter 10 Outline

1. Joshua's early life
2. Joshua leads Israel against Amalek
3. Joshua was Moses' servant
4. Joshua lingered in God's presence
5. Joshua's immaturity
6. Joshua and Caleb bring back a good report
7. Joshua had a foretaste of his inheritance
8. Joshua withstood popular opinion
9. Joshua was consecrated as the new leader
10. Joshua continued to obey Moses
11. Joshua and Eleazar distribute the land
12. Moses encourages Joshua
13. The congregation supports Joshua's leadership
14. The change of command
15. God speaks directly to Joshua

Part Two covers the crossing over into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The children of Israel began to possess the Promised Land under Joshua, but we will see that they did not gain complete victory over their enemies. They did not possess their full inheritance under Joshua. Joshua had a long and productive ministry, covering the forty years in the wilderness and about another thirty years in the Promised Land until his death at the age of 110.

1. JOSHUA’S EARLY LIFE

Joshua was also called Oshea (Num. 13:16), a Hebrew variant of his name. The Greek translation of his name is “Jesus” (Heb. 4:8). He was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. Joshua grew up in Egypt where he and his fellow Israelites were under hard servitude to Pharaoh and his taskmasters. Therefore, Joshua was well acquainted with the bondages and heart cries of the people he was about to lead.

2. JOSHUA LEADS ISRAEL AGAINST AMALEK

In Exodus 17:8-16, Joshua led Israel in battle against Amalek. We read in Exodus 17:13, “*And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*” In his first appearance in Holy Scripture, Joshua led Israel in battle against the Amalekites, who were descendants of Esau. Spiritually, they represent the works of the flesh. Likewise, the duty of a minister is to first deal with the works of the flesh in his own life, and then to protect his congregation from the works of the flesh. Leaders must also be trained in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12).

3. JOSHUA WAS MOSES’ SERVANT

Joshua was Moses’ servant (or minister) and went up with him to the mountain when he received the law, as seen in Exodus 24:13: “*And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.*” Joshua had a servant’s heart and humbly waited on Moses. God always promotes those who have a servant’s heart.

We read in 2 Kings 3:11 that Elisha was Elijah’s servant: “*Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.*” Elisha served Elijah and poured water upon his hands, the duty of a servant. It is no coincidence that Joshua inherited Moses’ mantle and anointing and that Elisha received Elijah’s mantle and anointing. It is because they had servants’ hearts.

Jesus said in Mark 9:35, “*If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*” He continued this theme in Mark 10:44-45: “*And whoever wants to be first must be slave*

of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (NIV). Those who are servants of all will be promoted to be first in God's kingdom.

4. JOSHUA LINGERED IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Joshua lingered in the presence of God, even after Moses left, as recorded in Exodus 33:11: "*And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.*" Joshua lingered in God's presence seeking to cultivate an intimate relationship with Him. The Lord deposited many wonderful things into the life of Joshua as he lingered in His presence. God put within him "another spirit" and faith (Num. 14:6-9; 14:23-30).

The best definition of ministry is that which the Lord deposits in our hearts as we spend time in His presence. Ministry is developed more in God's presence than behind a pulpit or in front of 10,000 people. Study notes, homiletics, charts, and outlines serve only as tools to help us express what God has already deposited inside of us. All true ministry comes from God alone. When we hear a sermon that really touches our heart, often God had already placed the seed of that truth within our heart during times of communion with Him.

5. JOSHUA'S IMMATURITY

Joshua's immaturity was seen in his handling of those who were prophesying in the camp (Num. 11:25-30). He did not want anyone except Moses to prophesy. Moses, on the other hand, had a very gracious attitude toward them, saying, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" (Num. 11:29).

Moses wanted the whole congregation of Israel to move in the prophetic gifts. Leaders should seek to develop the gifts and talents of their people rather than suppress them.

In the last days, God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, as prophesied in Joel 2:28-29: "*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: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.*" Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:39, "*Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*"

6. JOSHUA AND CALEB BROUGHT BACK A GOOD REPORT

Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies who brought back a good report from the Promised Land (Num. 14:6-10). The other ten spies inspired fear and unbelief in the people, causing them to despise the Promised Land and not enter into God's purposes (Num. 13:31-33; Deut. 1:28). Joshua and Caleb were the only two of their generation that made it into the Promised land (Num. 13:30, 36-37).

7. JOSHUA HAD A FORETASTE OF HIS INHERITANCE

Joshua had a foretaste of the good land, thirty-eight years before he actually possessed it. Every leader needs a foretaste of what God has for him and for those whom he is going to lead. A foretaste of our inheritance will help us to press through the long, dry wilderness.

8. JOSHUA WITHSTOOD POPULAR OPINION

Joshua was almost stoned for standing for what was right (Num. 14:10). Joshua remained loyal to the Lord and continued to uphold God's highest standards, even when everyone else was going in the wrong direction. This was the trademark of Joshua's life and character. To him it was more important to please God than the people. Even at the end of his life he declared, "*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*" (Josh. 24:15).

9. JOSHUA WAS CONSECRATED AS THE NEW LEADER

Joshua was consecrated as the new leader of Israel in Numbers 27:18-23: "*And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of the Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.*"

The importance of the consecration of a leader cannot be overemphasized. I have seen ministers transformed in a consecration ceremony. The mantle of God for their particular office comes upon them, giving them a divine enablement to perform their new duties.

This thought is confirmed in Ephesians 4:7: *“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”*

10. JOSHUA CONTINUED TO OBEY MOSES

As long as Moses was in command, Joshua received his orders from him. This was so with respect to the inheritance of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh. We read in Numbers 32:28-29: *“So concerning [the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh] Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel: And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the Lord, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall given them the land of Gilead for a possession.”*

11. JOSHUA AND ELEAZAR DISTRIBUTE THE LAND

Joshua and Eleazar the priest were entrusted with the distribution of the land of Canaan for the tribes of Israel. *“These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun”* (Num. 34:17). This is the blessing and privilege of faithful leaders. God gives faithful men the privilege of installing others into their inheritance and calling. Psalm 45:16 says, *“Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.”*

12. MOSES ENCOURAGES JOSHUA

The Lord instructed Moses to encourage Joshua in Deuteronomy 1:38: *“But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.”* The young need help and encouragement as they embark on their uncharted courses of leadership. No leader can reproduce the past; life progresses. The Church of God is moving on. The Lord said to Joshua, *“Ye have not passed this way heretofore”* (Josh. 3:4). Every new generation has a fresh task that in many ways is different from that of the previous generation. We must depend on the Lord so that we can lead the people He entrusts to our care.

Moses said in Deuteronomy 3:21-22: *“And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.”* The Lord told Moses to encourage Joshua again in Deuteronomy 3:28, *“But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people,*

and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.”

Moses also said to Joshua in Deuteronomy 31:5-8: *“And the Lord shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”*

13. THE CONGREGATION SUPPORTS JOSHUA’S LEADERSHIP

The congregation of Israel embraced and supported Joshua’s leadership, as recorded in Joshua 1:16-18: *“And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.”*

Not only does a new leader need to be encouraged, but the congregation must have confidence in him. Only the former leader can really give that needed assurance, as Moses did concerning Joshua.

14. THE CHANGE OF COMMAND

In Deuteronomy 31:14-15, the Lord instructed Moses and Joshua to appear before Him: *“And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.”*

Moses had to transfer the command of the Israelites to Joshua. Moses laid hands on him and imparted his mantle and anointing to him. We read in Deuteronomy 34:9, *“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.”*

Then Moses died and the Lord Himself buried him because his body would be needed later for his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration (Deut. 34:5-6; Lk. 9:30-31; Jude 1:9).

15. GOD SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO JOSHUA

Now that Moses is dead and Joshua is the new leader, the Lord speaks directly to Joshua and gives him specific instructions for the task that he has been called to accomplish. *“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister”* (Josh. 1:1).

These instructions are categorized in Joshua 1:1-9.

1. A statement that the former leader is dead (Josh. 1:1)
2. A directive for Joshua to arise and go over the Jordan River (Josh. 1:2)
3. A promise that every place that the sole of his foot touched would be given to him (Josh. 1:3)
4. A promise that no man would be able to stand up against him all the days of his life (Josh. 1:5)
5. A promise that the Lord would be with him as He was with Moses (Josh. 1:5)
6. A promise that the Lord would not fail him (Josh. 1:5)
7. A promise that the Lord would not forsake him (Josh. 1:5)
8. A directive for Joshua to divide the land of Canaan for the tribes of Israel (Josh. 1:6)
9. An exhortation to be strong and of good courage (Josh. 1:6-7)
10. An exhortation to observe His commandments (Josh. 1:7-8)
11. An exhortation that the book of the law should not depart from his mouth and that he should meditate in it day and night (Josh. 1:8)
12. An exhortation not to be afraid or dismayed (Josh. 1:9)

The two keys to a successful and prosperous life are to daily meditate in God’s Word and obey His commandments, as stated in Joshua 1:8: *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”*

The more we meditate in God’s Word, the more we will want to obey His commandments because they will become a delight to us. Psalm 1:2 says, *“But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*

Conclusion

God needs many men and women like Joshua today. The Lord is going to bring His Church into its inheritance in these last days, and He is searching for *Joshuas* who can lead His people into it. Joshua represents those who have been faithful in the wilderness tests and who have also tasted of the fruit in the land of promise.

Eleven Qualities of Joshua

1. Joshua was Moses' servant (Ex. 24:13; Num. 11:28; Josh. 1:1).
2. Joshua was brought up under Moses' leadership.
3. Joshua was trained in (spiritual) warfare, leading the children of Israel against the Amalekites (Ex. 17).
4. Joshua had spent time in the presence of God (Ex. 33:11).
5. Joshua was one of the twelve spies who had seen the land (Num. 14:6).
6. Joshua withstood popular opinion (Num. 14:10).
7. Joshua was full of faith (Num. 14:6-8).
8. Joshua was full of the Spirit of God (Num. 27:18).
9. Joshua was full of the Spirit of wisdom (Deut. 34:9).
10. Joshua wholly followed the Lord (Num. 32:12).
11. Joshua meditated daily in the Word of God (Josh. 1:8).

Let us seek the Lord and ask Him to develop the qualities of Joshua within us so that we can be used like Joshua to usher in a new move of God and lead God's people into their inheritance.

Chapter 11

THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN RIVER

Chapter 11 Outline

1. The Significance of the Jordan River
2. The Importance of Circumcision

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JORDAN RIVER

The crossing of Jordan was a major turning point in Israel's journey. It was a new day for them in every respect. The old generation and leader had died and a new generation and leader had arisen. The wilderness tests were over and the Promised Land awaited them. They were about to take a major leap forward into the promises of God as their feet crossed over Jordan.

Even their diet changed after crossing Jordan. The manna ceased and they began to partake of the fruit of the land (Josh. 5:12). They had new excitement and expectation. New strength and courage invigorated them to defeat their enemies. Crossing Jordan was a major step toward their ultimate destination, Mount Zion.

The Crucified Life

The crossing of the Jordan River has great spiritual significance for our lives as believers. Remember, the journey of Israel is a pattern of the spiritual journey of believers, as stated in 1 Corinthians 10:11: *"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."*

We read in Joshua 3:15-16 that the waters of the Jordan overflowed in the time of harvest all the way to the city of Adam: *"And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho."*

Adam represents our old sinful nature. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:45-47, *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."*

Paul said in Romans 5:12-14: *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."*

The fact the waters of Jordan covered the city of Adam when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan signifies that the crossing of the Jordan is a spiritual symbol of our sinful Adamic nature being dealt with whereby we become “dead to sin” (Rom. 6:6). After they crossed the Jordan River, the children of Israel were circumcised at Gilgal. Circumcision represents heart circumcision and the cutting away of the things we were born with (Deut. 30:6).

Therefore, the crossing of the Jordan represents the experience of being “dead to sin” whereby our old Adamic nature is crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20).

After the Israelites left Egypt, they were out of Egypt, but the love of Egypt was not out of them. However, after they crossed the Jordan River, the Lord purified them of the love of Egypt. We read in Joshua 5:8-9: *“And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.”*

God broke the power of Egypt over the Israelites at the Jordan River. They no longer wanted to return to Egypt, which represents this world. God did something in their hearts. Therefore, the crossing of the Jordan River symbolizes the working of the Holy Spirit to break the power of sin and the love of this world in our lives.

Knowing, Reckoning, Yielding

Paul said in Romans 6:22, *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”* God’s desire is for us to be completely set free from sin so that we can serve Him in holiness, leading to everlasting life. In Romans 6, Paul uses three words that give us the key to this walk of holiness and freedom from sin: knowing (Rom. 6:6), reckoning (Rom. 6:11), and yielding (Rom. 6:13).

1. Knowing that we are dead to sin

As we have already established, the crossing of the Jordan represents the “dead to sin” experience of Romans 6:6: *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* On the cross, Christ not only purchased our redemption, but also made provision to deal with our sin nature and destroy it, or render it inoperative. This is a very important spiritual experience because salvation does not deal with all of the sins and bondages in our lives.

The first step to being free from sin is to know by experience that our old man (our old nature) was crucified with Christ on the cross. The Greek word for “knowing” in Romans 6:6 is “ginosko,” which means “to know by experience.” In other words, Paul is speaking of knowing by experience, not in theory, that our sinful nature has been crucified with Christ. It takes an experience with God to truly know that our old nature has been rendered inoperative.

Paul spoke of this experience in Galatians 2:20: *“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.”* We must seek the Lord to have this same experience so that we no longer serve sin. Paul also said in Galatians 6:14, *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*

Many years ago, the Lord was dealing with many issues in my life, speaking to me about being “dead to sin.” God asked me if I was willing to give up certain things to Him. Some of them were easy to release to Him, but others were difficult. One morning while I was in my office, I had a vision of Christ upon the cross with His back toward me. The Spirit of God lifted me up to hang on the cross with Christ. I could see all of the people railing against Christ. I also saw the veil that was rent in the Temple when Jesus died. Then the vision stopped.

Out of my innermost being came the words from Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ.” At the moment, I knew that my old man had been crucified with Christ. I understood that when Jesus died nearly two thousand years ago, He not only bore my sins, but He also dealt with my old nature. Strength, victory, and indescribable peace filled my heart.

By no means am I implying that you must have a vision or experience like mine. However, it is important that you experience the reality of Romans 6:6 and have a revelation that your sinful nature has been crucified. That revelation will help you resist the temptations of this world and the works of the carnal nature every day of your life.

In addition to dealing with our sin nature on the cross, Christ also provided healing, as seen in 1 Peter 2:24: *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”* Peter uses the past tense here: “ye were healed.” Our healing has already been paid for, but we must appropriate it in order to be healed.

This is also true of salvation. Christ died for the sins of the whole world, but not everyone is saved

because not everyone accepts Jesus into their hearts. Although our salvation has already been paid for by Christ's death on the cross, we are not saved until we experience it. This same principle applies to being dead to sin. Our old man was crucified with Christ on the cross, but we are still bound by the sin nature until we experience being dead to sin, as described in Romans 6:6.

Paul says in Romans 6:6, *"That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."* After we experience Romans 6:6, typified in the journey of Israel by the crossing of the Jordan River, we have power over sin and we no longer have to serve sin. That does not mean that we become infallible or incapable of sinning, but simply that we have new power and strength to overcome our sin nature.

After the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River and experienced circumcision, they defeated the city of Jericho, but then were defeated at Ai because there was sin in the camp. Therefore, in this life we never reach a point where we are infallible and cannot sin, but the more we deny our old nature and feed our new man, Christ within us, the stronger he will become and the easier it will become to do what is right.

Many Christians are bound by sin even after they have been born-again, water baptized, and baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Corinthian believers were born again, water baptized, filled with the Spirit, and moving in all the gifts of the Spirit, but Paul said they were "carnal" (1 Cor. 3:1,3). They were not "dead to sin." They had not spiritually experienced the crossing of the Jordan River.

2. Reckoning that we are dead to sin

The second step in the walk of holiness and freedom from sin is "reckoning" that we are dead to sin. Paul said in Romans 6:11, *"Likewise **reckon** ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* The Greek word translated "reckon" is "logizomai," which essentially means "to count something done."

After we have the experience of knowing that we are dead to sin, we have to walk in that life of victory over sin every day. Satan will still come and tempt us every day. That is why we must "reckon" that we are dead to sin. We have to remind ourselves that we have been freed from sin and we do not have to give in to the desires of our carnal nature.

When the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, they took twelve stones out of the Jordan River and erected them on the west bank of the river as a memorial: *"Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over*

Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever” (Josh. 4:7).

The twelve stones served as a memorial to remind the children of Israel of their Jordan experience. In much the same way, after we have a revelation that we are dead to sin, we have to daily remind ourselves that we are dead to sin. The experience in Romans 6:6 of knowing that we are dead to sin puts our old nature on the cross; “reckoning” we are dead to sin keeps it there (Rom. 6:11).

3. Yielding ourselves to righteousness and holiness

The third step in the walk of holiness and freedom from sin is to “yield” ourselves to righteousness. Paul said in Romans 6:12-14: *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield** yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*

Paul said in Romans 6:19, *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”*

After we know by experience that we are dead to sin and we begin to reckon that we are dead to sin every time we are tempted, we must choose not to yield ourselves to sin. Instead, we must yield ourselves to righteousness and holiness. Are we going to yield ourselves to the right things or the wrong things? It is a choice that we have to make every day.

By the grace of God, we must “choose the good and refuse the evil” (Isa. 7:15). Holiness is a choice and we have to struggle with our old nature to make the right choices. The experience of knowing and reckoning gives us strength to yield ourselves to God and make the right choices.

The children of Israel continually wanted to return to Egypt until after they crossed the Jordan River (Josh. 5:8-9). After they crossed the Jordan River they were circumcised at Gilgal. Spiritually, as Romans 6 becomes a reality in our lives, sin begins to gradually lose its power over us. We begin to experience heart circumcision whereby God delivers us from the desires and nature with which we were born.

How Do We Get to Jordan?

On their journey from Egypt to Zion, the children of Israel had to cross the Jordan River in order to make it into the Promised Land. In the same way, in our spiritual journey from this world to heavenly Mount Zion, we must experience the reality of the Jordan River, which is being freed from the power of sin in our lives. Therefore, the question is, “How do we get to the Jordan in our spiritual walk?” The answer is that the Lord has to bring us to the Jordan. The children of Israel could only move on when the cloud by day or pillar of fire by night moved first.

God will not bring us to our personal Jordan experience until He knows that we have successfully passed our tests in the wilderness. This is the reason we must walk with God day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. We should actively seek the Lord to bring us into the experience of being dead to sin.

Many of the Israelites never made it to the Jordan River. They failed all their tests in the wilderness. Their evil attitudes of unbelief and hardness of heart hindered them from finding favor with God. Consequently, they died in the wilderness. New Testament believers are warned not to follow their example of unbelief (Heb. 3:7-4:11; 1 Cor. 10:1-15).

Some Christians are perpetual wilderness wanderers. Disobedience and self-will cause them to wander aimlessly all of their lives. You do not have to fall into this same pit. Ask God to develop within you a soft and obedient heart that brings His favor upon your life.

Joshua and Caleb were the only ones from their generation who made it into the Promised Land. They had faith and a rejoicing spirit, declaring, “If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this land” (Num. 14:8).

They spent time in God’s presence, allowing Him to develop within them a soft and believing heart. That is the only way we can make it through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. There are no short cuts to Jordan. Therefore, let us learn from the lives of Joshua and Caleb the keys to making it to the Jordan River and into the Promised Land.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF CIRCUMCISION

Physical circumcision is the cutting away of the flesh with which a male child was born. Spiritual circumcision is the cutting away of the carnal and sinful Adamic nature with which we were born. An uncircumcised person in the Old Testament was considered unclean and could not partake of the

blessings and rites of the Jewish faith. Lack of spiritual circumcision represents the fact that the sinful desires, ways, thought patterns, and reactions that we were born with have not been cut away or removed.

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River, came to Gilgal, and erected the memorial of the twelve stones from the Jordan River, as recorded in Joshua 4:19-20: *“And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.”*

At Gilgal, the Lord instructed Joshua to circumcise the people because the younger generation had not been circumcised by their parents in the wilderness. We read in Joshua 5:2-5: *“At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.”*

In Genesis 17:10-11, the Lord commanded Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised as a token of His covenant with them: *“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.”*

Circumcision was required in order to inherit the promises of Abraham, which included the Promised Land. It was a sign or token of the Israelites’ devotion to God.

The New Testament makes it clear that what God requires of believers is spiritual circumcision. Paul makes this very clear in Romans 2:28-29: *“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*

It is not necessarily important for us to be physically circumcised, but it is vital that we are spiritually circumcised so we obey God’s commandments. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:19, *“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.”*

The importance of spiritual circumcision is even portrayed in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 30:6: *“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”* The Lord desires to circumcise our hearts so that we can love Him with all of our hearts. Moses said in Deuteronomy 10:16, *“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”*

The Lord also wants to circumcise our ears so that we can hear and respond to His voice, as depicted in Jeremiah 6:10: *“To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.”*

Our lips also must be spiritually circumcised so that we only speak the words of God (Ex. 6:12,30). Jesus said in John 14:10, *“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”* Jesus only spoke the words that His Father gave Him to speak, as seen also in John 17:8: *“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”*

As we have already noted, the crossing of the Red Sea represents water baptism. Paul said in Colossians 2:11-13: *“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”*

Paul said in Romans 6:3-5 that water baptism represents being dead to sin: *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”*

Although water baptism symbolizes that we are identifying with the death and resurrection of Christ, and delivers us from many bondages, it does not set us completely free from the power of sin. The experiential fulfillment of being dead to sin is symbolized by the crossing of the Jordan River and the adult circumcision at Gilgal. In type, the crossing of Jordan River is the experiential reality of what happened at the Red Sea.

Our part in spiritual circumcision

What is our part in spiritual circumcision? A small child does not have a say in the decision for him to be circumcised. However, at Gilgal, the children of Israel were circumcised as adults. They had to allow themselves to be circumcised.

In the same way, we cannot circumcise our own hearts, but we have to give God permission and access to deal with all of the sin in our lives. We have to expose our hearts to the Lord and surrender to Him everything in our lives that He deals with. We must not resist when God is dealing with issues in our lives, but surrender everything to Him.

What is Our Inheritance?

The Israelites could not inherit the Promised Land and partake of the promises of Abraham unless they were circumcised. In much the same way, in order for us to enter into the fullness of God's inheritance for our lives, we must experience spiritual circumcision. Israel's inheritance was the Promised Land, but even more so it was an intimate relationship with Jehovah.

The Lord said in Leviticus 26:12, *"And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."* God's inheritance for our lives can include a ministry, our spouse, our family, and a nation or nations, but the greatest part of our inheritance is an intimate relationship with Him.

Paul said in Romans 15:8 that Jesus was a minister of circumcision: *"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."* God desires to circumcise our hearts so we can inherit the "promises made unto the fathers."

What were the promises made to the fathers? One promise was that they would inherit the Promised Land. In the Promised Land was Mount Zion, the Lord's dwelling place. Mount Zion was the ultimate destination for the children of Israel (Ex. 15:17), and it is ours as well (Heb. 12:22). All of the promises and blessings of God come upon those who reach Mount Zion, thereby hitting the mark and winning the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

We must understand that we cannot enter into God's full inheritance for our lives without a circumcised heart. Neither can we dwell in God's presence without a circumcised heart. The Lord makes this very clear in Ezekiel 44:9: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel."*

Uncircumcision represents uncleanness. In order to dwell in God's presence, the filthiness of our carnal nature must be cut away (2 Cor. 7:1). King David asked in Psalm 24:3, "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?*"

The answer is found in Psalm 24:4-5: "*He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*"

Eight Evidences of a Circumcised Heart

1. A compliant, submissive heart: Deuteronomy 10:16 says, "*Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.*" *Stiffnecked* means obstinate, inflexible, and stubborn. Circumcision of heart makes us compliant and submissive to God.

2. A heart that does not resist the Holy Spirit or His messengers: Stephen said in Acts 7:51-52, "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.*" The Jewish religious rulers resisted the Holy Spirit and the messengers God sent to them. God rejects those who reject His words (1 Sam. 15:26). Therefore, a circumcised heart is one that embraces the Holy Spirit and God's messengers.

3. A heart that is humble, broken, and repentant: God said in Leviticus 26:40-41: "*If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.*"

The third evidence of a circumcised heart is the ability to repent of our sins, humble ourselves before the Lord, and accept the consequences of our actions. A person with an uncircumcised heart refuses to accept responsibility for his actions, blaming others and refusing to repent. David had a humble, repentant heart, as evidenced in Psalm 51:17: "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*"

4. A heart that seeks God's praise (or approval), not man's: Paul said in Romans 2:29, "*But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*" Another evidence of a circumcised heart is that we

seek God's approval, praise, and honor, not man's. We must not seek the approval of family, friends, peers, or the world. We must be Christ-centered (Psa. 27:4).

Seeking the praise of man is a problem for many people, as seen in John 12:42-43: *"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."* Jesus said in John 5:44, *"How can ye believe, which receive honour [or praise] one of another; and seek not the honour [or praise] that cometh from God only?"*

5. A heart that worships God in the Spirit: In Philippians 3:3, Paul develops three aspects of a circumcised heart: *"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."* The fifth evidence of a circumcised heart is the ability to worship the Lord in the Spirit and in truth.

Jesus developed the theme of true worship in John 4:22-24: *"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* The Lord is seeking for true worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and truth. We can really only worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth when our hearts have been circumcised.

When our hearts have been circumcised, we can freely worship the Lord like David and not be hindered by pride, tradition, or fear of what others will think. David worshipped the Lord in the Spirit and danced before Him through the streets of Jerusalem as he and the priests took the Ark of the Covenant to Mount Zion.

Second Samuel 6:14,16 is the account of a man with a circumcised heart who worshipped God with all of his heart and did not care what others thought about him: *"And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart."*

Some believers despise clapping, the raising of one's hands, dancing before the Lord, and worshipping in the Spirit. Areas of their hearts have not been circumcised because they are not able to worship the Lord freely and they despise those who do, like Michal who despised King David. A circumcised heart gives us freedom to worship the Lord in the Spirit with all of our hearts.

6. A heart that rejoices (or glories) in Christ Jesus: *“For we are the circumcision, which...rejoice [or glory] in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 3:3). The sixth evidence of a circumcised heart is that we rejoice or glory only in the Lord Jesus Christ. The importance of this can be seen in Jeremiah 9:23-24: *“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth **glory in this**, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”* Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:17, *“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”*

7. A heart that has no confidence in the flesh: *“For we are the circumcision, which...have no confidence in the flesh.”* The seventh evidence of a circumcised heart is that we have no confidence in the flesh. We must not trust in our abilities, talents, ministry, possessions, wealth, intelligence, or education. Psalm 118:8-9 says, *“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.”*

Paul develops this theme in Philippians 3:4-8: *“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”*

8. A heart that is completely in love with the Lord: We read in Deuteronomy 30:6,8: *“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.”*

The eighth evidence of a circumcised heart is that we love the Lord with all of our heart, which enables us to obey Him. This is the first and greatest commandment, as Jesus said in Mark 12:30, *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”*

The Day of Atonement

As we have already established, the crossing of the Jordan River represents being dead to sin and

Gilgal represents heart circumcision. Therefore, the crossing of the Jordan River can also symbolize the sixth feast of Israel, the Day of Atonement, which dealt with the sin of the nation.

The Day of Atonement was kept on the tenth day of the seventh month. The children of Israel crossed the Jordan River at the time of the Passover in the first month (Josh. 4:19; 5:10). Thus the children of Israel did not literally celebrate the Day of Atonement when they crossed the Jordan River. However, it is clear from Scripture that the crossing of the Jordan can symbolize the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement was a time of cleansing of sin and affliction, as recorded in Leviticus 16:29-30: *“And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.”*

The Day of Atonement is also described in Leviticus 23:27-29: *“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.”*

I believe the Church of Jesus Christ is spiritually in the time of the Day of Atonement. God has been dealing with sin in His Church for many years now. God is preparing His Church for the seventh feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, which is a time of revival and the glory of God.

Israel is a barometer of what God is doing in His Church. As Scripture tells us, first the natural, then the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46). Events in Israel often parallel what God is doing in spiritual Israel, the Church (Gal. 6:16). My wife and I were on the Mount of Olives just prior to the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Yom Kippur is the Hebrew name for the Day of Atonement. The Lord visited us in a very sovereign way, telling us that the war was about to begin and that Israel would retreat. He told us that the Church was spiritually entering into time of the Day of Atonement.

He also showed us many Scriptural events that have not been fulfilled yet, including the division of the land of Israel and the bloodshed around Jerusalem in the last days. The Lord spoke to us that the young people who marched in 1973 during the twenty-fifth anniversary of the State of Israel would experience the Great Tribulation.

The Lord spoke to us: “I am going to reveal sin in high places. Then I will expose sin in My Church.” The Watergate scandal of the time brought down President Nixon. The next year, 1974, about thirty heads of state around the world were brought down, including President Pompidou of France and Chancellor Willy Brandt of Germany.

Since that time, many high-profile ministers have been brought down through the scandals and exposed sin. The Church is in a time of deep cleansing. If we are not willing to deal with sin in our lives and expose it to God, He will expose it to the world. Jesus said in Luke 12:2, “*For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*”

In 1981, while ministering in New Zealand, I was visited by two angels. One of the angels had a large sword in his hand. The word “circumcision” was written on the bottom of the sword. The other angel wore a sash inscribed with the words, “The Enforcer.” The Lord said to me: “I have come to circumcise the hearts of My people, and I will start with the leaders. Those who hearken and yield to My sword of circumcision will move on with Me. However, those who do not allow Me to circumcise their hearts will be judged by My angel, the Enforcer.”

Before the Church as a whole and we as individual members of the Church can enter into the seventh feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, we must allow the Lord to do a thorough work of cleansing in our lives. We must submit to the Lord’s work of circumcision in our hearts by His sword, the Word of God. In these last days, the Church is going to enter into revival and glory and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. The Church will reach its ultimate goal, Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22), which represents holiness, God’s glory, and God’s dwelling place.

Chapter 12

THE THIRTY-ONE KINGS

- King 1: Self-Will
- King 2: Self-Indulgence
- King 3: Self-Seeking
- King 4: Self-Complacency
- King 5: Self-Glorying
- King 6: Self-Confidence
- King 7: Self-Consciousness
- King 8: Self-Importance
- King 9: Self-Depreciation
- King 10: Self-Vindication
- King 11: Self-Sensitivity
- King 12: Self-Seeing
- King 13: Self-Introspection
- King 14: Self-Love
- King 15: Selfish Affections
- King 16: Selfish Motives
- King 17: Selfish Desires
- King 18: Selfish Choices
- King 19: Selfish Pleasures
- King 20: Selfish Possessions
- King 21: Selfish Fears and Cares
- King 22: Selfish Sorrows
- King 23: Selfish Sacrifices and Self-Denials
- King 24: Selfish Virtue and Morality
- King 25: Self-Righteousness
- King 26: Selfish Sanctification
- King 27: Selfish Charity
- King 28: Selfish Christian Work
- King 29: Selfish Prayers
- King 30: Selfish Hopes
- King 31: Our Whole Life

After the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River, they experienced circumcision at Gilgal. Then they had to begin dispossessing the enemies in the Promised Land.

In much the same way, there is progressive work of circumcision in our lives to deal with all of the spiritual enemies and strongholds of self in our hearts. Israel's battle was against natural enemies, but our warfare is against spiritual enemies (Eph. 6:12).

The Lord wants to deal with every stronghold in our lives, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; 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.”* God wants to subdue every stronghold of sin and all carnal thoughts in our lives and bring them into obedience to Christ.

It is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, that defeats these enemies within our hearts (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). Remember, the Lord appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in His hand as Israel was about to battle the enemies of the land (Josh. 5:13-15). We must seek the Lord and allow His Word to deal with every area of our lives.

In Joshua 12:9-24, we see that Israel had to drive thirty-one kings out of Canaan in order to possess the Promised Land. These kings represent different strongholds of the self-life that are reigning in our lives in place of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; The king of Shimronmeron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.”

The Promised Land was Israel's inheritance, but there were pockets of resistance in the land. There were many strongholds and kings in the land that they had to defeat in order to possess it. These thirty-one kings represent unsundered areas of our self-life. These thirty-one kings stood in Israel's way of

possessing the land and entering into rest on Mount Zion. These same unconquered areas of the self-life stand in our way of entering into rest on Mount Zion, for Zion is the place of God's rest (Psa. 132:14; Heb. 4:9-10).

The following interpretation of each king is based on a message by Rev. A.B. Simpson. It is an analogy of what the thirty-one kings can represent. It is by no means a statement of doctrine, but merely a Spirit-inspired application of the thirty-one kings. This message on the thirty-one kings is for believers who have already come through the wilderness and crossed over the River Jordan. It is for those who possess a certain level of maturity, but still have areas of the self-life in their hearts that need to be conquered.

KING 1: SELF-WILL

Someone who determines his own course of action

Self-will is one of man's greatest maladies. He is his own boss. He is on the throne of his life instead of God. Many Christians make their own choices and decisions. Rather than asking God what His will is, they tell Him what their plans are and ask Him to bless them.

The antidote is to seek only to do God's will, as Jesus said to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*" (Lk. 22:42). Jesus said in John 5:30, "*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*"

KING 2: SELF-INDULGENCE

Feeding one's ego

Self-indulgence causes us to only focus on ourselves. This person's favorite subject is himself. He monopolizes conversations, talking about himself, his experiences, and his achievements. Paul said, "*Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others*" (Phil. 2:4). "*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth*" (Prov. 27:2; 2 Cor. 12:2-5). Our first duty is to draw attention to the Lord and then stay out of the picture.

We should always point to Christ, just as John the Baptist pointed everyone to Christ. We read in John 3:26-28,30: "*And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye*

yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

KING 3: SELF-SEEKING

What is in this for me? What do I get out of this?

The third area of the self-life is a self-seeking attitude. Napoleon once said, “The only people I care about are those who can benefit me!” He had no use for anyone else. May we never be guilty of using people for our advantage! True love is unselfish. First Corinthians 13:5 says that love “seeketh not her own.” In other words, “it is not self-seeking” (NIV). True love considers the needs of others first. Paul said of Timothy in Philippians 2:20-21: “*For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own [interests], not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.*”

KING 4: SELF-COMPLACENCY

Passivity—I am good enough as I am.

The Laodiceans thought they had reached the apex of spirituality (Rev. 3:17). They thought they had it all! This is blindness and deception, of course (1 Cor. 8:2, Gal. 6:3). Self-complacency is the exact opposite of those who pant after God and hunger and thirst for righteousness (Psa. 42:1-2; Mt. 5:6). People who are satisfied as they are, have ceased to grow. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14: “*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” Unless we have an ongoing and progressive vision, we will become complacent in our Christian walk and wander aimlessly. Proverbs 29:18 says, “*Where there is no [progressive] vision, the people perish.*”

KING 5: SELF-GLORYING

Vainglory, boasting, and vaunting

Paul warned about self-glorying in Galatians 5:26: “*Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*” He also develops this theme in Philippians 2:3: “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*”

It is a tragic mistake for people to boast of having the fastest growing church in the country or the most successful ministry or outreach anywhere. Some churches boast of having the finest choir in the state, while some evangelists boast that they have never made a mistake with their spiritual gifts. Solomon

asserted that he was unsurpassed and unequaled by anyone who preceded him (Eccl. 1:16). Peter boldly declared that even if all his brethren forsook the Lord, he would never forsake Him (Mt. 26:33). All vain glorying and bragging is an exhibition of an inner king who must be removed and replaced by the King of kings.

We should only glory and boast in the Lord, as seen in Jeremiah 9:23-24: *“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”*

KING 6: SELF-CONFIDENCE

Confidence in the flesh and human strength

This entrenched king of self-confidence trusts in his own mind and judgment. He is self-reliant. He thinks he does not need anyone else because he knows what he is doing. He thinks he has everything under control and can work out his problems on his own. He is a self-made man; he thinks he has all the answers.

This is the opposite of that holy dependence Jesus had in His Father, saying in John 5:19, *“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”* Jesus also said in John 5:30, *“I can of mine own self do nothing.”*

KING 7: SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

A dreadful bondage of worry

The king of self-consciousness relates everything that is said or done to himself. Every gesture, look, and word is carefully studied. He assumes everyone is thinking about him and talking about him. He is a prisoner of his own imaginations. It is such a relief to realize that people scarcely ever are thinking about us at all. The truth is, they are just like us; they are thinking about themselves.

KING 8: SELF-IMPORTANCE

A distorted view of one's own importance or greatness

This enthroned king has an inflated ego. He becomes angry when his importance or greatness is overlooked by others. Many believers who have received knowledge and training for a few years

think that they have outgrown their teachers and pastor. Some even drift into the deception that they are God's special messengers sent to correct their leaders (Obad. 1:3).

KING 9: SELF-DEPRECIATION

Constantly degrading one's self

Just as bad as self-glorifying is degrading ourselves. It is not good to constantly degrade ourselves or focus on our shortcomings (Rom. 7:24). This is a preoccupation with self that hinders us from focusing on God. Philemon 1:6 exhorts us to "acknowledge every good thing that is in us by Christ Jesus." Give the Holy Spirit credit for all the good things He has done in your life.

If we do not have a wholesome opinion of ourselves, we will not have a wholesome opinion of others either. God wants us to have a wholesome sense of our worth in His eyes. Self-acceptance is important for good spiritual health. In order for us to love others, we must first love ourselves (Mt. 22:39).

KING 10: SELF-VINDICATION

Defending one's rights and position

The king of self-vindication demands his rights, defends his position, and justifies himself and his ways, even unto death. This king would rather die than give in to others. He is not convinced that "turning the other cheek" is really for today. Nor does he believe that injustices are ordained of God to move him closer to the throne (Gen. 50:20).

Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" We must deny ourselves of our rights and not seek to vindicate ourselves. When Shimei cursed David and threw rocks at him, David refused to defend himself, saying in 2 Samuel 16:11b-12, "*Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.*" Some Christians never learn this lesson. The very idea behind the Incarnation was the renunciation of our rights! Are we better than Christ? A. B. Simpson said, "I solemnly believe that most of the blessings that have been given to me in my life and ministry have come because of the evil things people have said of me, and because God made me willing to allow them to say them."

KING 11: SELF-SENSITIVITY

Overly sensitive, touchy, and easily offended

Self-sensitivity makes us touchy, easily irritated, quick to take offense, resentful, and very protective of

ourselves. It makes us very conscious of our own feelings, but unaware when we have hurt someone else. Ironically, overly sensitive people accuse others of being uncaring and insensitive to them, unaware of how much they are hurting them by their words (Rom. 2:1).

KING 12: SELF-SEEING

Only seeing things from our own point of view

This is the king who rigidly asserts, “There is only one way to do it!” The Apostle Peter struggled with this problem, saying, “I would never . . .” only to repent afterwards (Mt. 16:22; 26:33; Jn. 13:8; Acts 10:14). Job’s three friends refused to budge from their philosophic appraisals of Job’s calamity. They were unqualified, however, to counsel or console him because they had never seen, heard of, or experienced anything like Job’s trial. Therefore, they lacked the proper light to speak effectively into Job’s tragic situation. Yet they insisted, “This is the only way to look at it!”

This attitude is symptomatic of several problems. It suggests that everything that can be known about the subject is already known. It also presents the attitude of infallibility. By contrast, true wisdom gives us a broad view of life and enables us to gently offer other workable alternatives.

KING 13: SELF-INTROSPECTION

Always looking within

This king of the self-life causes us to contemplate our own thoughts, sensations, and feelings. God never told us to analyze ourselves or figure out our problems with our own minds. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” We do not know what is in our hearts, only the Lord does. He searches and tries our hearts every day.

David said to Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:9, “*And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.*” We should not be overly self-introspective, but allow the Lord to search our hearts.

KING 14: SELF-LOVE

Overprotective of self and selfish interests

This king lives for *himself* and resents inconveniences or intrusions upon his private life, time, or possessions. How contrary to the nature of God who willingly gave up His very life for others! John

3:16 says, “God so loved the world that He gave . . .” Christ never chose the path of convenience.

Jesus said in Mark 8:34-35: *“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”*

Some Christians refuse to go into the ministry or to a foreign field because of self-love. They love their life and security, but in so doing, they lose both. Jesus said in Matthew 19:29, *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”* Joy is found in the center of God’s will for our lives. Happiness is where the presence of God resides (Psa. 16:11). The safest place on earth is the center of the will of God.

KING 15: SELFISH AFFECTIONS

Loving only those who love us

Jesus said in Luke 6:32-33: *“For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.”* When we appreciate only those who appreciate us, we are ordinary Christians. Even sinners love those who love them. Are we thankful only for those who approve of us and praise us? Do we have little use for everyone else? Is our scope of fellowship small and cliquish? In a church of 300, are we friendly only to thirty people? God wants to enlarge our hearts so that we love all of God’s people.

KING 16: SELFISH MOTIVES

Doing favors with the hope of getting something in return

Jesus said in Luke 6:34-35: *“And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”*

Some people do things with selfish and ulterior motives. Flattery always wants something in return. Some people donate money to God hoping that they will receive more in return. We should never give anything to God with the motive of receiving more from Him in return. God truly is a generous God, and He loves to bless His people, but we should not give with selfish motives. Neither should ministers

spend the majority of their church services appealing for money. We should expose our hearts and motives to the Lord and ask Him to purify us. God's Word is a discerner of the thoughts, intents, and motives of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

KING 17: SELFISH DESIRES

Covetousness, something for me

People who have selfish desires are covetous, longing to be successful and have security. They often seek to have close friendships with prominent people in order to gain influence and power. Some even try to marry into a particular family for wealth, prestige, or power. We should examine our motives to see what is prompting our words and actions. Ask the Lord, "Why do I really want this?"

KING 18: SELFISH CHOICES

Not asking God what He wants, but telling Him what we want

The king of selfish choices makes his own choices without asking God's guidance. This stronghold of the self life causes us to do our own will. We were created by God to bring Him pleasure (Rev. 4:11). Therefore, we should always ask God which choice would please Him the most. If we are not bringing pleasure to our Maker, then we are living in vain. Joy is the result of being what we were created to be and doing the things that please Him. David said in Psalm 40:8, "*I delight to do thy will O God.*"

Life is filled with choices, and we are the sum of our life choices. We must allow the Lord to choose for us because He knows best. We read in Isaiah 55:8-9: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" We must allow the Lord to make our choices for us, especially the choice of our marriage partner.

KING 19: SELFISH PLEASURES

Gratifying self

Western society encourages people to do whatever makes them feel good and promotes carnal pleasures. Paul told us that in the last days people would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4). Sports, cars, clothes, and hobbies can be idols. Many Christians are enslaved by an insatiable appetite for pleasure.

The love of pleasure will choke the seed of God's Word in our lives, as Jesus said in Luke 8:14: "*And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked*

with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” We must deny ourselves and not revel in the pleasures of this world. As seen in Hebrews 11:25, Moses resisted the pleasures of sin: *“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”*

True pleasure is found in the presence of God and in the center of His will. *“In His presence is fullness of joy”* (Psa. 16:11). Many Christians exemplify the attitude expressed in Luke 12:19: *“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”*

KING 20: SELFISH POSSESSIONS

A spirit that grasps for possessions

The reading of a last will and testament is one sure way to cause hidden iniquity to surface from deep within a person’s heart. Families and friendships have been destroyed over the bitterness of a contested will. Jesus did not encourage the man who had an argument over an inheritance to fight for a bigger share. The Lord saw a motive of covetousness in his heart (Lk. 12:12-15).

Jesus warned that happiness is not measured by how many possessions we amass. The things people grasp for never satisfy anyway. Sooner or later, we will lose everything we try to hold on to with selfish motives. People who obtain riches or possessions by deceitful means end up being fools without fruit (Jer. 17:9-11).

KING 21: SELFISH FEARS AND CARES

What is going to happen to me?

This king exemplifies self-preservation. He is very protective of himself and has an acute problem trusting God to take care of him. Some fears stem from pride and the fear of looking foolish. Many times people worry about something for months, only to find that it was absolutely nothing when it comes. If our particular fear is rooted in pride, then humility can break our bondage. Fear and the cares of this life prohibit us from inheriting the promises of God.

In Psalm 34:4, David shows us that we can be delivered from our fears by seeking the Lord: *“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”* As we focus on the love of God, it will cast fear out of our lives, as expressed in 1 John 4:18: *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”*

Jesus shows us the danger of the cares of this life in Luke 8:14: *“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”* Peter said in 1 Peter 5:7, *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”*

KING 22: SELFISH SORROWS

Self-inflicted sorrows

Selfish sorrows cause us to be quick to accuse God and others of not caring about us. They make us feel that God has let us down. These sorrows result from unfulfilled expectations or hopes. If God does not give us something we want, it is because He has something far better in mind. Remember, godly sorrow brings life, but the self-induced sorrow brings death: *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* (2 Cor. 7:10).

KING 23: SELFISH SACRIFICES AND DENIALS

Giving to satisfy self

Paul speaks of selfish sacrifices in 1 Corinthians 13:3: *“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”* We can give our goods to feed the poor and even surrender our bodies to the flames as martyrs, but if our motive is not love, we gain nothing.

Some people fast with selfish motives, using their fast to boast of their sacrifice. Some self-denials are made simply to display a person’s religiosity. There is a story of a man who sat on the top of a pillar for twenty-five years, living on roots and rations. This did not make him holy, but only drew attention to his ability to deny himself. We must make sure that our motives behind sacrifices and self-denials are pure.

KING 24: SELFISH VIRTUE & MORALITY

A holier than thou attitude

Selfish virtue and morality gives us a “holier than thou attitude,” as seen in Isaiah 65:5: *“Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.”* People with selfish virtue, which is rooted in spiritual pride, think they are better than others because of their high standards and beliefs. It makes us standoffish to others. The Jews would not eat with the Gentiles or associate with them because they thought they were better than them. If they came in contact with them through commerce, they would carefully wash their hands afterwards (Acts 10:28; 11:3).

KING 25: SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

I am what I am by my works and efforts

Self-righteousness makes us think that we are righteous because of our works and devotion to God. The truth is that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags in God's eyes, as seen in Isaiah 64:6: "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*" The only righteousness we have is God's righteousness (Isa. 54:17).

Jesus spoke of the dangers of self-righteousness in Luke 18:9-14: "*And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*"

The Jewish religious leaders and Pharisees were guilty of self-righteousness. Their trust and confidence was in their own works, not in God's righteousness. When Job found fault with God but none with himself, he was guilty of the deception of self-righteousness (Job 27:1-6, 32:1, 35:2). Paul said in Philippians 3:9, "*And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*"

Salvation cannot be earned by good works; it comes through faith in God's righteousness. Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" Paul also develops this theme in Romans 4:1-4: "*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*"

KING 26: SELFISH SANCTIFICATION

Glorying in a transforming experience of the past

This happens when a legitimate experience we had in the past becomes an idol to us and we fail to

move on with God. When people camp around an experience of the past, they cease to grow and mature in the Lord. We must have new life flowing into us all the time, for no single experience can cause us to come to maturity. We must continue to grow and have new experiences all the time or we will dry up.

In Philippians 3:12-14, Paul said that he had not yet attained in spite of twenty-eight years of walking with God: *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

KING 27: SELFISH CHARITY

Giving with ulterior motives

There are people who contribute large amounts of money to a church or organization with strings attached. They want to control the work or use it to propagate their own ideas and beliefs. Some people give in order to have public recognition or the praise of man.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:1-4: *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”*

KING 28: SELFISH CHRISTIAN WORK

When ministry replaces relationship

God never intended ministry to take the place of our relationship with Him. The ministry must not be an idol in our lives. Just as a little child pouts when his toys are taken away, immature Christians sulk when God temporarily takes away their ministry. We must always make the Lord the most important thing in our lives and our first pursuit in life (Psa. 27:4).

The Ephesian church had become so busy doing the Lord’s work that they neglected their relationship with Him, as seen in Revelation 2:1-4: *“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the*

seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

KING 29: SELFISH PRAYERS

Give me, give me, give me

Many Christians have a selfish prayer life. All of their prayers focus on what they want God to do for them or give them, instead of seeking God just for who He is. We should pray for the right things, like asking God to give us wisdom (Jas. 1:5). However, the Lord knows our needs even before we vocalize them to Him (Mt. 6:32). Therefore, we should focus our prayer life on the Lord.

The prodigal son said, "*Father, give me!*" But after he squandered his substance he said, "*Father, make me!*" In other words, "Make me the son you want me to be" (Lk. 15:12,19). Today's prosperity message emphasizes, "*Give me!* Give me a quick answer, the easiest way out of my problems, provision and blessings." However, it has failed to emphasize: "*Make me!*" "Lord, make me fit for your eternal kingdom, even if my circumstances are not always pleasant and the answers I seek do not come immediately!" Our prayer should be, "Lord, what can I do to please You?"

KING 30: SELFISH HOPES

Living in a dream world, unrealistic expectations

The human heart sometimes fantasizes of becoming famous or wealthy, or covets something that belongs to someone else. God wants His people to learn contentment and thankfulness in their present circumstances. Paul said in Philippians 4:11, "*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*" We should make sure that what we are hoping for is what God desires to give us (Psa. 62:5). Our hope should be in the Lord (1 Pet. 1:21).

KING 31: OUR WHOLE LIFE

Withholding our lives from the Lord

Everything that we have has been given to us by God, including our lives. Therefore, our whole life must be placed on God's altar. Paul said in Acts 20:24, "*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry,*

which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

In reality, we belong to the Lord; therefore, we cannot do what we want to do. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

Chapter 13

INCOMPLETE VICTORY

Chapter 13 Outline

1. Slackness in possessing the land
2. The Book of Judges
3. The Lord's rebuke
4. Alliances

1. SLACKNESS IN POSSESSING THE LAND

Under Joshua's leadership, the children of Israel did not possess their full inheritance. They were slack in possessing the land of Canaan. We read this sad commentary in Joshua 13:1: "*Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.*"

We also read in Joshua 18:2-3: "*And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?*"

Hebrews 4:8 tells us that Joshua was unable to bring the Israelites into full rest: "*For if [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*"

The Israelites were satisfied to settle for partial victory. This is also true of the human heart. Many Christians reach a certain plateau in their walk with the Lord, and they are content to dwell there. Israel did not deal with all the enemies in their inheritance. They compromised with the enemy, made alliances with them, and were content to coexist with them in the land of their inheritance. This was their downfall. Their ultimate destination, Mount Zion, was not possessed. Instead, the Jebusites retained possession of it.

The book of Joshua ends with this account in Joshua 24:29,31: "*And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old... And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.*"

2. THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Book of Judges covers a period in Israel's history that may best be described as an interim between the death of Joshua and the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David. The Book of Judges continues the narrative of the children of Israel, from the death of Joshua until the time of Samuel, a period of about 350 years.

During the period of the judges, the Lord tested the children of Israel to know what was in their hearts after they were settled in the Promised Land. We might also pass through periods in our life like this.

Sometimes God withdraws Himself from us to see what we will do with what we know and what we have.

This can be seen in the life of King Hezekiah. We read in 2 Chronicles 32:31 that the Lord withdrew Himself from Hezekiah for a season to test him: *“Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.”*

Hezekiah, who was a godly man, failed this test, as seen in 2 Chronicles 32:25, *“But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.”* However, after God punished him for being lifted up in pride, he humbled his heart before the Lord. *“Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah”* (2 Chron. 32:26). May we draw upon the lessons of the Book of Judges for our life’s journey from the world (Egypt) to Zion. We must walk in humility before the Lord.

The Book of Judges opens with an account of Israel obeying the charge of Joshua. They began to dispossess the enemy in the Promised Land. We read in Judges 1:1, *“Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?”* However, many of the tribes were unable to overcome all their enemies.

1. The tribe of Judah (Judges 1:19): *“And the LORD was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.”*

2. The tribe of Benjamin (Judges 1:21): *“And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.”*

3. The tribe of Manasseh (Judges 1:27): *“Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.”*

4. The tribe of Ephraim (Judges 1:29): *“Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that*

dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.”

5. The tribe of Zebulun (Judges 1:30): *“Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.”*

6. The tribe of Asher (Judges 1:31-32): *“Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.”*

7. The tribe of Naphtali (Judges 1:33): *“Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them.”*

8. The tribe of Dan (Judges 1:34-35): *“And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries.”*

Reuben and Gad settled on the other side of Jordan, outside of the Promised Land. Simeon and Levi were not given designated land (Gen. 49:5-7). Simeon dwelt among the tribe of Judah, and Levi was scattered among the other tribes

3. THE LORD’S REBUKE

The Lord rebuked the children of Israel in Judges 2:1-3 for compromising with their enemies instead of killing them: *“And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.”*

The Lord told the children of Israel that He would not give them complete victory over their enemies because they had disobeyed His voice for too long. God addresses issues in the lives of His people

over and over again. However, if we continue to ignore His warnings and refuse to let go of our bondages, there comes a time when God will allow us to remain unchanged. The Lord limits a day for us to respond to Him and be transformed by His grace (Heb. 4:7).

God limited a time for Esau to repent and when he did not repent, the Lord confirmed him in the pathway of disobedience he had chosen. This is clearly seen in Hebrews 12:16-17: *“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 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.”* Therefore, we must be quick to respond to the Lord when He deals with areas in our lives.

The angel of the Lord went from Gilgal to Bochim to deliver this message to Israel. Bochim means “weeping.” At Gilgal, they had met with the Lord in a tremendous way under Joshua, but now at Bochim they had spent many years disobeying God’s voice. After Israel was rebuked by the Lord, they wept before the Lord (Judges 2:4-5). However, they did not truly repent of their sins, because the rest of Judges chapter 2 describes how they forsook the Lord.

It is not enough to weep; we must weep with a truly repentant spirit. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11: *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”* A repentant spirit will preserve us from compromising and making wrong alliances.

4. ALLIANCES

One of the most important lessons for Christians to learn is that we must make right alliances. There are terrible consequences of making wrong alliances. Making wrong alliances with the inhabitants of Canaan was a snare to Israel. They even married the unbelieving heathen. As a result, God judged the nation of Israel.

We read in Judges 3:5-7: *“And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.”* Israel began worshipping idols as a result of wrong alliances.

The righteous king Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahab, the king of Israel, who was very wicked (2 Chron. 18:1-3). The result was that Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, married Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, and walked contrary to God's commandments (2 Chron. 21:4-6). The Lord rebuked Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Ahab in 2 Chronicles 19:2: *"And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD."* While wrong alliances can have devastating consequences for future generations, right alliances can bring forth tremendous blessings for future generations.

Let us learn also from the admonition of Psalm 1:1-2: *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."* There are three degrees of fellowship described in Psalm 1:1:

- 1. Walking:** signifies receiving counsel or being guided by the ungodly, those who leave the path of righteousness.
- 2. Standing:** signifies openly espousing the cause of sinners, those who habitually commit evil works.
- 3. Sitting:** signifies taking up one's abode with those who scorn spiritual matters and have been given over to a mind incapable of sound judgment.

We become like those whom we walk with, as seen in Proverbs 13:20: *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."* Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 15:33, *"Bad company corrupts good character."* One bad apple in a barrel will corrupt the good apples, but the good apples do not make the bad apple good. If we make alliances with those who are not upright, we will be corrupted by them. This applies not only to our relationship with unbelievers, but also with believers. We must not be deceived into thinking that a person is godly just because he is a Christian.

The Lord was angry with the Israelites because of their disobedience, as seen in Judges 2:20-23: *"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua."*

Consequently, the children of Israel never possessed their full inheritance, as seen in Judges 3:1-4: *“Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.”*

If we make alliances with the wicked, we will be plagued by their wrong counsel. We will have to either tolerate or condone their sinful ways. Many people have bondages in their lives for decades because they made alliances with the wicked. They then face lifelong battles with those works of the flesh, even seeing their children plagued by the same sins. We read in Hosea 14:9, *“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”*

Part Three

INHERITING MOUNT ZION

Chapter 14

SHILOH

Chapter 14 Outline

1. The history of Shiloh
2. The glory departs from Shiloh
3. The lesson of Shiloh for believers

1. THE HISTORY OF SHILOH

After Israel crossed Jordan and entered the Promised Land, they had three principal capital cities: Shiloh, Hebron, and Zion. Their first capital was Shiloh, which means “tranquil.” We read in Joshua 18:1, *“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.”*

Located about thirty miles north of Jerusalem, Shiloh was the place chosen by God where the Tabernacle of Moses was erected after they entered the Promised Land. The Tabernacle remained there until it was taken to Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39).

The Tabernacle of Moses was located in Shiloh for several hundred years, starting from their entry into the land until it was overrun in the days of Eli (Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 1-5; Psa. 78:55-68). Shiloh served as Israel’s religious center, and it was in the territory given to the tribe of Ephraim.

It was part of the inheritance of Joseph. Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph (Num. 13:8). Therefore, Shiloh was the natural choice for the Tabernacle since it was located in the inheritance of Joshua, the leader of Israel.

We see in Joshua 22:12 that it was the gathering place for the armies of Israel: *“And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.”* We read in Judges 18:31 that the Tabernacle was still at Shiloh during the period of the Judges: *“And they set them up Micah’s graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.”*

The feasts of Israel were celebrated at the Tabernacle in Shiloh, as recorded in Judges 21:19: *“Then they said, Behold, there is a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.”*

The prophet Samuel spent his early years at Shiloh. It was at the Tabernacle in Shiloh that Hannah met with God and promised that if He gave her a son, she would give him back to God. We read in 1 Samuel 1:24-28: *“And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked*

of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

Shiloh was also a place where important decisions were made. It was there that the inheritance of the tribes of Israel was divided. We read in Joshua 18:8-10: *“And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh. And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh. And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.”*

Shiloh holds an important truth for believers today. We will pass through Shiloh on our spiritual journey. Our spiritual inheritance will be decided at Shiloh. Psalm 47:4 tells us that it is God who chooses our inheritance for us: *“He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.”* God chooses our inheritance for us according to the desires of our heart and the choices we have made in life. We read in Psalm 20:4, *“[The Lord] grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.”*

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh became complacent and decided they wanted to dwell outside of the Promised Land. Consequently, God gave them the desires of their heart, but they never experienced the fullness of God’s blessings and settled for an inheritance that was outside of God’s perfect will for their lives. We must never become complacent in our Christian walk or settle for anything less than God’s very best for our lives.

Press in with God to receive His full inheritance for your life. As John said in 2 John 1:8, *“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”* As Paul said in Philippians 3:14, continue pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus for your life. Never settle for second best!

2. THE GLORY DEPARTS FROM SHILOH

The Ark of the Covenant was located inside the Tabernacle at Shiloh for many years; thus the literal presence of God was there. However, although the period of Shiloh as Israel’s capital had a glorious beginning, its end was tragic. Compromise, wrong alliances, and coexistence with their enemies brought down Shiloh. The children of Israel became complacent and comfortable with the enemies in the land. They never possessed their full inheritance, including Zion, and gradually turned away from God.

We read in Psalm 78:55-58 that the Israelites turned away from God and began worshipping idols after He divided their inheritance for them at Shiloh: *“He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.”*

As seen in Psalm 78:60-62, God’s punishment for their sins was that His glory left the Tabernacle at Shiloh and He allowed the Ark of the Covenant to be captured by the Philistines: *“So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy’s hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.”*

Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain by the Philistines and the Ark of the Covenant was captured, as recorded in 1 Samuel 4:11: *“And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.”*

When Eli the High Priest received the news, he fell over backwards, broke his neck, and died. We read in 1 Samuel 4:17-18: *“And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.”*

We read in Psalm 78:67-71 that God rejected the tribe of Ephraim and the Tabernacle that was located at Shiloh in the inheritance of Joseph: *“Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.”*

God used Joshua, who was from the tribe of Ephraim, to lead Israel into the Promised Land. However, after Joshua’s death, the tribe of Ephraim and the inhabitants of Shiloh turned away from God. Therefore, God rejected them. In their place, God chose King David, from the tribe of Judah, to lead Israel back into God’s presence and to possess Mount Zion, God’s dwelling place.

God's presence never returned to Shiloh. After the Philistines returned the Ark of the Covenant, it was stored at Kirjathjearim and not at Shiloh (1 Sam. 7:1). Sadly, Shiloh, a place that once radiated with the glory of God, but then lost it through disobedience, can be summarized by 1 Samuel 4:21-22: *"And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."*

The prophet Jeremiah used Shiloh as an example to warn Jerusalem that it would suffer the same fate if its inhabitants did not repent. The prophetic message that God gave Jeremiah concerning Shiloh is very important for us as believers.

We read in Jeremiah 7:1-4: *"The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates **to worship the LORD**. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these."*

The Lord told Jeremiah to stand at the gate of the Temple, the Lord's house, and warn those who were entering in to worship the Lord. He told them to repent and amend their ways. It is important to note that the people he warned were entering the temple to worship the Lord.

The Jews in Jeremiah's time were still attending church regularly, still worshipping the Lord, and still offering their religious sacrifices to God. However, they were not walking in obedience to God's Word. Therefore, we see that regular church attendance, being faithful to pay our tithes, and worshipping the Lord are not accepted by God as substitutes for a relationship with Him and complete obedience to His Word.

God does not accept our worship unless we obey Him, even as Jesus said concerning the religious leaders of His day: *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Mt. 15:9).

This is the same message that Samuel delivered to Saul in 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."* God delights more in obedience than He does in our sacrifices. The Lord said in 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.”

To prove the validity of His message, in Jeremiah 7:12-15 God reminds Jerusalem of how He rejected Shiloh: *“But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.”*

3. THE LESSON OF SHILOH FOR BELIEVERS

Therefore, let us learn from the story of Shiloh. We must never be deceived into thinking that we are accepted in God’s eyes just because we attend church regularly or even pastor a church, worship the Lord, and faithfully pay our tithes and offerings. All of these things are great and vital for an abundant Christian life, but they hold no value at all without a life of obedience to God’s Word.

Even as Shiloh lost the glory of God because of disobedience, we can lose the glory of God and be rejected by God if we do not continue walking in obedience to His Word. Jesus said in John 8:31, *“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”* Let us seek to continue in God’s Word so that we may go from “glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

God wants your path to shine brighter and brighter with His glory as you move on with Him in the walk of holiness and perfection, even as stated in Proverbs 4:18: *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”*

Chapter 15

HEBRON

Chapter 15 Outline

1. Introduction to the life of David
2. The spiritual significance of Hebron

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF DAVID

After the glory of God departed Shiloh and the Ark of the Covenant was taken, God brought a plague upon the Philistines, causing them to return the Ark of the Covenant. They left it in Kirjathjearim. Eli the High Priest died and Samuel took over as the supreme spiritual leader. We read in 1 Samuel 7:15-17: *“And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.”*

However, at the end of Samuel’s life, Israel rejected his leadership and wanted a king like all of the other nations. Saul was man’s choice, not God’s choice. God warned the Israelites what Saul would be like in 1 Samuel 8:10-22.

The forty-year reign of Saul can be summarized by the word “halfheartedness.” In 1 Samuel 15, God commanded Saul to kill all of the Amalekites, including their king, Agag. However, Saul only partially obeyed the Lord, sparing Agag and the best of his flocks and herds. In 1 Samuel 13, Saul did not wait for Samuel and offered the sacrifices himself, in direct disobedience to God’s instructions.

Therefore, God was very displeased with Saul and rejected him, as seen in 1 Samuel 15:22-23: *“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. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”*

In 1 Samuel 16, David, the man who would lead Israel into their full inheritance and Mount Zion, was anointed by Samuel as the next king of Israel when he was about seventeen years old.

Having lost the favor and anointing of the Lord upon his life, Saul became jealous of David and tried to kill him. However, God faithfully preserved David. After Saul died, David received his second anointing at Hebron and was made King of Judah at the age of thirty in 2 Samuel 2.

We read in 2 Samuel 2:1-4: *“And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal’s wife the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the*

cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabeshgilead were they that buried Saul.”

David reigned as King of Judah in Hebron for seven-and-a-half years before he was anointed king over all Israel and took Mount Zion as seen in 2 Samuel 5:4-5: *“David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.”*

Hebron was a stepping stone to Zion in David’s life. In the same way, we must experience the message and truths of Hebron before we can go on to Zion.

2. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HEBRON

In order to understand the spiritual meaning of Hebron for believers, we must first consider the people in the Bible who are associated with Hebron, including Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Caleb, and Achsah.

1. Separation Before Multiplication

The first person associated with Hebron is Abraham. Genesis 13:18 tells us that Abraham dwelt at Hebron: *“Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.”* Before Abraham went to Hebron, he separated from Lot, as recorded in Genesis 13:9: *“Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.”*

The result of this separation from Lot can be seen in Genesis 13:14-17: *“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”*

After Abraham separated from Lot, God promised to multiply him and make him very fruitful. Then Abraham dwelt in Hebron. The principle that can be seen here is that separation comes before multi-

plication. There must be a separation in our lives before God will multiply us and before we can experience the blessings and promises of Hebron. Isaac and Jacob also dwelt at Hebron and are associated with Hebron. Isaac had to separate from Ishmael and Jacob had to separate from Esau in order for them to experience multiplication and the blessings of God in their lives.

2. Fruitfulness

The theme of fruitfulness is evident in Isaac's association with Hebron. *"And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned"* (Gen. 35:27). Isaac represents the hundredfold Christian, as stated in Genesis 26:12: *"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him."*

We want to be those who, like Isaac, bring forth fruit one hundredfold, as Jesus said in Matthew 13:8: *"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."*

Before we can bring forth one hundredfold fruit, we must allow the Lord to circumcise our hearts. Fruitfulness and multiplication are part of the promises God made to Abraham in His covenant with Abraham. We read in Genesis 17:6-7: *"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."*

However, the requirement to experience these blessings was circumcision, as seen in Genesis 17:10-11: *"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."* Therefore, if want to be fruitful and experience multiplication in our lives and ministries, we must allow the Lord to circumcise our hearts, as stated in Deuteronomy 30:6: *"And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."*

We also must experience spiritual barrenness in order to become fruitful. Barrenness makes us dependent upon God and makes us grateful people so that when we are fruitful, we appreciate what God has given us. Several of the women associated with Hebron in the Bible experienced barrenness, including Sarah and Rebekah.

We read in Isaiah 54:1-3 that God makes the barren fruitful in His time: *“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”*

3. The anointing

It was in Hebron that David was anointed for the second time, as King of Judah, and for the third time, as King of Israel. We read in 2 Samuel 2:3-4: *“And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabeshgilead were they that buried Saul.”*

Second Samuel 5:3 records David’s third anointing in Hebron as King of Israel: *“So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.”* It was this third anointing that enabled David to take Mount Zion (2 Sam. 5:6-11).

We see that David was anointed three times in his life. These three anointings can correspond to the Outer Court, Holy Place, and Holy of Holies. After David received his third anointing, he was able to take Mount Zion and place the Ark of the Covenant on top of Mount Zion, essentially making it the Holy of Holies. In the same way, we must experience a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit in order to progress in our spiritual journey to Zion (Psa. 92:10).

4. Having a progressive vision

It is very important that we have progressive vision (Prov. 29:18). The women in the Bible associated with Hebron had a progressive vision. They were not complacent or content with second best; they wanted God’s best for their lives and their husbands’ lives.

Several years ago the Lord appeared to me and asked me, “If you had a son, what qualifications would you require your son’s wife to have?” I was amazed at the response in my spirit. A whole list of qualifications immediately came to my mind. Then the Lord said to me, “Do you see how particular you would be about the qualifications for your son’s wife? Do you now understand how careful I am in

choosing wives for My sons?"

It is so important that women have the same vision, calling, and character as their husbands. God selects wives for His sons with great care because He does not want them to be deflected from His will for their lives by marrying the wrong woman. We must consecrate our affections and allow the Lord to choose our spouse.

Therefore, we are going to see that the women of God in Scripture associated with Hebron had a progressive vision and the same calling as their husbands. Sarah and Abraham lived in Hebron. Sarah is the only woman in the Word of God whose name was changed by God. Her name was changed from "Sarai" to "Sarah," which means "princess of multitudes" or "mother of nations" (Gen. 17:15-16). Her name changed to Sarah because she was married to Abraham, who was called to be "the father of many nations." She had to have the same vision and calling as Abraham.

Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, who took Hebron when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land (Josh. 14:13-14) is another example of a wife with a progressive vision. Caleb gave Achsah in marriage to Othniel because he took the city of Kirjathsepher (Judges 1:12-13). Othniel had an on-ward vision and was pressing toward the Lord's mark for his life.

Achsah moved her husband to press in for God's best for his life, as we read in Judges 1:14-15: "*And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.*"

Every wife moves her husband either toward or away from God and God's calling. Jezebel moved her husband Ahab in the wrong way, motivating him to great wickedness (1 Kgs. 21:25). By contrast, Achsah moved her husband, Othniel, to press on for God's full inheritance for his life.

5. Breakthroughs

Samson broke the gates of the city of Gaza and took them to Hebron, as seen in Judges 16:3: "*And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.*" The gates of a city are its strength and stronghold. Therefore, Hebron can represent the breaking of strongholds.

The Lord wants His Church to have the power to break every Satanic stronghold, as He said in Matthew 16:18, *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* Spiritually, God wants us to take the gates of our cities and break the spiritual powers governing our cities.

6. City of Refuge

Hebron was also a city of refuge, as seen in 1 Chronicles 6:57: *“And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, namely, Hebron, the city of refuge, and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa, with their suburbs.”*

We read in Joshua 21:13: *“Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer [one accused of murder]; and Libnah with her suburbs.”*

In a very real way, the Church is to be a place of refuge that those in need can run to for protection. We should have a heart to help those in need in any way that we can.

7. Wholeheartedness

Hebron represents wholeheartedness. Caleb was given Hebron for an inheritance because he wholly followed the Lord, as recorded in Joshua 14:13-14: *“And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.”*

Abraham, the first patriarch to dwell in Hebron, was wholehearted for the Lord as well. In Genesis 22, the Lord asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. All of Abraham’s promises were concentrated in Isaac. By sacrificing Isaac, not only was laying his beloved son on the altar, but he was also laying his call, ministry, and promises on the altar before the Lord.

We must never let family, loved ones, our calling and ministry, or the promises of God come before the Lord. He must always be first. Jesus made this very clear in Matthew 10:37: *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”*

Jesus Christ asks that we give up everything for Him and put Him first in our lives. He can ask this of

us because He was willing to leave the glory, splendor, and comfort of heaven and come to die on earth to save us, as seen in Philippians 2:6-8: *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”*

In the same way, the Lord asks us to lay everything down on His altar and always put Him first. My wife and I were instrumental in the foundation of a missionary society in New Zealand, where we ministered for ten years. God blessed this ministry and caused it to bear fruit in many nations of the world. Then early one morning the Lord spoke to me, “Resign and give it all up.” By God’s grace, that is what we did.

Another time we were ministering in a certain country and God poured out His Spirit in a powerful way. It was the beginning of a revival. Then God spoke to me, “Did you come here to preach or to do My will?” I said, “Lord, to do Your will.” Then God said to me, “Then get on the next plane and leave this place. It is My will for you to go somewhere else.” Ministry opportunities and revival must never come before the Lord and His will for our lives. We must hold everything very lightly before the Lord and be wholehearted for Him. It is wholeheartedness that enables us to progress in our spiritual journey to Zion.

Summary of the Message of Hebron

Hebron represents many spiritual truths, including the following:

1. Separation before multiplication
2. Fruitfulness
3. The anointing
4. Having a progressive vision
5. Breakthroughs
6. A place of refuge
7. Wholeheartedness

David had to pass through Hebron before he could reach Zion. Therefore, we, too, must first learn the spiritual lessons of Hebron before we can go on to Zion. Hebron is a stepping stone to Zion. We must prove ourselves faithful and pass our tests at Hebron before we can move on to Zion.

Chapter 16

MOUNT ZION

Chapter 16 Outline

1. The History of Zion
2. Being Born in Zion
3. The Spiritual Significance of Zion
4. The Feast of Tabernacles
5. The Qualifications for dwelling in Zion

1. THE HISTORY OF ZION

Geographically, Mount Zion is located in the southeast part of the city of Jerusalem. The earthly Mount Zion is a type of the heavenly Mount Zion, as seen in Revelation 14:1-2: *“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”*

There were three principal mountains in the journey of Israel:

1. Mount Sinai
2. Mount Hebron
3. Mount Zion

There were no enemies for Israel to deal with at Mount Sinai, but Caleb had to defeat the sons of Anak in order to possess Mount Hebron. David had to conquer the Jebusites in order to take Zion. Mount Zion was the last and most difficult stronghold to capture. King David defeated the Jebusites and made Zion his city.

We read in 2 Samuel 5:6-9: *“And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David’s soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.”*

The Jebusites boasted that even if their soldiers were blind and lame, David and his army could not conquer them. Nevertheless, David took Mount Zion, and the city of Jerusalem, after receiving his third anointing. We read in 2 Samuel 5:3: *“So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.”* David brought Israel into complete rest by conquering Mount Zion. Possessing Zion requires a new anointing! David made Mount Zion his capital and erected a tent for the Ark of the Covenant on top of Mount Zion.

All the days of Saul, the Ark lay abandoned at Kirjathjearim. Saul, who was man's choice as King of Israel, not God's choice, never sought to bring the Ark and glory of God to Jerusalem. We read in 1 Chronicles 13:3, "*And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.*"

Second Samuel 6:13-17 records the joyous event when David and the priests took the Ark up to Mount Zion: "*And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.*"

Although David was the founder of Zion, Abraham also had a vision for heavenly Mount Zion and New Jerusalem, as seen in Hebrews 11:9-10: "*By faith [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*" Although Abraham never dwelled in earthly Mount Zion, he had a vision for heavenly Mount Zion, of which earthly Zion is a type. Sometimes people receive a vision of a dispensation beyond the one in which they are living.

2. BEING BORN IN ZION

First of all, we need to realize that the Lord desires to plant an onward vision within all of His people. Habakkuk 2:2 says, "*Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it.*" We all need a clear, God-imparted vision in order to hit God's mark for our lives.

This vision will enable us to look beyond our present spiritual experience. It will sustain us and give us purpose in life. Proverbs 29:18 warns, "*Where there is no vision [or progressive vision], the people perish.*" Without an ongoing vision, people wander aimlessly through life.

Therefore, one's spiritual vision is very important. Zion is the ultimate goal of the Church of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul states in Hebrews 12:22: "*But you have come unto Mount Zion...*" The Lord wants to impart the vision of Zion to each one of us.

The vision of Zion is something that must be birthed in our hearts. Spiritually, we must be born in Zion. This is made very clear in Psalm 87:4-6: *“I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.”*

God takes note of the place where people are born naturally, but more so, where they are born spiritually and the vision into which they are born. Some Christians are led to the Lord through a church or ministry whose main emphasis is water baptism. They are born into that vision. Others are led to Christ through a church or ministry that stresses the importance of holiness. They are born into that message of holiness; holiness becomes their vision.

Others are born into a church that emphasizes evangelism. As a result, their main thrust becomes evangelism. Others are born into the Pentecostal experience, emphasizing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues, the gifts of the Spirit, and the power of the Spirit. In much the same way, we must be born in Zion. The vision and message of Zion must be birthed in our hearts. God takes note of those who have been born in Zion.

We read in Acts 18:24-26 that Apollos was a believer and had a heart for God, but he had only been born into the vision of John’s baptism. Aquila and Priscilla “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” In Acts 19:1-6, Paul ministered in Ephesus. The Ephesian believers were born-again, but they had not been born into the Pentecostal vision. They had not even heard about the Holy Spirit. Their vision and Christian experience were very limited. However, they embraced Paul’s message and were baptized in the Holy Spirit. They began speaking in other tongues and prophesied. In the same way, many believers love the Lord and are dedicated to Him, but they have not been born into the vision of Zion.

The whole process of being born in Zion starts just like the process of being born-again. We read the classic passage on the born-again experience in John 3:3-7: *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”*

Nicodemus could not understand the concept of being born-again because he himself was not born-

again. It did not make sense to him. Unbelievers do not understand what Christians mean when they talk about being “born-again.” It is foolishness to them, just as it was to Nicodemus. The only way we can understand the new birth experience is by accepting it by faith and experiencing it ourselves. In the same way, the concept of being “born in Zion” is difficult to understand until we accept it by faith and experience it ourselves. Just like the new birth experience, the vision of Zion cannot be understood unless it is experienced.

When a person gives his life to Christ, he is born into the family of God and the nature of Christ is born within him. He knows that his true dwelling place is not here on earth, but in heaven. In the same way, when we are spiritually born in Zion, we know that our spiritual calling and final destination is Zion. We live to make it to Zion and dwell with Jesus throughout all eternity.

The vision of Zion is a Christ-centered vision. The message of Zion is all about Jesus Christ and having an intimate relationship with Him. The vision of Zion can be summarized by the words of King David, the founder of Zion, in Psalm 27:4: *“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.”*

The vision of Zion is about having a wholehearted desire and love for the Lord. It causes us to desire to seek Him, behold His beauty, and dwell with Him in Zion. If you are pursuing that kind of relationship with Christ, then you are headed toward Zion! The prize for reaching Zion is Christ Himself. He is the prize of this high calling.

Let us seek to win Christ, even as Paul said in Philippians 3:8: *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”* The vision of Zion is about having an ever-increasing relationship with Christ. It is about winning Christ and delighting the heart of our Heavenly Bridegroom, as stated in Song of Solomon 7:10: *“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me.”*

The Christian life must always be about Christ. He must be our main focus and goal in life. It is not enough to minister for Him, to teach the nations of the earth, have right doctrine and good discernment, great church programs, live an upright life, and perform good works. The Ephesian church had all of these things, but they had lost the most important thing—their first love for the Lord!

We read in Revelation 2:1-4: *“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden*

*candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because **thou hast left thy first love.**"*

We stress the importance of Zion because it is Christ's dwelling place and it is where every Christian should want to dwell. If Christ dwelled somewhere else we would emphasize that place. What gives Zion its importance is that it is Christ's dwelling place. It is the place He has chosen because He delighted in it; therefore, Zion should be our delight and pursuit as well.

If you desire God's best for your life, then you are pursuing Zion, even if you did not realize it. Zion is God's best. Dwelling with Christ in Zion is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). Many Christians want God's best for their lives, they just do not realize that it is spiritual Zion.

As you have been reading this book, if the Lord has touched your heart through the message of Zion and you would like to be born in Zion, stop right now and pray. Do not wait another minute! Just as you said the sinner's prayer and asked Jesus into your heart, ask God to birth the vision of Zion in your heart so that you never settle for second best.

Pray this simple prayer or another similar prayer that the Holy Spirit inspires you to pray: "Lord Jesus, I want to be born in Zion because that is where You dwell. I love You with all of my heart and I want to be where You are. I want to experience being born in Zion. I embrace it by faith and confess that it is what I want for my life. Lord Jesus, I want Your best for my life and Zion is Your absolute best. Develop Your character and nature in my heart so that I can dwell with you in Zion for all of eternity."

Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" Just as we cannot earn salvation through good works, we cannot be born in Zion simply through good works. It is accomplished by faith, by walking the walk of faith and allowing God to do the work in our hearts. To dwell in Zion, we have to be like Christ. However, we cannot make ourselves like Christ. Our part is to submit to the Lord and allow Him to develop His nature within our hearts.

The vision of Zion is progressive, just as the Christian walk is progressive. The vision of Zion must first of all be birthed in our hearts. Then it must grow and mature. We must continue to nourish the vision of Zion within our hearts or it will gradually die, just as a malnourished baby eventually dies. Therefore, if God has now birthed the vision of Zion in your heart, you must not stop there. That is only the begin-

ning. You must study and experience the message of Zion from Scripture so that it is fully developed in your life.

3. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ZION

1. Zion is God's dwelling place.

We read in Psalm 87:2 that Mount Zion is God's preferred dwelling place: *"The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."* God loves Zion more than any other place. This does not mean that He does not love the other dwelling places in Israel, but Zion is His favorite place and that is where He has chosen to abide. Therefore, if we want God's best for our lives, we must press on to Zion because Zion is God's best.

Psalm 78:68 repeats this truth: *"But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved."* God has chosen Zion as His dwelling place, as seen in Psalm 132:13: *"For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation."* In Revelation 14:1, we see that heavenly Zion is Christ's dwelling place and also of those closest to Him: *"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."*

The main reason that we should pursue the vision of Zion is to dwell with Christ on heavenly Mount Zion for all of eternity. The message and vision of Zion is all about Christ. It is pressing in for God's best so that we not only make it to heaven, but also dwell with the Lamb on Mount Zion for ever and ever. That is truly my greatest desire. I just want to be with Jesus, loving and worshipping Him with all of my heart.

* Other Scripture references: Psalm 9:11; 74:2; 76:2; Isaiah 8:18; 12:6; Joel 3:17.

2. Zion is the place of God's holiness.

Zion is the place of God's holiness, as seen in Psalm 2:6: *"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."* We read in Zechariah 8:3, *"Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain."* In Scripture, Zion is referred to over twenty times as the Lord's "holy hill" or His "holy mountain."

We read in Isaiah 4:3-4 that God purifies those in Zion with the "Spirit of burning" and all those who

pass the test of His fire become holy: *“And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.”*

One of the primary messages of Zion is holiness. Holiness literally means “a separation.” From Scripture, we see that holiness is a separation from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and a union and communion with the Lord, who alone is holy. The importance of holiness is illustrated in Hebrews 12:14, for without holiness, we cannot see Jesus: *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”*

3. Zion is a place of anointed praise and worship.

David’s Tabernacle on Mount Zion is portrayed in Holy Scripture as a place of praise and worship. It was upon Mount Zion that David established a new order of worship (1 Chron. 15-16). He organized groups of singers and musicians to lead the congregation in worship. They entered into new heights of praise and worship upon Mount Zion. David even invented new musical instruments (2 Chron. 29:26-27). The revivals after the time of David renewed the worship he had established on Mount Zion.

In these last days, the Lord is going to raise up again the Tabernacle of David in His Church. We read in Acts 15:15-17: *“And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”* This will be a revival of the praise and worship established upon Mount Zion. Psalm 65:1 says, *“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.”* As the Church of these last days comes to Mount Zion, we will enter into new levels of anointed praise and worship.

** Other Scripture references: Psalm 9:14; 147:12; Isaiah 35:10; 61:3; Jeremiah 31:12; Zephaniah 3:14; Zechariah 2:10.*

4. Zion is a place of salvation.

Zion is a place of God’s salvation. God has placed His salvation in Zion, as seen in Isaiah 46:13: *“I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.”* As stated in Psalm 14:7, the salvation of Israel comes

out of Zion: *“Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.”* We read in Isaiah 62:11, *“Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.”*

5. Zion is a place of strength.

Mount Zion is a place of strength. In the natural, it was the last stronghold that the Israelites conquered in the land of Canaan. It was a strong fortress held by the Jebusites until King David defeated them and took the stronghold of Zion, as recorded in 2 Samuel 5:7: *“Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.”*

David said in Psalm 20:2 that God strengthens us out of Zion: *“Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.”* We read in Psalm 110:2, *“The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”* We read in Psalm 84:7 that those in Zion go from “strength to strength”: *“They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.”* The closer we draw to Mount Zion and God’s presence, the stronger we become.

6. Zion is a place of joy.

Zion is God’s dwelling place; therefore, it is also a place of joy. As David said in Psalm 16:11, true joy is found in God’s presence: *“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”* There is tremendous joy in Zion, as vividly portrayed in Isaiah 35:10: *“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”*

Mount Zion is the “joy of the whole earth” to God. We read in Psalm 48:2, *“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”* In the Millennium, this verse will become a reality as Jesus Christ reigns on earth for a thousand years from Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

* *Other Scripture references: Psalm 48:11; 149:2; Isaiah 51:3,11.*

7. Zion is the perfection of God's beauty.

Zion is the perfection of God's beauty, as described in Psalm 50:2: *"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."* We read in Psalm 48:2, *"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."* In Zion, the perfect beauty of Jesus can be seen.

From Zion, God's beauty shines through His people as well. The Lord wants His beauty to be seen in us. Moses prayed in Psalm 90:17, *"And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."*

We see the beauty of the Bride of Christ in Psalm 45:11,13: *"So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold."* The Lord is returning for a beautiful, spotless Bride that is full of His glory and beauty. Paul said in Ephesians 5:27, *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

How is the beauty of Jesus developed in our lives? The answer is given to us in 1 John 3:2: *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*

As we see Jesus in His full beauty, just as He is, we become like Him. Therefore, we need to press on to Zion to behold Him in all of His glory, because He dwells in Zion.

It is singleness of heart that enables us to behold the beauty of Jesus. This is clearly seen in the words of King David in Psalm 27:4: *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple."* David was permitted to behold the Lord's beauty because he was wholehearted and the Lord was his one desire.

8. Zion is the place where we appear before God.

We read in Psalm 84:7, *"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."* Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that we will all have to appear before Christ to give an account for our lives. Colossians 3:4 should be our prayer: *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

9. Zion is the place of God's favor.

Zion is the place of God's favor. This is clearly seen in Psalm 102:13: *"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."* God has a set time to favor Zion. We read in Psalm 132:17 that God's favor came upon David in Zion: *"There [in Mount Zion] will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed."* Even as God caused David to flourish in Zion, His favor is upon those who dwell in spiritual Zion.

We see the importance of having God's favor on our lives in Proverbs 22:1: *"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."* Jesus grew in favor with God and man (Lk. 2:52). Psalm 30:5 says, *"For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."* May we actively seek to have God's favor upon our lives.

10. Zion is the place of God's glory.

Zion is the place of God's glory. We read in Psalm 102:16, *"When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."* David erected upon Mount Zion a tent for the Ark of the Covenant, known as "David's Tabernacle." The Ark of the Covenant had lain abandoned in a field for many years, but when David took Zion, he placed the Ark on Mount Zion in the tent that he had pitched for it. The Ark, of course, represents the literal presence and glory of God, for the shekinah glory of God covered the Ark of the Covenant.

There was no veil in David's Tabernacle like in the Tabernacle of Moses, which prevented everyone except the High Priest from going into the Holy of Holies and seeing the glory of God. David had open access to go into God's presence and sit before the Ark. He really experienced the glory of God. Therefore, the visible glory of God is associated with Zion. God has chosen to manifest His glory at different times throughout history, but in these last days the Lord is going to blanket or cover His Church and people with His visible glory. We read in Isaiah 4:5 that the glory of God will come upon Zion and every church or assembly that dwells in spiritual Zion: *"And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence."* Therefore, if you want to experience the full glory of God, attend a church that has a vision for Zion and God's best.

11. Zion is the place of God's name.

Zion is the place of God's name. We read in Psalm 102:21, *"To declare the name of the LORD in*

Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem.” Isaiah 18:7 make this very clear: *“In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.”*

12. Zion is a place that is steadfast and cannot be moved.

Zion is a steadfast and permanent place, as portrayed in Psalm 125:1: *“They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.”* The Hebrew word translated “removed” means “to waver, shake, or fall.”

In 1947, Mount Zion was the first possession Israel regained when they became a nation. They had to wait a long time to get the other part of Jerusalem, but they got Zion first. In the last siege of Jerusalem, just prior to the Second Coming of Christ, Jerusalem will be overrun, but Zion will not fall (Zech. 14:1-3). We read in Isaiah 34:8, *“For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.”*

The Lord defends Zion like the apple of His eye because it is His dwelling place. Psalm 69:35 says, *“For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.”* We read in Isaiah 31:4, *“For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.”*

13. Zion is a place of prayer.

Another feature of Zion is that it is a place of prayer. If you do not have a hunger and desire to pray and seek God’s face, then you need to earnestly seek God to birth this desire and passion in your heart. If you are not willing to commit to respond to the drawing and Word of the Lord, then Zion is not for you. We read in Isaiah 56:7, *“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”*

David erected a tent on Mount Zion and placed the Ark of the Covenant in it. Mount Zion became a place of prayer and seeking God’s face. Psalm 24:1-4 gives some of the qualifications to dwell in Zion, God’s holy hill. Psalm 24:6 says that those who dwell in Zion are those who are committed to seeking God’s face: *“This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.”*

King David was a man of prayer, saying in Psalm 109:4, *“For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.”* In Psalm 27:8, David shows us the importance of responding when God draws us to seek Him: *“When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”*

14. Zion is the place of God’s blessings.

Zion is the place of God’s limitless blessings, as seen in Psalm 133:3: *“As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”* Psalm 128:5 tells us that God blesses us out of Zion: *“The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.”* Psalm 24:5, in reference to those who dwell in Zion, God’s holy hill, says, *“He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”* All the blessings of God come upon those who dwell in spiritual Zion. If you want to experience all of God’s blessings for your life, then press on to spiritual Zion.

15. Zion is the place of unity.

Zion is the place of unity. In Psalm 133:1-3, the unity of the brethren is likened to the ointment that Aaron was anointed with and also to the dew which descended upon Mount Zion: *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”*

The Lord pours out His Spirit in abundance when we dwell in unity with our brethren. God’s blessing comes upon those who are dwelling in unity upon spiritual Mount Zion. Christ Jesus prayed that the Church would come to unity in John 17:21-23: *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

The Lord’s desire is that His people will dwell in unity, for it is as we are one in the Lord that we can reach perfection and be “perfect in one.” As the Church comes to spiritual maturity in Zion, believers will see “eye to eye” because there will also be unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) and unity of the faith (Eph. 4:13). We read in Isaiah 52:8, *“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall*

they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.”

16. Zion is a place of righteousness.

Zion is a place of righteousness, as seen in Isaiah 33:5: *“The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.”* We read in Isaiah 1:27, *“Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.”* Righteousness is one of the qualifications to dwell in Zion, as seen in Psalm 15:2: *“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.”*

Psalm 11:7 tells us that the Lord loves righteousness and the upright are permitted to behold His face: *“For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.”* Therefore, let us seek to walk in righteousness before the Lord at all times, as stated in Psalm 106:3: *“Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.”*

17. Zion is the place of God’s law.

Zion is the place of God’s law. We read in Isaiah 2:3, *“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”* This is repeated in Micah 4:2: *“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”*

The Lord is going to honor His law in the last days. Many nations have passed laws in the last few years that contradict the laws and standards of God. For the most part, society today is turning away from the Ten Commandments. However, the Lord is going to exalt His law in these last days and cause it to come forth out of the Church dwelling in Zion.

The true meaning of the New Covenant is that God writes His laws on our minds and hearts so that we delight to obey Him. Paul said in Hebrews 8:10, *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”* As God’s laws are written upon our hearts, we delight to do His will, as King David said in Psalm 40:8, *“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law, as He declared in Matthew 5:17: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”* Just as He fulfilled the law, the Lord wants us to fulfill the righteousness of the law by walking in the Spirit. Paul makes this very clear in Romans 8:4: *“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

18. Zion has a sure foundation.

It is God Himself who founded Zion. *“What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it”* (Isa. 14:32).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation and Chief Cornerstone of Zion, as seen in Isaiah 28:16: *“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”* This is repeated in 1 Peter 2:6: *“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”*

19. Zion is the place where God reigns.

Zion is the place where Christ reigns. Isaiah 24:23 brings this out: *“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”* We read in Micah 4:7, *“And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.”*

Jesus Christ reigns in Zion as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. *“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion”* (Psa. 2:6). As we progress in our spiritual walk toward Zion, we begin to rule and reign with Christ in this life as spiritual kings and priests. The Lord wants us to reign with Him in the Millennium and eternity, but He also wants us to reign in this life over every circumstance and obstacle. Paul said in Romans 5:17, *“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”*

20. Zion is the place of God’s fire.

As the Lord’s dwelling place, Zion is the place of God’s fire. *“For our God is a consuming fire”* (Heb. 12:29). This is stated emphatically in Isaiah 31:9: *“And he shall pass over to his strong hold*

for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.”

The purpose of God’s fire is to purge and purify all those who come into His presence. The Lord is likened to a refiner’s fire in Malachi 3:2-3: *“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.”*

We read in Isaiah 4:3-4 that the Lord purifies those in Zion with the Spirit of burning to remove all of the dross in their lives and make them holy in God’s sight: *“And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.”* Submit to the fire of God in your life and it will purify you.

John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:11 that Christ would baptize us in the Holy Ghost and fire: *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”*

Today in many Pentecostal churches, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is emphasized, while the “baptism with fire” is completely ignored. Let us ask the Lord to baptize us with fire and purify us!

21. Zion is a place of peace.

Zion is a place of peace. We read in Isaiah 33:20, *“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet [or peaceful] habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”* The NIV translation says, *“Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken.”*

This is also clearly seen in Psalm 147:12-14: *“Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.”*

Peace reigns in Zion. Speaking of Zion (verse 14), Isaiah 60:17 says, *“For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.”* The NIV translation says: *“Instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler.”*

22. Zion is the place of the river of God.

Zion is the place of the river of God. We read again in Isaiah 33:20-21: *“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.”*

This is repeated in Psalm 46:4-5: *“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.”*

Ezekiel 47 describes the river that will flow out of the Temple during Christ’s Millennial reign on earth. We know that He reigns from Mount Zion (Psa. 2:6). Revelation 22:1-2 describes the river that will flow out of the throne of God in New Jerusalem in the New Heavens and New Earth: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*

23. Zion is a place of divine healing.

Zion is a place of divine healing. We read in Isaiah 33:24, *“And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”* It is clear that there is divine healing in Zion. Psalm 103:3 says, *“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.”*

The Lord said to the Israelites in Exodus 15:26, *“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.”* We need to experience

the Lord as Jehovah-Rapha: “The Lord our Healer.”

Matthew 4:23 tells us that teaching, preaching, and healing were Christ’s three main ministries: “*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*”

The Lord Jesus said in Luke 4:18, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*”

In order for healing to take place, the power of the Lord must be present to heal, as illustrated in Luke 5:17: “*And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*” We need to believe God to release the gift of healing in the Church. Jesus said in John 14:12 that we would perform greater works and miracles than He did: “*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.*” God wants His Church to be full of power, miracles, and healing.

The gift of healing is essential for the Church of Jesus Christ today. When I was a missionary in France, there was a tremendous move of God in the area of healing in our church. People were healed every night of the week. The local hospital even referred those whom they could not cure to come to our church. There was literally no illness or disease that could stand before the presence of Almighty God.

Years ago while I was preaching at a large evangelistic crusade in India, the man in charge of the meetings felt that we should pray for the sick before I preached. I was going to preach on blind Bartimaeus and said to the Lord, “Oh Lord, please be merciful and heal these people because if they do not receive a healing, they are not going to receive my message.”

Many people were healed and after I preached, four hundred people gave their lives to Christ. It was the healings that took place at the beginning of the service that prepared the way for them to receive the message of the Gospel. Many times it is good to pray that God will perform miracles before you preach because then the people will accept your God-given message.

24. Zion is a place of good tidings.

Zion is a place where the good tidings of the Gospel are preached, as stated in Isaiah 40:9: “*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!*” We read in Isaiah 52:7, “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*”

Our calling is to preach the good tidings of the Gospel. Isaiah 61:1 says, “*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.*” We read in Luke 8:1: “*And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.*”

25. Zion is a place that blossoms like a garden.

Zion is a place that blossoms like a garden. “*For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody*” (Isa. 51:3).

All those who embrace the vision of Zion and walk in the ways of Zion will blossom like the garden of the Lord as well, even as described in Isaiah 35:1-2: “*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.*” God wants you to blossom with His abundant life!

26. Zion is the place of the latter rain outpouring of God’s Spirit.

Zion is the place of the latter rain outpouring of God’s Spirit. This is clearly developed in Joel 2:23: “*Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*” The latter rain outpouring of God’s Spirit applies to the whole church, but the children of Zion have a special promise of blessing.

“The former rain” was the light autumn rain that softened the ground so that the sower could plant the crop for the next year. “The latter rain” means “the spring rains.” It was the heavy spring rains that brought the crops to maturity.

Rain symbolizes the outpouring of the Spirit of God. We read in Hosea 6:3: *“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”* Hosea 10:12 says, *“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.”* God’s favor is likened to the latter rain in Proverbs 16:15. In the Millennium, God will withhold rain from the nations that do not come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16-19).

As promised in Joel 2:28-29, God is going to pour out His Spirit in the last days: *“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: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”*

The Apostle Peter quoted Joel 2:28-29 on the day of Pentecost to prove that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, and the gifts of the Spirit were promised by God. Peter said in Acts 2:15-18: *“For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”*

In the last days, God is going to pour out His Spirit again, but in an even greater way than in the Early Church. Prophetically, Haggai 2:9 speaks of the fact that the Last Day Church will be more glorious than the Early Church: *“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former; saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

It will take a tremendous outpouring of God’s Spirit to prepare the Church to be the mature, glorious Bride spoken of in Ephesians 5:27: *“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* The Church in these last days will experience the latter rain outpouring of God’s Spirit. Why? The purpose of the latter rain is to bring the crops to maturity.

Therefore, the purpose of the latter rain outpouring of God's Spirit is to bring the Church to maturity.

This is also verified in James 5:7: *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."* Clearly, the Church will experience the latter rain and tremendous revival before the Lord comes again.

We must have a vision for a worldwide revival and harvest of souls, and ask the Lord to prepare us for revival. Revival is tremendously demanding and exhausting. My wife and I experienced revival in New Zealand years ago. Some of the services at our church of 3,000 members would continue until four o'clock in the morning. Therefore, seek the Lord and prepare your heart for revival!

27. Zion is a place of deliverance and breakthroughs.

Zion is a place of mighty deliverance and breakthroughs in God. We read in Joel 2:32, *"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."* There is deliverance power in Zion.

This theme is also developed in Obadiah 1:17,21: *"But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And saviours [or deliverers] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S."* There are deliverers in Zion (Rom. 11:26). God wants to use us to bring deliverance to a lost and dying world and to the people of God as well. Our generation needs anointed deliverers, not just more preachers.

In Zion there is also the power for breakthroughs, as seen in Isaiah 25:7: *"And he will destroy in this mountain [Zion] the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."* (The context of this verse is Zion, Isaiah 24:23.) God's power resides in Zion to break the Satanic covering that is cast over all the nations. Paul develops this theme in Ephesians 6:12: *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

Many years ago while on an international flight, the Lord spoke to me to look out of the window. The Lord opened my spiritual eyes to see the Satanic covering that covers the nations of the earth. This Satanic covering hinders churches from growing and prospering. A pastor friend of mine struggled in

his church for years. His church would grow to a certain number, but then they would lose members.

Then they would get a breakthrough and the church would begin to grow again, but then something would happen and the church membership would decrease again. They could never break through past a certain point.

When he sought the Lord concerning this problem, the Lord showed him the demonic power that ruled over his city and told him that it was this demonic power that was hindering his church from growing. The Lord told him to gather the church and begin to pray against that spirit. As they began praying in faith, gradually the power of that spirit was broken and their church membership exploded.

In reference to Satan, Jesus said in Matthew 12:29: *“Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”* We must first bind and break Satan’s power and covering over people, and then we will be able to reap the harvest.

It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that enables us to break the Satanic covering over our city, state, and nation. This is brought out in Isaiah 10:27: *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”* The power to break the Satanic covering over nations is found in Zion.

28. Zion is a place of God’s comfort.

Zion is a place where God’s comfort can be found. We read in Isaiah 51:3, *“For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”*

Zechariah 1:17 says, *“Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.”*

As we experience the comfort of God in our lives, we are able to comfort others. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are*

comforted of God.”

29. Zion is a place that is sought out by many nations.

Zion is called “the joy of the whole earth” in Psalm 48:2. We read in Micah 4:2 that many nations will come to Zion and ask to be taught the ways of God: *“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”*

We read in Jeremiah 50:5 that many will come to Zion and enter into a covenant relationship with the Lord: *“They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.”* This is also developed in Isaiah 62:11-12: *“Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.”*

30. Zion is the place of the rest of God.

Zion is the place of the rest of God. We read in Psalm 132:13-14 that God has chosen Zion as His resting place: *“For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.”* Zion is the place where we enter into the rest of God.

The children of Israel did not enter into rest until they reached Mount Zion. They did not enter into rest when they entered the Promised Land under Joshua because the land was filled with enemies they had to overcome. Hebrews 4:8 says, *“For if [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.”*

King David led the children of Israel into rest after he defeated all of Israel’s enemies and took Mount Zion, their ultimate destination. In 2 Samuel 5, David defeated the Jebusites and possessed Mount Zion. We read in 2 Samuel 7:1, *“And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him **rest** round about from all his enemies.”*

We cannot fully enter into the rest of God until we defeat all of our enemies, both inward and outward, and reach our final destination, Mount Zion. A runner cannot rest until he reaches the finish line. In the

same way, we cannot rest until we reach our goal, Zion. Hebrews 4:1 says, *“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”* Press on in your Christian life and do not rest until you reach Zion!

Hebrews 4:9-11 explains the spiritual significance of the rest of God: *“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”* When we enter into the rest of God, we have ceased doing our own works and God works through us for His glory.

31. Zion is the place of God’s abundant provision.

Zion is the place of God’s abundant provision. We read in Psalm 132:13,15: *“For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.”* God is a God of abundance and we must not limit what He can do by our unbelief. Paul said in Ephesians 3:20: *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”*

The Lord wants to abundantly bless the Church with the wealth of the heathen, as seen in Zechariah 14:14: *“And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.”* Proverbs 13:22 says, *“A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.”*

This theme is thoroughly developed in Isaiah 60:14-17: *“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.”*

32. Zion is the place of spiritual kings and priests.

Zion is the place of spiritual kings and priests. Psalm 132:13,16 says: *“For the LORD hath chosen*

Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.” God wants to anoint us as king-priests to minister to Him and His people.

We read in Revelation 5:9-10: *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*

Christ is a King and the High Priest of our faith after the order of Melchizedek, as seen in Hebrews 6:20: *“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”* Melchizedek was the King of Jerusalem (Salem) and a priest of God, as developed in Hebrews 7:1: *“For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.”*

The ministries of kings and priests are joined together in Zion. King David was a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek. David was a king, reigning for seven-and-a-half years over Judah and thirty-three years over all Israel. David became the pattern for kings; he is the standard by which all kings after him were measured (1 Kgs. 15:3-5).

David also functioned in the office of a priest, wearing a linen ephod which was reserved for priests, as seen in 2 Samuel 6:14: *“And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.”* David also ate the shewbread, which only the priests were permitted to eat (1 Sam. 21:1-6). God wants us to come to Zion and be kings and priests unto Him as well.

33. Zion is a place of God’s protection and safety.

Zion is a place of God’s protection and safety, as seen in Isaiah 11:9: *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”* We read in Isaiah 65:25, *“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”*

34. Zion is the dwelling place of those who trust in the Lord.

Zion is the dwelling place of those who trust in the Lord. We read in Psalm 125:1, *“They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.”* Isaiah 57:13

tells us that the way to make it to Zion is to trust in the Lord with all of our hearts: *“When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.”* The key to having peace is to trust in God and keep our minds focused on Him: *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee”* (Isa. 26:3).

35. Zion is a place of teaching and teachers of righteousness.

Zion is the place of the teaching of God’s Word. In the last days, the nations will come to Zion to be taught the Word and ways of God. We read in Isaiah 2:2-3: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”*

The Great Commission that Jesus gave His Church in Matthew 28:19-20 before He ascended to heaven is to teach all nations: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

Zion is also the place of teachers of righteousness. We read in Joel 2:23: *“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.”* The Hebrew word “mowreh” translated “former rain” literally means “an archer” or “a teacher.” The Hebrew word “tsedaqah” translated “moderately” literally means “righteousness.” Therefore, the phrase “the former rain moderately” can be translated as “teachers of righteousness.”

In God’s Word, besides symbolizing the outpouring of God’s Spirit, rain figuratively speaks of teaching and doctrine. We read in Deuteronomy 32:2, *“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”* God wants to raise up teachers of righteousness in the Church who teach the nations of the world His Word and ways.

36. Zion is the place of an innumerable company of angels.

Paul said in Hebrews 12:22, *“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.”* Thousands upon thousands of angels dwell in heavenly Mount Zion. However, on earth we can experience this “company of angels” as well. There are more angels for us than there are fallen angels against us (2 Kgs. 6:16-17).

Song of Songs 6:13 says that the Bride of Christ is composed of a *“company of two armies.”* The Church of Jesus Christ on earth needs to move in unison with the army of heaven. I believe the Church will experience more and more angelic manifestations in these last days.

37. Zion is the place of the double portion.

Zion is the place of the double portion. We read in Hebrews 12:22-23: *“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”* Zion is the Church of the firstborn ones. The birthright of the firstborn was a double portion of the inheritance and a position of leadership in the family (Deut. 21:17).

God wants to give us a double portion of His Spirit, even as Elisha received a double portion of Elijah’s mantle and anointing. We read in 2 Kings 2:9,15: *“And it came to pass, when they were gone over; that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let **a double portion of thy spirit** be upon me. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.”*

We should ask God to give us a double portion of the anointing that was upon Christ during His earthly ministry. Christ even said in John 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.”*

38. Zion is the place of the perfection of the saints.

Zion is the place of the perfection of the saints. Hebrews 12:22-23: *“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable com-*

pany of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” Christian perfection is reached at spiritual Zion.

God’s goal for our lives is perfection (Col. 1:28; 4:12; Jas. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:10). Jesus said in Matthew 5:48, *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”* Jesus commanded us to be perfect like our Heavenly Father. Paul also develops this theme in Ephesians 4:13: *“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”* Second Timothy 3:17 says, *“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

The Greek word used for “perfect” is “teleios.” It means “to be complete.” It comes from a Greek root word “telos” that means “to hit the mark or reach the intended goal.” The primary word used for “sin” in the New Testament is “hamartia,” which comes from the root word “hamartano,” meaning “to miss the mark.” Therefore, God wants us to be complete in Him, reach maturity, and hit the mark for our lives.

Paul develops this theme in Philippians 3:12-14: *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

39. Zion is the dwelling place of the Bride of Christ.

We read in Isaiah 62:1-5: *“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.”* Zion is the dwelling place of the Bride of Christ.

John was shown the Bride of Christ in New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:9-11: *“And there came unto*

me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Mount Zion is the apex of New Jerusalem. The Bride of Christ will dwell with Christ in New Jerusalem and those closest to Him will be with Him on Mount Zion.

40. Zion represents the Holy of Holies.

In the days of David, the Tabernacle of Moses was located at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39; 21:29). However, David took the Ark of the Covenant to Mount Zion and placed it inside a tent, known as the Tabernacle of David. Therefore, the Outer Court and Holy Place were still at Gibeon, but Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies were at Zion. The Outer Court and Holy Place worship took place at Gibeon, but the Holy of Holies worship took place at Zion.

We read in 2 Chronicles 1:3-6: *“So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem [on top of Mount Zion]. Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD [at Gibeon]: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it. And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.”*

There was no veil in the Tabernacle of David on Zion. Nothing separated man from the Ark of the Covenant, which is a symbol of the manifest presence of God. David went into the Tabernacle and sat before the Ark for hours, lingering in God's presence (2 Sam. 6:17). God wants us to come to Zion so that we can dwell in His literal presence as David, beholding the beauty and glory of the Lord!

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil was rent in the Temple, signifying that He had opened the way into the Holy of Holies for mankind. *“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”* (Mt. 27:51). Jesus opened the way into the Holy of Holies so that we can now go within the veil. We read in Hebrews 10:19-20: *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”*

The Spiritual Significance of Zion

1. Zion is God's dwelling place.
2. Zion is the place of God's holiness.
3. Zion is a place of anointed praise and worship.
4. Zion is a place of salvation.
5. Zion is a place of strength.
6. Zion is a place of joy.
7. Zion is the perfection of God's beauty.
8. Zion is the place where we appear before God.
9. Zion is the place of God's favor.
10. Zion is the place of God's glory.
11. Zion is the place of God's name.
12. Zion is a place that is steadfast and cannot be moved.
13. Zion is a place of prayer.
14. Zion is the place of God's blessings.
15. Zion is the place of unity.
16. Zion is a place of righteousness.
17. Zion is the place of God's law.
18. Zion has a sure foundation.
19. Zion is the place where God reigns.
20. Zion is the place of God's fire.
21. Zion is a place of peace.
22. Zion is the place of the river of God.
23. Zion is a place of divine healing.
24. Zion is a place of good tidings.
25. Zion is a place that blossoms like a garden.
26. Zion is the place of the latter rain outpouring of God's Spirit.
27. Zion is a place of deliverance and breakthroughs.
28. Zion is a place of God's comfort.
29. Zion is a place that is sought out by many nations.
30. Zion is the place of the rest of God.
31. Zion is the place of God's abundant provision.
32. Zion is the place of spiritual kings and priests.
33. Zion is a place of God's protection and safety.
34. Zion is the dwelling place of those who trust in the Lord.
35. Zion is a place of teaching and teachers of righteousness.

36. Zion is the place of an innumerable company of angels.
37. Zion is the place of the double portion.
38. Zion is the place of the perfection of the saints.
39. Zion is the dwelling place of the Bride of Christ.
40. Zion represents the Holy of Holies.

4. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The Feast of Tabernacles will take place as the Church comes to Mount Zion in these last days. We read in Isaiah 33:20: *“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities [or feasts]: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”* The New International Version reads: *“Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken.”*

In Scripture, Mount Zion and Jerusalem are specifically associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. King David took the Ark of the Covenant up to Mount Zion and placed it in the tent he had prepared for it. However, his desire was for God’s presence to have a more permanent dwelling place. God spoke to David that he would not build Him a temple, but that his son, Solomon would (2 Sam. 7:1-13). Solomon began the construction of the Temple in the fourth year of his reign and completed it seven years later.

First Kings 8 describes the dedication of the Temple of Solomon during the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. We read in 1 Kings 8:1-2: *“Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.”*

In 1 Kings 8:5-8, the priests took the Ark of the Covenant from Mount Zion down to Jerusalem and placed it in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon: *“And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they*

drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.”

The staves of the Ark of the Covenant were taken off for the first time. The Ark had come to its final resting place. Then the glory of the Lord filled the Temple and it was so powerful that the priests could not even stand up to minister, as seen in 1 Kings 8:10-11: *“And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.”*

David brought Israel into rest, unity, and glory. Solomon brought that glory down to Jerusalem for the nations of the earth to experience it. Nations came to witness the wisdom and see the glory that resided in Solomon’s Temple (1 Kgs. 10:1-9; 4:29-31). The goal of our spiritual journey is to come to glory, maturity, and rest. However, we must then take the glory of God to the nations.

The Feast of Tabernacles

The seventh and final feast of Israel was the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-44). It was a seven-day feast that began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, five days after the Day of Atonement. Booths were constructed on the first day of the feast and the Israelites lived in these booths for seven days. It was a time of celebration when the children of Israel gathered their harvests and thanked God for the ingathering.

Dispensationally, the Feast of Tabernacles represents the coming Millennial Age, which will be the final and greatest age as Christ rules over the nations of the world for 1,000 years. Zechariah 14 confirms this. Zechariah 14 begins by describing the final siege of Jerusalem by the Arab armies in verses 1 and 2. Verses 3 through 15 describe the Second Coming of Christ. We then read about the Millennium in verse 16, *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”*

This tells us that every year during the Millennium, the nations of the world will each send a delegation to Jerusalem to worship King Jesus. This will happen at the yearly celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Zechariah 14:17-19 also goes on to tell us that if a nation does not send a delegation to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, it will be punished by receiving no rain that year. Thus, it is clear that the Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ will be centered around the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles will also have a spiritual fulfillment in the Church before the Second Coming of Christ. Just as the nation of Israel is being prepared naturally by God to take its place in the coming Millennium, so the Church is being prepared spiritually. This final outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church in the last days is prophetically revealed to us by the Feast of Tabernacles.

There are seven main aspects of the Feast of Tabernacles:

1. Feast of Revival and Restoration
2. Feast of Ingathering
3. Feast of Joy
4. Feast of Glory
5. Feast of Unity
6. Feast of Rest
7. Feast of Christ's Appearing

1. The Feast of Revival and Restoration

The name *tabernacles* come from the Hebrew word *sukkah* which means "a booth or tent." This name was given to the feast because God commanded in Leviticus 23:42 that the Israelites were to dwell in tabernacles or tents for seven days as they celebrated the feast: "*Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths.*" The root word of "sukkah" is "suk" which means "to cover with oil; to anoint." Therefore, the spiritual meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles is that the Church in the last days will dwell under the anointed covering of the Holy Spirit.

We read in Isaiah 25:7 that from Zion the Lord will destroy "*the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.*" This signifies the breaking of the power of the Satanic principalities that govern the nations. The Church has seen glimpses of this in previous revivals. During the Welsh revival, the anointing did not just fall on the church services, but on entire communities. In the early part of this century, the Lord gave a revival in Sweden where the conviction of the Spirit of God fell upon the entire nation. These glimpses are what we will see in greater measure in the coming revival.

Many people have had visions of the coming revival in which whole communities, cities and nations will be blanketed by the Spirit of the Lord. People will be falling down in the streets, crying out to God and asking for forgiveness. Not only will the Church dwell under the anointed covering of the Holy Spirit, but whole nations will be covered by the Spirit of God in these last days.

The Feast of Tabernacles will also be a time of the restoration of the backslider. During the days of Ezra, the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the gate of Ephraim, as seen in Nehemiah 8:16: “*So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.*”

Ephraim was the backsliding tribe of Israel. However, God is going to restore many backsliders in the last day revival. The Feast of Tabernacles is a time of release and freedom, as seen in Deuteronomy 31:10: “*And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles.*”

2. The Feast of Ingathering

The Feast of Tabernacles is also called “*the Feast of Ingathering*” in Exodus 23:16. There it is mentioned as being “*at the end of the year.*” The explanation of this is found in the two calendars the Israelites followed. One was for their religious year, and the other was for their civil or agricultural year.

According to their religious calendar, this feast was in the seventh month; but according to their civil or agricultural year, it was at the end of the year. It was the time when the fullness of the year’s harvest was gathered in.

Just as this feast took place at the end of the year for Israel, the spiritual fulfillment of this will take place at the end of the age for the Church. There will be a mighty ingathering of souls at the end of this age, as prophesied in such scriptures as Matthew 13:39,47, Isaiah 60:1-7, and James 5:7-8. There will be great revival at the end of the age that will gather in the fullness of the abundant harvest of the Church.

3. The Feast of Joy

One of the most notable and frequently mentioned aspects of the Feast of Tabernacles is joy. The Israelites were told in Leviticus 23:40 that they were to “*rejoice before the Lord their God for seven days*” during this feast, which speaks of entering into the fullness of joy which is found in God’s presence (Psa. 16:11).

During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah when the temple was restored, which is prophetic of our days, the people of God were exhorted not to weep or be sorry (Neh. 8:9-10). It was during the setting of the Feast of Tabernacles that the timeless words “*for the joy of the Lord is your strength*” were given. There was great gladness among the people at this time (Neh. 8:17).

Deuteronomy 16:13-14 says, *“Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.”* There is always great joy when there is a good harvest. The Feast of Tabernacles also took place just after the harvest of the oil and the new wine, which both speak of the joy of the Lord. The Lord wants to give those who mourn in Zion the oil of gladness. He wants to fill us with the new wine of His Spirit. The pure joy of Jesus will be seen throughout the Church, and will give us the strength to fulfill God’s will in these last days.

4. The Feast of Glory

Another aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles is that it is prophetic of the glory of the Lord that will cover the Church at the end of the age. We read of this in Haggai chapter two. Verse one reads, *“In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet.”* This was on the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The message given for this day was, *“The glory of this latter temple will be greater than the former,”* as we read in verse 9.

The glory of the Church in the last days will be greater than the glory upon the Early Church. The Early Church had the blessing of Pentecost, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit; but the Church in the last days will experience the blessings of the Feast of Tabernacles.

2 Chronicles 5:3 tells us that the Temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. We then read in verses 13 and 14 that as the temple was dedicated, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not even continue to minister because of the glory that was revealed.

We also read in Isaiah 4:5, *“Then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering.”* Just as the glory of God filled Solomon’s Temple on the Feast of Tabernacles, the glory of God will be seen in these last days upon the churches that are dwelling in spiritual Zion.

I have been taken in the Spirit to see what God is going to do in the coming revival in China, in Africa, and in many other countries. I have seen the glory of God revealed upon the Church. I have seen God supernaturally protecting His people by the glory of God, just as He protected the Israelites before they crossed the Red Sea.

When will the glory of the Lord arise upon His people? Isaiah declared that it will happen when

darkness shall cover the earth. We are like stars, and we know that the stars are seen when it is night. The darker the night, the brighter the stars appear to glow. So while deep darkness is coming to the world, we can rejoice that the glory of God is also coming to the saints.

5. The Feast of Unity

During this feast, all of Israel was to gather to Jerusalem and dwell in booths. They all had one common purpose in mind, to celebrate this feast together. This was a time to forget about differences and rejoice in the Lord as one unified nation and body of devout believers for all of His goodness to them.

A notable occurrence of this feast being celebrated with great unity is during the Restoration Era. In Nehemiah 8:1 we read that all Israel “*gathered themselves together as one man.*” There was such widespread unity among the Jews at this time that they were as one man. Nehemiah chapter 8 goes on to tell us how they celebrated this feast as Ezra the scribe expounded the Word of God to them. They dwelt together in harmony in booths (Neh. 8:16). When this feast was held during the time of Solomon, it was also marked by tremendous unity. We read in 2 Chronicles 5:13, “*It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord ... that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.*” As it was unity in the days of Solomon that brought God’s glory, so it will be unity in our days that will bring the glory of the Lord to His Church.

The Feast of Tabernacles will be the primary feast during the Millennium (Zech. 14). It is during this time that Ezekiel’s prophecy of Israel and Judah becoming as one stick in the Lord’s hand will be fulfilled (Ezek. 37:16-28). The Lord promised in Ezekiel 37:22, “*And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.*”

There must be a spiritual fulfillment of this for the Church, and it will take place during the Feast of Tabernacles. In the last day revival, people will overlook denominational differences and flow together for the glory of the Lord to fulfill His purposes. Isaiah 42:8 promises that the people of God who dwell in spiritual Zion will see eye to eye and worship the Lord together.

6. The Feast of Rest

Rest is essentially associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. The number *seven* speaks of rest, even as the Lord rested from all His works on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2). This feast is the seventh feast of the

year, celebrated in the seventh month of the year for seven days. It speaks of coming into complete spiritual rest.

Another unique feature of this feast is that the first day of the feast and the eighth day, the day after this feast ended, were both sabbaths—days of rest when they were not to do any physical labor whatsoever (Lev. 23:35-36). The Jews entered into rest during this feast after their labors in the harvest fields were completed and they were able to see the fruit of their labors.

Noah's ark rested in the seventh month during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (Gen. 8:4). This was a significant prophetic sign depicting the rest that the saints of God will enter into during the last day Feast of Tabernacles. In addition to this, the Ark of the Covenant came into its final resting place during this feast in the time of Solomon.

The Apostle Paul said in Hebrews 4:9, "*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*" Paul lived during the time when God poured out His Spirit upon the Church on the day of Pentecost. Even though this was a great move of God, there is still something more that God has in store for His Church. The Body of Christ will come to rest and cease from its own labors during the last day revival when the Feast of Tabernacles will be spiritually celebrated.

7. The Feast of Christ's Appearing

The Feast of Tabernacles is also a time when the Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to His people in new ways. When Jesus was glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was a type of what will occur in the Church during the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. Peter wanted to build tabernacles so that they could stay there and enjoy the glory of Christ along with Moses and Elijah. In Revelation 11, we see that in the last days these two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, will be revealed again. But more importantly, we await the revelation of the glorified Christ among His saints!

Before our Lord physically returns from heaven in His Second Coming, He will reveal Himself in and through His Church in much greater ways. In John 7:2, we read about a time when the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. We read in John 7:10, "*He went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.*" John 7:14 says, "*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.*" Finally, we read in John 7:37, "*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out.*" Christ progressively revealed Himself in a greater and greater way throughout the days of the Feast of Tabernacles as a sign of what He will do in the Church during these last days.

I have had a little foretaste of what this is going to be like. A number of years ago, I was sitting on a

platform with several other ministers at a convention. We were listening to another minister who was then preaching. Suddenly the Lord appeared, and He walked up onto the platform. Then He walked right into me as I was sitting there. When I then looked down, I did not see my own hands, but only His nail scarred hands. I did not see my clothes, but only His white garments.

Most importantly, as I watched the speaker, I was watching him through the Lord's eyes and hearing him with His ears. I even felt in my heart what the Lord was feeling about this minister. That only lasted for about two minutes, but I understood in a new way what it means to have *Christ in you*. Let us believe that we can experience what the Word of God says, "*that you may be filled with all the fulness of God*" (Eph. 3:19). In these last days Christ and His fullness will be seen and demonstrated in and through His people. Praise the Lord!

5. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR DWELLING IN ZION

Paul said in Philippians 3:20, "*For our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*" This verse may best be translated that our citizenship is in heaven.

The New King James Version reads: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The citizens of Philippi would have appreciated this truth. Philippi was a colony of Rome; therefore, its citizens enjoyed Roman citizenship. Although they lived in Philippi, they were Romans, and received all the privileges of Roman citizens, as if they were in actuality living in the capital of the Empire itself.

Paul reminds them, as well as us, that as Christians they are citizens of heaven, and should conduct themselves as such. In the same way, when we are born in Zion, we become citizens of Zion and must act like citizens of Zion.

In order to be a citizen of Zion, there are certain qualifications and a code of conduct. The most important qualification is to be totally in love with Jesus and sold out to Him. Fifteen qualifications to dwell in Zion are described in Psalms 15 and 24. There are eleven requirements described in Psalm 15 and four more in Psalm 24. These psalms were written when David took the Ark of the Covenant up to Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6:1-16; 1 Chron. 15:1-16:6).

In Psalm 15:1, David asked the Lord who could dwell in Zion, His holy hill: "*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*" In Psalm 15:2-5, the Holy Spirit answers

David's question by listing eleven qualifications to dwell in Zion: *"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour; nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."*

There are four more qualifications in Psalm 24:3-4: *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."*

1. We must walk uprightly

The first qualification to dwell in Zion is to walk uprightly. The Hebrew word "tamiym" literally means "entire" and can be translated, "upright, integrity, truth, or without blemish." It has the meaning of being straight, honest, and righteous. The Lord is upright (Psa. 25:8), and those who are upright will behold His face (Psa. 11:7). The Lord delights in the upright (Prov. 11:20). The upright do not walk in iniquity (Psa. 18:23), are kept by righteousness (Prov. 11:6; 13:6), and are guided by their integrity (Prov. 11:3).

2. We must work righteousness

Everything we do must be done in righteousness. Righteousness signifies what is right in a given situation. It is what Jesus would do in that same situation. We read in 1 John 3:7, *"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."* We want to do what is right at all times, as described in Psalm 106:3: *"Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times."*

3. We must speak the truth in our heart

It is not enough to speak the truth with our lips; we must also speak the truth in our hearts. Our hearts and mouths speak the same things. Often people say one thing with their lips, but their hearts are saying something completely different. David said in Psalm 55:21, *"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."* We read in Zephaniah 3:13, *"The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid."*

4. We must not backbite with our tongue

Citizens of Zion do not backbite with their tongues. The Hebrew word “ragal” translated “backbite” means “to slander.” We read in Psalm 101:5, *“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.”* Proverbs 10:18 says, *“He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.”*

It means we are not talebearers, as described in Leviticus 19:16: *“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.”* Christian perfection is manifested through our ability to control our tongue, as seen in James 3:2: *“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.”*

5. We must not do evil to our neighbor

We must not do our neighbors harm in any way, either in word or deed. Being a citizen of Zion involves loving others as ourselves and doing good to everyone. Psalm 145:9 says, *“The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”* God is good to all and is incapable of evil. Citizens of Zion fulfill the second greatest commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt. 22:39).

6. We must not take up a reproach against our neighbor

The Hebrew word translated “reproach” means “to disgrace or shame” and comes from a root word meaning “to uncover or expose.” Even if someone falls into sin, we must not seek to disgrace them or unnecessarily expose their sin. When King Saul was killed, David did not take advantage of the situation to disgrace Saul, but spoke well of him and mourned his death (2 Sam. 1). We must not slander others or spread gossip about others. We are also not supposed to rejoice when our enemies fall or are disgraced, as seen in Proverbs 24:17: *“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.”*

7. We must despise vile people

Psalm 15:4 says, *“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned.”* The word “contemned” means “to despise.” Isaiah 5:20 warns us not to call the evil good, *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”* We should never praise an evil person, even as Mordecai refused to praise and honor the wicked Haman (Esther 3:1-5).

One aspect of holiness is being “separate from sinners,” as stated in Hebrews 7:26: *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”* David said in Psalm 26:4-5: *“I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.”*

8. We must honor those who fear the Lord

We must honor those who fear the Lord, even if we have disagreements with them. John Calvin was gracious to Martin Luther, who at times was less than saintly in his letters to those who did not agree with him. God honors those who honor Him, and we must as well, as seen in 1 Samuel 2:30: *“Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”*

9. We must keep our word, even when it hurts

Psalm 15:4 says, *“He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.”* This is perhaps one of the most significant hallmarks of a holy man. His word is his bond. He will stand by what he says at all times, even though it can be very costly.

James 5:12 says, *“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”*

We must be faithful to our commitments. For example, even if we have been misinformed about the true cost of building a shelter for the poor, we must keep our commitment if we have given our word.

10. We must not charge interest on money we lend

The Law states in Exodus 22:25, *“If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury [or interest].”* Leviticus 25:35-37 says: *“And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.”*

Deuteronomy 23:19-20 adds: *“Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.”* Thus the Law permits the charging of reasonable interest to unbelievers, but not to believers.

11. We must not accept a bribe against the innocent

We must not accept a “reward” or “bribe” against the innocent. Bribes pervert justice, as seen in Exodus 23:8: *“And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.”* This statute appears to be an indictment especially of lawyers who take money to obtain favorable judgments for their clients at the expense of the innocent parties.

We read in Deuteronomy 16:19, *“Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.”* Deuteronomy 27:25 reaffirms this: *“Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.”* Proverbs 17:23 says, *“A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.”*

12. We must have clean hands

This signifies that our service is pure and clean, for hands represent service. Job 17:9 says, *“The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.”* We must keep our hands from doing anything wrong or evil (Psa. 26:10; Isa. 1:15; 59:3; Acts 2:23). This has an application for our secular life. In Ephesians 4:28 Paul said, *“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”*

It also has the connotation of the ministry. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:1-2: *“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”*

13. We must have a pure heart

This speaks of moral purity and purity of motives. Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, *“Blessed are the pure in*

heart: for they shall see God.” Paul’s instruction to Timothy was to treat the elder women as mothers and the younger women as sisters, with all purity (1 Tim. 5:2).

We must continually pray the prayer of David in Psalm 51:10, “*Create in me a pure [or clean] heart, O God.*” In Ezekiel 36:26-27 the Lord promises to give us a new heart.

In Revelation 21:21 we are told that the street of the heavenly city is pure gold, like transparent glass. Clear distortionless glass, fine Danish glass, for example, is produced through many grindings or breakings. It is very costly because it takes a very long time to produce glass that is distortionless. Job 41:25 says, “*By reason of breakings they purify themselves.*” It is through many breakings and difficulties that we become transparent, having a pure heart.

14. We must not lift up our soul to vanity

No one knew this world’s vanities more than Solomon, and he gives us an understanding of them in Ecclesiastes 2:1-11: mirth, laughter, wine, houses, vineyards, trees, ponds of water, servants, maidens, great possessions, silver and gold. This reminds us of Christ’s warnings in Luke 12:15: “*Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*”

Solomon received no pleasure from his life of wantonness. He said in Ecclesiastes 2:10, “*And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*” Yet he concludes by saying in verse 11 that it was all vanity and vexation of spirit.

15. We must not practice lying

We must not swear deceitfully or practice lying. A man’s word must be his bond. All those who purposefully seek to deceive by means of oaths will be cast into the lake of fire, for that is the end of all those who habitually lie (Rev. 21:8). Revelation 14:5 describes those who are on Mount Zion with the Lamb of God: “*And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*” Psalm 34:13 says, “*Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*” We read in 1 Peter 3:10, “*For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.*”

The Fifteen Qualifications to Dwell in Zion

1. We must walk uprightly
2. We must work righteousness
3. We must speak the truth in our heart
4. We must not backbite with our tongue
5. We must not do evil to our neighbor
6. We must not take up a reproach against our neighbor
7. We must despise vile people
8. We must honor those who fear the Lord
9. We must keep our word, even when it hurts
10. We must not charge interest on money we lend
11. We must not accept a bribe against the innocent
12. We must have clean hands
13. We must have a pure heart
14. We must not lift up our soul to vanity
15. We must not practice lying

Chapter 17

CONCLUSION

Chapter 17 Outline

1. Press on to win Christ
2. Where are you on your journey?

1. PRESS ON TO WIN CHRIST

In conclusion, I would like to recount a vision I had at the beginning of my ministry over fifty years ago. I was sitting on the platform of a small church in one of the suburbs of London, England while waiting to be called on to speak. At that precise moment, I did not have a message from the Lord, and was earnestly seeking Him for one.

As I was praying, the Lord gave me this vision. I saw a man walking down a path which led into a beautiful valley filled with joy. The sun shone, birds were singing, and everything seemed so alive. Then the path came to the bottom of a mountain, and the man started to climb the path up the mountain. It was steep but the man persevered, and eventually the path came to a plateau.

To the left there was another glorious valley, much more beautiful than the first. Multitudes were in that valley and they cried out when they saw the man, “Come down into our valley for we have the blessing of the Lord.” Then a voice sounded from on high, “What they say is true, but if you go down into that valley, you will remain there. Come up higher.”

The man continued walking up the path which by this time had become very steep. Eventually he came to another plateau that had another valley more glorious than the previous two. A multitude also was in this valley, and they also said to the man, “Come down into our valley for we have the blessing of the Lord.” Again a voice from on high sounded, “What they say is true, but if you go down into that valley, you will remain there. Come up higher.”

He continued to climb up the mountain. This time, however, the climb was considerably more difficult. At times, he had to crawl on his hands and knees. Finally, after much effort and perseverance, he arrived at the top of the mountain, but there was nothing there, yet as he patiently waited, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared.

Over the years, the Lord has continued to shed light on the interpretation of this vision. The first valley represents the valley of salvation, filled with joy and light. The second valley represents the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The third valley represents the Feast of Tabernacles and the glorious last day revival. The top of the mountain represents Mount Zion.

All of these experiences along the way—salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and revival—are wonderful, but they are not our goal or resting place. We cannot stop until we get to the top of Mount Zion because the Lord Jesus Christ is waiting for us at the top of the mountain. We must not plateau in our Christian walk. Some people get saved and think that is all there is to the Christian life. Others get

filed with the Spirit and think they have arrived at perfection.

Others put all of their focus on revival, forgetting that revival is not an end, it is a means to an end—Jesus Christ! The blessings of God and spiritual experiences must not be our goal; our goal must be to “win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

Paul expresses this same truth in Philippians 3:12-14: *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

We must not stop anywhere along our Christian walk until we win Christ. At times the Christian walk will be difficult and even painful, but we must continue pressing on to finish the race and win the prize of the high calling in God. We must ever strive to mature in an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus.

2. WHERE ARE YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY?

The question we should all ask ourselves is: “Lord, where am I on my spiritual journey and what are the next steps You want me to take?” Stop right now and ask God to reveal to you where you are at in our your own personal journey. You need to know where you have come from, where you are at now, and where you are headed. What is your goal in life? Do you have the vision of Zion and winning Christ? If not, ask God to birth it in your heart.

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, confess your sins, ask Him to come into your heart, forgive you and cleanse you of yours sins, give you eternal life, and be your Lord and Savior. Romans 10:9-10 says: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

If you know Christ as your Savior, but are not walking with Him as you know you should be, then take this opportunity to rededicate your life to Him.

If you know Christ as your Savior, but have never been water baptized, then ask your pastor to baptize you in water. It is never too late. If you do not have a church, find a good Bible-believing church in your area and ask the pastor to water baptize you.

If you have never been baptized in the Holy Spirit, today is the day to receive it. Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but there is also the human element involved. We have to do the speaking with our vocal chords. This is our part. However, the words are given by the Spirit. Acts 2:4 says, *“They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

The Holy Spirit wants to come into us and flow out through us. It is a good idea to start by praising the Lord and worshipping Him in our native language. Then by faith we yield our vocal chords unto the Lord and begin speaking in a new language. We do not have to think about what to say, or formulate the words in our minds because it is a language that we cannot understand. The Holy Spirit bypasses our minds and intellect and speaks through us. We should not try to make up the words or copy someone else’s tongues.

If you are Spirit-filled, but have never operated in the gifts of the Spirit or not very frequently, ask God for a fresh release of the spiritual gifts in your life. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:1: *“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but [especially] that ye may prophesy.”*

If you are in the wilderness right now, do not complain or give up. Perhaps you are going through a bitter experience as when the children of Israel encountered bitter water at Marah, or you are experiencing a financial or physical need.

Continue thanking God and glorifying Him in the fires (Isa. 24:15). Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean to your own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6). As you do, God will bring you through your wilderness trial victoriously and you will be more than a conqueror (Rom. 8:37).

Perhaps you are mature in the Lord and maybe even a minister, but you still need a work of cleansing and circumcision in your heart. Then you are at the Jordan River. Allow God to circumcise your heart (Deut. 10:16; Deut 30:6). Deal with all of the enemies in your life, both inward and outward, so that you can have complete victory in your life.

Perhaps you are experiencing a time of revival in your own personal life or in your ministry. Do not forget that revival is not an end; it is only a means to an end—Christ. Keep pressing on until you win Christ!

Perhaps you have even gone within the veil and experienced the manifest presence of God and know the Lord intimately. Even now, this is not the end of your journey. You must take the glory of God to the nations of the earth.

If you are already doing this, you still have not reached the end of your journey, even as Paul said in Philippians 3:12-13: “*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.*” You must continue pressing on in your own personal life to know Christ more intimately each and every day! The key to moving on with God is to always say “yes” to Him when He deals with issues in our lives.

God wants to bring you and the Church in these last days to spiritual Zion. The journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land should have only take two years, but the children of Israel disobeyed at Kadesh-Barnea. Therefore, God can help us progress in our journey very quickly as we walk in obedience to Him.

Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, God wants you to keep pressing on. Do not plateau, become discouraged, or become complacent in your Christian walk. *Keep on pressing on!* That is the underlying theme of this study on the journey of Israel. Your spiritual journey on earth does not end until you reach heaven.

I pray that this study on the journey of Israel and the spiritual journey of believers has been a blessing to you and has inspired you to continue pressing on toward Mount Zion until you win Christ. May the Lord richly bless you, dear reader!

Appendix A

Extended Outline of the Journey of Israel

- I. THE LIFE OF MOSES
 - A. HIS EARLY LIFE
 - 1. HIS GENEALOGY (Ex. 2:1)
 - 2. HIS BIRTH (Ex. 2:2)
 - 3. RAISED IN PHARAOH'S COURT (Acts 7:22)
 - 4. REFUSAL OF EGYPTIAN SONSHIP (Heb. 11:24)
 - 5. DEFENSE OF HIS PEOPLE (Ex. 2:11)
 - 6. FLIGHT FROM EGYPT (Ex. 2:15)
 - B. IN THE ARABIAN DESERT
 - 1. MOSES HELPS JETHRO'S DAUGHTERS (Ex. 2:17)
 - 2. MARRIES ZIPPORAH (Ex. 2:21)
 - 3. THE PURPOSE OF THE WILDERNESS (Ex. 2:22)
 - 4. MOSES WAS CHOSEN BY GOD (Ex. 3:1)
 - C. THE RETURN TO EGYPT
 - 1. THE BURNING BUSH (Ex. 3:2 - 4:17)
 - 2. CIRCUMCISION AT THE INN (Ex. 4:24-25)
 - 3. MOSES MEETS AARON (Ex. 4:27-28)
 - 4. MOSES GATHERS THE ELDERS (Ex. 4:29-31)
 - D. IN EGYPT
 - 1. INITIAL REJECTION BY PHARAOH (Ex. 5:1-4)
 - 2. INCREASE OF BURDENS (Ex. 5:5-19)
 - 3. REJECTION BY ISRAEL (Ex. 5:20)
 - 4. AGAIN ISRAEL WILL NOT LISTEN (Ex. 6:9)
 - 5. MOSES MADE AS GOD TO PHARAOH (Ex. 7:1; 11:3)
 - 6. CONFRONTATION OF THE MAGICIANS (Ex. 7:10-13)
 - 7. THE TEN PLAGUES (Ex. 7:14 - 12:29)
 - 8. INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER (Ex. 12:1-29)
 - 9. THE JOURNEY TO THE RED SEA (Ex. 12:31)
 - 10. PHARAOH'S PURSUIT (Ex. 14:5-12)
 - E. FROM THE RED SEA TO SINAI
 - 1. THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA (Ex. 14:13-31)
 - 2. THE SONG OF MOSES (Ex. 15:1-22)
 - 3. THE BITTER WATERS (Ex. 15:23)

4. THE LORD OUR HEALER (Ex. 15:26)
 5. ELIM (Ex. 15:27)
 6. THE NEED FOR FOOD (Ex. 16:1-36)
 7. THE NEED FOR WATER (Ex. 17:1)
 8. WAR AGAINST AMALEK (Ex. 17:8-16)
 9. DELEGATION (Ex. 18)
- F. AT MOUNT SINAI (Ex.19:2 to Num.10:11)
1. THE TRIP TO MOUNT SINAI (Ex. 19:1)
 2. CALLED INTO GOD'S PRESENCE
 3. SANCTIFICATION OF THE PEOPLE (Ex. 19:9-25)
 4. MOSES RECEIVES THE LAW (Ex. 20 - 23)
 5. THE COVENANT CONFIRMED WITH ISRAEL (Ex. 23:20-33)
 6. FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE MOUNT (Ex. 24:12)
 7. THE TABERNACLE PATTERN (Ex. 25-31)
 8. THE GOLDEN CALF (Ex. 32)
 9. THE BREAKING OF THE TABLES OF THE LAW (Ex. 32:19)
 10. THE LEVITES RESPOND TO THE CALL (Ex. 32:26-28)
 11. MOSES' INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL (Ex. 32:30-32)
 12. GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES FACE TO FACE (Ex. 33:11; 34:6)
 13. THE SECOND PERIOD OF FORTY DAYS & NIGHTS ON THE MOUNT (Ex. 34:28)
 14. MOSES WEARS A VEIL ON HIS FACE (Ex. 34:29-35)
 15. THE TABERNACLE IS BUILT (Ex. 36-40)
 16. CONSECRATION OF AARON AS THE HIGH PRIEST (Lev. 8)
 17. THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE (Num. 1)
 18. THE PASSOVER IS KEPT (Num. 9)
 19. MOSES ENLISTS THE AID OF HOBAB (Num. 10:29)
- G. FROM MOUNT SINAI TO KADESH BARNEA
1. GOD'S FIRE CONSUMES MURMURERS (Num. 11:1-3)
 2. THE MIXED MULTITUDE LUSTS FOR MEAT (Num. 11:4-6)
 3. MOSES CRIES OUT TO THE LORD (Num. 11:11-15)
 4. THE SEVENTY ELDERS ARE APPOINTED (Num. 11:16-25)
 5. MOSES' GENEROUS ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER PROPHETS (Num. 11:25-30)
 6. THOSE WHO LUSTED FOR MEAT ARE BURIED (Num. 11:31-35)
 7. MOSES ENDURES THE CRITICISM OF AARON AND MIRIAM (Num. 12)
 8. THE PURPOSE OF THE WILDERNESS

H. AT KADESH BARNEA

1. THE TWELVE SPIES ARE SENT TO VIEW THE LAND (Num. 13-14)
2. THE EVIL REPORT OF THE TEN SPIES (Num. 13:31-33)
3. THE ATTITUDE OF JOSHUA AND CALEB
4. THE LORD SEEKS TO DESTROY THE UNBELIEVING (Num. 14:11-12)
5. MOSES PLEADS FOR THE HONOR OF GOD (Num. 14:15-20)
6. REVIEW OF THE TEN TRIALS OF THE WILDERNESS
7. GOD RETURNS ISRAEL TO DIE IN THE WILDERNESS
(Num. 14:21-37)
8. MOSES CONTENDS WITH THE PRESUMPTUOUS (Num. 14:39-45)

I. FROM KADESH BARNEA TO PISGAH

1. REBELLION OF KORAH (Num. 16)
2. THE ROD OF AARON (Num. 17)
3. THE DEATH OF MIRIAM (Num. 20:1)
4. MOSES PROVOKED TO SIN (Num. 20:7)
5. MOSES AND AARON ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE
PROMISED LAND (Num. 20:12)
6. EDOM REFUSES ISRAEL PASSAGE (Num. 20:14-21)
7. THE DEATH OF AARON (Num. 20:23-29)
8. ISRAEL BECOMES DISCOURAGED (Num. 21:4)
9. THE BRAZEN SERPENT (Num. 21:9)
10. THE WELL OF SPRINGING WATER (Num. 21:16-17)
11. BALAAM'S WICKEDNESS (Num. 22-25)
12. NEW GENERATION NUMBERED (Num. 26)
13. THE CHOOSING OF A NEW LEADER (Num. 27:15-17)
14. THE CHOICE OF INFERIOR INHERITANCE (Num. 32)
15. MOSES REPEATS THE LAW TO THE NEW GENERATION (Deut. 5-11)
16. PROPHETIC UTTERANCES FOR THE LAST DAYS (Deut. 29-31)
17. THE DEATH OF MOSES (Deut. 34)
18. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

II. THE CROSSING OVER TO CANAAN

A. JOSHUA THE NEW LEADER

1. JOSHUA'S EARLY LIFE
2. JOSHUA LEADS ISRAEL AGAINST AMALEK (Ex. 17:8-16)
3. JOSHUA WAS MOSES' SERVANT
4. JOSHUA LINGERED IN GOD'S PRESENCE (Ex. 33:11)

5. JOSHUA'S IMMATURITY (Num.12:25-30)
 6. JOSHUA AND CALEB BRING BACK GOOD REPORT (Num. 14:6-10)
 7. JOSHUA HAD A FORETASTE OF INHERITANCE (Num. 13:16-27)
 8. JOSHUA WITHSTOOD POPULAR OPINION (Num. 14:10)
 9. JOSHUA WAS CONSECRATED AS THE NEW LEADER (Num. 27:18-23)
 10. JOSHUA CONTINUED TO OBEY MOSES (Num. 32:8-9)
 11. JOSHUA AND ELEAZAR DISTRIBUTE THE LAND (Num. 34:17)
 12. MOSES ENCOURAGES JOSHUA (Deut. 1:38)
 13. THE CONGREGATION SUPPORTS JOSHUA'S LEADERSHIP (Deut. 31:3-8)
 14. THE CHANGE OF COMMAND (Deut. 31:14-15)
 15. GOD SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO JOSHUA (Joshua 1:1-9)
 - B. THE CROSSING OF JORDAN
 1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JORDAN RIVER
 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF CIRCUMCISION
 - C. THE THIRTY-ONE KINGS
 - D. INCOMPLETE VICTORY
 1. SLACKNESS IN POSSESSING THE LAND
 2. THE BOOK OF JUDGES
 3. THE LORD'S REBUKE
 4. ALLIANCES
- III. INHERITING MOUNT ZION
- A. SHILOH
 1. THE HISTORY OF SHILOH
 2. THE GLORY DEPARTS FROM SHILOH
 3. THE LESSON OF SHILOH FOR BELIEVERS
 - B. HEBRON
 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF DAVID
 2. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HEBRON
 - C. MOUNT ZION
 1. THE HISTORY OF ZION
 2. BEING BORN IN ZION
 3. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ZION
 4. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
 5. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR DWELLING IN ZION

D. CONCLUSION

1. PRESS ON TO WIN CHRIST
2. WHERE ARE YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY?