

ESTABLISHING THE EKKLESIA

**Advancing the Kingdom of
God Through Maturity**

Cheryl R. Thomas

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Printed in the United States of America

Dedication

I dedicate this book to my Lord, whose love for me has been proven time and time again. I give this book to Him with all my love, as He is the One who first gave it to me.

I dedicate this book to all the ones who had an influence in my life. You helped prepare me to write this book.

I dedicate this book to all my family. You are loved and held in the arms of my Savior.

I dedicate this book to Greg and Tracey. God put them in my life when I needed them. Many of the lessons I have learned along the way have been because of their influence in my life. I am grateful for them.

I dedicate this book also to my spiritual sons and daughters who are a precious treasure in our Savior's sight and mine.

Chris, you have been a special encouragement to me as I journeyed through some tough wilderness (transformation) periods. I value your insight.

I would be amiss if I did not also dedicate this book to my good friends, Rose and Rod. Without their love and encouragement, this book would probably still be a tiny flame trying to find a way to ignite. They stirred the embers with their continual prodding and urging me to move forward, as well as reading the developing pages multiple times. I am sure they never realized, at the beginning, the effort it was going to take, which makes me all the more grateful.

Last, but not least, I dedicate this book to the remnant God has called as the true leaders, who have been hidden in caves for what seems like forever, learning from the Master Himself, waiting for the time of their revealing. It is dedicated to the remnant who will never give up, but will travel on to maturity and make their Lord proud.

Nothing can stop what is coming! Let God arise!

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BOOK INTRODUCTION

We live in unique times. The smell of change is in the air. Our lives are bombarded everyday with the sense that something is happening that is going to change our world. We do not know what to expect. For many it means fear and anxiety. To others it brings excitement knowing God is about to do something and we get to be a part of it.

Most of us sense a real battle brewing between Good and Evil. The conversation is everywhere. Many books have been written about the seven mountains of culture in the earth and Christian circles are discussing. There are different ways of describing these mountains and God continually brings insight into their mysteries. Most everyone agrees, the mountains today are mostly ruled by evil, but we are at a tipping point.

Bill Bright, Campus Crusade and Loren Cunningham, Youth with a Mission (YWAM) originally identified these mountains as the mountains of home, church, schools, government and politics, the media, Arts/entertainment /sports, and commerce/science/ technology. These cultural areas are firmly under the Babylonian kingdom, established by the enemy of God. Yes, even the “church” or religious mountain is under the influence of Babylon. There is a clarion call going forth for God’s people to come out of Babylon and establish the Kingdom of God in the earth.

In truth, there is only one mountain of significance, the Mountain of God, Mount Zion. It stands above every mountain. Every cultural mountain will be toppled and taken for the Kingdom of God. The mountain of religion will be destroyed and the Mountain of God will rise above all other mountains to take its rightful place where King Jesus rules. This, I believe, will happen differently than what we are being taught today.

Before this can happen, God’s people must be firmly established by Jesus as the Ekklesia. They must mature as the people who know their God and do exploits. The purpose of

this book is to make known who the Ekklesia is and what she must do to become mature.

The truths written in the early parts of this book I have preached ad nauseum for decades. We must hear God and obey. Simple in word but not so simple in practice. Many of God's people have learned how to apply these truths in their daily lives to an extent, but have never carried them over into how to apply them to the advancement of the Kingdom of God in the earth. So, the truths once again must be presented, this time with a little more meat that may take longer to digest.

Some things written in this book may be hard to accept. It is not written for the faint of heart, but for those who are hungry for more, much more of God. It is written to a remnant hungry for all they can get of God. I may be called a heretic by some who read what I write, but I have written what I believe my Lord has required of me, I am satisfied.

There are going to be times while reading when you may want to throw the book in the fire. It will go against some things you have been taught. You may say I am wrong and dismiss what I say. Then I would ask you to consider what if it is true? When you stand before God will you know that you have pleased Him or pleased man? All I ask is that you seriously consider my writings and spend time with God discussing them.

I love the people of God. I love the "church" while also wanting God's best for His people. Many, many memories of God touching me were behind the four walls of a "church". My view of what the "church" is, has changed over the years. This book has not been easy to write. I could not write with conviction without some things changing in my own life.

I had to go through much shaking and upheaval in order to understand where God wants to take His Ekklesia. I put the word church in quotes throughout this book, because it is a word humans use to describe what they believe is being built by Jesus. I use Ekklesia for what I believe the Bible teaches Jesus is really building. Once we understand the depth of that revelation, we will not be able to turn back.

I have cried to God more times than I can count, “Lord, I would gladly leave this path I am on and return to where I started, if You would only show me the error of my ways. But I want Your way, not mine.” He would not release me to leave the path I have pursued. Honestly, there were many times I wanted to quit, but God came and picked me up, set me upright and going forward once again. Friends were there to encourage.

This journey has taken a long time for me to travel. It is only now that I believe I have a release from God to share these things with the remnant that is ready to receive it. There is such a thing as throwing pearls to swine, therefore there is a warning that comes with this book.

I am not foolish enough to say everything I say on the pages of this book is completely accurate. We still see dimly. Revelation is still being revealed. But I stand by what I say, when I say, “Question everything”. The most important thing is to seek God and His heart with every part of your being. Search out a matter until you believe you understand His heart.

We have entered the seventh day since Adam. The seventh day belongs to the Lord. It is a day of rest. Psalms chapter 95 tells us the children of Israel failed to enter the rest of the Lord. They had seen His acts, but they had not sought to know His ways. Therefore, they could not enter His rest.

That describes God’s people today. We want miracles. We want to receive from His hand, but do we really know Him? Those who truly know Him will do exploits. They know the heart of the Father. That is the difference between DOING and BEING. We will enter into His rest. We will see true miracles once again, but we must move on higher up the mountain to see Him and know Him.

The earth itself eagerly awaits the revealing of the children of God. Change is coming. It is inevitable. The question is, do you want to be a part of that change? Will you say yes to Jesus, the King? God is once again saying to Egypt (the world system), “Let My people go”. To the “church” He is saying, “Set My people free”.

Section 1

**INTRODUCTION TO THE CHINESE
LANTERN AND THE EKKLESIA**

CHAPTER 1

THE CITY ON A HILL AND THE CHINESE LANTERN

People everywhere are asking what is going on in the world. The days we live in are both exciting and bewildering. Knowledge has increased exponentially. Things that have been hidden in the darkness are suddenly coming into the light and what is being revealed is frightening. Corruption, lawlessness and fear are everywhere, but for those who know the heart of God, there is an anticipation of something great about to take place.

God has promised a time on earth when His glory would be seen in every nation. We have been told that eventually the nations of the world will become the nations of our God and of His Christ. There is a real sense that we have entered a new era, a new time in history, but we do not understand what that means. We are headed to a place in God we have never been before. It is both exciting and terrifying to many.

To enter this new day many new paradigm shifts are needed. These paradigm shifts are mentioned throughout this book. So many books are being written on the topic of the Kingdom of God, and I very much wanted to write on that topic, as well. However, God has instructed me this book must come first. I must write about the city on a hill, Mount Zion, the Ekklesia, the house that Jesus is building.

We cannot advance the Kingdom of God on earth to its fullest extent until the Ekklesia (the true Church) has come into a level of maturity it has not seen before. So, we must concentrate for the moment on this topic. This book is about

the journey into the paradigm shift needed to understand the true Ekklesia that Jesus is building and to grow into maturity.

Imagine for a moment, a family is packing in anticipation of a vacation full of adventure. They are excited to go someplace new and explore. They have planned their trip perfectly to do some sightseeing and partake in some new experiences along the way. They count down the days and finally the time comes to load up the car and go. Fun and adventure await them! Although they want a time to relax, they also do not want or anticipate boredom! Let the journey begin.

We are all on a journey. Life itself is the ultimate journey, the ultimate adventure. Why do we not face each new day with the enthusiasm that the thoughts of vacation bring us? Why do we settle for boredom? Why does not a new day excite us? Why does the thought of encountering new places, new people, new activities on our daily journey of life not thrill us, but often give us anxiety instead? Why don't secrets hidden in God entice us?

We need life! We need to really live the life God intended us to live. The pathway of life has many twists and turns, many surprises, but the ultimate destination is inside Father God's heart. The city on a hill represents the Father's heart and where His mature children dwell in His presence. They have entered into rest and oneness with their God. They rule and reign with Him on His throne from Mount Zion, the city on a hill. They love righteousness and hate wickedness. That is true life.

Miracles are not our goal in life. Establishing ministries on earth is not our goal in life. Salvation is not our end goal. Our goal is to become like Jesus. Our destination is the Promised Land. When Moses led the people out of Egypt across the desert to the land of promise, it was said to flow with milk and honey. Milk represents the living Word of God, and honey represents the revelation of the living Word.

The Promised Land was not just a piece of land for His people. It was a place where God would reveal Himself to them in His fulness. They had to want it enough to fight for it.

The Promised Land is His Kingdom where He rules and reigns. It is the Father's heart. It is Mount Zion, the city on the hill.

Our goal is to take this journey to maturity and into the Father heart of God so we can lead others to the promised land, the Kingdom of God. Eventually, it will affect the whole earth. The journey begins with salvation through Jesus, but it does not end there as many believe. The journey continues with training to encourage the saints into maturity so they can become like Jesus.

We enter the Kingdom, the Father heart of God. We do not enter and then sit on our blessed assurance. The mature saints of God become equipped to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. We use whatever gifts and talents the Lord has given to us. We will not settle until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and He reigns forever.

Wow! Some vacation if we have to fight! But you see when we are in the place of love and obedience, our Lord fights for us. It is amazing in real life to suddenly face a battle, and then resting in God, we see Him step in and fight for us. It is the difference between living in dread, and living in rest and joyful anticipation of what our God will do for us if we trust Him. It is then we can consider it an adventure.

No matter what vocation we choose in life, our ultimate goal as a representative of heaven born into the earth is to advance the Kingdom of God. We mature in the things of God so we can advance the Kingdom wherever He places us and gives us skills.

Everyone is called to minister or proclaim the gospel wherever God calls them. We are all called as ministers of the gospel. We are all called to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. It does not change, regardless of what God calls you to: electrician, technical expert, teacher, accountant, etc. This life should be anything but boring!

Do you remember the television game show where the winner could pick door # 1 or door # 2 or door # 3? One

door opened to the grand prize. How many times were people disappointed because they didn't choose the door with the grand prize? But what if I told you in the game of life, you could have all three doors?

It is not that a person gets everything that they want, it is that when a person's heart aligns with the Father's heart, all these things are given to us that are good for us. It is then that our wants begin to align with what the Father desires for us. The Father's heart of love for each one of us, wants only good for us.

Every new day is a new door that we get to open and it has great gifts of life for us directly from Father's heart. Every smile from a child, every 'I love you' is a treasure from your Heavenly Father. We miss so many of our Father's gifts because we are not expecting and we are not watching.

The Heart of Father God

Understanding the Father's heart for His creation and becoming a person He can trust with His heart are critical to the success and enjoyment of life. Years ago, I was walking through a shopping mall. Music was playing in the background. I was deep in thought and not paying attention. Suddenly the volume seemed to have been increased, and my daydreaming was interrupted.

I was acutely aware of the words being sung and I knew it was God speaking directly to my heart. The words "*All I want to know, girl, is can I trust you with my heart?*" hit my being like an arrow of fire. "Wow!" I thought, "If God had to ask me that question, then it was obvious He could not trust His heart to me."

While only lasting a few seconds, that event changed the focus of my life completely! In scripture it is recorded that God said the great King David had a heart after God even though his sins were great. I wanted to be known as a daughter of God who knew His heart. That would become my focal

point and it would change many things in my life and my pursuit of life over the years to come.

It is through the heart of God we have the ability to reach the heart of His creation. Our God is a God of mysteries and it is exciting to discover aspects of God we haven't previously understood. When we discover new things about the heart of God there will be a joy we have never known before. The city on a hill is in the very heart of God and cannot be understood apart from His heart.

I pray we, as God's children, arouse ourselves from sleep to see what God will do in and through us in this time in history. We only discover these mysteries through revelation, which only comes from spending time with our Father and understanding His heart. Just like there is a great awakening in our world today to things that have been hidden in darkness, there is a clarion call to the Ekklesia to awaken as well.

This book is about the awakening of the Ekklesia and her journey to maturity in the Father heart of God. Every stretch of the journey is about leaving behind an area where we are in bondage to something. We receive revelation from God who directs our steps. Then we obey God as we travel into the freedom God has for us. As our faith in God increases, our willingness to obey also increases. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that we cannot please God if we do not have faith. Faith in God and His love for us will empower us to transition from glory to glory.

The sheep that are My own hear and are listening to My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. John 10:27 (AMPC)

My journey of life has been filled with godly revelation gained from following God's direction and much of it I share on the pages of this book. It has not been boring and I am not done with life. Neither are you. God is not a boring God and He didn't create us to be boring or bored. He wants to reveal Himself to us. Let's move forward in anticipation.

Revelation

Revelation from God is a strange thing. It simply means that something not known before has been revealed. God delights in surprising His children with revelation. It comes in many forms, a still small voice, the voice of another person, Bible verses that leap from the pages, words on a billboard, dreams and visions and so many other ways. It can even suddenly appear in your spirit, by Holy Spirit and you suddenly wonder how you know what you know.

What does scripture say about revelation? It is the revealing of Jesus, who He is and what He is doing. Revelation comes from God, not man. Paul, an apostle in New Testament times, thought he knew who Jesus was, until God actually revealed the truth of Jesus and the gospel to him.

The truth completely changed him. He had been called Saul before this truth was revealed. The truth had such a dramatic effect on him that he changed his name to Paul. It wasn't man who revealed the truth to Paul.

**"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."
Galatians 1:11,12 (NKJV)**

Paul had been taught by the best Jewish scholars. He knew scripture. He thought he knew God. His human brain believed one way because of his upbringing, but one day he came face to face with the resurrected Jesus. He was faced with a decision. Does he hang on to his old thoughts, his old teachings or does he face this new revelation. If it is truly God he must follow. We will also be faced with that same decision many times.

Revelation is given by God. It is the revealing by God of something He wants us to know. It is secrets revealed, truths

unveiled that come to our spirit in many different ways based on what God knows will get our attention. We all have our own unique language, our way of saying things. God knows our language and therefore He knows how to get our attention and how to tell us or show us what He wants us to know.

God has spoken to me in many different ways over the years, but dreams and visions seem to be the prevalent method He has chosen to use. Throughout this book I will detail many of those dreams and visions, and I will point out how they line up with the word of God.

You may question many of these things if you have never heard them before. Of course, that is necessary and understandable. God is taking us to a place we have never been before. It is okay to question things. Above all else, we must know what is of God and what is not. That is what is called discernment, or testing of the spirits.

Four decades ago, God told me there was a message He wanted His people to hear. Over the years I have heard it loud and clear and even more so with each passing day. God said “Set My People free! Let My People Go!” He meant it then and He means it now!

I declare those words with every ounce of strength I have over and over again! If you continue to read this book, you will hear that cry too, deep down in your spirit as well as from the pages you read.

We should all want to be free from everything that holds us back and keeps us from being all God has called us to be. We want to be free to go to the places He has called us to go, to do all the things He has called us to do. Do you hear Him calling you? Hang on, it is the journey of a lifetime!

There is a religious spirit influence in the earth that desires to keep us chained, captive to religion and satisfied with where we are. We are gratified by going to “church” services once or twice a week believing we have fulfilled our religious duty. We are happy and feel fulfilled in our perceived giving obligations by dropping something in the offering plate as it passes by us.

We are content with living seemingly mundane lives. Every day is a simple repeat of yesterday. We get up and go to work, see the kids off to school, sit down to watch the news or a television show after a good evening meal and then off to bed to start the routine all over again the next day.

The realization that there should be something more to life escapes us, even when there is an occasional tugging at our hearts for more. It is not easy to escape from old traditions and old habits, but if your heart cries out for more, God will meet you there. It may take some time to tear down old ideas and replace them with fresh revelation, but it will be worth the time and effort it takes! Adventure awaits when you are living every day with God expecting Him to surprise you.

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.
John 8:31-32, 36 (NLT)

The amount of change described in these pages may at times seem overwhelming. The temptation to turn back is real because the road appears so difficult, different, or strange. We need to focus our eyes on the destination. We can enjoy the journey when our eyes are on the finish!

God loves His people and desires for them to be set free, to be satisfied and fulfilled in this life. Don't you dare turn back now. We are on the verge of something great. I pray for you as I write this book just as Paul prayed for the Ephesians. The revelation of our wonderful Lord involves mysteries and secrets!

“I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. [For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him, by having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the

saints (His set-apart ones)".

Ephesians 1:16-18 (AMPC)

Maturity and Freedom

This book is for all those intent on maturing in the things of God and have a desire to experience true freedom. Jesus is truth and scripture tells us that it is truth that sets us free. Many of you have longed for this day, you just didn't know what it would look like. It is your day! You are FREE! Spread your wings and soar with God!

We are alive in this generation for a reason and we have purpose. God knows each one of our names! He has tapped you on the shoulder and asked you to travel with Him on a trek of a lifetime. Will you say "Yes, Lord" to the King of kings, and Lord of lords as He desires to reveal more of Himself to you?

Revelation, revealing the nature of God, is continually moving us forward step by step. Early in our Christian walk we discover through revelation who our Savior really is and what a tremendous price He paid for our salvation. Life should become a journey into the fulness of Him. He is much more than just Savior. We must discover His fullness.

Until we really understand who He is, it is difficult to understand that He has a detailed plan for our lives that will fulfill us and give us great joy. If we travel on, we begin to realize that plan for our life is not for us alone. How we live our lives, what we do and where we go is for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth and that will affect many, many lives.

Revelation increases over our life's journey as we begin to realize our purpose for being is far greater than just raising a family, trying to fulfill religious duties, and making a living. The earth belongs to the Lord who desires to rule and have authority through His people.

The original intent given in the Garden of Eden has not been rescinded. We begin to realize the true Church or

Ekklesia is not a building with four walls. It is not the “church” as we know it today. It is the Ekklesia. Ekklesia is the Greek word translated as “church” in most translations.

This is the first revelation that will hit us like a ton of bricks, when the blinders begin to be lifted. The “church” and the Ekklesia are not the same. As stated in the introduction section of this book, I put the word “church” in quotes when I refer to what man has built.

In this book we will call what Jesus is actually building the Ekklesia, not the “church”. The Ekklesia is a people scattered all over the world, yet connected by the Spirit of God and working in unison. God has called out the Ekklesia to be separate and to live life according to God’s standards, instead of the world’s standard.

The revelation of Jesus increases in us as we understand He is the one building the Ekklesia, not us. Not all “churches” represent Him. Not all “churches” were established on the revelation of Jesus. Ministries who do represent Jesus accurately are merely vehicles used by God and His Ekklesia to advance His Kingdom. God uses other vehicles for that purpose, as well.

Continually growing in the revelation of who Jesus is, gives a clearer understanding of the Ekklesia and its responsibility in advancing the Kingdom of God. God made nations and they are important in God’s plans for planet earth. The nations have a place in God’s heart, so they should have a place in ours. Nations are made up of cities, and states or provinces.

In Mark chapter 16, after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and gave them a command.

And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. Mark 16:15 (NLT)

Some translations say preach the Good News; others say preach the gospel. The gospel is the Good News of Jesus and everything that He is. Many verses, when talking about the

gospel, add the words “of the kingdom”, but non say go preach the gospel of the “church” or the gospel of the Ekklesia.

The Good News is about our Messiah and His Kingdom. Our journey is all about becoming the Ekklesia and advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. The establishing of the Ekklesia is to advance the Kingdom.

And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Mark 13:10 (NKJV)

And this good news of God’s kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, a testimony to all people and all nations. Then, beloved, the end, the consummation of all things, will come.

Matthew 24:14 (VOICE)

The word for nations in the Greek is ethnos, from which the English word ethnic is derived. It is different than race or genealogy, although it can include both. It means a group of people who identify together based on genealogy, culture, traditions, language or other factors. Thailand is what we call a nation, but within Thailand there are many ethnic groups with their own language and culture. I have ministered in Thailand and Myanmar (Burma) and I know this first hand.

It is not enough to say we should minister to these nations. We must minister to all people groups and cultures. They are all a part of the Father heart of God.

Future Proves Past

Revelation most definitely is a strange thing. We must understand it. It is how God communicates with us and we cannot become mature in the things of God without it. Just when we think we have it all figured out, God surprises us again.

We should be constantly listening for Him to speak or watching for Him to illustrate truth and revelation through the events of our lives. Unexpectedly, He breaks into our everyday routines to get our attention so we learn to recognize Him.

Everyday there are surprises created for us, His children. We must begin to expect and watch for them.

God even tells us in Psalms 81:10 to open our mouth wide, and He will fill it. Sometimes revelation comes as a spoonful, other times God dumps a boatload of it into our spirit where we feel we will explode if He doesn't stop. Many times, the revelation is building on something the Lord has already shown us, advancing our understanding into a deeper level.

Sometimes we understand in an instant what God wants us to learn. Sometimes it confounds us and it takes time to unravel the mystery God desires to share with us. We sense in our spirit it is God, but we haven't a clue what He is trying to tell us. Will we seek Him for understanding or will we cast it aside?

In Jeremiah chapter 30, God told Jeremiah He was going to restore the nation of Israel. God was angry with the way His nation was being treated. He shared His plans with Jeremiah. At the end God told Jeremiah something very strange. God said Jeremiah would not understand until some versions say, "the latter days", some versions say "until it happens". God told Jeremiah He would reveal a lot of things to Jeremiah that Jeremiah was not going to understand, but nevertheless they were real and needed to be written. There would come a day later when understanding would be received.

Revelation works that way. We often hear things from God that we do not understand because they are not going to happen today, or even in the distant future. At times, I have put my own interpretation on what God is saying at the moment, only to realize what I was expecting to happen was nothing like what He really did when it did come to pass. In other words, the saying so many use these days seems to be accurate, "*the future proves the past*".

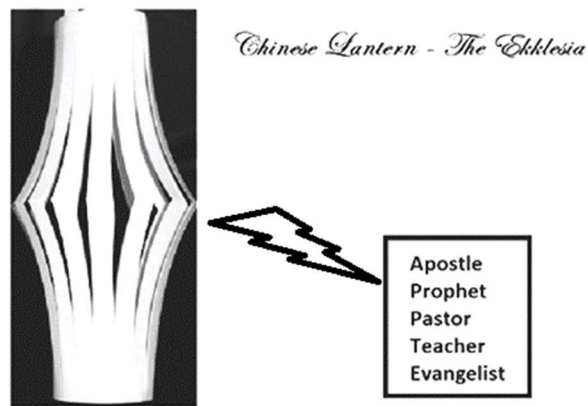
Often a word of revelation is not fully understood until it actually comes to pass. We need to understand how revelation works so we will allow it to work in our lives over time and not reject it.

When we are experienced at hearing and understanding the voice of God, we may have a simple understanding of what He is showing us today, while there is a sensing in our spirit that there is more God wants us to learn. We wait patiently for the rest, knowing when we are readied by the Spirit of God to receive, we will receive more. When the time is right in God's timetable, He will release more understanding. Be patient, trust and never let go of what God has said.

The Chinese Lantern

God gave me a simple vision in 1996 of a Chinese lantern along with a very simple command, turn the lantern upside down. The revelation of this simple vision came over a great number of years. It was through this experience I learned revelation comes in bits and pieces and evolves over time.

I knew the lantern was important to the local assembly I was relating to at the time, but I also had the sense it was even larger. I did not know at the time the massive amount of revelation that lantern held just waiting to be revealed. Revelation came sometimes little by little, sometimes in massive dumps.



I did not understand completely at the time how revelation worked, even though I had experienced it many times. I definitely had no idea at the time of the vision that the revelation of this simple little vision with its command would be enough to produce this book!

Within a few days of the vision, I understood the center fold of the lantern represented the five-fold ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, and evangelist. These are the gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus to help establish what the Lord, Himself, is building.

As time passed and more revelation came, I understood it was the religious spirit influence that prevented the lantern from being turned upside down. It was also the religious spirit that kept me from a full understanding of the lantern. I would need to deal with the religious spirit influence in my own life before I could understand the lantern and the simple command.

Dealing with religious spirits takes time. Religious traditions are very real today and are often considered sacred and not to be questioned. I came face-to-face with this realization years before this vision when God asked me a simple question, “Who taught you this? Did I teach you or did men?”

This is a question I have thought about many times over my life. We all need to start asking ourselves these questions concerning everything. In some circles a person is classified a heretic or a Jezebel for questioning any teachings or traditions of their particular assembly or denomination.

We must have the freedom to question our beliefs. God even invites us in His word to come reason with Him, to talk things over with Him until we come to an understanding (Isaiah 1:18). Even in Paul’s day, the Bereans were challenged to search the scripture to verify if what they had heard preached was accurate. At least we know God is always right! But He doesn’t rebuke us for asking questions.

Over my lifetime I have questioned a lot of traditions and beliefs, things I had been taught. I would bombard God

with questions. Little by little revelation came. The Chinese lantern would eventually present itself as the city on a hill, which Jesus mentioned. It was the city of our God on the sides of the north, Mount Zion, the place where God dwells. But in order to become that light producing city, the lantern needed to be turned upside down. Our understanding of the city on a hill, what Jesus is building, the Ekklesia must be turned upside down. A paradigm shift must happen.

The lantern would also reflect the cry of God's heart, "Set My people free". It would shine the light on the destination when the cry came for God's people to "Come out of Babylon".

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Matthew 5:13-16 (NLT)

For many years I would receive a little more revelation and understanding of the lantern. Some revelation would come like puzzle pieces but I couldn't quite see the complete picture, nor how to fit all the puzzle pieces together. Finally, many years later, in 2020 the puzzle pieces began to come together. I really hadn't thought about the Chinese lantern in several years.

God had continued to give me revelation on a lot of things, but I did not yet understand that they were all part of the Chinese lantern puzzle until the year God suddenly told me He was turning upside down His people's understanding of what Jesus was building. He was showing me what it would mean to be a "city on a hill", and how the "church" had missed it.

I knew this meant shaking would occur and the result of that shaking would be several paradigm shifts We would have a different understanding of God and the purpose for the

journey of life. The shakings would free us from the chains of bondage that we couldn't see holding us back. I still did not understand the "church" was not what Jesus was building. I did not yet understand what the true Ekklesia was, but I would! I was well on my way in this journey.

I was suddenly reminded of another vision I had at another time and things were really starting to come into focus. These two visions really drive the basis of this book. The second vision will be covered in depth in the next chapter. When God begins to reveal new truths to us, He often reveals a little at a time. We should meditate on the revelation He gives us until more revelation comes. Little by little we will begin to see the full picture.

When God's people really get a revelation of who God is and what He wants to do in this hour, we will turn our world upside down. Every morning will find us awake to new possibilities and great joy in anticipation of what God will do through us every new day.

One New Man

In the middle of the night, I awoke and glanced at the clock. It was 01:01. God often uses the time on a clock to interrupt me to get my attention. Sometimes it is just His way of confirming to me that I am hearing Him and I am on the right track. Sometimes He wants to communicate something to me.

When I saw the 01:01, I immediately thought of scripture's discussion concerning the one new man. God spoke gently to my spirit, "The one new man IS the city on a hill". I knew it was important we understand what the one new man really means. Ephesians chapter two is a great place to start on this topic of the "one new man". This theme is woven throughout this book. It is important to grasp the concept of what Paul is conveying as he writes about this one new man. It is particularly interesting when we read this passage in

Ephesians from the Passion version of the Bible. This translation can be easily found and read online.

The one new man is Jesus as the head and His Ekklesia as the body operating in the earth together as one. His body is made up of both the Jews and the Gentiles. This one new man has come into maturity and left childish things behind. It operates in coordination with the head who directs the movements of the body. The body does what the head directs.

Paul is the one who reveals the truth on this topic. Paul was a Jew of Jews. Because of Paul's background as a true Jew, it would make perfect sense if God had called Paul to minister to the Jews, but He didn't. God often surprises us with His gifts and callings outside of our background and comfort zone because He wants to show us and the world that we can do more than what it looks like in the natural that we can do. When we make assumptions God will challenge those assumptions, believe me!

God called Paul to minister to the Gentiles. God gave him revelation and understanding concerning the Old Testament's promises to include the Gentiles. Up to this time, the scripture was there for all to read, but its meaning and how it would be fulfilled was a mystery. Paul received revelation to that mystery. In this passage in Ephesians, Paul explained God's love and design for humanity, which included Jews, God's chosen people, and the rest of humanity (Gentiles).

Our reconciling "Peace" is Jesus! He has made Jew and non-Jew one in Christ. By dying as our sacrifice, he has broken down every wall of prejudice that separated us and has now made us equal through our union with Christ. Ethnic hatred has been dissolved by the crucifixion of his precious body on the cross. The legal code that stood condemning every one of us has now been repealed by his command. His triune essence has made peace between us by starting over—forming one new race of humanity, Jews and non-Jews fused together in himself!
Ephesians 2:14-15 (TPT)

The message of this book is imperative for the day we live, but it will not be received by everyone. It can only be

received through revelation. It is for a people whose hearts are set on maturing in the ways of God, whose focus is no longer self-promoting but God-promoting. It is the only way for us to overcome the evil that exists in our world today. We must grow up! Maturity is essential! When we are mature and walking in humility and unity with our God, He will share the blueprints for cities and nations with us.

The saints as salt today are in danger of losing their flavor. Salt meant to be a preservative is today preserving very little of the gospel of our Lord. The “church” doesn’t look much different than the world. But we are living in a great day of opportunity. Many prophets and apostles of old saw this day we live in by the spirit, and longed to be a part of what God has planned for this day. They could only see from a distance; we get to live in it.

Abraham left everything behind in search of something he would only see by the spirit. The city God was building would not become a reality in his day. We must see the same vision. We must be willing to leave all for what God is showing us. Even though it still seems far away, it is a lot closer by far to a reality today than it was in Abraham’s day.

Fear Comes in Many Forms

Abraham did not let a fear of the unknown, a fear of failure, keep him from being obedient to the voice of God. We must not allow fear to impact our lives. We must not be deterred from our goal. We must be obedient to God at all costs. We must embrace the change He is bringing.

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city

designed and built by God.

Hebrews 11:8-10 (NLT)

Fear is a very real thing. Many people are tremendously afraid of the unknown. Others fear being intimidated and ridiculed by others. With crime and violence everywhere, people are afraid to go places. People are fearful of losing their jobs, of harm to their families.

Common, ordinary believers are being put on watch lists by the government because of their beliefs. We have been taught evil will just get worse in the world and there is nothing we can do about it until Jesus comes back and rescues us. I pray this book will help to fight and to alleviate your fear and give you hope and faith that God is not done with us.

Much of what I teach is not being taught from most pulpits across this land and the world today. The last thing I ever want to do is preach a false doctrine. I am sure that is your heart's desire, as well. Some will want to know where you got your information. If no well-known Christian leader is supporting you, you may be rejected. You may be called names.

Always be humble when dealing with people. Always verify truth with your God and have His peace in your heart. He is faithful always. It is sometimes hard for current leadership to accept new revelation that they have never heard, especially from their "congregation". Be careful that you do not reject what the Lord has shown you just because leadership may not agree. Declare that truth will be revealed in your heart and theirs. Let God do His work.

I have always prayed, "Lord, if you have truly called me as your mouthpiece in the earth, please put a watch over my mouth and do not allow me to speak other than what I hear from you." When I have been confronted or questioned, God has always been faithful to show me that I am hearing from him or if not, where and how I missed it if I did.

God will be there for you as well. When God begins to give you revelation, there is a good chance those around you

may not have heard some of it before. Just be humble and don't assume you are always right or you are always wrong.

Go to your heavenly Father for direction. Above all, do not ignore what you believe God said. Search out truth. You have to know that you are hearing God accurately. God wants you to hear Him accurately. You are learning. He will teach and He will correct in love. Do not let the fear of being wrong stop you. Do not let the fear of what others think intimidate you.

Fear comes in many forms. In my case, because of my background, I would most of the time assume I was the one that was wrong. I feared leaders and their opinion of me. I have never gone to Bible college or attended seminary. Who was I to understand the Bible enough to teach it? Who was I to proclaim what God was saying?

The last thing I wanted to do was say something was from God when it had something of me in it. I wanted to just be quiet and not say anything, but I knew I couldn't or I would disappoint my God. I had to learn to trust God more than I trusted my own opinion and you will have to learn it as well.

Many may know in their heart that they hear God correctly, but when they speak it is not always well received by those around them. Therefore, out of fear of rejection they are tempted to not speak again in the name of the Lord. Believe me, these temptations to fear will come from the enemy to keep you in chains. Don't give up! Your Father knows you and He will correct you if you need it. But you must obey when He says speak. Continue in obedience and it becomes easier to just know when God is speaking.

I continue to this day to be cautious. I am not infallible and I do miss it sometimes. It is never wrong to question. When we miss it, we must just be quick to repent. The key is to have a heart for God and want to know His heart. If there is no check in my spirit to indicate something is not quite right, I don't have fear of declaring something new. I grew up in a "church" setting where I was taught to love the Bible. Knowing the Bible will help you stay on track, but God communicates in other ways as well.

Today God speaks to me often in dreams and visions, but it is checked against the Bible. Even words from the Bible need to be questioned and evaluated. We often accept man's interpretation of what God spoke through the authors of the Bible, rather than asking the Holy Spirit what He meant when those words were written.

We have often rejected a word from God because we believe something man has taught us in error concerning the Bible. Many denominations are built on different interpretations of the same scripture. How can this be?

I will be the first to admit that I do not have all the answers. I only know what God has chosen to reveal to me and trust Him to reveal more as I am able to process the new revelations. I have questions that thrust me forth into the unknown. Don't let the lack of answers keep you from moving forward. God is faithful. You will know what you need to know for the day's journey.

A New Day

Many have been taught, including me, the end-of-the-age will be a time when evil is so rampant that Christians will hide waiting to be rescued by God. One day I started asking questions. Did Jesus really say He was the second Adam and that He came to restore what the first Adam lost? Did He really say He gave back to man the authority and power that was originally given to Adam in the garden? Did Jesus really say that we would do greater works than He did while on earth?

Did Jesus really tell us to pray that His Kingdom come so that His will would be accomplished in the earth just like it is in heaven? Are wars and famine and human trafficking His will? If all that Jesus said is true, then shouldn't we be able to use that power and authority to overcome evil NOW? Doesn't it seem that if we are hiding and waiting for Jesus to rescue us, then Jesus failed in His mission to give us power and authority to change things? If He failed, then He lied to us.

I refuse to believe Jesus is a liar! I may not have all the answers but I am not going to accept willy-nilly everything religion has taught me. I have lots of questions, as I am sure you do as well. I believe the answers are in the heart of God. Our journey leads us into the very heart of God. As our relationship with God develops, our understanding of His heart for His creation becomes more acute. We begin to see His plans in far more depth than we ever thought possible.

We have entered a new era, a new time period in history. I do not know what all that involves, but I do know it means change. It means going where we have never been before. God will navigate; all we have to do is follow and obey. Jesus is coming back again, that I believe but He is coming back for a bride who has made herself ready!

It is God's Day. He will have His way. He is the One directing the building and establishing of the Ekklesia. Man has worked so hard over the centuries to accomplish so little. This is the day of rest where we enter into the rest of God that He has provided. We no longer work or strive to accomplish things for God. We just live the life, letting God live in and through us by the finished work of Jesus on the cross to touch all those we meet. It is about BEING, not DOING. There are still works accomplished; results are more awesome.

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.
Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

What God has chosen to reveal pertains mostly to the "what" He wants to do in this period of history, but not necessarily the "how". I am convinced the "how" depends a lot on each individual called to do their part, based on their talents, giftings, and anointing.

We are all individuals with our own uniqueness and God desires to use that uniqueness He placed inside of each one of us for His glory. We can no longer operate by formulas and lists and rules. We must depend on hearing His voice individually and simply obey in order to understand the "how".

Tear Down To Build Up

With this new era, comes the recognition of the religious spirit and how it has controlled many lives and many “churches”. Bondage is a trademark of the religious spirit. God is adamantly calling for a release of His people when He declares “Let My people go.” He is calling us out of bondage and into freedom. We must deal with the religious spirit before we can effectively advance the Kingdom of God.

God, when He called Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations, gave him a secret concerning God’s building process as recorded in the first chapter of Jeremiah. When God begins to build something new in our lives, this revealed truth applies. There are things that must be torn down and destroyed before new things can be built according to God’s instructions.

Many times, when God gives us new revelation, we filter it through an old belief system that has been infiltrated by human words and reasoning. We then tend to add the new revelation to the old structure. It is the concept of putting new wine into old wineskins. This needs to stop. We need to tear down all human reasoning and religiosity before we can build something new.

I write as one who has come face-to-face with this ugly religious spirit in many church settings, but also more times than I care to admit, in my own life. I have had to deal with it in order to move on in the things of God. My experiences and revelations from God are not for sale. Everything I write comes unpolished and straight from the heart.

I believe that what is in my heart and spirit was given to me by God and therefore it is not mine to sell. The Apostle Paul seemed to indicate that he was not a polished, eloquent speaker, but that didn’t make him anything less than what God had made him. I believe my message is straight from the heart of God and worth considering.

I do not know when all the things I write about will occur. I see the start of many things but I may never see the fulfillment of these things in this lifetime. Abraham believed God that he would be the father of many nations, but he did not live to see the fulfillment of that promise. That doesn't mean the promise was never fulfilled, because it most certainly was.

If I do not see these things happen in my lifetime, I believe even until my dying breath that God is going to do something glorious with His Ekklesia and nothing can stop it. He will see the lantern turned upside down so that it can become the light coming from the city on a hill, the true Ekklesia with Jesus as Head, the one new man.

I am not asking you to accept what I write *carte blanche*. I am asking you to prayerfully consider my teachings. I believe the Ekklesia is nowhere near what God desired it to be. How do we get back on track to see His desire for the Ekklesia fulfilled through us? I hope and pray this book creates a hunger in you for more of God and I pray it helps us to find our way. The one thing I know for sure is, God is faithful! GREAT is His faithfulness!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 1*

1 – How do you view the journey of life? Have you ever thought of life the way the author describes? How would you describe the goal or destination of your life? Are you willing to evaluate your goal?

2 – The author states that we are all called to minister, to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. Have you ever thought about this? What are your current thoughts on what it means to minister?

3 - Do you think knowing and understanding the heart of the Father will change the way you perceive life and how you live it every day? Do you hunger enough for God's involvement in your life to respond to God's call for you to know His heart? If you are willing, stop now and pray that God will work in you to bring you to the place He can trust you with His heart.

4 – Have you ever received understanding or revelation from God when you knew it was directly from Him and not your brain or logic? How did it make you feel? Think about Paul and what he believed before he met Jesus on the way to Damascus. He had people killed because of what he believed. Things changed when he saw the truth. Evaluate your own spiritual growth. Can you think of examples from your own life where there are things you were taught, but no longer believe? Think about the process that happened during this change. Can you see how God was working in that process?

5 – Are you willing to pray and trust God to reveal other areas where your doctrine was taught to you by man, and not by the Holy Spirit? If you are willing, please stop and pray right now.

6 – What do you think God means when He says “Set My people free?” What does ‘being free’ mean to you? What areas of your life need more freedom? Are you ready and willing to go through the process with God to be free, even if it means tearing some things down in your life to build something new? Do you think there may be religious traditions and human reasoning in your mind that God may want to destroy? Are you willing to pray, Lord, have your way in my life, set me free?

7 – Do you understand the difference between religion and being a part of the Ekklesia? Document your thoughts.

8 – What is your current definition of maturity as it relates to God’s people? In what areas of your own life do you feel you need to mature? Have you sought God for a plan in order to make this happen? Are there areas that you believe God has shown you where He wants you to come into a higher level of maturity? Do you look at events of each day as planned by God to bring you into maturity?

9 – Do you understand what the author means by progressive revelation? Have you ever had a word from God, a dream or vision, where you thought you understood it at the time, but over time you grew to understand it better? Do you regularly review the words God gives you, as well as dreams and visions? Are you willing to start to do this and pray God will give you more expanded revelation? Will you believe and trust that He wants to communicate with you? Why do you think the author spends so much time writing about revelation?

10 – The author mentions that the Ekklesia and the “church” are not the same thing. Do you understand what she means by

this statement? Do you really want to know the difference? What are your thoughts on this topic? Do you think the “church” needs to change? If so, how?

11 – We are told by Jesus to preach or proclaim the good news or gospel of the Kingdom. Scripture does not say preach the good news of the church. What do you think Jesus meant by “the gospel of the Kingdom”? How does that differ from the “church”? How does that differ from the Ekklesia? We are told to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. What do you think that means?

12 – Do you understand what Paul was teaching the saints concerning the “one new man”? Why do you think this is important? How do you think you get to the place of being an effective part of the one new man?

13 – Evaluate any fear that may be in your life. Can you recall when fear may have hindered or stopped you from obeying God? How did that make you feel? Did you repent and ask God to help you face your fear? What happened when you encountered it again? If you desire to be free from these fears, pray now that God would reveal the source of the fears and He would help you to trust Him enough to overcome these fears.

* These questions are to help readers process the material in the chapter. They should be thoughtfully considered, prayed about and processed before going on to the next chapter. Each chapter will have its own set of questions to consider. Document each answer and then review at the end of the book to see how your perception of things has changed. You will be pleasantly surprised.

CHAPTER 2

THE VISION OF THE CHURCH

Setting the Stage

Grow up! Has anyone ever said those words to you? It can be rather intimidating and embarrassing for someone to call us out as an adult and tell us to stop acting childish. My 80+ year-old dad used to say, “I may get old, but I will never grow up.” He instilled that same philosophy in me and I have said it many times. One is never too old to act like a child at times and enjoy life. In fact, Jesus told us that unless we come to Him with childlike faith, we would never enter the Kingdom.

However, we will find that advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth does require maturity. We cannot effectively advance the Kingdom of God without it, but that has nothing to do with giving up happiness, joy, and a full life. In fact, it has everything to do with it. There should be a child in all of us, even when we are mature.

Maturity opens doors that nothing else can. We must develop the ability to hear God’s voice and understand the Father’s heart if we are going to mature. Revelation is only obtained from the ability to hear the voice of God. If we are not serious about maturity, we will never embrace our true identity and destiny. We will always stop short. We will never be free from the chains holding us back, if we do not seek maturity.

Our final goal is not having our spirit reborn as Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John three. Heaven is not our final goal. Many people think the goal of a good life is all about getting saved, going to “church”, trying to live a quiet, good life and raising a family, witnessing to people now and then and finally dying in peace and going to heaven. That is not our goal,

nor is it our destination. Far from it! Unfortunately, millions of people are dying sitting in bondage on a pew somewhere just waiting for heaven.

We must travel on to maturity in Jesus, so that His Kingdom becomes our focal point. The Kingdom of God, where Jesus sits on the throne, ruling and reigning, is our destination and our inheritance. It is my belief that only the mature will sit on His throne with Him to rule and reign over the nations. Only the mature will be transformed into the bride of Christ. That topic will be woven throughout this entire book. Would you want a child to rule and reign over the nations, a child using their own immature judgment to make huge decisions that affect millions of people?

I hear some say, “Wait, a minute. I thought if a person was saved, they became a part of the bride. I thought all Christians would rule and reign.” God’s promises are available to all His children, but that doesn’t mean all His children obtain those promises. My first book, *The Mountain Belongs to the Remnant (Overcomers Advance the Kingdom of God)*, details much about being an overcomer.

We are born again as overcomers, but like learning to walk and talk, we must learn how to be effective as overcomers.

To him who overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 3:21 (MEV)

This verse clearly states it is the overcomer who gets to sit on the throne with Jesus. Overcoming means to conquer or get the victory over something. It requires some action on our part. Salvation does not require anything of us other than to believe and accept the free gift of salvation Jesus lovingly offers. Nothing else is required. So, what is it we overcome? Jesus said that He overcame the world.

We must overcome the world, as well. We must not allow the worldly systems to have control over us. The worldly

systems were infiltrated by satan to attempt to control and manipulate mankind. Jesus did not allow these systems to overcome Him. Jesus fought against them and overcame them. He fought against the enemy's attempt to enslave Him. He teaches us and gives us the tools we need to do the same. Our religious blinders must be removed so we see clearly and become effective.

What have I got to lose if I am right and I decide to travel on to maturity? If I am right, I will be a part of the bride and will rule and reign. If I am wrong, then by the thought of many, I will still be a part of the bride and will rule and reign with Jesus. So, I can't lose. Not so for the millions who do not mature in the things of God, if I am right. They will miss out on being a part of the bride and ruling and reigning with our wonderful Lord. What a missed opportunity! That doesn't mean they miss out on salvation, but salvation is the doorway to the Kingdom. My desire is that all God's people would come to maturity. Maturing can be difficult, but it is important. Maturity is not how many years a person has been a Christian, nor how well they know the Bible.

Many events in my life have shaped the message of this book on maturity. These events will be woven throughout this book as well. The first few chapters cover some of my life events in order to set the stage for the revelation that would come when God began to put the pieces of the puzzle together for me.

Life Events

I share these life events, at God's direction, so saints will begin to understand the things God has placed in my heart. They help illustrate the truth I am trying to convey. They are not just for me, but are about the exciting times we live in and about the future in order to give saints a hope.

I did not fully understand the events at the time they were happening in my life. These events were like puzzle pieces. Once God began to put the pieces together, they began

to make much more sense. I now have a release from God to write about them. We need eyes to see and ears to hear what God has planned in this age for His children. In order to see clearly, the blinders must be removed.

Some of these events happened in local “churches” or as I often call them, assemblies. In many of the events, I was a member or a participant of the assembly. Hopefully, these events I mention will help someone else. The sharing of these events is in no way meant to glorify, embarrass or shame anyone. They are shared as examples for when others may go through something similar, they will know they are not the only one and they are not crazy.

In most cases none of us involved in these events really understood the fullness of the events or the prophetic words at the time they took place. They were both learning and growing experiences. This is an important point to remember. Never throw something away when it doesn’t seem to make sense to you, or fit your current narrative. It will make sense in God’s timing and His way.

These events were meant to help us understand how we were in bondage and how to be set free. God wants us to be free. Most of the events discussed are happy ones, others not so much, but all were specifically planned by a loving Father and all were necessary. As I stated before, the future often proves the past. Prophetic events are not always understood at the time they are given.

These events teach us something about ourselves, about others and about God. Personal events are important in our lives and our process towards getting to know our Father’s heart and maturing in the things of His Kingdom. Hopefully for those reading this who have felt some of these same emotions, my experiences will encourage you to keep pursuing what God has placed in your heart even if you don’t understand the path.

Pursue what God has placed on your heart even when others can’t see it or don’t understand it either. God has His reasons for doing what He does in whatever way He chooses,

and allowing what He allows in your life. Embrace it if you are following His path for your life, ALL things will eventually work out for your good.

We should never have the attitude that we are always right and others are wrong. That is arrogance and not humility. We all go through training and maturing in the things of God. On the other hand, humility also does not demand that we accept the words of others just because of who they are, as some suggest. There is a false understanding of humility prevalent in the “church”.

False humility says no matter what, we should submit to the teaching and instruction of someone who exerts authority over our lives. After all, they are supposedly over us and have our best interests at heart. True humility is humbling ourselves before God and seeking truth from Him. We hear and then we obey. Truth from God can and often does come through others, just not everyone.

Humility is one of those things not clearly understood by God’s people today. It is, however, required for maturity. Before our maker we all stand or fall and at some point, in our life, we will be tested by God on whether we will obey Him or man. Obedience to God is required if we are going to enter our promised land.

**If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;
Isaiah 1:19 (NKJV)**

Revelation Sometimes Has Double Meaning

As stated before, revelation often comes in parts. We may understand a portion of it when we receive it, but God relays more revelation over time. Revelation can also have more than one meaning. It could have a current application as well as a future application. This is illustrated in scripture often.

One example is found in the book of Luke. The angel appeared to Mary with the news she was going to have a baby. The angel told her a few things about the life of this baby. Born

as a baby He would be the Savior of mankind and the Lamb to be slain. He was also King but His Kingdom was not what they expected.

He came to establish the Ekklesia. Both the revelation of the Kingdom and the Ekklesia were not understood in that time of history. The fulfillment was not done in an instant nor was it complete during the lifetime of Jesus on earth. The Word of God continues to produce.

**Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."
Luke 1:30-33 (NKJV)**

Another example of this double meaning is found in II Samuel chapter seven. God sent the prophet Nathan to King David with a word concerning the future. God told David that one of his sons would rule and the kingdom would be established by God under this son, Solomon. However, it is also a prophetic reference that the Messiah would come through David's bloodline and the Kingdom of the Messiah would be established forever. There it is, a current fulfillment and a future fulfillment in the same prophecy.

"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' "

II Samuel 7:12-16 (NKJV)

There are many more examples in the Bible. God lives outside of time and space and so this sort of double prophecy and fulfillment is an easy thing for Him. We, as humans, so often just want to box God into our human limitations, but God doesn't have limits. God wants us to recognize and live in unlimited possibilities. Many of our limits or constraints are because of man's teachings and are imaginary. God's power and authority have no limits.

We must fully understand the Ekklesia in order to advance the Kingdom of God. Ekklesia is the Greek word that many translators interpreted in English as "church". The Ekklesia is the people Jesus establishes to advance the Kingdom. There are many different vehicles the Ekklesia may use to fulfill this goal.

Many equate the modern "church" as the Ekklesia. It is not. It may be a vehicle the Ekklesia uses to advance the Kingdom, but mostly it does not much more than provide a building for the Ekklesia and unbelievers to gather to learn, worship and perform certain religious rituals.

The vision of the Chinese lantern mentioned in the first chapter, is a picture of the paradigm shift needed for a clear understanding of the Ekklesia. The Ekklesia is also pictured as the city on the hill, Mount Zion, the one new man.

We will most definitely spend a great deal of time dissecting that lantern in this book. But, another vision, an earlier one plays a role as well. This second vision was one of the first visions I ever had. It had a double revelation. The vision was meant for the situation I was facing at the time, but it also carried a connotation for something in the future, as well. It carried a double meaning. Both of these visions are key to understanding where God is taking us.

The Vision of the Church Building

Sitting in my car in the parking lot of the assembly I was attending at the time, I was praying and crying with my heart breaking. My children attended the school hosted by this

assembly. Some of the members of this assembly did not want to fund the school anymore, since it was not paying for itself. The arguments were getting heated and dividing the assembly.

I prayed earnestly for the assembly. I loved the people. I did not want them divided and angry with each other, but for the sake of my children I wanted the school to remain open. As I prayed in tears that day, sitting in the parking lot facing that church building, I suddenly saw a vision of the building as though it were alive. It was pulsating and its sides were expanding and retracting as if it were breathing. It was very real.

I watched in awe through tears as the vision continued. Suddenly I saw long arms protrude from the building. Those arms reached out into the community and picked up farmers in the field plowing their fields, children at school, on playgrounds, those sick in bed. They picked up mothers doing dishes, shopping, and kneeling by a bed praying. They picked up men and women inside buildings at work.

The arms picked up all kinds of people and set them down in front of the door of the building. I cried, "Lord, what is this? What is happening?" In my vision I was suddenly standing at the entrance to the lower level of the building where there were hundreds of pairs of shoes. I thought of God speaking to Moses at the burning bush, "Moses, take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground."

I took off my shoes and entered the building. I was greeted by a blinding light so bright that I could not see. I immediately knew I was in the presence of Jesus and I fell to my knees. I cried, aware of His holiness. He came to me, touched my eyes and lifted me to my feet. I could immediately see again. I did not see Jesus directly. I cannot fully describe it. I was seeing His form in the midst of the most beautiful blue light I have ever seen. It was not blinding. It did not hurt my eyes. I recognized His voice.

We talked but I do not know what all was said. Maybe I will know someday. Suddenly I wondered where all those people I saw enter the building had gone. I could not see them

through the deep blue light. I asked Jesus, “Where are all the people I saw enter this building?” His response was “Those people have become so much like me that you cannot see them anymore. You only see me”.

At that moment I was overwhelmed with awe and joy. Then I asked, “Lord, is this my “church”? I felt Him smile and then the vision was gone. He did not answer my question at that time. It took me many years to understand what had happened. His heart was so touched by my love and prayers for this assembly that He came in vision form to assure me that these concerns in this particular situation would work out for good. They did, even though several years later the school did close, but we were ready to enter a new phase of our lives.

The vision meant more than just assurance that God had heard my prayer. I knew that, but I didn’t understand what it was. After many years and when I was ready, He gave me further revelation. The vision He gave to me was a picture of His love for His Ekklesia He held in His heart, what He was establishing. Blue represents heaven and all those people were hidden in the Light of Jesus. They were a mature and holy people fitted together with the Lord. It truly represented heaven and earth connecting. Another revelation with double meaning.

Both of these key visions I had, represent the city on a hill, Mount Zion, the city of the great King, the one new man. Jesus would pull people from all walks of life and all ages and together establish His Ekklesia. It would take me many, many years to understand the truths hidden in these visions from God. We are headed to a place where we are so hidden in Christ that He is all the world sees. This will only happen when we are mature and functioning in true humility and unity, free from all bondage and control. Jesus is building us together into a beautiful building where His glory will be seen.

The Light of the World – Mount Zion

Mount Zion is the dwelling place of God. It is where He rules.

It is high and magnificent; the whole earth rejoices to see it! Mount Zion, the holy mountain, is the city of the great King!
Psalm 48:2 (NLT)

Zion is where the Ekklesia Jesus is building is located with Him as the cornerstone.

Therefore the Lord GOD says this, “Listen carefully, I am laying in Zion a Stone, a tested Stone, A precious Cornerstone for the [secure] foundation, firmly placed. He who believes [who trusts in, relies on, and adheres to that Stone] will not be disturbed or give way [in sudden panic].
Isaiah 28:16 (ESV)

Zion is where Jesus reigns in His glory. It is where His throne is located. It is the place where Jesus is both priest and king. He has also made us priests and kings before our God. To rule and reign with Him, we must learn how to operate in both these anointings.

Then the glory of the moon will wane, and the brightness of the sun will fade, for the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will rule on Mount Zion. He will rule in great glory in Jerusalem, in the sight of all the leaders of his people.
Isaiah 24:23 (NLT)

We, the mature saints reign in Zion as the body with Jesus as the Head, operating in obedience, humility and unity with the priestly and kingly anointing. The kingly anointing connects horizontally with earth and the people, the priestly anointing vertically with heaven and God. This is the one new man identified in the Bible.

The deliverers shall go up on Mount Zion to rule and judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom and the kingship shall be the LORD’S.
Obadiah 1:21 (AMP)

Deliverers go up the mountain of God to rule. We are those deliverers. We are here to set the captives free, not because we ourselves are special, but because the special One lives and moves freely in us to do what He wants accomplished in the earth. God has spoken. He wants His people set free. Maturity requires us to be free.

Matthew, chapter five, tells us shortly after Jesus began His public appearances, he went up on a mountain to teach His disciples. It is on the mountain He tells His disciples they are the light of the world.

You are the light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one lights a lamp and puts it under a clay pot. Instead, it is placed on a lampstand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so others will see the good you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16 (CEV)

Jesus told His disciples the fire He would light in them would be bright enough to light the whole world if they let it. They should not conceal it but make it burn brighter and brighter. The light coming from His Ekklesia on top of the mountain would bring glory to the Father in heaven and could not be extinguished. It wasn't individual lights scattered all over creation. It was mature saints as the Ekklesia shining brighter together as the light from Mount Zion. It is the Ekklesia, Isaiah saw in Isaiah chapter 60, when he saw a light so bright that it would draw the nations to it.

In John chapter eight and nine Jesus told the disciples He was the light of the world while He walked on the earth. Here in Matthew, He tells them they will become the light of the world. After Jesus returned to the Father, He would pass on to them the authority and the power needed to do the things that He was doing. He was the light and they would become the light. We, the Ekklesia, would become the light.

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” John 8:12 (NLT)

If we are now the light of the world, people can follow the light in us, which is Jesus, they don’t have to walk in darkness. They will be drawn to the light that leads to life, and they can then become light as well.

The light of Jesus should shine so brightly in us that when we walk into a room, demons recognize us, and make themselves known. Things hidden in darkness come into the light before this great army of the Lord that knows its place. When the light is this bright, there is no place to hide. All is revealed.

This army operates in righteousness and justice, in both the priestly and the kingly anointing, loves good and hates evil. They shine the light of Jesus wherever they go and darkness cannot hide anymore. That is your destiny. Embrace it. **DO NOT SETTLE.**

In chapter five of Matthew Jesus declared we are the light of the world. He also said we are to be like a city on a hill, not a lamp put under a basket to hide the light. We are to shine forth the light, which is the very essence of God, His glory, His presence.

We are not to hide the presence, the glory of God, under a basket, or in our case, behind four walls. It is placed on a candlestick high on a hill so the whole world can see it. It is not hidden in a building with four walls called a “church”, sitting on a street corner somewhere and only open a few hours each week.

Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

Hebrews 11:10 (NLT)

I know that it is hard to believe this will ever occur on earth before Jesus returns. All we see today is darkness and gross sins being flaunted. The wicked don’t care anymore if

you know what they are doing, and it could be easy to just throw in the towel. But Abraham saw the city by faith, and so can we! Our God is an awesome God and He is full of glory and He cannot tell a lie!

Jesus did not say He was building this Ekklesia in heaven. He said He was building this Ekklesia on earth. We have relegated too many things to heaven and ages to come, when God wants them to happen on earth in the here-and-now. We must see and understand the difference.

The Glory of the Last Temple

The last day temple will be more glorious than the first, the prophet Haggai writes in chapter two of the book that bears his name. He is talking about the house that Jesus would build and God would inhabit, not another physical temple. He is talking about the Ekklesia.

The Ekklesia will have more of God's glory resting on it than the glory on the Old Testament temples. The vision the Lord gave me says it all. The glory, the presence of God, was so bright, so beautiful that the individual saint could not be seen apart from Jesus. Everything points to our glorious Lord. Everything is in Him, the hope of glory.

The prophet Haggai had given Israel a word that was prophetic of our time. God was not happy with them. They had been building their own houses and neglecting the house of God. Sounds familiar today. "Church" leaders are building their own ministries, their own "churches", rather than collaborating with Jesus to build His Ekklesia.

Zerubbabel had started the rebuilding of the temple several years before Haggai's writing but there was opposition. The people had rebuilt the foundation but because of the opposition, it sat for about seventeen years until the prophet Haggai stirred the people to come together again and rebuilt the temple on the neglected foundation.

The foundation of the Ekklesia was laid 2000 years ago at the cross. The cornerstone was in place to make sure the

building would be built to God's standard. The enemy set out to keep the true Ekklesia from making much progress eventually leading to the Dark Ages of history. The recovery of truth began with the reformation in the 1500's. It would take centuries of little by little until we reach where we are today.

It is now time for the prophets of our day to come forth. They must begin to declare and decree the word of the Lord concerning the true Ekklesia so it can be built on the neglected foundation. It is time to stir the saints into action again. The true and only foundation is Jesus and the design and blueprints of the building of the Ekklesia are given to the true prophets and apostles through the heart and spirit of the Lord.

The latter temple will look different than the first Ekklesia. It will show forth the glory of the Lord in much brighter fashion. His presence will be real and the nations will see it. The whole world will see His glory and be aware of His presence.

A month after the Jews had started the work, God spoke again through the prophet, Haggai. There were those still alive who had seen the beauty and glory of the original temple. Haggai knew some were extremely disappointed that this temple was not near as beautiful and valuable as the original. It was a lot smaller and just did not have the grandeur of the first temple built by King Solomon.

It is in this setting that God spoke and told His people not to be sad. He told them there would come a time in the future when God Himself would shake the earth and all the nations. When that happened the wealth of those nations would flow into the Temple. THAT temple would be filled with God's glory. It would be filled with God's peace and it would be beautiful! More beautiful and glorious than Solomon's temple.

The prophet was looking down through time to see the temple not made by human hands, the Ekklesia, full of God and His glory. It had no walls to hide the glory. The glory would be seen in all the earth. Many are waiting for the transfer of wealth to come into the "church". Not going to happen! In

fact, much of the wealth of the current “church” is going to be stripped as well.

The wealth of the nations flows into the Ekklesia, the city on a Hill. It will be placed in the hands of the righteous, the ones who know what is right in the sight of God and will obey His every desire. The wealth will be used to build His Kingdom not our own kingdoms. Haggai was talking about the mature saints, the Ekklesia, who understand righteousness and justice, who operate in both the priestly and the kingly anointing, who hear the voice of the Lord and obey.

We are living in that day, people, we truly are! The true Ekklesia will carry the light and when we come into oneness with our Lord, that light cannot be hidden. It is the light of our Lord. He is all we see, all we desire!

That light is the glory of God manifested in and through us. God’s glory is His very essence manifested. Because He lives in us, that glory or light shines through us to others as well. There is going to come a day when the whole world is going to see that light, that glory.

For as the waters fill the sea, the earth will be filled with an awareness of the glory of the LORD. Habakkuk 2:14 (NLT)

Spiritual Dimensions

We are spiritual beings living in a physical earth suit. We are grounded by gravity to the earth. We live in time. We are three dimensional, measured by height, depth, and width. God lives in a multi-faceted world outside of time and space. We do not even know how to really comprehend that because we have never experienced it.

However, on occasion the physical or natural dimensions get close enough to spiritual dimensions to touch and intersect. We often experience the spiritual realm through our spiritual senses, but sometimes we get close enough to experience them with our physical senses. Sometimes we see angels or the glory manifests in the physical realm.

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, we are told of events where the dimensions overlapped. Sometimes it is hard to tell if the experience was with the physical senses or the spiritual senses because the author doesn't say. When the writers talk about these experiences, even if they were only sensed with the spiritual senses, they seemed so real they talk as if they were physical senses.

Paul describes this type of experience in II Corinthians. He was more than likely the man he mentions. He could not tell whether what he experienced was his spirit leaving his body to be taken into heaven to see some things, or if his whole physical body actually went to heaven.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

II Corinthians 12:2 (NKJV)

Many accounts exist in both the New and Old Testament of angels interacting with humans. Manna that fed the Israelites in the desert was from heaven and manifested in the earth. It even disappeared under the heat of the day. The transfiguration was very real. The spiritual dimension and the physical dimension collided that day. The glory broke through into the physical dimensions. So did Moses and Elijah.

Eight days later, Jesus took Peter, Jacob, and John and climbed a high mountain to pray. As he prayed, his face began to glow until a blinding glory streamed from him. A radiant glory illuminated his entire body. His brightness became so intense that it made his clothing blinding white, as multiple flashes of lightning. All at once, two men appeared in glorious splendor: Moses and Elijah. They spoke with Jesus about his soon departure from this world and the things the Father destined him to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions had become very drowsy, but they became fully awake when they saw the glory and splendor of Jesus standing there and the two men with him.

Luke 9:28-32 (TPT)

Philip in the New Testament had a spiritual dimension experience. He was a table waiter. Philip did not have a title or a degree from some theological school. But when God told him to do something, he obeyed. Philip was told by Holy Spirit to go to a certain place. As he obeyed, he saw a man sitting in his chariot reading from Isaiah and was told to approach the man. As the man read scripture Philip explained what it meant. The man believed and Philip, the table waiter, baptized him right then and there. Then what happened?

The Ethiopian stopped his chariot, and they went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, Philip was suddenly snatched up by the Spirit of the Lord and instantly carried away to the city of Ashdod, where he reappeared, preaching the gospel in that city. Acts 8:38-40 (TPT)

Ashdod would have been around fifteen miles from where Philip ministered to the Ethiopian. The Holy Spirit caught away Phillip. The Greek word translated “carried away” is the same Greek word used to describe what happened to Paul when he was taken to heaven. For Philip this was both a spiritual and a physical experience.

Have you ever experienced anything like that? Do you want to? Do you believe it is possible? Or are these just stories, figments of our imaginations? There are many more examples of physical and spiritual dimensions overlapping in the Bible. These things happened through the first Ekklesia and I believe they will happen again, even more, in this time. Are we prepared?

Many people believe if something is not mentioned in the Bible, then it is not from God. Yet, scripture tells us Jesus did many things that were never recorded. Aren't you curious what those things are? Jesus said we would do even greater works than these! Nothing is impossible with Him, and we are about to experience things never recorded before in history because heaven is going to invade earth like never before if we only believe and seek His heart!

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were recorded one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. John 21:25 (AMP)

Sacred

In II Corinthians chapter 12, Paul wrote about his supernatural experiences. He couldn't tell for sure whether it happened with his physical body or if his spirit separated from his body to experience it. It didn't matter. It happened and it was very real! Paul describes it, according to the New Living Translation in verse 4, he **"heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell."**

Wow! Stop and think about that statement! What do you do with seeing things that you cannot put into words? The Greek word implies that what Paul heard was too sacred, too holy to mention. It reminds me a lot of the book of Revelation. John saw things that he was having a hard time finding the right words to describe. But in his case John was told by Jesus to write down what he saw. Jesus was going to explain some things to him.

These experiences are available to us today as well as many other experiences. The things that Paul saw and heard in his day that he was not allowed to talk about, may very well be available for us to talk about because of the day in which we live. However, a warning must be issued. God still reveals things to His prophets that are not yet ready to be told. We must be obedient and speak when God says to speak and obedient to not speak when we are told not to speak.

Everything we receive from God should be treated as sacred and holy. We must be careful what we do with what He gives us. His words of revelation, dreams and visions are holy and pure and we can so easily defile them if we are not careful with the things of God. They should not be tossed away.

These godly gifts are precious treasures and not to be treated lightly. We can indeed be guilty of throwing pearls to swine. Sometimes people embellish what they see to make it

seem more appealing. In doing so, the pure word is treated as a cheap object in need of more glamor. This must stop.

Immaturity and the Loss of First Love

Why are supernatural events not as common as they were in the Old Testament or in the first century when the foundation of the Ekklesia was established? Several reasons come to mind, such as lack of faith, blindness, and immaturity. We have lost our love of who He is. When we look to Him, it is to His hands, not His heart.

As a society we have become extremely dependent on science and technology. It seems, we only believe God for something when there appears to be no other way to obtain what we desire. He is not our first resource. We must come to the place where He is our first choice for everything. Without faith it is absolutely impossible to please God.

When God says that we must have faith that He is, it is far more than just believing that He exists. We must believe what God explained to Moses, that He is the I AM. What does that mean? It means, whatever you need, I AM. Whatever we need whether it is health, finances, love, peace, anything, He is the Provider of everything! He is our source. If we want to walk in these things, He must be our heart.

Another reason we don't see miracles or deep revelations as much, there is a veil of darkness or blindness that covers most of the earth. God says the wicked are blinded by demonic forces because these evil forces do not want the glorious light of the gospel to penetrate men's hearts.

If there is anything hidden about our message, it is hidden only to someone who is lost. The god who rules this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers. They cannot see the light, which is the good news about our glorious Christ, who shows what God is like.

II Corinthians 4:3,4 (CEV)

The unsaved are definitely blind, but those who are saved can be blinded as well. The Bible states the blindness and deafness of those who are saved is often caused by rebellion and disobedience. When we disobey God, we walk a step further away from Him. Our back is to Him. The further away we are from His heart, the harder it is to hear. There seems to be a veil over us so it is hard to hear His voice.

Listen, you foolish and senseless people, with eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear. Have you no respect for me? Why don't you tremble in my presence? I, the LORD, define the ocean's sandy shoreline as an everlasting boundary that the waters cannot cross. The waves may toss and roar, but they can never pass the boundaries I set. But my people have stubborn and rebellious hearts. They have turned away and abandoned me.

Jeremiah 5:21-23 (NLT)

Another scripture.

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house.

Ezekiel 12:1,2 (NKJV)

And yet another scripture.

Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Matthew 13:13 (NKJV)

There are many verses, both Old and New Testament, that talk about the issue of blindness. Jesus goes on in this passage to quote from Isaiah chapter 42 which indicates it is God's people who are blind and deaf. Then if you read further, God says through the prophet it is because they have not followed God's laws and have been disobedient.

These are just a few of the many verses that indicate disobedience will make it harder to hear God and to see what

He is doing in the earth today. If we are blind, we will not see the things that have been taken from us. We will not know for what we should fight, let alone know that we are in a war to recover what has been stolen from us.

Immaturity is yet another reason we do not see miracles like we should. Huge numbers of people have believed that Jesus is the Christ and that He died for them, but they have not matured in the things of God. We want the shiny new toy and we want others to see us with the shiny new toy. It is the spiritual version of keeping up with the Jones's. God forbid. If we are to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God, if we are to advance that Kingdom in the earth, we must put away childish things and mature.

Recently I awoke one morning and I heard the Lord say to me, "I am not a magician. Tell my people I am not a magician, and to stop treating me like I am!" He was very serious. We must understand the holiness of God and His gifts.

Certain spiritual things are reserved by God for the mature. However, God does not withhold the ability to mature from anyone. The choice is ours. The mature understand what sacred and holy means and they do not touch godly things with unholy hands! The closer we are to God's heart; the more holiness means to us.

We have much to say about this topic although it is difficult to explain, because you have become too dull and sluggish to understand. For you should already be professors instructing others by now; but instead, you need to be taught from the beginning the basics of God's prophetic oracles! You're like children still needing milk and not yet ready to digest solid food. For every spiritual infant who lives on milk is not yet pierced by the revelation of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, whose spiritual senses perceive heavenly matters. And they have been adequately trained by what they've experienced to emerge with understanding of the difference between what is truly excellent and what is evil and harmful. Now is the time for us to progress beyond the basic message of Christ and advance into perfection. The foundation has already been laid for us to build upon: turning away from our dead works to embrace faith in God, teaching about different baptisms, impartation

by the laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. So with God's enablement we will move on to deeper truths. **Hebrews 5:11-14–6:1-3 (TPT)**

This passage from the Passion version of the Bible says the mature eat solid food and their “spiritual senses perceive heavenly matters”. The spiritual senses of the mature have been awakened to sense what is going on in the spiritual realm. The mature know and understand how heaven is reacting to what is happening on earth. They also have the ability to discern the spirit behind people and events. Discernment is desperately needed. We need to awaken this gift and become proficient at using it.

It saddens our Father's heart when we rebuke something sent by Him because we believe it to be from the enemy. It grieves His heart when we accept things that come from the enemy believing they are from God. This is further proof that we need to mature.

As we increase in our maturity, we will discover what it means to live in the Father's heart, to be that City on a Hill. In that place Jesus is the Head and we are the body operating as one and following His every command. As a result, there will be an ever-increasing closeness between the spiritual and the physical dimensions. We are going to see even more supernation events than what happened in New Testament times.

A Warning

Exciting and adventurous as all this sounds, a warning must be issued. We do not and never should we seek these things for the sake of the experience or for exploitation. We seek them because we want more of God, and our hearts cry for the people who need a touch from the One who loves them so. Love is what propels us.

So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

I Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)

Some translations say eager for spiritual gifts, but the word “gifts” does not appear in the original text. It simply means that the saints were eager to experience anything spiritual, anything coming from the heart of God. Paul warns them that spiritual experiences are not toys. They are not for show and tell. They are not to make a name for ourselves. They are not to exalt us and give us a platform from which to perform.

We should excel in our spiritual gifts and spiritual experiences in order to build on the foundation of the Ekklesia laid by Jesus. We don’t use these gifts to build what we call “church” today. We don’t use them to grow our congregations and our followings, to build huge ministries. We use them to train the saints into maturity so they are prepared to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. The saints belong to Jesus and are not ours to control.

There are many counterfeits in the world today and they can easily lead us astray if we are not following hard after God. Satan tries his best to distract us with his counterfeit kingdom. We must seek the Father’s Heart. Spiritual adventures happen as a result of residing in the Father’s heart and doing what He says. They are never meant to bring glory to us or dependency on us. We seek to receive from His heart, not His hand.

Some people who cannot tell the difference between the real and the fake avoid these experiences all together out of fear of accepting the counterfeit. That is why we desperately need to get to the place where we are confident in hearing our God’s voice. Nothing else will do. There are no shortcuts. Discernment is hearing the voice of God.

We need to be prepared for these experiences and not be afraid when they come to us, because they will! We should desire them, but not apart from knowing our God. These

experiences will often happen in spite of us when we are walking with God step by step. Peter walked down the street and people stepped into his shadow to be healed. He did nothing but walk! People, who touched a handkerchief or apron that Paul had worn, were healed. He was just going about his every-day business of tentmaking.

Things are not always as they seem. The enemy is a counterfeiter and he tries to manufacture the glory of God. He tries to manufacture the essence of God, but everything satan does is a counterfeit. We see the counterfeit all over the world today, and yes, I am going to say it, even in many of our “churches”.

In the days of Moses and Aaron, the sorcerers were able to do miracles also, like turn a staff into a snake. Jesus even warned His disciples that false christs and false prophets would arise and even perform signs and wonders to try to deceive even God’s people (Mark 13:22). Only staying close to the heart of God, hearing and obeying, and operating in discernment can we keep from being deceived.

The Spirit of Ichabod

This is an admonition to the “churches” and the ministries that are playing with fire. The spirit of Ichabod has come upon many of them. The story of Ichabod in scripture is both sad and frightening. The story is found in I Samuel 4. The name Ichabod means “the glory has departed”. The presence of the Lord has left.

The Israelites were battling the Philistines. The Philistines won the initial battle. The Israelites were beside themselves. They had lost about 4000 men that day. How could God not fight for them? They just didn’t understand. They assumed He was on their side. After all they were His people. As a last resort they sent for the Ark of the Covenant, the ark of His presence.

Moses had created the Ark per instructions given to him by God when the Israelites were in the wilderness. It was

meant to be a representation of the presence, the essence, the glory of God in the midst of His people. After the Israelites had entered the promised land, the ark had been stored in the city of Shiloh. This was many years before this war with the Philistines.

The ark was delivered to the Israelites from Shiloh as they made preparation to enter the battle again with the Philistines. The Israelites rejoiced. The Philistines heard the sound of the party in the Israelite camp and knew the ark of the covenant had arrived. They were afraid of it, but they were more afraid of becoming slaves to the Israelites if they were to lose, so they had no choice but to go to battle again.

The Israelites thought for sure they would win with the ark in their camp but they were wrong. The Philistines actually captured the ark of the covenant and took it away from the Israelites. The Israelites not only lost the ark, but another 30,000 men, many more than they had lost in the first battle.

The Israelites had sought to force the presence of God to work in their behalf, to force His approval of their actions, to manufacture the glory. God never told them to remove the ark from Shiloh. There is no record that they even consulted God about this situation they faced. They were full of disobedience and self-reliance. They didn't care. They defiled the holy things of God. They had no respect for the will of God. They wanted Him to bless what they were doing. God's glory will not rest in that environment. It will depart.

The previous chapter in I Samuel details the calling of Samuel when he was a boy in the home of Eli the priest. He had been left there by his mother who had promised God her son, if He would allow her to have a baby. Most of us are familiar with the story. God began to speak to Samuel at a young age. The Lord visited Samuel in a vision and told him that He was going to judge Eli and Eli's sons for their wickedness. By chapter four, Samuel had grown into a man and was well known as a true prophet of God in the land.

This battle with the Philistines was the fulfillment of the vision God had given Samuel as a young boy. Eli and both

his sons died for their wickedness during this time. The wife of one of Eli's sons was giving birth while he was away fighting and she named the baby, Ichabod. Then she died. The glory of the Lord had indeed departed. The Philistines took control of the ark. What a legacy! So sad, but when the glory of the Lord departs from something it does indeed die. The name Ichabod is written over many "churches" in the land today. Wickedness fills them.

Priests

Death is coming to a lot of things in the day we live, because the real must be seen. There are a lot of places that are going to collapse or be abandoned because the glory is gone. The fire of God is coming to the earth to burn up all that is wood, hay and stubble, while purifying that which is the treasure of His heart, the gold, the silver. We must no longer defile the things of God. They must be treated with love and respect, for they are holy and pure and sacred.

In Leviticus chapter ten, instructions were given to Aaron as a part of the priesthood responsibilities, "*that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean*". Ezekiel chapter 44 expands this to not only were priests to be able to have this discernment, but they were charged with teaching the people to operate in this discernment as well.

We, as priests after the Melchizedek order still must have this ability, the gift of discernment. It doesn't just apply to the Levitical priests of the Old Testament who operated in the priestly anointing. The Melchizedek priest operated in both the kingly and priestly anointing.

Many believe Melchizedek was Jesus in pre-incarnate form. We do know he was a priest before God even established a tribe of priests in Israel. He was also king of Jerusalem. He was the first to walk in the priest and king anointing together and therefore was a picture of the Messiah and of the Ekklesia.

Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, so he was not anointed to be a priest under the Mosaic law. Only those from

the tribe of Levi could be priests. However, a prophecy came forth in the book of Psalms, chapter 110 regarding Jesus as a priest and king after the order of Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews, in chapters five through seven, confirmed that Jesus had come as priest and king in the order of Melchizedek. It doesn't stop there. In Revelations it is declared that we have been made kings and priests.

and have made us kings and priests unto our God; and we shall reign on the earth.
Revelation 5:10 (MEV)

We were made. It is not something that will happen in the future. Earlier in this chapter we are told that this happened through the blood Jesus shed for us on the cross. We are priests and kings right now and should be operating in this anointing now!

We want the genuine. We want nothing to do with the counterfeit. When we are mature, we see and understand the difference. We can distinguish between the pure and the common, the holy and the defiled. It is through these vessels, who love righteousness and hate wickedness operating as kings and priests, we will see the glory of the Lord displayed in the earth. That is the Ekklesia!

John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
Revelation 1:4-6 (NKJV)

Vessels of Glory

These holy vessels of honor live on Mount Zion. They are the city on a Hill. They are the Ekklesia. In Isaiah chapter 60 we catch a glimpse of them. The light and the glory of God will

arise and shine on them. Nations will flow to this place to see them and to hear them. At one time we were a people forsaken and hated, but we will become the joy of the whole earth. The Lord will be an everlasting light to us and in us. His glory will shine through us for all to see!

These are the mature. These are the people hungry for the glory of God to shine through them, hungry to know His heart, hungry to travel into the unknown with Him. They are hungry for righteousness and justice. They are hungry to see the miraculous and supernatural of God touch a hurting world. The world is waiting for us, looking for us, crying for us, the mighty glorious bride of Christ, the Ekklesia.

We may not know how all the puzzle pieces fit together. We may have to leave some places and people behind. We may not understand everything God is doing, but we are beginning to know and understand His heart, therefore we trust Him. We are not satisfied with the status quo. We want others to see the glory of the Living God in us as we are the light to the world, the city on a Hill.

We want all He has to offer us. He is our destination, our inheritance, not fame or fortune or ministry as it is known today. We are the one new man. Jesus is King and the city on the Hill is the seat of the government of His Kingdom. The light will be so great that it can be seen across the whole earth. The kings of the earth will come to hear from the King, so great will be the light. There will be absolutely no doubt not only that God is real, but that He is actively involved in the affairs of men.

How do we get there from here? We must hear the voice of our God and be quick to obey. We must live in the constant revelation of who our God is. We must be willing to discard the chains that bind us, control us, and hold us back from our destiny. We must be free.

There will be paradigm shifts on our journey. They are needed to change our thinking and understanding of God and His Kingdom. Going from the old to the new requires transitioning. The future is ours, but we must go forward.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 2

1 – Have you ever given much thought to what the bride of Christ is? Have you ever thought about there being a difference in responsibility and privilege for mature saints versus immature saints? What do you think about the author's stating that it is only the mature saints who will sit on the throne with Jesus and rule and reign? Will you seek truth in this area?

2 – What were your thoughts as you read about the vision of entering the building and finding the people had disappeared into Jesus? Does it make sense? Do you believe that is what God wants? Do you believe it will happen this side of heaven? If you believe this is what God wants, what are your thoughts on how we get there? Write your thoughts down. When you are done with the book, review your answers from these chapters with what you believe after completing the book.

3 – What are your thoughts on how the author says the Ekklesia (the Greek word translated as “church” in most translations) is Mount Zion, the city on a hill, the one-new man? Do you have any additional thoughts concerning the difference between the “church” as you know it today, and the Ekklesia?

4 – What do you think about the author saying our light should be so bright that when we walk into a room, if there are demons there, they would make themselves known? Has anything like this happened to you before? Do you want it to happen?

5 – What thoughts come to mind when you think about Zerubbabel and the building of the foundation of the second temple in Israel? How about when Haggai stirred up the people to restore the foundation and to build on it? How do you think this is applicable today?

6 – What have you been taught concerning the wealth of the nations, or the wealth of the wicked? Do you believe what the author says about it not coming to the “church” or to all Christians, but to those who are mature and can hear God and will obey? What do you think the author means when she talks about His Kingdom versus our own kingdoms?

7 – Think about physical and spiritual dimensions. Have you had any spiritual dimension experiences? Do you want to experience them? Why or why not? Do you believe these things can still happen today? Do you ever listen or watch stories by others of their supernatural experiences? If you listen, do their stories create a hunger in you for more of God, or do they turn you off to the supernatural? Why?

8 – What do you think you would do if God ever told you something so awesome, so astounding, but then told you that the time was not right to reveal it to anyone else? Does God speak to you on a regular basis? Do you believe He wants to or do you believe He either doesn’t do that anymore or He only speaks deep things to those called prophets?

9 – How easy is it for you to hear the voice of God with all the noise of the world around us today? What do you do to ensure you hear God more clearly?

10 – Have you ever thought about the words that God speaks, the things He shows His people, as being sacred and holy? Describe in your own words what you think that means.

11 – The author states there are three main reasons she believes we do not see many supernatural events in our own lives today. List them and describe how you think they fit in relationship to your own life. What, if anything, are you doing, or will you do to improve in these areas?

12 – Have you ever deeply thought about the fact that it is impossible to please God without faith? How deep is your desire to please Him? Have you ever thought about what God meant when He told Moses He was the “I AM”? Does that still apply today? Is He your number one source?

13 – It is a hard thing to admit sometimes that we have not been able to see a truth that was right in front of our face. Has this ever happened to you? What is the difference in blindness between believers and unbelievers according to the author? Do you understand and believe this?

14 – Sometimes we think we are fine with God because we are not committing any gross sins. Can you think of ways you have been disobedient to God even in what might be considered small ways? Did you repent and turn back to face Him? How important do you believe it is to obey God even in the small things? Have you ever thought about when you disobey, even a seemingly insignificant thing, that it could be causing you to be blind to some truth God wants to reveal to you? Will your thoughts about obedience change anything in your life going forward?

15 – This book was written to reveal the true identity of the Ekklesia. The author states that maturity of the saints plays a major role in identifying the Ekklesia. Has your opinion concerning maturity changed any since you answered the question about maturity in chapter one? Do you believe that there are things available to the mature saints that are not given to those who are still immature? If not, why do you believe this? How important is maturity?

16 – Describe what you believe discernment to be. How important do you believe discernment is? What do you believe your level of discernment is? Describe some events in your life where your discernment was right. Describe some events in your life where your discernment was wrong. What are some

areas where you would like your discernment to be better? How are you using discernment daily and how could it be improved?

17 – What are your thoughts concerning what the author gives as a warning? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Have you ever been in a place where it seemed the glory of God was attempting to be manufactured? Describe how you felt and why you felt that way. How did you determine if it was real or counterfeit or did you? Are you one who walks away from these things because you lack confidence in whether you can discern what is real and what is fake? If so, how are you going to change or are you?

18 – Evaluate the level of maturity in your own life in each of these areas and then pray for direction from God on how to increase your level of maturity.

- Hearing the voice of God
- Obeying what you hear God say
- Receiving revelation from God
- Amount of freedom to pursue God's plan for your life
- Discernment

Journal about your journey into maturity. Sometimes we don't realize how far we have come until we look back at our journey. Don't look at this as a fail/pass. It is a process. You never fail unless you quit.

CHAPTER 3

PARADIGM SHIFTS

Life's Puzzle Pieces

As a child I used to love putting puzzles together. They were pretty simple with not many pieces. As I got older and the number of pieces to a puzzle increased, I didn't enjoy them as much. Put a 1000-piece puzzle in front of me today and I will glare at it with a blank stare wondering where do I start.

Do I start with the border? A particular corner? Do I pick out a large basic one-color part of the puzzle and start there? Or do I pick a particular object in the puzzle as a starting point? It seems to be an enormous task just to begin.

There is no easy way of putting the puzzle pieces together to reflect the true Ekklesia. I cannot paint a clear complete image for you to see. You will read this book and at first glance you might understand a few pieces of it. Only God can reveal to my readers the fullness of the picture I am trying to paint from years of puzzle pieces of revelation coming to my spirit from God. It is going to take time and complete surrender to the Holy Spirit to finally see it in its entirety.

It is not simply laying the pieces together in a particular order. The pieces are so inter-twined I often seem to repeat myself. We are tempted always to mix the new with the old, so the process gets repeated until we lay aside old mindsets and truly see the true Ekklesia through God's eyes.

The whole goal of this book is to point people to God, to help them recognize Him when He is training them. The Father's heart is so deep and wide it is hard to fathom it. We need a huge desire for maturity for ourselves as well as others which is only found in our Father's heart.

God encourages us. His heart wants us to be free from bondage, free to pursue Him, free to be who He created us to

be. Move forward we must. Change is not only inevitable, but necessary if we are to mature into the person God wants us to be.

Like putting a puzzle together, we will all go through similar processes on the road to maturity. Discernment is necessary to determine what is God and what is not. We cannot force a puzzle piece to fit where it was never meant to fit.

We must understand deeply that God created us all as unique individuals and He has put His stamp of approval on us. We can accomplish everything the Father has put into our hearts, with Him on our side. There are no formulas with God. There are however, certain traits about God that we all can recognize and grow to appreciate.

The Father's heart is open and He desires to stir up an excitement in you to move forward to discover what is in His heart. There is so much more to God, than we have experienced to date, but I want all I can get, don't you? His desire to see the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of His dear and precious Son becomes our desire as well, and it compels us to move forward.

This is our destiny. He will teach each one of us step by step, but we must take the step into our destiny. The mature saints will rule and reign with Him throughout eternity. We are learning how to do that in this life time.

We must reach our destination, our one goal, our finishing, to be like Jesus and to receive our inheritance. Only then can we truly advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. We are the one new man where Jesus is the Head, and His mature ones are His body, obeying everything He says to do, all operating in unity. Paul describes it very well in the book he wrote to the Philippians.

My passion is to be consumed with him and not cling to my own "righteousness" based in keeping the written Law. My only "righteousness" will be his, based on the faithfulness of Jesus Christ—the very righteousness that comes from God. And I continually long to know the wonders of Jesus and to experience the

overflowing power of his resurrection working in me. I will be one with him in his sufferings and become like him in his death. Only then will I be able to experience complete oneness with him in his resurrection from the realm of death. I admit that I haven't yet acquired the absolute fullness that I'm pursuing, but I run with passion into his abundance so that I may reach the purpose for which Christ Jesus laid hold of me to make me his own. I don't depend on my own strength to accomplish this; however I do have one compelling focus: I forget all of the past as I fasten my heart to the future instead. I run straight for the divine invitation of reaching the heavenly goal and gaining the victory-prize through the anointing of Jesus. So let all who are fully mature have this same passion, and if anyone is not yet gripped by these desires, God will reveal it to them. And let us all advance together to reach this victory-prize, following one path with one passion. **Philippians 3:9-16 (TPT)**

Our heavenly goal and prize for victory is to possess our promised land, our inheritance, our land of milk and honey. What is our inheritance? Milk represents the Word of God, and honey represents revelation. What God promised the Israelites of old and what He promises us today, if we would only go in and possess it, is the fulness of Jesus. He is everything!

Jesus is the Word and we can possess the fulness of Him, if we want it and are willing to mature. Only then will the world desire what we have! Only then will they come to the light of the city on a hill, the glory of our Lord. Only then will our desire be the nations becoming the Kingdom of our God.

In this passage from Philippians, Paul explains the process. He didn't feel like he had arrived at full maturity yet, but he was pursuing it with deep passion. It was his greatest desire. Look at what Paul desired. Every Christian who wants to be mature and complete in Christ must feel the same way. This is the path to maturity.

- To be consumed with Jesus
- Righteousness – to know what is right by God's standards and not our own
- Long to know the wonders of Jesus
- Long to experience the overflowing power of His resurrection working through us

- To be one with Him
- Experience the absolute fullness of Jesus
- Run with passion into His abundance
- To reach the purpose for which He has given us life
- Depend on the strength of Christ not our own to accomplish this
- Fasten our focus on the future and not look back
- Gain the victory prize that God has invited us to obtain

Paul wanted this for himself but also for all of the people he served that they would have this same passion for these things. If passion is lacking then we should talk to God about it, so we all can come together with the same passion. We are to follow the one path with one passion to advance together to this one destination, the mature body of Christ advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth.

We seem to be waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises concerning His Ekklesia, His body, His Bride as she rises in beauty and splendor, dressed in the glory of our God. The promise is that the whole earth will be filled with His glory through us. We wait for action from God as if He will just snap His fingers and it will happen. We miss the point. He is waiting on us!

For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds. Titus 2:11-14 (NLT)

Freedom from lawlessness is needed. Lawlessness is when we do things our way instead of God's way. We must turn our backs on everything that does not please our God including self-indulgent lifestyles. We must go through His

purification process and become a people who are passionate to do what is beautiful in our King's eyes! We are that people!

This bride is not operating half-heartedly in the things of God. She is not performing by rote or habit. She has passion in her eyes because she sees what is in the King's eyes and it is beautiful! Our destiny is to give to Him all He desires from us so we become like Him. We live and move and have our very existence in Him, the King of glory. Then His glory will be seen in us.

The Bride

Several years ago, as I was praying, I suddenly saw in the spirit a bride getting ready for her wedding. She was putting on makeup and making sure everything was perfect. Her dress was ironed and had no wrinkles. She was prepared. As she walked down the aisle, every eye in the room was on her and marveled at her beauty. Her eyes were focus on her husband-to-be standing at the front of the room and her eyes never strayed. She didn't care what the people thought of her, only what her beloved thought of her. She had made herself beautiful for him.

I was seeing a vision of the spiritual bride. She had come to the place where she only had eyes for the Savior. She did not care what man thought of her. The vision continued and I saw the groom at the front. I could not see Him clearly, but I knew it was the Lord. And I cried out, "Oh, Lord, when will this be? When will you come back for us?" Jesus responded, "When My bride has eyes only for Me, when she has made herself ready, when she begins her walk down the aisle. Don't you know I will not keep her waiting at the altar!"

"Come," says the Holy Spirit and the Bride in divine duet. Let everyone who hears this duet join them in saying, "Come." Let everyone gripped with spiritual thirst say, "Come." And let everyone who craves the gift of living water come and drink it freely. "Come."

Revelation 22:17 (TPT)

When the bride has prepared herself for the Lord, Holy Spirit will know and together in unison a cry of passion will go forth into the universe together as one voice, saying “Jesus, come!” The bride will determine in her heart to become what she needs to be, holy and pure. The bridegroom is not going to force her to do anything. She is going to do this out of a heart of love.

In Ephesians chapter five Paul tells us that we are the bride of Christ. Read it here from the Passion Bible and see what he says about maturity.

And to the husbands, you are to demonstrate love for your wives with the same tender devotion that Christ demonstrated to us, his bride. For he died for us, sacrificing himself to make us holy and pure, cleansing us through the showering of the pure water of the Word of God. All that he does in us is designed to make us a mature church for his pleasure, until we become a source of praise to him—glorious and radiant, beautiful and holy, without fault or flaw.
Ephesians 5:25-27 (TPT)

The language in the original Greek seems to indicate that this is subjective. We do not become beautiful and holy, without fault or flaw, automatically because of salvation. Salvation opens the door. We could never be anything or do anything without the blood of Jesus, but we must go on to maturity to become the glorious and radiant, the beautiful and holy bride of our Lord, His Ekklesia. This means there is a need to truly understand what is meant by maturity.

Revelations chapter 17 makes it even more clear.

Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder: “Praise the LORD! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.” For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And he added, “These are true words that come from God.”
Revelations 17:6-9 (NLT)

For those who believe that all believers are the bride, who is the crowd praising the Lord? Who are those who are blessed because they were invited to the feast? I would rather make myself ready by becoming mature and entering the holy place where I am prepared to be a part of the bride, than perhaps miss out because I wasn't prepared.

This is illustrated, as well, in the parable of the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins found in Matthew, chapter 25. Five were prepared when the bridegroom came. But, sadly, five were not prepared.

We are all called to the same destiny, the completion of the same puzzle. We are all called to finish the race for the prize, which is Jesus. We are all called to maturity and the Father's heart. We are called to the city on the hill. Mount Zion. The destination is the same, but the journey is different. Our puzzle pieces are created for us individually by our Father out of His love. We may put the puzzle together in different ways, but the ending puzzle picture is the same.

We choose whether we follow the path the Lord directs in front of us, or we settle. When we hear and obey, another puzzle piece goes into place. When we disobey or just continue to do things our way, the puzzle piece sits there waiting to be placed in the puzzle of life. It is sad that so many people do not realize that God wants to be involved daily in our lives. God is grieved that so many of His people are content to settle in some place that brings them physical happiness, while their spirit is starving. There is so much more to life. We dare not settle for second best.

The destiny we seek is being one with Him. That destiny is the city on a hill, Mount Zion, the Ekklesia where we have matured in the things of God and are free from everything that has previously constrained us. From this place we can advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. He will mold each one of us into what He desires and place us in the wall as a living stone in the house that He is building. As a stone in the wall, we have come to the place where we are one

with others who have matured and one with the Head who is our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Just like the brain in our physical bodies gives a command to our legs to walk a step, so Jesus the Head of the spiritual body gives a command, and we the body, move. That is our goal. The vehicle we use to get to that goal may be different. The size, shape and function of the stone God molds us into, may be different. But, the goal of every stone is the same, to be shaped as a stone by God and placed in the wall of the house of the Lord by the Lord Himself.

It is only in this place that we can effectively advance the Kingdom of God on earth. As I describe the experiences and the processes for me in putting the puzzle pieces together in my own life, I pray it makes sense to you and it will be a help in your journey. There are many paradigm shifts we will encounter and are necessary on this journey. They will be woven throughout the entire message of this book.

Paradigms and Paradigm Shifts

It is important we understand what paradigms and paradigm shifts are. The word “paradigm” means a collection of standards, rules and perceptions that form the structure for something we currently believe. For instance, how a person believes a “church” should operate and its purpose is a paradigm. How we view the Kingdom of God is a paradigm. The views we have on these topics have standards we believe about them.

When we try to define what a “church” is, or what the Kingdom of God is, we define it through a set of beliefs, standards, perceptions that we have been taught or reasoned for ourselves. From studying the Bible and listening to others teach and preach on certain subjects, as well as our own experiences, we form a set of ideas or concepts that set the framework for what we believe concerning a particular subject. These could also have a mix of some revelation given to us directly from God. This is a paradigm.

A paradigm shift happens when those ideas and concepts we believe are turned upside down and we can no longer believe in the total framework or structure we operated on before the shift. It is not an incidental change, but a dramatic change.

That is what the vision of the Chinese lantern illustrated when God told me to turn it upside down. It was an illustration of the paradigm shifts to come. It was a picture of the drastic change in thought needed to understand the purpose of the Ekklesia.

God's paradigm shifts require us to weed out man's teachings from God's teachings. We must separate the common from the holy. Before God can harvest the fruit in our lives, He must separate the fruit from the tares. He must burn up the tares, that which is wood, hay and stubble, and with the same fire, purify that which is holy in our lives. That is the harvest in a nutshell.

An incident in the life of Paul (Saul), an apostle in the first century Ekklesia, is a perfect example of a paradigm shift. He was taught and believed growing up the Old Testament picture of the Messiah coming as King, not as someone who would die on a cross. Therefore, in his mind, Jesus was an imposter and Saul needed to rid the world of these people who called themselves Christians, those who believed Jesus was the Messiah. In his mind He was doing God a favor.

Jesus couldn't be the Messiah, Saul thought, because the Messiah was supposed to come as King. No King of heaven dies on a cross! But on the road to Damascus one day, Saul had a paradigm shifting experience. The whole framework of the old belief system came tumbling down when Jesus appeared to him. So great was this experience, he not only changed directions, he changed his name. Paul walked away from the old Saul and became a dynamite stick in the hands of God to advance God's Kingdom on earth.

There are many things in the Christian community and in our lives that we believe we are doing for God, when God has not sanctioned them. When we wake up to the truth, a

paradigm shift will be required. When we cannot cram the new revelation into the old framework, a shift is needed. We cannot put new wine in old wineskins.

The paradigm shifts that are discussed in this book, will not only turn your world upside down, they will turn the entire world upside down once they are understood and followed. They must be received by the spirit and not just the mind. The vision of the Chinese lantern was given for me to understand the shaking that was to come as paradigms shifted by the spirit. There were many lessons to be learned before I would deeply understand by the spirit what this meant.

From My Own Life – Example 1

Here is an example of a paradigm shift from my own life. I was raised Baptist and I will be eternally grateful for the things I learned during this time, especially a love for the Bible. All through life God meets us where we are.

When I was nine years old, a Baptist minister was on his way to visit one of our neighbors who attended his “church” when one of the tires on his vehicle went flat in front of our ranch. That was not an accident, but rather an incident designed by God for the journey God had planned for my family. It was one of those puzzle pieces of my life. The pastor invited us to summer Bible school starting the following week. My mom drove us to town, 30 miles away, every day that week and my love for the Bible began.

Every “church” denomination or affiliation has its own doctrinal statements and its own set of beliefs. As a Baptist, I adopted a lot of those beliefs into my belief system. I created a framework, a paradigm, around the Baptist doctrine concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Most Baptists believe it is from the devil and to avoid it.

I questioned that belief somewhat when I discovered my favorite eighth grade teacher attended the Assemblies of God “church”, therefore he must believe in speaking in tongues. He was the best teacher and a good man. How could

he possibly be involved with the devil? It was another piece of the puzzle that got my attention. It was, once again, something God planned in my life so I would question my paradigm. But the questioning only remained while this man was my teacher and was soon forgotten by me, but not by God.

Over time I accepted the teachings of the Baptist denomination for the most part without questioning them anymore. Then one day, years later when I was married and pregnant with my youngest child, God invaded my world in dramatic fashion like He is prone to do at times.

My mother-in-law was Jehovah Witness and I wanted to witness to her. I came into possession of a book called *Kicked Out of the Kingdom* by Charles Trombley. The author had been a Jehovah Witness, but when a child of his needed healing they did not help. He turned to the Baptists and then to the Charismatics.

As the account in his book continued his child was healed. During his life journey as detailed in the book, he begins to learn about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. That got my attention, a Baptist talking about speaking in tongues. As I continued to read, a hunger began to develop in me for more. Could it be that this experience was not of the devil like I had been taught? I did not know at the time, but God set me up again. This was another puzzle piece of my life where the picture was beginning to come into clearer focus.

The author was a Baptist for a while, but I didn't know him personally. Before I went down this road any further, I needed to hear from someone I knew and trusted. God knew it would need to be someone who was a Baptist in order to break me out of the religious chains that had a grip on me. I wasn't even aware there were chains at that time. I was afraid to bring up the topic with my Baptist friends. I prayed, "God, if this is really of You and not the devil, send me someone that I trust to help me".

I continued to read and hunger for more. I did not have a clue that I was in bondage to religion. One day a few weeks

later I get a call from a friend of mine, a pastor's daughter, who attended the "church" I attended. Her dad had been the pastor of the "church" before he retired. We talked for a while and then I apprehensively asked her about her thoughts concerning speaking in tongues.

She had never experienced it, but she had seen others receive it and she believed it was real. She told me how the "church" had at one time needed a youth pastor, but had problems finding a Baptist one. After a while they decided to hire a young man who was a "spirit-filled charismatic". In less than a year the youth group had grown quite large and many young people from other "churches" came as well. Half of them were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

Those events were puzzle pieces bringing things into a clearer focus for me. It is what I needed to begin my journey into a dynamic paradigm shift. God knew I was so entrenched in Baptist doctrine that it would take a Baptist to help break me out of it. Sometimes the walls we build are so strong, it takes something equivalent to a bomb to tear down those walls. I didn't realize this was a spirit of religion and I would encounter it many times over the course of my life.

Religion is a set of beliefs and rules surrounding our interactions with God and who He is. It is defined by man and the set of beliefs and rules are usually established around a certain group of people. For example, the Baptist doctrine or religion is much different than the Catholic doctrine or religion.

Religion tends to focus on the things we think we need to do to please God, such as attend "church", give our tithes and offerings, support the poor. In one of the "churches" I attended, a person must sign a document that stated you would not go to movie theatres or amusement parks in order to become a member. Members were privileged to vote concerning "church" matters.

Christianity is not a religion. It is a relationship with God, our creator, who made us unique and gave us talents and giftings to lead an effective and productive life. It is a

relationship based on love and trust. And so much more. We are not striving to please Him; we are trying to know Him. Knowing God with faith and trust pleases God.

When I understood speaking in tongues was real and not from the devil, I went to our pastor and told him that we were going to leave the Baptist “church” and go to a place where they believed in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. He blessed us and said he believed it was real himself, but unfortunately, he could not preach it if he wanted to remain as pastor there. I was pleased with his understanding, but saddened by his situation. We need to be free.

A few months later, my paradigm shift would be complete and the framework for my beliefs concerning speaking in tongues would have completely changed. I was a tongue-talking Christian and I would never be the same. That paradigm shift turned my whole world upside down. I made a promise to God at that time that never again would I dogmatically hang on to what man taught me, but would diligently seek God for truth. If God showed me an error in my beliefs, I would abandon those beliefs quickly.

Many of the paradigm shifts we will face in our own personal lifetime, if we are willing to follow Jesus and leave our comfort zones, will shake our world and turn it upside down. The paradigm shifts talked about in this book, represented by turning the Chinese lantern upside down, I guarantee will cause a world-wide shaking and a global turning of the world upside down!

From My Own Life – Example 2

The second example of a paradigm shift in my life came when I was teaching a Bible study in my home. We were done with the final lesson in the series. We had an awesome season of miracles during this time. God revealed Himself to us mightily time and time again.

The group was in agreement on the topic of end-time prophecy for the next study. I was delighted. It was a topic I

had studied for years and was dear to my heart. I prepared these home-grown Bible studies myself. As I prepared for the new study, I found myself struggling and I didn't know why. As I prayed God ask me, "Who taught you what you know on this topic, man or Me?"

I was shocked by the question. Everyone who studied the end-times back in the mid 1980's followed two main authors on the topic. Everyone trusted them. I was using their material. They were my source for most of my beliefs on the topic at that time. I had to respond to God with the realization it was not God who had taught me what I believed.

The promise I had made to God when I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit seemed to be shouting from my heart. I had said if I ever found something that I believed was contrary to what God was teaching me, I would abandon that teaching immediately. I had not thought once before this about the possibility of this teaching not being from God.

After this revelation God further instructed me, "I do not want you to teach this topic. What you have learned is not the way it will happen! In fact, I do not want you to read any of the so-called end-time passages again until I release you to do so." I was shocked! Little did I know I was in for another huge paradigm shift.

Another framework of my belief system was being challenged by God. So much so, that I would not read any of those passages from the Bible for over 10 years. I truly had no desire to even peek a little. I would not read any books written on the topic or listen to any messages. I still do not understand all the events of what we call end times, but I am content with knowing what God chooses to reveal to me. I do ask questions when my spirit is stirred to do so.

A copious amount of what we think we know about God, comes through what others think of Him. Man can take God's word and interpret it through their own thoughts, their own ideas, and their own experiences but God says in II Peter chapter one the meaning of God's Word can only be interpreted through the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit speaks to us and brings us through experiences orchestrated by God to teach us. We must be able to discern what is of God and what is not. This applies to the written word of God as well as His spoken word uttered through prophetic people today. Just because someone calls themselves a prophet does not mean their words are directly from God. We must test the spirit behind the words, not from our own thoughts and ways, but by the Holy Spirit. We can only do that accurately, if we are close enough to God's heart to hear His heartbeat.

And so we have been given the prophetic word—the written message of the prophets, made more reliable and fully validated by the confirming voice of God on the Mount of Transfiguration. And you will continue to do well if you stay focused on it. For this prophetic message is like a piercing light shining in a gloomy place until the dawning of a new day, when the Morning Star rises in your hearts. You must understand this at the outset: Interpretation of scriptural prophecy requires the Holy Spirit, for it does not originate from someone's own imagination. No true prophecy comes from human initiative but is inspired by the moving of the Holy Spirit upon those who spoke the message that came from God.

II Peter 1:19-21 (TPT)

We have been taught certain rules to apply while reading the Bible. We have been taught not to take one verse and make a doctrine out of it. We have been taught to read the verse before and after to get the context of the message. These rules do not always work.

The only way to truly understand the Bible is to know the author, Holy Spirit. When we are not sure what the Bible is saying or what someone else is saying about that Bible is accurate, ask Holy Spirit. The same is true concerning prophetic utterances.

Tell God you want to know truth; not just what man has taught. Truth may not be revealed instantly, but it will be revealed if you are sincerely looking for it. Then you will be faced with a choice, man's teaching, or God's Truth.

Even when we begin to see religion for what it is, it is sometimes a major effort to tear down the framework of religion taught to us by man, but be torn down it must. A true paradigm shift will not just change a few things and build on the old, it will destroy the man-made parts so that God can erect a new framework on which to build. Sometimes that is painful, but it is necessary.

Religion is a huge topic. How we deal with the spirit of religion in our own lives, will make or break us. Religion's goal is to lure us into being satisfied with where we are, so we do not move into God's best. Religion wants us to settle. If we truly want to move into the fulfillment of God's promises for us, we must deal with religion, not once, or twice, but many times. We cannot settle.

Paradigm Shifts for the Body of Christ

There are two major paradigms on the horizon that this book addresses. The first paradigm shift is why this book is written. The second will be the topic for another book, but is minimally discussed here because of its importance.

Every paradigm shift will overflow with surprises, mysteries and adventure. The only requirement for these great adventures is to be ready to ditch old thoughts, ideas, concepts, plans, goals, etc. as the Master reveals His ways and His purposes.

These two major paradigm shifts are massive and probably contain many smaller paradigm shifts. Not all are covered in these writings, but this outline will give you some food for thought as we face this new day.

Paradigm Shift 1: Understanding of the true Ekklesia

Old Paradigm: What religion has taught us concerning the "church" and what man has built – the false system

New Paradigm: The true Ekklesia that Jesus is building – the Real

Other shifts within this major shift:

- Individual visions and desires will give way to God's vision and desires
- Operation of discernment between what is taught by man and what is Holy Spirit breathed
- Truth concerning humility, submission, and unity
- Leadership that is controlling and demanding (slavery) will give way to leadership as Jesus taught (freedom)
- Emphasis on "doing" changes to an emphasis on "being" (works based on pleasing God or self-satisfaction versus works done out of living in God and He living in us)
- Defeat, fear, and waiting for God to rescue us will be replaced with hope and a realization that the earth groans in anticipation of the revealing of the true children of God

Paradigm Shift 2: Emphasis on the Kingdom of God rather than the Ekklesia

Old Paradigm: Build and expand the "church" with an emphasis on salvation as the destination - Kingdom of God is out of reach, for another age or for heaven

New Paradigm: The true Ekklesia understands salvation is the doorway to the Kingdom of God. Saints have become disciples (students) in order to mature to be able to advance the Kingdom of God on earth as commanded by Jesus. His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

The vision of the Chinese lantern mentioned earlier is all about the first paradigm shift. The turning upside down of the lantern represents the journey from the old paradigm to the new paradigm. Before we can effectively advance the Kingdom of God, we need to become the Ekklesia.

Revelation, the revealing of Jesus and His ways, is necessary to understand this shift. We must comprehend the process God uses to transition us from one paradigm to another. We must understand the journey and be willing to do what He asks of us.

Although this journey will be adventurous, taking us where we have never been before, it is not for the faint of heart. We must be committed to following the heart of God wherever He leads. Hearing the voice of God and obeying are important truths that will echo with every step we take on this journey. Satan will not be happy with our seriousness for the journey, but victory will be sweet if we do not give up.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 3

1 – Have you ever put together or helped put together a large puzzle and wondered where to start? Have you ever thought of your life like a puzzle and looked back at the events of your life to see if there seems to be a picture emerging from them that perhaps God is painting? If not, will you talk to God about it? He wants you to know that He has been there, guiding your steps all along the way. Ask Him to help you see those steps.

2 – What are your current thoughts on God's Kingdom on earth? How has your doctrine changed over time? If any, what are the questions you have concerning this topic? Document them and ask God to bring revelation. When you are done reading this book, revisit this question to see how your thoughts have changed.

3 – Do you feel passion for the things of God? Do you have a vision of what God has called you to, your destiny? If so, what holds you back from pursuing that destiny with passion? If you want increased passion and an awareness of your destiny, ask God for it right now.

4 – Everyone is called to maturity in God. Do you see what that looks like for you? Do you recognize some of the paths God has put you on for the purpose of your maturity? If so, document in your journal for reference. Review the list of maturity traits from chapter three of Philippians. Are these goals you want to achieve? If you are willing to obey, ask God to show you how to get there.

5 – What are your thoughts on the vision the author had of the bride? Do you believe it is possible to be so focused on Jesus and what He desires that we do not care what men think? What is the relationship between maturity and the bride making herself ready? Does it make sense that salvation opens the door, but we must do something as well?

6 – What are your thoughts on all of us having one destination? The author states that the vehicle we use to get to that destination may be different than what is used by others. What do you think she means by that statement? Document your current thoughts on how maturity prepares the bride, and how maturity helps the bride to advance the Kingdom in the earth.

7 – Do you understand what a paradigm is and what happens when there is a paradigm shift? If not, ask God for clarity. Have you experienced any dramatic paradigm shifts in your life that turned what you believed at the time completely upside down? How did it make you feel? If God said, “Are you going to believe what you have been taught, or are you going to believe Me”, could you make the promise to believe God, even if those around you would not accept it?

8 – Have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues? If not, will you search the Bible and talk to God about it and then get God’s direction on how to receive? If you speak in tongues, how important do you think it is for the health of your spirit? If it will help you move to a new level in maturity, will you commit to use the gift more?

9 – Do you understand what a religious spirit is and how it operates? What things have you been taught through religion that may not be what God says in His word? How are you going to determine what to do when you discover those things? Are you willing to ask God to show you the difference between what man taught you and what God wants to teach you?

10 – Define in your own words what you think the author means when she says Christianity is not a religion? Do you understand the difference between religion and relationship? Are you doing things out of religion or because of your love of God and your desire to be close to Him?

11 – The author talks about prophets who do not always get their words from God. Do you believe this to be true? Do you believe discernment is necessary? How do you react to words that you are not sure are from God? Do you immediately reject them or do you take it to God to get His response? Do you understand what it means to “test the spirits”? If not, will you ask God to show you more about this? Will you pray and ask God to show you how to use discernment in your own life?

12 – Identify any areas in your life where you have been settling. What commitment can you make to God concerning religious influence in your life and how you will deal with it?

13 – The author identifies two major paradigm shifts that are coming. The first one is the topic of this book. Do you understand what it means? Write down any questions you might have right now concerning the paradigm shifts. Ask God to reveal truth to you as you read the pages of this book. Journal any revelation God gives you. Ask God to help you deal with whatever is holding you back from your destiny. Ask Him to show you what your part is in these paradigm shifts.

14 – What do you think the author means by “this journey is not for the faint of heart”? Are you prepared to fight for the land, the inheritance, God wants to give you? Do you hunger for more of Him so much that you are determined not to give up and turn back? If not, are you willing to pray and ask God to stir up a hunger in you to continue this journey?

Section 11

TRANSITIONING/TRANSFORMING

CHAPTER 4

RECOGNIZING THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

Revelation, as we have established, is essential for us to understand what God is doing. our life's goal and destination can only be understood through revelation. We are living in the seventh day from Adam, the Lord's Day, and the only way we understand deeply what that means is through hearing God's voice as He reveals Himself to us.

Our heart's desire is to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth as the city on a hill shining in the glory of her Lord who is the King. The destination is our destiny, our inheritance. Our jobs are not our destiny. Our family is not our destiny. Being a part of a local assembly and using out God-given gifts is not our destiny.

Our destiny is Jesus and His Kingdom. That is our promised land, our inheritance. Everything else is a vehicle or tool used to get us to our destination. We mature and come together in unity as the body of Christ with Jesus as the Head of the body, directing our every move. This mature body of Christ is free from the chains of religion, obeys the King, and at His command advances the Kingdom of God in the earth.

God Has a Process

There does seem to be a 1-2-3 step process when God leads us from an old mindset to a new one, from one paradigm to another. It is not a formula. It definitely doesn't happen overnight. He moves us from glory to glory. We cannot back God into a corner to get Him to act on our behalf.

The process is His way of letting His people know when it is time to leave something old behind, and enter into something new. The one thing we will definitely learn on this journey over and over again, is our God cannot be put in a box.

We desperately need to learn to recognize when God begins to shift us from something old to something new. Sometimes it seems like God just turns our world upside down and we aren't prepared because we do not understand the process. God often teaches us through tiny baby steps until we start to understand the process and our faith has time to develop. He truly wants us to succeed. It is the devil, not God, who desires to hinder us, or hurry us, and even destroy us.

Giant steps by the Ekklesia across the world are going to be required for us to see the paradigm shifts needed for our maturing and the advancing of the Kingdom of God. We must first understand the process He takes His people through in the tiny steps before we will be able to take giant mature steps. We must be able to hear His voice and obey.

There is a religious spirit that attempts to hinder us from taking a step forward. It is going to take a core group of people, a remnant, who refuse to turn back, refuse to be satisfied with the status quo, refuse to give in to the tactics of religion to manage this paradigm shift. This remnant will be committed to advancing the Kingdom and to becoming the Ekklesia that Jesus is building. They are after the heart of God, nothing else will satisfy.

God wants us to move forward. He wants us to be encouraged. Therefore, He desires His people to recognize and deeply understand the process. Many in the past have turned back before receiving their end result because they have not understood this process. Others have aimlessly wandered in the wilderness until death, never entering into the glorious thing God has planned for them because of lack of understanding. This must stop!

That they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but might keep His commandments And might not be as their fathers—a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their hearts aright nor prepared their hearts to know God, and whose spirits were not steadfast and faithful to God.

Psalm 78:7, 8 (AMPC)

We must understand the process and refuse the devil's schemes to try to get us off the path God is laying out before us. We must not let the enemy keep us from our destiny. We set our hope and faith in God and do what He says to do. We obey willingly so that we do not become a stubborn and rebellious people. We prepare our hearts to know God. We prepare our hearts to know His heart.

Our Heavenly Father wants to transition us from the old to the new. Every day is a new day. We must learn to face each new day with excitement and expectation that God is moving us from glory to glory. He does not want us to eat stale bread and drink polluted water. If we settle, we settle for old bread and water. He is the Bread of Life and He is Living Water, ever moving and revealing aspects of Himself we have not yet seen or comprehended.

An old song suddenly comes to mind, "He gets sweeter and sweeter as the days go by. Oh, what a love between my Lord and I". That is the way it ought to be. Everyday God is moving us closer to Him, closer to our destination, closer to our destiny and inheritance. Every day the fire of God in us is burning up all that is hay, wood and stubble, and it is purifying the treasure He buried in us. He wants that treasure to be exposed to the world. The world needs us.

Transitioning/Transforming

Transitioning is a process we go through in order to change from one form to another. This process is described in Romans, chapter 12 as "transforming".

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
Romans 12:2 (NLT)

When we transform, we move from something old to something new or different. The journey of life for all of us

consists of these events that transform us. If we do not understand the process, our development is limited, our growth is stunted, and our maturity in the things of God is delayed. When we face these events in our lives, our mind must be transformed to think like God thinks.

Changing what we think to line up with God's thoughts is really the essence of the coming paradigm shifts. How do we know when our thoughts line up with God's thoughts? Aren't His thoughts higher than ours, so we can never truly understand God's thoughts?

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares 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.
Isaiah 55:8,9 (ESV)

Our thoughts originate in the mind. God created us with a mind in order to think. God has thoughts and He wants us to be able to know His thoughts. He speaks His thoughts so we need to hear Him in order to understand His thoughts. God wants us to know what He thinks, so we know how to think. The Bible holds a lot of thoughts that were written down by people who heard God's thoughts, so it is important to read the Bible. We also hear Him through His Spirit who lives in us and communicates with us every day.

That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit

means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. For, “Who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?” But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

I Corinthians 2:9-15 (NLT)

In this passage Paul quotes from Isaiah 64:4. We often use the first verse of this passage to explain why we can’t understand God. Many people stop there. Many consider it almost blasphemous to even think that we can know God’s thoughts. This passage, in its entirety, says God wants us to understand what is in His mind and heart.

We can understand God’s thoughts because Holy Spirit lives in us, speaks to us, and relays truth to our minds. We have the ability to tap into the mind of Christ. He has deep secrets that He wants to reveal to those of His children who will seek Him. We need to see and understand deeply, how sacred and precious this is! We are not here alone trying to figure out how to live life to the fullest!

It is so important to renew our minds to think like Jesus so we are not hampered from running the race that Jesus sets before us. because our wisdom and understanding are limited. When our wisdom and understanding are limited, we are impeded from becoming mature. It is like running a race with crutches.

The Phillips translation so eloquently instructs us on the renewing of our minds.

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity. Romans 12:1, 2 (Phillips)

Renewing our minds by the Holy Spirit allows us to understand our journey through these paradigm shifts to our destiny. The renewing of our minds is the transitioning process

we go through where our belief systems are changed, sometimes quite drastically. This transformation is often called a wilderness experience. When we come out of the process, our mind must never go back to the old way of thinking. It has been transformed by truth.

We have all experienced these wilderness times, but often do not understand what is happening. We must understand the process in our own individual lives in order to understand what God desires to do through the Ekklesia, His collective body. God will take us through this process whenever He wants us to move from one mindset to another. We do not want to turn back, nor do we want to die in the desert.

Metamorphous

The transformation process is similar to the metamorphous of a caterpillar to become a butterfly. The caterpillar enters into a casing that will constrain it for a season. It is isolated and not much seems to be happening around it, but inside all the cells of the old body are being rearranged to create a completely different body with a completely different structure.

That is a perfect picture of what God does with us. Think of that caterpillar as you. You place yourself in the loving hands of your Father and let Him create the cocoon around you, the transitioning place. He creates or allows all the situations in your life during this time as a place for you to change. The old structure is going away and the new structure is being created. When the time is right, the cocoon is shed and you come forth as a beautiful butterfly still in the loving hands of your Father.

Most of us have experienced these transformation events in our lives. We may not have realized why or understood the process until now. To come out the other side of these paradigm shifts, we need to understand the process to know what God is doing. We need the mind of Christ. He is

the One building us into this beautiful house. He is the one doing this wonderful, glorious metamorphous. If we let Him, He will transform us into a beautiful butterfly.

To illustrate this process, I present several events from my own life which God used to teach me about transforming. Many of these events were major, life-changing experiences, emotional and hard to understand at the time. God teaches us the transforming process individually so we understand it. The same process will be used for groups, cities, states and countries to transform, so it is important that we comprehend it deeply.

Hopefully my experiences will help my readers begin to recognize and understand transformational experiences in their own lives. We must learn to recognize these events as God uses them to establish us as an effective part of the Ekklesia.

Religious Spirit

In my local assembly, a good group of people met to pray on Wednesday nights before services. We tracked the prophetic words that came to us, and we prayed over them regularly. Each time different people led the prayer sessions. The first time I attended this meeting, I learned a person in the group had shared earlier she believed three spirits were operating in the assembly, hindering us from growth. Those were the spirits of apathy, complacency and lethargy.

One particular meeting, the group leader led in prayer against these three spirits. I felt uneasy, but I was not sure why. I prayed in the spirit. As I prayed, I believe God showed me that we could not come against these spirits as they had a right to operate there due to a religious spirit. Religion was the reason people were complacent and lethargic. Religion had to be handled first.

I was new to the group at the time. I was hesitant to say anything at first, but I finally did. My words to the group

were noted, but there was very little discussion and the meeting went on as scheduled. The whole incident continued to trouble me over the week as I continued to pray.

The next week the coordinator decided the entire focus of prayer was going to be on these three spirits. I cautiously reminded him of what I believed God had said the week before concerning the religious spirit. The coordinator decided we were going to proceed as scheduled and he turned it over to the designated prayer leader for that night. At the end of the prayer session, the coordinator did give me time to discuss what I believed the Lord was speaking.

Prophetic voices are obligated to speak what they believe the Lord says, even when it is different from the rest or not well received, or some are offended. True prophets and apostles often have foundational truths in what they speak from the Lord that help set a direction and give blueprints. They must operate by faith, as well. God does not always give them the full picture or the full blueprint either.

We learn much from these types of experiences. When God says speak, we must speak regardless of the reception we get or don't get to that word. We sometimes learn the hard way. We can't control who listens and believes. We all have free will. It is God's business, not ours. It doesn't mean that obedience isn't hard. No one likes rejection. Dealing with rejection and offense are things we face many times in our lives and is a part of maturing. If we avoid dealing with this, it will hinder our maturing.

If we are going to speak for God, we must win the battle against the fear of man. We are going to offend some people, but we have to obey God with humility. Obedience is required whether the speaker or others truly understand the reason. Our trust must be in our loving Heavenly Father.

During these prayer meetings, I don't believe any of us realized the importance of what God was saying at the time. I certainly didn't. Over time and experience we learn that when God speaks, it is important to pay attention to what may seem to us to be minor details. I wonder sometimes how things

would have been different if we had paid more attention to what God wanted us to learn about the religious spirit back then. Maybe some of the events I detail in these chapters, could have had a different outcome.

Would have, could have, should have. All things we reflect on with little value. We look back at events only to recognize God's leading and to hopefully avoid the same pitfalls in the future. We should learn from our mistakes and each one should drive us closer to an understanding of our Father's heart which propels us into the future.

The topic of the influence of a religious spirit in this assembly soon faded away and was rarely mentioned. However, it would not leave me alone. It took many years for me to understand how important this topic was to God and what He meant. It had everything to do with the vision of the Chinese lantern. The details would unfold over time. The Chinese lantern vision was for this assembly, but it was also much larger as would be revealed later.

Recognizing the Religious Spirit

Even though new revelation from God can seem overwhelming at times, it usually comes in a small spoonful. He rarely gives it to us in its entirety. He wants us to seek Him, to be dependent upon Him. He wants us to love Him enough to seek His heart and His ways. He feeds us a little bit at a time and assures us, if we are hungry for more, it is there in His heart waiting for us. Our human minds can only comprehend so much at one time. He feeds the multitudes, but then like He did with His disciples, He draws His students aside to feed them deeper truths.

We must understand how a religious spirit operates and how to deal with it. Religion will keep us from our inheritance, our promised land. We must recognize religion and abandon it. God will reveal its influence in our lives and how to deal with it one step at a time. If we realized how much

influence this spirit had in our lives all at once, in most cases it would crush us. We must be set free from its clutches.

God was revealing to this assembly the religious spirit must be dealt with before dealing with the spirits of lethargy, apathy and complacency. We could not just cast these demons out because they had a legal right to be there. But I didn't fully understand why.

Although this event brought revelation concerning a religious spirit to this local assembly, the revelation was much larger. Understanding the spirit of religion is necessary worldwide in order for God's people to be set free to become the true Ekklesia. The counterfeit kingdom of satan was built on the spirit of religion.

Religion is man's attempt to get to God, whatever that god might be. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism are all religions that have a god they try to appease. Many people call Christianity a religion, and it can be but it should not be. True Christianity is about God reaching out to man (relationship), because man can never get to God on his own (religion).

A religious spirit entices us to find God or whatever god we believe in through our own efforts. It can entice us to follow rules and regulations hoping to please God, but often hinder our ability to approach the real God. Any religion, including pagan Christianity is a part of the Babylonian system, that which tries either to eliminate God or create an imitation.

A lot of people are completely unaware the religious spirit is alive and well in many of our "churches" or assemblies. God is indeed calling His people out of Babylon, the counterfeit kingdom. It is where satan rules his kingdom with control, chaos and every evil thing. The counterfeit kingdom is centered around man and self, rather than God. Satan desires the counterfeit to replace the true Kingdom of God and the Ekklesia who is trained to rule and reign with King Jesus.

The religious spirit, has not only infiltrated the "church", but created the fake image of the "church". It is an imposter. Anything that replaces or adds to a relationship with

Christ is false religion. Control, manipulation, anything that elevates man rather than God are signs of a religious spirit.

It is absolutely astounding that people dynamically opposed to the government having control over their lives, are the same people who willingly submit to the control of their religious affiliations. In this system, promotion is a reward for those who follow without questioning the actions of leadership. God wants His people set free to be who He calls them to be, to do what He calls them to do.

For they are not true apostles but deceitful ministers who masquerade as “special apostles” of the Anointed One. That doesn’t surprise us, for even Satan transforms himself to appear as an angel of light! So it’s no wonder his servants also go about pretending to be ministers of righteousness. But in the end they will be exposed and get exactly what they deserve. II Corinthians 11:13-15 (TPT)

Satan desires to replace God and be worshiped. He masquerades as an angel of light! Everything he does or uses is an imitation of the real deal with God. The religious spirit is very strong and holds a powerful place in satan’s counterfeit kingdom with its own cultural centers. It is satan’s attempt to counterfeit our Holy Spirit.

Jesus taught us how to recognize this religious spirit in Matthew 23. This chapter shows us how this deceiving spirit operates. In this chapter Jesus spoke to the crowds as well as His disciples. He described to the crowd and his disciples in detail how the religious spirit was operating through the scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day.

These are not my words! These are the words of our Lord! The list here is mostly worded in the language of the Passion Bible translation. This describes religious people including leaders.

Religious people:

- make rules for the people that they, themselves, are not willing to follow

- put burdens of religious obligations on the backs of the people
- do things for show and to be noticed by others
- want to be seen as holy, dress to stand out, do other things to portray holiness
- crave the seats of highest honor at banquets and in their meeting places
- love to be admired by men because of their titles of respect, aspire to be recognized in public
- are frauds and pretenders, blind guides, nitpickers, snakes in the grass
- are obsessed with peripheral issues or as we say sometimes, “majoring on the minor”
- are blind to their own evil. Only care about the outward appearance, not the heart
- masquerade as righteous people, but their hearts are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

The paradigm shifts God is bringing to His people will require we deal with the spirit of religion. We must learn to recognize how this spirit operates in our own lives as well as others. We then must counter these actions with whatever the Lord shows us, and speaks to us. We must sharpen our listening skills and commit to obey the voice of our Lord always.

We are not nitpicking people’s faults here, or giving license to justify any negative feelings we may have against certain people. We are called to love, but we are also called to holiness and righteousness. God’s Kingdom is based on righteousness and justice. When we see something that is not right, we ask God for understanding of what will correct that which is wrong (bring justice) and then we do whatever the Lord tells us to do.

It became much clearer over time when God said “Come out of Babylon”, He was saying in part for His people to come out of religion. We must come out of the counterfeit

kingdom and let the chains it has used to enslave us fall to the ground. Be free! When He asked me, “Who taught you this, Me or man?”, He was asking me if I was operating from His Kingdom or from the counterfeit religious system.

Beloved, we must be quick to recognize religion. We have become so familiar and comfortable with it that we are satisfied with the counterfeit, the imitation. We must shed our chains, and seek the real.

Hear me clearly! I am not advocating for leaving the “church” you are attending. Only God can direct you to do so, if that is His will. It may be that is the path the Lord would have for you. But the most important thing, is to find the heart of God for you. Learn to hear His voice clearly, and then obey. God wants you to hear and recognize His voice as much or even more than you desire. He will find ways to confirm to you what He is saying. He does not play cat and mouse games with us!

We all must come to the place where we are able to hear the voice of our God clearly enough that we can instantly obey. We must not be satisfied with being directed by others anymore. Follow God with all your heart and don’t lean on your own thoughts. That is all I am advocating.

The Holy Spirit is the true author of scripture. He spoke words to human beings who then wrote those words down. Instead of trusting Holy Spirit to reveal what He meant by the words, we allow humans to interpret for us and we trust what they say. If we desire truth, God will show us where man’s teaching has had an influence in our lives.

John Bevere is a Christian leader and an author. In a 2016 Facebook post he relayed how God once asked him if he knew how to recognize a religious spirit. When he answered the Lord, God responded. In general terms God told him that a religious spirit operating through a person uses the Word of God to bring about their own will. That is truly what it is! The religious spirit will try to sound and act like God to you but its goal is to get you to do what they want; not what God wants.

The religious spirit is all about self. It is a method of manipulation and control.

Why Religious Spirits Remain

The religious spirit is one that keeps us blind to truth. It wants us to settle. It lulls us to sleep, thinking we are okay with God. It will engage the spirits of lethargy, complacency, and apathy to do its dirty work to keep us from having an effect on the Kingdom of God in the earth. We participate by attending “church” services, giving tithes and offerings, and being kind to others without any other purpose than fulfilling our duty.

Those spirits make us satisfied with being saved and on our way to heaven. Hopefully if we live quiet, peaceful lives, the devil will leave us alone. We attend “church” services, and are attentive. We believe what we are taught, never questioning our “church” doctrine, never rocking the boat, and not realizing demonic forces are influencing us.

Why would the devil do this? He recognizes he may never be able to have certain people in his kingdom of darkness forever, but he can stop their influence over others. He blinds people to the truth of the Kingdom of God to keep it from advancing.

But what gives this religious spirit the right to remain? Remember, blindness in God’s people is mainly caused by disobedience and rebellion against God. When we do not do what the Father tells us to do, we walk in disobedience. In otherwards we walk in the opposite direction of the Father’s heart, which moves us further away from hearing His voice. If we continue in this pattern, we basically become deaf and blind.

When we are blind and deaf, it is difficult to tell the difference between the real and the counterfeit. We cannot discern spiritual truths. This allows the religious spirit to operate. So, if we want to deal with religious spirits, and other spirits that lull us to sleep or into inactivity, we must deal with

our rebellion and disobedience. That requires something we do not like to hear, repentance.

Repentance

Repentance is not a popular word in religious circles. People tend not to like to admit when they are wrong. Pride drives us to do what we want which is often contrary to God's will. Pride will lead us to do things we ought not to do.

When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.
Proverbs 11:2 (NKJV)

This verse we all know so well.

Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)

Another favorite tactic of a religious spirit is taking offense. Taking offense is a sign of pride operating in our lives. If we get angry or disturbed by something someone else says or does then we are offended. If we let things offend us, we are more interested in self-preservation than we are in truth. It is a sign of pride.

When we recognize pride, or disobedience, or any other sign of a religious spirit's influence in our lives, we must repent. Repentance merely means we have a change of heart. We realize that we are headed in the wrong direction, and we turn around and head in the right direction.

When we turn around and face a right direction, we can still choose to not move. We must step forward and allow God to open up all the possibilities that lie before us on this new unknown path.

For Paul, when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he could no longer persecute and kill Christians. He now knew he had been doing wrong, and he had to stop. But that wasn't the end. He took a step into his future and ended up being

taught by Jesus in the wilderness for many years before entering his true destiny.

The wilderness, the desert, the valley of decision, the place of transformation stands between us and our destiny. Onward and forward, blessed ones!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 4

1 – Have you thought about your life's goals and destiny in light of God's plan for your life? Have you asked for God to reveal His plan to you, realizing He may do that a little at a time? Do you see how He has guided you so far? Reflect on this and journal what you see.

2 – No matter what vocation you have chosen, do you realize it is not your destiny? How does understanding your vocation may be just a vehicle for you to use to advance the Kingdom of God, change your thoughts on life? Explain the difference between a vehicle or tool and your destination or promised land?

3 – Over your lifetime how has God transitioned you from glory to glory where you have become more mature in the things of God? How long has it taken to undo some old thoughts and establish some new ones? What are your thoughts on what maturity looks like right now? Your perspective of maturity may change while reading this book. It will be interesting to look back and see your journey, so this question may be asked several times.

4 – Are there promises that you believe God has given you that you have left because they seemed impossible? Are there times where you started on a journey where God was leading and you turned back or just stopped? Document these and ask God to show you what you should do.

5 – Explain how you believe an understanding of the paradigm shifts mentioned in this chapter will affect your life. Ask God to give you a clearer understanding of what they mean for your life and your inner circle, as well as for your impact on the world in your area of responsibility to advance the Kingdom of God on earth.

6 – Evaluate your ability to understand God’s thoughts. Have you been one that basically thought it impossible? What do you think it means to have the mind of Christ? Have you ever thought about God wanting to reveal His deep secrets to us? What would life for you be like if you could know what was in the mind of Christ? If every saint understood this, what would the earth look like today? How will this reflection on the mind of Christ change your daily life going forward?

7 – When the author talks about a religious spirit, what are your thoughts on this topic? It is important to document your current thoughts and then look back at them when finished reading the book to see what has changed.

8 – Explain any times in your life when you have felt the fear of man. How did you react? Ask God to help you overcome any fear of man that you may have.

9 – Have you ever been in the place where you wanted to say something, but something inside of you seemed to indicated that it was not the right time to speak? Do you recognize the difference between God’s voice and your own voice that might be keeping you silent? If you are not sure, are you willing for God to take you through some training exercises to help you recognize His voice even if it means that during this process you could fail? Ask God to help you develop a hunger to hear His voice and a hunger to obey. Document your progress.

10 – Do you understand what the author means when she says there is a difference between religion and relationship, between the real and the counterfeit? Explain in your own words the difference. How has religion affected your own life?

11 – Have you ever thought about satan having a counterfeit for the Holy Spirit? Evaluate the things that may seem obvious now that are counterfeits and not real parts of the Kingdom of

God. Document your thoughts. Is God calling you to do anything differently? Are you willing to forsake the counterfeit for the real?

12 – Read through the list of traits of religious leaders again and evaluate where you have seen these traits before. We are not coming against people, but learning to recognize the spirit of religion and how it operates. Evaluate your attitude in this area. Do you desire to see people you know set free from a religious spirit? Will you ask God to show you what justice you can bring to these situations, what He would have you to do? Are you willing to obey Him?

13 – Explain what true repentance means. Explain what you believe the author means when she says turning around to face a different direction without taking any steps is not true repentance. How will this truth change your life or will it?

CHAPTER 5

AS EASY AS 1-2-3

The decision to turn and walk in a different direction is not always easy. When we recognize the work of the religious spirit in our lives, it is often difficult to decide to turn and leave it behind. Repentance is required. Once we make the decision, we turn and take a step forward into our future in the heart of God. We make it hard by always trying to plan every step, looking for shortcuts, looking back, not trusting that God knows best.

It is imperative that we learn to recognize our Lord's voice and to sense His presence. Discernment of spirits is determining what voice is speaking to us directly or indirectly through others, the voice of God, the voice of flesh, or a demonic voice of influence. Maturity requires that we know whose voice we hear.

God will direct our steps. We move when He says move. We stay still and wait when He says stay still and wait. We must be able to discern that which is pure and holy from that which is defiled. We must want Him about all else. We must learn to recognize His voice and obey everything He says, otherwise it will be impossible to transition from the old to the new.

I learned these truths concerning transforming from the old to the new through the events and wilderness journeys of my life. These helped me understand God's heart and the need for a wilderness or transforming period. I believe my experiences will help you to understand your experiences, as well.

The paradigm shifts that await us are going to require an army that understands this process. The Christians of the first century A.D. turned their world upside down. This modern-day army will do the same in an even greater fashion.

We can choose to be a part of this great army or we can sit on the sidelines.

Moses

“Let My people go!”. This cry from God has echoed in my heart for a very long time. The story of Moses parallels so much the day in which we live. The Old Testament is a treasure chest of truths concerning our God and His plans for His people.

To many people, the Old Testament is not relevant because we are under a new covenant. Many of the Old Testament people lived out physical lives in such a way to illustrate spiritual truths that apply to us today. It is fascinating the secrets and mysteries hidden in these writings that we can discover if we treasure them and don't ignore them.

In Exodus chapter three, Moses was in the wilderness. He was about to transition from being a shepherd of sheep to leading millions of people to their promised land. It was in the wilderness Moses had the burning bush experience and God gave him specific instructions. God heard the cries of His people coming from Egypt. He saw their suffering. Moses became the man of the hour.

Today the world is a mess, but there are groups all over the world crying out to God and He is making Himself known to them. We are moving rapidly toward a one-world government with debilitating control by a few elitists. Hope is hard to find for many. We are very much like the Israelites in need of a deliverer. Once again, we hear the cry to let God's people go.

Forty years before the burning bush, Moses had tried to deliver the Israelites. He failed, and fled to the wilderness. He was a young man at the time and believed he could do anything. The self-reliance, the self-assurance, in Moses had to go. Moses needed to understand that he could do nothing apart from God and it had to be in God's timing. God will take us

through that process as well, in order to prepare us to lead others out of bondage in His time and His way.

Moses and God had a conversation at the fire-bush. This time there was no self-assurance in Moses. Moses was not convinced that he was the right man for what God has planned. It is no different with us. What God wants us to do and be in the Kingdom of God is larger than we are. You will feel the same emotions that Moses felt. However, God knows what He is doing. When He taps you on the shoulder, He already knows that you have the ability to do what He wants you to do with His help.

It is okay to have this type of discussion with God. God welcomes it, but when it comes down to it, obedience is required in order to move forward. God promised Moses that He would take the people to the promised land. It truly would be a delightful, fruitful place. There was a hidden message, a mystery, a secret hidden in the revealing of this place. God called it “a land flowing with milk and honey”.

Milk and Honey

Milk in scripture represents the Word of God. Honey represents the revelation or understanding of that Word. We need both. The Israelites were to leave behind a place in Egypt that once provided richly for them, but now enslaved them. They were to transition from this place to a new place flowing with milk and honey. First there was a desert to cross.

As we travel the path of life, we will be led into times of transitioning. Either naturally or spiritually, we will be called to leave the place where we are and some things behind. We will enter what seems like a desert, but in reality, is the valley of transitioning or transforming. In this place we often do not know or understand the place where God is taking us. Maybe all we have is a promise or a sense that we must move forward.

The Kingdom of God is a place where Jesus is King, and the fulness of the knowledge of who He is flows like milk and honey through the land. Through obedience when we step

foot in the new promised land, we find it is filled with an understanding, a revelation of Jesus and the promise of what awaits us in the new place, but we must go through the valley of transformation first.

The Israelite leaders would accept Moses and listen to him. Moses would go before the Egyptian leaders and declare the word of the Lord. God would work miracles in behalf of His people to get them released from bondage. It would not be easy. Today, whole societies are beginning to awaken to the fact they are in bondage and are not free. We need leaders like Moses.

Now is the time for God's true leaders to step forward and demand freedom for the oppressed. It is time to shout "Let God's people go!" It is now time to lead the people out of bondage and into a promised land where Jesus will reveal Himself to millions. He will reveal Himself, not as the religious leaders portray Him, but as He truly is.

True authentic leaders who know the heart of God must arise, willing to fight for whole societies. The mature Ekklesia must be established. Jesus will build His Ekklesia the way He wants. We must not hinder this process by pouring new wine into the old wineskins. Just as Paul was led into the wilderness and taught by Jesus Himself, so many leaders will experience the same. We need to pray to find out what our part is in all of this. It is time! The deliverers are here!

Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'
Exodus 3:18 (NKJV)

Let My People Go

Moses was instructed to tell the Egyptians the Lord wanted His people to go on a three-day journey into the wilderness to worship God. This is the instructions God gave

to Moses that day at the burning bush. It is time to leave Egypt behind. Egypt represents dependence on worldly systems. We must come to the place where our dependence is upon our God and we are free from the control of the counterfeit system.

The first time Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh is documented in chapter five. Notice God says, “*Let My people go*”.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.’ Exodus 5:1 (NKJV)

400 years before Moses, Joseph had moved his entire family to Egypt and they had grown into a mighty nation within a nation. They were prosperous and life was very good. Then Joseph died and was forgotten. Egypt began to enslave God’s people. The burning bush incident brought up memories for Moses. He had tried to deliver his people forty years before this in his own strength, but had failed. He wasn’t sure he was ready to try again. After all, it was that incident that drove him into the wilderness to herd sheep.

Undoubtedly, Moses knew God had told Abraham that His people would be in Egypt for 400 years. God would then send a deliverer to lead them back to the promised land. Time was up, yet no one seemed to know about or remember the prophecy. The people were enslaved and miserable, yet who was reminding God of the promise? No one is saying “Where is the God who promised us deliverance? We have been here 400 years and we want to go home.” Where are those people?

Where are the people today declaring God’s promise of the third day? We live in the third day. Where is the God of the Bible who declared He would raise us up and we would live in His sight on the third day? Where are the deliverers? There are a few. The people are ready to be delivered. They are ready to be set free.

After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight. Hosea 6:2 (NKJV)

The Wilderness

Instead of keeping God's promises close to our heart and waiting in expectancy, we tend to forget what God has promised us just like the Israelites did. Sometimes our mind is so set on how we expect God to fulfill that promise we miss it or reject it because it doesn't look like what we expected. We must remain flexible and understand that God cannot be limited to our way of thinking. His thoughts are higher than ours, for sure, but we can know His thoughts and His ways.

Years ago, through a series of miracles, God gave me my dream job. I thought I would be there forever. Much to my surprise, things were about to change. One extended weekend, I travelled to visit friends where a well-known prophetess from England was speaking. She prophesied that I would leave my place of employment and God would provide another.

My mind just could not fathom how that could be. I had my miracle job from God and I loved it! It was enjoyable getting up and going to work every day. Sometimes that is the way it is when God speaks to us about transitioning to something new. We are satisfied where we are. God may start to move. You don't feel like He is as close to you as He was before. You may wonder if you have done something wrong. He has determined in His perfect timing it is time for you to move to a new level. He moves, will you follow?

God will woo us to follow Him into the wilderness, the transitioning place, the place of transformation when He wants us to move into something new. It is His way of saying it is time to move to a new level of glory. From glory to glory He changes us. He draws away so that we will miss Him and hunger for Him and go in search of Him. He leads us into the wilderness where He woos us. In this place he builds a pathway for us to get to the new place He is leading us, the new thing

He is doing. All we have to do is love Him enough to follow, to obey.

“But then I will win her back once again. I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her there. I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope. She will give herself to me there, as she did long ago when she was young, when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt. Hosea 2: 14, 15 (NLT)

Our first sight of the wilderness will often look like this Valley of Trouble. If we will take that first step and start the journey through transformation, God will turn it into a Gateway of Hope.

I was comfortable where I was in my dream job. I did not immediately move out into the desert or search God’s heart for direction. He began to change things around me. This job had been my destination and I had settled. The favor I had in this place began to leave. It was no longer a fun place to work. I was blamed for things that were not my fault. However, through it all I was able to witness to people how this was all orchestrated by God and I obtained a good reference to take with me.

Eagles will line their nest with a soft cover before laying eggs. As the eaglets are hatched and grow, a few may be reluctant to leave the nest. Mother and father eagle may then begin to strip the nest of the soft covering so it is uncomfortable to remain in the nest.

This is a perfect example of our Heavenly Father. Like me, many of us have become comfortable where we are. Maybe we have been influenced by a religious spirit and have settled into a lethargic spiritual lifestyle. God is ready for us to break out and He desires to move us to higher ground. He will begin to remove the things that make us comfortable, so we desire to move forward.

Looking at this situation with natural eyes, it would look like a bad thing to lose my dream job given to me by God. Therefore, logically it would be easy to conclude it was the enemy trying to steal from me and to begin rebuking him. Yet,

things are not always as they seem! We will be faced with that reality time and time again. Discernment is necessary.

When we don't understand the changes in our lives, it could be the enemy coming to create chaos, to steal from us or destroy us. It might be the Father seeking to draw us to a new level in Him. We must live in the Father's heart or we will find ourselves rebuking the devil for things God is doing, and giving God credit for things the enemy is doing.

Discernment is required to move into transformation. We have to be able to discern between the holy and the unholy. We must understand righteousness and justice in order to mature and be established as the Ekklesia.

Over time it became clear it was God instigating this change with my job. He was stripping the nest so I would become uncomfortable and would follow His heart. The prophetic word was there also to guide me. I eventually followed Him into the wilderness. It would be so much easier if we would learn to hear His voice, seek His face, and then immediately obey! But if we don't, He will do something to get our attention like strip the nest.

We are moving into the unknown with God. We have never been this way before. We are making a new path. All we have, which is all we need, is the ability to hear the voice of God and to understand His heart. Even if change is not easy for us, God can and will build an excitement for adventure in the unknown if we will let Him. All we have to do is say YES to Him.

Lessons Learned

Leaving my dream job was the first step in beginning to understand the process of transforming. Less than three years from the prophetic word, I was on my way into new territory and another promised job through another series of miracles. I was learning new things about my Father and His heart.

Not only did I have a new job, but my ministry increased. I travelled to preach in a small congregation for a while once or twice a month. I taught studies in the assembly I attended. I went on several short-term mission trips to countries I dreamed about as a child. Everything was absolutely amazing!

God fulfilled many prophetic words that had been spoken over me during this time. I had divine favor over my life for many years. I had no clue that once again a major paradigm shift in my life was just around the corner. It is always from glory to glory. It was going to be a hard one, but there was much God wanted to teach me.

These experiences do not just happen to people with a prophetic or apostolic voice. It might be more intense for those called as leaders, but the process is the same. This transitioning from glory to glory is necessary for everyone in order for us to mature in the things of God. It is not just for a few.

The major problem with God's people today is we have not learned to recognize His voice and the way He works in our lives. We fail to recognize when God uses particular incidents to nudge us into moving up a level in glory, to follow Him into the unknown. We tend to ignore or forget about the incident and just go on with life when it doesn't make sense to us. We need to start paying attention. God communicates with us every day. We are just not recognizing it.

Your call to the desert could be as simple as in your current situation you are feeling burnt-out and tired. Why? What does God want you to do about it? Does he want you feeling that way? Of course not! So therefore, He wants to transition you from the place of burnout to a place of peace and rest. How do you get there? You ask God, listen to His voice, and do whatever He tells you to do.

It could be as simple as saying no to a few things, when it is not easy for you to say no. It could mean finding a different job or moving to a different place. Whatever it is God will show you the way, and all that is required of you is obedience.

God wanted me to understand this transformation process so I wouldn't settle and I wouldn't turn back. He wanted our assembly to understand the process because he wanted us together to move into something new, a new level of glory in Him.

He wants the same for you. Once you understand the process and go on an adventure with God, you will never be the same. He wants you to be a part of a group who are maturing and traveling through the transformation processes to equip you as the Ekklesia.

I was about to learn a lesson I would never forget. At the time, I was a part of the leadership team of this local assembly. We appeared to be moving forward. We had teams going to the nations. I was teaching what God had placed on my heart concerning Church versus Kingdom and on righteousness and justice. It was received pretty well, although there were a few who questioned it. That is normal in any "church" assembly.

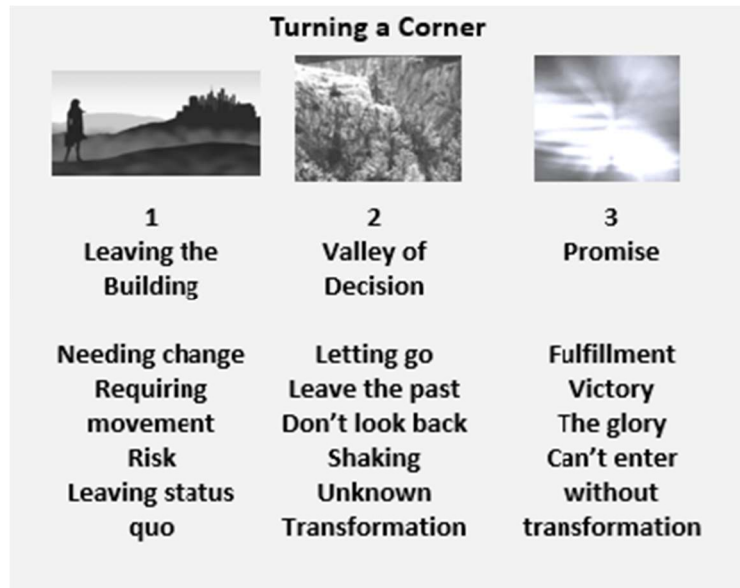
We believed God was taking us into new territory and some were pretty excited. Others were skeptical. Some were completely happy with the way things were. To some growth meant growing the size of our congregation. Others wanted spiritual growth and, I believe, had a genuine desire for more of God.

According to a prophetic word given to the assembly, we had left the four walls of the building and were on our way to the new land God was taking us. We had turned a corner. I had a dream a few days later that confirmed this prophetic word.

In the dream I was in a city that was surrounded by walls. In my dream I walked out of the city through the gate. I walked around one corner of the wall and saw a huge valley with granite walls on both sides stretched out before me. As I looked deep into the valley, where it seemed to end, there was a bright light. It was blinding and glorious.

1-2-3 Step Process

In the dream, there appeared to be a 3-step process defining what the previous prophetic word had meant by “turning a corner”. Step one was the walled place, the place where we were or had been, step two was the valley or the wilderness, and step three was the place we were going. During this process God spoke to me concerning transitioning being “as easy as 1-2-3”. I illustrated what I was seeing by the spirit and communicated it to the “church board”. This is an abbreviated version of what was presented to the board.



February 1 (02/01) was the day of my dream. That same day, our pastor’s wife had a prophetic experience, but neither one of us knew about the experience of the other until a day or two later. She hadn’t doubted the prophetic word for the assembly about having turned a corner, but she asked God for personal confirmation of it. God loves all His children and

desires to communicate with us. He looked at her heart and He gave her the answer through this prophetic experience.

The pastor's wife was waitressing at a local restaurant on that day, February 1 (02/01). Table one was assigned to her. Two times on that day two different people at table one gave her a \$2 bill as a tip. That was a prophetic sign that the 1-2-3 process for transitioning had begun, her confirmation that we had turned a corner and stepped from step one into step two.

One month later on March 03 (03/03) she was waiting on table 23 and someone left her two \$2 bill tips. Another confirmation of the process. One person left two \$2 bills on table 23. Steps 1-2-3, emphasis on the two and three, we had entered the valley of decision or the transitioning place (step two) and step three the promised land was in front of us. The date was 03/03. It was an encouragement from God to not look back.



It was double confirmation that we were on the right path. \$2 bills are rare. God did this. She gave me one of those \$2 bills and I still have it to this day. God wants us to succeed. He does not play games with us. He does not dangle a carrot in front of us without giving us the carrot. He wants us to

understand what He is saying to us. He will use any method there is to get us to pay attention to what He is saying. That is our awesome God!

We become comfortable with where we are, and we settle. Suddenly God does something to indicate to us, it is time to travel to the next level of glory in Him. We start to feel uncomfortable or not satisfied with where we are. We might see, through blurry glasses at best, where God wants to take us. Many are afraid to start the journey until the end result is clearly seen. God doesn't work that way. He requires faith.

Faith

It is faith that pleases God. We must step out in faith, when God says move.

But without faith it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him, for whoever comes [near] to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (AMP)

Abraham by faith left his home and headed to the promised land without knowing where it was.

By faith Abraham, when he was called [by God], obeyed by going to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went, not knowing where he was going. Hebrews 11:8 (AMP)

Faith demands that we obey even when we do not see the end result clearly. Our God is leading us and He only has good things planned for us.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NKJV)

We have heard a lot of teaching over the years on the wilderness experiences and we have come to dread them. They are however necessary in our transformation process. One meaning of the Hebrew word for wilderness is “uninhabited place”. It is not a place to settle. It is not a place to build a home and live. It is a place to pass through on our way to somewhere else.

Many of God’s people move out into the wilderness with good intentions. They want to grow and mature. However, too many either return to their starting point or settle in the desert because things get tough. They don’t understand the process of moving from glory to glory. Not being able to see the final destiny with clarity sometimes makes them lose heart.

Understanding this process is important so God’s people do not settle or turn back. We must have faith that God knows what He is doing and His goodness and love await us in our new territory. These 1-2-3 processes can be experienced in the physical realm as well in the spiritual realm. God may have a different job for you, a different location, a new thing. Maybe He wants you to move into a clearer understanding of who He is and what He is doing in the earth today. The process is the same.

Our Comfort Zone

Stepping out of your comfort zone may not be easy. It may, and usually does, require you to be willing to leave some things behind. Those things may be important to you, and hard to give up, but you must have faith that the place God wants to take you is far better than where you are today.

To see what is of God and what is not, we need to question everything. We too often assume we know what God is doing or how He will bring our dreams to pass. We miss out on so much because we don’t recognize God’s hand in our lives. Sometimes, if we don’t immediately understand, we assume it is not God. If it seems contrary to what we expect

from God, we assume it is not God. He demands complete obedience. Until we learn complete obedience, we often will not understand why He is doing what He is doing.

God is unique. He always does things His way. He doesn't always do things the same way He has done in the past. We are made in His image. We are unique creatures. God tailors our situations uniquely to who we are. We cannot compare our experiences to others. God communicates with us knowing the best way for us to comprehend what He is saying and doing.

We have to determine for ourselves if He is faithful and truthful to us. Is He acting in our best interest? Can we trust Him even when we do not know where we are going or what He is doing? Are we close enough to Him to know His voice and trust Him when He does something that seems foreign and opposite to our desires? We must submit to His every command, knowing that He knows better than we do, what is best for us. Then, perhaps He will reveal in detail the steps ahead. Obedience opens so many doors!

Some of these things don't come easily. It can be a lot of change, but if we are faithful to believe God and are willing to find out if what He says is for real, He will take us through the process at whatever speed is necessary for us. You will be stripped of some things, some old doctrine, old teachings, old ways in order to enter your promised land.

God is doing a new thing in your life. He is not remodeling; He is building something new. He will not whitewash the old and call it new. A fresh coat of paint is not enough. Sometimes that stripping process hurts. You do not understand why it is necessary, but some day you will. Have faith that God knows what is best and that placing your life in His hands is far better than you messing things up on your own.

Transforming is a whole lot easier for an individual or family than it is for a group of people. As I write about this process, it may seem tedious and repetitive at times. But when you are called on by God to lead a group of people out of an

old mindset into a new mindset, you will appreciate the understanding of the steps. Whole communities and whole countries are going to be transformed and we need an army to understand the process and lead the way.

Valley of Decision

And who would mend worn-out clothing with new fabric? When the new cloth shrinks it will rip, making the hole worse than before. And who would pour fresh, new wine into an old wineskin? Eventually the wine will ferment and make the wineskin burst, losing everything—the wine is spilled and the wineskin ruined. Instead, new wine is always poured into a new wineskin so that both are preserved.”

Matthew 9:16,17 (TPT)

God wants to pour new wine into us, but He will not pour it into an old wineskin. It would destroy us. He must prepare us for the new wine. He must prepare us for the new place we are headed. He must prepare us for the new revelation of His secrets and mysteries that He wants to share with us, His children. He must prepare us for the paradigm shifts that are to come. He must prepare us for the new day, the Third Day.

When Queen Esther heard of the evil plot devised by Haman to destroy her people, she fasted. On the third day, she put on her royal robes and went to see the king. We are in the third day, and the bride, the Ekklesia, is preparing to put on her royal garments to go before the King. We are transitioning into the spotless bride, without spot or wrinkle.

David spent a lot of time in the wilderness even after he had been anointed king. He needed to get rid of some things in his life and he needed to learn how to think like a king. That all happened in his wilderness experiences, his transforming times. He had opportunities to give up, to disobey God but he was faithful.

He had occasion to harm King Saul but he did not. Saul sought David's life in the wilderness but God protected David. The enemy came after Jesus when Jesus was in the

wilderness, as he will come after you, as well. The enemy does not want you to enter into your promised land.

The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. Psalm 29:8 (NKJV)

Kadesh means holy. The wilderness is a holy place but is also the place of shaking. It is designed by God for you to get rid of the old and prepare you for the new. Wood, hay and stubble are destroyed in the wilderness in preparation for inheritance of gold and silver in the promised land. The wilderness experience, the transformation valley, is not a once in a life time experience. It will occur over and over again as you move from glory to glory.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. II Cor. 3:18 (NJKV)

In the transition hallway, in the wilderness, we are often hidden from view and forgotten by people. Those people often have an image of who they think we are. That image needs to die so a new image can arise. We will be different when we come out of the wilderness. Our deepest revelations often come during transitioning. We will have new instructions, new understanding, new purpose, new determination, new faith. Old burdens that we unnecessarily carried are gone.

The transitioning period is really a bridge between the old and the new. At some point we reach a point of no return. We have seen some undeniable things with a solid understanding of where God is taking us. We have seen too much to turn back, but that doesn't mean that we won't settle in the wilderness.

The wilderness was never meant to be a place to live, but for many, the journey is too hard. They decide to settle and die in the wilderness without inheriting their promises. Millions of people have done this exact thing. They have settled.

Millions of Israelites died in the wilderness in Moses' time because they refused the goodness of God and did not walk in faith.

The transitioning place is indeed a valley of decision. We choose to go back, to settle, or to inherit. Even when God leads you in what seems like the opposite direction of your God-given dream or vision, be encouraged. God knows how important the lesson of obedience is, and He will lead you into a place where you must decide to obey or not. It is always your choice.

God desires to communicate with us, to give us dreams and visions. Many want to know what God desires for them, so they flock to places where well-known leaders are speaking just to get a "Now Word" from the Lord or an interpretation for their dreams and visions. People want something they can relate to right now. Many times, they hang on to what makes sense to them in the moment and discard the rest.

We must understand every word God speaks is important, whether we understand it in the moment or not. **GOD DOES NOT WASTE WORDS.** Most times, true words from God are both for the moment and for the future. We should treasure these words with our heart and hang on to them tightly. Review them often. Let God bring new meaning and understanding over time.

Understanding God's purposes is a part of our journey. Every day He brings new insights and knowledge to us. Every step we take, we should understand it is a step into our destiny, whether we fully comprehend it or not. Even the desert times have purpose.

In transitioning we should find ourselves closer to God, with a deeper understanding of His heart. The wilderness is not a place of dread, or fear, or apprehension. It should be a place of JOY. God has found us ready to move to a new level in Him. That is a very good thing.

God is proud of you. You stepped out of your comfort zone, obeyed His voice even when you did not know what was

happening or where you were going. Do not turn back. Do not settle. Your future awaits you.

For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Isaiah 51:3 (NKJV)

Decide today to move out into the transitioning land with the determination to finish your race and never settle in the desert. May the promise of more of the Father's heart and the glory of the house that Jesus is building propel you into your promised land.

The Ekklesia must mature and become the one new man and the city on a hill before we can effectively advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. The Ekklesia must go through the transforming to eliminate the wood, hay and stubble and to polish the treasured jewels so God's glory can be seen in its fullness. She must be committed to the Father's heart. Scripture tells us that the bride will make herself ready. We are not waiting on God. He is waiting on us to take our rightful place.

A Warning

The prophetic word and the prophetic incident gave our assembly the assurance we had heard God and the revelation of the 1-2-3 step process we were experiencing. A few months later, God gave us a prophetic warning.

God said, "I have prepared a way through the wilderness so that you might enter your promised land. The wilderness is a time of testing. It is not a hard thing, but it is a necessary thing, so that you might be prepared for that which lies ahead. If I have prepared the way for you to go, will I not be faithful to lead you with the cloud of My Presence? Will you not be able to discern the way that is right for you by My glory that lights the way? For I would not have you in darkness. The darkness is the place of deception. For the darkness is the place that the enemy hides

and does his unspeakable acts. He does so in order to thwart the plans that I have for you.

For the enemy would desire to send a counterfeit cloud that it might hide and obscure the sun (Son). For if he succeeds the light would no longer shine upon the path that I have laid for you and there would be a stopping and there would be a spirit of confusion that would arise to keep you in the wilderness, so that you might not enter into your promised land. And because of this, you would find yourselves ready to accept second best. And you would suddenly find yourselves satisfied with mediocrity again. And then the enemy would begin to convince you that you had entered into the promised land, when in fact you were still in the wilderness.

There are currently things hidden in the darkness that need to be exposed. This will not happen if the counterfeit cloud is allowed to obscure the sun (Son). For the full light of My presence must be allowed to shine upon you and to expose those areas that need correction, that need realignment. There are things that must be completely torn down so that there can be a restructuring, a rebuilding.”

This word told us exactly what was about to happen. We were going to be faced with a counterfeit promised land and we would need to choose between the counterfeit and the real. We must be prepared to discern the counterfeit when it presented itself. We were in the land of transitioning, the valley of decision. But I don't think any of us recognized the importance of this word at the time.

The summarized points from the prophetic word above are listed here telling us what would happen in our valley of decision. We would choose whether to travel on with God or settle in the desert or return to the place we were before.

- We were going into a place where we would be prepared by God for our promised land.
- There would be an attempt to thwart our forward progress and plans
- Discernment was necessary.
- A counterfeit would come to tempt us off the right path. If we did not discern and reject the counterfeit, we would settle for the counterfeit.

- To enter our promised land, there were some adjustments that would need to be made, some tearing down and rebuilding, but we would not be able to see those areas if we accepted the counterfeit.

God warned us. We should have been prepared, but we were not. The story continues.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 5

1 – Explain the meaning of discerning of spirits? How easy is it for you to discern if you are hearing from God, your flesh, or the enemy? Why do you think this is an important factor in the maturing of a child of God?

2 – Have you ever thought you heard God speak and then question if it was Him or just your thoughts? Have you had discussions with Him about it? If the voice wanted you to do something, did you end up doing it, or did you decide it probably wasn't God? How are you going to handle things the next time this happens? Do you believe you can have an open and free discussion with God? Do you truly understand the importance of obedience?

3 – In Bible language what do milk and honey represent? Why are both important?

4 – What are your thoughts on the need to be delivered from Egypt today, to be set free from slavery?

5 – Have you ever had a promise from God fulfilled in a way you were not expecting? If so, what did you learn? How will your actions change in order to take limits off of how God fulfills His promises to you?

6 – Describe some of your experiences in the wilderness. Could you see God's hand in moving you to the wilderness? What changes occurred when you came out of the wilderness? Looking back, can you see these experiences as God wooing you, calling you closer to Him? Did you move into the wilderness because you felt God had moved and you wanted to be closer to Him again, or did He need to strip the nest and make it uncomfortable in order for you to move? How will you

do things differently when the next wilderness experience presents itself?

7 – Think about a time in your life where you believed it was God doing something when it was the enemy, or a time when the enemy was doing something and it was God. What made you think the way you did? How did you finally realize the difference? Are you satisfied with your current level of discernment or do you want more? If you desire more discernment, ask God to help you increase your discernment level. God will put you in situations where you will need discernment. When those situations present themselves, ask God to direct you until you know for sure.

8 – Review the 1-2-3 process. Does it make sense to you? What is your reaction to the prophetic events that happened to verify the prophetic word? Do you truly believe that God wants to communicate with us more than we realize? What efforts are you going to make to increase your ability to hear God and communicate with Him?

9 – Meditate on the new wineskin versus old wineskin. What are your thoughts about leaving some things behind in order to be transformed? What happens when you carry things over and mix them with the new when God has said to leave them behind? Are you willing to obey God and leave some things behind as He shows you, in order to enter a new level of glory, of maturity? Ask God to help you in this process.

10 – Explain your reaction to going through the wilderness multiple times and being hidden or forgotten while in this process. Explain your reasoning for why this is necessary.

11 – What is your reaction when things seem to be going in the opposite direction from your promise from God? How do you

know you are on the right path even when it might not look like you are?

12 – Explain why you believe the author states the importance of paying close attention to every word God speaks to you, and not assume that it has been fulfilled in its fulness. Do you see how people throw away words through lack of understanding and through carelessness? Considering that the words of God to you are holy and precious and should not be ignored, how will you treat them in the future?

13 – How important is discernment to you when you are in a valley of decision? Contemplate a promise you have from God and how the enemy might try to steal it from you or present a counterfeit. How will you know the difference?

14 – How important is it for the group of people you congregate with to be mature and hearing the voice of God? Are you beginning to see why it is important for a group to be on the same page with direction given by God for that group for whatever season He directs?

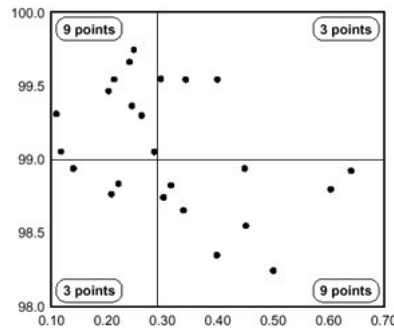
CHAPTER 6

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

An Earth-Shaking Event for Me

What just happened? My mind was spinning, I was nauseated but I wasn't sure exactly why. Major change was coming. A decision had been made in the assembly I attended. Although I wasn't entirely blindsided by it, my reaction shocked me. Something seemed very wrong, but I didn't know what.

In the last chapter I detailed the activities leading up to this event. We had been told through a prophetic word that we had turned the corner. A couple of prophetic events with 2-dollar bills confirmed the word. We had started transitioning into something new even though we did not clearly understand what it meant. We were full of joy that God had heard our cries and was answering our prayers when suddenly everything was turned upside down.



Scattergram

Our brains and our spirits are collectors of information. Each time God reveals truth to us, it is stored in

our internal computers. I often compare it to a scattergram. So many pieces of information collected and scattered all over the intellect and the spirit without a clue at times how they might all connect.

Each dot is like a piece to a giant puzzle of life. How do they all connect? Only true revelation from God can begin to bring the pieces together and make sense of it all.

I had just begun to see how some of these puzzle pieces of revelation fit together and it was amazing how God was moving. All seemed to be going in the right direction, as I taught on hearing the voice of God, on righteousness and justice and how it all fit in the advancing of the Kingdom of God. Then this event happened that shattered into a million pieces everything I thought I knew. I had so many questions.

Have you ever felt this way? If you desire to be on the cutting edge of what God is doing in this hour, then you have or you will. Emotions play a part in our lives and I was in an emotional upheaval. We have to learn to recognize our emotions and know how to deal with them. God has emotion. Emotions can thrust us forward or they can hold us back. They do bring us to a decision point, that is for sure.

If you have experienced some of these same emotions, hopefully my experiences will encourage you to keep pursuing what God has placed in your heart even if you do not understand when some events that appear contrary to your heart, happen in your life.

What was this event that shattered my world? The pastor/apostle of the assembly I attended at the time had called a meeting of the leaders, of which I was one. He announced a decision had been made to join an organization we had been considering for a while. We had been operating under complete autonomy and independence in the past. The decision was not a complete surprise. We had attended seminars and conferences with this organization and they had sent speakers to us.

It wasn't that their message was completely off base either. It seemed to embrace the Kingdom message and the

discipling of nations. They were teaching on subjects strong in my spirit. However, I had felt strongly, we should remain independent, not under an organization. The pastor/apostle felt he needed covering. He felt he needed accountability to someone. This is a normal quandary with many leaders and the topic had been discussed a little in the past.

When the decision was announced to the leadership group that the pastors had decided to join this organization, I became sick to my stomach and I really felt strongly I could not be a part of it. I truly did not know at the time what it was that was causing me such discomfort. I knew the organization was not very supportive of women apostles or women in leadership for that matter and that bothered me, but was it enough to make me nauseated? I desperately needed to get alone with God and find out what was happening in my spirit.

I was a mess for several weeks. Was it just me being emotional or was God involved with what I was sensing? Was it my flesh or was it God? The words God spoke to me many years before this incident came storming into my head. “Things are not always as they seem.”

The more I prayed, the more I knew God was causing my uneasiness, and I could not be a part of what was happening in the assembly. For me to do so would mean I would have to be disobedient to God. It wasn't until I reread the prophetic warning given a few months before this incident and detailed in the previous chapter, that I began to understand what was happening.

I will not go into any more detail, other than to say I left an assembly I loved very much and it hurt deeply. I would leave people behind who I cared about very much. It did indeed break my heart.

Believe me, if God calls you to something bigger than you are, you will come face to face with these feelings. You may feel lost and alone. You may feel like there is no ministry left, that all you thought you were going to do for God has been flushed down the toilet. What is wrong with you? How did you miss God so drastically?

All these thoughts may come into your mind. You will need to deal with them, because you must come to the place where you trust God no matter what things look like. God's plans for your life are far greater than anything your dreams could convey.

Obedience in the midst of all these feelings is necessary. Obedience will open doors in God's timing and His way. Believe me, you will absolutely be tested on your willingness to obey. Our ideas, our ways have to die, in order for God to live through us.

Lack of Understanding

This separation was necessary for me, but it would be quite a while before I would fully understand why. Through the process I would begin to understand the depth of the vision of the Chinese lantern and the need to turn it upside down.

When God moves you from glory to glory, there will probably be times of separation. There will be times when you do not understand what is happening, times of deep emotional feelings. You will absolutely need alone-time with God to sort through it all. In the end it is all about obedience.

I prayed for everyone involved. I evaluated whether I was over reacting or missing God, but for me there was no turning back. We, as a body of believers, had moved out from behind the four walls. We had turned a corner and were headed to the promised land. God had confirmed it, but He had also given us a warning. The warning was very real. This was all detailed in the previous chapter. But when things changed, we had all forgotten about the warning, including me.

Before this happened, things were looking up and I was truly excited. Now, everything seemed to crumble in front of my eyes. I didn't understand how or why. It felt like this move to join this organization placed us back behind four walls under the influence of the religious spirit. It moved us back into a controlling situation at a time when God was declaring "Set My people free". The warning about a counterfeit had been ignored. Leadership was convinced it was on the right path.

I learned several things over time from this experience. Apostolic and prophetic voices are needed and foundational to establish what God wants to do in a region through His Ekklesia. We must understand and value them as gifts if we love and value God. Those who see strategies and blueprints often see at a higher level than other apostolic and prophetic people. This is not a flaw. They are just different and needed.

This is important to know. You may be different and not understand why you can't just be like someone else you know who operates in the same gifting. You are an individual and God has specific plans for you. I struggled with this because I had a man who believed he had an apostolic gifting tell me that my gift was flawed because I saw too high level for this body of believers.

There will be those who cannot see the gift your precious Lord has placed in you. They may think you are flawed because you are not like others they know. It doesn't matter. You have to settle with your Lord what is in His heart for you and not settle for what others think. In humility and love go to the Father's heart and He will let you know who you are. Then just be who He has gifted you to be.

The place behind four walls would have a new name, new terminology, new rules. It would talk a little different, act a little different to disguise what it was. I could not be a part of it. That is all I knew at the time, and I could either apologize for my bizarre behavior and return to the fold, or I could obey God and not return. It was the end of my ministry, or at the least the ministry as I perceived it at that time. Even though it hurt my heart tremendously not to return, and even though some part of me wanted to, I could not disobey God.

Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience to the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed [is better] than the fat of rams. "For rebellion is as [serious as] the sin of divination (fortune-telling), and disobedience is as [serious as] false religion and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you as king."
I Samuel 15:22,23 (AMP)

Obedience Is Required

I write of my experiences because I believe many will experience similar situations as we move into the massive paradigm shifts ahead. They will need to recognize what is happening and the only place to run is straight into the Father heart of God for wisdom. Discernment is necessary and essential.

Emotions will play a part, but you cannot allow them to rule you. Finding the will of God and then obeying Him is the only solution. When He says move, you must move. You must not allow the fear of man, the fear of rejection, loneliness, bitterness, anger or any other human emotion to take root in your heart. Let Father God embrace you and move you forward.

All over the world, God's call to come out of Babylon, satan's counterfeit kingdom, is being heard. The walls that hold God's people back are coming down. Everything that can be shaken is going to be shaken and there will be a massive amount of change. There will be many institutions whose leadership refuse to set God's people free. Many of those institutions preach a false doctrine and condone evil lifestyles and practices. Others appear to preach mostly truth, but refuse to obey God.

When God's people begin to see the truth, they will be placed in the valley of decision. Will they obey God or men? The religious spirit is a tough spirit to deal with and as stated before, one of the root causes is disobedience. The religious spirit is everywhere. We must recognize when God has spoken and we must obey.

It is rebellion against the will of God when we disobey Him. Often times people shrug off disobedience thinking they can repent later. God does not see it that way. To Him, disobedience is a serious thing. It is so serious it is likened to witchcraft or divination. Divination is when we seek supernatural direction or instruction outside of God. In God's view, disobedience is as evil as practicing witchcraft.

God likened disobedience to seeking help or direction from a religious spirit. If we are not obeying God and taking His advice, we are getting advice from self or from a religious spirit. There are a lot of people who cannot seem to hear from God for themselves so they seek God's voice through another. Many times, that is a prophet (perhaps a false prophet) who is giving fortune cookie prophecies and God's people are content with what they get.

God is not a magician. Much of what is declared today is not God, even though it may sound like Him and have some form of godliness in its speech. It is nothing more than a religious spirit performing for the crowds. It is not everybody, but enough to mention and to understand discernment is unequivocally necessary. True prophetic words are important and valuable, but we must know the Father's heart and voice for ourselves and not be dependent on hearing His voice through someone else.

We are responsible before God to discern when He speaks to us directly or through another. We don't accept everything as from God without discerning for ourselves. God has spoken to me through billboards, books, nature, and even through a boss who was not a Christian. The key to discerning whether it is God, is being close enough to know His heart and His voice.

If we disobey God, we become less sensitive to Holy Spirit's guidance and our spiritual eyes are dimmed and our spiritual ears are plugged. Once this happens, the religious spirit can operate in our lives and we don't even realize it. It lulls us to sleep. Apathy, complacency, and lethargy set in, and that is not a pretty picture!

With hope and anticipation in this hour, I believe God's people will be obedient and follow God into the transitioning place, the valley of decision. Many have been there for a while and wonder when it is going to end. Nothing seems to be happening. It is not that there isn't any revelation, but when will this end and when will we step over into our promised land? It has been a long time. Did we miss God?

Maybe we should do something? The temptations will definitely come to try to make something happen.

God instructed me a few years ago to watch events unfold in the natural realm as a sign of what will happen in the spiritual realm. We expect things to happen overnight, but they seldom do. Although God certainly has the ability to do things quickly, He often chooses not to do things instantly. There is a mass awakening taking place today to the corruption and evil all around us. We are appalled and amazed that it has been there for a long time, but we couldn't see it.

The same thing is happening in the spiritual realm with these paradigm shifts. They are not going to happen overnight. We must awaken to see the deception and veil that has been over our eyes for a long time. These paradigm shifts require a mass of God's people to be awoken and stirred to action. We must stop building our own kingdoms and instead dedicate our lives to the advancing of God's Kingdom. We must reject the religious version of the "church" and embrace the Ekklesia that Jesus is building.

While in the valley of decision, at times I have made plans and tested some waters. Sometimes, a check in my spirit would indicate the plan wasn't right or it wasn't the right time, leaving me frustrated. Obedience was still required. My heart cried, "God, please don't let me settle". More time passed. More attempts to move forward. More checks in my spirit. When a person receives a check in their spirit it is like something inside of them says, "Don't do this". There is no peace in it. Let God's peace direct you. When the time is right, there will be peace. Don't force things to happen before their time. You could birth an Ismael.

To step out of your transitioning place before it is God's time is disobedience as well. We must obey Him at all cost, move when He says move, stand still, when He says stand still. You will be tempted to force things to happen, just as Abraham was tempted when God promised him a son and that son took a long time coming. We think we have to wait a long time, but Abraham waited 25 years for the promise of a son.

In Deuteronomy chapter one, we read the story of the Israelites coming to the edge of their Promised Land. God told them to fight the Amorites and He would give them the victory. The Israelites didn't believe they could win so they rebelled. God told them the price for their disobedience and rebellion would be dying in the wilderness. Only Caleb and Joshua from the older generation through their trust in God and their obedience would be allowed into the Promised Land.

The Israelites were not happy with God's decision and they thought they could change His mind. They decided the next day to go fight the Amorites like God had told them to do the day before. God saw what they were planning and told them, "Don't do it. I won't be with you and you will lose". But, once again they thought they knew better than God. They lost. We cannot do things our own way. Sometimes we learn that lesson the hard way, but learn we must. Disobedience will keep us from our promised land.

Everything Happens for a Reason

I have nothing but sadness at leaving some relationships behind. They were family. Am I on the right path and therefore they are on the wrong path? Everyone has their own path to the one destiny called maturity, the city on a Hill. Everyone has to find their own path God has for them. All I can say is I was on assignment as an apostolic/prophetic voice to that assembly and their leadership until God called me away.

God ended my assignment there to lead me into a valley of transformation. If we are following after God, we can be assured everything happens for a reason. I do believe they accepted a counterfeit, but that didn't have to be the end. It is not our place to ever force decisions in the groups where God places us. God gave all of us a free will to choose. We cannot violate that, but we can pray that people will choose righteously and justly, including ourselves. Believe me, I have failed in making right decisions before, we all do. It is a part of our journey into maturity.

We are going to face these types of situations in the process of maturing, if we are moving forward with God. We all should be moving from glory to glory, but some will move at different speeds and down different paths. Be careful what you judge. We still have a lot to learn about justice and judging.

Sometimes people will travel with you for a while and then you find yourself taking a different path. Some may reject you because they do not understand why. Some may be angry and feel like you have rejected them. Some will believe you lost your way, or you went off the deep-end and there is nothing they can do to help you. It is what it is, but in your heart, you have seen the city not made with hands, the same city Abraham of old saw. You must travel on and you will not turn back. Obedience to your Father is now deeply rooted in your life-blood.

Question everything, always! Question your own heart, question your motives. Humble yourself before your God and tell Him you are willing to do whatever He tells you to do. If you missed it, repent and make it right. If you still believe God is in it, just obey at all costs. If your heart is pure, God will take care of it.

Hold the puzzle pieces of your life up to God and give Him control. It doesn't matter what others think of you. It only matters what God thinks of you. You may never be vindicated in this life, but it doesn't matter. Obedience brings you to a far better place even if it takes a while to get there.

Events like this will occur in your life if you are following God with a whole heart. You need to know how to handle these events. Above all, don't let them distract you from your goal. Don't lose focus of your promised land. I did not understand the process, so I wasted years and felt doomed to fail. Because I believed I had failed, I thought I could never be who I felt God called me to be. I wallowed in self-pity for a while.

Don't be like me. These types of events are a part of your training in obedience. If it takes every ounce of strength in you, do not give up. Do not return to the status quo. Do not

give in to the enemy who wants you to hide away and never realize your potential. Understand the Father's heart sees greatness in you, so He allows events to guide you into maturity. He wants what He has placed in you to come out in perfection. The only way forward is submission to God in everything and obedience to Him no matter what the cost.

Puzzle Pieces Are Tossed in the Air

Before leaving this assembly, God had begun putting some of the puzzle pieces together for me. I thought I was making good progress. It felt good. My ministry and work life were full and blessed. I was full of joy and excitement when suddenly everything felt like it was falling apart. This often happens when God is on the move.

I was reminded of a prophetic word from God given to me in North Dakota a few years before this happened. The prophetess said, "There is some readjustment. It is like everything being thrown up into the air." But the Lord says, "Daughter, when it begins to settle you will see, there's a new order. That you'll see that there's readjustment, that there's some new priorities." And the Lord says, "Daughter, don't you know it's my mercy upon you," saith God. For surely I would not leave you in this place forever."

When God called me to change jobs and to move it was like all the puzzle pieces had been tossed in the air. With the new job and the assembly moving forward the puzzle pieces had been starting to fit together nicely.

Perhaps you have experienced something similar as well. Things were going great in your life and coming together nicely. You could relax a little and enjoy your life. Things seemed to make sense and you felt blessed. Then all of a sudden, life was like a stirred-up hornet's nest and you did not understand it. Everything seemed to be going wrong. Things were going so well. What did you do wrong? Probably nothing!

Don't give up hope. God moves us from level to level in our pursuit of Him. We must transition into the next level,

so God moves us into a wilderness moment again. It may be a dramatic event that leads us into transitioning. It might not be, but either way, it is a good thing. God needs to get our attention. We need to learn to recognize and appreciate our transitioning moments. Transforming takes place in the desert, the place between our past and our future.

Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV)

This thrust into the wilderness for me was like no other. I felt completely alone and my ministry in shambles. The journey seemed to go on forever. The calling on my life appeared almost dead with no hope of revival. How could this be? Was my life a wasted life? This time in the wilderness I began to understand with more clarity the purpose of the journey. It was not a place to settle. It was not some dead desert place. It was a place of meeting God without all the distractions. It was a place of shedding the old in preparation for the new.

I had thought originally, The Chinese lantern vision was for this couple who pastored the assembly I was leaving and for me as a part of their ministry. When I separated from them, the Chinese lantern vision seemed to die with me. If that vision was for them as well as me, how could it ever come to fruition since God seemed to have separated us?

I did not yet see the fullness of what God wanted me to see through this vision. I thought I missed God, and the meaning of the vision and it was too late. Little did I know that the desert was where God was going to open up my understanding of what the Chinese lantern meant. I had seen the vision correctly, but it was much bigger than I first thought.

I had longed to be a part of a group who journeyed as Abraham did, because they saw the city not made by human hands. I desired to be a part of an army that was willing to learn from God as we went, an army that would only do what they

saw the Master do, only say what they heard Him say. My heart hungered for it. Was I wrong? Were my dreams too far out there?

There was more I needed to know and to learn. I do not have all the answers for what happened in that assembly. I don't need the answers. I just know that separation was necessary, although I was not happy with God's decision at the time. My heart ached for what had been. Leaving the past behind is not always easy.

I would live out the 1-2-3 process God brought to our assembly by myself for several years. It would live deep in my spirit as God filled me with revelation. Instead of the dry thirsty land of a desert, we should learn to feed on the bread from heaven and drink the living waters. It truly is the place of transforming, of change. If we truly understood, we would travel through in much less time. It is very much a valley of decision. We must decide whether we will go back to our old life, our old thinking or move on into an unknown future with God.

God Is Our Shepherd – He Knows

I was about to emerge from this long desert experience after several years, when I revisited another word from God given to me by a different prophetic voice several years before this last event. This prophet said, "And the Lord says, "Daughter of God, he says, Arise this hour. I am speaking to your spirit and I am causing you to arise this hour. Hold strong cause I'm putting the pieces of the puzzle back together even the mystery of some areas of your life that you have been pursuing."

Although I had read this word many, many times before, I had never noticed that it said "putting the pieces of the puzzle BACK TOGETHER." It meant the pieces (or at least some of them) had been put together before and now they were being put BACK together. This is a perfect example of why it is important to hang on to the words God speaks to you

and review them often. We can so easily overlook or misinterpret things.

God HAD KNOWN. He had helped me start putting the puzzle pieces together before this traumatic event. Then it was like He tossed them all up in the air and shook them around. They were all mixed up again. Although the puzzle I was putting together was always about the Ekklesia, God had to change my perspective several times during my lifetime until I began to see it from His perspective.

He couldn't dump it on me all at once. I had to experience some things, learn some things. And now, once more, my understanding of what the puzzle represented, the Ekklesia, needed to change again. I needed to see what Jesus was truly establishing outside of my current perspective. I needed the desert time to understand and change my perspective. I needed to transition from the old to the new.

Everything God says has meaning. God has a way of starting things and then building on them over time. Never throw away a prophetic word and assume it is unfulfilled or even fully fulfilled. If it is truly from God, pieces will come together in the season they are meant to happen. Treasure them in your heart. God is so very good and so very faithful.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
John 10:27 (NLT)

I needed to hear my Savior's voice during this time. I needed to walk away from any noise keeping me from hearing Him clearly. My world had been turned upside down. This scripture has always been one of my go-to scriptures. Jesus is often pictured as a shepherd. Shepherds, in the day when Jesus lived, were not like western shepherders.

I grew up on a ranch in Wyoming and we raised sheep and cattle. When we wanted to move sheep from one pasture to another, we saddled up our horses or hopped on our motorcycles and we got behind them and pushed them forward in the direction we wanted them to go. If one broke

loose from the flock, someone would go after it and drive it back into the flock.

Shepherds of Jesus day did not drive the sheep in the direction they wanted them to go. They knew the sheep and the sheep knew their shepherd, the one who cared for them. In the morning, the shepherd would go to the field and lead the sheep to a nice green spot to feed that day. The shepherd led; the sheep followed.

During lambing season on the ranch, there would be a few ewes who would either die giving birth or reject their lambs. These orphan lambs were called “bum lambs”. As children we bottle fed them and we gave them names. They played with us right along with our dogs until they were old enough to return to the flock. We named them. Those lambs remembered us and they knew their name. When we would gather the sheep in from the pastures, if there was a “bum lamb” in the group and we called their name, they would come to us.

That picture would always come to mind, when I would read this verse from John. I faced this major struggle where the vision of my life had been shattered into pieces. Many things I held dear and loved seemed to be coming to an end. I needed desperately to hear from God and understand what He was doing. At the time I did not want to hear any voice, but His.

I needed to know I was following Him and not out there somewhere on my own alone. I needed to know I hadn't wasted my entire life following a path I thought was in the heart of God for me. It would take some time and some godly hand-holding to get me through this. I would eventually find the vision was not shattered. God had given it a great shaking so it could be rearranged in God's proper order.

It was during this transitioning period I wrote my first book, *The Mountain Belongs to the Remnant*. Many more puzzle pieces were created, while understanding of existing ones began to emerge. My entire life had been orchestrated by God. I began to realize the puzzle was a picture of the Chinese

lantern. Only God could take a simple picture like that of a lantern and make a 10,000-piece puzzle out of it!

I was beginning to understand with even more clarity the heart of God. Too many times when God reveals truths, we are eager to run with what God has said. Instead of regurgitating the word until we have fully digested it, we take what we think we know and wrap it in a shell of religion and old traditions. We add our thoughts, our expectations to it and then we preach it.

This activity defiles the pure word of God. God despises mixtures of the pure with the defiled. This is an important detail to understand as we enter the shaking that is coming and has already begun. There are tares that have been sown in our own lives. They must be removed. The shaking is necessary to get us from the old paradigms to the new. We dare not treat it lightly, nor defile it.

Our hearts must be pure before God. We must have a desire to go on into maturity. We must hunger to live in the Father heart of God. We must be determined to obey no matter what the cost. We must understand shaking will come and some things will be removed. We must be ready for change, ready to allow a metamorphous to take place, not a rearranging but a complete overhaul. We must be in a place to say, "Lord, your will be done, not mine". We must begin to see what He is building and not insist on doing things our way. We will not be disappointed.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 6

1 – Examine the attitude of your heart. Are you satisfied with where you are or do you hunger for more of God? What are you doing about it?

2 – Think about events in your life where emotions were involved? How did you handle these situations? Did you realize at the time that God was involved in the situation? How did you learn to control your emotions and let God be God, or did you? Were there times you obeyed what you believed was God in spite of your emotions? Explain why emotions are okay but why they need to be controlled by the spirit.

3 – Re-evaluate your level of obedience to God and your ability to hear His voice. Ask Him to show you where you have missed it and repent. Ask God to increase your ability to distinguish His voice from other voices, even your own. Document your progress.

4 – Have you ever hesitated to obey what you felt was God because you could not see the full picture of what He wanted to do in your life? Document these and commit to a heart of obedience even when you cannot see the big picture.

5 – Are you beginning to see how seriously God takes obedience and disobedience? How will this knowledge change you?

6 – Have you ever felt the “check in the spirit” described by the author? Describe the events where you felt it and how you handled it. Do you understand the process of being led by peace? Have you ever stepped forward into something you thought was the right path, only to then feel something was wrong? Again, how did you handle it and what, if anything, will you do differently next time in these situations?

7 – Do you believe everything happen in our lives for a reason? Have you ever lost friends or family over decisions that you have made in following God? Have you ever chosen family or friends over doing what God said to do? Evaluate your commitment to follow God with a whole heart and pray about it.

8 – Evaluate your fear of men and what they think. Does it hold you back? Talk to God about it and ask Him to help you in this area if you need it. Have you compared yourself to others and walk away feeling inferior? Spend time with God so He can show you that He made you unique. You are not like everyone else. Do you understand your talents and your gifts given to you by God and how they can be used to advance the Kingdom? If not, pray and ask God to show you.

9 – Do you long for a group of like-minded people that are looking forward to where God wants to take us? God wants that for us. Pray for it and open your eyes to the possibilities.

10 – Describe in your own words what you believe the author means when she contrasts modern day shepherds who drive the sheep versus shepherds in Jesus' day who led the sheep. Will you commit to pray for laborers for the harvest who are leaders, not pushers?

11 – Are you ready to hunger for the Father's heart and to obey as He moves you forward? If you are hesitant, will you pray for a willingness of heart to enter new unknown territory with a braveness not known before?

CHAPTER 7

THE SHAKING IN THE VALLEY

Then [at Mount Sinai] His voice shook the earth, but now He has given a promise: Yet once more I will shake and make tremble not only the earth but also the [starry] heavens. Now this expression, Yet once more, indicates the final removal and transformation of all [that can be] shaken—that is, of that which has been created—in order that what cannot be shaken may remain and continue. Let us therefore, receiving a kingdom that is firm and stable and cannot be shaken, offer to God pleasing service and acceptable worship, with modesty and pious care and godly fear and awe; For our God [is indeed] a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:26-29 (AMPC)

Shaking To Come

During transformation processes in our lives, old things are shaken loose and removed. God is moving and preparing us for a FINAL shaking where everything that can be shaken is removed and we stand before Him mature and well able to advance His Kingdom in the earth. Our mighty God goes forth in the earth as a consuming fire consuming that which is wood, hay and stubble and purifying that which is gold and silver and precious stones.

Every time we go through the valley of transformation, the wood, hay and stubble in our lives must be removed. God told Jeremiah there must be a tearing down before there can be a building. This is the message of the gospel of the Kingdom. As His priests and kings in the earth, we root out the works of the enemy and destroy them, so God can build what is beautiful and holy. It is the message of righteousness and justice, and it is the Father's business that we are involved in every day.

This passage from Hebrews indicates that there will be one final shaking when everything comes into alignment with

the plans of God. This is the harvest at the end of the age that Jesus mentioned to His disciples, where all the tares are finally separated from the wheat.

The wilderness times in our lives are meant to shake us into truth, so we can separate the tares from the wheat in our own lives and those around us. We must move from glory to glory, in righteousness and justice as individuals in our communities, so we are ready for the end-time harvest. There is a level of anointing that we will not reach until the Ekklesia goes through these major paradigm shifts.

These shakings do not change things over night. They take time. In the final shaking, everything in the entire earth and the second heaven will be shaken and evil will be uprooted. It may take years, it may take decades, but be assured when God says final, He means final.

Once the final shaking has begun, it will not stop until God has achieved His purposes and the kingdoms of the earth are prepared to become the kingdom of our Lord. The Ekklesia must mature and take her place as priest and king under the direction of the King of kings. The Ekklesia must become Kingdom-minded instead of “church” minded.

Religion is a very real part of the garbage to be burned. It is deeply rooted in all aspects of our culture and society. To bring this false system down, there will be a tremendous shaking in the entire earth as well as the starry heavens. Satan will not give up easily. It is his kingdom and he will fight viciously to keep it, but God and His saints will win. Babylon will fall, but first God’s people must realize they have been a part of her for a long time. They must come out of her and be free.

The most startling revelation of the Chinese lantern was the exposure of the religious spirit and how the enemy attempts to counterfeit God’s kingdom. We must recognize the difference between the counterfeit and the holy. We cannot continue to mix them and call it acceptable. We must realize religion is evil and separate ourselves from it.

In my life I have run the full gamut of religious expression. I have experienced doctrinal changes from Baptist to Pentecostal, from Pentecostal to Charismatic, from Charismatic to Prophetic, from Prophetic to Apostolic, which led to more understanding of the Kingdom of God. For the most part, it is still religion.

Dreams and Visions

A couple of years before this event in my assembly which caused my separation, I had a very startling dream concerning the shaking to come. Before this dramatic dream God spoke to me and said that He was visiting every institution that named His name and He was bringing a broom with Him. And He was telling His people, “Clean this place up, or I will be back and I will do it for you”.

The dream which followed would show me the intensity of the shaking that was coming. God was serious about us cleaning up our assemblies. God does, indeed, communicate with His people bringing revelation through dreams and visions. The New Testament is filled with people who had dreams and visions. Communication with God, no matter what form, is important and should not be treated lightly.

Peter stood up with the eleven apostles and shouted to the crowd. “Listen carefully, my fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem. You need to clearly understand what’s happening here. These people are not drunk like you think they are, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. This is the fulfillment of what was prophesied through the prophet Joel, for God says: ‘This is what I will do in the last days—I will pour out my Spirit on everybody and cause your sons and daughters to prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will experience dreams from God. The Holy Spirit will come upon all my servants, men and women alike, and they will prophesy.’

Acts 2:14-18 (TPT)

I was almost thirty years old when I realized God was communicating with me through dreams. I had the same dream three nights in a row before God got my attention. Many people tend to think that only those with a prophetic gifting have dreams and visions. This scripture tells us it is available to everybody, male or female, young or old. It is not just for those called to lead.

Pray for God to communicate with you through prophesy and dreams and visions. It is available to you because you have Holy Spirit in you. Sometimes you may only get a partial dream. Write it down. Ask God, if the dream was from Him, to reveal more to you. Pay attention to what happens around you. God is constantly communicating.

Because God created us all as unique individuals, the communication methods He uses with us are unique to us. Symbolism in dreams does not always mean the same thing. Be very leery of anything that defines and institutes rules to follow in the Kingdom of God, especially dream interpretation. God cannot be put in a box, and we risk not understanding what He is saying if we use rules or man's ways instead of the Holy Spirit to determine His message to us.

Expect God to speak to you and see what happens. Maybe the next night you will have the same dream with a little more information. Sometimes God will put something in your path that makes you stop and think. Suddenly in your spirit you know the dream is about this situation. Sometimes He brings people into your path who say something that triggers thoughts of your dream. The key is to expect God to talk to you in dreams and visions, and desire to know Him enough to understand them.

Dreams have meanings. There is no detail in a dream that God adds as filler. It means something. We may not always understand every detail. That is okay. He sometimes hides things in our dreams until a day when we have advanced from glory to glory enough to understand them. Then suddenly one day on our path forward, we suddenly understand something we didn't understand before. It is pure joy in our spirit when

we suddenly experience a drop of revelation from the Father's heart.

Even if you do not understand, do not discard your dreams and visions. One time a prophet on television admonished his audience, if your prophetic word hadn't come true, get a fresh word and discard the old. That is not biblical. If God truly speaks something, He is NOT obligated to fulfill His word by any time table concocted by man! EVERY WORD GOD SPEAKS IS IMPORTANT and is to be treated as sacred.

If you have a word, a dream or vision, and you are unsure it is from God, ask Him to show you what is of Him and what is not. If it is from God and you are seeking His heart continually, those words, dreams and visions will not leave you alone. If they do, it will be for a season, and sometime later you will find you are drawn again to them.

I have words, dreams and visions that I received almost thirty years ago, that are just now coming to pass. Trust God. He knows what is best for you, and when it is best. Dreams and visions and prophetic words are meant to shake us out of a place of complacency so we can live in expectancy of what our awesome God wants to do in our lives and the lives of others around us. Now, back to this dream of the shaking.

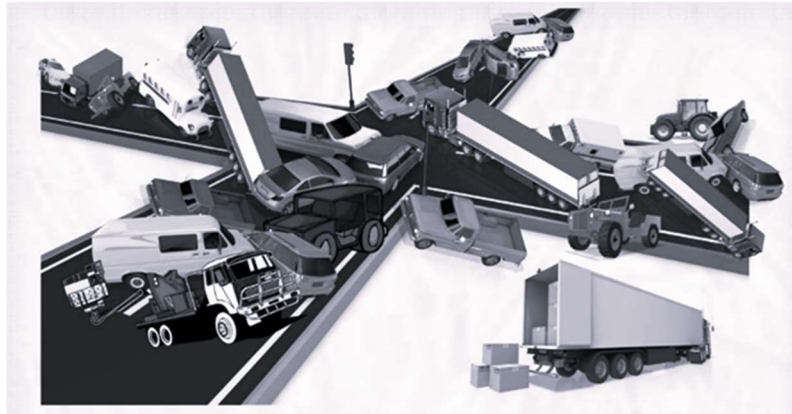
Dream of a Shaking

When the dream began, it was in the middle of an event that had already happened. A huge traffic accident on a major highway or interstate had occurred.

There were cars in the ditch everywhere. On the highway there were cars and other vehicles wrecked and traffic was completely stopped. It was going to be a very long time before the road could be cleared and people back on the road again.

I surveyed the situation in my dream and listened to the conversation around me. Someone shouted and I saw a semi-truck, with trailer attached, fly through the air. It landed

right side up across the highway on the side of a hill and bounced several times.



I thought the driver would surely be dead from such a jolt, but as the truck stopped bouncing, the driver leaned out the window. He was obviously dizzy and could hardly talk. After a few minutes, he was determined to get the rig back on the road, even though the roads were blocked from all the wreckage.

I suddenly felt an urgency, although I did not understand why, to move on down the road. I really could do nothing to help clear the roads. I looked to my left and saw a woman dressed in leather. I thought she was obviously a motorcycle rider. I asked her where her motorcycle was, and she showed me. I implored her to come with me further down the road. At this point in my dream, I realized I, also, was riding a motorcycle.

The woman was too afraid of getting hurt in the middle of this wreckage to get on the motorcycle. I had seen how she was dressed and assumed she was an experienced motorcycle rider. She wanted people to think that way, but now that she needed to use those skills, she was afraid. She was new to motorcycles and barely knew how to drive.

Only motorcycles could make it through the mess on the road and we had to go. I encouraged her and finally, she agreed. We headed through the mess slowly. It was difficult. Everywhere people were busy trying to fix things and clear the road. They completely ignored us. It was miles and miles of clutter before we were away from it.

On the other side of all the clutter the highway narrowed to just a trail. We went slow because of her inexperience and fear. Then we came to a long swinging bridge with narrow planks made out of wood tied together with rope and we stopped. We could see the field on the other side of the bridge. The woman did not want to cross the bridge with her motorcycle. She was afraid the motion of the bridge would make her nauseous. I reassured her it would be easy if we moved swiftly and kept our eyes on the goal.

She asked if I had ever crossed that bridge before. She wanted assurance that I actually knew for sure we could make it across. She was not happy when I told her I had not, but it was obvious someone had. After all the bridge was there and there seemed to be a path on the other side. I knew I must continue even if she did not follow.

She sat very quietly for a while thinking about her options and what she should do. Finally, she said she would go with me. I would go first and I promised her I would not take my eyes off the end of the bridge. All she would have to do, is follow me.

We both knew once we started, we could not go slow and there was no turning back. We had to go across the bridge quickly. If we stopped or slowed down the bridge would throw off our momentum. We revved our engines and took a run at the bridge. The exuberant, indescribable experience was like complete freedom and it was over too soon.

I crossed the bridge with enough room behind me for the woman and her motorcycle. She came across shortly behind me. We talked about the feelings we experienced as we crossed the bridge and we both knew there was no going back. The feeling of joy and wonder that we felt while crossing the

bridge would be just the opposite if we were to turn around and go back across.

We sat down in the grass for a while to talk and rejoice in the experience, then once again I felt the urgency to continue on our journey. We couldn't stay there in this place. But, when I got up to proceed, I noticed the trail ended shortly after the bridge. The trail had gotten us across the bridge, but that was the end. I questioned "What do we do now?" and that was the end of the dream.

Some dreams seem to just happen matter-of-factly with little feeling or emotion. Other dreams, the emotions are very real during the dream. This was a very emotional dream for me, and I awoke knowing for sure it was from God. I needed an interpretation. I needed to understand it, and I would not rest until I did.

The Interpretation of This Dream

Vehicles, in my dreams, seem in most cases to represent ministries (areas of service) or callings or anointings. In this dream that is truly the representation where vehicles were scattered all over the highway for miles. Sometimes we organize with others to help facilitate the use of our gifts and callings. We call these ministries, although not all facilitated ministries are godly. Some of these ministries are labeled "churches" but they are not the Ekklesia.

I was on a journey to discover the true Ekklesia and its importance in advancing the Kingdom of God, but it would still take much time. The dream foretold a coming day when many ministries and organizations were going to be exposed. Those who claimed to be delivering a pure word of God, but were not, lay on the highway unable to function, chaos all around them. Organizations that had allowed the Babylonian spirit to infiltrate their ministries were going to be confronted with a Holy Spirit shaking.

The real word of God is hindered when it comes through this carnage, when it is delivered on this highway of

religion. It will more times than not be diluted or defiled. We need the pure word of God more than ever. We need holy vessels to speak truth. We cannot continue traveling this road of compromise. We must separate ourselves from the counterfeit. God will lead us to the real.

In the dream the apostolic and prophetic anointing God is calling forth in this hour to lead His people in transitioning from the old to the new was represented by me and my motorcycle. The true apostolic and prophetic leaders do not drive the people, they lead them. True godly leaders do not force, coerce, or manipulate God's people. God gave us the freedom to choose for ourselves. Many of these leaders have been on the backside of the desert for years being trained for this very hour.

The woman on the other motorcycle represents the true Ekklesia, the remnant whose heart is to follow Christ, the mature saints of God. She is inexperienced and a little apprehensive, but her heart desires to follow on even if it is into unknown territory. She is willing to leave the chaos and wreckage behind as long as there are leaders she trusts to lead her in the path of Jesus.

Many of the old vehicles must be left behind. We must travel on into unknown territory. The old ministries, the old vehicles, have been compromised. The old mindsets must be left behind. We cannot put new wine in old wineskins. We must come out of Babylon, the counterfeit kingdom orchestrated by the enemy.

This is not advocating leaving your "church", but it is assuring you that you must follow Christ and His word wherever that leads you, and you must leave religion behind. Religion will never lead you to God. It only appeases the soul, not the spirit. Babylon, in part, is religion, and it must be dealt with every time it raises its ugly head.

This is a message of blessing and hope to current "church" leaders, as well. You are free. You no longer need to operate your calling from the constraints of four wall and a "church" building. You are free to operate anywhere the Lord

leads you to go. You are free to do whatever He calls you to do, wherever.

Paul, in chapter 19 of Acts, had met up with some disciples that he laid hands on them for the baptism in the spirit. He then started discipling them in the things concerning the Kingdom of God he had been taught by Jesus. He was teaching in the synagogue. There were religious people that gave him trouble so he took those who were eager to learn with him to another place.

He was in Ephesus at the time. The King James version says he found a place that was called the school of Tyrannus. The word school means place of leisure or gatherings and is thought to be a place where people got together to talk and fellowship. It was big enough to hold a lot of people, so Paul got permission to use it.

Paul spent two years reasoning with the students concerning the Kingdom of God in that place. It wasn't under the control of a "church". There was no formal organization. He was just in that place every day training disciples and equipping them as the Ekklesia. He performed many miracles during that time and it says that all of Asia heard the good news of the Kingdom of God. That is what happens when you are set free!

The semi-truck and trailer in the dream were carrying supplies to the organizations. Not only was the pure word of God not being delivered to these ministries, their money supply was being interrupted. Many "churches" or ministries who have been feeding stale or rotten bread to the multitudes and controlling them can no longer continue. Many who have hidden atrocities in their leadership are being wrecked and their supply lines are being terminated.

As we traveled forward in the dream, it took a while to leave the wreckage behind. No one seemed to notice us or care what we were doing. They were all interested in fixing what they had that was damaged. They had no thought of moving forward, they only wanted to rebuild what they had previously.

The road got narrower as we left the wreckage and the chaos behind us. We were the only ones on the path at the time. It was a path made specifically for the people hungry for God. The swinging bridge was the decision point. It represented the Valley of Decision. It represented going into a new land and leaving the old behind.

The swaying of the bridge represented the shaking that takes place during this part of the journey to rid us of any remaining old stuff before we completely embrace the new. The enemy always tries to prevent God's people from crossing over into new territory. He wants us to turn back. But, once we cross this bridge, it is difficult to go back.

It is like crossing the Red Sea. If you stay you will be destroyed, but if you go forward you have to trust that the walls of water on each side will not suddenly fall back on you. But, go forward you must. On the other side you enter into rest. We move forward now as God leads in His rest. It will not be about doing; it will be about being. We have a lot to learn. The path is truly a new one, not one that already exists.

The motorcycle is an open vehicle so we are not boxed in and can breathe the open air. It represents a ministry with no walls to constrain it. The true Ekklesia that Jesus is building does not exist inside four walls. It is free to move into new territory. It is leaving religion behind. It has become more focused on the Kingdom of God than building "churches" or ministries.

My pastor, at the time I had this dream, believed virtually whatever was done in ministry should be done under the umbrella of a "church" organization. The "church" was the only vehicle Jesus ordained to proclaim the accuracy of the gospel. That is the common belief among leaders but it is just not true. As we continue, you will understand why.

Over the years this dream has come back to me time and time again. We are living in the day of religious organizations being shattered and exposed and it has just started. People do not know who in leadership to trust. There

will be a lot more exposure before this is over. Today that dream is very much a reality

The bridge represents going from the old mindset to the new mindset, from one era to another. It is the bridge of transforming from one paradigm to another. It is not a stationary bridge, but one that sways with the winds of the Holy Spirit as it shakes loose the old dead things, in preparation for the new. We have seen the goodness of the Lord, and there is no return for us.

The vehicle of choice is not held captive behind four walls. The vehicle of ministry is open to reflect and feel the sun (the Light of God) and the fresh breath of air (the Holy Spirit). It is a symbol of freedom to go where the wind takes you. The true Ekklesia cannot be boxed in and segregated.

Interpreting Dreams

We can and should interpret dreams. There are many ministries teaching dream interpretation. Many are writing books on the topic as well. Be cautious of them. We should never use cookie cutter methods to interpret dreams. When interpreting dreams, it is the Spirit of the Living God who knows what He meant by the dream. He will give us the answers.

From my many dreams, I do believe God often uses certain objects to mean certain things, but we should never take that for granted. We should never assume we know the meaning because it seems obvious. Always consult your Father who is communicating with you about what He is saying to you.

All we need to do is listen to God, but to be proficient we must spend quality time with Him getting to know His voice and His ways. There are no shortcuts. Daniel didn't have a book to tell him what his dreams meant. Neither did Peter when he saw a sheet come down from heaven containing unclean animals. God is everything you need.

It takes time to know we are hearing the voice of God and can distinguish His voice from our own. It is not an easy thing all the time. But the more you spend time with God and hear Him speak to you, the more you just know when you hear His voice. The future proves the past. Until your dream is fulfilled you probably will not fully understand the dream. The prophets in the Bible often saw things they did not understand. They described them the best way they could at the time.

We often assume the Old Testament prophets heard God audibly and there was no doubt in their mind that it was God. They so boldly proclaimed “The Lord said this”, so we think it must have been audible. But look at Jeremiah chapter 32. In the first verse it says **“The following message came to Jeremiah from the LORD”** and then it details the message.

God promised to deliver to Jeremiah a confirmation that it was God speaking to him. Jeremiah’s cousin would come to Jeremiah and offer to sell him some land. That would be the confirmation that Jeremiah had heard God speak to him. It happened exactly as the Lord said it would. Notice verse nine when Jeremiah says, **“Then I knew that the message I had heard was from the LORD.”**

If God had spoken audibly to Jeremiah, he would already know for sure it was God. But God must have spoken to Jeremiah by the spirit, and then arranged an event to prove to Jeremiah that it was really God that had spoken to Him. No different than today. God is more interested in talking to us than we are in listening. He will prove Himself to us because He wants us to trust Him. He wants you to know His voice.

In New Testament times there are references to God speaking audibly with some people hearing clearly, others hearing a noise but unable to discern the words, and others hearing nothing. God does speak audibly sometimes, but not most of the time. Again, God will not be put in a box. We must not reject His word, whether He speaks audibly or he doesn’t. We must desire to hear Him and understand Him, when He does speak, no matter how He speaks.

Every true prophetic voice is always between a rock and a hard place. They must know for sure if it is God speaking when they put His name to their words. Then it is decision time. Speak in obedience and pray it will come out of your mouth right or don't speak and thus disobey God. The decision to speak ought not to be taken lightly. God's words are precious and sacred.

The Apostolic and Prophetic

Then Jesus taught them another parable: "Heaven's kingdom can be compared to a farmer who planted good seed in his field. But when everyone was asleep, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and ran away. When the wheat sprouted and bore grain, the weeds also appeared. So the farmer's hired hands came to him and said, 'Sir, wasn't that good seed that you sowed in the field? Where did all these weeds come from?' "He answered, 'This has to be the work of an enemy!' "They replied, 'Do you want us to go and gather up all the weeds?' " "No," he said. 'If you pull out the weeds you might uproot the wheat at the same time. Let them both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I'll tell my harvesters to gather the weeds first and tie them all in bundles to be burned. Then they will harvest the wheat and put it into my barn.' " Matthew 13:24-30 (TPT)

We journey into truth, traveling from glory to glory, here a little, there a little. Religion keeps us from beginning a new journey with God. Religion keeps us trapped within four walls, tied to a particular doctrine and set of rules. Many people never escape those walls in their lifetime. God is calling us out of religion and into divine relationship with our Creator on the journey of life.

The harvest is ripe and ready, but it is not what we have been taught. The harvest is not about how many people get saved. The harvest is about the tares being exposed and removed. Unspeakable evil is coming to light today. It has been there hiding in the darkness for a long time, but now it is being revealed so it can be crushed.

Many ministries in name only are being exposed, not only for their self-promotion, control, manipulation, fear

tactics, but also satanic activity, human and child trafficking, and other very evil deeds. Many openly support abortion, social justice, and a one world government according to modern socialists. Life today truly is like my dream of vehicles scattered all over the highway and everything in chaos. Even more will be exposed in the days ahead.

In spite of this bleak outlook, be assured the true prophetic and apostolic gifts that have been hidden for a long time are beginning to come forth. They are different. They never really fit into the image today's organizations expected of these gifts. God knew the hearts of His chosen and He hid them away to teach and prepare them. They truly are on the frontline of what God is doing in this hour.

These prophetic and apostolic gifts are receiving instructions on how to navigate the catastrophic mess around us and take us into the new land. They will guide us over the bridge of transformation from the old paradigm to the new paradigm. These faithful guides will help ensure many saints who face the valley of decision do not quit in this transitioning time, but go on to maturity.

The meaning of the dream affected me so dramatically, I wanted additional confirmation my interpretation was right. Several months later I traveled to a conference in Montana. I registered for a session to have my dream interpreted and I sent the dream to them ahead of time.

I knew many dream interpreters were using teachings from books rather than the Holy Spirit for guidance. I went to the conference anyway at God's direction, expecting to get some type of affirmation that I really was hearing and understanding God.

There were two very nice ladies from this congregation who met with me concerning the dream. They prayed over me and the dream. They believed God was telling me that my ministry was to minister to people one-on-one. I knew dream interpretation training mostly teaches vehicles in dreams represent ministry. The bigger the vehicle, the bigger your

ministry. A motorcycle was about as small as you could get, thus the interpretation of one-on-one ministry.

Not that one-on-one ministry is bad, but was not even close to what my ministry had been or what others had prophesied over me. I already knew my true calling. I asked them both if they were sure of what God was saying and they both responded affirmatively.

There was absolutely nothing in their interpretation that dealt with the meaning of the wreckage on the highways or about the bridge. There was nothing to give overall meaning to the dream. I had not expected them to see the fullness of the dream, yet, I was extremely disappointed. My heart hurt. Not only was their interpretation of my ministry so wrong, they missed the true meaning of the dream.

My spirit was extremely troubled. I was sad, appalled and confused at this level of dream interpretation in the body of Christ. Not only were they wrong, they were doing damaged to those who listened to them. I am sure they thought they were doing God's work. They did not know how serious this was. This is not a game.

I knew God directed me to the conference, but it wasn't exactly as I expected (it rarely is). God is always full of surprises. In the last session of the conference, the pastor in his message said several things that confirmed I was on the right path with the interpretation of my dream. The confirmation came in a different way than I anticipated and I learned many valuable lessons.

Gifts Are Not Toys

Saints, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not toys to entertain; they are not gimmicks to draw in the crowds. They are precious gifts from our God and they **MUST** be treated with respect. They are sacred. How dare we defile them! Spiritual witchcraft and false religion are alive and well even in some charismatic, spirit-filled, prophetic, apostolic "churches".

We must be able to discern the true from the false, the holy from the unholy.

The first time God gave me a prophetic word to speak in a “church” setting, I could feel the anointing all over me. I shook with it. There was no doubt it was God. But I was afraid. I had never prophesied before. What if I tripped over my words? What if people laughed? Fear of man controlled me. I did not enjoy speaking to groups in those days.

I failed that day to give the assembly the word of God that burned in me and I went home distraught. I cried and cried and begged God to forgive me. I had failed Him and I hurt. What had I done? I wanted Him to talk to me, but He was silent. I wanted Him to tell me it was all right. I wanted to feel His love and approval.

Finally, after quite some time, He simply said to me, “Use it or lose it”. He was stern. He had to be. He knew me so well. It was the only way to jar me out of my stupidity. I had to have a greater fear of disappointing my God than I had a fear of men.

When God gives a gift, He doesn’t change His mind and take back the gift He has given. The choice to accept the gift and use it, is always ours. If I chose not to operate in the gift I had been given, it would become much more difficult to use the gift over time until I would just never use it and I would have lost it.

The next time the opportunity presented itself, it was no easier, but I did not disappoint my God. The fear of God is reverence for God. When we care deeply for our Lord, we don’t want to disgrace His name. We don’t want to disappoint Him. The people who are touched by the gifts God gives to us, deserve something real. I am so thankful He gave me a second chance to obey Him.

Those thoughts and memories are instilled in my heart as I write concerning the truths the Chinese lantern represents. These truths were not dumped into my spirit at one sitting but were built upon day after day during my desert journey until one day in 2020 God began to bring them all together. I began,

finally, to understand what it was going to mean to the Ekklesia, the house that Jesus is building, when the lantern was turned upside down.

Many years ago, during a wilderness time, I was feeling so alone. I cried out to God, yet I felt like my voice was shouting into the wind with no one to hear it. Then God gave me a dream of a valley with granite walls on both sides. As I walked through the valley all alone, suddenly I heard a trumpet sound and I became attentive. I watched as I saw hidden caves in the granite walls on both sides of the valley begin to open and many people came out of those caves, descended the walls and began to march in the valley with me.

God's motley crew for this hour are the unknowns, the rejects, the weird ones. They are a chosen generation. They are not chained with religion anymore. They are coming out of the caves where they have been in hiding preparing for the day in which we live. They desire only to follow Jesus and do what He says to do. They have matured and left childish things behind them. They have no fear of man. If you listen closely, you can hear their voices being carried on the wind. You are not alone and soon you will know.

The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear (revere and worship) Him, and He will show them His covenant and reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning.

Psalm 25:14 (AMPC)

There is a beauty in the way the Passion Bible translates this verse. There is a secret place in God reserved for those who truly love and desire His presence, who truly revere Him enough to follow Him anywhere and obey His commands. The Ekklesia is going to come into a place where they understand covenant like never before. There is a deep meaning to covenant we have not truly understood yet, but the Ekklesia will in the days ahead.

There's a private place reserved for the devoted lovers of Yahweh, where they sit near him and receive the revelation-secrets of his promises.
Psalm 25:14 (TPT)

Do you hunger to sit with your God and hear Him tell you secrets? Do you love Him with every fiber of your being? You will face times when you are called into the valley of decision as you travel from glory to glory, from paradigm to paradigm. Sit beside Yahweh in the secret place and gain revelation and understanding of His heart and where He desires to lead you.

The journey through the valley of decision is so worth it all when we come out on the other side. Maturity and the shaking and the fire of God don't sound like much fun to the untrained ear, but you, my fellow traveler, will see the whole new world that awaits you when you come out of the desert, more mature in the things of God!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 7

1 – Think back on some transforming times in your life. Can you identify any wood, hay, and stubble that God required you to leave behind in order for you to move forward? List them and explain how easy or how hard it was to leave those things behind. List any benefit you recognize from leaving them behind.

2 – How do you think religion plays a part in culture and society today? Think about what it would take to change the perception in people concerning this and document your thoughts.

3 – Document your thoughts on God’s people coming out of Babylon. How has the Babylonian system and religion influenced you and others around you?

4 – Do you have a similar experience as the author when she describes moving from one denomination of “church” structure to another as her doctrine changed, or do you still attend the same “church” where you were raised? How do you feel about the current situation where the four-walls of a “church” are based on doctrinal beliefs and if your doctrine changes you have to move to another set of four walls? Should this change, if so, how?

5 – Describe any prophetic experiences you have had. Have you previously realized that God wants all His people to experience these? Do you desire to have dreams and visions, to have a word from God for someone else, as He directs? Ask God to give you a heart to see what He is doing and to help people understand the heart of God for themselves.

6 – Document your thoughts concerning the author’s dream about vehicles scattered across the highway and her

interpretation. Do you see any of this beginning to happen? Document any current events you see that may be related to this dream.

7 – The author repeatedly declares that God’s words are precious, holy, and sacred. Have you thought of that before? If you will make any changes to how you hear and speak God’s words, document them and ask God to help you. Explain what you believe the author means when she says prophets (and prophetic people) are between a rock and a hard place. Will you commit to obey God to speak when He says speak and to be silent when He says be silent?

8 – What were your thoughts on prophets in the Bible hearing God with an audible voice? Did you realize before that many of them probably heard God by the spirit?

9 – Describe how you see apostles and prophets leading the Ekklesia into the new paradigms. Revisit this after you finish the book as your concept may change.

10 – Describe how you see yourself now in light of what you have learned from this chapter. What things have changed? Do you truly believe He wants to trust you with His secrets, His mysteries? If so, how will your time spent with God change?

Section III

THE CHINESE LANTERN

CHAPTER 8

THE EKKLESIA

The vision of the Chinese lantern represents the Ekklesia that Jesus is establishing. It represents the shaking and the turning upside down that is needed so we begin to understand the Ekklesia. There are going to be some drastic changes in our thinking concerning the Ekklesia, what it is and how it functions. Those changes are paradigm shifts.

The lantern being turned upside down represents the transformation period we go through as we travel from one paradigm to another where the old wood, hay and stubble is shaken loose and that which is righteous is purified. It will require that we deal with the religious spirits that hold us back. Our focus is on maturing the Ekklesia so we can advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. "Church" will no longer be our focal point.

A Quick Review

In order for the paradigm shifts to be effective and complete, there are a few things we have identified thus far that God's people need to understand.

- How to hear the voice of God clearly
- What revelation is and how to receive and understand
- Obey God
- Become mature in the things of God as we journey from glory to glory
- Disobedience and rebellion are as serious as witchcraft
- Disobedience can keep us from entering our promised land

- Continued disobedience and rebellion make it more difficult to hear His voice and can lead to blindness and deafness
- Repentance is turning around and heading in the right direction
- Satan has a counterfeit kingdom
- Satan tries to counterfeit the Holy Spirit with a religious spirit
- Question everything until you have an answer from God
- As we move from glory to glory, we go through a 1-2-3 process, leave our current place (step one) and travel through the valley of decision or transitioning (step two) until we have been prepared to inherit our promised land (step three)
- The new paradigm is a land of rest

In transitioning from the old paradigms to the new ones, we must be able to hear God's voice clearly and accurately. The changes we encounter will be massive and drastically different from the old. Transformation will require us to make some difficult decisions and emphatically obey God. Our communities, our state or province, our country and even the whole earth depend on our successful transformation.

During these paradigm shifts there are going to be some things revealed you have never heard before. They may be in this book, or they may be from others with new insights from God for the days ahead. When you hear these things, or read these things, we can question them, but we cannot ignore them.

As you ponder these new things in your heart, if they are of God, you will be thrust into step two of the transitioning process, the valley of decision. Each day you will be faced with the decision to turn back or continue on the journey God is laying out before you. Are you going to move forward and allow Him to transform you into a new level of glory?

Satan's counterfeit kingdom will use religion and tradition to keep us from God's ways. If we are open to change, the enemy might even wave some sparkly new thing in front of us as a substitute to distract us from seeking the real.

If something seems strange or foreign to us, we cannot assume it isn't God. It might be God's way of moving us to a new place, from glory to glory, to give us an inheritance we never thought possible. Spend time with God. We cannot trust our eyes and ears alone. Know His heart before you make a decision. But don't reject or accept until you know His heart for you.

You will be faced with a decision. We cannot receive new revelation and not change or try to go back to not knowing it. We will be miserable. This book is written for those who are solid on foundational truths and want to move on into maturity, those who have a hunger in their deepest being for more. Do you have a hunger to mature into the bride the Father desires to present to His Son, A bride who has made herself ready?

As long as you are seeking God with a whole heart, and your heart is set on knowing His truth, He will lead you into truth. In the end, your desire, your passion for more of God will lead you in the right direction. God encourages us and coaxes us to move on, but He will not drag us kicking and screaming. He leads us into the valley of decision to provide insight and strip us of things that hold us back. But, in the end, He still gives us a free will to choose.

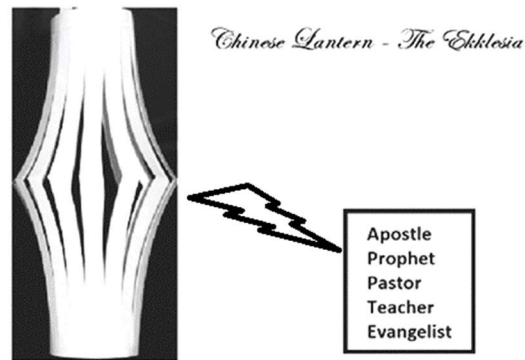
The land we are headed for in this hour will only be reached by complete obedience to our Lord. We will have to learn that lesson. The more we trust God, the easier it is to obey Him. The only way to trust Him, is to get to know Him and understand His heart. Therefore, we must spend quality time with Him.

It is going to take a courage and a resolve few of us have ever walked in to this point to make this shift. We must see the city even more clearly than Abraham saw it. Nothing must be allowed to deter us. We were born for this hour. We

are not satisfied with the world or the “church” the way they are. We want the Ekklesia! We are not satisfied with ourselves, the way we are. There is more and we will not be satisfied until we enter the fulness of all He has for us!

The Picture of the Chinese Lantern

Although the picture of the Chinese lantern is simple, the concepts that God wants us to grasp of the paradigm shifts it represents, are complex. The Chinese lantern was previously mentioned with the center fold representing five-fold ministry gifts as presented in this picture.



This is all I knew when God told me the lantern needed to be turned upside down. I did not understand what God was saying. If the lantern was turned upside down, nothing would change. The five-fold ministry gifts would remain in the same place. the apostolic and prophetic gifts and their impact were being studied and explored in our local assembly so I sensed these gifts were key to the rest of the understanding of the lantern.

A few days later, I saw a graph in a book I was reading that at a high-level glance looked like a Chinese lantern. I

suddenly understood by the Spirit, what the top and bottom parts of the lantern represented.



The lantern represented what Jesus was building, the Ekklesia, shining forth the glorious light of its Lord. But I was still thinking in “church” terms. Turning the lantern upside down still did not make sense. It didn’t seem to solve current concerns with “church” leadership. Turning it upside down made more sense with leadership being the foundation to support the structure (the people). It took many years for my religious blinders to be removed so I could see and understand what God wanted me to see and understand.

The next few chapters are going to address what the Ekklesia is and what it is not. It will become quite clear why we need to start using the word Ekklesia when we discuss what God is building. We will address leadership today and leadership in the days ahead in great depth as it is going to be one of the most dynamic paradigm shifts. We are in for the adventure of our lifetime!

Leadership, People and Structure

It takes time to tear down the old religious mindset before we can fully see the truth the way God wants us to see

it. Trying to understand, I approached the structure of the lantern from my own life experiences. Being involved in a Baptist fellowship as well as an Assembly of God fellowship for many years, I had experienced turning upside down of the lantern, in a traditional sense.

The people or congregation were on the top rung of the lantern in these denominational structures. In this concept being on top meant being in control, having the authority to make decisions. After all someone has to be in charge, right? Or do they?

The congregation controlled what went on in the “church”. There was a board who would select candidates for pastor and decide who they thought was best. Then that candidate would be presented to the members for a vote.

Members of the “church” organization became members by signing some document stating they promised to follow the rules of the organization. They could then vote. The members chose the pastor of their congregation. It was the same members who could fire him. They were also responsible for all major decisions that required a vote, after the decision first passed the approval of the “church” board. The pastor’s main function, if he wanted to remain, was to keep the congregation happy.

In the independent (non-denominational) “churches” I attended the leadership was represented on top of the lantern. The “church” was usually established by one man who became its pastor. If that “church” was affiliated with some higher-level organization as a part of a network of “churches”, they may have placed the minister in that congregation. The person might carry a title such as Pastor or Apostle. But, unlike the denominational “churches” the people were not in charge.

The assigned minister probably operated with a board of directors since all 401c3 non-profit organizations must have a board. In most cases, the board of directors are close associates or friends with the minister and thus most of the time support whatever the minister wants, after all it is his “church” established upon his vision.

I had seen both scenarios seem to work in some places, and not work in others. In some cases, they worked for a while, until something changed. In my humble opinion at the time, neither of these approaches were ideal. Try as hard as I could, I could not picture anything different, but I knew God had something different in mind. First, a lot of religious thought had to be torn away in order for me to see. Every time I was reminded of the vision of the Chinese lantern, I thought through this process, and nothing made sense to me.

God was leading me into the desert to train me and prepare me to understand what He wanted. That training would take years. I would many times face religious devils. In the desert I had to allow God to strip me of the web of religious teaching that had been spun around me to keep me from understanding the Father's heart.

Turn It Upside Down

The vision of the Chinese Lantern was an enigma to me. Turning it upside down as the Lord instructed would change things for sure, but I didn't know exactly how. I knew the vision had an immediate application for the assembly I attended at the time, and it had implications for my own personal ministry, as well. But I could not escape the feeling that there was much more to the vision than I was seeing.

I would much later come to understand the overall lantern was a picture of the Ekklesia, that Jesus was building. I was reminded of the vision described earlier of entering the "church" building and seeing Jesus. I knew Jesus wanted me to have a deeper understanding of His great love for His people and the Ekklesia He was building.

I could not understand the structure of the lantern until I fully understood the lantern, itself. I had to understand what Jesus was truly building or establishing before I could understand how people and leadership, or even five-fold ministry fit. I would have to step outside of everything I had been taught and had experienced. You will not be able to

understand either, until you begin to see what it is that Jesus is doing, the true Ekklesia.

When God told our assembly we had turned a corner, we entered into a transformation period to understand the Ekklesia and the Kingdom of God. When God gave the Chinese lantern vision to us, He was offering us an opportunity to see the Ekklesia through His eyes; to participate in the paradigm shifts necessary to move forward; to present truth to the world from a tiny place in the north country of the nation.

Of course, at the time I didn't fully realize that was God's intent. I knew God was calling this place to greatness in Him. All I was doing was attempting to listen to God and allow Him to direct my steps. If I didn't understand, how could I convey it to the local assembly? True apostolic and prophetic voices are extremely needed today in all areas of life.

Sometimes the puzzle pieces come together nicely. Sometimes God tosses them in the air again. God had His reasons. I had to pick up the puzzle pieces and start over. Little by little, I would comprehend why we needed to turn our current understanding of the Ekklesia upside down. If we were willing to go through the shaking, the paradigm shifts that God wanted us to undertake, we would see clearly the Ekklesia that Jesus was building. Then, perhaps we would be willing participants.

In the vision Jesus was really asking, "Will you stop building your "church" according to your design, and let me build My Ekklesia according to My design?" Would we be willing to turn it upside down for Him? Would others all over the world be willing to turn it upside down for Him? I am totally convinced there will be multitudes that will be willing when they get a stirring in their hearts for the Father's heart and His Son's Kingdom.

What lies ahead for us is so great, it is hard to fathom. After 2000 years of struggling to establish what God intended on earth, it seems everything has only gotten worse. Yet, what I see by the Spirit of God will be built almost effortlessly when

we truly get an understanding of who our God is and enter into His rest. Nothing can stop what is coming by the hand of God.

Understanding the Ekklesia

There is only one Church, the Ekklesia. I rarely use the word Church for what Jesus is building because our religious indoctrination pictures something completely different from the true Ekklesia. We need to establish what the true Ekklesia is before we can understand leadership and five-fold ministry gifts by going through a paradigm shift.

We must comprehend fully, there is only one Ekklesia and it is Jesus who is establishing it. Most of the translations of the Bible translate the Greek word, Ekklesia, as church.

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples this question: “What are the people saying about me, the Son of Man? Who do they believe I am?” They answered, “Some are convinced you are John the Baptizer, others say you are Elijah reincarnated, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” “But you—who do you say that I am?” Jesus asked. Simon Peter spoke up and said, “You are the Anointed One, the Son of the living God!” Jesus replied, “You are favored and privileged Simeon, son of Jonah! For you didn’t discover this on your own, but my Father in heaven has supernaturally revealed it to you. I give you the name Peter, a stone. And this rock will be the bedrock foundation on which I will build my church—my legislative assembly, and the power of death will not be able to overpower it! I will give you the keys of heaven’s kingdom realm to forbid on earth that which is forbidden in heaven, and to release on earth that which is released in heaven.” Matthew 16:13-19 (TPT)

Peter recognized who Jesus was through revelation. It is because Peter received that revelation and understood it, that Jesus said Peter would be established as a stone in the house Jesus would build. That is the Ekklesia, polished mature stones fit together by the Master Builder. It is the legislative body to which Jesus gives power and authority in order to conduct Kingdom business on His behalf.

As stated earlier, “church” is man’s word to describe a building where Christians (and others) gather to meet. Even if, we relegate the people, not the building, to be the “church”, not necessarily everyone in that building is born again, therefore not all are a part of the Ekklesia. Not even once in the Bible is the Ekklesia ever relegated to a building or to just the people found in a building.

Changing our understanding of the Ekklesia is a huge paradigm shift itself. The word “church” to many people automatically connotes the thought of a building where people meet on Sundays. I normally use congregation or assembly or meeting place to describe what others call “church” today. However, the true Ekklesia is much more than this.

In this passage from Matthew, Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. Peter gets the answer right. Jesus said He was building an Ekklesia, which is NOT a building but rather a people who legislate in the earth. Legislate what? His Kingdom! What is the foundation of this legislative body? An overwhelming revelation and understanding of who Jesus is! You cannot legislate without a solid foundation based on the knowledge and experience of Jesus as the Messiah, the King, the Priest, the All-in-All, the I AM.

Our language may have to change when we get a true revelation of what Jesus is establishing. The religious connotation of what a “church” is, has become so implanted in our brain through religious indoctrination, when we see clearly, we can no longer call it “church”. Even if we try to eliminate the thought of a building, and we strictly talk about people, we still miss some key truths. The Ekklesia is much more than what religion declares it to be.

The Ekklesia is a Legislative Body

The Greek word EKKLESIA means a “legislative assembly”. When the King James version of the Bible was authorized, King James had the word translated as “church”. He had his own political reasons for doing so. He believed the

“church” should be under the control of the government. This change was done on purpose. A few leaders thought the word should be translated “assembly”, but it was rejected.

For a deeper understanding of why that word was translated as “church” in the King James version, read the book by Ed Silvano called *Ekklesia*. The book details the process of the publishing of this version of the Bible and the role King James played.

The purpose of the Ekklesia is not to build “churches”, but to legislate Kingdom business in the earth. The King of this Kingdom places the keys in the hands of the Ekklesia. When someone owns a house, they get a set of keys to the doors. Those keys belong to the owner. The owner can come and go as he or she pleases, locking and unlocking the door. The owners can give a set of those keys to anyone they please.

When an owner turns over a set of keys to someone else, those people have authority to enter the house. They have authority to let someone else in or to lock them out of the house. Of course, the house does not belong to them and they are going to obey whatever conditions are put on them by the owner hopefully. They are not going to throw wild parties and destroy the place. They are going to always consider what the owner would do if he were there.

When Jesus says He is giving the keys to His legislative assembly, the keys are not to the home of the legislative assembly, but the keys are to the Kingdom of heaven where the King lives! That is a big deal!! That is the place where everything God has to offer exists. EVERYTHING!

Along with those keys comes implied power and authority. When a person legislates, they either forbid or they release. They either bind or loose. What are they forbidding or releasing? Heaven’s resources for one thing. Anything that is forbidden in heaven can be forbidden in the earth. Anything that can be released in heaven can be released in earth.

These Kingdom representatives don’t just declare according to their will. They see what heaven says about a current situation (righteousness) and they release what they see

into the earth (justice). You will never have the power to forbid or to release if you cannot hear and see the King and His Kingdom in heaven. Not my will but Yours be done in earth as in heaven.

The keys given to the Ekklesia by her King have the power and the authority to enforce the forbidding and the releasing of what they declare. The power and authority of their King is in operation through them, because they have been appointed by Him. They have been appointed by the King to conduct Kingdom business in the earth, to be His representative and to do His will in His stead. These keys also unlock plans and blueprints for our communities.

This goes further than just binding devils and loosing good things. More detail will follow, but for now let it suffice to say, that this is not a Sunday-go-to-meeting type situation. It is an everyday occurrence; it is living this way moment by moment, day by day wherever God leads you.

We are ambassadors of the Anointed One who carry the message of Christ to the world, as though God were tenderly pleading with them directly through our lips. So we tenderly plead with you on Christ's behalf, "Turn back to God and be reconciled to him."

II Corinthians 5:20 (TPT)

We have the important position of being ambassadors. Ambassadors represent their land or country in a foreign place and must always be on their best behavior. We represent the King and the Kingdom of heaven everywhere we go on earth. This is the Ekklesia, the legislative assembly. If we are to represent heaven effectively then we must know the King and all that His Kingdom represents, for it is our Kingdom as well. We must be in constant contact with the King.

Greek Cultural Influence

During Jesus' time on earth, the Greek culture had a tremendous effect on Israel. The Greeks conquered Israel

approximately 350 years before Jesus was born. Around 160 years before Christ, Rome conquered Greece and 100 years later conquered Israel. Israel was influenced by both Roman and Greek culture.

The Greeks introduced the concept of an *ekklesia* to the world. To solve community issues, often a group of citizens was chosen and given the responsibility of making a decision concerning the issue. Usually these groups were small, but sometimes they were larger and represent the citizenry of the whole city.

The Romans adopted the word, but they changed its application somewhat. When Rome conquered a land, they sent a group of soldiers into the occupied land as an *ekklesia* to make the new place look and act like Rome (which did include some Greek culture). Jesus understood this when He used the word *ekklesia* to represent what He would build. The Greek word for “build” can be translated “to establish” or “to found”.

The *Ekklesia* that Jesus was setting a foundation for and establishing would legislate Kingdom business and would be the mechanism for making earth look like heaven. Jesus only used this word a few times. He doesn't have to explain it to His disciples. They are fully aware of what the Romans were doing and they understood what Jesus was saying.

The term *ekklesia* was well known in both Greek and Roman cultures. Jesus said He was building a legislative body to legislate Kingdom business. That Kingdom business would consist of details such as salvation, baptism, healing, spreading the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, but it would also consist of wisdom and knowledge, righteousness and justice, and maturity to rule and make decisions in the cultural areas of society as well. Everywhere they went, they would influence and change earth's society with godly, heavenly principles.

This legislative body would have so much authority and power that wherever there would be just two or three of them gathered, they would effectuate great change. He

reiterates the responsibility again for this Ekklesia to forbid and permit according to the will of the King in heaven.

“I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. “I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”
Matthew 18:18-20 (NLT)

The word in the Greek translated “whatever” is quantitative in nature. In other words, whatever amount you are willing to permit will be permitted, and whatever amount you are willing to forbid will be forbidden. So how much sin will we forbid and how much blessing will we release?

According to this passage, this legislative body has authority in the WHOLE earth, not just where they live and work and play. This legislative body can be as few as two people. They don’t just have this authority inside a building with four walls. It isn’t just for those in leadership positions to have this authority. You don’t have to be a licensed or ordained minister to have this authority. You don’t need permission from anyone to have this authority, other than Jesus.

This passage says followers of Jesus have this authority. The New King James says “those gathered in My name”. The Amplified Classic version is even more clear.

Truly I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven. Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, make a symphony together) about whatever [anything and everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven. For wherever two or three are gathered (drawn together as My followers) in (into) My name, there I AM in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:18-20 (AMPC)

To be a follower of Jesus implies that we are following Him by doing what He says to do and going where He says to go. We are not going in the opposite direction, which is rebellion and disobedience. Disobedience happens when we are walking a different direction than the Lord has instructed us to go. We cannot conduct Kingdom business when we are in disobedience and rebellion.

We must clearly understand if we want this power and authority to produce change in the earth, we need to consistently hear the voice of our God, and follow Him closely. When our hearts are one with the Father's heart, then we can bind and loose in the earth what is in His heart. That is what is meant in this passage by being in the name of Jesus. His Name represents all of heaven. We are right in the middle of His perfect will when we are in the Father's heart and in the Name of Jesus.

Eyes To See the True Ekklesia

Standing in a place of authority where two or more are in agreement with King Jesus, you find the Ekklesia in action. It does not matter their gifts or callings or where they are. It does not matter if they are male or female, or what color their skin is. They may be in Africa, Europe, China, the United States, or any other country. It does not matter how many or how few. It does not matter if they are engineers, programmers, mechanics, nurses, doctors, teachers.

Titles and positions in religious circles do not matter. All that matters is that we are true followers of the Living Christ hearing His voice and obeying Him wherever He leads us. If we are following Him and walking in His Name, we have power and authority to conduct Kingdom business wherever He leads us.

That is the glorious picture of what Jesus is establishing. It doesn't have walls. It doesn't have a name that defines its doctrine. It doesn't have constraints other than what God puts on it. No one has to go somewhere to a building to

be the Ekklesia, you just have to follow the One who is building the Ekklesia, and do whatever He says to do.

The Ekklesia is not unbelievers sitting on a pew somewhere believing they are doing their religious duty. It is not even saints who are also sitting on the same pew or in the same chairs doing the same thing. It is not the building. It is not the assembling of people in a building once or twice a week. It is the people of God who are mature enough to hear His voice and will obey.

We go from glory to glory, saints (believers) to disciples (students) to Ekklesia (mature and ready to legislate). Disciples are educated in spiritual matters, but they are also educated in maturity so they can become productive saints in society. We must understand what it means to disciple. Discipling is not about training people what to think, but how to think for themselves and access the Spirit of God within them for themselves.

We must find a better way to disciple. There is no one size fits all for disciples. An individual's uniqueness is important to God, and we must find ways for individuals to understand their own uniqueness and how it fits in the plan of God for earth.

If we are not educated and trained in our own lives and the lives of our families, how are we going to be able to disciple or educate nations? Jesus never emphasized the Ekklesia. It was something He would establish with His educated disciples, who would advance His Kingdom, which would be His emphasis. He would use the Ekklesia for this purpose. He would use His called-out ones for this purpose wherever they might be, in whatever vehicle of life they may be driving.

A pupil is not superior to his teacher, but everyone [when he is] completely trained (readjusted, restored, set to rights, and perfected) will be like his teacher. Luke 6:40 (AMPC)

The purpose of discipleship is to create others who are mature and follow Jesus with a whole heart. The King James

version says disciple instead of student. The Amplified Classic translation expands on the meaning of the word perfect. The Strong's Concordance states that one definition of the word is "*adjust:—fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect(-ly join together), prepare, restore*".

When people are disciplined, they are educated in truth and molded into saints who have matured and prepared to be joined together with others as the one new man with Jesus as the Head. They have been adjusted, mended and restored to their original purpose for man when God created Adam and Eve in the Garden. They are ready to legislate Kingdom business.

So tell me this: Why do our fathers worship God on this nearby mountain, but your people teach that Jerusalem is the place where we must worship. Who is right?" Jesus responded, "Believe me, dear woman, the time has come when you will worship the Father neither on a mountain nor in Jerusalem, but in your heart. Your people don't really know the One they worship, but we Jews worship out of our experience, for it's from the Jews that salvation is available. From now on, worshiping the Father will not be a matter of the right place but with a right heart. For God is a Spirit, and he longs to have sincere worshipers who adore him in the realm of the Spirit and in truth."

John 4:20-24 (TPT)

The Samaritan woman at the well questioned Jesus about where to worship. She was a Samaritan and her people worshipped God one place and Jews worshipped God in a different place. She asked Jesus what made the Jews place of worship better than the place of the Samaritans. We could ask the same thing. What makes a charismatic house a better place to worship than a Baptist house?

Jesus' response is very interesting. It is a new day and the place we worship no longer matters. People, Jews, Samaritans or others, no longer needed to go anywhere to worship God. It is not about being in the right place but being right in our hearts. Mankind consistently attempts to put God back in a box, but it can't be. There is nothing wrong with gathering together to worship God. The Bible tells us it is

important to fellowship with one another, but it never states it has to be in a particular building or always with a particular group.

There is nowhere in the New Testament where the Ekklesia is described as an organization with employees and owned assets. There is no requirement they have a governmental certificate in order to operate like the 401c3 form we have today. We don't need governmental approval to be the Ekklesia. If there were to be rules and regulations for the Ekklesia, don't you think Jesus would have said something about it?

Spiritual eyes are needed in order to see and understand the true Ekklesia. Man took revelation given by God and mixed it with man's traditions and ideas and created "church" and it has existed in variations of its current form for generations. But it is the seventh day, God's Day, and He is going to have His way. God hates mixture.

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
Matthew 6:22-24 (NJKV)

Establishing the Ekklesia is a process. When we are born again by the Spirit of God, we become a believer and a potential part of the Ekklesia, yet we are not effective at legislating Kingdom business. As disciples, Jesus molds us into the stone He desires us to be in preparation for placing us in the Ekklesia He is building. Therefore, we must go through a process to become effective as a part of the Ekklesia. We have to go through training in order to become kings and priests unto our God.

Jesus describes that process in His command to His disciples before He returned to heaven.

But Jesus came and spoke these words to them, “All power in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. You, then, are to go and make disciples of all the nations and baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you and, remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”
Matthew 28:18-20 (Phillips)

Jesus told His disciples all power had been given unto Him as King of the Kingdom of Heaven and that power was effective both in heaven and in earth. He then authorized them to go bring salvation to the nations, teach and make disciples out of them. Not only were they to teach people knowledge of the Kingdom, but also to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

The word “observe” in this passage means to guard, to keep, to do. Jesus was commanding His disciples to teach the saints so they in turn could go forth and do exactly what they were doing and expand the Kingdom of God in the earth. In effect it was the process of moving from saint to disciple and from disciple to Ekklesia, skilled in legislating Kingdom business.

The Ekklesia of Heaven

Only citizens could be a part of the Greek or Roman ekklesia. Only citizens can be a part of the Ekklesia Jesus is establishing. When we are born again and become a believer, we become a citizen of heaven. That becomes our foremost citizenry.

But [we are different, because] our citizenship is in heaven. And from there we eagerly await [the coming of] the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
Philippians 3:20 (AMP)

That word translated “citizenship” means, according to the Strong’s Hebrew/Greek Lexicon, “the constitution of a commonwealth, form of government and the laws by which it is administered.” We are citizens of heaven’s Kingdom and we

follow the laws of the Kingdom. That is our city/state where we are the Ekklesia, heaven. Our legislative mandate from heaven is to expand the Kingdom of God on earth so it looks like heaven wherever the King sends us.

This is exactly what the Romans did with their ekklesia. The responsibility of the Roman ekklesia was to enter the cities conquered by the Romans and make the city look and act like Rome. We, the Ekklesia of heaven, are to make earth look like heaven wherever our King sends us. We don't have designated territories other than what the King says. We are sent ones, doing the will of the Master, our Lord and King, conducting Kingdom business wherever He sends us.

Understanding the true Ekklesia will completely change our view today. We will begin to understand how the enemy has infiltrated and made a system and institution out of something that was completely different from the intent of the Father heart of God.

Many ask why does the Bible seem to indicate there are multiple "churches"? For instance, the book of Revelations seems to indicate multiple "churches" in different cities, or multiple ekklesias. Let me ask you a question? You are a citizen of the United States, or Canada, or some other nation. If you travel to Greece, or Australia, or South Africa does that make you any less a citizen of your country? No. You are still a citizen of the country you departed while traveling.

The same applies to us as believers. It does not matter where we are on earth, where we live, or work, or travel, we are still citizens of heaven and a part of the heavenly Ekklesia, the city on a hill. There is only one heavenly Ekklesia, but it exists wherever there are believers. Believers can execute heaven's Kingdom business wherever they are on earth.

Whether a translation of the Bible translates the word Ekklesia as "church" or "churches" it is still Ekklesia in the original Greek. Jesus said He would establish His Ekklesia. It is not divided. In Revelation when the letters were delivered to seven "churches" it is speaking of the heavenly citizens, the

part of the Ekklesia, who happened to reside in each of these earthly cities at that time.

They do not get their power and authority from the government of these cities to legislate. Their power and authority come from heaven. Their earthly bodies were assigned by God to live in these cities. They gather together to legislate Kingdom business wherever the Lord assigns them. Jesus loves cities. He wept over Jerusalem. He assigns members of His Ekklesia to cities and countries to see what needs to be corrected in order to advance the Kingdom of heaven in that area. He is free to move them other places any time He chooses.

If we look at the Ekklesia as being plural we negate the words of Jesus. He is building one Ekklesia, not many. We are looking through our physical eyes to relegate the Ekklesia to the place we live or even to the building we attend “church” services. We need spiritual eyes to see the one true Ekklesia is a heaven thing. We are a part of the heavenly Ekklesia.

Our authority and marching orders come from heaven and the Commander-in-Chief of the Lord’s army, Jesus Himself. We are not contained within four walls, or within any earthly territory. We are free to follow Jesus wherever He leads us. We will do what He says to do. We will use all the gifts and tools available to us to complete our assignments. We know this. However, when we teach it, it still seems to have a mixture of the old and the new.

We don’t know and understand it deep in our spirit yet, but we will. The fire of God will burn up the old that has been mixed with the new and we will go forward with a pure message of who the Ekklesia really is. We will hear His voice and obey, even if those around us ridicule us or laugh and scream at us. We have eyes to see.

We Need a Paradigm Shift

We need to pray for revelation to fully understand the needed paradigm shift and what the Ekklesia really is. We need

our minds and our spiritual eyes to discern where religion has deceived us and constrained us from understanding the true Ekklesia. We need to grasp and hold onto an understanding of the freedom God has given us in Him. If we need to repent, repent we must.

We need a paradigm shift to understand that heavenly citizens, called saints or believers who legislate Kingdom business on the earth, are the Ekklesia. They are mature saints, trained and ready to do the will of the Father. They are advancing the Kingdom of heaven in the earth.

The Ekklesia exists whenever a couple of people (or more) find themselves together in the Spirit of the Lord discussing and legislating Kingdom business. To think otherwise is religion. Religion has given us the picture of the Ekklesia being a particular brand of “church” building. People have chosen to go to a particular brand of “church” because of their current belief system and doctrine. But what happens when their doctrine changes?

Our parents and grandparents more than likely grew up in a particular “church” and many have followed in their footsteps, settling there for life. There may be no life in the place, no joy, no spirit, but we are expected to be there out of family tradition and expectations. We do our duty by attending once or twice a week.

We give them our money and support their community or global efforts, even when we do not know where our money actually goes. Many of these “churches” support things that are ungodly, like abortion and other evil pursuits. But we give our money, anyway! We do our duty! We rationalize that because we are not in leadership, we simply do as we are told and the accountability is no longer ours. Wrong!

People, we need to wake up! Do we really think our God is pleased with these actions? Do we really believe we can declare ourselves to be followers of Christ when we do these things? We are following a false Christ.

The true Ekklesia is coming alive and beginning to understand her role in the Kingdom of the living Christ who

will reign forever and ever. She will understand the mysteries and secrets of the Kingdom in order to thwart the tactics of the enemy to keep her in bondage to religion. This Ekklesia, by her actions and her obedience under the power of Holy Spirit, will cause a major paradigm shift worldwide. It truly is an exciting time to be alive!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 8

1 – What is your current understanding of the role of apostles and prophets? How does their role impact the Ekklesia?

2 – What “church” background do you have? Have you experienced the difference between a denominational organization with the people in control and an independent organization where the leadership was in control? What, if any, observations would you make on these two different styles of operating a “church”?

3 – Describe your thoughts on what the author meant when she says that there has been 2000 years of struggle with limited results and it seems to be getting worse, but there is a day coming when our work in the Kingdom will be done through rest and ease. Do you agree? If so, why? If not, why not? Pray for continued revelation.

4 – How, if any, has your understanding of the difference between the “church” and the Ekklesia changed since you started reading this book? Pray and ask God to increase your understanding, not just in your mind but in your spirit as well.

5 – What is the purpose of the Ekklesia? How does that differ from what you have been taught?

6 – How did the illustration of the house and its owner help with an understanding or did it? What does it mean to have the keys to the Kingdom? What do the keys represent?

7 – Describe how ambassadors work in our world today. How does this represent our role as ambassadors from heaven’s Kingdom?

8 – If we can see ourselves foremost as citizens of heaven, how does that change our perspective concerning Kingdom business and advancing the Kingdom of God on earth?

9 – Describe how the Greek and Roman application of an ekklesia deepens your understanding of what Jesus meant when He told His disciples that He would establish His own Ekklesia.

10 – Where do you have authority? If this is different from your previous understanding, how is it different? Who sets where you have authority? Ask God to give you a clearer understanding of your authority and where you have authority.

11 – If we are a part of the Ekklesia, when and where do we operate? When and where do we have power and authority? If you are working, or playing, do you have that authority?

12 – Describe your thoughts on the author’s depiction of the progress of a believer – saint to student to Ekklesia. How does maturity play a role in this?

13 – Describe your thoughts concerning the statement that our emphasis has been on the “church” while Jesus’ focus was on the Kingdom of God. How does that need to change, if you believe it should? Pray any blinders you may have are removed in God’s time and way.

14 – Most “churches” and religious organizations today are 401c3. Do you understand what a 401c3 governmental non-profit organization means? If not, do some research to see why God might not want an organization to form this type of organization. Pray about it.

15 – Describe how your understanding of religion has changed since you started reading this book. Ask God again to strengthen your gift of discernment.

CHAPTER 9

THE WORD OF GOD – PRIMARY WEAPON

The vision of the Chinese Lantern represents the Ekklesia. Our understanding of the Ekklesia, according to God's instructions, must be turned upside down, causing a great shaking. Out of this great shaking will come several major paradigm shifts. The paradigm shifts are meant to free us from the old, and allow us to move forward into new territory by the Spirit of God to a place we have never been before. God said, "Set My people free". A huge part of being truly free in Jesus is freedom from religion.

The enemy does not want us to move into the new paradigm therefore, when we leave the old paradigm behind, he will try to stop us. God has placed weapons in our hands to ensure our success of which one of the greatest, is His Word.

We step out of our comfort zone into a valley of transitioning, a valley of decision where we begin our preparation by God to fully embrace the new paradigm. God calls us from the place we have been living, into the wilderness in order to strip us of the old and prepare us for the new. Our mindsets must change.

These paradigm shifts we face as a whole are massive. Our focus must change from that of doing "church" to being the Ekklesia and advancing the Kingdom of God. The enemy has established a counterfeit kingdom and most of our culture, including "churches" are camped in this counterfeit kingdom called Babylon. God has called us out of Babylon for it is about to be destroyed. The true Ekklesia united as one with her Commander-in-Chief, Jesus, is going to destroy Babylon.

God designed it that way. It is His masterplan. Advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth through righteousness, justice and holiness is the privilege and responsibility of the Ekklesia. The enemy does not want us to

understand who we are, or how much our God loves and supports us.

Our Lord did not leave us defenseless. He already assured our victory, if we will fight for it. We must learn to recognize the tactics of the enemy and know how to fight back, not just to stop him, but to take back the stolen territory. How dare he think he can win against our King, our God! He is nothing.

One of our most effective weapons is the Word of God. The Ekklesia will use this weapon to accomplish the demise of Babylon and to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. When the phrase “word of God” is used, most people think of the Bible. They believe the Bible is their weapon. The Bible is also one of the enemy’s favorite weapons. However, the word of God is so much more than just the Bible.

Our Weapon

The living, breathing word of God is the weapon of choice for the Ekklesia. If God’s words have no relevance today, no power, no authority to change things, then our words for sure won’t either. But our words do, even when we are unaware of it. There is an all-out war today to silence God’s people and keep us from changing the culture around us. The enemy does not want you to have a voice. He does not want you to know the power of your words when they sync with the words of the living God. Those words echo off the canyon walls of time and last for an eternity.

Censorship has been happening for years, but we mostly haven’t recognized it until lately. Jesus is Truth. Truth is a light that shines in the darkness. When your voice lines up with the One who created the universe, it is light shining in darkness like never before. We are becoming more cognizant of the deceit of the enemy. Men love darkness more than light because their deeds are evil.

Your voice brings truth to the darkness and causes those hidden in darkness to reveal themselves. They squawk

like cornered animals. The enemy is not happy because he knows your voice has power to change cultures. Your voice has power to topple kingdoms of darkness, because you hear the voice of God. The enemy labels truth as mis-information or dis-information to try to silence us, or keep others from listening to us.

God's people are rising up, bold as lions and they are saying "No more! You will not have our cities, you will not have our businesses, you will not have our schools, you will not have our children! You can't have what belongs to us!" The streets of our cities, the highways of our states and provinces are crying out for truth to be heard clearly once again.

The Word of God is our weapon; it is our sword. Hebrews 4:12 calls it a two-edged sword that can cut open the heart and see what really makes it tick. The Ekklesia is the legislative body called by God to legislate in the earth, to bind and release. How do we do this? With words. Not just any words, but the living, life-changing word of the Lord. We are the conduit through which God's word flows. Keep this in mind as you continue to read this chapter. The Lord still speaks!

Let the praises of God be in their mouths, and a sharp sword in their hands—to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with shackles and their leaders with iron chains, to execute the judgment written against them. This is the glorious privilege of his faithful ones. Praise the LORD!

Psalm 149:6-9 (NLT)

It is a privilege for the Ekklesia to be a conduit between the Word in heaven and the events of earth. We speak what we hear our Commander-in-Chief say. We do what we see Him do. This is how we are going to see paradigm shifts happen and earth to begin to look like heaven. That is how we are going to see Babylon fall.

In order for the paradigm shifts to happen, the saints must mature and be equipped as the Ekklesia to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. This requires us to reevaluate

every area of our spiritual lives. Since the word of God is our weapon, we need to fully understand what that really means.

We automatically think Bible when we hear the words “the word of God”. I love the Bible. I really, really do. I read and study it all the time and have since I was a young child. However, we must understand that the true Word of God is Jesus, not the Bible as we have been taught. The Bible does indeed point us to Jesus, who is the Word. But it is Jesus, our wonderful, glorious Lord who is our focus.

Many “church” leaders say, “If it is not in the Bible, it is not God.” That statement is not true. John 21:25 is very clear in what it tells us. The things Jesus did, the things He said while He lived on earth, would fill so many books that even the world couldn’t hold them if they were written. Do we not want the Holy Spirit to whisper about those things in our spiritual ears? Do we not want to know the secrets our Lord spoke which were not recorded or lost to history? Would not that encourage us? Our wonderful Lord cannot be constrained to just books written in the past. He is alive and working in us today.

He will not contradict Himself. He is the same today as He was yesterday and will be tomorrow. We need to understand Him as the living Word of God. To understand better we need to explore two terms used in the Bible, “scripture” and the “Word of God”. Today, the use of either one of those terms automatically projects a picture of the Bible in our minds, but at the time these words were written, the Bible did not exist.

Scripture

The Greek word translated “scripture” in the Bible is used 51 times in the King James version and it is translated that way every time it is used. According to the Bible commentators, scripture refers to the Old Testament writings of the books of Moses, the psalms, and the prophets. These books were accepted by Jewish leadership and used in the synagogues of Jesus’ day. Today when we read the word

“scripture”, we think it refers to the entire Bible. Just be mindful of this when reading the Bible.

This book is not intended to be a study on the history of how the books of the Bible were selected to be included in what we call the canon of scripture. Canon is just a word used to signify those books selected as those inspired by God and included in the Bible. One can find plenty of books already written that outline the process used to canonize the books.

This book is written to encourage you to think about what you believe and why you believe it. There were many attempts to determine which books were inspired and written by God, before the work was finalized around the fifth century after Jesus. Even now, not all theologians agree on which books should be included.

You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.
II Timothy 3:15-17 (NLT)

Paul was talking to his protégé Timothy, and was referring to the Old Testament writings. We quote it often. There was no New Testament at the time. Paul says the scriptures from the Old Testament Timothy was taught growing up, pointed to the coming Messiah. Jesus was the Messiah from the scriptures. All of scripture is foremost meant to reveal Jesus.

We have been taught and have accepted doctrine based on someone’s interpretation of the Bible without even thinking or questioning it. The responsibility of prophetic and apostolic gifts is not to tell you what to believe or what to do, rather to provide you with information and insight so that you can think, reason, and question things for yourself. Their responsibility is to direct you to Jesus who has all the answers and the solutions. He is everything we need.

There are other books mentioned in both the Old Testament and New Testament, by the writers, but are not included in the collection of books called the Bible. Do they hold any value to us as believers? Have you ever read any of them? Have we been trained to be afraid to read outside the Bible?

Religion has often dictated we not read anything written outside our own religious denominational or affiliation's recommendations. In many cases we are instructed by leadership not to read anything other than approved authors. Leaders have checked my bookshelf when they came to visit. Leaders have chided me for reading books of which they do not approve. There is nothing wrong with being cautious, but let Holy Spirit guide and direct, rather than men.

We have been taught that the Bible is sacred. Paul tells us in Romans 1:2 scripture is holy or Holy Spirit inspired. There was no Bible at that time. Paul was referring to the writing of the prophets and the books of Moses in the Old Testament. Does history even tell us which books were included in the scriptures at the time Paul wrote this? Did it include the book of Enoch that has been removed by man? We don't know.

I write this with an abundance of love for the Bible, which I have studied and memorized since childhood. It is man who has told us what to accept as scripture and as the Bible. Therefore, it is absolutely critical for us to evaluate everything we believe. The paradigm shifts will require us to deeply question if we have been taught by Holy Spirit or through man. We must seek God's face for His view on every aspect of our lives. God is faithful.

Word of God

Two Greek words are used in the New Testament to indicate the word of God, *logos* and *rhema*. Kenneth Hagin, who founded the Rhema Bible College, brought this teaching to the

forefront. It was an enormous part of the teaching of the Word of Faith movement.

Common religious thought teaches logos refers to “written word” and rhema refers to “spoken word” or “a NOW word” from God. A good deal of Christendom believes rhema words do not happen anymore since the establishment of the early “church” was completed.

Believers tend to think of logos as the Bible and rhema as direct revelation from God. Direct revelation from God can come from Bible verses that seem alive to us at the moment or as prophesy spoken through others or even through hearing the still small voice in our own spirit. There are many other vehicles God uses to reveal Himself to us. We need a better understanding of these two Greek words for our journey into the paradigm shifts we face.

Logos

In John chapter one, the logos of God, the Word of God is defined as Jesus. It is not referring to something that is written like we have been taught. Jesus is the personal expression of the Father. Jesus was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus’ disciples did not understand the Father so they asked Jesus about Him. Jesus told them because they had seen Him, they had also seen the Father. Jesus came to earth to reveal the Father to us. Jesus was Himself the logos, the Word of God. That has not changed.

At the beginning God expressed himself. That personal expression, that word, was with God, and was God, and he existed with God from the beginning. All creation took place through him, and none took place without him. In him appeared life and this life was the light of mankind. The light still shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.

John 1:1-5 (PHILLIPS)

One of the definitions for logos in Greek/Hebrew lexicons deals with the mind and the ability to reason, to explain. God’s thoughts are impossible for the human mind to

understand. We just cannot comprehend with our natural mind what God is thinking. So how do we communicate and have a conversation with our Creator, our Father?

Jesus is the personal expression of God. The concept of God was hard to explain and put in words until Jesus came to earth as a man. Jesus was the one who could translate the thoughts of God so they could be understood by the human mind and spirit. He was and is the logos. He came so we could have His mind and understand who the Father is and what was in the Father heart of God.

It is these things that we talk about, not using the expressions of the human intellect but those which the Holy Spirit teaches us, explaining things to those who are spiritual. But the unspiritual man simply cannot accept the matters which the Spirit deals with—they just don't make sense to him, for, after all, you must be spiritual to see spiritual things. The spiritual man, on the other hand, has an insight into the meaning of everything, though his insight may baffle the man of the world. This is because the former is sharing in God's wisdom, and 'Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' Incredible as it may sound, we who are spiritual have the very thoughts of Christ! I Corinthians 2:13-16 (PHILLIPS)

When we encounter the word logos in the Bible, it is what gives us an explanation of what was in God's mind when He acted, when He did certain things. The Father's thoughts and ideas could be expressed so our mind could comprehend them. Now, we have the mind of Christ so we can understand the plans God designed for the earth from the beginning. Now, as spiritual beings with the logos living in us, He can reveal the secrets and mysteries to us which others cannot understand.

We need a deep revelation of this truth. Father God is so powerful, so majestic, so far above us, His creation, we cannot in our human reality know Him or understand Him without having a mind that is on the same level as His. Jesus gave us His mind when He died and rose again for us. He gave us the ability to know and understand our God and to communicate with Him.

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

The logos word of God is powerful and alive. It exposes our thoughts and places them alongside the thoughts of God, not for the sake of shaming us, but so we can compel our thoughts to line up with the thoughts of the Creator of the universe! If we can see this revelation, if we can change our thoughts to align with God, we can then speak the rhema words necessary to change the world!

We must stop thinking of the logos the way we have been taught. Logos is way more than the Bible; it is the Living Christ living in us so we have understanding of what He wants to do and say through us every step of every day.

Rhema

The other word used in the Bible for “Word of God” is the Greek word rhema. It is used to signify a spoken word, command, decree, expression. It also connotes a spoken word that is a “fresh word” or “now word”. Word of God in this passage uses the Greek word, rhema. The New Living translation translates the word “word” as “command”.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Hebrews 11:3 (NKJV)

By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen. Here is another verse where rhema is used.

Hebrews 11:3 (NLT)

Here is another passage that uses the word rhema.

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” But Simon answered

**and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.”
Luke 5:4,5 (NKJV)**

Peter tells Jesus, “The fish are not biting; it is a lousy day for fishing, but if you speak a now word to me telling me what I should do, I will do it. If you give me a command, I will obey. Give me a rhema word and I will let down the net”.

Here is another quotable verse we know so well.

**And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV)**

Songs have been written about the Bible being our sword. We raise our Bible in the air and wave it around like a sword. However, it is the word rhema that is used in this passage, the spoken word. It signifies so much more than just the Bible. Many believe God does not give “now words” today, but that is a religious deception. We must understand and believe in the rhema word of God if we expect to be successful in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth.

Logos and rhema words often work together. A person could be reading a passage of the Bible concerning the fivefold ministry gifts and suddenly realize the truth of the passage from Ephesians that says these gifts are given to the Ekklesia for the “maturing of the saints”. Revelation is suddenly recognized and understanding is realized concerning the main purpose for these gifts.

We may have read this passage many times before, but something different clicked in our spirit this time. It became alive in us. We tapped into the mind of Christ. We saw what was in the heart of God. We experienced the logos of God, the word of God in us revealing what we didn’t know with our natural mind. Our spirit understood and communicated it to our mind in a way that we could understand what God was saying to us in that moment.

Later, this person continues reading and hears God saying to them personally that He is calling them as an

evangelist. Or perhaps they hear Him calling them as a prophet, or one of the other gifts mentioned in Ephesians. The word they hear is a direct, fresh, and NOW word to them specifically. That is a rhema word. God often uses the logos word initially to get a rhema word to His people.

The weapon that God has given to the Ekklesia to bring down the Babylonian kingdom and to wage war against the enemy of the souls of men, is Jesus, Himself. He is the weapon we can use against the spirit of religion. The words that Jesus speaks, we hear. We see Him do things, so we do the same.

We are the conduit between heaven and earth. We hear what is coming from the mouth of our Lord in heaven and we declare those words and perform those actions in the earth to tear down strongholds in our own lives, our families, our cities, our states, our nations and to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth.

That again is our privilege and our responsibility. The enemy will do everything he can to keep us from understanding the power of our weapon. If we do not understand, then he can keep us from using our weapon effectively to damage the Kingdom of darkness and to restore what the enemy has stolen from us.

The Enemy Is a Counterfeiter

If the enemy cannot entice God's people to turn their back on God, he will desperately try to keep the Ekklesia from her destiny by either hiding her destiny from her or distracting her from it. He will attempt to satisfy her with something much less than what God intended for her. The weapon of choice for the Ekklesia is the Word of the Living God, Jesus.

Everything the enemy does is a counterfeit of the truly authentic provided by God. The enemy is nothing like our God. Satan's counterfeit kingdom is Babylon. He wants us to believe it is his kingdom that should rule on earth, after all Adam gave it to him legitimately. He doesn't want God's

people to understand Jesus took back the authority to rule when He died on the cross as a man. Jesus restored man's authority and power to rule in the earth when He shed His blood and then rose from the dead.

The enemy wants the Kingdom of God relegated to heaven only. He deceives us so we don't understand that God's purpose is to bring the Kingdom of God from heaven to earth. He tries to convince us the world just gets worse and worse and there is nothing we can do about it. Just do the best you can, God will understand. If the enemy can't coax you into hell, he will convince you there is nothing to do but wait for heaven. The enemy has convinced believers for hundreds of years that these lies are true.

Glory to God, there is a remnant rising in the earth that has seen with spiritual eyes the Kingdom of God on earth and this remnant is no longer satisfied to live in Babylon. The called-out ones have escaped the chains and bondage of religion and are now declaring and decreeing what they see their Lord proclaim, "Come out of Babylon". They understand the streets are calling for truth to be heard, and they are taking truth to the streets. Their greatest desire is to see the Kingdom they see with spiritual eyes become a physical reality.

The Word of God is our weapon and the fact that we are beginning to understand what that really means, frightens the enemy. He does not want us to realize what the Word of God really is, and how to effectively use our weapon. Jesus has spoken and still speaks. It is His living words spoken through us that contain power and authority.

If the enemy cannot keep us from reading the Bible, he will put rules and regulations around it so it doesn't seem relevant for today's living. He will relegate things to days gone by so there is no power and authority in it. He will make sure errors and problems are noticed so people will question whether any of it is relevant.

Most of all, the enemy will try to convince us that God spoke in Bible days, but God doesn't speak directly to men anymore. In fact, the enemy calls us crazy for hearing voices.

He doesn't want us to know that not only does God speak today, God's words are our weapon to destroy the enemy and his counterfeit kingdom. When God's words come out of the mouths of the mature and obedient Ekklesia in faith, there will be a greater level of power and authority than we have ever experienced.

You can read the Bible until you are blue in the face, but if those words do not live in you and continue to produce life, they are only words on a page. The true word of God is alive and He lives forever more. The Bible is important, it really is, but we must have a proper understanding of it. After all, our enemy recognizes it and uses it as a weapon against us. We must mature to the point we understand and can thwart his attempts to stop us.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 9

- 1 – Why is it important to understand what the word of God really is?
- 2 – Why would the enemy want to stop us from using our weapons? Why is our voice so important?
- 3 – Have you heard the terms mis-information and dis-information before? If so, how were they used in the current world environment? Explain what they mean and how the enemy is using those terms to hinder us from using our weapons effectively?
- 4 – Explain what you believe the author means by the statement that we are the conduit through which God’s word passes from heaven to earth.
- 5 – When you have heard the term “word of God” in the past what came to your mind? Explain the difference between the word of God and the Bible.
- 6 – If your understanding of what “scripture” is, as mentioned in the Bible, has changed, explain how it has changed.
- 7 – Evaluate any cautiousness you have toward exploring teaching or writings outside of your denomination or religious affiliation. What have you been taught? Do you see how some of the teaching could be coming from the influence of a religious spirit? What, if anything, do you intend to do, to change your direction?
- 8 – What are your thoughts about the connection between Jesus as the Logos and being able to understand God? Does this make sense to you? If not, what questions do you have?

9 – How do you think an understanding of logos and rhema helps in the understanding of advancing the Kingdom of God on the earth?

10 – How does the enemy attempt to keep the Ekklesia from her destiny? What tactics has he attempted to keep you from achieving your potential and destiny?

11 – Do you believe Jesus gave you power and authority to rule? If not, why do believe what you believe? Are you willing to ask God to show you truth in this area? If you do believe He gave you power and authority, why do you believe? How are you using that power and authority?

13 – Do you believe the world is only going to get worse and there is nothing you can do about it? If so, why do you believe that? Ask God to show you truth. If you do not believe this, why do you not believe it? How do your actions reflect your belief?

CHAPTER 10

THE WORD OF GOD - TACTICS OF THE ENEMY

Whenever God gives His precious children a gift, the enemy doesn't like it. This is especially true, if the enemy sees the potential in those gifts to bind him and do him great harm. He will try to kill the ability of that gift to operate in our lives. He doesn't want us using a gift from God to effect change in the earth.

The enemy wants to steal God's promises from us. He wants to destroy our faith and kill any results that would come from us believing the promises God gave to us. His whole premise is to steal, kill, and destroy as stated in John chapter ten, verse ten.

The most precious gift God has given us is His Son. Through the Son we can know Father God's heart. In John chapter one, it tells us that the Word of God became human and lived among the people. God did not send Jesus to earth as a human in order that we could record His words and His deeds in a set of books and call that the Word of God. That is a substitute for the real Word of God.

The enemy uses many tactics, sometimes very subtle, in order to keep us from God's intended purposes and His best for us. The intended purposes of God are always extremely powerful and life-changing. Satan, if we will not abandon the gifts of God, will tempt us with a weakened, counterfeit version of the real gift.

The enemy always attempts to counterfeit what God wants to give His people, hoping we will accept the counterfeit for the real. He will try to convince us we have no real power and authority because we are mere humans. Therefore, our only hope is to live the best we can and wait for heaven. The enemy will keep us divided, and instill a fear of change in us.

He will attempt to create a belief that we are easily deceived so we will fear change.

By twisting God's words, satan tries to get us to question God. Did God really say that? Did He really mean what He said? The enemy knew when Jesus declared He would establish His own Ekklesia it would destroy him, so he gets humans to build their own little kingdoms instead of working with Jesus to build His.

The enemy does not want us to realize that God speaks to us directly. The Word of God, Jesus, has unlimited power and authority and His words produce change. Can you imagine what impact God's children would have, if they realized that the words of power and authority from Jesus have the same power and authority in the earth if those words come out of our mouths in faith, because we are His and He is ours?

Enemy Tactic - Accept the Bible as the Word of God Instead of Jesus

The enemy would rather we ignore the Bible entirely by enticing us to believe it is an outdated book full of errors. If we won't do that, he will get us to accept it as the Word of God, complete and finalized with no need for God to ever speak again. The Bible becomes the substitute for the real Word of God which is Jesus.

Jesus is the Word of God as stated even in the Bible. The Bible is not the Word of God as we have been taught, but it is important and does contain a revelation of the One who is the Word. Remember, the first century Ekklesia did not have the Bible. They depended on revelation from Jesus Himself.

Jesus is alive and well, and it is He who is the final authority on every topic. We are one with Him, so we know Him and what He desires in the earth. When we succeed in the needed paradigm shifts, we will understand what it truly means to be one with the God of the universe!

“And I ask not only for these disciples, but also for all those who will one day believe in me through their message. I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to become one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me. For the very glory you have given to me I have given them so that they will be joined together as one and experience the same unity that we enjoy. You live fully in me and now I live fully in them so that they will experience perfect unity, and the world will be convinced that you have sent me, for they will see that you love each one of them with the same passionate love that you have for me. “Father, I ask that you allow everyone that you have given to me to be with me where I am! Then they will see my full glory— the very splendor you have placed upon me because you have loved me even before the beginning of time. “You are my righteous Father, but the unbelieving world has never known you in the perfect way that I know you! And all those who believe in me also know that you have sent me! I have revealed to them who you are and I will continue to make you even more real to them, so that they may experience the same endless love that you have for me, for your love will now live in them, even as I live in them!”

John 17:20-26 (TPT)

The Bible is wonderful and it is full of truth regardless of seeming inconsistencies, but it is nothing in comparison to who our Lord Himself really is. The Bible is a pointer, a guide, to point us to the Living Word of God, our Lord. Never let the Bible be a substitute for a living, now relationship with Father God and our Savior Jesus and our friend, Holy Spirit. The Bible is just another book if Holy Spirit is not there to reveal truth from its pages. It is the God of the Bible who makes the words of the Bible come alive and touch our spirit.

Enemy Tactic - Bible Is Final Authority-God Doesn't Speak Directly Anymore

Once the enemy has convinced us to substitute the Bible for Jesus, he will try to convince us God doesn't speak any more directly to men. God supposedly said everything He needed to say through the Bible. Now that all the books, deemed to be sacred writings, have been included in the Bible,

there is no need for additional information concerning God and His dealing with humans.

Many Bible scholars teach that everything God wanted to reveal about Himself has been revealed and recorded in the books of the Bible or in nature. Anything that adds revelation not published in these books is deemed false and a cult.

Many institutions have written doctrinal statements for their particular brand of Christianity. Here is an example of a doctrinal statement that appears in many of these documents concerning the authority of the Bible and its finality.

We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God without error in their original writings. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is free from error and is the final authority.

These “experts” believe the Bible encompasses all the truth there is. They declare there is no truth revealed apart from the Bible. But Jesus, according to the Bible, reveals Himself as Truth personified. The Bible also says in Revelations 19:10 that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The testimony of Jesus implies that He still speaks and when He speaks it is revelation.

A question we must ask is why would God stop revealing Himself and limit all knowledge of Him to a few pages written by just a few people? The people who did write in ages past did actually know Him and love Him, for sure. Are there not people today who know Him and love Him just as much who could write of the marvelous wonders of our God who is eternal and cannot be constrained to time and space?

God speaks and what He says should never ever be ignored or taken lightly! When there appears to be a discrepancy with what we hear compared to what we believe, we must go to God for an answer. If we live in His presence, we will know the difference between the Spirit of the Lord and our own mind. Our own mind will try to justify something we want to do, when God clearly says it is wrong for us to do.

Be careful what you throw away and what you keep. Always be leery of being deceived, but know that you have the

anointing in you to recognize deception. Always allow Holy Spirit to speak to you and guide you concerning what you are reading. The Bible draws us to Jesus, who is very much alive and very much speaking today.

The man or woman to whom Holy Spirit gave words in the Bible was merely a conduit. Holy Spirit used them to pass the word from Heaven to others on earth. The same is true today. God's people speaking and writing God's words are merely conduits. They are just willing vessels opening their mouths and letting God speak no matter how ridiculous it might sound, or how little they understand of what God is speaking at the time.

There are secrets and mysteries in God that are yet to be discovered. If you believe the people who have made all the rules and regulations concerning the Bible, then you won't believe there are any more secrets and mysteries, because everything God wanted to reveal has been revealed. You will have to decide.

Counterfeit voices abound in our world today. The enemy will encourage us to listen to these voices. The enemy has become so good at deception. When you listen, what is being said in many cases sounds plausible and right. The only way to judge what is right is through the righteousness of Jesus, which He has given to us. There is no standard of righteousness apart from God.

Holy Spirit will guide us to truth. Jesus is truth. Holy Spirit is our companion, always directing us to hear Jesus. We may have problems distinguishing the real from the counterfeit at times, but continuing to press into God's presence, we cannot help but know the difference. God's words, even in correction and admonition, always bring peace to our heart if we truly know and desire His heart. Our own mind by itself does not bring peace.

Do we really believe that a God who has no beginning and no end, would limit His creation to an understanding of Him observed by certain men and women and written down over the span of only about 2200 years of history (from Moses

through the early church)? Jesus called God His Father and invited us to do the same. The Bible even tells us that not everything that Jesus said or did was written down. The earth could not contain it all. Does that sound like a God who would make the Bible the final word from Him? Or does it sound like a God who is continually revealing Himself?

Do we truly believe a God we call our Heavenly Father, would stop talking to His children and instead would refer them to a book written about Him to speak for Him? Do we truly believe the complete revelation of a God who created the universe and everything in it, and who continues to expand that universe even this very day could limit the revelation of Himself inside a book the size of the Bible?

Enemy Tactic – Twist the Bible To Mean What You Want It To Mean

Often times a particular doctrine is established from the translation of just one verse.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; Hebrews 1:1,2 (NKJV)

This transaction of these verses seems to indicate before Jesus came to earth God spoke in all different kinds of ways and times to fathers of the faith through prophets, but not anymore. In other words, in the Old Testament times God spoke in a variety of ways but mostly He spoke to leaders through the voice and prophetic demonstration of the prophets. When Jesus came to earth, things changed.

Jesus was born as the beloved Son of God and God began to speak through Him. In this verse the term “has spoken”, which is past tense, is used to indicate that Jesus spoke while He was on earth and for a short while afterwards. Many “church” leaders teach that miracles, such as Jesus

appearing to Paul on the road to Damascus, ended once the “church” was established. Things supposedly changed again.

The revelation of Jesus was final and there was no need for Him to speak directly to men any more. The “church” was born and according to many, became the vehicle (the only vehicle) to carry the voice and word of God preached from the Bible. Almost every version of the Bible translates these verses as Jesus “has spoken”. However, the Passion version of the Bible translates this verse as Jesus still speaks in the here and now. Notice the difference between the two translations.

Throughout our history God has spoken to our ancestors by his prophets in many different ways. The revelation he gave them was only a fragment at a time, building one truth upon another. But to us living in these last days, God now speaks to us openly in the language of a Son, the appointed Heir of everything, for through him God created the panorama of all things and all time.

Hebrews 1:1,2 (TPT)

Which translation is correct, Jesus spoke while He was on earth and until the “church” was fully established, or Jesus continues to speak? The correct translation makes a huge difference! Is God still speaking through Jesus or did He stop speaking?

The Greek word translated as “has spoken” in most translations of this verse, is translated as “speaks” the 244 other times it is used in the Bible. A look at the Greek/Hebrew Lexicon for this verse will prove this. It is ONLY in this one verse that it is translated in the past tense.

Why is this? The enemy has lied to us, constantly, and we don’t even question it! He doesn’t want us to know and understand that our God still speaks to us individually! We can hear God for ourselves. We do not need a mediator to tell us what God is saying to us. It is past time for God’s people to wake up!

The belief that the Bible is complete and God doesn’t speak anymore, leads the deceived to believe the final word of God is the Bible and it has the final authority to dictate God’s

will and His ways to mankind. Jesus now only speaks through the Bible. Therefore, it is the Bible that now has the same authority as Jesus would have if He still walked among us. These same people use the Bible as a weapon to keep God's people in line and under control.

The Bible says all authority has been given to Jesus. He is the highest authority. It doesn't say that authority only lasted while He walked the earth. Jesus didn't command us to write the things He said and make it into the final authority once He left the earth.

Since He supposedly doesn't speak anymore, these leaders argue that the Bible which contains His words becomes the power and authority over our lives. It has the authority to tell us what is right or wrong in our lives.

"Church" leaders argue the Bible tells us how to establish "churches" and how to govern "churches" and we cannot deviate from those rules or we are rebellious. "Churches" are deemed to be the method through which the Bible is interpreted and preached and through which Jesus now speaks. They assume, in error, the "church" and the Ekklesia are the same. They are not.

We need a paradigm shift to bring us back to God's original intent. Jesus has an already established Kingdom in heaven. He took back the authority in the earth which Adam had given to the enemy. Now He has given mankind back the delegated power and authority to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and to make it look like heaven.

The Bible doesn't have the authority, but it points us to the One who does. You and I have authority to rule and reign in the earth because of delegated authority. Authority only comes through our Lord who is the TRUE WORD OF GOD. We cannot privately interpret what God has said through the Bible. Nor can we privately interpret what He says directly to us. We can only interpret what He means by the Spirit of God speaking directly to our spirits.

We must understand authority and who we allow to have authority over us. Jesus is our final authority not the Bible,

not man, not the “church”. Again, a reminder for us all, God does not contradict Himself. The Bible is important. We cannot just make up stuff and put God’s name on it. That is another tactic of the enemy. But that should not stop us from desiring to know truth, and truth is Jesus personified.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)

He still had authority on earth when He returned to heaven. He did not relegate that authority to the pages of a book, or to a group of people gathered behind four walls. He still is the final authority, but He also placed the power and authority on the Ekklesia, the mature saints of God, as an extension of who He is!

We are free to make our own choices. No one should bring fear upon us or try to control us. No one decides your choices for you. We are here to point you to Jesus. Jesus is the only FINAL authority in your life. He will show you the way. God does not want you to live in fear as you desire to serve Him. He wants you to be free in Him to be all He has called you to be.

Enemy Tactic - Keep God’s People Divided and Controlled

“Churches” are often named so their doctrine is identified in the name. For instance, First Baptist identifies as a “church” with Baptist doctrine. One Way Methodist identifies as a “church” holding to Methodist doctrine. Many of these “church” affiliations have their own schools and universities to produce leadership able to teach their doctrine. Most “churches” only install leaders from these institutions in their affiliation.

Many of these institutions outline their beliefs with doctrinal statements to which members should adhere. Doctrinal statements are the walls of the institution that

include some and exclude others. The enemy keeps people separated by doctrine because it is easier to control them. He does not want the saints to come together as the body of Christ with Jesus as the head. The enemy has been very successful at separating God's people into groups.

Most leaders are convinced people can be easily deceived by all the different flavors of "churches" and doctrine that exist. Therefore, they must do everything they can to control what the congregation is fed and who feeds them. They put boundaries around their feeding ground, and often use fear tactics so the people do not go astray. Only approved speakers are allowed behind the pulpit.

A large number of "churches" will not let just anyone start a Bible study in their home on your own. If allowed, there must be a prescribed study approved by leadership in order to avoid deception and leading people astray. After all, home Bible study leaders probably do not have a degree from a seminary or Bible college. If they lead someone astray, they could damage the reputation of the "church", therefore the situation must be controlled for the good of the congregation.

As a part of one local "church" years ago, if a person wanted to teach a Bible study at home, they would need to teach what the pastor preached the previous Sunday morning. An outline of study would be provided.

Pastors have perused the books on my bookshelf in my home. Was I reading books not approved by leadership, books that might leave me open to deception? Deception was determined to be a risk by these leaders if anything was taught differently than the denomination or affiliation in which we were associated.

These types of controls are happening in "churches" everywhere. These tactics instill fear in God's people making them think they are not qualified to hear God. God's people don't trust their ability to hear the voice of God accurately for themselves. They are dependent on leadership to tell them what to think and what to do. This absolutely has to stop. We cannot allow the enemy to divide and control us anymore. If

we cannot reason for ourselves, we are doomed to remain spiritual babies.

The translation of the Greek word “Ekklesia” as “church” by King James was probably intended to deceive the people, to control the people and it has worked for centuries, but not for much longer. The enemy deceives in many ways. We must be able to discern his deception in order to help facilitate the paradigm shifts needed.

Many believers are afraid to hear God for themselves. They are afraid of being deceived so they sincerely embrace letting others feed them and control them. Misinterpreting God’s word or voice and the threat of deception are real fears making it easier for us to allow someone else to do the thinking for us. We do not understand, we are still responsible to know God and discern His ways for ourselves.

We must think for ourselves and we must question everything that we have learned from man. We must question with our spirits, not our minds. Our minds have been deceived for years. We have lived under control of a religious spirit and Babylonian system of control without fully realizing it. If a “church” does believe that Jesus still speaks to us today, any prophetic utterance is mostly controlled or even pre-screen to see if it is appropriate for the congregation to hear, unless of course it is given through one of the approved leaders.

This is done under the guise of judging the spirits. Afterall, someone must be in charge of judging, right? Contrary to popular belief, we are all responsible before God to judge and discern the spirit behind any words spoken or any actions taken. Discernment is a tool given to us by God for the purpose of knowing who to follow and who to believe.

Jesus said to him, “I am the [only] Way [to God] and the [real] Truth and the [real] Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John 14:6 (AMP)

The only way to know truth is to go to the source of truth. Jesus is truth personified! The Bible should never be

used to control or manipulate a person into doing our bidding. Prophetic utterances should not be used to control or manipulate, either. This is the work of the enemy to deceive.

There is a right way to correct something that is in error as indicated in the verses below. However, it is never done in a spirit of control or manipulation. We need to understand the difference.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Acts 18:24-26 (NKJV)

There is also a way to confront false teachers and false prophets, whose spirits are operating from a religious spirit rather than the Spirit of the Living God. That is not the topic of this book. God will show us a more excellent way to deal with this. The purpose of this book is to show us where deception has entered and what must change in order for the paradigm shifts to happen. The Ekklesia must mature in the things of Christ. There is a lot we need to learn and to change as a part of that process.

Enemy Tactic – The Bible Is Complicated – Experts Need To Interpret/Teach

The enemy has convinced many people that a normal ordinary person without proper theological training is incapable of accurately interpreting the Bible. If we disagree with the interpretation of the experts, we are mocked, ridiculed, and sometimes ostracized. How dare we use scripture apart from its original intent.

The Bible tells us, as saints, to study the Word of God in order to know truth. To not study or not be able to discern

truth would be contrary to God's purposes for His Ekklesia, not just leaders but all believers. Studying what others have written about certain passages is helpful. Comparing scripture to scripture is beneficial. Researching the history and culture at the time is useful. But that is not enough. It is definitely true that scripture can be complicated. The Bible, even with all the tools that are available can be difficult at times to understand.

However, even though the books of the Bible were written thousands of years ago, the author is still alive. The true author is Holy Spirit who spoke through men and women in times past. Holy Spirit exists for all time. When He speaks, He has the advantage of seeing things outside of time. He sees the past, the present, and the future all at the same time.

His words can carry more meaning than anyone listening at the time can understand. Those powerful words that echo through the chambers of time, can have meaning for the moment as well as meaning for one or many future events in history.

I've written these things about those who are attempting to lead you astray. But the wonderful anointing you have received from God is so much greater than their deception and now lives in you. There's no need for anyone to keep teaching you. His anointing teaches you all that you need to know, for it will lead you into truth, not a counterfeit. So just as the anointing has taught you, remain in him.

I John 2:26,27 (TPT)

In the first verse of this chapter, John says he is writing to his dear children. He is not writing to the elite, to leaders. to those with a specific calling, or to those with titles. He is writing to believers. He warned there were people who were trying to deceive them and lead them astray. The anointing given to the saints by God is greater than the power of deception. If we truly want to be free from deception, there is a way.

John continues by saying they did not need men (or women) to teach them! What? Is that true? They can learn everything they need to know about God from the anointing, Holy Spirit? That anointing leads us into truth. Who is Truth?

Yes, our wonderful Jesus is Truth. That anointing will not lead us into a counterfeit.

No need for fear. This is John, the beloved apostle saying this, not me. The disciple who was extremely close to Jesus, the one Jesus on the cross called out to care for His beloved mother, says this. We have allowed men and women to lead us astray, to bring deception into our lives because we have trusted them more than we have trusted our ability to hear from God.

Another key factor in these verses we have already mentioned. Deception has the ability to enter into our lives if we do not obey God. Disobedience causes us to walk a different direction than our Lord is walking. Repentance will turn us around and put us on the right path again. Notice at the end of verse 27 it says, REMAIN IN HIM. Just as the Holy Spirit, the anointing has taught you, remain in Him, follow Him, OBEY Him and deception can have no part in you.

Enemy Tactic – The Bible Has Errors/The Bible Has No Errors

There are those who believe the Bible is completely without error and every word should be accepted as sacred. There are others who believe the Bible has errors and therefore should be rejected in its entirety. Some people feel so strongly about inerrancy that when they find out there are errors in translation or even perhaps in the copying of the text, they reject the whole Bible. They have been told it is either all God or none of it can be trusted as from God.

Many doctrinal statements of “churches” state the Bible is without error and is God breathed. People are taught they must accept this statement. When they discover an error or what they believe is an error, many forsake their faith. Critical thinking skills and revelation through the Holy Spirit are needed.

We have translations, and translations are not always perfect. They are man's interpretations into a different language of what we believe God said. The original Hebrew did not even have punctuation separating one sentence from another. Accurate punctuation can make a huge difference. Some Hebrew words no one truly knows their exact meaning. The translators determined how to use the words. Saints are not taught to study for themselves. They are taught to never question these things, so there is chaos in their souls.

There are many translations having portions of verses or entire verses that other translations do not have, depending on which transcribed document from history they used. These things give us pause, and lots of things to consider, but it should not deter us from reading the Bible. We read and trust God to reveal truth to us.

When discrepancies arise, we run to God for the answers. We have to know the entirety of God's word to understand. This book of books was preserved by God for a reason and therefore should not be tossed aside as not reliable, even if we find an error or discrepancy. We have the author at our disposal (God) to explain everything to us if we will only seek His face and His heart.

There are things we do not understand about the writing of the Bible. We need to be flexible and open to the Holy Spirit to interpret, to guide, to provide wisdom and understanding. We do the same with a prophetic word from God. Without the Holy Spirit those are just words on a page, or words out of a person's mouth. We need the Holy Spirit not only to interpret, but also bring life to us through those words.

Here is an example of an error from the book of Matthew. Yes, I said error! We have copies of the book of Matthew from ancient days written in three different languages; Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Most of the modern translations are taken from the Greek version.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him

**who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.”
Matthew 27:9 (NLT)**

The Greek version of this verse says the prophecy comes from Jeremiah but that is not right. Jeremiah chapter 32 does refer to buying a field, but the other details do not match.

The Aramaic version says it comes from the prophet, but doesn't name the prophet. The Hebrew version identifies it correctly as coming from Zechariah. The Greek version is in error.

Then I said to them, “If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.” So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.

Zechariah 11:12-13 (NLT)

Here is another passage that has caused confusion for Bible scholars. Verse 21, concerning fasting and prayer from this passage, is found in the Hebrew and the Aramaic and some Greek manuscripts, but is not included in most of the reliable Greek versions. Some of the modern translations omit this verse completely.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Matthew 17:19-21 (NKJV)

Did the scribes whose responsibility was to copy these documents, miss that phrase? Does this kind of spirit actually require prayer and fasting to cast out? Did Jesus actually say these words or not? Only God knows, but if we really want to know we can ask Him.

Everyone who is working for God and extending His Kingdom in the earth must have discernment operating in their lives. Everyone who wants to be approved by God and not ashamed must be able to rightly (correctly) divide truth. When there are questions concerning the Bible, we go straight to the author for answers. So whatever Jesus and Holy Spirit speak is truth. That word “divide” in the Greek means “to cut a straight line”. This verse below was mentioned earlier. Here it is in a different translation.

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (AMPC)

Whether God’s Word is spoken through the pages of the Bible, whether it is spoken by a prophet or anyone in your sphere of influence, whether it is written in a newspaper or another book, or appears on a billboard, that Word is alive and full of power. It has the ability to divide or separate that which is of the soul from that which is of the spirit.

We need to stop looking at the Bible as a law giver, as a rule maker, as an iron-fist for conduct, and start looking at it as a revelation of who Jesus is. It is one great method that our wonderful God chooses to communicate with us, His creation, but it is only one method. There are others.

Paradigm Shifts Needed

The Word of God is Jesus. He is the final authority in all things. The Bible is important, but it can only be understood through a fresh breath from Holy Spirit. He leads us into all truth. It is not that we love the Bible and have faith in the Bible, it is that we have a love for God and a desire for truth. We

know God spoke through the pages of the Bible in the past, and He still speaks to us through the pages today

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

John 16:13 (ESV)

He also speaks directly to our heart. He speaks through others, even when at times, they don't know it. God will get His message to us in a multitude of different ways. We just have to be ready to hear Him and know it is He who is speaking no matter what the vehicle is that He chooses to use.

Our weapon is the living Word of God which is far more than the Bible. It is Jesus. We use the living words of God whether they come through the Bible or some other means, to tear down and build up, to forbid and release, to bind and loose as we walk out our lives every day.

We must be able to discern what is of God and what is not, no matter what the vehicle is that brings God's Word. We then take what we have been given, understanding what is right in the eyes of God and bring God's justice to the earth.

Discernment is necessary. We must be able to see when the enemy is attempting to deceive us. We must not be fooled by his attempts to control and manipulate us. We have the anointing of the Holy Spirit in and on us to keep us from being deceived as long as we live in obedience to the Living Word of God.

We must renew our minds, reform our thinking to match what God says to empower us to discern the will of God for our lives. We must stop being overly influenced by those around us and think for ourselves.

Beloved friends, what should be our proper response to God's marvelous mercies? To surrender yourselves to God to be his sacred, living sacrifices. And live in holiness, experiencing all that delights his heart. For this becomes your genuine expression of worship. Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be

inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God's will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.

Romans 12:1,2 (TPT)

We must never again allow chains to keep us in bondage by turning over our privileges and responsibilities to men. We must walk in freedom and not let fear grip us. We must teach and train our children and our grandchildren. We must mature and become the Ekklesia where we know how to rule and reign in obedience to our Lord.

We will still have doctrinal differences as we are all at different places in our growth cycle. When we mature in God, we want to know Him deeply and follow only Him. We know the Bible teaches that what God says is not up to any one man's interpretation, so we seek God's face for what He says and don't let differences divide us when we are all seeking God's heart.

[Yet] first [you must] understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is [a matter] of any personal or private or special interpretation (loosening, solving). For no prophecy ever originated because some man willed it [to do so—it never came by human impulse], but men spoke from God who were borne along (moved and impelled) by the Holy Spirit.

II Peter 1:20-21 (AMPC)

Jesus told His disciples that He was truth. He then told them after He left the earth, the spirit of truth would come to them. Who is the spirit of truth? Holy Spirit is, not the Bible! Holy Spirit came and He is still here revealing truth.

We are moving into maturity. We are finally going to come to the place of being the mature One New Man operating in unity as one body with Jesus as the Head. To deny this or to say it is not possible, is to deny our Lord Himself. It will happen when our entire focus is on Jesus. He is our authority. He is our everything.

All things are possible in Jesus. To believe that today's "church" was and is His ultimate goal is just sad. When we

believe we need what we have today in order for there to be some semblance of order and to eliminate chaos, we are putting more faith in self than we are in God. What we have today is nothing like what He said He was going to establish.

His “gifts to men” were varied. Some he made his messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the Gospel; to some he gave the power to guide and teach his people. His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole body might be built up until the time comes when, in the unity of the common faith and common knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity—that measure of development which is meant by the “fullness of Christ”.
Ephesians 4:13 (Phillips)

Man has set all sorts of rules and walls around the way God speaks, but God is God and He cannot be put in a box. We must stop putting limits on God. We must trust God to guide our beliefs. If our focus is entirely on Him, then He will teach us the way and show us the error of our beliefs. We can trust Him. He will do this. When we finally see who and what the Ekklesia really is, nothing is going to stop us. The kingdoms of this world will not be able to resist the glory and beauty of our Lord and His bride.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 10

1 – Describe a time (or more) when you believe you heard clearly from the Lord. How did the enemy try to steal or kill that word so it would not be fulfilled? Did the enemy try to weaken the promise, so you would accept a compromise? How will you do things differently in the future when the Lord speaks to you? Is it now easier to recognizing the enemy's tactics?

2 – Describe how your past views of the Bible and its authority differ from what the author describes. How have your beliefs changed overtime on whether God still speaks to His children or not. What are your concerns about hearing the voice of God for yourself? Have a conversation with God concerning this, and tell Him you want to hear His voice more clearly.

3 – Have you been told that the Bible is the final authority and if anything contradicts it, it is not God? Have you ever thought that the problem might be with man's interpretation and translation? Do you believe that the words God speaks to you directly or indirectly through another person (if they are truly from God) carry as much weight as the words God spoke in the Bible? If not, why not? What scripture do you have to back up what you believe? Pray for an understanding of truth in this area.

4 – If you are a part of a “church” group, do they have a doctrinal statement that covers the beliefs of your group? If so, have you ever reviewed it thoroughly to see if you agree with the statements? What is the statement if any concerning the Bible?

5 – Describe your thoughts on why Bible translators would translate the Greek word as speak or speaking (present tense)

244 times and translate it one time as spoken (in the past)? How important is it that we not just accept what we read from the Bible, but study it and read it in different translations, as well as use other tools that are available?

6 – Describe your thoughts on why some verses might be missing from certain translations of the Bible, realizing that the example on prayer and fasting is only one of the times there is a difference in translations. Does it make you want to study the Bible more? It should. If it doesn't, evaluate why and pray about it.

7 – Describe your thoughts on the fact that one translation quotes a verse as being written by Jeremiah when it was instead written by Zechariah. How does this impact the way you look at the Bible or does it?

8 – What are your thoughts on the division of “churches” by doctrine? Document why you agree or disagree with the author. What questions come to mind as you read about the enemy’s tactics to divide and control? Pray for answers to all your questions.

9 – Describe any situations where you felt like leadership was trying to control you. How did you handle it? If it were to happen today, would you handle it any differently? If so, what would you do differently?

10 – Describe your ability to discern what God is saying and doing. Describe your level of concern for yourself that you could be deceived. Do you find yourself trusting others more than yourself to hear God and discern situations? If so, what are you doing to increase your discernment level and lessen your dependence on others for truth?

11 – The author has many times stated that we need to think for ourselves and to question whether what we believe was

taught to us by men or by God. How have your thoughts changed on this topic since you started reading this book? Does it seem like God is prompting you more and more to rethink some teachings? Write down any areas where God seems to be speaking concerning this.

12 – The author states that when the Bible tells us to judge, it means, in part, to discern. Do you agree with this statement? Do you believe that there are those called to be discerners who can judge words and actions, or do you believe that is available to all believers? Why do you believe the way you do?

13 – Do you believe you can accurately interpret the Bible? What hinders you? Describe a time when your beliefs did not line up with what was being taught? How did you react? Did you accept the other person's teaching or did you go to God to find truth?

14 – When you hear that you don't need teachers to teach you about God and His ways, what does your mind say? Does that mean you should stop listening to others teach? Why do you think John made a point of telling the early Christians this truth? What effect does that truth have on you now?

15 – John said that in order for the anointing to work against deception, we needed to remain in Jesus. What do you think he meant by that statement?

16 – Concerning Hebrews 4:12, the Word of God is stated to be like a sword. Why do you believe the author puts an emphasis on the Word of God being our best weapon and being more than the Bible?

17 – Describe what you believe will look different when a paradigm shift occurs and we realize that Jesus is the Word of God and He is the final authority. Do you believe there can be unity in God's people even when they do not agree on

doctrinal issues? Can you see this working without being divided into groups based on doctrine? Describe how a paradigm shift might accomplish this? How will your prayers change going forward concerning what Jesus is establishing?

CHAPTER 11

HORSE AND CARRIAGE – EKKLESIA/KINGDOM

As I awoke one morning God reminded me of John the Beloved who wrote the book of Revelation while on the island of Patmos. I heard God say the words “Come up here where I am, so I can show you things from my perspective”. That is basically what He told John. What was it that God wanted John to see?

As I began to read the book of Revelations, something I do not do very often, I was acutely aware that God was revealing something about His Ekklesia to John. God wanted John to see it like He saw it. I cried out, “Lord, what is it you want me to see?”

John is instructed to write letters to the seven Ekklesia in Asia. The word used is indeed Ekklesia. But I thought there was only one Ekklesia. Was I wrong? These verses jumped off the pages into my spirit.

From John to the seven churches in western Turkey: May the kindness of God’s grace and peace overflow to you from him who is, and who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who are in front of his throne, and from Jesus Christ the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from among the dead and the ruling King, who rules over the kings of the earth! Now to the one who constantly loves us and has loosed us from our sins by his own blood, and to the one who has appointed us as a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion throughout the eternity of eternities! Amen!

Revelation 1:4-6 (TPT)

While John mentions seven Ekklesia, he also mentions seven spirits of God. Once again, words are important to God. He does not waste them. Everything has relevance. There are not seven gods. There is only one God with different aspects of His nature. There is only one Ekklesia that Jesus is

establishing with different aspects. Each letter John was to pen indicated different aspects of the Ekklesia. Many believe these letters describe the Ekklesia down through the centuries of history, as well.

John declared Jesus as the King who rules over the kings of the earth, the one who existed in the past, present and future. Jesus is King and we are appointed as a kingdom of priests and kings to serve the King of kings. John said all this in the middle of talking about the Ekklesia. There must be a connection.

John is proclaiming to the Ekklesia that Jesus has always existed and is the Creator. He had a plan for mankind from the very beginning of creation and it has not changed. It will come to full fruition. The Ekklesia had been established for a purpose. That purpose could only be seen clearly once the King of kings had come to earth, died and rose again to make it possible.

The plan of God for man from the very beginning of time, as found in the first chapter of Genesis, was to subdue the earth, replenish it and have dominion. The mandate given to mankind, had been stolen by the enemy but was returned, restored to humans through Jesus.

God wanted John to see the Ekklesia, not as individual groups, but how the complete, the mature Ekklesia would look. He wanted John to see the true purpose for the Ekklesia. He wanted John to see what needed to take place in order for the Ekklesia to become the mature, holy bride she was meant to be, one Ekklesia in Christ, the Eternal One.

He gave John a picture of the process the Ekklesia would go through on her way to maturity. He wanted John to see the paradigm shifts needed to prepare us for our destiny as a kingdom of priests and kings ruling with the King of kings and Lord of lords. He wanted John to see the things that would hinder the maturity of the Ekklesia so they could be corrected. This mature Ekklesia would one day face the evil of the world and bring down the counterfeit Babylon. God wanted John to

see the Ekklesia as God, Himself, saw it. “Come up here with Me and see what I see”.

Horse and Carriage

Up until this point I had believed that I must understand the Ekklesia before I could understand the Kingdom. God was showing me that you can't have one without the other. I needed to understand both. We must deeply understand, if there is no Kingdom of God on earth, there is no need for the Ekklesia.

The words to an old song by Frank Sinatra came to mind, something about love and marriage going together like a horse and carriage and you couldn't have one without the other. Suddenly I understood the need for both. Although, this writing is about the Ekklesia we must have some basic understanding of the Kingdom of God in order to comprehend the purpose and design of the Ekklesia.

I, John, am your brother and your partner in suffering and in God's Kingdom and in the patient endurance to which Jesus calls us. I was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and for my testimony about Jesus. It was the Lord's Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. It said, "Write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

Revelation 1:9-11 (NLT)

In verse 11 John is instructed to write ONE book or scroll and send it to the seven Ekklesia. Why? Because the seven was a picture of the complete, mature Ekklesia. In verse 9, John says he is a part of the kingdom. He is speaking from the standpoint of one who not only understands the Kingdom of God, but is an active participator in it and has endured tribulation because of it.

Another point worth mentioning is found in verse 10. Many have interpreted “on the Lord's Day” as being Sunday,

since supposedly that was the day designated by the “church” for believers to meet. Many would be surprised to find that this verse is the only place where “the Lord’s Day” is mentioned in the Bible. The Day of the Lord is mentioned multiple times but it refers to something different. One should do an actual study to see how Sunday was chosen as the day of meeting. The Bible does not teach this or explicitly say the Ekklesia has a particular day to be together.

The Ekklesia is God’s army which may meet in small or large groups as a legislative body whenever there is something that needs legislated and established. But, the Ekklesia is busy in everyday life judging injustice as God directs and bringing justice where justice is needed. They are not just the Ekklesia when they are meeting.

Jesus, said it best, when He said that wherever there are two or three gathered together, He would be there with them. That is the Ekklesia. Whenever two or three Ekklesia saints get together to conduct Kingdom business no matter what area of life it concerns, Jesus is there with them determining what is right, and how justice should be applied. You are still a part of the Ekklesia when you leave the group to go home.

If I meet with a couple of other saints to lay hands on an individual for healing or casting out of a demon, we are the Ekklesia conducting Kingdom business. If I meet with a group of saints to discuss a strategy to replace our ungodly political leaders with godly leaders, we are the Ekklesia conducting Kingdom business. If I meet with a group of saints to worship and praise God for His goodness and to pray, we are the Ekklesia conducting Kingdom business. If I meet with a group of saints to discuss how we combat human trafficking in our community, we are the Ekklesia conducting Kingdom business. The Ekklesia still exists outside of the meetings. The groups are not necessarily the same.

One group is not higher than another. Leadership is not greater than the others. Just because a person may have been given the gift of apostle or prophet by Jesus, their gift is no more important or deemed a higher gift than the leaders of

the other groups. A current teaching in the “church” does recognize apostles and prophets in the “marketplace”, but they are mostly deemed a lower-class leader than those assigned to the “church”. Full-time ministry trumps everything.

This is religion. Each gift is different, but it doesn’t make the person more important than another. We must understand with clarity, the “church” is not the Ekklesia. We must learn this lesson in order to facilitate the paradigm shifts to come.

The Day of the Lord

The Bible mentions multiple times, both in the New and the Old Testament, the term “The Day of the Lord”. We will not do a full expose on that topic in this book, but the study is definitely needed in order to understand the Kingdom of God. Could it possibly be that John is saying that He was called up to heaven to see the future Ekklesia and the future Day of the Lord that so many of the Old Testament prophets also were allowed to catch a glimpse?

Throughout the book of Revelation, the number seven is used frequently. There are seven stars in the right hand of Jesus in chapter one of Revelation. The right hand represents authority, power and command. John is told that these seven stars are the angels assigned to the seven candlesticks. The candlesticks are said to be the seven Ekklesia to whom John is writing letters.

The Ekklesia in other places is pictured as a light which reflects the glory of God and draws all the nations to that light. Seven is the number of completeness, of maturity. We need to come to the place of maturity in order to see our full purpose as the Ekklesia of God. We need to come to maturity in order to enter the Kingdom and begin to advance it in the earth.

God, through this scroll John was told to write, was letting His Ekklesia know what was right with what they were doing and what was wrong. He basically told them unless they fixed what was wrong, they were in danger of losing their light.

They could become like Ichabod where the glory of the Lord would depart.

Maturity brings the glory to the house. It brings the light. The authority and power of Jesus was in each place because He held them in His hands. So why would Jesus just hold these seven places in His hand? Were there not more cities than that where there were gatherings of believers? Wouldn't He hold the whole Ekklesia in His hands? The seven stars are symbolic of the whole, the complete, the mature body of Christ.

Suddenly John saw Jesus by the spirit as fire walking among the lampstands. The light is so bright it is like the blinding sun. On the island of Patmos on this particular day, Jesus was giving John a glimpse of a day when the Ekklesia would come to maturity as one. The fire of God and the shakings to come would remove her impurities. There would be paradigm shifts in order for her to understand her purpose. The fire would come to burn up all that was wood, hay and stubble.

Through the Holy Spirit directed writing of John, God would show us what maturity looks like. He would show us the enormous upheaval in all the world systems that was needed in order for the Ekklesia to take her place of authority alongside her Lord, and to take possession of the kingdoms of the world that would now be the possession of the King of kings.

Without the Ekklesia there would be no Kingdom of God on earth, and without the Kingdom of God there would be no need for an Ekklesia. That is by God's design. They go together like a horse and a carriage.

God Had a Plan and Still Does

As I continued to read and talk with God, suddenly I was in the spirit looking down upon the earth. I saw the activities taking place in the nations of the world. I saw the problems, the struggles. They seemed to come up before me as bubbles, and it seemed overwhelming. As bubbles burst,

even more came up before me. I heard God ask me, “Do you think I created the Ekklesia to just solve the problem of the religious bubble, the problems with religion?” Before I could respond, He said, “I didn’t even create religion!”

God had shown John and was now showing me the purpose for the Ekklesia. The Ekklesia was created and established to solve all the problems on earth, not just those dealing with God and the Bible and “church” life. The Ekklesia couldn’t do this of course on their own, but through the seven spirits of God. Those spirits or attributes of the Holy Spirit are referenced in Isaiah 11:2–3.

The Ekklesia would judge what was right in the eyes of God, and apply justice to make any situation on earth right. They would loose and bind, permit and forbid according to the will of the King in all cultural areas of society, such as education, government, religion, financial, medical and others. This was the advancing of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Jesus did not come to earth to die, just so we could have our fun worship sessions and get high on emotions. He didn’t come to earth so we could build huge congregations or have bigger and better miracles. He didn’t come to earth to just get people saved so they could just await a trip to heaven.

I suddenly understood we had not even begun to scratch the surface of why we are on earth. I looked down at the earth and was appalled at how man had allowed such evil to take over and destroy the earth. I was saddened by the walled-in parties conducted in the name of Jesus while the earth and its inhabitation were being destroyed. Where was the Ekklesia?

I wept when I thought of how our loving God before time even began, held human beings in His heart. He created a place that He would give to them out of love. Everything on the earth would be created for the purpose of enhancing the life of this master creation that was in His heart, humans. The atmosphere was just right for humans to breathe. There was ultimate variety so they would never get bored. There was a

purpose for everything. The earth was theirs. All they needed to do was possess it and take dominion.

God proceeded with His plan and created human beings. But things didn't go as God originally planned. That, of course, was no surprise to God. He already knew what this creature that He created would do. God wanted humans to have freedom to choose. He didn't want puppets. They would always have free will.

Satan was there and began to twist God's word to entice the humans to doubt the goodness of God. He tricked them out of their authority on earth. Adam gave away his authority to Satan. Satan actually stole it from Adam through trickery and deception.

Contrary to what some of us have been taught, God didn't look down on that situation and say, "Oh, well. That didn't work. I guess humans can still just live on the earth and when they die, heaven is here waiting." "Churches", as most of them exist today, would make perfect sense if that would have been God's decision. But it wasn't.

Satan wanted man to think that God had failed and he, the enemy, had won. God had already created man to live on the earth, so he would continue to live on the earth until he died. Dying was never what God wanted for mankind. Humans were going to live forever. Everything changed because of sin and disobedience and Satan began to convince humans that God failed and therefore He had to come up with a different plan.

Satan convinced people that the earth had been given to Satan by the very humans God had created and there was nothing that could be done about it. God placated mankind by giving them the "church" so they could feel connected to God until they died. God would send Jesus to earth to shed His blood so humans would have a place to go when they died. Salvation and baptism became the only messages of the "church".

The great deceiver has brainwashed God's people from the time of the early Ekklesia even until now. That

brainwashing includes teaching on the end times. The end was going to be very dark and evil. There would be great fear, so Jesus would come and rescue the few people who would be watching for Him.

Therefore, saints could do nothing to make the world better. It was doomed so why even try. Many saints do not even vote because of their belief that God is going to do what He is going to do. Evil was meant to prevail. The only message of consequence is to get people saved so they too, can escape what is to come! When you really deeply know your God and who He really is, this doesn't make any sense at all.

God's plan from the beginning is still God's plan whether we realize it or not. God did not send Jesus so we could start a whole new religion of meeting on Sundays, hire personnel to facilitate those meetings, and concentrate on religious activity instead of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. God sent Jesus to earth, so His original plan for humans on earth could be restored! The Second Adam, Jesus, took back what had been stolen from the first Adam.

The Second Adam came to establish the Ekklesia on earth, so it could work with the King of kings sitting on the throne in heaven, to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. The enemy must be put under the feet of the King and all the kingdoms of the world will be added to the Kingdom of God. We will never do that using the vehicles called "churches". We must be free to become the mature Ekklesia.

Interesting that God revealed to His people several decades ago that human society is basically set upon seven cultural areas. These were referred to as mountains. The seven or complete and mature Ekklesia would work with the seven spirits of God to effect change in the seven cultural areas of society. That is what John was seeing from God's perspective. That is what God was allowing me to see from His perspective.

God wants us to see the Ekklesia and the Kingdom of God from His perspective, not from what we have been taught by man. He is calling us higher. He is calling us to leave some things behind. He cannot put new wine in old wineskins.

Massive paradigm shifts must happen in order for us to see clearly what God is doing in this hour.

The Chinese Lantern – Clearer Focus

God began to paint the picture of the Ekklesia for me with the vision of the Chinese lantern. We discussed the center of the lantern as well as the top and bottom of the lantern in chapter eight. Before we can truly understand our personal part in advancing the Kingdom of God, we must understand what the Ekklesia really is. That is why this book is dedicated to understanding the Ekklesia.

We are beginning to fully understand what the Ekklesia really is, and the reason she exists. We are beginning to see why the lantern must be turned upside down thus creating a shaking, a series of paradigm shifts. The establishment of the Ekklesia means the Kingdom of God can be advanced in the earth. Her weapon of choice is the Word of God, the Living Christ. Where He goes, she goes.

When the lantern is turned upside down, the center and what it represents remains the same. This signifies that the original purpose of the Ekklesia will not change with the shaking that is represented by turning the lantern upside down. These gifts given to the Ekklesia are important. Jesus' purpose for them has not changed and will not change. His purpose and desire is the same as it has always been.

The shaking, or turning of the lantern upside down, returns the foundation to what it is supposed to be, and takes away the control over the saints. Neither the saints nor the defined leadership of what we call the "church" today represent the Ekklesia. It is the center that is important. When pressure is put on the lantern, it expands in the center allowing more light to be seen. Jesus is the light in us. He must be seen in us by the world. The world must behold His glory through us.

In the passage from the Bible, the gifts are listed as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. In

“church” settings these have become known as five-fold ministry gifts. This term distracts from the gifts true purpose. It is a great misnomer since all believers are called to minister. We will simply call them the love gifts from Jesus to His Ekklesia. They are leaders, but not necessarily what we deem leadership today in the “church”. This will become abundantly apparent as we travel forward on our journey.

These gifts are given to the Ekklesia by Jesus. There is a difference between gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus, and gifts that are given to the Ekklesia by the Holy Spirit. Again, we are all called to minister, but some are leaders. For now, just recognize that leaders are not managers, supervisors, dictators, directors, bosses and other titles humans give to people to define control and rank.

These leadership gifts given by Jesus were all active in the early Ekklesia according to the Bible. Over time history shows once the early “church” had been established and matured there was a point where doctrine dictated these gifts were no longer needed. This doctrine dominated “church” life for centuries.

Restoration of All Things

God didn’t make these gifts disappear. The enemy watered down God’s words and plans and gave the “church” a counterfeit system. The devil came to kill, steal and destroy. Jesus came to destroy the works of the enemy and to restore to His people what has been lost. Jesus is truth and He wants the truth concerning these gifts to be recognized along with other truths that had been forgotten and lost. He wants all things the enemy had stolen to be restored to His people.

“My fellow Jews, I realize that neither you nor your leaders realize the grave mistake you made. But in spite of what you’ve done, God has fulfilled what he foretold through the prophets long ago about the sufferings of his Anointed One. And now you must repent and turn back to God so that your sins will be removed, and so that times of refreshing will stream from the Lord’s presence. And he will send

you Jesus, the Messiah, the appointed one. For he must remain in heaven until the restoration of all things has taken place, fulfilling everything that God said long ago through his holy prophets.

Acts 3:17-21 (TPT)

A blind man had just been healed while Peter and John were in the temple. The Jews had gathered to see what was happening when Peter began to speak to them. He explained that Jesus was the Messiah sent to earth, and then returned to heaven.

Even though the Messiah had returned to heaven, there were promises from God for “times of refreshing” to come from the Lord’s presence, if His people would only repent. The word for “times” is the Greek word “kairos”. It means an appointed time planned by God in His timing and His way. People often call it “a kairos moment” when referring to a spur of the moment event that happens as a God moment in our life.

In the next breath, Peter begins to talk about the restoration of all things. These kairos moments of refreshing can come into our individual lives as we serve God, repent of where we miss His direction, and turn to follow Him in everything concerning life. But I also believe they refer prophetically to times that would come to earth to refresh the whole earth and restore Godly truths that would be lost over the years. One of those truths being the baptism of the Holy Spirit and another being these leadership gifts given to the Ekklesia to help mature the body of Christ.

Peter told the crowd that Jesus will remain in the heavens until something important happened. What will happen before Jesus returns? The restoration of all things. What was Peter talking about? What needed to be restored? What are all things?

for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Luke 19:10 (NKJV)

Some of us memorized this verse in Sunday School when we were young without a full revelation of what it meant. Jesus was having a conversation with Zacchaeus, the tax collector. Zacchaeus told Jesus that he would restore fourfold anything he had wrongfully taken. Jesus goes on to explain that Zacchaeus was beginning to understand the full benefits of salvation.

We have always taken this verse to mean that Jesus came to save THOSE who were lost, meaning people. Some translations even word it that way. But He says THAT which was lost in the King James version.. Jesus is not identifying exactly what was lost, but whatever was lost was going to be saved or restored.

Why did Jesus choose Zacchaeus to have a conversation with on this day? Zacchaeus as a sinner and a tax collector had stolen from people and he was promising to restore what had been stolen. Jesus was using him as an example. There was someone else who had stolen from mankind and he also was going to forfeit what he had stolen. What satan had stolen was going to be returned. What was lost was going to be restored.

Jesus was telling Zacchaeus that salvation covers so much more than just the saving of our souls. Jesus said He came to earth to restore all that was lost to mankind through the acts of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. They had given up and lost their authority in the earth. Jesus was the second Adam and He came to restore all that was lost, everything!

In the earlier passage in Acts, the word Peter used for restoration is only used this one time in scripture. However, it is found in several writings of historians from that time period and is defined as meaning a return to a true theocracy where God is the supreme ruler. It also seemed to refer to a return to the perfect condition the earth was in before the fall of Adam. Is that what it means when it says all things restored? Could that possibly happen before Jesus comes back to earth? Definitely something to give us pause.

When God called John up higher, he got to see the establishing of the Ekklesia and the restoration of all things from heaven's perspective. Over time a lot of things would change and need to be restored in order to understand the original intent of God for creating humans. The gifts operated in the early Ekklesia, but man took them away through their religious theology over time. Those gifts would need to be restored along with the truth of the purpose of the Ekklesia and the Kingdom of God.

Peter spoke a powerful message in his day showing he had a revelation and understanding of when Jesus would return to earth. He will return after ALL things have been restored. We have work to do. A lot more than just these gifts must be restored.

History

Many Bible truths believed by the early Ekklesia were lost down through the ages. Many have been restored but there is more to come. As the early Ekklesia was formed, all the gifts mentioned in Ephesians chapter four, were in operation. By the second or third century these gifts were basically gone.

The world went through a period of time known as the Dark Ages where the Bible was only in the hands of a few leaders. On the other side of the Dark Ages was a time called the Renaissance where there was a great awakening in all of the cultural areas of society, including the Ekklesia.

It was during this time that the printing press was invented and used to publish the Bible so it was readily available to people and not just "church" leadership. The love gifts (true leadership) that Jesus gave to the Ekklesia listed in Ephesians chapter four as well as in the first book of Corinthians, chapter 12, began to be restored and are still not fully understood. Both of these Bible references were written by Paul who himself was an apostle and teacher according to his writings.

All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church:
first are apostles,
second are prophets,
third are teachers,
then those who do miracles,
those who have the gift of healing,
those who can help others,
those who have the gift of leadership,
those who speak in unknown languages.

I Corinthians 12:27,28 (NLT)

Paul uses the term "first" when referring to apostles, "second" in referring to prophets, and "third" when referring to teachers. These gifts were restored in the reverse order that they were lost. It is hard to pinpoint when pastor and evangelist gifts were restored, but we do know at least the pastor gift came as a part of the Renaissance.

Evangelists were active in the early history of our country. Teachers were recognized when "churches" started having Sunday School and Bible Studies. The recognition of the prophet gift happened pretty much in the 1980s followed by the recognition of the apostle gift in the 1990s.

The fact that these gifts are noted as first, second, third does not signify an order of importance, but rather in function as to how they work together. We have already talked about the role of prophet and apostle in the foundation of the Ekklesia and will not expound on any further at this time.

Most of the time, when truth is restored, it is like a giant pendulum that swings from one extreme to another and then finally slows down to reveal the real truth. When it comes to prophets and apostles, we have had a lot of pendulum swings and it is now time we come back to the simplicity of the gospel. We understand that these gifts have importance in God's plan for earth, and as the paradigm shifts occur, we will better understand their function.

We must return to God's plan for earth. We must shed our religious indoctrination that keeps us from understanding God's desire for us and this great planet. We must go higher

and see from heaven's perspective, not man's intellect. It is a journey taken step by step, little by little.

But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. I John 3:8 (NLT)

Jesus gave us the tools, the power and authority, to also destroy the works of the devil. Evil is found in the places we work, shop, and play. It is found in our government, in our banks, in our schools, in our businesses and even in our "churches".

The Ekklesia was established to go to all these places and destroy the works of the enemy. Do the works of the enemy only hinder a person from being saved or make a person sick? Or do the works of the enemy include greed and selfishness in our leaders who are a part of every cultural area from our banks, our government, our health industry, insurance, you name it?

What about human trafficking, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, election fraud and fraud in other areas? What about theft, exorbitant interest rates and taxes? What about drugs and alcohol abuse? What about murder? Are not all these works of the devil and should they not be destroyed? If not by us, then by whom?

The Ekklesia was established by Jesus to help facilitate the restoration of all things. We cannot restore righteousness and justice without destroying the works of the devil. By the restoration of the mandate given to mankind in the Garden of Eden, the Ekklesia could participate with their Lord in destroying the works of the enemy and advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. It is done every place the Ekklesia walks, every single day of the week, and every hour of the day, not just when the "church" doors are open.

There is a day coming when all the kingdoms of the earth will become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, where He will reign forever and ever! But it will not happen

until the Ekklesia is complete and mature. It will not happen until the Ekklesia is in place as the one new man where she operates as the body of Christ with the Lord as the head. Amen!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 11

1 – Explain how the seven Ekklesia relate to the seven spirits of God and the seven stars in the hands of Jesus. Document any questions concerning this.

2 – Often times we take one statement out of the Bible and use it to build a doctrine. Can you see why the author states that everything has relevance? If God is talking about the Ekklesia, why do you think He throws in the fact of Jesus living in eternity? Does the explanation the author gives make sense to you? Explain why or why not.

3 – What are your thoughts on Ekklesia as saints meeting to conduct Kingdom business? What is your definition of Kingdom business? Does it agree with the what the author says? Provide reasons for believing the way you do.

4 – What have you been taught that John meant when he said “the Lord’s Day”? Do you see how it might not mean what you have been taught? Did you do any further research on why the “church” meets on Sunday and where in the Bible they got the reason for that doctrine? What did you find?

5 – Have you ever thought of the possibility that John was seeing into the future “Day of the Lord” that many Old Testament prophets had seen? What are your thoughts now concerning this and what questions do you have?

6 – Have you been taught anything about the mandate given to mankind in the Garden of Eden and the fact that mandate never went away? What are your current beliefs concerning this and what questions do you have? Document them.

7 – Describe what you think the author means when she likens the Ekklesia and the Kingdom of God to a horse and carriage.

Does it make sense to you why you can't really have one without the other? Document why you agree or disagree with this.

8 – Have you ever thought about your reason for being on earth in light of God's original mandate in the Garden of Eden? How does this differ from a mindset of just being here to get people saved or healed? Do you believe God intends for the mandate given to Adam and Eve to still be in place? Will this change the way you live life in anyway? If so, document and state your reasons.

9 – What are your thoughts on the passage from the Bible that says Jesus will remain in heaven until the restoration of all things? Have you thought about that before? What things need to be restored? Document if you agree with the author or not and the reasons why concerning what needs to be restored before Jesus comes back to earth.

10 – What have you in the past thought were the works of the devil that Jesus came to destroy? Have you thought before about what your role is, if any, in destroying the works of the devil? What are your thoughts on your role after reading this chapter? How has the "church" in the past relegated the role of the "church" to just spiritual matters and not all works of the devil? What, in your opinion, needs to change?

CHAPTER 12

JESUS GIVES US LEADERSHIP GIFTS

Jesus gave, and continues to give, gifts of leadership to the Ekklesia. Anything Jesus gives to His people is given from a heart of love. Much of what we see today is counterfeit. We need to do a deep-dive into what leadership is to understand the level of love our Lord has for us and the amount of hate the enemy has.

There is a difference between what the world calls leadership and what Jesus says is true leadership. We must know the difference. The enemy has setup a counterfeit structure for leadership in the world. We grow up in the world, so our perspective tends towards how the enemy wants us to see the world. We need to have spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear what the Spirit of the Living God is speaking to us today,

Gallop did a study in 2023 concerning leadership. They published the study indicating that approximately 10% of the population seem to possess a natural ability for leadership, while an additional 20% could be trained to be effective leadership. This is according to the world's standard. In the Ekklesia it probably holds pretty true that only about 10% of the Ekklesia has been designated by Jesus as a gift to the Ekklesia in the form of apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher or evangelist.

In the Ekklesia you cannot learn these skills. It is not that Jesus created a gift of leadership and then placed it in our hands to use, it is rather that we have been created as the gift itself. The gift can never be taken from you, because it is your very essence. It is who you are. You were born as the gift. That is one reason God says the gifts are without repentance. In other words, God does not change His mind. How sad if we never realize our potential in Him because we choose not to walk in what was built in us from birth.

If you were born as a leadership gift, then you are the gift. The gift cannot be received by the laying on of hands. Yes, there is training for leaders, but it is always at the direction of God, not man. Man will teach, but it is God who determines what is needed in each individual life. Leadership gifts are given to the Ekklesia by Jesus.

The enemy tried to make these gifts disappear by deceiving us concerning our birthright and potential. He has been somewhat successful in replacing those truly called with counterfeits. However, the true gifts are absolutely crucial to the establishment of the Ekklesia, therefore a proper understanding of them must be restored. We must put on spiritual glasses and rise above all the hoopla of today to see these leadership gifts as God sees them.

The “church” has been trying to define these gifts for decades now. They have tried to make them all fit into some type of mold so they are easily recognized. They have created rules around them, not only so we might recognize them, but also to control them.

The vision of the Chinese lantern shows these gifts as a band around the center of the lantern. When the Chinese lantern is turned upside down, these gifts still remain in the center. They are still very much needed in the new paradigms we are expecting. The center of anything represents the heart of a matter. These gifts still hold the same place in the heart of God as they always have, but our understanding of these gifts is about to change drastically.

Purpose for the Gifts of Leadership

Let's return to Ephesians chapter four where these gifts to the Ekklesia are defined.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge

of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:11-16 (NKJV)

These gifts are for two main purposes:

- 1) to equip the saints for ministry
- 2) to edify (build up, cause to grow) the body of Christ
 - a. for unity
 - b. for maturity
 - c. knowledge of Christ
 - d. complete man to the measure of the fullness of Christ

These gifts have a profound effect on the Ekklesia:

- 1) Unity of faith
- 2) Unity of the knowledge of Jesus
- 3) Reflect the fullness of Christ
- 4) No longer children following false doctrine
- 5) No longer tricked by men's devices to lead us astray
- 6) Speak truth in love
- 7) Grow up in all things being able to reflect Jesus as the Head
- 8) Every person knowing who they are in Jesus and fulfilling what Jesus has given them to do and being what God has called them to be
- 9) Edify others in love

The mature Ekklesia cannot exist apart from these leadership gifts. No amount of shaking and turning the lantern upside down, changes that fact. Therefore, it is essential that we understand these gifts.

Ministry and Ministering

There is a need to understand what it means to minister and have a ministry, if these leadership gifts are going to be successful at equipping and edifying the saints. In these verses in Ephesians chapter four, It is the saints who minister. The work of leadership is to equip the saints to minister.

We have mostly been taught leadership gifts are the ministers. Only they can rightfully establish what is called a “ministry” which defines what and how the leaders minister. Ministries are a glorified creation by man. Ministers are given titles, and set apart as special. We are taught not everyone can be a minister, only those called by God to a full-time ministry.

In truth all believers are called to minister. Do you see it? The leadership gifts equip or prepare the saints for the “work” or the “doing” of ministry. We glorify and make special the word minister or ministry, but the word translated “ministry” really means to serve.

The devil has created a counterfeit definition of “ministry” and made it a special calling and anointing. Those who have accepted the counterfeit have put titles on it, and made it an occupation for only the well-learned Bible scholars, the special people.

In fact, the leadership gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus, are set apart to serve the saints, so they can in turn serve the people God puts in their pathway every day for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. There is no real mystery to ministry. There is nothing special about it to be reserved for a few elite men and women. True leadership serves the Ekklesia, and teaches them how to serve the people of the world so they desire to come into the Kingdom of God. They teach them how to teach others and disciple others.

Equipping and Edifying

The word translated as “equipping” in this passage from Ephesians was originally translated in the King James version as “perfecting”. It is the only place in the New Testament where this Greek word is used. It means that these gifts from Jesus to His Ekklesia, these people called for this purpose, (apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist) are to provide for the Ekklesia everything they need to carry out their purpose on earth.

The purpose of leadership is to prepare the Ekklesia for every situation or task they will face as they take on the world systems and advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. It is not to groom the saints to fulfill some role or need in the ministry of the apostle or pastor. You mean, if I am a prophet, or apostle or teacher, or pastor or evangelist, I am there for the people, they are not there for me? That is correct and it is a huge paradigm shift in thinking!

Many “church” leaders will equip people as long as they are willing to stay in the leader’s “church” or ministry and perform what they need. How many times have you heard the more you serve leadership, the better your chance for promotion? The goal of leadership should be equipping saints to serve God in whatever capacity God calls them to and wherever He calls them, not the other way around. Until we come to a complete understanding and paradigm shift of what the true Ekklesia is, this is not going to change.

Saints cannot be fully equipped from an hour or two of preaching on Sunday morning. They cannot possibly get everything they need from a crowd type setting and lecture. It is like a teacher in the school system teaching first graders with fifth graders in the room. There has got to be a better method than this. Saints should be able to recognize true leadership given to them by Jesus. They exist in every sphere of influence, not just in what we call “church”.

These leadership gifts are found in our places of work, entertainment, education, government etc. Again, it does not

matter where you meet or when you meet or whether it is one or two, or twelve or whatever. What matter is as a saint you can talk over the situations you face in real life, in your home, at work, in politics, in school and get help in understanding the will of God for that situation from the leadership gifts of Jesus around you.

Training sessions can be helpful, meetings can be beneficial. These things are not wrong in themselves. But, until we truly understand the Ekklesia and its purpose, until we truly understand the love Jesus has for it, and what He is building, we will never understand the multitude of methods that can be used to edify and equip the saints.

Review the list at the beginning of this chapter concerning the training leadership does for equipping and edifying the saints. Not many leaders can cover all of these by themselves. There are going to be many leaders who impact a saint on their way to maturity. We have handicapped the saints from maturing because we have kept them behind four walls. Every saint needs the leadership input from all of God's leadership gifts.

Things have to change. I cannot tell you how that looks, only that it is going to be different. We need to be open to change and to hearing the voice of God direct us in everything we do. That starts with the leadership gifts from Jesus actually having a heart for the saints like Jesus does.

Precious Jewels

Jesus is establishing His Ekklesia. He is polishing the stones and perfecting them so they fit perfectly in the walls of the building He is building. Leadership should not be developing stones to fit into the walls of what they are doing. These are God's precious stones, not ours, and we should be doing what God wants us to do to help prepare them for the work that God is calling them to do. The Kingdom of God will be advanced on the earth through edified saints who have been equipped properly for the tasks.

This passage in Ephesians goes on to talk about the one new man. The one new man, as mentioned before in this book, is when the body of Christ is joined with the Head, and moves at His command. You cannot have an arm that does its own thing, and ignores the command coming from the brain. The one new man operates together obeying Jesus, the Head (brain, command center) in everything!

I believe God put these gifts in the center of my vision of the Chinese lantern because they are the heart of God. That is where it all begins, and turning everything upside down does not change His love for His bride! It does not change the need for these gifts, and it does not change their purpose.

One Sunday evening I was attending a “church” service and we were singing a song about Jesus in relationship to treasure. Over my life time I have asked God so many questions, that I was quite surprised by Him when He turned the tables and asked me a question that night.

“Do you want to know where My treasure is?” He asked. “YES! Lord. I want to know” was my overwhelming response. He said, “It is hidden deep inside my people”. There was a hesitation for a moment. Then He said, “And I am calling you to go and dig it out!”. Needless to say, I was in tears. But I have come to understand this is the true mission of these leadership gifts that Jesus gave to His Ekklesia. We are called to see what Jesus sees hidden deep inside His people and bring those jewels out in perfection for others to see and benefit from them.

We need to truly understand and recognize these gifts that Jesus has given to His Ekklesia, because of His great love for His people. It is these love gifts, these true, authentic leadership gifts, that have a heart for the people and they see the treasure Jesus has placed in each one of them. The saints are precious to Jesus, so therefore they should be precious to leadership to whom Jesus has given the command to edify and equip until we come into unity and maturity and a full knowledge of our Lord.

The Bride

Jesus gave the leadership gifts to the Ekklesia, for a very definitive reason. Jesus has a tremendous love for His bride-to-be.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV)

The Ekklesia is the bride-to-be, without spot or wrinkle and mature. When Paul talks about equipping the saints for ministry and edifying the body for unity and maturity, he is referring to the bride. This is the responsibility of the leadership gifts given by Jesus to the Ekklesia. These are His love gifts to His bride-in-waiting. He loves her so much He wants her to be prepared to rule on the throne with Him.

Jesus so loved His bride-to-be that He gave to her gifts to help prepare her for becoming the bride of the King of the universe. That is the real purpose of these love gifts, to prepare the bride. These gifts are to attend her, provide her with what she needs, treasure her, treat her with respect and dignity.

The main difference between the people who have been called by God to function as apostle, prophet, pastor, evangelist and teacher and the saints is these leadership gifts are called to minister to the saints and the saints are called to minister to the world and to advance the Kingdom of God so the bride can eventually present her dowry, the nations of the world, to her future husband. They walk together in love and mutual respect.

The saints of the Kingdom are an apostolic, prophetic, evangelic people who can teach and shepherd or support each other. They learned from their leaders, whose greatest desire is to see the bride become what her Lord wants her to become.

Laying on of Hands

I Corinthians chapter 12 gives us a detail look at how the body coming together as one works. It discusses the gifts that are given to the body by the Holy Spirit. These are given to the saints in order to help them mature and find their place in the house that the Lord is building.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. I Corinthians 12:4-11 (NLT)

Although these gifts of the Spirit are a worthy topic to study, we will not address them very much in this book. These gifts given to the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit can be given through the laying on of hands, there is no indication in scripture that the leadership gifts from Jesus of apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher and evangelist are ever given through the laying on of hands.

It is my strong conviction that leaders do not have a gift; they are the gift. Everything in their lives is geared around preparing the bride where ever she is found. These leaders are born with this stamp of authenticity from God, even though they may be halfway through life before they fully understand it. I was in my mid-thirties before I even understood a little bit of who I was in Christ. Once God began to reveal to me, who

I was, I could look back on my life and see His hand of preparation upon me even as a young child.

The LORD gave me this message: “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.” Jeremiah 1:4-5 (NLT)

God told Jeremiah that He knew what He had placed inside of Jeremiah when in his mother’s womb. It was then that Jeremiah was a prophet even from birth. These gifts given by Jesus to His bride-to-be are designated as such even before they were born. This does not make them special, just different. By God’s design they have a different job to do, a different function.

Leadership is not for everyone. Because they are the gift, these gifts cannot be passed on to others. Jesus Himself determines who He calls and equips for these gifts and it is built into their DNA from before birth. It cannot be taken away. It does not mean that these people are more special than anyone else. How do you know whether you are called to a particular gift? If God has called you, He will personally tell you and He will use His own means to confirm it to you so you know for sure that you have heard God.

God has put His stamp of approval on you. You do not need the approval of others. We will talk more about that as we go along. But what about mantles? Mantles are never mentioned in the New Testament. That doesn’t mean there aren’t mantles.

When something is not clearly defined in the Bible, we must discern if what we have been taught is from God or from man. Jesus is and always has been the Word of God. We get our knowledge and wisdom from Him. Seek Him. A lot of leaders today are claiming to walk in a mantle of someone. Just be careful what you believe and who you follow.

What about Paul saying that Timothy received his gift by laying on of hands? Some believe that gift was his calling as pastor. Others believe it was because he was to teach. We are

all called to teach and prophecy. That alone does not make us a leader or one called specifically to prepare the bride.

These leadership gifts given by Jesus are not a thing of glory to be desired as it is perceived to be today. It is a serious matter. If you are born as one of these love gifts, you have been called to lay down your life for the sheep, for the saints. Nothing else matters but the equipping and edifying of the saints, their preparation and beauty as the bride to be presented to her Lord. This is a very serious responsibility and a privilege. Jesus does not take lightly those He has called specifically for this critical task. He will no longer tolerate the abuse of His bride-to-be.

You may be an engineer, an IT professional, a nurse or doctor, a dentist, a factory worker or any one of hundreds of other job titles, it doesn't matter. You can be a leadership gift and still function in the vocation of your choice. You serve others with the gifts you are or have in the place God has planted you.

All Gifts Are Unique in Nature

In the passage from I Corinthians chapter 12, there are some interesting facts that apply to both the leadership gifts given by Jesus and the gifts given by the Holy Spirit.

- Different kinds of gifts but all given by the same God
- Different kinds of service but we all serve the same God
- God works in different ways in each of us, but it is still God doing the work

This solidifies the fact that God is a unique God who created us all as unique individuals. There are many books written about the gifts that may be helpful. Many paint a picture of what a gift should look like and act like. They put

them in a box. We need to take great care that we do not throw away a gift given to us by the Holy Spirit or by Jesus, just because it does not fit into some mold someone else has designed.

God is a God of infinite variety and He created us to look different, act different, be different. Embrace your uniqueness. God gives the gifts. He will define them for you. He will also help you recognize the gifts in others. He will do this by the promptings of the Holy Spirit within you and not by the use of some checklist printed in some book or on some website.

Given to the Ekklesia

The people who follow after God with a whole heart, who are legislating Kingdom business in the earth are the Ekklesia and they are doing this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are doing it in their jobs, in their homes, in their businesses, in their downtime, when they are out enjoying themselves, wherever they are, wherever they go.

Yes, that means apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists. I can be a prophet and use the gifting that is in me when I am talking to my boss. You can be a teacher sitting at a lunchroom table over lunch. We must stop thinking of these gifts as people with titles that stand behind a pulpit and have their own government approved ministry.

We also have to stop thinking of leadership as the only ones with these abilities. We don't have to go to a prophet to get a prophecy, or a teacher to learn. One of the primary functions of these gifts is to encourage the saints to be like Jesus. Saints should be teaching and prophesying and doing the works of the ministry every day everywhere.

Apostles show us how to be an apostolic people and be effective in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. They show us how to judge situations we face for ourselves and apply the right, godly solution to those situations. Prophets show us how to be a prophetic people and hear the voice of

God. Pastors show us how to be a caring, loving people and minister to the needs of people. Evangelists show us how to reach people with the gospel, the good news of Jesus. Teachers show us how to dissect the Bible and the prophetic now Word of God so we can teach others what the Holy Spirit teaches us. And so much more!

This book is not meant to be an expose on these leadership gifts and all they are meant to be. There has been a lot of teaching on them over the last several decades, but God is about to reveal things about them that we have not known before. Nothing God does should ever be put in a box, and we have put these gifts from Jesus in a box. The gifts of God will no longer be put in a box.

We do not recognize gifts by the gift itself or because someone declares themselves to be one. We recognize gifts through revelation brought by the Spirit of the Living God. When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she went to visit her Aunt Elizabeth. When Mary came into the presence of Elizabeth, the baby (John the Baptist) jumped in Elizabeth's womb because he was in the presence of Jesus and he knew it.

The Spirit of the Lord in us will recognize the Spirit of the Lord in others, then we can accept the gift as authentic. These leadership gifts from Jesus to the Ekklesia do not need a pulpit. They do not need a public "ministry". We recognize God's precious gifts because we see our Lord Himself in them.

Expectations

Most people today, when they understand they are called by God to a leadership gift, look for a pulpit somewhere, a ministry. They believe they cannot be fulfilled unless they have opportunity to preach and/or prophecy in some full-time capacity. They already see themselves as leaders and become frustrated when the window of opportunity doesn't seem to open for them.

The first thought is often to find a Bible School. Get prepared. Get licensed or ordained. Look for a "church" where

they might recognize your calling and make a place for you. Perhaps start your own ministry. God never allowed me to go to Bible School or seminary. He didn't allow me to start my own ministry, although I tried several times.

At the time I did not understand and I wasn't happy with God even though I obeyed. I was frustrated and questioned my calling especially because I was a woman and I had been taught women were limited in their options for ministry. There was a lot I needed to learn (and unlearn).

There are a lot of frustrated saints just like I was, trying to understanding the gift in them and how to put that gift to use. When they receive revelation from their Father, they will understand the path on which God led them even if it wasn't what they originally believed for and wanted. When they truly understand, it is going to bring them great joy!

When prophets returned in the 1980s, many were rejected from the pulpit unless strictly controlled. Prophets were too wild and unpredictable. Pastors felt it would be insanity to turn their pulpit over to a prophet without setting some rules. Afterall, they ran the risk of losing their entire congregation and that would be the end of their ministry.

When we get a clear revelation of what the Ekklesia truly is, we will no longer think along these lines. These gifts do not require a placement in a position of leadership or a pulpit in order to operate to their fullest. They were born as a leader and they are leaders wherever they go.

Many counterfeit leaders find a platform on the internet to gather followers. Along with the genuine always comes the counterfeit. Satan tries to counterfeit everything real that the Lord has to offer. A lot of what we see today is counterfeit. We often judge what is real by the number of followers.

This book is not written to show you the difference between the real and the counterfeit, but to encourage you to seek the Father's heart. Discernment is necessary for the coming paradigm shifts. We must be able to distinguish between the real and the counterfeit and that is part of the

responsibility of these leadership gifts from Jesus, to prepare us to hear God's voice so we can discern for ourselves what is of God and what is not.

It is also currently expected by religion that these gifts operate within the boundaries of a ministry or a "church" where rules can be used to keep the gifts under control. There has been some exception to the rule with the fairly new teaching on what religion calls "marketplace" apostles and prophets. This is all going to change with the paradigm shifts that are coming.

Marketplace gifts are discussed as a part of the modern day, seven-mountain teaching concerning cultural regions of society. More on that later. "Churches" tend to think of marketplace gifts as second-rate gifts. They are made for the marketplace and those with regular jobs. Those in "church" ministry believe they have a higher calling because they have full-time ministry. Contrary to popular belief, there is nothing special about a pulpit or a ministry title.

Ministry, or serving, is not a vocation, but it is full-time. It is who we are. There is no such thing as a marketplace apostle or prophet. You are either an apostle or you are not. You are either a prophet or you are not. It is not a gift that you operate in, but rather it is who you are. You are an apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher or evangelist 24/7 no matter where you are. You are not defined by whether you have a pulpit or not.

Beloved, we have to change our perspective. We have to see with the eyes of God. We have to hear with His ears. We have to have His mind. What is important to the world, and yes, unfortunately also important to Christians today, is seldom what is important to God.

Titles mean nothing in the scheme of things in the Kingdom of God. No other name than Jesus means anything much in the Kingdom of God. It is all going to crash and burn. It is all a part of Babylon and destruction is waiting in the wings. All that is wood, hay and stubble is going to burn.

I don't care if people have engraved the name of Jesus on it. He is going to destroy what claims to be His when it isn't. Some with huge ministries are going to see the truth and it will require them to lay everything they have built down and walk away. Will they obey? Will they follow the heart of God? I pray that many will.

Foundational

So, you are not foreigners or guests, but rather you are the children of the city of the holy ones, with all the rights as family members of the household of God. You are rising like the perfectly fitted stones of the temple; and your lives have been built up together upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, and best of all, you are connected to the Head Cornerstone of the building, the Anointed One, Jesus Christ himself! This entire building is under construction and is continually growing under his supervision until it rises up completed as the holy temple of the Lord himself. This means that God is transforming each one of you into the Holy of Holies, his dwelling place, through the power of the Holy Spirit living in you!

Ephesians 2:19-22 (TPT)

Paul explains this building of the city on a hill, the Ekklesia. It is being built under the watchful eye of the Lord, Himself. Jesus is the Head, the Cornerstone. What is a cornerstone? It is the first stone put in place when laying a foundation. All other stones are put in place in relationship to the cornerstone.

This translation says that the foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets. In the Greek it seems to indicate they don't lay it; they are the foundation just as Jesus is the cornerstone. The foundation is a base on which the house sits. It isn't the part that is seen but it is so important because without it, the house would sink and fall apart. The foundation must take into consideration the conditions around it, as well as the size, shape, and weight of the house that is being built. It must be strong enough to support all that sits on it.

The house that the Lord is building has stones that must be aligned with the cornerstone who is Jesus. It also has

a foundation that must support what the Lord is building. The Lord Himself is the true foundation, but it is the apostolic and prophetic gifts who see the Lord for who He is and what He is currently doing.

The apostles and prophets are the ones who help ensure that the foundation is built to the Lord's standard. They hear and see and develop blueprints and plans for the toppling of the cultural mountains and the advancement of the Kingdom of God in the earth. They see blueprints and plans for our local communities, states or provinces, and countries. They see blueprints for businesses, schools, companies and much more. They see how these plans fit into the overall plan of God for the Kingdom of God on earth.

It is taught that prophetic and apostolic ministries are the government of the modern "church" because they are mentioned as the foundation. They are not here to govern, but rather to guide God's people to understand the true government of God, the King and His Kingdom in all aspects of life on earth.

The counterfeit house built over the years has a foundation mostly based on the "church" and the pastor gift. The counterfeit kingdom is the kingdom established by the enemy. A paradigm shift must happen in order for the house of the Lord to be built correctly. Today, in our own ministry houses that we build ourselves, called "churches", a foundation is mostly laid by pastors and the house is not strong. It is not balanced and it cannot stand for long. It is built on sinking sand. It will tumble.

The true house of God cannot be built on the concept of encapsulating the people behind four walls to keep them safe and care for them. Even the evangelist and teaching gift tend to think they must bring people into the house behind four walls. according to the religious doctrine we have been taught, these new saints must attend "church" in order to prevent error in doctrine.

Jesus' intent was for mature believers to disciple and train new saints themselves. The problem is the current model

of “church” is full of immature saints, which cannot produce mature saints. In the paradigm shifts to come, maturity will be the goal and the key to release God’s people into freedom. The mature saints will disciple others wherever and whenever God leads.

The true house of God must be built with the stones of mature, unified saints in order for them to take their proper place in advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth. This house is not man-made and seen with the physical eyes, but is God established and seen only with the spiritual eyes. The apostle and prophet foundation is built on righteousness and justice and the advancement of the Kingdom of God. It is built on a NOW word from God, as Jesus directs. It is built on Jesus, the true foundation.

In the I Corinthians chapter 12 passage discussed earlier, it mentions **“first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers”**. Many preach that there is no hierarchy in the Kingdom of God, but they use this verse to illustrate hierarchy just using different terminology so it doesn’t sound like hierarchy. These gifts, for the most part, are classified as positions in “church” leadership today. They are held in high esteem and mostly are not to be questioned. They are at the top of the religious pyramid in 1-2-3 order with what is thought to be governmental authority.

In God’s design, the reason for the leadership gifts really has nothing to do with government or leadership structure. It has to do with the overall structure that Jesus is establishing. It is based on serving rather than managing. He is building us into ONE NEW MAN, where we are His body and He is the Head. In order to lay the foundation of this building, we need the apostolic and prophetic gifts first to show us the way to advance the Kingdom, to hear the voice of the Master in how to build, how to facilitate the restoration of all things, and how to develop strategies for advancing the Kingdom in all cultural areas of human life. They help us find our part.

We need teachers to lay out in plain language what the apostles and prophets see and hear so we all can use what we learn to righteously judge every situation that comes into our lives over our lifetimes, to care for those God puts in our path, and to bring others into the Kingdom as we walk out our journey on earth. Unless the apostles and prophets see what God has done and is doing in the earth and how it applies to us today, teachers have little to teach, other than foundational truths.

The order of these gifts has nothing to do with the level of importance, or level of authority. It has to do with the order to how we need to receive the gifts they carry in order to build. Apostles and prophets help us understand the foundation of what the Lord desires to establish. Teachers break it down into bite size chunks so we can understand what needs to happen. Teachers, pastors and evangelists cannot do what they are called to do, if the plan of God for the hour has not been made plain, and the voice of God heard clearly. We have much to learn, but the paradigm shift is in motion. There is no stopping what is coming!

Getting Out of the Vehicle

Over the last several years, I have had many dreams concerning vehicles. God was teaching me through these dreams. I began to notice in most of the dreams nothing significant happened until I got out of the vehicle. In one dream I even got out of the vehicle (a plane) and tied a rope to it and started pulling the plane across the parking lot because it would not do what I needed it to do. God has a great sense of humor and He gives me strange dreams to illustrate His points.

The dreams from the Lord signify we have allowed some vehicle to define us. In most cases that vehicle is what we call the “church”. We are constrained by how we or others define our vehicle of “ministry” which we drive or in which we

ride. We must be free. Nothing should constrain us except our instructions from the Lord Himself.

When we step out of the vehicle, we can see who God made us to be. We can see His heart and His purposes. We can see what He has placed in our heart. Then vehicles become tools in our hands designed by God for the purpose of serving Him. We then control the vehicle; it does not control us. We are not constrained to one tool or vehicle all the time. As our Lord directs us, He places in our hands the tools or vehicles we might need for the task assigned.

When we have been called as one of these leadership gifts, we tend to often look at the calling as our vehicle. Rules have been put around those vehicles so they do not stray into the wrong calling. Many prophets, who may also have an apostolic anointing, are told to stay in their lane in order not to upset someone else's applecart. In other words, they are told to leave the job of apostle to those whose primary anointing is apostle.

There is argument in many circles on whether a person can carry more than one leadership gift. If they do, then there is usually a primary. There are so many rules and regulations around these thoughts, that it creates conflict often between apostles and prophets, as well as prophets and teachers. There is even more conflict with pastors who feel their job is to protect the sheep at all costs.

Some believe that you cannot be an apostle without also carrying the other gifts. I have seen true apostles who have operated in all five leadership gifts, and I have seen apostles only operate in one or two of the gifts. These gifts are given to us by Jesus. He is the one that decides. Paul in the Bible says in one of his letters that he was both an apostle and a teacher. There is nothing in scripture that defines the rules around these gifts. Jesus cannot be put in a box.

Instead of depending on the Holy Spirit as the Bible instructs us, we tend to label things and put them in a box. We put people in boxes and give them titles because we lack discernment and the ability to hear the voice of God clearly.

When we become mature, this will no longer be an issue. It is imperative that we grow up and mature in the things of God. There are many who classify themselves as leaders today who have not reached maturity as defined by the Bible.

Even if we do not yet understand completely what this new paradigm looks like, we are beginning to understand that the current vehicle of ministry we force on the people is not working. God is calling us outside the vehicle, outside the four walls, outside the constraints of rules and regulations that have been put upon us for centuries. We are being set free. We are beginning to see what He is establishing in the earth.

We are beginning to understand what freedom really means. We are beginning to understand we are the city on a hill that shows forth the fulness and the glory of our Lord. We are beginning to understand the meaning of the one new man. We are beginning to see what Jesus is establishing.

When the leadership gifts are set free to be who God has called them to be, we will begin to take maturity and unity seriously. We want to see the miracles and walk in things we have never thought possible, but it is only going to come through maturity and unity.

We are coming into the knowledge and understanding of Jesus as the second Adam. He is restoring all things that were lost to us. The bride-to-be is finding her purpose and her voice. We are moving forward!

Conclusion

The four-walls of the “church” are being torn down. We see beyond the religious tunnel that has encompassed us for centuries. We are no longer limited. We don’t need a pulpit or a full-time ministry “job”. We were born as the gift. We send the saints forth into the world in whatever capacity the Savior has designed, fully equipped. They come to us, and when they are ready, they go from us. We are not the only ones called to impart into their lives. God places the ones who are needed into their lives at the time of their need. They do not belong to

us. We do not own them. We impart to them as God directs, and they take what was imparted to them wherever God leads and directs them.

We have become so hung up on everything being done through the vehicle we call “church” that we cannot see any other way of doing what we are called to do. The God who has called us will direct us and open doors for us. Just be open, willing, and ready.

Leadership gifts do not manage or drive the sheep. For a season, they care for those who have chosen to follow them as they follow Jesus. They need something you have inside of you as a leader. Be brave, be strong and determined to follow Jesus where ever He leads and to recognize those who need you, and those you need on this journey into maturity and unity.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 12

- 1 – Do you believe a person can be trained to be one of these gifts of leadership if Jesus has not specifically called them to one of these gifts? If so, what is your basis for this believe?
- 2 – Do you believe there are counterfeit gifts that the enemy has placed in positions of leadership? Is it easy to recognize? Describe some of the issues with discerning the difference and how you know the real from the fake.
- 3 – When you look at “church” leadership today do you believe it does a good job of equipping and edifying? If not, why do you think that is and what should be done about it?
- 4 – Do you believe maturity and unity is possible to the extent the author describes? What do you think the fulness of Christ looks like? Is it possible to achieve all the things concerning the effect of maturity and unity mentioned in Ephesians, chapter four, this side of heaven, or before Jesus comes back? Why or why not?
- 5 – Explain how your concept of ministering or ministry has changed after reading this chapter. If it hasn’t changed, explain.
- 6 – Explain how your doctrine may have changed concerning the purpose of leadership and the purpose of the Ekklesia. Do you believe that the leadership is there to minister to the Ekklesia and their needs, rather than the other way around? If not, explain your reasoning.
- 7 – Explain how you feel about the author’s thoughts that the leadership gifts are not meant to be behind a pulpit in a church somewhere, but are called to be the gift wherever they are at any given time. Document any questions you might have and pray about it.

8 – Explain what you believe concerning the laying on of hands. If you believe leadership gifts can be passed from one person to another through the laying on of hands, explain your reasoning.

9 – Can you think of some times when you have put people and their gifts in a box surrounded by rules because of something you had been taught? Have you sought God's to see if you learned things from Him or from man? Ask God to continue to reveal to you the difference between the counterfeit and the real.

10 – Examine yourself. Are there areas of your life where you have put yourself in a box and made decisions around the perceived rules of that box? When have you compared yourself to others and made decisions based on your comparisons? Did you allow for God's own uniqueness that He designed in you?

11 – Explain the paradigm shift needed where the old paradigm has these gifts operating strictly behind a pulpit in a "church" setting to the new paradigm where they operate anywhere anytime. Is this possible? Do you believe this needs to happen?

12 – Does the explanation for why the Bible talks about apostles as being first, prophets, second and teachers, third make sense to you? Explain in your own words.

13 – Explain what you believe the author is trying to convey with the thought of vehicles and how we can be restrained or held back by them depending on our beliefs. How do we get free from these restraints?

14 – Does it make sense to you that particular gifts have the ability to impart some of that grace to you? What do you think the author means when she says that apostles produce an apostolic people, prophets produce a prophetic people?

CHAPTER 13

TURNING THE LANTERN UPSIDE DOWN

The vision of the Chinese lantern was given to me by God to illustrate the Ekklesia being established by Jesus. It was also given to illustrate the paradigm shifts needed in the body of Christ in order to see and understand the difference between the “church” and the true Ekklesia. The paradigm shifts will cause us to question whether what we have been taught is from man or God.

A paradigm again is nothing more than a set of thoughts, a mindset of something that we believe strongly. When that mindset, that structure of thoughts in our mind, begins to change, there is a shift from an old paradigm to a new paradigm. New wine cannot be put into old wineskins. The shaking is the transformation process we must go through to be free from the old religious doctrine of “church” to walk into the truth of Jesus and how He establishes the Ekklesia, Himself.

New Wine in New Wineskins

Many saints are starting to use the term Ekklesia instead of “church” illustrating the shaking has begun. They are rightly declaring the “church” is not the building, the people are, but that is only the beginning. Sadly, many who receive the new revelation are mixing it with the old concept of “church”. Pouring new wine into the old wineskins will not work.

It is going to take time to shed our religious glasses and see clearly. Be assured, however, God will no longer allow us to continue to build on what man is establishing nor pour new wine into old wineskins. It all must be destroyed. The shaking

will destroy what has no value so what is precious in the sight of our Lord can be established.

God never intended His saints to be contained within four walls. Those walls are going to fall. The “church” as we know it today is not the Ekklesia. The saints of God are being set free to serve God and follow Him wherever He leads. The Ekklesia is being established.

Although metaphorically Jesus is taking us as polished stones and building His invisible temple, in reality He is establishing a people whose heart’s desire is to see God’s Kingdom set up on earth. Jesus will rule His Kingdom with His bride (the Ekklesia) by His side for eternity. The revelation concerning this cannot be stuffed into an old wineskin.

Our revelation must come from the depths of God’s heart if we are going to be free of religion. We need to see and understand His plan which has existed from before time began. We must have the blueprints from heaven for the purpose of establishing and advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth.

Everything that happens is for the purpose of building, establishing and equipping the Ekklesia, the body of Christ, to be able to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. Only as a united body being directed by instructions from the head, in unity and in love, can we begin to truly advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. Only then will the bride have made herself ready for her Bridegroom. Only then is she fit to rule and reign with Him.

Seek His Face

David wanted to build a house for God, but God told him no. Instead, David’s son, Solomon, would be the one to build the temple. David called the Israelites together to tell them to support the efforts of his son, Solomon as he started this great undertaking.

Now seek the LORD your God with all your heart and soul. Build the sanctuary of the LORD God so that you can bring the Ark of

the LORD's Covenant and the holy vessels of God into the Temple built to honor the LORD's name." 1 Chronicles 22:19 (NLT)

The most important thing for them, and for us, was to seek God with their whole heart and soul. Only then, could they build. The Lord is building His own house today, the Ekklesia and we can only cooperate with Him in that building if we first seek Him with our whole being.

The LORD looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. Psalm 14:2 (NLT)

When you look at the condition of the Ekklesia today, you wonder if anyone is truly seeking God with all their heart. Take the time to read Isaiah chapter 42 It is a good picture of today. Jesus will not fail in bringing justice. Justice in all areas of life is going to come from Mount Zion, the City on a Hill. It is going to come through the Ekklesia that Jesus is establishing.

Jesus is coming forth as a mighty warrior. He is going to win against His enemies. He is going to lead the blind in a path they have never been before. He will bring light to their eyes so they no longer walk in darkness. The knowledge and wisdom of God is going to be made known to them.

God told Isaiah the blind and the deaf were His people. With our religious glasses, we have been walking around blind to what God is really doing. It is time to shed our blinders and begin to walk in the light of our glorious Lord.

But this is a people robbed and plundered; All of them are snared in holes, And they are hidden in prison houses; They are for prey, and no one delivers; For plunder, and no one says, "Restore!" Who among you will give ear to this? Who will listen and hear for the time to come? Isaiah 42:22,23 (NJKV)

God clearly says it is His people who have been ensnared, trapped, held in bondage and live in prisons. They

are not free, but the Mighty Man of War is coming to set them free and restore their sight so they can see what He is doing in this hour. God then asks a question that is worth asking again today. Who will see and hear for a time to come? After we see and hear clearly, will we cry out for restoration?

God responds to a people who see by the Spirit the times and seasons. He will respond when they cry for restoration. He longs for a people who can see things through His eyes. He loves a people who love righteousness and hate wickedness, who are not afraid of letting go of the old and embracing the new thing He is doing today.

We are going to see righteousness and justice exercised in the earth through the Ekklesia to a degree where evil is toppled and the glory of God is visible. When we see it will be the equivalent of a greater than 10.0 on the Richter scale of earthquake magnitude and impossible to obtain in the natural realm.

At night I long for You with all that is in Me. When morning comes, I seek You with all my heart. For when Your justice is done on earth, then everyone in the world will learn righteousness.

Isaiah 26:9 (The Voice)

The Kingdom is foremost on God's heart and on ours as we seek God's heart with our whole being. When we seek the establishment of the Kingdom of God, we seek righteousness, to be in alignment with what is right according to God's ways.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all these things will be given to you too. Matthew 6:33 (The Voice)

It is a new season and God continues to do new things; He continues to restore. Will we cry for restoration?

Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Isaiah 42:9 (NKJV)

“You have heard; See all this. And will you not declare it? I have made you hear new things from this time, Even hidden things, and you did not know them. Isaiah 48:6 (NKJV)

He said to them, Therefore every teacher and interpreter of the Sacred Writings who has been instructed about and trained for the kingdom of heaven and has become a disciple is like a householder who brings forth out of his storehouse treasure that is new and [treasure that is] old [the fresh as well as the familiar].

Matthew 13:52 (AMPC)

A Master Plan

About a year or two after the vision of the lantern, a prophet gave me a long word from God about a lot of different aspects of my life. One of the details seemed totally impossible to me at the time, but within months, it came to pass. That gave me faith to believe the rest of the prophecy.

This is the part that permeated my thoughts for a long time and I couldn't comprehend it. I didn't fully understand what a woman of the kingdom really was, and certainly not a master plan.

“Daughter I am calling you to see some things that most people won't see. cause I want you to see some things and behold some things that most people won't see. Because you are a woman of the kingdom.” And God says, “like I said before there are places that you are going that many people will not be able to go to. Because you are the woman with the plan.” God says, “I have given you a master plan.” God says, “Put that thing together and run with it.”

If I knew what this master plan was, then I could run with it as God told me to do, but I didn't have a clue. I tried to develop a plan based on the things God had been revealing to me. I shared the plans with others to help get a sense of direction, but the peace of God evaded me.

If we are determined to follow God and do not have a spirit of rebellion, we will begin to know His heart and He will not let us go too far in a direction not of His choosing. If we have a rebellious heart and are determined to do things our

own way, then often God will allow us to continue and fail, so we will understand it is far better to wait for Him. During this time as I tried to develop these plans, God was opening revelation to me that would be useful when I actually did discover what the plan was.

God often hides things in plain sight just so we will seek Him. If you are not sure you are hearing God clearly, step out. If it is wrong, He will let you know. If you are right, suddenly you will see something that was right in front of you the whole time.

It wasn't until I began taking the vision of the Chinese lantern seriously that I began to see, truly the MASTER PLAN had already been given to me. At the time of the prophecy, I already had the plan. I just couldn't see it. I was looking for some huge detailed plan. I completely missed the possibility of a simple plan with one instruction, the Chinese lantern and turn it upside down. That was the plan!

I was astounded when I discovered the plan had been there in front of me for years and I had not seen it. The plan was to take God's people from the old paradigm of "church" to the new paradigm of the Ekklesia. Many of my dreams were about this plan. I could not be a woman of the Kingdom until I understood the Ekklesia and the truth concerning advancing the Kingdom of God on earth.

This is important! We have not understood the Kingdom of God in the past. Many have taught that the Church and the Kingdom of God are the same thing. They are not. The responsibility of the Ekklesia is not to just snatch people from the jaws of hell and make sure they had a place in heaven, as we have been taught. It is to bring the saints to maturity and unity so they can advance the Kingdom of God in the earth.

The Kingdom of God is wherever Jesus is King. There are so many areas of our own lives as well as our communities where Jesus is NOT King. The Kingdom plays an intricate part in all our discussions concerning the Ekklesia. You can't have one without the other.

We must change so our communities can change! But things won't change as long as we hang on to the current "church" mentality. We have to have a paradigm shift in the understanding of the Ekklesia. That means leaving a lot of religious thinking behind us!

Top and Bottom of the Chinese Lantern

Up to this point, turning the lantern upside down didn't seem to mean much of anything. The fog of religion must go. Sometimes the change in thought that is needed is so drastic that God has to spoon feed us awhile until we are able to shed the religious brainwashing and actually see truth. We must seek His face with our whole being in order to come out from under the influence of the religious spirit, which is, in reality, religious brainwashing.

Revelation is often hidden in plain sight waiting for that moment when God sees our heart and our willingness to hear Him and to obey no matter what the cost. Then He pours it into our heart. What could I have done differently to see truth sooner? You have probably asked similar questions.

It doesn't matter. There is nothing you can do about the past. You can't redo it. God knows me and He knows you. He knew me before I did the stupid things I did. He knew me when I procrastinated and when I was rebellious. He didn't give up on me and He still directed my paths. God loved me in the midst of it all and He loves you exactly where you are.

It is not too late for God to turn things around. Joel chapter two shows us how much love God has for His people. His desire to restore us. It is in this passage God says He gives His people both the spring rains and the fall rains to speed up the harvest. In verse 25 He says **"So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten"**.

He doesn't give up on us, we give up on ourselves and sometimes we give up on God. When we miss His direction, He sets out to get us back on the right path if we will let Him. Seek His face. He loves us and often He will make up for lost

time. Believe Him and trust Him. You may be late, but He never is.

Sometimes it is not about you missing God in your response to Him. Sometimes the people who need what you have are not prepared yet to receive it. God knows all. We must learn to trust everything to our God and realize He has a time and season for everything.

Life Experiences Are Training Ground

We can learn so much from life's experiences. God not only directed my steps and blessed me with jobs that I would enjoy, they were jobs that would teach me much about what was in the heart of God. I was not always happy with this. I knew there was a call of God placed in me even before my birth. I wanted what was called "full-time ministry" and a pulpit, but every time I turned around, the door seemed to be slammed shut in my face. I was confused and heart-broken.

I questioned if all the wrong decisions I had made in my lifetime had caused God to change His mind or perhaps it was true after all that God did not call women to minister in certain gifts or anointings. Even though I did not understand it, I was in exactly the place God wanted me. This verse got me through many times when the enemy tried to convince me to turn my back on the call.

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [for He does not withdraw what He has given, nor does He change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call].

Romans 11:29 (AMP)

Maybe you have experienced something similar. If so, rejoice. God will have a pure, holy vessel in which to pour out His goodness. If we will not allow bitterness and anger to have a place in our heart, God will use life experiences to teach us and prepare us for the days ahead. He uses true life experiences to show us what is in His heart.

There were things I had to experience in order to see the religious spirit keeping me from moving forward. I had to experience some things to understand the changes God wanted to bring for His Ekklesia. When we come out on the other side of the experience, we will understand. God introduces new concepts to us in small pieces because we would be overwhelmed if we saw it all at once. Just because we get a revelation of something, doesn't mean it is complete and we should run with it. Everything has a time and a reason.

Too often we get a revelation from God and we decide to run with it. The result is often that the new revelation (the new wine) is shoved into old, religious mindsets (old wineskins). We must wait for a clear understanding of the new wineskin before we release it. If God gives you a word for something, He will also give you the instructions on how and when to run with it.

If God tells you to run with something, by all means run with it. But never assume you know everything you need to know to do what He has called you to do. Take steps and evaluate whether you are following God. You will know by your spirit if your desire truly is to follow Him. If you feel a check in your spirit, take a step in a different direction or pray for further direction from God. He will not let you down or lead you astray.

God had given me a plan, a master plan, He called it. He also told me to run with it. I tried to figure out what that plan was and even developed some, but when I tried to run with them, I knew it wasn't right. I wasn't ready. Again, you will only know for yourself as you seek God's face and learn to hear His voice, and understand His way of dealing with you.

So many people, as well as many prophets, think God gives orders to do something without telling us how to do it. So, we assume we know everything there is to know. We many times assume the what is up to God, but the how is up to us. That is how we build an Ismael. We must learn to rely on Him for everything and continually seek His face. He reveals as much as we can handle at the time.

Leadership

The Chinese lantern was God's way of showing me the plan He was giving to me. This plan was also meant for the assembly of people I was a part of the time if they would accept it. I taught for almost a year on righteousness and justice and the Kingdom of God. I taught on hearing the voice of God. We had left the place we were and started across the valley of transformation.



Turn the lantern upside down

But then leadership chose to go a different direction and today that leadership believes they made the right decision. None of us fully understood at the time what God was asking of us. None of us understood the drastic changes or what the prophetic words would mean. I did not understand and when they made the decision to go a different direction, it broke my heart and I had to leave at God's direction to me.

I could not leave what God was teaching me behind. The lantern must be turned upside down. An understanding of apostle and prophet foundation must be established. Although, I was still wearing my religious glasses, I did know

that leadership was never meant to be over the people as lords. There truly is a difference between leaders and managers.

In the systems of the world, managers and directors within a corporation or business are placed there to make decisions for the organization. They often make decisions for the employees. They are given titles that reflect their level of authority. They can hire and fire people and set policy and procedures for areas of the business for which they are responsible. They usually answer to someone in the organization with a higher title and authority.

Managers and others in authority make decisions for people all the time. They are hired to make decisions. They are hired for their intelligence and expertise and often feel superior because of this. They are positioned for others to trust and follow them, often blindly.

I was a director of Information Technology in a state government agency for many years. I understand the world's management structure very well. This is the world's way of delegating authority, but it is NOT the way authority is delegated in the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, whether we are a leader or not, we are ALL to be servants serving each other.

A leader, a servant has no title. A leader has followers, those who see the gift in the leader. They are not coerced, but rather see the value in the gift, so they follow. In the Kingdom of God, true leaders follow Jesus with a whole heart and another they will not follow. Saints recognize leaders who follow Jesus and know it is safe to follow them when God directs.

I have a dear friend with a tremendous voice and I love to hear her sing. I hear the voice of God through her singing, but do I elevate her and give her special authority over my life because she stands above others with her ability to sing? I don't give her a title or any special privileges. I just recognize the gift given to her by God.

We have taken people with extraordinary gifts from God and given them a title, elevated them and given them a

place of authority over us that was meant for only God to have. In the true Ekklesia there are no titles. There is no arrogance. There is no placing rules and regulations on the followers, no coercion, no bowing to titles and implied authority, no control over another. Everyone is accountable to Jesus.

The Fullness of the Revelation

The master plan was to turn the paradigm of the “church” upside down to shake God’s saints out of the religious fog so we could be established as the true Ekklesia. Unless we allowed God to do this, we would not move forward in advancing the Kingdom of God the way God intended us to do.

It requires a shaking up of our understanding of the “church” structure and leadership as established by the “church” versus what Jesus is establishing. Everything about our understanding of the “church” needs to be shaken and all the wood, hay and stubble burned. What will be left standing will be the Ekklesia.

Chinese Lantern – the Ekklesia



Chinese lantern turned upside Down and shaken
Up-down arrows – working of The Holy Spirit
More pressure applied – more light

The shaking will bring about a proper foundation for the Body of Christ, made up of saints and saint-leaders with gifts to lead, following the King of the Kingdom who is the head. The bars of the lantern that run vertically represent the flowing of the Holy Spirit in the midst of His people connecting everything together in unity and maturity. With the proper foundation, the proper leadership gifts, and the Holy Spirit, the Ekklesia could function as one, in one mind, one spirit, and one accord. There is no need for a hierarchical structure in the Ekklesia.

The more the pressure of the Spirit is applied to bring about unity and maturity, the more the light is visible from within the lantern to the outside world.

Leaders Serve

At one point in the ministry of Jesus, the mother of two of his disciples requested her sons to sit beside Jesus when His Kingdom was established. The rest of the disciples were not happy. In fact, the Passion version says there was a jealous anger that arose in the disciples. Jesus then called them all together for a teachable moment.

But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:25-28 (NLT)

Even Jesus, the Son of the Living God, came to serve. He vowed the Ekklesia He would establish would not be ruled by the hierarchical system of the world that creates lords and officials to have authority over the people. Yet, today, that is what “churches” who claim to be the Ekklesia, do.

In a hierarchical system there are different levels of authority flowing down from the highest position to the

lowest. In a work environment, a person has a direct supervisor. The supervisor reports to a manager of a particular area. The manager may report to a director who is over a particular department of the business. Directors can report to either the owner of a business or an officer of the business. Each level has its own title and ever-increasing authority as it approaches the highest level.

If Jesus said this type of leadership was wrong for His Ekklesia, then there is something wrong with the way we have interpreted scripture concerning “church” leadership. We see this type of leadership all around us, so it is no surprise that it operates in the “church” today. But that doesn’t make it right.

Power and Authority

Everything has been put under the feet of Jesus, under His authority. He is the head and the body is His Ekklesia. The Greeks thought of the head as the source of life. Jesus is the one who gives life to the Ekklesia.

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.
Ephesians 1:22,23 (NLT)

Mankind, Adam and Eve, had been given authority in the earth in the beginning. They gave it away to the enemy. Jesus came to earth as a sinless man, took the authority back from the enemy, and delegated it to us. People have free will. We do not have authority to control humans. We can control exterior and demonic activities that affect humans.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
Isaiah 55:10-11 (ESV)

We look to heaven for an answer to every situation we face in our own lives, our communities, our countries. What would make this situation right? How should I judge this situation righteously? Whatever the Lord says to do, we obey. We fight a lot of battles with our words. The Lord of heaven speaks a word from His mouth. That word passes from heaven to earth.

When you speak that word into the earth that originated in heaven, it has power and authority. You have the faith to see that word come to pass because you know it is the will of your Father in heaven. Your words have power now because they are the words of God and He promises the words declared in heaven and released through the mouths of His people on earth, will not return to heaven until they happen.

As a saint, as a member of the Ekklesia, when you lay hands on a person according to heaven's directions, the power and authority is there to make things happen. You, as a believer have solutions to problems in every aspect of business or life. You have inventions and ideas from God as seed just waiting to spring up and bear fruit in whatever area God places you.

The Ekklesia was never intended to be managed or directed by an organizational structure. It is believers who have seen the King and His Kingdom and have determined that another they would not follow. Those believers hear the word coming from heaven and they execute it in the earth. They are busy conducting Kingdom business. They are legislating.

Leaders reflect Jesus so others will follow until they know Jesus and hear His voice well enough, they no longer need us to lead them. They will mature in the Lord and directly follow Him. They will legislate Kingdom business in the earth and understand their delegated authority. They must have a mindset of BEING rather than DOING.

Leaders do not need to be called a leader or given a title, nor will they coerce others to follow. They serve with their heart out of love for people and their God. They are servants, they don't just do servant activities. Those who DO, demand

recognition. Those who BE want Jesus to receive the recognition for them being what He created them to BE.

Our natural minds make sense of the hierarchical system because it is what we see every day. It makes sense until our eyes are open to see what Jesus really said He was going to establish. It makes sense until we tap into the heart of God and then we realize it really does not make sense anymore at all.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, for the carnal mind is hostile toward God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:5-8 (MEV)

When we operate with our natural mind, we build our own houses, our own kingdoms. Even though we put the Lord's name on them we are drawing attention to ourselves. We think we are pleasing God and doing what He wants. The Bible calls this "carnal" and declares it "hostile toward God" which definitely does not please God. We are actually fighting against Him.

But you: do not let anyone call you "Rabbi," that is, "Teacher." For you are all brothers, and you have only one teacher, the Anointed One. Indeed, do not call anyone on earth "Father," for you have only one father, and He is in heaven. Neither let anyone call you "leader," for you have one leader—the Anointed One. If you are recognized at all, let it be for your service. Delight in the one who calls you servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Matthew 23:8-12 (The Voice)

Not only should we not call someone Teacher, Father, or Leader, we should not call someone Bishop, Prophet, Pastor, Apostle or Evangelist. Titles are a sign of a hierarchical system. Paul, when he wrote, said he was an apostle and a teacher, but he was never addressed in scripture as Apostle Paul or Teacher Paul. He just was stating that he carried the gift of apostle and teacher in him, as given to him by his Lord.

We now see that the hierarchical structure of the denominational “church” as well as the networked “church” are not God’s design for His Ekklesia. Sometimes beliefs are so entrenched in us that God has to deal with it a little at a time, before we can receive the full revelation of the truth.

Something To Think About

We must take off our religious glasses in order to see the difference between what is currently practiced in the “church” today and what the Bible actually teaches. We no longer live by the law. We no longer live by a set of rules. We live by the leading and directing of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is available to all of us, not just a select few. We no longer have to come to God through a priest, or a man.

God wants us to be free. He does not want us under the control of man. In the understanding of the new paradigm, there is no hierarchy in the Ekklesia. This is not a new thing. It was established by Jesus when He walked the earth. But it is a new understanding of an old truth.

We are so entrenched in the way worldly systems work that we think we must have a boss and we must have some structure. God’s ways are different from ours and sometimes that is hard for us to wrap our brain around. There is someone in authority and that is Jesus. He is all the authority we need.

We look at the situation in the “church” and in the world today and we think that without authority there would be pure chaos, and lawlessness. There is authority but it is not found in a hierarchical structure. It is found in those who have power and authority in Jesus because they follow Him only. Power and authority are not lacking, it just looks different and we cannot understand how that could possibly work. There is much more revelation to come for those who will say yes to the new wine.

In the book of Colossians, Paul states that he is a servant to the body of Christ. He was assigned as a servant by the authority of God. Servants do not exercise authority over

people. They do not control people. What authority they have is given to them by their master.

This is the very reason I've been made a minister by the authority of God and a servant to his body, so that in his detailed plan I would fully equip you with the Word of God. There is a divine mystery—a secret surprise that has been concealed from the world for generations, but now it's being revealed, unfolded and manifested for every holy believer to experience. Living within you is the Christ who floods you with the expectation of glory! This mystery of Christ, embedded within us, becomes a heavenly treasure chest of hope filled with the riches of glory for his people, and God wants everyone to know it! Christ is our message! We preach to awaken hearts and bring every person into the full understanding of truth. It has become my inspiration and passion in ministry to labor with a tireless intensity, with his power flowing through me, to present to every believer the revelation of being his perfect one in Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:25-29 (TPT)

Paul's responsibility to the Ekklesia was to serve them by equipping them with the Word of God. His responsibility was to teach the body of Christ about the mystery God had revealed to him, so that every believer could experience it. Believers are to be flooded with the glory of God. The riches of heaven have been made available to all believers. It is like a treasure chest. That treasure chest really is Jesus and all He is.

Paul came to preach truth to the saints. Not only did he preach truth, he labored to bring them into the full understanding of what that truth is. He wanted every believer to understand they were being perfected, or made complete, maturing into the perfect one in Jesus.

Paul didn't travel to all the places he did in order to control the saints or keep them in line. He didn't travel to exert his authority or to demand allegiance. He came to be a servant to the saints. He came to present truth. He came to awaken people to who they were in Christ. He came to present Jesus, pure and simple! For any true, authentic leader in the Ekklesia this is our desire as well.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 13

- 1 – Describe the dangers of obtaining new revelation (new wine) and running with it before you have complete understanding of what it really means.
- 2 – Explain your thoughts on the importance of seeking the face of God to come out of bondage to religion into freedom.
- 3 – Why do you think God told Isaiah that God’s people were blind? What needs restoration and why is it important enough to cry for it? Are you asking God to reveal to you the things that He wants to be restored?
- 4 – The author writes about being rebellious and disobedient in her own life and how God knew she was going to go through those things and still planned for her to get back on track and move forward. Can you relate to those experiences? Think about this and document any area of your life that you have left behind, but now may feel God is encouraging you to pursue once again.
- 5 – Document some of life experiences where you now realize they were training ground for you, in order for you to understand the ways of God better.
- 6 – After reading concerning hierarchical systems of the world, do you see how Jesus could be doing something different with His Ekklesia? Explain.
- 7 – How does seeing leaders as servants instead of managers impact your belief system? What questions do you have concerning this? Document and ask God for the answers.
- 8 – Explain how you see each piece of the Chinese lantern and what you believe the author was trying to convey. Ask God for clarification for anything you don’t quite understand.

Section IV

RELIGION UNMASKED

CHAPTER 14

LIFTING THE FOG OF RELIGION

The enemy is the father of lies. We have been lied to from the very beginning. We have accepted the lies without even questioning them. The enemy has turned us from a pure connected relationship with God to a counterfeit, which is religion. God gave us a brain for a reason. We must reason out what we hear and allow our spirits to communicate with the Spirit of Truth, so we can distinguish a lie from the truth.

Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies.

John 8:44 (CEV)

Truth has a voice and it needs to be heard. When we seek for truth, we will find it. It is truth understood that will break through any fog of religion that may have settled over us. Study, as the Bible states, to show yourself approved of God, one who rightly divides or understands the word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

In Acts chapter 26, Paul stood before King Agrippa (king of the Jews under Roman rule) and Governor Festus from the Roman Empire defending himself and sharing the truth of the gospel. In New Living Translation terminology Festus responds, **“Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy!”** (verse 24). Some saints fear going down rabbit holes and coming up with conspiracy theories if their brain is allowed to think too much. If that is the case, we do not have much faith in Holy Spirit.

We must not be afraid of the truth or of what others might think. Truth must be sought and loved by us in order for

us to be free from the fog of religious entrapment by the enemy. The message to the Ekklesia today is “be free”.

Journey Into Freedom

God is calling His people out of the Babylonian system and every leader must choose to set the people free or not. If they choose not to set them free, they are choosing against God. They are choosing self and religion over the will of God. They are choosing rebellion and disobedience.

Believers also face the decision of being free. The Lord Himself paid a horrendous price for our freedom and we must be free. We must decide if we will continue to allow men to dictate what our relationship with our Lord is, or commit to follow Jesus and Him only will we serve.

There are religious doctrines established around some terms found in the Bible and their usage in “churches” today has kept the saints in bondage to tradition and doctrine. This topic is vast and only the surface is scratched in these next few chapters. We must come to the place where we feel free enough to question if what we have been taught came from man or God.

Minister, Ministry

The word “minister” is often used as a title in place of pastor or anyone who preaches in a “full-time” position. It has become a profession. People carrying the title of minister usually have a pulpit, are paid to stand in the position, and have an organization around them called their ministry.

When the word is mentioned in the Bible, it means something completely different. Paul called Epaphras a minister when he wrote a letter to the saints in Colosse.

as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.
Colossians 1:7,8 (NKJV)

The words “on your behalf” is one little preposition meaning “for” in the Greek. Translators often add more words to try to make the meaning clearer. The original Greek says “minister of Christ for you”. This word gives the connotation of bending over in order to shield or protect. He is serving the people.

This person is not “ministering” on behalf of the Colossians. Sometimes when the interpreters add words for clarification it helps us. Sometimes it hinders us from seeing and knowing truth.

Epaphras is mentioned here and in the book of Philemon. Epaphras is called a servant and a minister of Christ in the King James version. “Fellow servant” in the Greek is one word meaning co-servant, indicating that Epaphras co-labored with Paul.

The word for minister is the Greek word “diakonos”, from which we get the word, “deacon”. It means one who serves or waits on tables, literally one who is sent on errands. Paul indicated this man who worked with him was just as much a servant of Christ the King, as he, Paul, was. Their purpose was to serve God by doing errands assigned by God to benefit the Colossians.

Ministers are servants. Our imagery must change. We are not servants of the people; we are servants of the Most High God. Servants answer to the Master and Him only. Whatever He desires of us, will benefit God’s people as well. When we are ministering, we are serving God in whatever capacity He has instructed us, and it brings benefit to the people.

We often picture a minister as someone standing behind a pulpit and preaching to us because of what we have been taught instead of the picture of the Ekklesia in the New Testament where everyone is ministering and serving each other, running errands that benefit others as directed by the Lord.

We love God. We hear God. We obey God. This is ministry. Ministry can be laying on of hands for healing, praying with a person, buying a pair of shoes for someone who needs them, running into the house to get a glass of water for someone. It can be teaching. It can be doing our job in our chosen profession, if God has placed us there.

Ministry is not a “church” thing. Ministry is serving. Ministry can be offering a solution given to you by God for a problem while sitting in a board room of some company. It could be telling someone about a dream God gave to you. It could be taking flowers to someone in the hospital; It could be mowing somebody’s lawn. That is true ministry, serving those God puts in our path every day.

Made a Minister

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Colossians 1:23 (KJV)

The gospel message of Jesus and His death and resurrection had been proclaimed across the land. In the letters Paul wrote, he discussed the changes that had taken place in the cities and regions because of the gospel message. In that context this passage could be understood better as “I, Paul, have become a servant to Jesus because of hearing the truth of the gospel myself”.

There are several Greek words that are translated “preach” or “preacher” in the King James version of the Bible. All these words have a slightly different application but they all mean to proclaim or announce. The word used here means to publicly proclaim or announce.

The New International version says proclaim instead of preach and become a servant instead of made a minister.

if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard

and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Colossians 1:23 (NIV)

It sounds so much more official to say Paul was “made” a minister; to think he was placed into some position of authority and therefore he should be listened to and followed. In reality, he was merely stating he had heard the gospel like they had all heard it and it had touched his heart so deeply that he could do nothing else but follow Jesus and serve Him.

We take passages of the Bible that have been translated by some man or organization and because of tradition we accept it as fact. I am just as guilty as everyone else. We have been brainwashed, me included.

There was nothing special about Paul. Yes, he was an apostle and a teacher and his gift as a leader was recognized by many. He was called to build up the saints and help bring them to maturity. He was called to know and understand the plans of God for the earth and to make them known. As a servant dedicated to Jesus, his life’s work was to obey God and serve the saints.

He was also a businessman. He made tents. He did not demand any special treatment. He did not demand that the saints obey him. He did not start his own congregation, his own ministry, his own “church”.

of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, Colossians 1:25 (NKJV)

Again, the King James makes it sound like Paul was appointed by God as a minister with authority over them, but that is not what is meant. What was given to Paul for them was a particular message from God that God wanted them to hear. God wanted them to understand the fulness of the gospel message. Here is that verse again in a different translation.

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— Colossians 1:25 (NIV)

Paul had a call on his life to teach and proclaim the gospel, the Word of God in its fullness, and so he served the saints at Colosse as well as other places he went. It was as simple as that. Paul was not establishing church structure. He was merely proclaiming the Word of God to the saints where he traveled as God told him to do.

Preach

**Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:
Colossians 1:28 (NKJV)**

The word for “preach” means to proclaim, to announce, to declare. It doesn’t always mean to do so publicly. You do not need a pulpit to preach. It could be a simple conversation with another person or many people. It doesn’t have to be an organized meeting. Whenever Paul and his team talked to the saints, whenever he taught them either formally or informally, he was preaching.

Paul was saying that wherever he went proclaiming the Good News of Jesus and His Kingdom, it was for the purpose of teaching them, reminding them and strongly encouraging them to live by what he taught so they might mature in Kingdom principles.

It is not what we think of as preaching today. Being a preacher is not a profession as we have been taught through religious tradition. We are taught those with the skillset to preach and a Bible college degree can obtain a license or ordination to prove they have a right to preach.

The gospel is simple. We want to make it complicated so only a few specially qualified people can preach the gospel accurately. We have made a business and a mockery of the Kingdom and that has got to end!

It will end when a righteous anger arises in a fair size remnant to the point they can stand the farce no longer. Whether at work or play, when you proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom, plant a seed to one or a thousand, you are preaching.

Covering

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:
Isaiah 30:1 (KJV)

The New King James talks about covering. Other versions do not use the word cover or covering. The Hebrew word used for cover or covering means “poured out” like anointing oil or a covering like a web. It can also mean a libation poured out like in making a covenant. Some translations translate it as “make an alliance”. The Amplified says it this way.

“Woe (judgment is coming) to the rebellious children,” declares the LORD, “Who carry out a plan, but not Mine, And make an alliance [by pouring out a libation], but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin;
Isaiah 30:1 (AMP)

The message of Isaiah chapter 30 is how God’s people have turned from trusting God to trusting Egypt. Instead of allowing God to be our cover, our anointing, our alliance, we have surrendered to Egypt and the ways of the world to cover us. We form an alliance with the world rather than with our God. We allow man to cover us when God is our covering, our anointing.

Egypt represents the world. We have allowed the world’s doctrine and ways to infiltrate and control our thoughts. We build our own kingdoms instead of allowing Jesus to establish His Ekklesia. We have accepted the covering of the world and not the covering of God. We have accepted a covering that is not of God’s Spirit. We must repent and turn from our wicked ways.

We have built a whole complex doctrine concerning covering in the “church” when it is only mentioned once in the New Testament in I Corinthians, chapter 11 referring to a woman covering her head when praying or prophesying. They use this to prove men have authority over women, and leaders must be under some authority or covering in their “ministries”.

We will cover the question on women later. We are taught (both leaders and saints) in order to avoid error, we must be submitted to the authority of someone who is higher than us. Leaders must submit to higher authority in order to have a justifiable ministry and a covering. If we are all ministers, all servants, all equal in the sight of God, then the only one higher than anyone of us is God.

It is this lie of the enemy that keeps many of God’s true leadership in bondage. It will cause us to accept a counterfeit system when God wants us to break free. To many, it is a sign of submission, but it is a religious activity not true submission. It was this delusion that assisted the assembly I was a part of, in accepting a counterfeit.

Covering and accountability are somewhat related, but they both come out of religion and are taught by man. When you look at ministering as serving and preaching as merely proclaiming, the only covering you have is the anointing of the Holy Spirit on you as you speak God-given words. God is our covering, our anointing. He is the one we are accountable to, period! These concepts are developed as doctrine in order to constrain us, to control us, to hold us back! We must be free.

We do not free ourselves out of rebellion and anger, but we free ourselves because we know it is the will of the Father heart of God. The chains that hold us back are not chains of a loving Lord. We do not have to live with them.

Accountability – Hierarchy

The hierarchical structure in the “church”, is one proof that it is not the Ekklesia. Jesus told us how He would build and it would not be with the use of this hierarchical structure.

When we see the hierarchical food chain, accountability always follows. In the world system most people are accountable to someone higher.

In the “local church” setting, saints are traditionally accountable to their pastor. Pastors are accountable to the denomination or network’s leadership team. If they truly are independent, then pastors must find another peer for accountability. No one really explains to whom the people at the very top are accountable.

The prophetic and apostolic “churches” created a new dilemma. According to their doctrine, apostles are higher than pastors and bishops trump all. Pastors should be covered and accountable to an apostle or a bishop, so now everyone wants to be an apostle or bishop. Apostles supposedly are good at correction and discipline; pastors are too gentle or weak.

With the hierarchical system, we are accountable to God, as well as our leaders. I have witnessed first-hand, so-called apostles come into churches and berate people publicly while the so-called pastor sat and watched. The pastor did nothing because he had submitted himself and the congregation to the “apostle”. These false apostles tear the sheep to shreds, and leave them in the pastor’s care to heal.

No where in the Bible does it tell us this is God’s way. No where in the Bible does it tell us that we are accountable to our leaders. We are accountable to God. Do a search of the Bible for the word “account” or “accountable”. Once again, leaders lead. They are not called as managers or directors or enforcers.

Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. So, let’s stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

Romans 14:12,13 (NLT)

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

Hebrews 4:13 (NLT)

It is hard to fathom a place where no one is in charge, with no one in control so the group does not descend into chaos. As we submit to God's way, He will give us clearer revelation. If that is the design of Jesus for His Ekklesia then it has to be possible. Maturity is the key. Without maturity there can be no unity.

Correction/Discipline/Chastise

Many would be surprised that the word discipline doesn't even exist in the King James version of the New Testament. The word "chastise" is used several times which means "to teach, correct or in some cases, punish". Every Bible passage using this word refers to God as the one who chastises. Just because the Bible does not mention something does not mean it is wrong. God is righteousness and He determines what is right or wrong.

We often pick up an idea from reading the Bible or some teaching and it gets turned into a doctrine. People, without thinking, surmise it is from God just because the "church" teaches the doctrine or practices the doctrine. That is not necessarily true. Each individual, discerning if it is God or man, must decide for themselves whether they will submit to the policy or not.

Discipline and chastisement are often used as control mechanisms, as is other doctrine not inherently based in the Bible but practiced in the "church". It still requires submission from the one being discipline and is not to be used to control or manipulate.

Since the Bible does mention correction, we will take a look at it. A person might be shocked to find that it is servants who do the correcting. Servants are those saints who have submitted to the Lordship of Jesus and are committed to obey Him. It does not say only those leaders called to the leadership gifts from Jesus.

There are horrible abuses in what we call the "church" today. There are gross sins that should never happen. It is not

that these should be overlooked and ignored. But much of it is because we have instituted a false ekklesia with a Babylonian control structure that has provided an incubator for such actions. We must be careful who we follow and with whom we relate and allow to correct us. Holy Spirit, show us the way.

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

II Timothy 2:22-26 (NLT)

A servant of the Lord must be able to teach and instruct. We are all servants, all ministers. The New King James version says it this way:

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

II Timothy 2:24-26 (NKJV)

As we mature in the things of God, we will find a people submitting to each other, preferring one another and operating from a pure heart because of the love of God in their hearts. Thoughts may turn to Ananias and Sapphira, thinking Peter was in charge and he was bringing correction.

In Acts chapter four, the young Ekklesia had just received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. Verse 32 says that the people were with one heart and one soul. That is important.

They decided their possessions were not theirs, but they should share. The Ekklesia living in Jerusalem felt they

should do this of their own free will, though it was not required. No one was pressured or coerced. They wanted funds to provide to the Ekklesia so they could obey the commandment given by Jesus to take the gospel of the Kingdom to the whole world. They wanted to support each other.

The apostles who had been with Jesus and had experienced all the miracles and teachings were there helping the Ekklesia find direction. The believers gave the money from the items they sold to the apostles to distribute. The apostles knew Jesus better than most because they had travelled with Him and would know probably best how to start this new process of impacting the world.

The apostles were not there establishing new rules or doctrine by organizing the saints. They were finding a solution to the problem of how do they start to follow the command Jesus had given them, to go into all the world. They needed funds to be able to do this.

Ananias sold some land and came to Peter with part of the money he received, but not all of it. Evidently, he had promised all of the proceeds, not just part of it. The rest of the story is well known to us as found in chapter five of Acts.

The Bible does not tell us how Ananias died. It doesn't tell us Peter command death to him. Some writers of the 4th century A.D. believe Peter actually killed him and did the same to his wife when she came. Others believe that the apostles were in charge of the Ekklesia and must keep them in line in order to keep them from going astray. They believe God struck Ananias and Saphirra dead to not only illustrate the seriousness of disobedience to God, but also disobedience to His leadership.

We do not have all the answers. We do know after this event there was a fear that fell over the Ekklesia, but there were also many miracles. If Peter had just killed two people out of anger for lying, why were people lined up on the street waiting for him to pass by in hopes that his shadow would fall on them and heal them? There was no organizing done to form a

“church”. The apostles disciplined (taught) so the saints would mature before they were scattered because of the persecution.

There are those who talk about the God of the New Testament as different from the God of the Old Testament. The God of the old was angry and killed people. The God of the new was full of mercy and love. God is both. He is a God of love, but He is also a God of justice. He is righteousness. He cannot sin and only He can determine what is right.

Why are there no more examples of people dying in the early Ekklesia in the Bible or in other early writings? I do not know. I do tend to believe this was God’s doing, rather than Peter’s. There are two points I want us to see that pertain to the topic of this book. First, this has nothing to do with “church” leadership and the authority of apostles or other leaders of the saints to bring discipline or correction. There is nothing in these chapters in Acts that indicate this.

Second, in verse 32 of chapter four, they were all of them in one heart and one soul. There is a oneness, a unity, that is coming to the Ekklesia that we have not experienced before. The early Ekklesia may have tapped into that unity between the Ekklesia and the Head, who is Jesus and operated as the one new man, if only for a short time.

Verse four of chapter five holds a revelatory key. I do not fully understand it yet. Peter said something strange. He told them before they sold the land it was theirs to do whatever they wanted to do. He told them that even after they sold it and had the money in their hands, the money was theirs to do whatever they wanted to do with it. Had they actually in their hearts committed earlier or were they planning all along to only give a portion?

What changed? When and for what purpose did it change? We don’t know, but I truly sense there is more to this story than what we see. The problem wasn’t because they didn’t give the entire amount. The problem began because they lied to the Holy Spirit.

If every man who lied to God were struck dead, there would not be many people alive. What they were doing was

more than just a lie. Peter said Satan had entered the heart of Ananias. Peter told Sapphira that she had schemed with her husband to tempt or test the Holy Spirit. That word “tempt” in the Greek is the same word used when Satan tempted Jesus and when the Pharisees tempted Jesus.

They were challenging Holy Spirit and His character to prove Himself to them at some level we do not understand as yet. This young Ekklesia had just received the gift of the Holy Spirit, which according to this verse is the Spirit of holiness. There was a holiness in the unity of this group that had not been experienced before.

For God’s call on our lives is not to a life of compromise and perversion but to a life surrounded in holiness. Therefore, whoever rejects this instruction isn’t rejecting human authority but God himself, who gives us his precious gift—his Spirit of holiness.

I Thessalonians 4:7,8 (TPT)

I do not fully understand it, but I do believe when we come into oneness as the body with Jesus the Head of the body, we will walk in the Spirit of holiness in a whole new level. That type of anointing cannot be touched.

Isaiah 35 records the future glory of Mount Zion, the Ekklesia. We will see the glory of the Lord, His excellency. There is a highway in that place called the Highway of Holiness. There are so many secrets and mysteries God has for us to unfold if we will seek His face. I strongly believe we are headed into a day when the holiness of God means something again. I don’t know exactly what that looks like, but I think the early Ekklesia gave us a glimpse of some of it.

God is going to have a holy people. Judgment comes first to the house of God. Holiness only comes through the fire. God is holy and He is fire. That is what we know. This is not something we want to take lightly. It is a serious matter before God and should put the fear of God in all of us, just as it did in the early Ekklesia.

There are many people in leadership today who claim to speak for God. If the fire of holiness would suddenly come

back, there would be far less claiming to speak for God. God will have a holy bride to present to His Son. She will have to go through the fire.

This book is not meant to provide every scriptural proof there is of what I am teaching. It is to whet your appetite to search things out for yourself and trust Holy Spirit to lead you into truth. Once again, do a search of the Bible for the word “correct” or “correction.”

Obey Rulers or Not

Not only does the Bible not tell us we are accountable to our leaders there is nowhere in scripture where we are told to explicitly obey our leaders because they are our covering. Here is a verse some people use to discredit this statement. Let’s take a look at what it really says.

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)

As already stated, the Ekklesia does not have rulers, but it has leaders that lead if we are willing to follow. Jesus told His disciples they were not to rule over people. Let’s dissect this verse and look at it in a couple of different translations.

Obey –

Most translations translate the word in the Greek as “obey”. There are a couple of stronger Greek words that strictly mean obey which the author of Hebrews could have chosen to use. Instead, the author chose this particular word which means “be persuaded”, “have confidence in”, or “trust”.

Who Rule -

This Greek word means one who leads or goes before you. In fact, the New King James version has a note on this word, saying “leader”. It cannot be translated correctly as

“those who rule over you” because Jesus said that is not how His people would lead. In fact, He emphatically declares that His leadership would be servants. The writer of Hebrews surely would not contradict Jesus, the One who establishes the Ekklesia.

The writer is saying “have confidence in your leaders”. We are to trust those we allow to lead us to Jesus. If we can’t trust them, then we should not be following them.

Be Submissive -

The Greek word for “submit” used in this verse in the King James version means “don’t resist”, “yield”. We will talk about submission more in a later chapter, but for now just be aware that it does not mean “obey”. It does not speak of authority.

Watch -

This word means “sleepless, alert, attentive”. These leaders are to care enough for the saints to pay attention to their needs. They know how much the Lord loves His people and they love them and want what is best for them. They desire to see the saints mature so they can get what they need directly from God and not have dependence on them anymore.

Over Your Souls -

This Greek word means “of yours” or “concerning you or yours”. The Common English Bible states it this way, which is closer to the truth of what this verse really means. There are other things wrong with this translation that will be covered soon.

Rely on your leaders and defer to them, because they watch over your whole being as people who are going to be held responsible for you. They need to be able to do this with pleasure and not with complaints about you, because that wouldn’t help you. Hebrews 13:17 (CEB)

God chooses leaders and gives them the gifts needed to lead. They follow God with a whole heart. They lead the saints to Jesus and the understanding of God’s heart. When we find good leaders who are not driving the sheep but leading the

sheep to the heart of God, then we can trust them and listen to them and follow them. They are responsible before God for what they teach and where they lead. They are responsible for loving and leading the saints.

These leaders are not responsible to control the sheep and treat them like their own personal workers. They are not responsible for the sheep. The sheep are responsible for themselves. Knowing and testing the spirits of leaders to see if they are truly following the heart of God is the responsibility of the saints. Saints then determine whether they should listen to the leaders and choose to follow them or not.

Give Account -

The word for “give” means “to deliver”. The word used here translated as “account” is “LOGOS”, meaning “word, decree, speak, a doctrine or teaching”. It is translated word 218 times and account only eight times. In other words, these leaders are responsible before God to bring saints the WORD of God that God has directed them to bring. They want to be able to deliver that word with joy.

Notice the Common English Bible adds “for you” when discussing responsibility for the people. Those words do not exist in the original text. We must take responsibility to research and seek out a matter when it comes to translation. Most translations add words here and there to try to make the meaning of the verse clearer, but it is not always accurate.

There is nothing in the original Greek that indicates these leaders have responsibility for the people. It simply means these leaders have a responsibility before God to deliver the Word that was on God’s heart for these saints.

The Ekklesia has leaders. We will recognize them because we see Jesus in them. We will know by the Spirit of God in us if the leaders are mature and following God with a whole heart. Leaders teach and help saints to move into maturity. But they are not responsible for us.

Leaders are not leaders because they say they are. They are leaders because there are people following them, not out of coercion but because they have something to offer the

followers. We are always to follow Jesus. When we recognize Jesus in others, we may follow them as they follow Jesus. Any time they deviate from following Jesus, we do not follow them. We must always hear the voice of the Lord for ourselves and follow our Lord. Paul even said it was okay to follow him as he followed Christ.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

I Corinthians 11:1 (KJV)

We are always looking for a successful model, a plan with clear steps we can follow to achieve a certain outcome. God doesn't work that way. He expects us to use our own uniqueness and follow His direction. We are all individuals and we are all to serve God by listening to Him directly and doing what He says to do in the way He says to do it.

We are not clones. Too many false leaders today are trying to make clones of us. They want us to look and act like them. True leaders, who really care about us, will encourage us in our God-given uniqueness.

After examining this verse word by word, here is my paraphrase for this scripture found in Hebrews 13:17.

“Have confidence in those who lead you, those who have a love and concern for your well-being. Yield to their instruction because they know how important it is that the word they speak and the things they do are directly from God Himself specifically for you. They need to be free to bring God's word to you without you complaining about them, because they are there to help you mature in the things of God. That would bring them great joy. “

“Ordinary Men”

Taking a quick walk through the book of Acts, we see in chapter six, the believers multiplied greatly. The twelve apostles wanted to help facilitate the growth of the many new believers, but they felt their first responsibility was to teach and

to pray, so they chose some “ordinary men” to do certain things that they had been doing to serve the saints. These apostles were the original men who had been close to Jesus. They knew personally the Son of God. They had heard Him teach first hand. They had seen His face and touched Him.

The apostles chose some men who had a good reputation. They were ordinary saints who loved God and were not well known. They were full of the Holy Spirit and that made them extraordinary. They are no different than saints and leaders in the Ekklesia today. We are more than ordinary. We are all designed by God as unique and special individuals.

Among those chosen was Stephen. He was just a mature saint. Paul, or Saul as he was called then, was actively going from house to house pulling believers into the streets and killing them at this same time. Stephen was arrested and then stoned to death with the approval of Saul.

Before Stephen died that day by stoning, this “ordinary man”, without title or ordination, preached a dynamic sermon. In reality it was just the response to a question asked by the high priest who was the religious leader of the Jews in that day. The event is found in Acts chapter seven.

Acts chapter six says this “ordinary man” was full of God’s grace and power and he performed many miracles. He knew scripture. He knew the truth concerning Jesus, His Lord. This is a perfect picture of the Ekklesia. Every believer should be full of God’s grace and power and performing miracles, actively using the gifts the Holy Spirit has placed within them wherever the Spirit leads them to go, teaching and walking in truth every step they take. Every day they live always prepared to give a reason for the hope in them no matter what situation they face.

Acts chapter eight opens with persecution being widespread. The apostles stayed in Jerusalem, but the believers were scattered! The “ordinary men” (believers, both men and women) were scattered and they proclaimed the gospel.

But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. Acts 8:4 (NLT)

Believers preached without a license or a certificate from a Bible college. Many “churches” would put a stop to this if any of their congregation was out there somewhere preaching without their permission. Well, to be fair, the Ekklesia was in its infancy. Much of that type of control would come later. The word again for preaching, means proclaiming. They were just obeying the command Jesus had given His people before returning to heaven.

Performing miracles is not just for those called as apostles. We, the saints of God, proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom because there is a burning in our heart to speak about our Savior and His Kingdom to someone, anyone. It matters not whether it is one person, a dozen people or thousands. It doesn't matter if it in a house, a café, a sports stadium, a theatre, on a front lawn, or in a park.

Chapter eight of Acts is also where we find Phillip, one of the others chosen as a servant. The crowds listened intently. They saw the miraculous signs and demons being cast out of people. Many were healed all at the hands of this “ordinary man”.

But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:4-8 (NLT)

One last example, in Acts chapter nine we find the story of Saul meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus. This is Saul who would become Paul, one of the greatest apostles of all times. Saul persecuted Christians and was the one who gave the order to stone Stephen. Saul was blinded by the light of the

Lord and had to be led around by others. Jesus told Saul that a man would come and lay hands on him to receive back his sight.

That man was Ananias, an ordinary man, not an apostle or pastor or teacher. God told Ananias where to find Saul and to go to him. Ananias had heard how this man had been killing Christians and he had concerns. God assured Ananias that He had future plans for Saul's life. Ananias needed to be obedient for the sake of the Kingdom and he was.

The role of Ananias was just as important as Paul's role. There are no second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God, only obedient children. Ordinary men and women doing what God asks of them and then God does the rest.

The Nicolaitans

The Nicolaitans are mentioned twice in John's letters in the book of Revelation to the Ekklesia. The only verses in the Bible referencing this group are found in chapter two. The Ekklesia living in one city was praised for having nothing to do with them, while the other was challenged because they tolerated them.

Jesus, speaking to John, likened the Nicolaitans to the followers of Balaam in the Old Testament. Balaam was hired by the king of Moab to curse Israel, but when he tried, instead of cursing, words of blessing came out of his mouth. Balaam then strategized with the king of Moab to try to destroy God's people. The name Balaam likely comes from two Hebrew words which mean "destroy" and "people". Balaam was a prophet for hire.

The word Nicolaitans comes from a word that means "to conquer people". There are similarities between Balaam in the Old Testament and the Nicolaitans. In both cases an attempt was made by religious leaders to compromise truth; to woo the people away from their first love and replace it with something else. In the case of Balaam, it was to lure the Israelites into illicit relationships with the women of Moab.

With the Ekklesia it was to lure the people of God into relationship with the worldly systems represented by Babylon the harlot.

The letters by John to the Ekklesia were written in the very last years of the first century. It hadn't taken long for heresy and false doctrine to make an inroad into the Ekklesia. The Nicolaitans desire was for control over the people. The word used for people in the Greek is laos and is how we get the English word for laity. The Nicolaitans pushed this doctrine that created the division between leadership and laity (ordinary people).

There have been many books written on this topic over the years and many of them quote from ancient manuscripts and writings by historians of that day. You might find it an interesting study. Early in its development, the Ekklesia was being enticed to mix the worldly system with what Jesus Himself had established. They were being coaxed into compromise, and compromise they did.

In the world system there were rulers. There were those who lorded authority over the people. By the third century AD the transfer had been pretty much complete. Buildings established for strictly "church" purposes began to appear in the middle of the third century AD. The early Ekklesia became deceived and disappeared into the hierarchical "church" system, now compromised and a far cry from the Ekklesia that Jesus came to establish. It exists in this perverted form today. There is a hierarchy in the leadership of the "church" and they rule over the people, the laity.

All is not lost. A paradigm shift is in the making. It is the seventh day. It is the Lord's Day and God is removing all wood, hay and stubble in order to establish His true Ekklesia. It is His day. He will have things His way. If the great apostles who had spent time with Jesus when He walked the earth, could not keep apostasy and false doctrine from creeping in, what makes us think we can undo the damage that has been done to the Ekklesia?

I do not know all the answers, but I know what God has said. The glory of the latter house will be greater than the former. Jesus is coming back for a bride without spot or wrinkle. He is coming back for an Ekklesia that has made the enemies of God His footstool.

He is God. He has given man 6000 years (6 days) to get it right, and we have tried every means except for complete surrender to the Lordship of our Lord. On the 7th day, we surrender to His Lordship. It is His day! His bride is making herself ready. The bride is holy and has eyes only for her Lord. She will not be distracted; He waits for her!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 14

1 – If you are not familiar with using a lexicon to look up Greek and Hebrew words and what they mean, take the time to become familiar using either an actual book or an online version. What benefit does this have in your Bible study efforts?

2 – Do a further study on the words mentioned in this chapter using the lexicon. Document any additional notes and questions you may have.

3 – Describe the difference between the “church” as you see it existing today versus what the author describes as the Ekklesia. Does it make sense to you, or do you still have questions and concerns? If so, document and pray asking for wisdom and understanding.

4 – How do you see things changing when the saints get an understanding that they are the ones who are to preach and teach the gospel of the Kingdom?

5 – Evaluate and document what you have been taught about covering. Has your understanding of this doctrine changed after reading this chapter? Explain.

6 – Stop and think about the Ekklesia operating with love and unity and maturity and no hierarchy. Do you think this is possible? Do you see what a huge paradigm shift this is from the current model of the “church”? Is it possible that the model of the “church” designed from the early centuries, has been wrong all this time? What reaction do you have to that thought? What, if anything, do you believe God wants you to do about it?

7 – How does what the author presents concerning correction and discipline differ from what you have been taught? Does it make sense to you? What if any questions, do you still have? Document and expect God to answer those questions.

8 – Think about the incident with Ananias and Sapphira. What are your thoughts concerning this event? Do you believe these things could happen in the Ekklesia today? Document your reasoning.

9 – Document your thoughts on obeying our “church” leaders. What questions or concerns do you have? Again, pray and ask God for clarification.

10 – Have you heard or read about the Nicolaitans before? Do you see how the separation between the leadership and what is called the “laity” happened? They were mentioned in the Bible, in the early Ekklesia. Can you see how satan infiltrated the Ekklesia very early in its beginning? Does this help you to believe that we have been wrong in our understanding of the Ekklesia and what Jesus is building from almost the very beginning? What do you think needs to happen to get us back on track?

CHAPTER 15

EXPOSING MORE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

We have seen how the early Ekklesia, the leaders and saints, worked together to spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God and how the Ekklesia was compromised by false teaching and heresy. Many religious traditions and activities resulted over the years as Babylon, satan's kingdom infiltrated the "church".

Jesus is truth and the more we allow Him to speak, the more truth is revealed. We are going to see the Ekklesia fully established as Jesus intended it to be. Religion and tradition have in the past hindered us from moving forward, but will hinder us no more. We will continue searching for truth and will not be held back. When we understand truth, it sets us free.

We need to dissect what we have been taught. We need to evaluate what the Bible really says concerning certain words and phrases used regularly in religious circles. We have to do research and pray for revelation like never before. Words used centuries ago did not always mean then what they mean today. We have to be able to separate what man has taught us from what Holy Spirit teaches us.

The Holy Spirit has the answers to our questions. It is true we only see in part, but the Bible teaches us we are kings and it is the privilege of kings to search out a matter. We will continue to expand our vision as we seek our Lord and search for truth.

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.
Proverbs 25:2 (AMP)

Titles/Gifts

Titles are words describing a job or function. When they are used with a name, they bring importance to that name

or person. They bring an idea of status, recognition, rank, achievement, hierarchy. The title may be earned through education. It may be bestowed as recognition for some achievement. The title may be achieved through passing tests and receiving a license.

Spiritual functions in the Bible, such as bishop, pastor, apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, deacon, disciple, elder, never were used as a title. All functions in the body of Christ are given by the grace of God, not by our own power and will. Paul never insisted he be addressed as Apostle Paul. He would say, "I am Paul, an apostle, a teacher, a servant to my Lord". Even Peter, who walked with Jesus, was never addressed with a title in scripture.

Hierarchy of control and authority in worldly systems always carries titles. We have talked about this previously. When hierarchy was introduced into the "church" in the early centuries, it was modeled after the worldly system of ruling complete with titles. Titles and status are completely against the teachings of Jesus and how His Ekklesia would be established.

Leadership gifts in the Bible of apostle, teacher, prophet, evangelist and pastor, given to the Ekklesia by Jesus, were never meant to be used as a title. They were used to describe what a person did or functioned as. They are all important, but there is not one position that is more important than the others. In New Testament times, the people understood what Paul meant when he said he was a teacher and an apostle. Today, not so much. That needs to change.

Let's look at the words used in the Bible that have turned into titles. This is not a complete repertoire on the subject.

Office

In recent days the word "office" has been used more frequently as the restoration of the truth concerning apostles and prophets has become more mainstream. Over time as

ministries grew into extremely large organizations with multiple “churches”, in order to reflect the rank and position within the ever-increasing size of the hierarchy, titles and terminology changed.

More people were operating with an apostolic and prophetic gift and calling themselves prophets. Were they prophets or just prophetic people? If they were prophets, were they assigned a particular place in the structural organization of the ministry, or were they just a part of the “laity”? The term “office of the prophet” and “office of the apostle” began to be used more and more to distinguish between those ordained and set apart by the ministry and those who were not.

Those who were set apart as operating in a particular gift and known in large circles suddenly started using the term Office of the Apostle, Office of the Prophet to distinguish themselves from the ordinary apostle and prophet. This was a sign of recognition for achieving a senior rank and could be placed over other prophets with a definitive right to a platform for ministry.

Once again, we take a couple of scripture verses and devise a whole doctrine around them. The word “office” appears in the King James version of the New Testament eight times. Three of those times, the word “office” is used when talking about the priests of the Old Testament. We will ignore these verses since they do not apply to the Ekklesia. They are referring to those under the Old Testament priesthood.

There are three other verses where the translators added the words “office of” when it wasn’t in the original text. Interestingly, two of these times they referred to deacons and one time to bishop. We will ignore these verses as well, since the word office is not found in the original Greek. After all you can’t build a doctrine on words that aren’t even there, or can you?

In reality there are only two verses in the King James version where the word “office” is used in the New Testament sense. An entire doctrine of special gifts operating from a

position of an “office” is based on two verses. Even one of these verses might not be considered to fit either.

This verse uses a Greek word that it is translated as “office” in only this verse. 33 other times, it is translated as some form of the word “ministry” or “service”.

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: Romans 11:13 (KJV)

The Passion Bible translates it the best.

Now, I speak to you who are not Jewish, since I am an apostle to reach the non-Jewish people. And I draw attention to this ministry as much as I can when I am among the Jews, hoping to make them jealous of what God has given to those who are not Jews, winning some of my people to salvation. Romans 11:13,14 (TPT)

Paul is not saying that he magnified or bragged about the importance of him being an apostle. He is drawing attention to the fact that God called him to use his apostolic gift among the Gentiles instead of the Jews. He wanted the Jews to be jealous enough to listen to the messages he taught.

Paul is not highlighting some tremendous new truth that his gift is so important that he has some sort of entitlement to an office. He is drawing attention to the fact that he is called to minister or serve the Gentiles, instead of the Jews.

The second scripture passage translates a different Greek word as “office” and is found in Romans also. This passage talks about the members of the body of Christ and that not everyone is the same. It means “doing, tasks, deeds”. Not everyone is called of God to do the same thing in the same way.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Romans 12:4,5 (KJV)

There is nothing in any of these verses that indicate any kind of hierarchical structure or implied control and rulership.

There is nothing to indicate that some gifts are more important and deserve more recognition than others. The concept of having an office is made-up doctrine. It is not scriptural.

Pastor

The Greek word used for “pastor” is translated as shepherd everywhere in the New Testament except for one verse. In most cases the word is referring to a literal shepherd who watches over sheep, not a leader of the Ekklesia. None of those references are about leadership in the Ekklesia, except for the one in Ephesians 4:11 where the five gifts given by Jesus to the Ekklesia are mentioned. That is the only verse in the New Testament where the word “pastor” is found.

The rest of the verses are either about Jesus as the Good Shepherd or about a true shepherd of sheep illustrated in a parable of Jesus. Yet, the “church” has built its entire hierarchical infrastructural doctrine upon a key figure in every “local church” known as the pastor. It is almost a universal belief that every “local church” must have a “pastor” in order to exist.

That belief is being reconsidered in many modern “churches”. In the eyes of the religious elite of today, an apostle seems to outrank a pastor. Unfortunately, everyone today wants to be an apostle or a prophet. Jesus does give the pastoral gift of leadership to some with a heart to shepherd and lead people, but they lead them to Jesus only. They never take center stage to control and drive. They don’t need a title.

Elder

The word elder simply refers to older, more mature people. It is the same word used in the verse that says “young men will see visions and old men will dream dreams”. The words elder, overseer and bishop are used often interchangeably and are for those who are mature in the faith

whose desire is to guard and protect the Ekklesia and help them mature. There is no indication that elders have control over God's people.

Deacon

The Greek word translated as "deacon" is used in scripture 37 times. Only twice is it translated as deacon. The word in other places is translated as "minister to" or "serve". The word is actually a verb, not a noun, so it does not refer to someone or something, but rather refers to an action. It is never used as a title or position.

Bishop

The Greek word used for "bishop" is the word from which we get the English word episcopal. The Greek word is a combination of two words, "over" and "seer". The word bishop appears four times in the King James version of the New Testament. In other translations it is rendered either overseer or guardian. It actually means a guardian of souls or watching over someone's welfare. In this scripture verse, Jesus is referred to as Bishop in the King James version.

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. I Peter 2:25 (KJV)

Here is the Modern English version where it is translated for what it actually means.

For you were as sheep going astray, but now have been returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. I Peter 2:25 (MEV)

When using a Hebrew/Greek Lexicon be careful in your research. Many times, the author uses the current understanding of the word in religious circles when giving their explanation for the meaning of the word. Many "church"

practices have developed over time and were not in existence at the time the Bible was written. Look for places where the lexicon notes how the word was used in other writings of Bible days such as from Plato or Socrates or historians. You will get a more accurate sense of the meaning of the word at the time it was written.

Here is another verse using the word “bishop”.

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
I Timothy 3:1,2 (KJV)

This is one of those occasions mentioned earlier concerning the word “office”. The words “the office of” are not in the original Greek. Being a bishop is not about being in a position of authority or about assuming a title with control. It is about having a desire in one’s heart to teach and lead the Ekklesia to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, which is Jesus.

It is about being a leader so that others will want to follow. It is about having the ability through the Holy Spirit to look into the heart of someone and see what they need. It is about having the heart of God enough to meet that need. If you desire to be a leader after God’s heart, who is following Jesus the Good Shepherd then this is how you must live.

Overseer

In the original Kings James version, there is only one verse with a Greek word translated “overseer”. All other times that word is translated as “bishop”. We have already discussed the meaning of bishop. In the New King James, there are two verses that translate a Greek word as “overseer”. In both cases the Greek word is a derivative of the word translated other places as “bishop”.

Let's explore this passage from the original King James Version as well as the New Living translation. Neither one gives us a good understanding of what this passage of scripture really means.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Acts 20:28,29 (KJV)

So guard your hearts. Be true shepherds over all the flock and feed them well. Remember, it was the Holy Spirit who appointed you to guard and oversee the churches that belong to Jesus, the Anointed One, which he purchased and established by his own blood. "I know that after I leave, imposters who have no loyalty to the flock will come among you like savage wolves. Acts 20:28, 29 (NLT)

The author of the book of Acts wrote in verse 17 of this chapter 20, that Paul had called together the elders (the older, mature ones) of the Ekklesia who were in Ephesus to talk with them. In verse 28, he told them to guard their hearts, to take heed and pay attention not only to the flock who belonged to Jesus but also to pay attention to themselves individually. Paul emphasized the people did not belong to them, the elders, but they belonged to Jesus.

Paul cared for these people, so it was important to him. He knew there were wolves, imposters, who were not loyal to the people, who didn't really care for them and love them. He knew these imposters would try to rule the sheep instead of care for them.

The Greek word used for the translation of "over", in relationship to the flock, is rarely translated as over. More than 2100 times it is translated "in" or "among" or "with". The elders are not over the Ekklesia or flock, they are in the Ekklesia or among the Ekklesia. Paul told the elders to be true guardians of the sheep as well as yourselves as you live among them. Some of the sheep have not reached maturity yet and might need guidance to follow Jesus.

The word translated “made” can be translated as “lay” or “lay down” or “appoint”. It is a passive word requiring no action and implies a laying down rather than a different word that is translated the same but is used in an upright active position. These leaders were not being put into some position of authority over the sheep. This passage in no way signifies a ruling or controlling or managing.

Overseers we already discussed as meaning guardian of souls or those who watch out for another’s welfare. Once again, it is merely signifying that the elders are a part of the sheep flock. They are just older and more mature. They live and lie down with the sheep. They are not separated and treated differently. They help guide sheep on the right path.

When you put all that together, the scripture is not about oversight and control. It is saying “Pay attention to yourselves and those among whom God has placed you. Teach them for it is the Holy Spirit who has placed you in their midst to be a help to them and a guardian of their souls; to look out for their welfare and help them on their road to maturity. They are the Ekklesia which Jesus purchased with His own blood. Help protect them for there will be those who come as wolves and do not love and care for the sheep.”

There is absolutely nothing in scripture that says that these guardians are rulers of the Ekklesia or in charge of them in anyway. In fact, there are many scripture passages which encourage us all to watch over and guard each other. When Paul was there, he guarded them and taught them, but then he left.

God places us where He chooses for whatever period of time He chooses. We teach and support those we are among for as long as we are there. There is no title of Overseer or Bishop or Elder that gives a person charge over a set flock of saints. No one rules over the sheep. Jesus is their Shepherd. We are to guard and watch each other’s back.

What we call “church” today is not what Jesus calls the Ekklesia. We must get a clear understanding in our spirits of what the Ekklesia really is. We must see what it is Jesus is

building. We must be able to see what man is building and how it differs from what God is building. Once we see the truth we must decide. Will we serve man or God?

Licensing/Ordination/Appointment

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

Titus 1:5 (NKJV)

The original King James version says “ordain elders”. Ordain and appoint are used interchangeably in the New Testament. Paul was leaving the island of Crete but there were still things to do, so he left Titus there to finish the things that were not yet done.

One of the things Titus was to do was to recognize the elders by the Spirit of God and declare them or show them to be what they were, so others would recognize the gifts in them. This was to help the believers to know how to live by discernment and to know who to follow.

The Greek word translated “appoint” or “ordain” can mean “to put in charge of” or “to rule”, but because of what Jesus said to His disciples, we must look for a better interpretation. Jesus said that His followers would not rule or lord over people, but would serve people.

Another meaning in the Greek that seems more appropriate is to “show to be” or “to appoint to something”. The older, mature saints, which the Bible calls elders, were those who had been discipled and had a strong relationship with God. They followed Jesus with a whole heart and they were to be revealed or “shown to be” to the Ekklesia so the Ekklesia would understand who was trustworthy and had their best interest at heart. The elders were also tasked to help finish the work that needed to be done in Crete, as well as to further the Kingdom of God in Crete after Titus left.

The New Living translation says it this way.

I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you.

Titus 1:5 (NLT)

Paul goes on in the letter to his spiritual son with instructions on how to recognize these ones who are elders, and what their responsibility will be. Paul does not give authority to Titus over the elders, nor does he say the elders were to have authority over the believers. They have authority over the work of their own hands, the work of the Kingdom. In other words, they were responsible before God for everything they said or did in His Name.

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

I Timothy 2:7 (KJV)

The King James version here uses the word ordained. The New King James version uses the word appointed. Again, these words are used interchangeably many times in the New Testament. Who appointed or ordained Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles? Jesus did when Saul, later known as Paul, came face-to-face with Him on the road to Damascus.

God is the one who ordains, appoints, or sets apart His people for the calling on their lives, for the tasks they are prepared to do. It is God who declares the calling on a person's life and presents it to the Ekklesia. Ordained or appointed has nothing to do with a certificate or license to minister. It is the process of recognizing the gift that God has given to an individual, so others are aware of it and can draw from that gift.

Today, in most cases, you must go to Bible School or Seminary in order to receive a certificate of license to conduct religious services or form a "church" or religious organization. A certificate is usually required to either be licensed or ordained. These terms are usually defined by the organization, denomination or network that issues the license or ordination certificate.

This doctrine is not from God. This is just another religious tradition and ritual that has been instituted to control and isolate people into groups based on interpretation of scripture. Yet, once again, a reminder that it is contrary to everything Jesus taught. God has called all of us as a part of the Ekklesia to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. There is no need to be certified by man and given approval to do so.

There are organizations online that will license people to enable them to start their own “churches”, or perform wedding ceremonies. Many who have left “churches” to start their own ministries are using this method to obtain title and authenticity. Others are doing it just to be able to perform marriage ceremonies for their friends and families.

Most of these organizations are non-profit. Many of these organizations are donating money they receive to other organizations. Some of these organizations they support are places that perform abortions, world religion organizations, and other abhorrent businesses.

The 501C3 certification by the government to operate as a non-profit organization puts the government right in the middle of “church” business. More and more “church” leaders are finding ways to get out from under its control. If one is interested in this topic there is plenty of information available on the internet if you search for it. There are other ways to organize, if one truly believes God wants them to form an organization.

Planting Churches

The planting of “churches” is the term used for starting a new “church”. It usually begins with gathering believers together and assigning someone to be over them until a permanent pastor can be hired.

There is nowhere in the Bible that indicates the primary function of an apostle is to “plant churches”, nor does it indicate it is the goal of the great commission. The goal of the

great commission is to proclaim the message of God's Kingdom which includes salvation.

Who else disciples and baptizes, other than the "church"? And we are called to go into all the world and do these things, right? So, what other logical explanation is there other than planting "churches"? I know many pastors who believe if something is not sanctioned by the local "church" it is not directed by God. The "church" is thought to be the only mechanism through which these things happen.

Proponents of "church planting" use Acts, chapter 11 as proof of apostles as "church" planters. However, as we examine the book of Acts, we find it wasn't the apostles going into all the world. Believers were scattered because of the persecution in Jerusalem from Jews who didn't believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

Eventually the message of the Kingdom, declared through the believers, reached the ears of the Gentiles and what was happening in Antioch got the attention of the apostles who had remained in Jerusalem. Several, including Barnabas, went to Antioch to verify what was happening.

After seeing what was going on in Antioch, Barnabas went looking for Paul. Paul after all had been called as an apostle to the Gentiles. Barnabas found Paul and they returned to Antioch and remained with the believers for a year, teaching them. In this place the disciples were first called Christians. This is the basis for the doctrine of "church planting". These same proponents of "church planting" then use Acts 13 to further justify this concept with the sending forth of Paul and Barnabas.

There were prophets and teachers in the Ekklesia in Antioch and they were fasting and praying when Holy Spirit led them to pray for Paul and Barnabas and to send them forth to do the work that Holy Spirit was calling them to do. It says nothing about "building churches".

Wherever God sent Paul and Barnabas, they discipled or trained the saints in the way of the Kingdom, in order for the saints to mature and be able to participate in the Ekklesia

by advancing the Kingdom of God themselves. They followed the pattern of saints becoming disciples and maturing into the Ekklesia.

God sent His people into all the world, leading people to Jesus, establishing them in Biblical truths as a part of the Ekklesia that Jesus was building, and teaching them to observe the teachings of the Lord. They met in different places at different times. There was never a building or place that was established as a “church” until the middle of the third century after Jesus died. It was the people in a particular place who were established as a part of the Ekklesia. There was even a prayer meeting on the banks of a river.

It is noteworthy that most of the letters written in the New Testament were written to the whole body of believers who lived in a particular city. Most of them were written by Paul. If the Ekklesia group in the city receiving the letter had pastors, or someone else designated as a “head” or shepherd who was “in charge” of the sheep, it seems it would have been more appropriate to address the letters to the leadership who would then share them with the congregation. But the writers don’t address leadership for the most part.

- Romans – to the saints
- I Corinthians – to the Ekklesia of God, to the saints
- II Corinthians – to the Ekklesia and all the saints
- Galatians – to the Ekklesia
- Ephesians – to the saints and the faithful
- Philippians – to the saints and to the bishops and deacons (to the saints and those who have a heart to guard and protect the saints and to those whose heart is to serve the saints)
- Colossians – to the saints and faithful brethren
- I Thessalonians – to the Ekklesia
- II Thessalonians – to the Ekklesia
- I Timothy – to Timothy, a spiritual son of Paul’s
- II Timothy – also to Timothy
- Titus – to Titus, another spiritual son of Paul’s

- Philemon – to Philemon who was a fellow laborer in Christ, and also to a few others who were called fellow soldiers. Some of the Ekklesia met in one of these fellow soldiers’ house. The letter was also addressed to them. There is no mention that this man was pastor, apostle, leader of any kind, just a fellow soldier for the cause of Christ.
- James – to the believers in the twelve tribes of Israel (Jews) who have been scattered. This letter was not written by Paul. The writer is still not writing to a “pastor” or an “apostle” who is “over the church”.
- I Peter – to the “strangers” who were scattered across different regions. “Strangers” is used in the King James version and means pilgrims or travelers. It refers to the believers who were scattered across the land because of persecution. This book was written by Peter who was later killed for the sake of Christ.
- II Peter – to those who have received faith through Jesus
- I John – doesn’t state who the letter is addressed to
- II John – addressed to an “elect” or “chosen” lady and her spiritual children and all those who know truth. Interesting that this is addressed to a woman.
- III John – to Gaius a fellow believer in the truth. It is not sure who Gaius is, but he was well thought of. It is possible it is the same Gaius who traveled with Paul.
- Jude – to those who are called, sanctified and preserved in Jesus.
- Revelation – Although this is not a letter in itself, the first three chapters detail letters to the “seven churches”. There is only one Ekklesia, even though it appears here to be seven. The letters in Revelation were written to the “angel” in each place. Other translations say messenger.

Headship

We tend to interpret things we read through the lens of the day in which we live. Although this may make a small difference when reading a book that was written a hundred years ago, it makes a huge difference if that book was written 2000 years ago or more. Thoughts and statements evolve over time. Meaning of words change drastically over time. While studying the Bible, we must take into consideration the change in the meaning of words, as well as the way people did things (their culture) in that particular time in history.

The word “head” in the New Testament is such a word. In Bible times the head was considered the source of life. It did not refer to the intellect or thinking. It did not refer to decision making or control. Decisions were made by the heart, not the head. If your head is chopped off, your life is gone. Consider this as you read:

But I would have you know that the head of the woman is the man, the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.

I Corinthians 11:3 (MEV)

Where in scripture do you find a hierarchy between Father, Son and Holy Spirit? There is nowhere in scripture where there is defined a hierarchy within the trinity as defined by need for control or rulership. They are all equal: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yes, Jesus submitted to the Father, but that was when He walked the earth as a human.

If there is no hierarchy in the Godhead then the rest of this verse cannot refer to hierarchy either. Paul is not talking about control, authority, or as master/lord. He is talking about the source of life. This is not a scripture to signify hierarchy in control. If we read the entire chapter, we see the truth of this.

When Paul wrote this verse, he was probably thinking about creation. God gave human life to Jesus to come to earth to die for us. Jesus gave life to Adam as the Word of Life, Creator of all things, and Adam gave life to Eve through the

process of being put to sleep and God using some of Adam's flesh to create Eve.

It is interesting that Paul makes this statement, then goes into a discussion of head covering and then comes to the conclusion in verses 11 and 12:

Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord. For just as the woman came from the man, so the man comes through the woman, but all things come from God. I Corinthians 11:11,12 (MEV)

But you can see clearly, Paul is not talking about headship in the sense that we talk about it, but is talking about the source of life.

This scripture passage is one used often to dictate that men rule over women. When I was growing up, women in my church were not permitted to teach males over the age of accountability. She could teach younger boys, but that was only permitted if there was no man available to teach them. Our Sunday school classes as a teenager were split up between boys and girls. We never met together. Men taught boys. Women taught girls.

On Wednesday nights we had prayer meetings. The pastor would give a fifteen-minute teaching and then we would divide up for prayer. Men would go to one room and women to another. Growing up in this type of environment is different. It even carried over into life outside the church.

My own mother was concerned about me accepting a job offer where I might be promoted over a man. Even in a secular position she believed it was wrong for a woman to teach or be over men. Men were the head of everything which meant control or rule. I could never be made a supervisor or manager if there were men in the group or I would be sinning. I never bought into that lie in my secular world, but within "church" life it took time for me to break out of this master/slave doctrine perpetrated by "church" teaching and tradition.

Instead of ruling and controlling others, including women, men are to bring life to those around them by living the life Christ has placed in them. We often think of a marriage as involving two people, a man and a woman. But in reality, a godly marriage involves not only two people, but God making three. It was never meant that a woman was to obey her husband explicitly. In a godly marriage, both husband and wife submit to God and to each other.

We don't find in scripture any place where the Son disagrees with the Father or the Holy Spirit. They are always in agreement. When a husband and wife disagree on anything, then the solution is to go to the third member of the marriage, God, and get His opinion because He is never wrong. In order for this to work, both husband and wife must be committed to live spiritually and not carnally, which is the true design of marriage by God.

I do know that not every Christian marriage has matured enough for this to happen. This is not a marriage counseling manual, so I am not going to expound any more than I have. We do want to become all that God intended us to be. We should strive for maturity in all things, including our marriages.

Submission

The concept of hierarchy and the need for someone to be in control stems back to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. It is the result of sin and the curse that came with man giving over control of the earth systems to the enemy. God told Eve that the curse would cause men to want to rule women. It wasn't God's plan. It was a result of sin.

But glory be to God, the curse was broken when Jesus died on the cross and rose again! The curse has no power over us anymore. God has restored our authority in the earth. In the beginning Adam and Eve were in equal authority. There was no contention. They were in total unity. There was no hierarchy.

If there is no hierarchy in God's Kingdom, if there is to be no controlling of people or ruling over people, then how does it work? How do we return to this type of unity in the Ekklesia where there is no control or rulership other than God? Well, believe it or not, it is through submission. Just not the way we have understood submission before.

It is noteworthy that the Greek word translated as submit, has not been found in many other writings of that day. It seems quite possible that it was a word coined by Paul because it was a spiritual word and impossible to accomplish apart from the Spirit of the Living God.

Use a Bible dictionary and a Greek/Hebrew lexicon when studying the Bible. It will help. But even using these tools we must be careful to separate what is of God and what is of man. These tools often refer to how words have been used over the centuries in the world of religion starting with the early centuries of the "church". This is one of those times.

Because the word was not used often in first century writings, it is hard to determine what the word actually meant at the time the Bible was written. The Spirit of God is the final authority on what it means. He will not contradict Himself. When you know God and His character, you know when things are presented to you that do not seem to fit in His character. Seek Him for answers always!

The word does not mean obedience even though it is translated as obey several times. If Paul believed women were to obey men in all things, he would have used a different word that emphatically meant obey.

Submission is something that is done at the will of the person submitting. A person cannot make another person submit to them. You, and only you, can choose to submit to someone. It is an act of your will, because your spirit leads you to prefer another person's will over your own.

This is also true in addressing submission in the husband/wife relationship. Submission does not demand that we submit in all circumstances. It does not apply when submission would cause us to sin. It does not apply when

submission would cause us harm. We are still to be led by the Spirit and do what God tells us to do, which at times might be directly opposed to the concept of submitting. As stated earlier, God is the third member in a marriage and He is always right.

Most of us have probably heard this illustration before concerning submission but it is worth repeating. A child is told to sit down by his parent, but he refuses to obey. Finally, he sits down, but he exclaims “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I am standing up on the inside.” This is another perfect example of what submission is not. It is the heart of a person that chooses to submit not someone forcing submission on us.

Submission is not something we do because we think it is required of us, it is who we are. When we love one another, we want others to experience joy and peace. We want unity, so where there is no ill effect, we give in to each other. It is not being a slave or a doormat or about making others subject to us, but rather having respect for each other. The Bible calls it “preferring one another”.

There was a woman with a prophetic gifting, to use as an illustration, who was attending an evening “church” service with her husband. A pastor called her forward and gave her a word concerning crowns. On the way home, her husband was not happy because the pastor had not called him to the front as well.

Religion might say he was right. The pastor would say the Lord had not given him a word for the husband. The husband also judged the word given as not being from God because crowns are always to be thrown at the feet of Jesus, and should never be considered as achievements. He felt his wife was in pride for accepting the word and he wanted her to submit to his way of thinking and repent.

The wife did not argue, but she prayed, “Lord, I do not want to be in pride. If there is any pride in me towards the gifts you have given me, show me and I will repent. But I am not

going to give up on the gifts you have given me. They are precious to me”.

She had been reading a book and when she started reading it again later, in the next chapter there were comments by the author on crowns and what they mean. God was confirming to her, the word that had been given to her. She was not in pride and should not submit to the will of her husband.

This example shows the true meaning of submission. She was basically saying by her actions, “Because you are my husband, I value your opinion, so I will check myself with God to see if there is pride in me and I will repent if He shows me the error of my ways. But at the same time, I value what God has given me, and I will use my inheritance from God to benefit mankind any time and place He chooses. I will not let anyone steal it”.

We, as people with a submissive spirit, will value input and advice from others. We will be kind in our remarks. We will seek God’s thoughts on the matter and repent when necessary. But no one will keep us from the gifts our Father God has given to us.

Husbands and wives should be sensitive enough to see what God is doing and what He wants to do in their spouse’s life. True love, the God kind of love, causes us to value each other and prefer one another. We should be excited to see what God is doing in each other’s life.

Submission should be a way of life for all God’s people in the Ekklesia. When we are led by the Spirit of God every step of the way, we will know when and where to be submissive. It will not be forced on us. It is voluntary by the choices we make, and when the Spirit of the Lord directs it, it is not always comfortable, but it is easy.

Women

We are not going to spend much more time on the topic of women in ministry or women in submission. It is not

as huge an issue now as it was when I was young. For me, it was a time of difficulty in the process of maturing. It can be difficult for any woman with a call of God on their lives. There are some good books that have been written to discuss these issues. Besides, when we understand being a minister is not some title or position, but is really just serving the people and providing what they need, it makes the point, futile. Who is going to tell a woman she can't be a servant?

In I Corinthians 14:34,35 the text says that women should keep silent in the "churches". The word for "women" in the Greek is also the word for "wives". It makes more sense in the culture of their day, since it also refers to asking the husbands at home to explain. But scripture is not supposed to contradict itself, so what do you do with the over one hundred other verses in the New Testament where women prophesied, taught, and spoke as a part of the Ekklesia?

If women are to be silent in the "church", how can they teach even Sunday School, or sing during choir or sing while sitting in a pew or a chair in the "congregation"? How can they pray, or prophesy, or participate in the "church service" in any way? Yet, Paul clearly says that everyone should desire to prophesy. Are women to prophesy with their mouths shut, maybe by writing it down? Or is it, women should never have a title, or stand behind a pulpit or have influence in a man's life?

None of this makes sense, yet the "church" has demanded over centuries that women not be allowed to teach or to be recognized as having a call of God on their life for leadership. I used to cry out to God, "Why did you put this fire in my bones, and then make me a woman? My heart and mouth want to preach, but I am told I can't."

It took many years of agony for that lie to be broken off of me, but God was faithful. If you are a woman, I declare you free to be all that God has called you to be!

This should be the desire of every husband who is the "head" or life of his wife, to want her fulfilled and serving God in whatever capacity God desires for her. A godly husband

speaks life into his bride, and a godly wife prefers her husband and is attentive to the things on his heart.

In I Timothy 2:12 Paul tells Timothy that he does not permit women to teach. The Passion Bible translation says “women who are new converts” with a note that this is implied by the cultural facts of the time when Paul was traveling and preaching. In this same chapter, women are permitted to pray and worship God, which seems to contradict the previous statement of women being silent. Priscilla and Aquilla are mentioned in Paul’s second letter to Timothy and Priscilla is called a co-laborer with Paul. I doubt if she would fulfill that role without opening her mouth, or teaching.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.
Galatians 3:26-29 (NLT)

We are no longer subject to the law. We have inherited all the promises of heaven and are heirs to all things that belong to Jesus. However, according to “church” tradition, everything is available to me as a woman except, I can’t teach or be in leadership. I can’t speak when the Ekklesia meets to conduct Kingdom business. I can’t have a call on my life to be one of the five gifts given by Jesus to His Ekklesia.

Well, maybe if I belong to an apostolic or prophetic “church” that rule can be relaxed enough to allow a woman like me to be one of the gifts, except apostle. Nope. That gift is too important and carries too much responsibility and authority and power for any woman to have.

That nonsense is only a concern when the hierarchical system is in place. When you truly understand that all gifts, regardless of whether given by the Holy Spirit or by Jesus, are servant gifts, given to serve the Ekklesia, this nonsense is over! Servants aren’t interested in authority or control over others.

All the gifts are important, and none are weighted by value or importance. None are related to title or rank or position of control or authority. When we realize this to be by God's design, the argument against women doing any of these things goes away.

Now I do beg you, my brothers, by all that Christ means to you, to speak with one voice, and not allow yourselves to be split up into parties. All together you should be achieving a unity in thought and judgment. For I know, from what some of Chloe's people have told me that you are each making different claims—"I am one of Paul's men," says one; "I am one of Apollos'," says another; or "I am one of Cephas"; while someone else says, "I owe my faith to Christ alone."

I Corinthians 1:10-12 (Phillips)

Chloe was a female leader in Corinth. That goes against the idea that there should not be female leaders in the Ekklesia. She had believers who met with her and some of her group had informed Paul about the division that seemed to be occurring in the Ekklesia. Some claimed to follow the teaching of Paul, others were following different teachers. To this, Paul emphatically replied they should not allow themselves to be divided into groups. They should all follow Jesus and not man.

If we would only take that to heart today! "Churches" are completely divided by the teachings of their leaders, either present or past. Will we see the silliness of our ways? When will we realize all the divisions and the exalting of men is in vain? It is Jesus we should follow. The results of what happened in the garden no longer bind us.

We are one with Jesus. We have inherited everything He has to give. It does not matter whether we are male or female. It does not matter what nationality we are or the color of our skin. What Paul is saying to Timothy and to the Corinthians has to be because of certain situations within those communities at the time and do not apply to the Ekklesia as a whole for all time. Otherwise, they do not make any sense.

A Beautiful Picture of Adam and Eve

There is a beautiful picture painted in the creation of Adam and Eve which very few people see. I saw it one day as I was reading about the crucifixion of Jesus. A soldier pierced Jesus in the side to make sure He was dead. Out of that wound in the side flowed blood and water. Blood represents human life and water represents the Spirit of God. Suddenly, revelation flooded my soul and I thought of God's creation of humans.

Why didn't God just roll up the dust of the earth and make another human in the form of a woman? God exists outside of the constraints of time. He could see the past, present and future all in one sitting.

The "church" has used the fact that God opened up the side of Adam in order to form Eve, flesh of his flesh, to preach that Eve was inferior to Adam. They use it as "proof" that Adam was created to be master over Eve, and that men are to rule over women. When God put Adam to sleep, and then reached into Adam's side He created Eve.

Suddenly I saw it differently by the Spirit. As God put Adam to sleep, He was seeing a future event when Jesus, His precious Son and the second Adam, would be put to sleep on the cross to redeem this creature God was creating.

As God reached into the side of Adam, He looked down through the years and saw the soldiers split open the side of Jesus on the cross and blood and water flowing from His side. When God created Adam, He created him from the earth and then He breathed heavenly life into him, blood and water. This creation of God's was made from the soil of the earth and from the breath of heaven. It was created to live in both worlds.

When Adam sinned, he could no longer live in both worlds. When Jesus died on the cross, both blood (the earthly realm) and water (the Spirit realm) were released again into the earth. Man could once again be a part of both worlds.

God created Eve from parts of Adam, and then presented her to Adam as his bride. Once again, God was looking at the cross and seeing the side of His son split open, and out of the body of Jesus, God would bring forth a bride for His precious Son.

When God created Eve the way He did He already knew sin was going to enter the world and that a Savior was going to be needed to bring God's people back to their intended purpose on earth. When He created Eve, He was making a promise to future humankind.

This was all a prophetic picture of a future time, when He would put His Son to sleep on the cross, reach into His side and create a bride for His Son, the Ekklesia. It was a prophetic picture that the curse that came on man would be broken when the second Adam came and God's original purpose for humans would be restored.

That is why we cry "RESTORE"! Oh, the mysteries and the marvel of our God!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 15

1 – Explain from your knowledge of the Bible why you believe Jesus does not condone the use of titles. If you do not agree with this statement, document your reasons and questions and ask God for clarity.

2 – Have you heard the term “the office of” before? What does it mean in the places you have heard it used? Does scripture teach this doctrine? Explain why or why not?

3 – Did you know before reading this book that the word pastor is only found once in the Bible? When you first realized this, what was going on in your mind at the time? How important is a pastor in your “church” structure and why do you think it is that important or is it?

4 – After reading and studying about the various titles and ranks used within the “church”, what are your thoughts? How important is it to study the Greek/Hebrew language to get a clearer understanding of the Bible?

5 – What are your thoughts on licensing and ordination after studying the Bible? Does what the author states concerning appointment, licensing make sense or do you question it? What if any are your questions?

6 – Do you see how these “church” traditions can be used to control and manipulate the saints? Explain.

7 – Explain why planting “churches” is not the goal of the Ekklesia or the job of an apostle and why you agree or disagree with that premise.

8 – Explain the difference between the head as authority versus the head as source of life. What do you believe concerning this topic? Document and ask God for clarity.

9 – Have you heard before the definition of submission presented by the author? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

10 – Describe your belief system concerning women in ministry. Should they have limits? What questions do you have? Does the fact that ministry really means “to serve” have an impact on what you believe? Pray and ask God to show you how He views women in ministry.

11 – State in your own words the prophetic picture from Genesis of what would occur when Jesus hung on the cross? Does this make sense to you? How does this change your perspective (if it does) on why God created Eve the way He did?

CHAPTER 16

TERRITORIES AND BOUNDARIES

Satan's goal from the beginning was to create a counterfeit kingdom and to draw people to the fake instead of the real. His end game is to steal, kill, and destroy. He uses all types of strategies to do this, but one major strategy he uses is religion which serves self rather than God. Religion always involves pride. Babylon represents this counterfeit kingdom of self and pride.

God created a people who could love Him, trust Him, and follow Him. They would always be free to choose. If they chose to follow, He would entrust them with the ability to see His Kingdom in heaven. He would bestow on them the ability to expand His Kingdom on the earth. They would be His Ekklesia, His ambassadors on earth. They would thwart the enemy's plans and participate with God to fulfill God's original intent for His creation and the earth.

Many of the enemy's strategies using religion to thwart the mission of the Ekklesia have already been discussed. There is much more to evaluate. We must revisit our religious thinking, "church" doctrine, rules, traditions, and training to determine if we learned it from God or from man. We must be free from religious shackles.

If we are to truly walk in freedom, we have to recognize these hinderances and tear them down. The question is, do we really value freedom enough to want to be free? Do we really desire to know truth? Jesus is the one who sets us free. He is not the one hindering us. He is truth personified.

Boxing Us In

The enemy would rather we go our entire life not understanding our purpose and our place in the earth. If he

cannot stop us from serving God, he will attempt to hinder us as much as possible.

Those hindrances come through these and other schemes:

- Walls and fences
- Assigned territory with boundaries called spheres of influence
- Rules and regulations that govern how and where we minister or serve

The enemy uses these mechanisms to hinder and control us, so we are only partially effective. If the enemy can't stop us completely, he will allow us to have a small territory of our own if we obey his rules. Our sight becomes limited to the territory the enemy presents to us. We can't see our true potential and all the possibilities that lie outside our scope of vision. The walls hide the view.

So many of our religious traditions box us into a territory defined by the enemy. The blinders must be removed so we see the walls and fences for what they are and understand it was not our God who put them there. The enemy did.

Walls and Fences

Every city has multiple "churches". Every "church" building has its own walls and invisible territory. These "churches" have rules that keep us behind walls and fences and rules that keep certain people outside the walls. The religious spirit says "you can only go this far, no further." It puts limits on us and kept us from fulfilling our whole potential, our destiny in God.

The whole idea of structure behind walls began very early in "church" history. In the first three centuries of the Ekklesia, the enemy began to entice the saints into accepting a counterfeit leadership. Just like Noah and the flood, it only took a handful of generations for wickedness to return.

Leadership began to be appointed and structured in terms of hierarchy and control just like the worldly systems. There was one “church” per city with one bishop in charge. They even made rules in the early days and published them so people would know and understand the consequences for anyone who dared violate their established religious principle. This is all well documented by historians of the early centuries.

Each bishop or pastor (as defined in religious terms) had control over the “church” in their territory or city. No leader would dare go into another man’s territory and try to entice the people there to come to his “local church” instead of the territory to which they belonged, in other words proselytize or convert. Anyone who dared do this could be kicked out of the “church” and defrocked.

Over time, as multiple “churches” were allowed in a city and different denominations or brands of “church” doctrine were instituted, each “church” claimed its own territory in the city and proselytizing or converting were highly discouraged. Buildings designated as “church” buildings didn’t start happening until the middle of the third century. It was then “churches” began to become isolated and non-communitive. They wanted to prevent any chance of sheep stealing between the “churches” in order to grow their congregations.

Over time doctrine became different between groups and developed into a divisive tool to separate God’s people. Often minute differences would cause huge debate, separation, and rejection. Division is one of the enemy’s favorite tactics. Jesus never had in His heart to create different flavors of “churches” when He discussed the establishing of His Ekklesia with His disciples.

There is only one Ekklesia, one legislative group from the city of our King, the city on a hill, Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem. There is no division in the true Ekklesia. We are one! Our King is in heaven and He gives us our marching orders. The earth has been given to us. We must

advance the Kingdom of God in the earth wherever and however the King desires.

Boundaries/Territories

God never indicates in the Bible that we should protect our territory from other members of the Ekklesia. Our territory is our inheritance. Our inheritance is Jesus. There are no fences or walls to keep others in or out of the inheritance of Jesus. We are only to defeat the enemy who comes to try to steal our inheritance. He comes to kill and destroy our ability to inherit what is rightfully ours.

Religious leaders with self-interest fight for what they perceive as their territory. For example, a “church” decides to open a soup kitchen as an outreach to the community. Their desire is to serve the public and hopefully add new people to their congregation. Many times, “churches” like this will get very upset if another “church” in the same community decides to do the same thing. The second “church” is now infringing on the territory that the first “church” has perceived as their territory.

In these communities, we hear terms like “stealing sheep” and “proselytizing”. We hear phrases like “stay in your own territory” or “stay in your lane” or “know your boundaries”. All are mechanisms used by the enemy to divide and separate God’s people.

One early morning, I was sitting on the edge of my bed thinking about the dream I just had of a wide, open field that reminded me of the ranch where I spent my childhood. There was such a sense of freedom as nothing hindered my view for miles and miles.

I heard the Lord ask me, “What do you see?” I responded, “I see a large open field. It seems to have no boundaries.” To which the Lord responded, “Oh, child, there are boundaries. You can’t see them, because the boundaries are set by Me. What don’t you see?” I didn’t see any walls or fences. I felt Him smile. He replied, “There are none.”

Revelation flooded my soul at that moment! Fences and walls are built to keep people or animals controlled and restrained in a certain area. There is an illusion of freedom within the contained area. God's boundaries are different!

I recently had a survey done on land that I own. The surveyor measured the land and placed markers on the borders, so I would recognize the boundaries. I cannot see those boundaries markers because the grass is tall, but they are there. They are different than walls or fences. They do not restrain my movement. I can place one foot outside the boundary and one inside the boundary. There is no fence or wall. I am free to choose.

Our boundaries are set by God and they are spiritual, not physical. To expand boundaries is an easy thing. There is complete freedom of movement within the boundaries and outside the boundaries. They can only be seen by spiritual eyes, not physical eyes. When the Bible talks about boundaries, it is nearly always in reference to our inheritance which can be expanded.

The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; You support my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yes, an inheritance is beautiful for me. Psalm 16:5,6 (MEV)

The Lord, Himself, is our inheritance. Our boundaries are found in Him. The New Living translation puts it this way.

LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing. You guard all that is mine. The land you have given me is a pleasant land. What a wonderful inheritance! Psalm 16:5,6 (NLT)

The word translated "lines" in the Modern English version and the word "land" in the New Living translation in these scriptures mean measured portion or territory. It is the Lord who determines our inheritance and sets our boundaries. When we grasp the truth, this most amazing fact overcomes us. He is our territory and we can have as much of Him as we

want. He will expand our boundaries as we seek and desire more of Him.

Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; but his mother named him Jabez, saying, "Because I gave birth to him in pain." Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would indeed bless me and enlarge my border [property], and that Your hand would be with me, and You would keep me from evil so that it does not hurt me!" And God granted his request. I Chronicles 4:9,10 (AMP)

Jabez thought "I am not going to let my name define me." Jabez wanted more of God and His hand upon him. He cried to God for more. God heard him and granted his request. We are no different. The answer to everything is more of God and His blessing upon our life! He will expand our boundaries and our territories. It has nothing to do with physical boundaries or territories. We go wherever the Lord takes us. He is the one who sets our boundaries. We are free!

We just do whatever God tells us to do wherever He tells us to do it. He will guide the sheep where He wants them to be. They are not ours. They belong to the Good Shepherd. They must be free and those who declare themselves as leaders, must set them free. Any place there is control, there will be division and true freedom will not be found. The enemy has succeeded in his deception of the very elect of God!

Sphere of influence

Another term we hear these days is "Sphere of influence". This term has been used in government since the 1800s when Europe was bringing the European influence to parts of Asia and Africa. Countries or regions on these continents began to adopt European customs. The European sphere of influence was expanded.

When the Ekklesia began to see restored truth concerning prophets and apostles in the 1900s, sphere of influence became a term used in religious circles as well. Man

began to define these gifts and set rules around their influence and operation. For instance, if your sphere of influence was defined as ministry to children or to teens, you did not step “out of your lane” to minister to adults. If your sphere of influence was worship, you did not start a “church”.

You must stay in your own territory and not infringe on the territory of another. Stay in your own area of influence. You have been defined in a certain area of ministry. Stay in that definition and do not color outside the lines.

Religion made the rules so you don’t go stealing sheep from a territory in which you are not authorized to operate. If your sphere of influence is worship, don’t step out of your lane to stand behind a pulpit and preach. You might steal followers from someone else’s territory.

One could minister in a “church”, but one could conceivably minister on the street or a place of business as well. Rules were adapted for “church” ministry and marketplace ministry. The rules were not the same.

If your sphere of influence was in the marketplace, you were different from a “full-time” minister in a “church” (paid to preach). According to “church” leaders who make the religious rules, just because you may have authority in the marketplace, does not mean you have authority in the “church”. Many believe, “church” ministers have a higher level of authenticity and authority than those in normal society.

We want to please our leaders, so we submit to these rules often without question. We believe we are pleasing God by submitting to the authority they claim to have. We don’t realize in doing so, we sacrifice the call of God on our own lives. Always, always question what man says and compare it to the desire of your Heavenly Father’s heart for you! You should know in your heart what God has given to you.

Territory Rule or Not

This concept of territories, boundaries, or spheres comes in part from misinterpretation of II Corinthians chapter

ten. These verses have been used to prove the religious standpoint of staying in our lane. Let's examine this passage of scripture closely, first from the original King James version.

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

II Corinthians 10:12-13 (KJV)

At first glance, the way this is translated looks like every "minister" is given a territory by God where they "rule". The translation seems to indicate the Corinthian assembly was put under Paul's rule by God. Even the Amplified version makes it sound like God assigns territories of authority. We know by now this is not how Jesus establishes His Ekklesia.

We, on the other hand, will not boast beyond our proper limit, but [will keep] within the limits of our commission (territory, authority) which God has granted to us as a measure, which reaches and includes even you.

II Corinthians 10:13 (AMP)

The word translated "rule" in the King James version, is the Greek word "kanon", which means "standards" or "rules". The Canon of scripture defined by historians was the process of using standards and rules adapted to judge which writings were spirit-inspired writings to be included in what we call the Bible. When Paul said, "according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us", he was saying God had set standards and rules, "kanon", on what Paul was to teach the Corinthians.

Most translations use this word in a way that makes it sound like Paul had been assigned a certain territory with boundaries compared to others who are ministering in the area.

We won't brag about something we don't have a right to brag about. We will only brag about the work God has sent us to do, and you are part of that work.
II Corinthians 10:13 (CEV)

Some of the Corinthians did not like the way Paul spoke to them and they compared him to others who were teaching in the area. Paul was just telling them he had a standard from God on what he taught and how he ministered and served God's people. That standard from God didn't change when he arrived in Corinth. It was still the same.

Paul is not declaring control or authority over them. He is not proclaiming that Corinth is his territory as opposed to someone else's defined territory. God has sent him to certain places to minister including Corinth. God may have sent others.

He tells them he is not responsible for standards or rules of conduct others use, his standard and rule of conduct is what God set for him. God sent Paul to minister to them what God knew they needed. God would do the same as he traveled beyond Corinth.

For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,
II Corinthians 10:14-15 (KJV)

The Contemporary English version says it this way.

We are not bragging more than we should. After all, we did bring the message about Christ to you. We don't brag about what others have done, as if we had done those things ourselves. But I hope as you become stronger in your faith, we will be able to reach many more of the people around you. That has always been our goal.

II Corinthians 10:14-15 (CEV)

Boundaries and territories, control and authority are not the topic of Paul's words. Paul is not taking credit for what

others have taught them or what others have done to help them mature in the things of God. He is not condemning others for infringing on his territory. All Paul desires is, as he preaches according to the standard or rules or principles of conduct God has given to him, their faith will increase and it will cause them to prosper and grow even more. It is okay to have multiple teachers!

To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

II Corinthians 10:16-18 (KJV)

If anyone, including Paul, is to glory or boast about anything, let it be about the Lord. For it is not who man commends, praises, recommends, or approves of, it is all about who God commends, praises, recommends. The only approval that counts is God's. Even if Paul is to boast about the results in Corinth and other places, he will not take credit for what others have done in the same area. Here it is in the Contemporary English version.

Then we will be able to preach the good news in other lands where we cannot take credit for work someone else has already done. The Scriptures say, "If you want to brag, then brag about the Lord." You may brag about yourself, but the only approval that counts is the Lord's approval.

II Corinthians 10:16-18 (CEV)

The Greek word for "measure" used in this Bible chapter is "metron", which seems to illustrate measuring ourselves against a goal we are striving to achieve, not measuring a person to another. This word is tossed around a lot in apostolic circles today. They use this for an example of why you must "stay in your lane". The Greek word does not designate what is being measured or what the unit of measurement is. It strictly means measurement.

“Metron” is the word translated as “principle” in the New Living translation. It has nothing to do with control or authority! It has nothing to do with territory.

It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God. Galatians 6:15, 16 (NLT)

In these verses Paul declares he abides by the principles, the metron, the measurement of what he is supposed to do as set before him by God. He does not listen or conform to what others are setting as standards or rules for him. It has nothing to do with territories.

Measuring Ourselves

Often, we compare ourselves to others, measuring our anointing or calling or success. The people of Corinth were afraid of Paul and told him his letters terrified them. They didn't like the way he taught them. They compared him to others in the area who also taught them. If it was Paul's territory, assigned by God to him, why are there others teaching the same people? Some nerve! Yet, Paul didn't condemn this.

Paul refused to be like other teachers and measure himself against the others. He tells them to do so is unwise. That is the whole purpose for this chapter in the letter to the Corinthians. Don't compare yourself to others. Everyone is unique and should not pattern themselves after another, rather find their measurement in who Jesus says they are.

Do we measure up to whatever standard we have identified for ourselves in our own mind? Do we measure up to what we think is in the mind of others? That is often what we do instead of measuring ourselves against what God has planned for us as a unique individual. Paul is saying, “The only thing I am going to boast about is that God gave me a measure

of a gift and told me to share it with you and that is what I am doing”.

The Measure of a Man

The phrase “the measure of a man” comes to mind. In the Old Testament God rejected Saul as king because of his disobedience. Samuel was a prophet at the time. God sent Samuel to a man named Jesse and his family to find the next king. Samuel looked at the oldest son and believed he looked perfect for the position of the next king. He measured up according to the standard Samuel had in his own mind.

This was however, not the man God had chosen. God explained to Samuel, men look at outward appearances to determine things, but God looks on the heart. David, the youngest and the most unlikely by human standards, would be the next king. Even David’s own father did not think David measured up to the standard of a king. He was just a shepherd boy. But David was God’s choice.

Paul did not seem to measure up to the expectations of the people in Corinth, just as David didn’t measure up to Samuel’s expectations. Furthermore, the people of Corinth were evaluating each other not by the standard of God, but by the standard of man. Paul himself would only use God’s way of measuring, not man’s way. Paul would measure himself only by the view of him that God had. We should do the same. Men didn’t choose Paul for the work he was doing, God did.

We should never evaluate our success by comparing ourselves to others, only by the standard God has set for us. It does not matter what others think or say about us. It only matters what our heavenly Father says about us. When others criticize us and tell us we are stepping out of our lane, we must run to our Father to get His opinion. Hear His voice and obey Him.

When David, the shepherd boy, saw how Goliath, the giant, spoke about the Israelites, he was appalled. How dare this dude talk this way about God and His chosen people? He

would fight this giant. His own brother called David prideful and full of arrogance. He basically told him, “You are a shepherd boy, stay in your lane. It is not your place to go up against this giant. You will only make matters worse.” But David knew his God and he could not be stopped.

When the Israelites realized, they were not going to talk David out of fighting the giant, the king said, “Well, if you are going to do this, just use our ways, our traditions, our rules. Put on this armor.” That armor did not fit David. The old ways of doing things would not work. He took that armor off. All David needed was the anointing of God on him and to obey what he heard the Father say.

When we commit to do what others have refused to do, we may get the same type of backlash that David received. Sounds of “who do you think you are?” and “stay in your lane, you are not a prophet or you are not an apostle, or whatever” may reach our ears. If that doesn’t work, they will criticize us for not doing things their way, not following the ways of the “church”. When this happens, know you are over the target.

Listen to your heavenly Father and obey Him. We cannot let other voices drown out the voice of God. Miracles will happen. Miracles will follow us if we keep our focus on God, who He says we are, and what He tells us to do.

The words of Paul to the Corinthians have nothing to do with spiritual authority and ruling as religious leaders today have interpreted it. They have nothing to do with someone in leadership having complete control or authority over the Ekklesia or staying in your lane. It has nothing to do with assigned territories. We must tear down these walls that hold us back.

We have been lied to and manipulated for centuries on so many things. We have been led to believe that God delegates our territory and assignments and we must be careful not to tread on another man’s territory. We must learn to stay in our own lane.

Forget all of that nonsense! We are committed to go wherever the Spirit of the Living God directs us to go! That is

the lane, the path that is for us and it is a unique path designed by our God just for us. It is time we stop letting the enemy rob us of what God wants to give us. Follow Him.

Dreams of Vehicles

Every time the “church” doors were open, I was there from about age 10. I loved to study and I had a lot of Bible and religious teaching. Breaking loose from religious bondage in my own life was difficult and took time. God gave me dreams along the way to help me understand. He taught me little by little what He wanted me to know. It will take time for all of us to separate truth from religion.

Apathy, complacency and lethargy are often signs that a religious spirit has its claws in a place or a person. Even when we recognize truth and the need for change, it is not easy and requires a strong will or constitution. It is the only way to freedom. It is not just knowing truth that sets us free, but the truth that we embrace. We must live it. It is not just knowing Jesus; it is living in Him. That is the key to the paradigm shifts that lie ahead for us.

Vehicles in our dreams often represent how we or others perceive our ministry, calling, way of serving God. Vehicles have walls. In my dreams truth was revealed only after I stepped out of the vehicle. I share several of these dreams to illustrate my point. I needed to see the walls and realize they were not God’s doing. He released me from the constraints of the vehicle and sent me forth in freedom. He wants to do the same for you.

In a previous chapter, I told of a dream of hundreds of vehicles scattered all over the highway. Trucks with food supplies were unable to get to the places they needed to go. This is a picture of “ministries” as we know them today being shaken. God is not going to let business as usual continue either in the world or in the “church”. He is setting His people free. He is tearing down walls and fences. He is showing us our

boundaries are our inheritance and everything is there for the taking.

There is a remnant arising that will not be satisfied with anything other than their inheritance. They want it all, every last bit of it. They don't want to forfeit anything. Jesus is our inheritance. The promised land for the Israelites was called a land flowing with milk and honey. Milk represents the Word of God, which is Jesus. Jesus is the Word. Honey represents revelation.

The promised land for the Israelites was their inheritance. It was a land that flowed with the knowledge and revelation of a coming Messiah, a coming Savior. Our promised land is the same, except He has already come to earth, and returned to heaven to rule and reign forever. He is our promised land. He sets our boundaries. He tells us what our inheritance is. We can have all of Him that we desire.

Dream of a Collision Course with the “Church”

My dreams often involve things that are not possible in this life. Nothing surprises me anymore with God. By presenting these dreams I hope to help you in your journey to more of God. He may use dreams or other methods to communicate with you. He wants to have a conversation with all His children on a regular basis.

In this dream I was driving a car down a street at night. There was snow on the ground and it was still snowing. There didn't seem to be any other cars on the road. I suddenly felt like I was going the wrong way, so I turned around.

There were now several vehicles coming in my direction with their high beam headlights making it difficult for me to see. They did not seem to be following a set lane, but were all over the highway and trying to run me off the road.

Suddenly, there were no more cars and I realized the road was coming to an end. I drove into a huge vacant mall parking lot. I tried to stop but I was on pure ice. A building lay straight ahead and I was going to crash into it. As I got close

to the building, I saw I was on a bed of sand that was not covered with ice and the vehicle stopped just short of crashing into the building.

I got out of the vehicle to evaluate the situation. I didn't know how I was going to get back on the road. As I surveyed the scene, I saw that the car I thought I had been driving was really an airplane. Why was I driving a plane on the highway? Why did I not know it was a plane? When I was in the vehicle, I had a perceived sense of truth, but I didn't know the real truth until I stepped out of the vehicle.

I certainly could not get that plane off the ground on ice, so I decided I was going to see if I could pull it myself. I found a rope and attached it to the plane and I started walking across that ice. Not only did I not slip and fall, but I pulled that plane with ease to the highway, no hard work.

End of dream.

See what I mean? There is no way I could pull a plane myself with a rope! I think God delights in laughter. He brings such joy to my heart. He certainly knows how to make my dreams exciting. This kind of dream was not new to me.

I had thought that I controlled the vehicle. I sat behind the steering wheel and directed the car down the highway. I was in control. I could control my ministry. I knew what it was or so I thought.

God had to send multiple dreams to get through my stubborn head that ministry as I saw it then was not God's way of thinking. Even though it seemed like I had control, I did not. The vehicle itself defined what I could do and what I could not do when I was inside the vehicle. It was not God. The vehicle itself was in control.

If I am in a car, I cannot fly or drive into the ocean. If I am in a semi-truck or bus I cannot go on a narrow, winding road without difficulty. If I am on ice, there is only so much I can do to control a vehicle. If I am in a plane, I cannot land on my home street and drive it into my garage. If I am on a train,

I can't decide to suddenly cut across the field in pursuit of a coyote like my dad used to do in his pickup on the ranch when I was a kid.

So truly, a vehicle will end up controlling and limiting what saints are able to do while they are in a vehicle. A ministry behind four walls and defined by someone will only let you go so far. A vehicle has walls that constrain us and define us.

This dream portrayed my personal history of my understanding of ministry and calling. I had been stuck in a vehicle going the wrong way. I was following the path that man taught me to follow if one was called to "ministry". That was my understanding at the time.

My ministry really had been defined by men as many of those reading this book will discover with their ministries as well. That vehicle you are in, that "church", that organization, will define your level of ministry.

In my dream I finally realized I was going the wrong way and I turned around. Also, in real life there came a point I realized I was going the wrong way and had to turn around. There were other vehicles (other people and ministries) trying to sidetrack me and stop me from heading in the new direction.

That is exactly what happened in real life. Then I ended up parked in nowhere land for a while. The ministry vehicle was not going anywhere, trying to figure out what to do next. Yes, that happened in real life, also. God was playing back my life in this dream.

I had been on a collision course with the building with four walls, the "church" and the things I held near and dear to my heart from my upbringing. My viewpoint on things was changing. My ministry was for all intents and purposes, dead, not going anywhere, but it was not destroyed. It did not crash and burn, but it was waiting for a new revelation, a new understanding of what really constitutes ministry.

I was beginning to understand the "church" is not the Ekklesia. It is merely one of many vehicles or tools that might be used by the Ekklesia to possess her inheritance, her land, if

used correctly. Most of these vehicles are tools of the enemy and they are going to be destroyed.

The “church” has been taught for centuries that it is the only vehicle, because it is the Ekklesia. When you understand that is not true, then you are free to use whatever vehicle or tool God puts in your hand. There are many tools or vehicles available to the Ekklesia, but none are meant to control her or constrain her and keep her from achieving all God has for her to achieve.

Then in the dream I stepped out of my vehicle and was shocked to discover the vehicle was not what I had thought it was. It had wings. It could fly. But I wasn’t going to get into it and drive it and be under its control. I was outside the vehicle pulling it. I was controlling the vehicle; it was no longer controlling me and I was doing it effortlessly.

Because I had been courageous enough to obey God and step out of the vehicle and the four walls that controlled me, God was showing me where He was going to take me. It was all a part of His plan for me.

Points from the dream:

- God will interrupt our smooth-sailing life, if we are hungry for more.
- God will show us things are not always as they seem, if our desire is to see as He sees.
- In order to see and understand truth, we must step outside of what controls us.
- God does not want us to be controlled and constrained by what others call “ministry”.
- God doesn’t want others to define who or what He has called us to be or do.
- We, ourselves, are in control of our destiny that God has given to us as our inheritance.
- God defines our territory, our boundaries.
- Do not give control of your destiny to others.

- There will be those who will fight against you to try to keep you from your inheritance. Don't let them stop you.
- The "church" is not the Ekklesia. The "church" is just another tool the Ekklesia might use to possess her inheritance.
- Tools used by the enemy to keep God's people in bondage are not going to survive.
- There are many tools.
- When you do what God has called you to do, in His way, there is rest. There is no striving. There is no work. It happens effortlessly by the Holy Spirit at work in you. It is about BEING, not doing.
- The impossible becomes the possible!

Pull Over That Boat Dream

I had another dream the next night. One of my grandsons and his friend were driving pickups on country roads and I watched them drive down into the ditch and across a pasture doing figure 8s and donuts and all kinds of things at high rate of speed. It was amazing to watch from a distance.

The scene then changed and I was in a house. I heard police sirens sounding, so I went outside to see what was happening. The police were using a bull horn to tell someone to "PULL OVER THAT BOAT".

Just like the previous scene in the dream, I could see clearly from outside the four walls and from a distance. There lay the road in front of me but there was nothing on it, except the police car. In my dream I was thinking, "No one drives boats on a road! What are they talking about?"

I glanced deeper into the pasture and there was an outdoor theatre in the middle of the field and the boys were sitting in a boat watching a movie. The police were puzzled. There was no vehicle hooked to the boat to pull it. It couldn't have possibly been going down the highway by itself without something pulling it, or could it?

The police looked around the field for a vehicle that could have been pulling the boat. It was like a graveyard for discarded vehicles, an old bus, a semi, a bunch of old cars. Nothing had run in a long time. The police left very confused.

End of dream.

God speaks to many of His children through dreams, but they write them off as pizza dreams because they don't seem to make any sense. It is a rarity to find anyone who can really interpret dreams today without using some published dream interpretation book. Write your dreams down and ask God for understanding if it is from Him. He will send someone to help you, or He will show you what it means.

These kids in my dream are doing crazy stuff, things that are not normal and they are having fun! They represent the younger generation who see the vehicles (ministries and "churches") and the rules (mostly set by religion) and they are breaking all of them. They are attempting to break free of the things that held past generations in bondage. They are trying to take control of the vehicles, which are defined ministries and change them. A boat represents ministry that has limited walls with some freedom. Right or wrong in their approach, they know something is wrong and they want to be free.

The new generation doesn't see things as we see them. They want change. They don't want to be controlled. They want to do things their way. To some extent, what they are doing is working. It is stirring up a whirlwind and causing people to look at ministry differently. It seems to be crazy, and wild and chaotic and backwards to many. It is not complete freedom, but it is a desire for freedom. They want more. It is a good start.

Then the police (those who govern and make the rules) come on the scene trying to stop what is happening. They don't know what to do with a boat driving on the road. Their job is to stop the change from happening, but things aren't as they

seem and they are confused. The religion police can't see what God is doing. They are blinded by rebellion and disobedience.

Suddenly the religion police find a boat in the middle of nowhere, with the young people sitting in it thoroughly enjoying watching a movie. These young people are in uncharted territory watching the world scene of life passing by. New ones, young ones watching from God's perspective to know what is needed in a particular moment. They are not afraid to drive a vehicle down the road that was not designed to be driven down the road. Anything is possible.

All around them are old useless vehicles (ministries) no longer functional. All kinds of vehicles, but none of them can pull this strange boat vehicle. This strange boat does things that no other boat could do. It is not being controlled by itself, but by something outside of itself. It does not rely on its environment to operate. It moves not just on water, but on land.

Religion has put rules around ministry and callings and we try to abide by these rules, even when they are contrary to how God sees things. Our perceived ministry and the name we give it, limit us to what we do and say and the territory in which we operate. It controls us.

When we embrace the concept of BEING instead of DOING, none of these things matter. We just do what we see our Master do, and we say the things we see Him say. We have our being in Him, who is the true apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, evangelist. So, we operate in whatever capacity is needed for a particular situation just as we see Him operate. Vehicles become tools in our hands.

We are not contained within a box (vehicle) anymore. We are no longer controlled and hindered by outside forces. It is not important to us anymore whether men call us apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, evangelist, or anything else. We are His, and He lives in us, directing our every step. That is our ministry. The gifts are ours. We know who we are. We just don't advertise it. It is the Lord we advertise.

The younger generation is beginning to understand this and is breaking out of the religious rules past generations have placed upon it. God is also confirming that the law enforcers, the controllers (those who in religion have made the rules in the past) cannot stop what is coming. They may be using a bullhorn to preach against it. They do not understand it or how these things are possible, but they cannot stop it.

Points from the dream:

- Things are not always as they seem
- The younger generation, a lot of them not being raised in a “church” are finding God and leading us into new uncharted territory using unconventional methods to advance the Kingdom of God. They are using vehicles never thought to be designed for Kingdom use.
- God wants to do the impossible, the unexpected through us. He wants all limits to be gone.
- Freedom is ours.
- God wants us to enjoy life and what He has called us to be and do.
- In order to be free, we must break out of religious traditions and rules.
- There will be those who will try to control us and put us back inside a box. DO NOT let them!
- Nothing is going to stop what God has planned. The only thing that can stop you from being a part of it, is you.

Dream of the Rocket Launching

When I worked for state government, I would purchase software for the agency. In the beginning the State did not have an approved buyers list, so every agency bought from whatever suppliers they chose. However, we had to get approval from another department to purchase software and

prove we had vetted the company to ensure we were not buying pirated or stolen software.

The next night (third night in a row) I had another dream about vehicles. This was another strange and impossible dream. I was buying software for my agency and had provided the right paperwork to the State to prove I had vetted a company to purchase the software licenses I needed. In the dream after providing the documentation, I had to go through a test to show that I was not lying and prove a right to the licenses.

The test was always the same. I would go outside the building to a vehicle that rested on a train track extending out from the 18th floor, high in the air. I was required to get in the vehicle and do a stunt that in the real world was impossible. If I did it correctly it would prove everything was right and we could proceed.

I knew I had a right to the licenses so I was never afraid of the test. But in my dream on this day, I went to take the test and was told I was no longer required to take a test. I was allowed to go through some doors to exit. On the other side of the doors, I met a male pilot in uniform. He said, "Welcome aboard" as he showed me the entry of what looked like a jet plane. I entered and sat down in a seat and put on my seatbelt. I did not seem to question why I was there.

I was relaxing with my eyes closed waiting for take-off. All of a sudden, I felt the jolt of the taking off but did not open my eyes. Then I felt a strange sensation so I opened my eyes. I discovered I was surrounded by two huge air-bags about 20 feet tall and I could see nothing else around me. I looked up, I could see outside and we were travelling at a greater speed than a normal plane would travel and going straight up in the air. I realized I was on a rocket, not a plane.

End of dream.

Once again, the dream concerned what we call "ministry" and callings or anointings. In order to have a

ministry, religion makes us jump through hoops for licensing or the right to preach. Testing is required to prove our call and anointing before we are allowed to do what we are called to do. That is the traditional view of ministry and calling.

By the grace of God, that is all changing. Things were changing in my own life. There would be no more testing and signing my life away to receive a license to minister. I was welcomed on board by my pilot which I believe represented Jesus. He was taking me where He wanted me to go not through man's ways or methods. His approval was all I needed.

The air bags surrounding me were His protection and covering upon me, no one else in sight meant I wasn't dependent upon man but only upon my pilot. The fact that I was not on a plane but a rocket, I believed was God telling me He was preparing to launch me into something new and it wasn't going to be at normal speed! Hallelujah! Thank you, Lord.

This dream was so much bigger than just a message to me. There many more saints out there like me who have been hidden away learning from God and unlearning what man has taught. We are all waiting on a thrusting forth, a launching into what God has planned for the earth in this time.

As I am trying to process this series of three dreams in a row, a friend sent me an internet link to a video. She knew nothing about my dreams at the time. As I watched the video the message that shouted to me was "prepare to launch". It was not by coincidence my friend sent this link to me right after a dream of being launched on a rocket. It was God.

Points from the dream:

- Religion may require licenses and ordination in order for a "call of God" to be recognized and ministry established, but it is God who allows us to minister and sets the boundaries of our inheritance, not man.
- God requires nothing of us except to hear and obey.

- When we recognize our freedom and begin to walk in it, our “ministry” will be launched. Ministry is simply serving as God directs.
- Ministry is not how religion defines it to be. Ministry is serving and using the gifts God has given us to advance the Kingdom of God. All saints are called to minister. I am ministering to the Ekklesia by writing this book.
- Religion wants to control us and restrain us within the boundaries of a vehicle that it chooses. We are free to be what God has created us to be. We do not have limits set by man and religious systems.
- God provides our covering, not man.

Conclusion

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
Ephesians 3:20,21 (NKJV)

We are all familiar with this passage from the book of Ephesians.

Never doubt God’s mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for his miraculous power constantly energizes you. Now we offer up to God all the glorious praise that rises from every church in every generation through Jesus Christ—and all that will yet be manifest through time and eternity. Amen!
Ephesians 3:20,21 (TPT)

The Passion Bible really does add so much passion to how Jesus establishes His Ekklesia, and His power enables her to do the unbelievable. The phrase “*every church in every generation*” really means the Ekklesia that exists in every generation.

If you are a part of the Ekklesia, then this verse is for you. His mighty power works in you to minister. It works in you to serve God's people. If you are a believer, you are a minister. You are a servant of the Most High God. Man does not control you. You are not confined to a vehicle defined by man. You don't need a building, pulpit, license, or someone's blessing. You are free. You have no limits other than the boundaries set by God for your inheritance and those can be expanded, if you ask.

Day by day the LORD takes care of the innocent, and they will receive an inheritance that lasts forever. Psalm 37:18 (NLT)

I have taken Your testimonies as a heritage forever, For they are the joy of my heart. Psalms 119:111 (AMP)

Several translations use the word decrees in place of testimonies. The words, the decrees, the dreams, the visions, the gifts God has given to you are your inheritance. They are forever. They are not given to you by man and they cannot be taken away or limited by man unless you let them. **DO NOT** let any man take them from you. They are yours.

These gifts are a special treasure designed just for you, and your uniqueness. They will bring you joy if you let them. They are your inheritance **FOREVER!** Would you let a thief come into your house and steal your valuables or would you find ways to protect them? What God has given to you is a greater treasure than any earthly treasure. Don't wait for permission to enjoy your inheritance. Don't wait for someone to recognize your inheritance and release you into it. Don't let man define it.

God is not only powerful and more willing to do what you ask of Him, but He is thinking much bigger for you than you can possibly think. His thoughts are bigger than your dream, bigger than your wildest imagination. God wants you to enjoy life as you serve Him and bring Him pleasure. The early church paid a severe price of martyrdom in order to

present the freedom you have today. We dare not squelch that priceless gem.

The early Ekklesia is cheering us on to pursue in this hour all that that the latter-day house of God has been promised. We dare not disappoint them or our God. We are His and He is ours! Will we say “YES” to Him?

The spirit of religion that has kept us in chains is letting go as Truth is revealed and we hear the voice of our Father saying, “Go! Be free!” There is nothing too hard for our God. Without Him we are nothing, but with Him we can do all things, even exploits in His Mighty Name! Go forth and find your freedom, saints! NEVER GIVE UP!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 16

- 1 – Name three ways the enemy hinders us from receiving our inheritance. Describe how the enemy has used these methods in your own life.
- 2 – Explain why the enemy would even allow you to have some territory.
- 3 – Describe how from the time of the early Ekklesia walls and fences became normal.
- 4 – Describe what you believe your inheritance is. If your thoughts concerning your inheritance changed after reading this chapter, describe what changed and why.
- 5 – Explain in your own words how stealing sheep, proselytizing, and staying in your own lane are not godly terms.
- 6 – Explain the difference between “church” walls and God-given boundaries and territories.
- 7 – Have you heard the term “sphere of influence” before? What did it mean to you before reading this chapter? Explain how this concept can be used to hinder you in your quest for your inheritance.
- 8 – What is your true inheritance and how much of that inheritance can you have? What do you need to do to get it?
- 9 – Do you believe there is a difference between a “church” prophet and a marketplace prophet? Explain why or why not.
- 10 – Explain in your own words what you believe the message Paul was trying to convey in II Corinthians, chapter ten.
- 11 – Did you learn anything from the dreams the author documented? If so, explain.

CHAPTER 17

RELIGIOUS LEADERS VERSUS GODLY LEADERS

In order to understand the Ekklesia of today, we need to understand the Ekklesia of the first century. Reading the gospels and the book of Acts, we become acutely aware of the price our Lord really paid to give us our freedom and our inheritance and how we have squandered it. It is amazing to see the tenacity that existed in the first Ekklesia and how they loved not their lives unto death.

The early Ekklesia paid a horrific price to spread the gospel of the Kingdom and establish the first Ekklesia because of their love for their Lord. If we are the last Ekklesia, the latter house, then we must have that same tenacity, that same love of our Lord that drove the early saints. We must return to our first love.

Religious Leaders and a Religious Spirit

The religious spirit mentioned throughout this book does a lot of its work through religious leaders. It was this way in the early Ekklesia and it is that way today. One of the primary goals of the religious spirit is to keep God's people from their first love. We must learn to recognize that spirit of religion and combat it. We must fight its influence in our own lives, as well as its influence in religious leaders.

Our country was founded on godly principles and the hope of what many term "religious freedom". It was based on each individual finding God for themselves. Today, our country is a mess and there is a battle raging for its very soul. There are those who want to destroy the nation's foundation of godly principles. However, there are many nations that are

looking to our nation to maintain a foundation for God and truth.

Much of what we believed true of our country has over the last few years been proven to all be a lie. Our leaders have deceived us, lied to us, made us believe we could trust them while leading us down a path of destruction for years all while pretending to have our best interest at heart. At first it was hard for us to believe otherwise, but now our eyes are open to see what has been happening for a very long time in our country.

We see clearly this massive deceit propagated on us, the ordinary people, in the world around us but we don't believe such a thing could happen within the "church" world as well. But it has. We have been deceived by our leaders for centuries. Many of them are themselves deceived. We must wake up to see the injustices and corruption in what we call Christianity, just as the masses are waking up to the corruption in our government, news media, big corporations and more.

God did not call us to religion, to a set of rules and regulations. He called us to relationship. The Greek word for religion connotes an outward demonstration of worship, for instance, a ceremony. Our relationship is an inward one and begins with the heart. We must understand the difference.

Holy Spirit must be our Guide. He reveals the spirit of truth. Jesus had some harsh words for religious leaders of His day. This will help us identify the religious spirit in religious leaders today. Then we must pray for guidance and instruction on what we are to do, in our desire to see Jesus lifted up in the earth like never before. It won't happen without some major paradigm shifts taking place in our day.

"Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me."

Luke 11:23 (NLT)

We certainly do not want to continue to be working against our Lord. Jesus sent His disciples out two-by-two to

the cities around the area. He gave them the following instructions.

Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Luke 10:8-10 (ESV)

We have a tendency to look at the denominational “churches” that have been around for centuries, and declare them religious and evil. Many are embracing abortion and other worldly philosophies that the Bible clearly doesn’t support. But these religious spirits can be found in the spirit-filled, apostolic, prophetic and kingdom “churches” as well.

Jesus instructed His disciples that there was a time to stay and minister or serve the people. There was also a time to leave. We are faced with the same decision. Listen to Holy Spirit and let Him guide you step by step, day by day. It does no good to serve a people who have set their heart on opposing God. Anyone who isn’t with Him and interested in knowing His heart, is not really for Him. Anyone who is not actively for Him is against Him. Not my words! Jesus said this!

Mysteries

The end-times is still very much a mystery, but more is being revealed every day through revelation given to us by God. We must begin to question things we have been taught. Did man teach us what we believe or did God? We need to read scripture with fresh eyes and a clean heart. We need Holy Spirit eyes and ears to see and hear what God would teach us at this very important time in history.

In II Thessalonians Paul talks about something that would happen in the days ahead of him. The King James version calls it “a falling away”.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

II Thessalonians 2:3,4 (KJV)

In most other translations, the term “a falling away” is translated as “the rebellion”. What day will not come without first a rebellion happening? Most translations say “the day of the Lord”. The day of the Lord is the seventh day. We have definitely seen a great falling away, a great rebellion against God and everything He represents.

Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. II Thessalonians 2:3,4 (ESV)

Verses one and two of this same chapter are worth reading in the Voice translation. Some in the Christian community of Paul’s day were already getting anxious and fearful about the Lord’s Day to come. Paul said these words to the believers in Thessalonica and they are just as applicable to us today as they were to the saints then.

Since, brothers and sisters, we are on the topic of the coming of our Lord Jesus the Anointed and how we will all gather together to meet Him, we ask that you don’t let your minds get quickly rattled or become anxious because of someone else’s so-called “spiritual revelation” or because someone gave you a message or claimed to know of a letter allegedly from us reporting that the day of the Lord has already come!

II Thessalonians 2:1,2 (Voice)

There is so much fear mongering in the world today. Fear is rampant as the Bible indicated it would be. Paul said we shouldn't be rattled by the things we hear or see. We should not allow fear or anxiety to dwell in us. He gave that message to the believers of his day and I believe the Spirit of the Living God speaks through these words once again in our day and hour. **DO NOT FEAR! DO NOT BE ANXIOUS!**

Since scripture can have more than one application, let me ask these questions. Once again, we need to be reminded it is not wrong to ask questions. When we ask questions, God will respond with an answer in His time and His way, but answer He will!

What if the great rebellion, the great falling away started happening in the second and third century A.D when the Ekklesia was taken over by the concept of the "church"? What if it started when man decided to build his own house or ministry, rather than allow Jesus to build what He wanted to build? The "church" has been declared the temple of God by many. What if the antichrist, the one full of lawlessness refers not to one human being, but the religious spirit, the spirit of Babylon that made man a god, the spirit that took over the "temple" and raised it in man's image, not God's?

This man is called the man of perdition, which means destruction, to destroy. Man has become god. Man has seated himself in the place of authority instead of God. Man has become lawless even in the "temple". Man has put his own spin and interpretation on scripture and blessed it. It is so even in this day, but we are mostly too blind to see it, too deceived.

The presence of the "outlaw" is apparent by the activity of Satan, who uses all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, spurious wonders, and every form of evil deception in order to deceive those who are perishing because they rejected the love of the truth that would lead them to being saved. Because of this, God sends them a powerful delusion that leads them to believe what is false.

II Thessalonians 2:9-11 (TPT)

The enemy did not save up his deception just for the day in which we live. It has always been his mode of operation. What if a lot of what we see today is counterfeit meant to deceive us? One of the ways delusion and deception can affect our lives is through disobedience to God. It can come from listening to what man teaches without consulting God for an understanding of truth.

What if we have been living in deception for a very long time, passed down from generation to generation, and did not know it? What if we are starting to wake up and come out of our delusional state? We have not been able to distinguish the wheat from the tares, but now as the wheat matures and it is time for harvest, the revealing of the tares can take place. The truth can now be revealed and the separation can happen.

Deception in our government and other areas that has been going on for a long time is being revealed. It certainly could be in the religious world as well. Why do I ask these questions?

And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming. II Thessalonians 2:6-8 (NLT)

There are mysteries in scripture awaiting a time to be revealed. God told me a long time ago that things aren't always as they seem. Paul said all of this was a mystery, and the truth would only be revealed when the right time would come. Paul also said that the lawlessness was already working in secret in his day! It would remain a secret until the time it was to be revealed

Who is this man of lawlessness? When is the source of lawlessness going to be revealed? When is it the time for this spirit of lawlessness to be destroyed? The answer is, according to these verses in II Thessalonians when Jesus comes in great

splendor. The word splendor is the word glory or presence. How is He coming in great glory?

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Isaiah 60:1-3 (ESV)

Jesus is coming through His remnant, who have acknowledged His Kingship, who are hungering to see His Kingdom established in the earth, just as it is in heaven.

We can all draw close to him with the veil removed from our faces. And with no veil we all become like mirrors who brightly reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus. We are being transfigured into his very image as we move from one brighter level of glory to another. And this glorious transfiguration comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. II Corinthians 3:18 (TPT)

What if the antichrist spirit has been operating all these years and now is the time for the revealing of the sons and daughters of the King? What if now is the time to which Paul was referring when he told the early Ekklesia God would determine the time to unveil the secret? If so, what are we going to do about it? Will we wake up and take our place, or will we roll over and go back to sleep?

We are made to be vessels to carry the Lord's glory! We are built like a mirror to reflect His likeness. The likeness and the brightness become more clear and more distinct with each step towards Him that we take. We are transforming one step at a time. The closer we get to Him, the more the brightness of His glory is seen in us. We must forsake religion that carries us backwards in our pursuit of God.

Religion is everywhere. When we read about the religious spirit that operated in Jesus' day, let's not relegate it to the old denominational "churches" alone, but let's evaluate our own particular dealings with the religious institutions we participate in and to which we give our time, our resources, our

money. Are they truly following God's way or are they following the ways of man, lawless and self-serving?

Are we following religious leaders or are we following God? If we are following a godly leader, are we following because God has directed us to follow them? Is God the one we are following foremost? God will use godly leaders to direct us to Himself, but He is the One we ultimately follow!

Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and the High Priest

In Jesus' day there were Pharisees, a sect of the Jewish people established sometime after the second temple was built, which was several centuries before Jesus was born. Paul was a Pharisee before his conversion. He spoke of them as the strictest of all the Jewish religious groups. Along with obeying Jewish law, they believed in keeping the oral traditions of the Jewish leaders passed down through generations.

Jesus said the Pharisees held their traditions higher than scripture. Jesus did acknowledge the Pharisees as sitting on the seat of authority passed down from Moses under the old covenant and they did know the law.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

Matthew 23:1-3 (NKJV)

The Pharisees and scribes sat in Moses' seat, through which the law was passed down from generation to generation. They interpreted the law for the Jewish people. Jesus was talking to the Jews, acknowledging the Pharisees knew scripture. It was okay to listen to their teaching, to observe the celebrations as the law presented, but they should only do what was truly from God. He called the leaders hypocrites because they didn't do what they demanded of their followers. This was

still under the old covenant and before the Holy Spirit was given.

We have Pharisees today who make their own rules and establish doctrine for their own brand of religion. These rules sometimes become more important than the Bible and are a burden to the people. They become walls to confine and control the people.

There were also Sadducees, another group of leaders in the Jewish community. Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, Sadducees did not. Sadducees adhered to strictly the Books of Moses, not to the other books such as the books of the prophets.

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. Acts 23:8 (ESV)

Both Pharisees and Sadducees challenged Jesus many times, along with scribes. Scribes studied the scriptures, knew the scriptures, and copied the scriptures so the scriptures would be available to more people. Many times, they were chastised by Jesus right along with the Pharisees.

The high priest was the highest ranked priest and had special duties written in the law. Aaron, the brother of Moses, had been appointed the first high priest while the Israelites were still in the desert. Even though the Jews were under Roman rule at the time Jesus walked the earth, they were still allowed to practice their beliefs and have their ceremonies. The high priest at the time had to give his approval for the crucifixion of Jesus (John 11).

God initiated a system for the Israelites to point them to the coming Messiah. Their leaders added their own set of rules and regulations and it became a mechanism for enslaving the people.

It is not much different today. Even though Jesus came to earth, died and rose again to set us free from sin and bondage, our religious leaders put us back under slavery. Even though Jesus told us to pray His Kingdom come to earth like

His Kingdom exists in heaven, the religious leaders preach a religion that ignores the Kingdom and keeps us under control and in chains. They preach that our only hope is to die or wait for the return of the Savior so He can rescue us from the wickedness of this world. We have little to no concept of the Kingdom of God for which we pray.

Religion Brings Bondage and Control - Relationship Brings Freedom and Liberty

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, bondage cannot exist. There is only freedom glorious freedom! If those we follow keep us in bondage to tradition and an outward appearance of religion, we must search our hearts. Our leaders should encourage us to love the Lord with all our heart and to follow Him wherever He directs us. Leaders should encourage us to be free.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [emancipation from bondage, true freedom]. And we all, with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit.
II Corinthians 3:17,18 (AMP)

Religion will attempt to keep us in bondage. Religious leaders under the influence of the religious spirit will try to keep us under their control. Where there is control, there is no freedom. Many times, this control comes under the guise of tradition. In the days of Jesus, it was ceremonial things like washing your hands before eating, or eating with sinners, doing certain tasks on the Sabbath day. Today, it is rules the organization makes which are not supported by the Bible.

Then the Pharisees and religious scholars came from Jerusalem and asked Jesus this question: “Why do your disciples ignore the traditions of our elders? For example, they don’t ceremonially wash their hands before they eat bread.” Jesus answered, “And why do you

ignore the commandment of God because of your traditions? For didn't God say, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Whoever abuses or insults his father or mother must be put to death?' "But you teach that it's permissible to say to your parents when they are in financial need, 'Whatever gift you would have received from me I can keep for myself, since I dedicated it as an offering to God.' This doesn't honor your father or mother. And you have elevated your tradition above the words of God. Frauds and hypocrites! Isaiah described you perfectly when he said: These people honor me only with their words, for their hearts are so very distant from me. They pretend to worship me, but their worship is nothing more than the empty traditions of men." Matthew 15:1-9 (TPT)

The religious leaders were more concerned about people breaking their regulations, rules, and traditions than they were about people disobeying the Word of God. We see that today over and over again. There are many religious leaders today who condone abortion, and ignore the Bible concerning murder and the value of life.

There are many today who condone evil lifestyles because they do not understand the truth concerning love and judgment. They misconstrue some scripture and ignore other scripture in order to propagate their own doctrine and traditions.

Many times, we relinquish things to religious leaders thinking we are no longer accountable. Instead of listening to Holy Spirit for directions on who to feed, who to cloth, who to serve, who to give money, we dump finances into an offering plate and give the "church" the responsibility to decide for us. We give them the responsibility of teaching others.

We are commanded by our Lord, to minister to others, giving them the truth of salvation. We are commanded to advance the gospel of the Kingdom and to love and care for others. In other words, we are to walk the walk of advancing the Kingdom on earth in our own lives and we are to teach others how to do the same.

Yet, we relegate that responsibility to our religious leaders, not realizing we are still responsible. Many of these

religious leaders don't even believe in advancing the Kingdom on earth, and they don't believe the ordinary saint sitting in the pew is qualified to minister or preach the gospel. Will your "church" leaders allow you to start your own Bible study in your home without supervision? Will they allow you to come before the assembly with a word from God without it being scrutinized first?

Leaders are afraid of damaging their reputation in the city, so they avoid anything that might be done in error or bring chaos. It is their "church" so they do have a right to forbid such things. This again, proves the "church" is not the Ekklesia. The "church" does indeed belong to the ones who built it. It belongs to those who authorized it, which is man, not God.

The true Ekklesia has no walls. The true Ekklesia is made up of mature saints who love the Lord with all their heart. The true and real Ekklesia values its freedom in the Lord. It will not abuse it. Mature saints value their freedom of choice, which is a part of their inheritance from the Lord, but they also understand they are accountable before God for how they use that freedom.

The Ekklesia does not use its freedom against the Kingdom of God, but they use it to advance the Kingdom of God. They understand the consequences of their actions. They understand the consequences of wrongly using their freedom.

Many religious leaders do not know the heart of God. They are pretenders. They serve their own purposes. As the previous verses indicate, they quote the Bible often. They preach from it. They often sound good to the untrained ear. However, they value their doctrine more than they value the living Word of God. Their hearts are far from the heart of God.

There is a real difference between religious leaders and godly leaders. Religious leaders are those under the influence of a religious spirit. They will often tell you who to follow, who to listen to, what to read. Godly leaders tell you to listen to

God and do whatever He tells you. We must be careful who we trust. We must be free.

Religious Leaders are Hypocrites – Godly Leaders Follow Jesus and Obey

Jesus called the religious leaders, hypocrites! He did not mince words! Hypocrites are those who preach one thing and do another. They do not practice what they preach. They expect you to abide by certain rules, but they don't have to abide by those same rules. Run from those who claim to be godly leaders who are hypocrites. They are religious leaders.

Godly leaders are not managers or dictators. True godly leaders show forth the glory of Jesus as they follow Him and others want to follow. As saints are discipled and mature into the true Ekklesia they practice what they preach. We are all to follow Jesus. He is the one who desires to lead us. His true sheep will not follow the voice of another. We only follow others if it is the voice of our Lord speaking through them. Paul said follow me as I follow Christ.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

Matthew 23:27 (ESV)

Jesus referred to the religious leaders of His day as hypocrites over and over again. We are talking about a habitual practice of hypocrisy. When we discern a religious leader is not following Christ, we must stop following them.

Religious Leaders Are Like Snakes – Godly Leaders Reflect the Image of Jesus

John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees vipers. The New King James says "brood of vipers". The original King James says "generation of vipers". The original

Greek word for brood or generation means “offspring”. Jesus once told them, they were of their father, the devil. They were offspring of the devil, offspring of the viper. They supposedly followed God. God’s people looked to them for training and instruction.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Matthew 3:7 (NKJV)

This is John speaking. Jesus used the same terminology when He spoke of them. They had just told the crowd that Jesus cast out demons through “Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons”.

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Matthew 12:33,34 (NKJV)

The term that Jesus and John the Baptist used to describe these religious leaders was calculated and reflected exactly who they were. It has a deeper meaning than just name calling. The Greek word used for viper in these passages is “echidna”.

Echidna was a Greek mythological creature, half woman, half snake. The Iliad, a book written seven or eight centuries before Jesus was born, mentioned this creature. The Jews living in Rome and influenced by Greek culture would have known the story and understood why this word was used.

The top of the creature Echidna was a beautiful and enticing woman, while the bottom half was an ugly snake ready to squeeze life out of its victims. She lived in a cave most of her life. Religious leaders use enticing words to lure their prey into the trap of control and then take away whatever life the Holy Spirit wants to impart. They lure with deception and flattery, all tools of the trade used to entrap.

Echidna was said to have power in her venom to bring her victims to madness. Deception has the ability to warp the mind and emotions. According to the Bible it is delusion that drives humans to the most horrendous of sinful deeds. The deception coming from religious leaders is indeed poison and can drive humans to madness. Jesus and John, the Baptist, by the use of the phrase “offspring of vipers” was likening them to Echidna. The true madness of child molestation and trafficking are found in the religious world as well as other industries.

Religious leaders deceive us ever so subtly with all their rules and regulations and control that were never meant for us to carry. That in itself makes them vipers after the order of Echidna. Beware those who deceive. Beware those who try to control. Be extremely careful who you trust!

Godly leaders are not interested in number of converts or number of followers. There is no deceit. They want the saints to have a heart to follow God like they do. They teach and disciple people how to hear God for themselves and obey Him in all things. They disciple, train and then release.

We must recognize the difference between godly leaders and religious leaders. Religious leaders keep us tied to them. Godly leaders practice what they preach and lead us directly to the heart of God.

Religious Leaders Want Recognition – Godly Leaders Want Jesus to Get the Recognition and for Saints to Excel

Matthew 23 is a chapter dedicated mostly to Jesus’ words concerning religious leaders. It lists many of the things to watch for in self-serving religious leaders.

Everything they do is done for show and to be noticed by others. They want to be seen as holy, so they wear oversized prayer boxes on their arms and foreheads with Scriptures inside, and wear extra-long tassels on their outer garments. Matthew 23:5 (TPT)

Although the Jewish leaders were instructed by God to wear tassels and certain instruments on their robes, Jesus said they enlarged them to get attention as someone important. Today, it could be a robe or a collar. This certainly applies in some denominational settings, but it has come back in modern apostolic “churches” as well, particularly if you carry the title of bishop. Religious leaders tend to only associate with those who are on an equal status with them.

Religious leaders want us to accept what they say just because of who they are. If you question them, who are you? You didn't go to seminary. You didn't go through special training. You have not spent your lifetime in service to the “church”. What right do you have to question them?

In some instances, this self-importance comes down to the level of dreams and visions, the number of miracles, the size of the crowds, the number of trips through the portal to heaven, the number of words of prophecy given by the leader. These are all possible status symbols that make a person noticeable and honored by others.

It is not that these things are wrong. They are wrong when they are exaggerated or outright lies. They are wrong when they are used for show or to bring attention to one self. Not everyone is self-promoting, but it is definitely an area where a person can become vulnerable to the religious spirit.

And how they love to be admired by men with their titles of respect, aspiring to be recognized in public and have others call them ‘Reverend.’ “But you are to be different from that. You are not to be called ‘master,’ for you have only one Master, and you are all brothers and sisters. And you are not to be addressed as ‘father,’ for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Nor are you to be addressed as ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Anointed One. The greatest among you will be the one who always serves others. Remember this: If you have a lofty opinion of yourself and seek to be honored, you will be humbled. But if you have a modest opinion of yourself and choose to humble yourself, you will be honored.”

Matthew 23:7-12 (TPT)

We have talked copiously about titles. Jesus says it best here. They are used because the leaders want admiration, recognition and respect. But His Ekklesia is not to be that way. Test the spirit. Don't use a title when addressing religious leaders and see what happens. If we are following God with a whole heart and have committed to obeying Him at all costs, we will know if a person is in it for the show and recognition. Religious leaders bring glory to themselves. Godly leaders bring glory and honor to God and they do not care for pomp and circumstance.

They crave the seats of highest honor at banquets and in their meeting places.
Matthew 23:6 (TPT)

Jesus spoke about religious leaders who craved honor. Walking into most "church" auditoriums there is a platform at the front. The platform sits above the congregation. Often times there are special chairs for the pastor or special speakers, that resemble thrones. They help present the picture of how special they are. They have reserved parking places, and reserved seats.

It is not that these things are wrong, again. There might be reasons sometimes why these things are necessary. The point is We do not live by man's rules and regulations. It is just as wrong to say we can't do these things as it is to say we must do these things. It is all about our heart and our motive.

Just because it has always been done a certain way is not a reason to continue. We become so desensitized to things, we begin to see everything as normal when we should be questioning things. We must train our spirit to always be sensitive to the Spirit of God, always able to discern the spirit behind the things we observe and do so we are not deceived.

**Religious Leaders Build Their Kingdom – Godly
Leaders Build God's Kingdom**

Most people think it is normal to desire to build one's own place or ministry. Every ministry for itself. Do they separate themselves from the rest of God's people? Do they constantly talk about growing the size of their congregation, or how to get involved in building what they are building? Or do they talk about the Kingdom of God and reaching their community for Jesus, whether it adds to their congregation or not?

“Great sorrow awaits you religious scholars and you Pharisees—such frauds and pretenders! You do all you can to keep people from experiencing the reality of heaven's kingdom realm. Not only do you refuse to enter in, you also forbid anyone else from entering in!”

Matthew 23:13 (TPT)

We cannot categorize all ministries this way. There are true ministries who are doing the work of the Lord in specific areas because He has established them in that ministry and given them a heart for it. There are ministries doing everything they can to stop human and child trafficking. There are ministries ministering to battered wives and abused children. There are ministries serving the homeless. We must have our eyes and ears open in these days to discern truth. Deception is everywhere. Be careful who you follow.

Religious Leaders Are Blind and Deceived – Godly Leaders Hear and Obey God

Disobedience means we are walking away from God not towards Him. It becomes harder to hear His voice and easier for the religious spirit to deceive us. Many leaders who have become deceived are blind to the fact that they are deceived and if confronted with that fact, will become extremely angry.

“You blind guides! Great sorrow awaits you, for you teach that there's nothing binding when you swear by God's temple, but if you swear by the gold of the temple, you are bound by your oath. You are

deceived and blind! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred? Matthew 23:16,17 (TPT)

Take time to read the rest of chapter 23 of Matthew. Jesus has nothing good to say about these leaders. Over and over again He calls them frauds and pretenders. If there were that many religious teachers in Jesus' day, what makes us think they are few and far between in our day? I tell you they are numerous, just as they were in the day Jesus lived.

Religious leaders are obsessed with things that don't matter. They do not focus on things of heavenly value. Jesus calls them blind guides and nitpickers. They are full of greed and self-indulgence. He tells them they are like **"tombs painted over with white paint—tombs that look shining and beautiful on the outside but filled with rotting corpses on the inside"**.

They masquerade as righteous people but inside are full of lawlessness. They do whatever they want to do. They think they are accountable to no one, not even God. Jesus was so fed up with this group of religious leaders that He concluded His talk to them with these very somber words.

"For this reason I will send you more prophets and wise men and teachers of truth. Some you will crucify, and some you will beat mercilessly with whips in your meeting houses, abusing and persecuting them from city to city. As your penalty, you will be held responsible for the righteous blood spilled and the murders of every godly person throughout your history—from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, whom you killed as he stood in the temple between the brazen altar and the Holy Place. Matthew 23:34,35 (TPT)

As mature saints of the Ekklesia, we must not make decisions based on our emotions or our human reasoning. Jesus pointed out traits of the religious leaders and how to recognize them, but He did not tell us to categorize all leaders this way. The leaders that He pointed out were ones who came and confronted Him. He discerned the religious spirit that was operating in them.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. Yes, He did initially come to Jesus at night time so that the other Pharisees would not see him. He was concerned for His reputation and image, but he was hungry to know more concerning the Kingdom of God. Jesus got through to the heart of Nicodemus. We know this because the Bible indicates he helped the disciples with the burial of Jesus after His crucifixion.

We must not run with this teaching and declare leaders to be snakes and hypocrites and phonies because they have not accepted us, because we feel they have hurt us, or they are not doing what we think they should be doing. The whole goal of this message is for us to mature in the things of God, and know God's heart. When we know God's heart, we only say the things we hear Him say and we only do the things we see Him do.

The goal is to be so close to the heart of God that we discern easily and instantly that which is righteous and that which is religious. We reject all that is from the religious spirit. We want to walk with open eyes and ears, and open hearts.

Religious Leaders Demand Allegiance - Godly Leaders Lead with Godly Authority

Religious leaders demand to know by what authority you do the things you do or by what authority you speak the things you speak. Who gave you the right to speak? They questioned Jesus' authority all the time. They will question yours. What right do you have to hold Bible studies in your home? What qualifies you? Are you licensed? What Bible School did you attend? What makes you think you are an apostle or a prophet? Who gives you the right to say you speak in the name of the Lord?

**One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority."
Matthew 12:38 (NLT)**

There is just something about a person who has a heart after the heart of God. They walk differently, talk differently, react differently. There is an authority that others just cannot deny. They may not understand it, but they see it.

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law. Matthew 7:28-29 (NLT)

They wanted Jesus to prove His authority by doing miracles. To them the ability to do miracles was a sign of authority. How many ministries entice you to their meetings with the promise of miracles? How many people travel all over the country in search of a promise of a miracle?

Miracles are not wrong. Many have been taught that miracles don't happen anymore. They are very real. There are also some that look like miracles, but are not. Some use the illusion of miracles to draw crowds. Jesus seems to indicate miracles are not the reason we should seek Jesus. Miracles do still happen. Discernment is necessary.

Jesus is in the restoration business and He has been restoring truths to the Ekklesia that have been lost for years. Some of these truths concern miracles, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God, and the five gifts given by Jesus to the Ekklesia of apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist and pastor.

Because Jesus wants these truths restored to His Ekklesia, we have seen the results of these truths demonstrated over the last couple of centuries. We have only begun. We do not seek miracles for the sake of miracles, we seek Jesus. We seek His face, His love, His Presence, His will, His Kingdom. Miracles are contained within every one of these.

This, I believe, is what Jesus was trying to convey to the religious leaders who were so interested in Jesus performing miracles. Seek Him for who He is, not what He can give you. Seek Him, seek His face, and the miracles will happen. When we turn our focus to Him and Him alone, we

will begin to see a torrent of miracles! I am reminded of an incident in my own life.

I had just started traveling down the road of faith and what it really meant to have the faith to move mountains. I had severe asthma attacks since I was a child. God healed me completely. I have not had an attack since He healed me many, many years ago.

I saw one miracle after another, including parking places wherever I went and needed one. One day I needed to pick up a part from the local Sears store for my husband's uncle. He needed it as fast as I possibly could get it. So as usual, I prayed and believed for a parking spot immediately in front of the store.

No parking spot in front of the store was available. I was so sure the parking spot would be there that I became frustrated and disappointed. In that emotional state, I lashed out at God. "Why? You always give me parking places! You know I need this right now. What is going on?"

As I am saying this, I am driving around the block, not knowing what I am going to do. As I am driving, trying to find a spot to park and praying at the same time, I heard Jesus say to me with sadness in His voice, "Do you love me because I give you parking places?"

An arrow struck my heart deeply. Tears came immediately to my eyes. "No, Lord. I would love you if all you ever did for me was die on the cross". I immediately felt the warmth of His love. At that moment, I suddenly realized I was back in front of the store and there was my parking place. As I pulled in to that spot, the light of the glory of my Lord filled that car. His presence was so real. I did not want to leave it.

I cried "Thank you, Lord" as I reluctantly climbed out of the vehicle, wiped the tears and went to get the part from the store. It was an experience I have relived over and over again in my mind, but have never experienced the intensity of it again. It taught me nothing is more important than He is. Seek Him and all the other things will be added to you. Seek Him. Seek Him. Seek Him. Nothing else will do.

There is a real difference between following a religious leader and a godly leader. Godly leaders lead you to Jesus where you can hear Him for yourself. They are not interested in you following them for everything. They want you to follow Jesus. He is everything.

Overall Signs of Religious Leaders

Even though “church” is not what Jesus is building, it does not mean that every leader of a “church” or current ministry is religious or evil. God has used many tools and vehicles to get His message to mankind throughout history, even pagan kings and donkeys. God is waking up leaders to His ways. Many are hearing His call and they are beginning to walk out of religion.

There are many differences between religious leaders and godly leaders. Run from religious leaders who refuse to see the error of their ways. Do not let them control you. Flee Babylon. The most important thing to know is always hear the voice of your God, and follow Him no matter what you feel or think.

Religious leaders love to tout their knowledge and understanding of the Bible. They try to prove they know and understand the Bible better than their followers. Do not be trapped by their arguments. Sometimes they will use flattery as a way to set a trap to keep congregants following them. Sometimes they accuse people of not being spiritual, while declaring themselves righteous.

These leaders value recognition and prestige, yet, do not value the people and their worth as children of God. They use the same tactics worldly systems use, such as divide and conquer or goading people into anger. They use many other ungodly tricks in order to make an example of God’s people and hopefully limit their influence.

When Jesus questioned the religious leaders of His day, they became angry. Leaders like this do not want others to question what they are saying or doing. They preach more

about works than about relationship. They want converts to their “church”, their way of thinking. They then create monsters even worse than they are. They are not interested in preaching about the King and His Kingdom being advanced on earth.

They take away the key of knowledge. They purport they know scripture better than others and we need to listen to them, thus they control what we believe. These are the fences they have erected and we dare not look for greener pasture on the other side. They threaten us saying we are in rebellion and disobedience to God if we leave their pasture. They punish those who God sends to speak to them concerning the error of their ways.

These leaders have a real love for money and the prestige it can bring. They cater to those who have money to give. They are jealous of those who seem to have a better or bigger ministry. They will try to undermine those they think are in a better position in ministry than they are. They will accuse others of stealing sheep and operating out of their lane.

Religious leaders demand loyalty to them and to their ministry. If they believe you have not fulfilled that obligation, they feel justified in kicking you to the curb. If you are not being loyal to them, you are not being loyal to God because it is God who is working in them. They are the leader and you must follow. Coercion is a very real part of this religious world and we need to recognize it and flee from it.

They are not interested in a current word from God if it contradicts what they believe. John the Baptist accused religious leaders of rejecting the true living word of God. He accused them of playing religious games. It is no different today.

If people have different opinions than leadership, they are not allowed leadership positions or teaching positions. In many cases they are not allowed to speak to the group or to come to the front of the “church” with a word from God.

Religious leaders can be easily offended, but just like the deep state today in the world, they project their sins on

others. It is not their fault. When they are offended, they declare the reason is because you are offensive. You are the problem. It is your fault that they must do the things they do.

When you hit a sore spot of truth in their lives, they will become angry and again make you the problem. They will declare you guilty of the very things you point out in their lives. They will have no problem with persecuting you and ridiculing you, isolating you until you leave their building or ministry. They do not want you to infect the rest of the assembly with your words. If Jesus directs, wipe your feet and go.

Returning to Our First Love

The Bible is the source for identifying religious leaders. There is more that could be said, but this should be enough to illustrate we have a problem with religious leaders in our day. If you are still unsure, please take the time to read the gospels and the book of Acts for yourself.

We sometimes think Jesus was strictly referring to the religious leaders under the old covenant and things changed under the new covenant with a new set of leaders who were now all godly leaders, not religious leaders. After all, the new covenant saints and leaders had the Holy Spirit in them, while those under the old covenant did not.

Holy Spirit in us truly makes a difference, but there is a difference between being filled with the Spirit and allowing the Spirit of God to lead and direct us. Therefore, we still have religious leaders today identified by the same traits of leaders that Jesus faced.

Paul was ministering just a few years after Jesus was resurrected when he confronted those who were false ministers. It did not take long for the enemy to set up his new counterfeit leadership to work against the establishing of the Ekklesia.

These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. But I am not surprised!

Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.
II Corinthians 11:13-15 (NLT)

There was a paradigm shift that happened to bring the new covenant into being. It did not stop satan from attempting to sabotage what God was doing. False ministers were already in action in the first century of the Ekklesia. They are even more active in the current Ekklesia. They look real. Their speech sounds good. It might even sound exciting and enticing. They masquerade for the multitudes, darkness disguised as light. They are only discernable by the Spirit of the Living God.

In the first part of this chapter in II Corinthians, Paul makes a promise to Jesus that he would deliver to Him a pure bride undefiled by the world. That was his goal and is the goal of all godly leaders. Jesus desires a bride without spot or wrinkle. He longs for His bride to come out of religion and be His alone.

Paul's biggest concern regarding these false apostles was that the saints would lose their pure undivided devotion to Jesus by the deceptive teachings of these false leaders. Godly leaders are saddened by the glitter and glamor being pushed by the false leaders today that lead people away from the heart of Jesus.

This is the heart and soul of why I write this book. We have lost our first love for the Lover of our souls. He is everything. Our devotion and love must be for Him and who He is, not for what He can give us. We are constantly looking to His hands for what He can provide, rather than His face for who He is. When you look into His eyes, you see the Father's heart and then you know the true meaning of love!

That is the difference between a godly leader and a religious leader. The religious leader will lead you to build something earthly and not lasting. A godly leader will lead you straight to Jesus and what He is building. We must have this.

The needed paradigm shifts cannot happen without a mature Ekklesia. A mature Ekklesia needs godly leaders.

Not only did Paul warn about false leaders, he even warned there were false brethren.

I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.

II Corinthians 11:26 (NLT)

Freedom is a huge part of the message of the gospel. We are free. Jesus made us free. But there are many who desire us to relinquish our freedom. They want us back under control. If we do not understand our freedom, we will not do the exploits necessary to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. We will succumb to the pressure to accept the status quo.

Even that question came up only because of some so-called believers there—false ones, really—who were secretly brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations. But we refused to give in to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the gospel message for you.

Galatians 2:4, 5 (NLT)

It is our responsibility to test every spirit to see if it is from God or not. We should not just trust our instincts, but ask God for truth. We have put our trust in wrong leaders for years. Again, we must begin to question everything. We must ask God to show us truth, and we must be willing to obey whatever truth He shows us.

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. Those people belong to this world, so they

speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

I John 4:1-6 (NLT)

John said there were people who would claim to speak from the Spirit of God, but some of them would speak from a worldly perspective instead. John was not telling people to follow him because he was speaking to them. He said that those who know God would follow him because they would recognize God in him.

The basic criteria for being able to discern the real from the fake is to know God. That means really know Him, not just know about Him. We must be following God with a whole heart and have a desire to please Him, then we will be able to discern what is real and what is false.

The goal of all our lives is to know our Lord and follow Him. Religious leaders reach people and bring them into their building, into their ministry in order for the people to learn about Jesus and hopefully get involved in their ministry.

Godly leaders guide people to Jesus and His Kingdom ways. They teach and disciple the people to hear and obey God. They in turn, go out and reach other people and bring them to Jesus and His Kingdom ways so they can hear and obey God as well. The cycle then continues over and over again.

They are outside the walls of religion living life on earth as God intended. They are free and advancing the Kingdom of God wherever their feet touch every day of the week. They are the Ekklesia going about the world doing Kingdom business all the time. They have broken free of the chains of religion. There is no stopping them.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 17

- 1 – Do you believe the religious spirit is as prevalent as the author indicates? Explain your reasoning.
- 2 – In Jesus day who were the Pharisees and Sadducees? Who in our current environment would be in their position today? How do you think Jesus would react today?
- 3 – Describe the difference between leaders who try to bind and control us and those who want to bring freedom and liberty to us. Describe any experiences you have had that illustrate this. How did you handle the situation and what would you do different if anything today?
- 4 – Describe what it means to be a hypocrite. How do you ensure that you do not walk in hypocrisy yourself? Why is it important not to follow a leader who is a hypocrite?
- 5 – Explain why Jesus used the word viper to describe the religious leaders. How do we avoid being a religious viper?
- 6 – Recognition is important to most religious leaders. Write down some ways this shows up in their ministries. Knowing that godly leadership and ministry is serving others, explain the difference between religious leaders and godly leaders.
- 7 – There is a difference between building your own kingdom and building the Kingdom of God. Describe the difference between religious leaders and godly leaders in this area.
- 8 – Explain what true authority looks and acts like when there is a mature Ekklesia versus what we see today in “church” life.
- 9 – How important is it for believers to return to their first love? How important is that in our pursuit of freedom? Are you taking any steps to get there? If so, explain.

Section V

THE EKKLESIA AND THE KINGDOM

CHAPTER 18

THE MATURE EKKLESIA

The paradigm shifts mentioned in this book require a mature body of believers who have been discipled in the ways of the Kingdom of God. In a nutshell, that is the meaning of the vision of the Chinese lantern. We must turn everything we think we know upside down and allow the Lord of the harvest to shake it, so all that is not of Him can be removed. Only this will produce a people trained to hear and obey the Lord, ready to allow Him to establish them as the effective Ekklesia in the earth.

Our society today is full of rubble. We can only be equipped to remove the rubble from society as we allow the wood, hay, and stubble to be removed from our own lives. Only then will we understand how to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. We must prepare to be the Ekklesia, for it is the Ekklesia that advances the Kingdom and reclaims territory from the enemy.

If we cannot understand the Ekklesia, we will not understand the Kingdom of God. We will not understand the whole purpose for our lives on earth. Our focus must change from that of “church” to His Kingdom. Being of the Kingdom is just another way of saying we have lost our satisfaction with the world’s ways of doing things. Our hearts long to facilitate a paradigm shift that will take us back to God’s original intentions. It is not about bashing what we call the “church”, but is about doing things God’s way.

The “church” has influenced me greatly over the years and helped me arrive at the place I am today. But there is so much more. We can choose God’s best or be satisfied with second-best. We have been satisfied for so long. If God could use evil kings and ungodly leaders in ages past to bring about His will, it is proof that He can use anything He desires for His purposes. But how much more effective it would be if the

vehicle or tool being used for God's purposes was actually designed by the Creator, Himself, for His purpose in the first place.

This book is meat for the remnant, those who hunger for more of God to see His righteousness and justice reign in the earth. What man had created and called the "church" has merely been a vehicle or a tool to help facilitate the spreading of the gospel. It has done little more than present the message of salvation. In many cases it has become so corrupt it has been used as a tool of the devil to keep God's people in bondage.

The World in Shambles

The world is in shambles. 2000 years of "church" has not made things better. In fact, they seem to be getting worse. Fear is rampant among all the people of the earth in every nation, including our own. Believers don't understand what is happening any more than unbelievers, yet believers should have the answers. Believers, for the most part, walk in as much fear as the world does. That should not be true!

God has the answers to everything in His heart; therefore, we have the ability to get answers if we know His heart. Many are satisfied to know Him superficially, to know about Him. That is not enough. We must truly know His heart for mankind and the earth. To truly know God is to love Him with every fiber of our being, to love what He loves, to hate what He hates. When we love Him, we do whatever He wants us to do, whenever He wants us to do it.

We must let go of everything we thought the "church" was, in order to understand what Jesus is establishing. This is so very critical to do. Many ask, "How can you say something that has existed for 2000 years, which God seemingly allowed and used, is wrong?"

The "church" is a tool, just like a hammer, and is not inherently good or bad. It is how the tool is used that determines its worth. If a hammer is used to break a window by a thief, the hammer is being used wrong. If a "church" is

used to divide, control, deceive, or box people in and keep them from doing what God commanded them to do, it is being used wrong.

The true Ekklesia will do exploits for her God. She will stand boldly and declare the decrees from the throne in heaven in the face of everything evil. The "church" today is too busy lighting up the sky with spiritual fireworks to entertain. We need some Elijahs to strike fear in the heart of the enemy once again as fire falls on evil altars and destroys them.

Quick Review

Here is a quick review of the discussions so far. The vision of the Chinese lantern and turning it upside down represents these points for transformation.

- The "church" is not the Ekklesia. The Ekklesia is the collective body of mature believers everywhere.
- The "church" is a man-made vehicle. It has been used to some extent by the Ekklesia as a tool to propagate the gospel. It has also been used as a vehicle or tool of the enemy to propagate religion.
- Relationship must replace religion. Apathy, complacency and lethargy are signs of the influence of the religious spirit.
- The saints must be set free from the mechanisms of men who seek authority and control over them. Jesus is our authority.
- The traditions and teachings of men have held us in bondage and under the influence of a religious spirit.

- We must embrace our individuality designed by God. No more cookie cutter saints, apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists.
- Paradigm shifts and transformation are needed for us to prepare to possess the Kingdom of God, which is our inheritance.
- A great shaking of all things will facilitate the needed paradigm shifts. Works of hay, wood and stubble will be burned. Gold and silver will be purified.
- Believers must be able to distinguish between what has been taught by man and what is taught by God.
- We must establish His Kingdom, not our own little kingdoms.
- The journey from believer to disciple to mature saint is essential in order to be the Ekklesia and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.
- True leadership and gifts given by both Jesus and the Holy Spirit will come into clearer focus.
- The gift of being an apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor and evangelist are given to certain people by Jesus. They serve the saints by training them to hear and follow Jesus. These gifts are not above or beneath any other saint.
- There are no titles, no rank in the Ekklesia. Everyone is a servant of God submitting to God and to each other in love.

- Leaders are leaders not because they coerce or subject others to follow. Others follow because they see true leaders following Jesus and encouraging others to follow Jesus.
- Mature saints must be committed to hear and obey their Lord at all costs.
- All saints of the Ekklesia are called to minister meaning to serve mankind. A minister is not a title and a ministry is not an organization.
- Mature saints enter into rest, which is a state of being rather than doing.
- Mature saints are united with Jesus as the Head to form the one new man.
- It is the mature saints who inherit the Kingdom.
- The saints of the Ekklesia are citizens of heaven. It is the responsibility of the saints to bring heaven to earth.
- It is a new day. It is the 7th Day from Adam and the 3rd day from Jesus. We are going where no man has gone before. We are free and we are casting off all limits and hindrances to follow our Lord.

Maturity

Until we truly understand and become mature, we will not be effective in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. Maturity means different things to different people. Some believe it is the amount of the Bible a person knows; some believe it is the number of years a person has been saved. The Bible lists these requirements for maturity. There may be more.

Unity – As the One New Man
Living by the spirit, not by the flesh
Hearing and obeying God
Operating in life from a state of being rather than doing
Humility
Living in a place of rest and holiness

We must live spiritually rather than carnally. To be carnal means to live by our flesh, our emotions, our own minds and thoughts, rather than by our spirit communicating with the Spirit of the Living God. We must renew our mind so it does not war against the things of the spirit. There are believers who have been saved for thirty years and still live carnal lives. Saints, that ought not to be the case!

We must become that army described in Joel chapter two knowing who we are what the Lord has called us to do in perfect unity and harmony with the Commander-in-Chief.

Like mighty men they run, like men of war they scale a wall; each marches on his way, they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another; each marches in his track. Through the weapons they plunge; they do not break rank. Joel 2:7,8 (MEV)

Gifts Given To Help the Saints Mature

The gifts from Jesus, as discussed previously, are apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist and pastor whose main purpose is to equip the saints for ministry (service). They are called to help the saints mature as the Ekklesia.

Apostles prepare an apostolic people. Prophets prepare a prophetic people. Both gifts are foundational. Jesus is the true foundation and cornerstone of the Ekklesia. Apostles should be receiving the blueprints given by Jesus in heaven for what will be established in the earth. They should be equipping a people to see the blueprints and to know how to build what the Lord is establishing.

Prophets add details to the blueprints. They see what needs to be torn down and destroyed before the accurate structure can be built. Prophets, today, are not seeing the detail in clarity yet, because the apostles do not know their actual function. Many prophets are focused on impressing and building their ministry by seeing into the future. Many use Chinese fortune cookie prophecies to attract the people.

The apostles are too focused on building “churches”, networks and ministries. There are blueprints waiting in heaven to be downloaded to an apostle who is willing to step into his or her rightful place to help lay the foundation of the Kingdom of God through Jesus.

When apostles begin to function in this way, the rest of the gifts will begin to operate as the Lord intended. They will facilitate the shifts into new paradigms. John the Baptist is an example. He saw a shift from the Old Testament covenant to the New Testament covenant because he knew who Jesus was. The original twelve apostles carried out the blueprints given by Jesus for the Ekklesia of their day. Paul initiated the paradigm shift that revealed the message of the Kingdom was for the Gentiles, also.

Apostles and prophets are established in righteousness and justice, the pillars of God’s throne. They discern what is right in the sight of God and they apply justice to make things right for the Kingdom in major ways. They develop and train apostolic and prophetic people to prepare them to operate in righteousness and justice where God leads them.

Apostolic and prophetic people judge what is right in particular situations and release or apply justice to those situations. They help change lifestyles in those around them by showing them a new way to look at life. When they begin to function as designed, there will be blueprints downloaded from heaven for cities, states, companies, government, schools, media, entertainment and so much more.

Teachers equip the Ekklesia with instruction of what Jesus is teaching or speaking. They, along with prophets, equip

the Ekklesia to hear the voice of God for themselves. They also prepare the Ekklesia to teach others.

Evangelists have a heart for the lost and they equip the saints to bring the message of salvation to others. They have a heart for the people, not only for salvation but for preparation to be effective in the Kingdom of God.

Pastors have a heart to see the Ekklesia grow and mature and be productive as saints in the Kingdom. They teach and equip the saints in maturity and living a spiritual not a carnal life. They instill a love in the Ekklesia for others and a heart to help others achieve maturity.

This is not meant as an end-all to what these gifts do. Every individual is unique and God will direct their development. We are not to be clones. Our uniqueness must be allowed to flourish in God.

The pure gospel of the Kingdom is important and needs restored. Not only will the authentic gifts from Jesus help bring the saints to maturity, they will return the pure doctrine of the early Ekklesia that over centuries the enemy has twisted and defiled. What we are being taught is the gospel, is far removed from the truth of the gospel message that sets men free. Signs and wonders happened all the time in the early Ekklesia. Angels were seen and active in the lives of believers.

Today, everyone is seeking the supernatural experience instead of the God of the supernatural. Everyone wants to take a trip to heaven without dying. There seems to be a competition between “prophets” on who can come up with the most outlandish version of heaven.

There are real supernatural experiences. The Bible is absolutely full of these events. We should be experiencing these more than we are. But they must be real, not a counterfeit, not made up to entice followers. There is so much emphasis on seeking the supernatural instead of on pursuing God with a whole heart.

Faith comes with the real. Signs and wonders will once again flourish and angels will have an active part in our lives again. The saints will do exploits. The glory and the anointing

will be seen by the world. The people who are given as gifts to the Ekklesia must facilitate all of this. God first in everything!

The gifts given by Holy Spirit are to help us and those around us see the goodness and the grace of God. Every believer can operate in these gifts. They should never be hidden. They are in us and can be used 24 hours a day, 7 days a week wherever we go and for all people we encounter.

The important thing is not the people who have the gifts, but that the right gift is available at the right time for the people who need it. That should be our desire, to operate in the gift that is needed wherever we are for the people who are in our presence at the time. These gifts are to edify us, to establish us in the faith. They help to raise us up to maturity, to become the one new man scripture reveals to us.

Renewing Our Mind

In order to live in unity, to live by the spirit and not the flesh, we must renew our minds. We must understand what is right in the sight of God and walk in obedience. According to this verse, renewing our mind, enables us to walk in holiness and righteousness. We will walk in discernment, and do what is right in the sight of God.

and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:23,24 (NKJV)

As mentioned earlier, Paul talks a lot about the “one new man”, which is the body of Christ, the Ekklesia, connected to the Head, which is Jesus. Before we can become the “one new man”, we must become a new man (or woman) ourselves, individually. Then, collectively, all the new men and women come together as the “one new man”, both Jew and Gentile, who hear and obey the voice of their Lord. They are in unity.

Before we can be joined together, we must mature. It is all about maturity. Paul told the Ephesians to put on the new

man created by God. It means living from our spirits, not out flesh. Their minds needed to be renewed. The word for “mind” means intellect or understanding. They needed to start thinking like Jesus, not like the world. They needed to start thinking spiritually, not fleshly or carnally.

Some say we should renew our minds daily, but that is not necessarily true. The word “renewed” in this passage means to “reform, renovate”. If I am doing a kitchen renovation, I want to do that renovation one time and not every day forever. If I am reforming some habit that I have, I do not want to reform it and revert back the next day to my old habit only to start all over again.

Our mind needs a complete renovation. We do not get up every morning and renew our mind to think spiritually and then during the day somehow revert back to thinking with our emotions and flesh. No, our minds should never go back to the old mind with the old thoughts.

However, God may deal with areas of our thoughts and intellect at separate times. While we are working on renewing one area, there may be other areas not yet addressed. God deals with each individual differently and we need to recognize that fact when ministering to individuals. Once an area of our mind has been renewed, we should never go back to the old thoughts and patterns of life.

We are a new and different person operating according to the spirit, not the flesh. When we operate from the flesh, we are not mature. The Voice translation says it this way.

If you have heard Jesus and have been taught by Him according to the truth that is in Him, then you know to take off your former way of life, your crumpled old self—that dark blot of a soul corrupted by deceitful desire and lust—to take a fresh breath and to let God renew your attitude and spirit. Then you are ready to put on your new self, modeled after the very likeness of God: truthful, righteous, and holy.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (Voice)

Another familiar passage from Romans also instructs us to renew our mind. Until believers come to the place where

they are each individually living from the spirit rather than the flesh, we will not come together in unity as the one new man.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1.2 (NKJV)

Containers For the Glory

It is only as we learn to live in humility and unity that we find ourselves connected to others who have matured in the things of God. Paul, in Ephesians chapter two, explains how the Gentiles who were not circumcised, would be united with those who were circumcised to form one body. Jesus is the head of that one body. The body no longer depends on old regulations and rules to lead them, it has Jesus. Circumcision was no longer required.

When we mature into that one new man then we will enter the Kingdom and our inheritance. We must shed the carnal man, the old man nature, and put on newness of life in the form of the spiritual man, the new man. United with others who have chosen to do the same, we will have become an effective Ekklesia.

Transformation requires we go through the fire. The fire will burn up the old wood, hay and stubble that keeps us from moving forward. We cannot enter the new day, the new land with baggage. It must be destroyed. For some this will be extremely hard because all they have is wood, hay and stubble.

The fire is also meant to purify. The treasures we have of gold, silver and jewels need the fire to remove all impurities. That is a good thing! Do not fear the fire. The fire is the glory of God, and it needs to be seen in us. The world needs to see it, but they can't if it has impurities. We must become a peculiar people!

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
Titus 2:14 (KJV)

He is the one who is purifying us, making us clean of all impurities, so we can become a chosen and special people set apart for Him as the Amplified version of the Bible says it.

who [willingly] gave Himself [to be crucified] on our behalf to redeem us and purchase our freedom from all wickedness, and to purify for Himself a chosen and very special people to be His own possession, who are enthusiastic for doing what is good.
Titus 2:14 (AMP)

The fire in us is the eternal fire of God. We are built to house the fire, the anointing, the glory of God in us. It should never go out, but shine brighter each day. There is a level of glory that we have not experienced yet, but we will. The nations will see it. Isaiah chapter 60 is about the day in which we live.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. **Isaiah 60:1-3 (ESV)**

We live in a vast darkness today. Darkness covers the earth and its people. It is the day when the glory of the Lord is going to rise on His mature saints, His Ekklesia, the people who follow Him with a whole heart and cause the darkness to flee. Isaiah is full of scriptures concerning the glory of God. Another verse says this.

And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” **Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)**

There is a note on this verse in the English Standard version that says “the whole earth is full of his glory” could be translated “may his glory fill the whole earth”. Isaiah also

mentions a rebellious people who have eyes that can't see and ears that can't hear. How very real that is today!

The fulness of the Lord IS already in the earth, including the fulness of His glory, but not everyone has eyes to see it or ears to hear and understand what it is. A day is coming when it will be seen! The glory of our God, the fullness of our God will be seen by the nations through a peculiar, unique, special people who have become one in the spirit, no longer under control of their carnal nature. These peculiar ones have gone through the fire and allowed their Lord to purge the impurities from them.

We are containers for the glory. The glory is inside us and draws people to the Lord all the time, but there is a level to God and His awesomeness that we have not experienced yet, nor have we fully comprehended it. If we are willing to climb the mountain deeper into His presence, we will experience something deeper, I am convinced of it. There will be a corporate glory that fills the Ekklesia.

Being One with the Lord

There is a secret, a mystery here to the one new man we do not yet fully understand. We must understand the difference of BEING versus DOING.

Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.
John 14:9-10 (NLT)

How can the Father be in Jesus, and yet Jesus is in the Father? Can you take a beach ball and put it inside a large cardboard box and at the same time say that the box is inside the beachball? Impossible in our minds and in our earthly understanding of things. Yet, not only does Jesus declare that

it is that way between Him and the Father, it will be that way between us and Jesus. How can this be?

When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” *John 14:20-21 (NLT)*

This is the prayer on the heart of Jesus. The Father will not leave a prayer of His Son unanswered. Jesus prayed it, the Father will do it. We will be one.

We have not experienced this yet in its fulness, but it should be the desire of our heart to have the prayer of Jesus for us fulfilled. There is a level of unity, of glory, of anointing, of love we cannot fully imagine, but it is available to us. We just need to be hungry and thirsty, for it is then that we will be filled. We must lose our fear of man. We must hunger for God's heart.

John chapter 14 is a great chapter to read over and over again. Jesus prayed for the Holy Spirit to come so these things could happen. Notice in verse 9, Jesus said it was the Father who did the works through Him because the Father lived in Him. The works through us are happening because Jesus lives in us and He is the one doing the works. This is the act of DOING.

In this chapter. Jesus says several times that those who love Him, will obey Him. When He is in us, we can do works, but when we realize that even though He is in us, we are also in Him, then those works are done out of love and obedience to the heart of God. THAT IS BEING. That is where the power is, the anointing, the glory, the authority. That is where the mature saints of the Ekklesia live! They live in the knowledge and experience of BEING in God.

The Bible says it is in Jesus we live and move and have our being, not in Him we live and move and do things. It is when we function with the understanding that Jesus lives in us, that we do things and often the DOING comes out of a sense

of obligation. When we truly understand we live in Him, then He becomes our focal point and we do things from a heart of love and from a state of BEING. It just comes naturally.

It is part of our inheritance. The inheritance is for mature children of the King. The earth is waiting for the sons of God to be revealed. This passage is from Romans chapter eight. This whole chapter is worth reading over and over again.

For I consider [from the standpoint of faith] that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us! For [even the whole] creation [all nature] waits eagerly for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration and futility, not willingly [because of some intentional fault on its part], but by the will of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from its bondage to decay [and gain entrance] into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been moaning together as in the pains of childbirth until now.
Romans 8:18-22 (AMP)

What does this mean when it says that the earth is waiting for the children of God to be revealed in the hope that the earth itself would become free from its bondage to decay? Do the children of God have that power and authority?

This is another mystery hidden in God waiting for a revelation. This Bible passage says that the earth was subjected to decay because of the sin of man. It can be restored and it is crying out to be restored. The earth is crying out for the children of God to be revealed to the world in their fullness, in their completeness, in their maturity. The earth knows that is the key to its freedom from the bondage of decay.

The earth longs for the freedom found in Jesus through the children of God. God's people must be set free. God is declaring it. All of nature is waiting for it. We must declare it and do our part to spread the Word. The mature children of God are free.

Maturity is required to go any further in our journey. Chapter eight in Romans is really a comparison between living by our sinful nature (immature) and living by the Holy Spirit

guiding our spirit (mature). Verse 14 of this chapter in the Amplified version says:

For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:14 (AMP)

The book of Romans is filled with Paul's words about carnal believers versus spiritual believers. Those who have come to the place where they are able to hear God speak and they obey His every command are those who are led by the Spirit. They are the mature children of God.

Being in the heart of God, things happen. We enter a state of BEING. Those led by their own minds, will and emotions are carnal. They do things their minds or emotions tell them to do or say things without knowing if it is God. They do things out of a state of DOING. Our inheritance is dwelling in Him and doing things out of a state of BEING.

Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves an inheritance for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set. Galatians 4:1-2 (NLT)

Before we are mature, we are children and cannot receive our inheritance. God intends for us to mature. He wants us to know Him as our loving Father. We are sons and daughters of the most High God. But, if we continue to put ourselves back under the law, under religion, our inheritance sits there waiting for us until we mature. We must realize we were not born of the slave woman, Hagar, but were born of the free woman, Sarah, and are therefore Abraham's seed.

We are sons, not servants although we serve people and God out of a heart of love. The inheritance is ours. If we are servant minded, we operate out of a sense of DOING to try to prove ourselves worthy of an inheritance. If we are servant hearted, we understand we are sons and daughters of the King. We serve out of a heart of love just like our Father

just by BEING who He has made us to be. There is a big difference between being servant minded and being servant hearted.

We strive for what the world says is our inheritance rather than what God says is our inheritance. The earth is groaning and waiting for true sons who recognize their inheritance from God and take it. The nations await. Our inheritance is the fulness of God, everything He is and everything He has. That is the Kingdom. The world will see God in the fulness of His glory through His mature sons and daughters.

Too many people are seeking experiences rather than God Himself. They long for visitations by angels, visions and visitations to heaven, miracles, healings, increased feeling of anointing instead of longing for God Himself. He wants us to long for His heart. David was a man after God's own heart. The mature saints who will advance the Kingdom of God in the earth will have God's heart and they will take their inheritance.

Humility

Another sign of maturity is humility, which is needed to enter into unity. The fight of light against darkness is in part a fight between pride and humility. It was pride that caused the fall of man into sin when man believed he could rule creation without God.

Pride bows its knee when we realize we can do nothing without our God, but with Him we can do anything. Humility says we are not sufficient in ourselves, but we depend on God for everything, His strength, His knowledge, His ways. Therefore, we will seek His face continually. Humility begins with our relationship with God.

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you Except to be just, and to love [and to diligently practice] kindness (compassion), And to walk humbly with

your God [setting aside any overblown sense of importance or self-righteousness]?
Micah 6:8 (AMP)

No one can make us humble. Like submission, it is our choice. We should walk in a humble position, one of not thinking ourselves better than others. Jesus says it best.

He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves and were confident that they were righteous [posing outwardly as upright and in right standing with God], and who viewed others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple [enclosure] to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood [ostentatiously] and began praying to himself [in a self-righteous way, saying]: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men—swindlers, unjust (dishonest), adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even raise his eyes toward heaven, but was striking his chest [in humility and repentance], saying, ‘God, be merciful and gracious to me, the [especially wicked] sinner [that I am]!’ I tell you, this man went to his home justified [forgiven of the guilt of sin and placed in right standing with God] rather than the other man; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself [forsaking self-righteous pride] will be exalted.”

Luke 18:9-14 (AMP)

The war between the flesh and the spirit is in part a war between pride and humility. Paul was troubled because he did the things he didn't want to do. In Romans seven, he admits the struggle. We relate to what Paul is feeling, and think that is life, but it isn't. Chapter eight reveals Paul overcame it. We can live by the spirit and be directed by Holy Spirit because He lives in us. It is in this chapter Paul told us we are more than conquerors and that all things work for our good. God is for us, who can be against us.

Maturity is about letting go of controlling things ourselves and submitting to God. Pride demands doing things our way. Humility knows and submits to the ways of God even when we do not understand fully the reasoning behind a given situation. Humility is an important part of maturity.

Until there is a mature body of believers operating in humility and unity, we cannot effectively advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. We will only be the army described in Joel when we begin to operate as a mature body of believers. The Kingdom of God is where Jesus rules. He does not rule in a carnal heart, self does.

Maturity is a journey from saint to disciple to Ekklesia. We only get there one way, climb the mountain of His presence. In Philippians chapter three, Paul recounts his lineage as a true Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. He was raised in the best schools and taught by the best Jewish teachers. He knew the Law and the Old Testament scriptures through and through. He had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

He defended fiercely what he believed to be truth even to the point of killing those who followed Jesus. But then the risen Jesus met him on the road to Damascus and everything changed. We can think we know truth, but one tremendous encounter with Jesus can make us realize what we thought we knew no longer has any value.

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:10,11 (NKJV)

Have you ever thought about the amount of power it would take to raise someone from the dead, particularly one who had been beaten severely, crucified and a spear thrust through His side? Paul wanted to experience that type of power, so it is possible. It will require knowing Jesus deeper than the way most of us know Him today.

Paul continues to tell the Philippians he has not reached that level of being in Jesus but his life is lived in a way that he moves forward to lay hold of it and make it his own. God is calling us upward, up the mountain into the fire. He is calling His disciples who have reached maturity into a higher level of power He has available for us. Will we have the same

hunger Paul had to reach this place where mysteries are revealed and the glory of the Lord shines without hindrance?

I press on toward the goal to win the [supreme and heavenly] prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward. So let those [of us] who are spiritually mature and full-grown have this mind and hold these convictions; and if in any respect you have a different attitude of mind, God will make that clear to you also.

Philippians 3:14,15 (AMPC)

The prize Paul is so desperate to obtain is Jesus and everything He represents! The Amplified says “calling us upward”; the King James says “high calling”. High speaks of heavenly things. Calling is a word that means invitation like to a feast. Jesus is inviting us to reflect on heavenly things, not earthly things. We can feast on Him.

That is really the message conveyed through communion. God says in Psalms 23 that He “sets a table before us in the presence of our enemies”. He invites us upward to dine from that table in whatever situation life throws at us. We don’t have to ask Him for it, He has already provided what we need. We need to reach into Him and take what we need.

That is the place Paul wanted to be. That is the prize he wanted to achieve. It is available to all of us. Paul even says that in these verses when he says **“let those of us who are spiritually mature and full grown”** desire the same thing. Some things are held back for the mature. If we are not mature then self-desires become our focus instead of what is in the heart of God. When we seek Him and His heart, everything He has is made available to us. Let us run the race and seek the prize.

When we operate in maturity, we enter the heart of God. We are consumed with who He is, not what He can give us. It is then we operate out of a state of being, rather than a state of doing. It is then we enter into the place of rest and of holiness.

Miracles From a Place of Doing or Being?

We are mostly a thrill-seeking people. We want the glitter. We want the miracles, the gold flakes, the glory cloud, appearance of angels, open portals, visions of heaven. We want to see God do something He has never done before in human history. We want the fire from heaven to come down on evil. We want the idols destroyed. We want God to prove Himself to the world.

When we focus on miracles, we are focusing on what is in God's hands. Our Lord should be our focus. When we focus on God, we are focusing on what is in the heart of God. Miracles have not ended; we have just believed a lie from the enemy. Some desire to see and receive miracles so much they are willing to fly or drive across the country for them. Our focus must change from what He can give us to who He is.

When we expect a miracle and it doesn't happen in our way or our time, we try to explain why. We question our actions. Why am I not healed? Why did the thing I prayed for not happen? Did I not pray enough? Was I begging? Did I not have enough faith? How do I get more faith? Did I ask when I should have commanded or declared? Should I have asked others to pray instead of doing it on my own? Should I seek out those who have a gift of the Holy Spirit for healing? Maybe I should call the elders? Who is an elder? Is it not happening because there is unconfessed sin in my life? Did I forget to ask for forgiveness for something? What if I don't know what it is? And on and on it goes!

Religion has given us so many rules. We are always questioning if we are good enough for God to act on our behalf! It doesn't matter. God's people in Old Testament times didn't always do things the way God wanted them to do them, but over and over again, He said "Return to me". He is our Father. He loves us. We must run to Him, not away from Him. He sees us through the precious blood of His Son. We are precious to Him.

We often, run to anything but God. We turn to books and well-known authors on healing, and we try anything which often leaves us more confused. We run to conferences and special speakers. We set rules; if the situation is this, then we do this. If the situation is that, then we do that. This is what is called DOING. Works are done out of DOING and are sometimes effective, but the effectiveness is usually limited and leaves us less than satisfied.

The majority of the events in the Bible where Jesus healed were instantaneous healings. I do believe, as saints mature, we will see more consistency in miracles. When the mature Ekklesia is operating consistently from the spiritual nature and not the carnal nature, we will see more instantaneous answers to our requests.

God will be faithful to point us in the right direction if we let Him. The answer, nearly always, is seek God, desire His face, listen to what He says and then do it. This is what is called BEING. The works done from a state of being are because of BEING in God and hearing/obeying His voice. The focus is on Him, not us.

Responsibility Versus Love

Here's an example of responsibility versus love. Grandpa lives alone now and is somewhat handicapped. Part of his family drops by every Sunday afternoon to visit him, while others only drop in randomly from time-to-time and others only drop in on holidays or other special days.

We hear the details and assume the part of the family that visits every Sunday really loves and cares about Grandpa while the other parts of the family don't love him as much. They don't seem to make the effort to do more, especially the part of the family that only visits on holidays or special days.

What no one sees is the part of the family that visits every Sunday often argues about visiting because they would rather be doing something else. The father argues that Grandpa won't be around forever, and therefore they need to

visit. Obligation drives them for the sake of DOING. Although they love Grandpa, that love is not strong enough to entice them to visit because they miss him and want to spend time with him. They feel compelled to visit.

The part of the family that visits randomly from time-to-time knows Grandpa and how much he values his privacy. They love and miss him very much and they want to share that love with him. They miss his voice, his wisdom, his thoughtfulness, his delightful laugh when he sees the kids and hears what they have been doing. Their visits are not out of obligation but out of pure love and desire to spend time with Grandpa. Their act of visiting is an act of BEING, not DOING. The love in their hearts pulls them to BE with the one they love.

The part of the family who only visits on holidays and special days really is operating out of obligation as well, and is perceived by those around them as they don't care much for Grandpa. In reality, they just care more about themselves than they care about Grandpa.

Every family is different. This imaginary family is just an example to illustrate the difference between DOING and BEING. Things are not always as they seem and we are quick to make judgment calls based on what we think we perceive. In some families going to see Grandma and Grandpa every Sunday is an act of love, of being. In others, it is mainly just a responsibility and they do what they think is expected of them.

God has a family. We are His children. Do we spend time with Him out of pure love or is it out of a sense of obligation? Do we do things for Him because of love or out of feeling we have a responsibility to do what is expected of us? Do we love Him or do we love the things He will give us? It is the difference between DOING and BEING.

We are moving from the sense of DOING into the sense of BEING. There is a difference between having faith in God and walking in God's faith. There is a difference between walking with God in us, and us walking in God. We need both. We will learn the difference. God will teach us as we travel into

the necessary paradigm shifts. When we have become mature and our spiritual senses are in tune with God, we hear, we see, we know God and we instantly obey. That is when we become effective as the established Ekklesia conducting Kingdom business.

Then we will marvel at the miracles and the wonders and the awesomeness of our God that come out of that relationship with Him from a state of BEING, not DOING. We no longer seek His hand and what He can give us, we seek His face, His heart and then everything He has is available to us.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 18

1 – Why does the author call the “church” a vehicle or a tool? Explain in detail what you believe that means.

2 – Name some other tools or vehicles God could give the Ekklesia to use to advance the Kingdom.

3 – Evaluate what you have been taught concerning the “church” and reaching the lost. Do you see how it has limited our approach to reaching people with the gospel? How has your thought process changed concerning the message of the Kingdom and our responsibility as the Ekklesia since you started reading this book?

4 – Have you ever evaluated the progress of the “church” since its beginnings 2000 years ago? Do you think we have made progress or not? How close are we today to what you believe Jesus wanted to establish?

5 – Name some of the traits of maturity in the Ekklesia. Many people measure maturity by the number of years of being a Christian and how well you know the Bible. Detail how maturity described in this chapter and the Bible is different than what most people have thought about maturity in the past.

6 – Scripture tells us that the responsibility of the five gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus is to help the saints mature. Describe how you believe they do this.

7 – Why is renewing our mind such an important part of maturity. What is the purpose of renewing our mind? Explain the process as you understand it.

8 – Has your understanding of the one new man changed over the course of reading this book? Explain how the message of

the one new man illustrates unity and why that is important for the Ekklesia.

9 – Explain in your own words what the author is saying in her illustration of the beachball and the box. Do you see that the ball being inside the box at the same time it is outside the box is impossible in our natural realm? What are your thoughts as you contemplate this truth and mystery of God in us and us in God? How does it tie into the message of state of doing versus state of being?

10 – Describe your understanding of what our inheritance in Jesus really is.

11 – Describe the author's point on what humility is. How does it differ from what you have been taught about humility?

12 – Explain your thoughts on the difference between DOING and BEING. Miracles can happen both from a state of doing as well as a state of being. Explain why a state of being might be where miracles abound. Continue to pray for revelation.

CHAPTER 19

HOLINESS AND REST FOR THE MATURE

Forerunners

Forerunners play an essential part in preparing saints for maturity.

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 6:19-20 (NKJV)

Jesus was a forerunner. He went into the Holiest of Holies, where no man had gone before other than the high priests under the strictest of rules. The high priest was always a descendent of Aaron. Jesus went behind the veil, not as a descendent of Aaron and the Levites, which is important. Jesus was a priest but not under the law. He went into the presence of God behind the temple veil, the veil that separated man from God.

When Jesus died that veil was ripped in half to show that man could now enter directly into the presence of God. The law was given to reveal the coming of Jesus to earth. Jesus came to fulfill the law. Jesus became our High Priest, a forerunner so we could become priests, as well, who could minister to God and to man. Remember, to minister is to serve. We are made to serve both God and man.

The word translated forerunner in this scripture means one who is sent as a scout or a spy into a new place and prepare the way for others to follow. God is looking for forerunners in this day.

Reading the verses before the passage just mentioned from the book of Hebrews, we see how the promises made to

Abraham would be given to his heirs. Abraham was a forerunner. He led the way into the promised land. John the Baptist was also basically a forerunner.

But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”
Luke 1:13-17 (NKJV)

An angel told John’s father that he was going to have a son. This son, who would be known later as John the Baptist, would be a forerunner. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit even while still in his mother’s womb. It was never recorded that ever happened before. This baby boy would have a specific assignment from God that no other man ever had before. He would prepare a road for the coming Messiah.

Isaiah prophesied about John and recorded it in chapter 40 of his book. John the Baptist would introduce the Messiah to the world. Malachi, another Old Testament prophet foretold the coming of John the Baptist as well, in chapters three and four of the book of Malachi.

We are going into new territory where we have never been before. We need forerunners that the Lord has prepared to lead us to this new land, into uncharted territory. The fear of God is in them, not the fear of man. They don’t care if they are ridiculed or what men may say. They have eyes only for the King and His Kingdom.

Forerunners live outside the normal so they can set the new normal for multitudes who need a change but don’t know how to get there. Forerunners never settle for second best. They move forward even if it looks like no one will follow them. Forerunners see the goal of becoming like Jesus, to

think, act and talk like Him, to walk in righteousness and justice in every situation they face, no matter what the cost. Apostles and apostolic people are forerunners.

John was doing things no other had done before. He did not care what the religious leaders of his day thought of him. He was dedicated to doing what God had told him to do. He had no fear of man. He may have lost his head in the end, but he did what he was called to do.

**The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.
Proverbs 29:25 (ESV)**

The enemy is always setting snares or traps to keep us in bondage. We are not free when we fear men. There is a huge battle brewing on the horizon between good and evil. We must win. Fear of man will keep us from the battle.

Maturity demands no fear of man. Maturity requires the saints to be settled in the fear of God and in Him only. Fear of God and fear of man cannot co-exist. We are after the heart of God. It is He we desire to please. It is His approval we want.

**For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.
Galatians 1:10 (ESV)**

It was time for the Passover. Jesus travelled to Bethany where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. Lazarus had been raised from the dead by Jesus sometime earlier than this. Jesus was ready to lay down His life. In preparation for what lay ahead Mary anointed His feet. The next day Jesus began the journey from Bethany to Jerusalem. People heard He was coming so they went out to meet Him.

Many foreigners had come to Jerusalem for the feast and they wanted to meet Jesus. Jesus was teaching the crowds when a loud voice came from heaven and said **“I have glorified my name! And I will glorify it through you again!” (John 12:28b TPT)**

It was the audible voice of God but many thought it was thunder or an angel. God wanted the people to believe Jesus was who He said He was and that it was necessary for Him to die. In spite of all the miracles, they still did not believe. Verse 37 says **“Even with the overwhelming evidence of all the many signs and wonders that Jesus had performed in front of them, his critics still refused to believe.”**

Some heard something but did not hear the words God spoke. Not everyone had the ability to hear. We must prepare ourselves to hear His voice. Even though there were many that did not believe, there were several Jewish leaders who did believe in Jesus and the things He did. They were afraid of the other religious leaders in control so they kept what they believed a secret. They didn't want to be ostracized or excluded from the group.

Isaiah said these things because he had seen and experienced the splendor of Jesus and prophesied about him. Yet there were many Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus, but because they feared the Pharisees they kept it secret, so they wouldn't be ostracized by the assembly of the Jews. For they loved the glory that men could give them rather than the glory that came from God!

John 12:41-43 (TPT)

They had a fear of man that prevented them from following Jesus with a whole heart. What if we believe something that gets us excluded from the “church” we attend? What if we lose friends because we believe something different from them? These people believed, but they feared their religious leaders. These people wanted the approval of man, rather than the approval of God. It is the same today. Don't rock the boat. You might get excluded from the in-group, or your set of friends.

This fear of man even affects leaders in the “church” system today. God is speaking to some about change, but leaders hesitate. What if the congregation doesn't like the change? What if many people leave? What if we can't pay our bills?

Forerunners must have a heart for God and for the people. They must follow Jesus even if they lose everything. They must have a desire for others to follow Jesus as well. Forerunners will recognize the hinderances that hold back the people. Forerunners will move forward regardless, but they do desire to pave a way for many. They will do their best to persuade the people, but they will not be deterred from moving forward.

Forerunners desire for saints to be free. These are exciting days to be alive. We are on the forefront of something great happening in our world and we are called to be a part of it. It is going to require us to seek our approval from God and not man. It is going to require us to move even when others refuse to move with us.

The enemy will not easily give up territory he has already claimed as his own. He will fight to hang on to it all. He will threaten, he will fight, but the kingdoms of this world belong to our King and we must not be afraid to face this enemy. We must stand boldly. Confidence in God only comes by knowing Him and understanding His heart, especially in the face of adversity.

The greatest miracles ever seen by mankind are going to come at the hands of a Mighty God working through those who are not afraid. Miracles are going to happen through a people who belong to God and do what He says to do. They obey Him with joy and excitement. The glory of the Lord and His anointing are going to be so strong on these sold-out ones that no one can deny the Lord Himself goes before them. The choice is ours. Will we follow or not?

There will be a new understanding and emphasis on covenant. The Abrahamic covenant is for us. God made a covenant with Abraham, but knowing that Abraham could never keep his end of the covenant, God put him to sleep and Jesus stepped in and made the covenant with His blood in behalf of Abraham (Genesis 15). Abraham was God's friend and He talked with Abraham about His plans and He listened to input from Abraham.

That covenant relationship applies to us as well. God wants to talk things over with us. It is not that we blindly obey, although that is required at times, but God wants to have discussions with us. He has chosen to invade the earth with His goodness through mankind. He seeks a man or woman to partner with Him to bring righteousness and justice to the earth.

We lay no other foundation other than Jesus, but in order to establish that foundation we need forerunners, apostles and prophets, as well as apostolic and prophetic people to see what Jesus is doing and help lay the foundation that Jesus is establishing in the earth. This is what is meant by apostles and prophets being a part of the foundation of the Ekklesia. Jesus is the true foundation, but what He is doing in the earth must be revealed and established.

The Lord's Day - Our Day

Many Bible scholars describe the Bible as existing across dispensations or periods of time where God dealt with man differently than at other times. It is not wrong per se to divide time this way, but it sometimes tends to put God in a box as to how He deals with people. God can never be put in a box. God never changes. Scripture tells us He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no change or shadow of turning.

James 1:17 (MEV)

God does not change. There is no shadow of turning with Him. God does have seasons. There are those of His people who know Him and know the seasons of God.

From the sons of Issachar, those having understanding of times and what Israel should do: I Chronicles 12:32 (MEV)

In this passage of scripture where the sons of Issachar were revealed, the kingdom of Saul was about to be turned over to David. Those who understood the times and seasons had specific strategies for those times and seasons. Saul was man's choice. David was God's choice. David had a heart after God. David was a forerunner. The paradigm shifts we face are about transitioning from man's choice to God's choice. We desperately need God's strategies in the day we live.

The Old and New Testament are also referred to as the old and new covenants. Hebrews chapter eight details the differences between the old covenant and new covenant. Human beings are both physical creatures and spiritual. The Old Testament shows people living out their lives physically. The New Testament changes the focus from the physical aspects of life to the spiritual. Holy Spirit came to live in believers after Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

The contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant is one of living a carnal life versus living a spiritual life which can only be accomplished through Holy Spirit with us and in us. The command given in the garden to take authority over the earth can only be accomplished by the one new Man, where physical humans are totally submitted to the Spirit of God and they live spiritual lives in the natural realm, but not carnal lives. That is the difference between the two covenants.

It was not that God was experimenting with concepts and covenants and didn't like the first one, so He changed His mind and made a second covenant. Man sinned, but God already knew he would. He had given man free-will to choose.

God wanted man to see where sin would lead and it could not be overcome by anything but the blood of a sinless man. Old covenant people lived their lives in anticipation of this sinless man, the Messiah, coming to earth. Four days (4000 years) from the promise in the Garden of Eden, the Messiah

came to earth signaling the end of the first covenant. It is also the beginning of the second covenant, a spiritual covenant, lasting two days (2000 years) so far where the people would experience living a spiritual life.

But that still wasn't enough. Six days (6000 years) trying to live a physical life and then a spiritual life to overcome the sickness of sin. But it was done for the most part by man's efforts and ways, not God's way. The number six represents man. Six days of man.

Now we have entered the seventh day, the Lord's Day, and it is no longer going to be done man's ways, but God's ways! God's plan is for mankind to mature as the Ekklesia, see His plan and together, Jew and Gentile (all other races) united as one body of believers submitting to the King of the Kingdom, Jesus our Lord. It is the mature Ekklesia who advances the Kingdom of God so the nations become His.

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"
Revelations 11:15 (NKJV)

The Lord's Day is upon us. Saints who can see the time and season we are in are taking their place. Saints who can see God's strategies for taking the Kingdom and can implement them are arising in authority. Forget about what dispensation anyone thinks it is. God will do what He wants to do, when and where He wants to do it by raising up a people who will listen to Him and do what He says.

A Day of Rest

So the heavens and the earth, and all their hosts, were finished. On the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He had rested from all His work which He had created and made.
Genesis 2:1.2 (MEV)

God's work was completed and God rested on the seventh day. We have entered the seventh day in history, a day of rest. A few years ago, as we were entering into the seventh day since Adam, the Lord gave me this word to deliver to a particular group of believers, but I believe is for all believers everywhere. I published it in my first book, *The Mountain Belongs to the Remnant*, but it needs to be repeated.

"As I have said before," says the Lord, "this is a new day. I am taking My people where they have never been before. We are entering the seventh day. The sixth day belonged to man. The seventh day belongs to Me."

"The seventh day is a day of rest, the Sabbath. I am the Lord of the Sabbath. It is My desire to reveal Myself to My people in this hour as the Lord of the Sabbath. I desire to show you how to enter into rest. As I have told you before, rest does not mean a time of inactivity. It is a day where there is no effort and no striving. It is a day when men's activity will fail. It is a day when all men's efforts will produce frustration, and strife, but those activities born of My Spirit will produce life and results."

"My people have been so busy doing, that they cannot hear My voice. In this new day, I will do things differently than I have done in the past. I will not bless just any work, only that work that I have specifically declared. You would be surprised at how much that has been done in My name has been not of My doing or My desire. I am looking for a people who know Me and will do nothing except what they see Me doing. I am looking for a people who will recognize My voice above the noises of the crowd. What I say will not always be popular and well received, but it will bring the results that you are desiring to see."

"The walls that have separated My people for ages past are about to come down even as on the seventh day My people marched around the city of Jericho and the walls came down. Everything that holds My people back is going to be torn away. I have warned My people that this was going to happen, but they have done little to prepare for this day. As the Israelites were silent for six days before the walls came down, I am calling for My people to sit quietly before Me and learn of Me and My ways so they can be prepared for the coming days. I am telling My people to wait more than I am telling them to do in this hour."

"Preparation is of the heart. My mighty men are even now being prepared. It is My day and these mighty ones will point the way to Me. In this hour you will have all you need to do what I tell you to do. You will not have to strive for finances or time, or any of the things that hold you back now. There will continue to be a lot of activity and a pulling in all directions for those who have not learned to distinguish My voice."

"You must not look back, either at your failures or at your successes. It is a new day. There are no formulas for the days ahead. The only preparation is to draw near to Me so that you can hear My voice and know My ways. For as you draw near to Me and hear Me with open ears, your love for Me will deepen and you will find it an easy thing to be obedient. That is all I require of you for the days ahead. Don't rush it. Your times are in My hands. I will do things in a new way and many will miss it because they expect Me to do things always a certain way. It is only as you become more intimately acquainted with Me that you will be able to discern what is really me."

"Do not fill your time with busy work or you will miss My call. Do only what I have told you to do. I know you have dreamed of the days ahead and I have given you a small glimpse of what I have planned for you, but you have no idea the extent of the joy and the fun and the success and the rest that I have planned for you. Today you are tired and frustrated at the amount of effort to produce such small results that you are often tempted to give up. Tomorrow you will marvel at the amount of success that comes from such little effort as I release you into My day. And the amount of energy you will have as My spirit quickens you and gives you life. Wait for it. It will happen in its time!"

The rest of God is a real thing and can be experienced. Hebrews chapter four describes this rest. We have been taught rest is what we receive when we go to heaven. Many think this chapter in Hebrews is about salvation. This chapter in Hebrews is written to believers so it has nothing to do with salvation.

When we enter into rest, we cease from our own works, from the state of doing and we enter a state of being in God, in His finished works. The Greek word for "rest" means "a calming of the wind". Unbelief and disobedience keep us from experiencing this rest.

So we conclude that there is still a full and complete Sabbath-rest waiting for believers to experience. As we enter into God's faith-rest life we cease from our own works, just as God celebrates his finished works and rests in them. So then we must be eager to experience this faith-rest life, so that no one falls short by following the same pattern of doubt and unbelief. **Hebrews 4:9-11 (TPT)**

The faith life of rest comes when we realize we can do nothing without Him. We are a conduit. We do not have to try to manufacture something to meet a need. All we have to do is go to heaven's storehouse, which is available to us, and pull down from heaven what is needed in the earth realm. The storehouse of heaven is God's heart. If it is in His heart, we can have it. We don't have to work for it.

We operate from a status of BEING versus DOING. We live life. We meet people. We see a need. We ask God what is in His heart for this person to meet their need. We see it, or we hear His voice telling us. Then we reach into God's heart, the storehouse of heaven, and we pick up whatever is needed and we bring it into earth's realm. We are familiar with this passage.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 (MEV)

Reading verse 20 just before this, we find Jesus chided the cities where He visited and performed mighty miracles for their unbelief. Miracles, signs and wonders are not enough to change hearts and lives.

Then he began to scold the cities where he had done his greatest miracles because they didn't change their hearts and lives. Matthew 11:20 (CEB)

It was not enough to convince the cities to repent. That is how hard their hearts were. That can really seem like work! Labor all day, ministering to people and performing miracles,

only to have the people reject it all and not turn from their wicked ways. How discouraging in the natural. How tiring. No rest. Verse 27 tells us the key to rest we need so desperately.

“All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son, except the Father. And no one knows the Father, except the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. Matthew 11:27 (MEV)

We do not strive to make people believe. We do not work to provide an answer to the needs we see. Jesus simply looked into the Father’s heart and did whatever He saw the Father do, or said whatever He heard the Father say. We are to do the same. That is rest. Our success is not measured by whether a person believes or not. It is measured by our trust in God. It is His approval we desire. If we obey, He is pleased. We do nothing more, nothing less.

Nothing more doesn’t mean do nothing. If I meet a person on the street who is hungry, I look into the Father’s heart and listen to His voice. The response could be to give them some money or take them into a restaurant and feed them or go home and make some sandwiches. It could be spending some time with them to get to know them and then bringing someone they know back into their lives to help them.

There are a multitude of things that can be done, but it becomes labor if it is not the answer God had in mind. He has the answer in His heart for every situation that man faces. As mature believers we tap into the heart of God for the answer that is always doable. It takes the work out of it. We are operating from being in the heart of God, rather than doing whatever we think we can do. BEING instead of DOING. That is rest.

Sometimes people ask for something other than what God wants to give them. The only way you will know and understand is listening to God. Here is an example of this found in Acts 3. Peter went to the temple where there was a crippled man begging for money. This happened day after day. I am sure Peter saw him before this particular recorded event.

Peter may have given him money before, but it is not recorded. We don't know.

On this day this man was destined for a God event in his life. While the man was still asking for money to survive, Peter discerned from God's heart it is time for this man to receive something different from what he had been asking.

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. A man lame from birth was being carried, whom people placed daily at the gate of the temple called Beautiful to ask alms from those who entered the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. Peter, gazing at him with John, said, "Look at us." So he paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." He took him by the right hand and raised him up. Immediately his feet and ankles were strengthened. Jumping up, he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God.

Acts 3:1-8 (MEV)

This man didn't need money. He needed a touch from God. The mature man of God heard God and obeyed. This is the difference between labor and rest. We do what we see the Father do, and we say what we hear the Father say.

We are not working for God, nor are we trying to receive favor from God for what we do. We are serving God from a heart of love by bringing the gifts inside the Father's heart to the ones God has placed in our path. We are His hands and His voice delivering what is in the heart of God to people.

For in Him we live and move and exist [that is, in Him we actually have our being], as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

Acts 17:28 (AMP)

Holiness

A whole new understanding of what it means to be holy is going to come from these paradigm shifts. Many

believers think holy means “without sin”, which to many seems totally unobtainable.

Instead, shape your lives to become like the Holy One who called you. For Scripture says: “You are to be holy, because I am holy.”
I Peter 1:15-16 (TPT)

The word for holy really means “set apart”. We are to be separated from the ways of the world and set apart for God’s purposes. God sets the standard of righteousness. He is set apart from everything else. No other god is like Him. We are created by God in His image.

When that image of God buried deep inside of us, comes out into the light, others see that image in us. We move from the place of trying to live a sinless life to that of walking in Him, in His being. This is the difference between doing and being.

In every relationship be swift to choose peace over competition, and run swiftly toward holiness, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.
Hebrews 12:14 (TPT)

When we are operating from a place of works, and trying to please God, all we see is His hand and the things He can give us or do for us. When we operate from a place of being, we operate from the place of holiness. We are set apart and nothing else matters, but Him. We want to see Him, and behold His beautiful face.

It is in this place where we will be able to rule and reign with Him. This is the place where we fully understand righteousness, what is right in His sight. We can see through His eyes because we have seen His face. That is the place of holiness. When we can fully see righteousness, then we know and understand justice.

Peter walked in this place of being when people stepped into his shadow for healing. It is the place in God we will walk and see an abundance of miracles and exploits. It is

the place of God's glory. In the letters of Peter included in the Bible, he speaks a lot about holiness.

All that he does in us is designed to make us a mature church for his pleasure, until we become a source of praise to him—glorious and radiant, beautiful and holy, without fault or flaw.

Ephesians 5:27 (TPT)

Paul writes that everything Jesus does is for the point of establishing His Ekklesia. The Ekklesia brings Him great pleasure. As we become mature saints established in the Ekklesia, we are covered with His glory. The whole earth will see the Ekklesia in the brightness of that light and beautiful. They will see her as separated from the world and all its enticements, and existing for the pleasure of the King with no fault or flaw.

There was no greater delight to Paul than experiencing Jesus himself. Do you remember the passion, the delight when you first discovered Jesus? In verses eight and nine Paul talks about the greatness of the knowledge of Jesus, of really knowing Him.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Philippians 3:8,9 (NKJV)

Nothing is worth more to Paul than the knowledge of Jesus. The word "knowledge" in the Greek is an interesting word. The Amplified Classic translation describes this knowledge this way, "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]."

Paul lost everything for this privilege and he wouldn't have it any other way. There is a deepness of knowing Jesus that we have not yet achieved. We can have it if we want it.

Paul also mentions to be found IN Him. We can know Him as Savior, but we can also know Him deeper and be IN Him. There are deep things, deep mysteries that can only be discovered by being deeper in Jesus.

Verse nine in the Passion Bible: **“My passion is to be consumed with him and not cling to my own “righteousness” based in keeping the written Law.”** Can we say we are consumed with Him? Is that the desire of your heart? As the mature Ekklesia our greatest desire must be to be consumed with our Lord. If we are going to be equipped with all it takes to legislate Kingdom business according to the will of God, we are going to need to stand in the fire of God. The fire is on the mountain. We must go higher.

The fire burns the worthless, the ugly, and purifies and makes holy what is godly. Where the fire is, nothing unholy can remain. Paul goes on to say not only knowing Him by being consumed with Him but that is the place we can know the power of His resurrection. His power and glory are found in holiness. He is found when we are willing to separate ourselves from the influence of the world and be wholly in Him.

Divine Activity – Victory

The word for holy also means “divine activity - victory”. In Exodus chapter 12, God gave Moses and Aaron instructions as they prepared to leave the land of Egypt. God is calling us out of Egypt, out of the worldly systems and out of Babylon, the counterfeit religious systems. Maybe we should pay attention.

God instructed them concerning the Passover lamb and the blood on the doorpost, a picture of the sacrificial lamb, Jesus, who would shed His blood for us. God told them it would become the first month in a new year for them. There was a direct changing of time when Jesus died. We went from old covenant to new covenant.

After the Passover feast of the lamb, they were to celebrate for seven days, the feast of unleavened bread. They

were to do this throughout all their generations to celebrate coming out of Egypt, delivery from slavery. On the first day of the celebration there was to be a holy convocation, a holy calling together of the people, a sacred assembly. Then again on the seventh day there was to be another holy convocation.

They were celebrating with a holy assembling of the people for all generations on the first day to remember there had been a taking out of Egypt and worldly systems and an entering into the Promised Land. They celebrated again with a holy get-together on the seventh day as a promise from God that once again on the seventh day God would take His people out of Egypt and worldly systems and lead them to the Promised Land, the Kingdom of the Living God! We are in the seventh day.

For fourteen days they would wait from the beginning of the month to slaughter the lamb. Fourteen is seven plus seven. Seven is the number of completion, so fourteen is double completion. There would be a completion of the old covenant when the Lamb of God was slain on the cross. There would be a final completion when the Lamb of God took His place on the throne with His saints as the kingdoms of this world would become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Holiness was a key part of the first celebration and it will be a part of the celebration in the seventh day, as well.

Conclusion

There are so many mysteries and clues God has hidden in the Bible just waiting for us to discover. Understanding means we can take action. We will know what to do. As we begin to have understanding from God, our way of thinking, our paradigms are going to shift.

Ensuring these paradigm shifts actually happen is going to be the battle of the ages. It is the battle of good versus evil. Not only are we battling the world, we are battling a religious spirit that has been in control for 2000 years trying to thwart the plan of Jesus for His Ekklesia This spirit is not going

to give up control easily. Coming out of Babylon is required. Coming out of religion is required. It is not a game, it is war.

Warriors must not be afraid to lose their lives if it is required. It is going to take brave souls who do not care if they lose everything for the sake of the gospel of the Kingdom. Not everyone is going to like or receive the message. Not everyone will be convinced at once. People have been blind and deaf for a very long time. It is not going to happen overnight, but it is going to happen!

You may just be the one to plant the seed. You can't change the heart of people. Only Holy Spirit can touch the heart. Just do what God says to do, and say what God says to say and then leave it in God's hands. There will be those you encounter whose hearts have been prepared for this hour. Raise them up and let them go so they can do exploits for their God.

There are some things you will have to leave behind to come into maturity. You will be faced with making a decision concerning the control and indoctrination of the institution. You must be free. God declares it. You must learn how to walk in freedom. You have walked in bondage without knowing it for so long, it often takes time to recognize the bondage. Freedom has been given to you as a gift from your Heavenly Father. Use it wisely.

We must experience these things individually, before we can unite as the Ekklesia, firmly established and ready to advance the Kingdom of God. We must know how to advance the Kingdom in our own lives first. There is a whole other level of battle God is calling us to in order to take our cities and nations for the Kingdom of God.

God is calling us out of Babylon and up on the Mountain of Zion. He is calling us out of man-made kingdoms into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

Then the heavenly messenger who had been answering my questions since my first vision left my side, and a second messenger came and met him. Second Messenger: Go quickly, and tell that

young surveyor with the measuring line, "Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the vast number of people and all their domesticated animals living in it." For the Eternal One says, "Instead of a wall of stone, I will be a wall of fire protecting her all around, and I will be the shining glory within her." Eternal One (to Zechariah): Tell all the Israelites to hear My message: "Up! Flee from your oppressors in the north. I have scattered you far across this earth, as if you were the four winds of heaven, and now I call you to return." Then tell My people in Jerusalem to hear My message: "Escape from subservience to daughter Babylon and go to Zion!" So said the Eternal, Commander of heavenly armies. After His glory has arrived in the city, He will send me to the nations that stripped you bare, Jerusalem, because any nation who harms you harms the apple of His eye. Zechariah 2:3-8 (Voice)

What we know for sure:

- The walls, holding God's people back, are coming down.
- God will be our protector with fire which is the glory.
- We must flee from Babylon, the counterfeit religious system.
- We must come to Mount Zion, the presence of God, where His glory is.
- It is time to take the nations - to advance the Kingdom of God.

Many voices are saying that God is doing a reset. This is not a reset. God is turning everything upside down and shaking it violently. What comes out will be what was His original intent for His Ekklesia. We are not even resetting the Ekklesia to the first Ekklesia. The latter Ekklesia is even more grand than the first and will succeed.

Returning to the roots of Antioch where saints were first called Christians is a reset, and is NOT God's purpose for His Ekklesia. This concept of a reset is going around in prophetic circles today and is really about resetting the idea of the "church". We will never reset the "church". Jesus will establish His Ekklesia. We must go back to God's original

intent in the Garden of Eden when He created man. Making adjustments to the way we do “church” is not the plan. Our focus has to be the King and His Kingdom.

The Chinese lantern has been turned upside down. Let the paradigm shifts begin. The overcomers, the mature saints, the Ekklesia have left the playground behind. They are serious about the Word of God and His Kingdom. They are the ones who have power with God. They are the ones led by the Spirit. They are the ones called as pioneers to go places no man has gone before. They are the forerunners blazing a trail before them for others to follow.

The Ekklesia will have influence over the kingdoms of the world, the cultural mountains. They are the ones who understand the mysteries of God. They are the ones who will do exploits in the Name of Jesus. They are the ones who will carry the sound of the trumpet far and wide to awaken the people. They are the ones shining forth with the glory of God. Come forth, glorious and mature Ekklesia!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 19

- 1 – Explain what forerunners are and why they are important in the Ekklesia.
- 2 – Describe the fear you see today around you. Why do you think people are so afraid? How do we overcome that fear in our own lives? How do we disciple others to let go of fear?
- 3 – One of the greatest fear we can have is fear of man and what man thinks. How has this affected your own life? How has God directed you in order to overcome this fear?
- 4 – The Bible has a lot to say about a time period called the Lord's Day. There is much yet to learn about what this is and what it means. The author shares some of her thoughts on this period in history. Explain what you believe she means and how your beliefs differ if they do. Pray for more revelation concerning this topic.
- 5 – The author talks about the rest of God. How does this differ from your thoughts on what rest is? Did anything change in your thinking after reading this chapter? Explain the relationship between rest and operating from a state of being versus a state of doing.
- 6 – Using the example of Peter and the lame man at the temple, explain why it is important to listen to God when dealing with people, instead of just listening to what it is the people want from you. How will this change the way you deal with people in the future?
- 7 – Explain your understanding of holiness and why it is an important trait in a mature Ekklesia.

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

There she is, the glorious Ekklesia shining forth in the glory of her Lord. She has faced the paradigm shifts with eager anticipation knowing that the maturing of the saints is not the end-game, but the beginning. She has not arrived at her destination; she has only begun the journey.

From saint to disciple to Ekklesia, she has travelled. Each individual has travelled this path in their own life. They have broken free of the bondage that held them back from their God. They have put their own lives in order and matured in the knowledge of their Lord and of His Kingdom. They have come to the place where they are ready to be established in the Ekklesia that Jesus Himself is building, the one new man.

With the maturing of the saints, this one new man is now ready to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth and bring the kingdoms of the world under the dominion of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It truly is only the beginning. There are adventures of a lifetime that await us as the mature Ekklesia.

We have been under a system of control for a very long time. The enemy has blind-sighted us with a counterfeit Babylonian system. This fake kingdom is not going to come down easily. It is going to fight back viciously, but it will fall.

The false kingdom will come against us and project their sin on us, to attempt to get people to reject us and our message. God is with His Ekklesia and He will back us with miracles and proof that we are His. We will not retreat.

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Romans 16:20 (NKJV)

The God who is peace and brings peace to us will use us to crush the head of the serpent. It is our feet that do the stomping. Jesus is the Head of the one new man. We take our territory in peace, not in chaos. It is important to remain in peace, and not allow our actions to be dictated by turmoil. It is peace that rules in our hearts. The peace of God protects our minds and our hearts, while we crush the enemy.

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: “We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Isaiah 26: 1-3 (NKJV)

This chapter in Isaiah opens with “that day” but does not tell us what that day is. The answer is found in the previous chapter, chapter 25. That day is the day strongholds are toppled, strong nations declare God’s glory, and ruthless nations fear God. It is a day of celebration.

Verses 6-8 describe the celebration, **“the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will spread a wonderful feast for all the people of the world. It will be a delicious banquet with clear, well-aged wine and choice meat. There he will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth. He will swallow up death forever!”**

We live in the third day of history since Jesus came to earth. We are about to see our promised land, our inheritance. In ancient times, God had called Abraham to begin his journey to an unknown land, when on the third day of his journey he looked up and saw the Promised Land. It was Abraham who looked down through history to our third day and saw the city of God not made by human hands.

The third day has a lot of significance. God told Moses to prepare the people for the third day. Moses was leading the children of Israel through the desert to the Promised Land. Moses had made several trips up the mountain to meet with

God. This particular time, Moses got instructions on how God was going to come down to meet them on the third day.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud, Moses, so the people themselves can hear me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you.” Moses told the LORD what the people had said. Then the LORD told Moses, “Go down and prepare the people for my arrival. Consecrate them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothing. Be sure they are ready on the third day, for on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch.
Exodus 19:9-11 (NKJV)

The people needed preparation so they could hear when God spoke to Moses. They would then know that God was real and that God actually directed Moses. They needed to be free of the things that hindered their seeing and hearing.

We have just begun to live in the third day since Jesus died and rose from the dead. We are in preparation ourselves to be the ones God directs in this hour. We cannot do what needs to be done until we are free from what hinders our sight and our hearing. God is also preparing people to see that God is real through a people set apart for Him and following Him with a whole heart.

Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.

Hosea 6:1-3 (NKJV)

After two days have passed and we enter the third day, God promised to revive us and raise us up to live in His sight. We are in the third day. The Ekklesia, the city on a hill, Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth is coming into maturity. She is making herself ready as the bride to shine forth the presence, glory and holiness of her Lord. The nations will see the light of that glory and be drawn to her and the bridegroom, the King

of kings. She desires the nations because her Beloved desires the nations. She will not be denied.

Then I heard something like the sound like a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying: “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. It was granted her to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” Fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. Revelation 19:6-8 (MEV)

The bride must make herself ready. The Ekklesia must understand her purpose and how the maturing of the saints has everything to do with the bride making herself ready. It is not the end. It is the beginning of something new. We must hunger to know more about the Kingdom of God and where the Ekklesia is heading. This chapter is merely an introduction to the topic of the Kingdom that would require a book (maybe more). We must bridge the gap between the Ekklesia and the Kingdom of God.

Paradigm Shifts

Major paradigm shifts are required in order for us to not only understand the Ekklesia, but also understand the Kingdom of God. The first necessary and complex paradigm shift is the difference between “church” and Ekklesia. A lot of religious ideas need to be destroyed before the true Ekklesia comes into the glory of her Lord.

As saints, we travel from saint to disciple to mature Ekklesia. It is the pathway to maturity. The “church” is not the Ekklesia. The “church” can be used as a tool for discipleship. Being a disciple is just being a student under the tutorage of Jesus. We do not have to be mature in order to operate in the gifts given to us by God. We do not have to be mature in order to walk in signs and wonders. But maturity brings a release of these for a higher level of advancing the Kingdom of God and redeeming the earth through the Ekklesia.

The Bible tells us in Matthew, chapter ten, Jesus sent forth His disciples with power and authority to heal. They were not yet mature in the things of God. However, in the Bible much is written about moving into maturity. When we are mature, we don't step over into the spiritual realm occasionally, we walk in it. The advancement of the Kingdom of God requires a mature Ekklesia, a mature people who have been established with one mind and one spirit to hear and obey their God in everything.

Our focus must change from the Ekklesia to the Kingdom of God. We must become knowledgeable in the gospel that we were told by Jesus to proclaim. The message is not just salvation and healing. It is the gospel or good news of the Kingdom. The gospel of the Kingdom is to make earth look and act like heaven. In other words, bring heaven to earth.

In accomplishing that task, it requires us to destroy the works of the enemy and establish God's ways (righteousness) in the earth. Some will doubt this. They believe the Kingdom comes only after Jesus returns to the earth. To those I ask, why did Jesus tell us to pray "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?

This shift will affect all the cultural areas of our lives in the cities, in states or provinces, and in nations. Most of us do not have a clue what that looks like, let alone what it means. If we do not understand the true Ekklesia or what the gospel of the Kingdom means, we will never inherit the nations. But, praise God, He says we will.

Babylon the Great Counterfeit

Babylon, the counterfeit kingdom of satan has a history worth noting. The world had become so evil, that approximately 1700 years after Adam, God told Noah to build an ark to secure his family and many animals from a flood coming to the earth. After the flood, it was only a few generations before sin was very active in the world again. Satan began rebuilding his counterfeit kingdom through Noah's

great grandson, Nimrod. One of the cities founded by Nimrod was Babylon.

As an act of rebellion toward God's rule, the tower of Babylon was constructed towering towards heaven. God stopped the plan by confusing the languages of men. Babylon remained a small city-state until King Hammurabi made it the capitol of his empire. The entire empire would later be called the Babylonian Empire.

Satan would choose to build his counterfeit kingdom on a foundation of disobedience and rebellion. The city of Babylon would represent the realm of false religion, but the city would be the center of a huge empire called the Babylonian Empire and it would be satan's attempt to rule all of the cultural areas of mankind, a false world kingdom.

King Nebuchadnezzar would rise to power in the Babylonian Empire. He captured Jerusalem and took many Jewish captives to Babylon including Daniel. Eventually the Persians would take over Babylon and King Cyrus would rule. The kingdom of Babylon was destroyed under Cyrus and over time the city of Babylon would also be destroyed.

Cyrus was a key figure in history. He allowed the Jews who were held captive in Babylon to return to their land and to rebuild the temple. This is a prophetic parallel to what is happening in the world today. The cry of "Come out of Babylon" is being heard across the earth. It is time to enter our promised land, our inheritance, and for Jesus to build the Ekklesia He said He would build His way, not ours.

President Donald Trump has been prophesied as a Cyrus by several prophetic voices. Cyrus was not a Jew, but he was used mightily by God to set God's people free. Whether a person likes President Trump or not, is not the point. His message is one of stripping the elite of their power and returning the power to the people. God is using him to set people free and to set the stage for the building of the last Ekklesia who will inherit the earth and who will work with the King of kings to establish His Kingdom.

God impressed on me several years ago to watch the world and what was happening in it. God often uses current events to open the eyes of His people to what He is doing in the earth. We have discovered, as our eyes have been opened, there are a lot of people who are not what or who they say they are. They are definitely wolves in sheep clothing.

Many have tricked us into following them and believing in them when all they want is prestige, control and our money. There are lots of people who say they are for Christian values, but those values are distorted to mean what they want them to mean instead of what is truly in God's heart.

Some leaders promise us what we want, if we only vote them into power. Once they receive the power, they do anything but what they promised. Discernment is lacking. Critical thinking skills to reason out thoughts have all but vanished. True wisdom and knowledge come through God, but few rely on God for these precious gifts.

God is awakening us to truth, to true knowledge and wisdom. He is awakening us to the plan for global dominance by the few elites of the world and the evil that is planned by satan's kingdom to rule us and enslave us. But we are beginning to understand, we do not have to allow this to happen. He has given us the power and the authority to deal with this if we would only submit to the rulership of the King of God's Kingdom. God's ultimate goal is that we would come into our inheritance!

There is a lot we do not know about how we get there or how this looks, but it does not look anything like what has been tried before. This is not about conquering or bloodshed in the name of Jesus. This is not going to be accomplished through religion or plans by man. It will be orchestrated by God. None of us see clearly yet what it looks like or fully how we get there, but the plans and strategies and blueprints are in the heart of God. We will not see them nor understand them until we are dedicated 100% to His heart and His true apostles and prophets take their place.

Coming out of Babylon

There is a book called Jasher that was not chosen to be a part of the Bible, but is nevertheless mentioned in I Samuel 1:18 and Joshua 10:13. If anyone is interested in reading it, the book can be found online.

In Jasher it is recorded Babylon was famous and it ruled and had influence over the whole earth. The tower of Babel was built out of man's rebellion, an attempt to ascend into heaven and overthrow God's rulership.

This counterfeit kingdom continues to attempt to remove anything that relates to God, no matter what area of society it is found, entertainment, government, education, and in every aspect of society. The enemy desires to rule in place of God and we have never seen this as clearly as we see it today. The book of Revelation describes Babylon, the counterfeit kingdom, as an evil woman who has sought to destroy and kill the saints down through history.

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filth of her sexual immorality. On her forehead a name was written:

**MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Revelation 17:4-6 (MEV)

The counterfeit kingdom of Babylon, established by satan, was a city as well as an empire. The Babylonian Empire was ruled from the city of Babylon. The true Kingdom of God has the King's throne in Zion, the city of God, the city on a hill, the city of the Ekklesia and God rules His Kingdom.

Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Psalm 48:2 (MEV)

Zion is great because the King who lives there, Jesus, is great. Satan is not great. He attempts to mimic what God does. The city of Babylon is called great because it has managed to control the whole world. It has great influence and power to deceive, but its days are coming to an end.

The woman whom you saw is that great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth. Revelation 17:18 (MEV)

Jeremiah prophesied that Babylon would fall to the Chaldeans in chapter 51 of his book. He warned the people of God to flee out of her. This was not only a word for the falling of the physical city of Babylon in ancient times, but it was a prophetic word for our time as well. Remember, prophetic words have life and they can continue on in future fulfillments long after we think they have already been fulfilled.

Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and each of you deliver his soul! Do not be cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the vengeance of the LORD; He will render to her a recompense. Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, that made all the earth drunk. The nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed. Howl for her. Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed. Jeremiah 51:6-8 (MEV)

We are preparing to see the destruction of the spirit of Babylon in our day.

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. He cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!’ She has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, and a haunt for every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality, the kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” Then I heard another voice from heaven saying: “Come out of her, my people,’ lest you partake

in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues. For her sins have reached up to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Revelation 18:1-5 (MEV)

Notice in this Bible passage, God speaks to His people to come out of Babylon. God's people are mixed up in this counterfeit kingdom to their eyeballs. God has been pulling the blinders off so people can see what is happening around them. Many years ago, God instructed me and others to start proclaiming that the things hidden in darkness would be brought into the light and revealed. The results of those proclamations are being seen all around us today.

Just as in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, God wants His people to choose of their own free will whether to follow God or not. Will they serve the world systems, or will they serve the God of heaven? They must choose. No longer will they be allowed to straddle the fence. They can't make a right decision until they can see truth. To see truth, blinders must be removed.

The rulers of the earth have become corrupt, drunk with control, prestige and money gained from evil deeds. It is all being exposed these days. Judges and attorneys, governments in general, are corrupt. Our entertainment companies, as well as governments, are filled with sexual immorality. Our media is reporting anything but truth. Our educators are educating garbage. Corporate companies are filled with greed and donating to evil causes.

As we continue on in this passage what we see today is described as the merchants of the earth becoming rich off of the luxury of the spirit of Babylon. She has enticed many with her sins. Government leaders have gone into position with not much more than a dollar in their pocket, only to have millions a few years later. Many have succumbed and are being blackmailed in order to keep their sins hidden and not exposed.

It is the day of revealing. Exposure is happening today. Babylon is about to fall. For centuries the money-making evil of human trafficking has been active but hidden from view.

The worldly systems have become rich from this huge industry. That is about to change. Corruption and extortion have made the wicked rich.

Everything that can be revealed will be revealed. These evils are even prevalent in the religious community and its leadership. It even exists among those who claim to be spirit-filled. Many have sold their soul to the devil. The dream the Lord gave me of the wreckage with vehicles scattered all over the highway for miles and miles and miles was a picture of Babylon falling and particularly the religious portion of the world systems.

God's broom of justice is coming to the people who claim to be God's people but they live on the lusts of the flesh. These things are found in the Babylonian system. They should have no part in a believer's life. We must choose. Go down with the Babylonian system or come out of her. You cannot love God and at the same time love the world. John the beloved disciple of Jesus put it this way.

Don't set the affections of your heart on this world or in loving the things of the world. The love of the Father and the love of the world are incompatible. For all that the world can offer us—the gratification of our flesh, the allurements of the things of the world, and the obsession with status and importance—none of these things come from the Father but from the world. This world and its desires are in the process of passing away, but those who love to do the will of God live forever.
I John 2:15-17 (TPT)

Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 are very detailed in the destruction of Babylon, both in the physical world in ancient times and prophetically in the current times of the counterfeit kingdom of satan. Take time to read these chapters and study them thoroughly. Here are a few points from those chapters.

God's People Challenge Babylon

A nation from the north (Zion, God's saints) will come against her.

On the mountains, the places of authority, the shepherds have led God's people astray.

The sheep have forgotten their resting place.

The cry is heard "Come out of Babylon".

The arrows that fly against Babylon will be from skilled warriors and not be in vain.

Babylon's foundation crumbles and her walls fall down.

Those who sow in Babylon will be cut off from sowing and there will be no more harvest for the wicked.

A snare has been laid for Babylon by God Almighty and Babylon is in a trap. This is the work of our Lord God of hosts.

Babylon's storehouses will be opened and made available to the people of God.

Those of God's people who flee and escape from Babylon will shout from Zion declaring the vengeance of God on the counterfeit kingdom.

A people come from the north, a great nation with many kings, their voice like a roar, dressed as a MAN for battle. That is the one new man, the Ekklesia with Jesus as the head.

The fall of Babylon will be so great that the earth will tremble and all the nations will hear.

The nations are deranged because they drank the wine of Babylon.

When God judges Babylon, the righteousness of God's people will be known.

We are God's battle-ax and weapons of war. We break (scatter, disperse, break apart from control) nations, kingdoms, horse and rider, chariot and rider, men and women, old and young, shepherd and flock, farmer and oxen, governors and rulers.

God is against Babylon, the destroying mountain. He is going to destroy it through us.

Babylon will cease fighting, the bars of the gates are broken, and the inhabitants are terrified.

The nations will not stream to Babylon any more.

Then the heavens and the earth and all that is in them will sing joyously because the plunderers from the north have taken Babylon. The Ekklesia is those plunderers.

Strangers had come into the holy places, the Lord's house, and desecrated it.

A cry is heard from Babylon as the Lord plunders her and silences her voice.

The Kingdom of God in You and You in It

Awake saints of God. God is going to have His way with this false, counterfeit kingdom. The cry to come out of her is very real and it grows louder with each passing day. It is the Ekklesia who is going to take her place with Jesus as the Head to destroy Babylon. The fall of this religious mountain is going to be so great that the whole earth shakes and all the nations take note.

This is the reason that the message of this book is so critical. The Ekklesia must mature and take her place. In order for the kingdoms of the world to become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ, the Ekklesia must be prepared to join with the King to bring down Babylon.

God's people have not understood the plan of God for the earth or why He placed them here. Because of this, satan's kingdom has been operating in the earth pretty much free of opposition for centuries. We must not be ignorant of the strategies of the enemy.

We have been satisfied to go to "church" and hear others tell us what they think the gospel is. For the most part, the "church" gospel is the gospel of salvation with a sprinkling of Holy Ghost anointing and a dash of healing. We are satisfied with that measure of gospel even when occasionally we wonder and long for something more.

The true gospel is not the gospel of salvation or healing or "church". According to Jesus it is the gospel of the Kingdom. "Church" is never mentioned in scripture in conjunction with the words "the gospel of". Salvation is the doorway into the Kingdom. We should never stop in the doorway just to peer into what is behind the door. We must enter through the door into our inheritance, the Kingdom of God.

Seek the Kingdom of God first. Everything else will be added if the Kingdom becomes our focal point. Our mandate is to superimpose the Kingdom of heaven over the earth. We are to bring heaven to earth

The Kingdom of God is nothing more than wherever Jesus rules from His throne and has complete authority. We must first allow the King of kings to have complete rule in our own lives. This is the process of maturing. As we mature in the things of God, we turn over every area of our life to the King to rule in and through us. We are transformed from a carnal creature to a spiritual creature. The Kingdom of God is within us. Jesus taught that often.

Once the King of kings has complete rule in our lives then suddenly our eyes are open to see that not only is the Kingdom of God in us, we are in the Kingdom of God. We have become a mature member of the Ekklesia, the ruling, legislative body of Christ with Jesus as the Head. It is a mystery revealed. It is the ball in the cardboard box illustration

mentioned earlier about God being in us, but we are also in God.

The Kingdom of God is in us, when we allow Jesus to rule over our lives, but we are also in the Kingdom where we realize it much bigger than us. Once we are mature and our lives are submitted to the King of kings, we can begin to see the Kingdom of God outside of us. We can see the Kingdom we are in and how we can have influence in it. We can begin to understand how we expand that Kingdom and that means much more than just getting people saved.

Righteousness and Justice

We have spent a lot of time examining maturity and God ruling in our lives just to get to this point where we can now focus on the Kingdom of God around us. He must consume us, so we are consumed with His desire for the nations.

A child has been born for us; a son has been given to us. The responsibility of complete dominion will rest on his shoulders, and his name will be: The Wonderful One! The Extraordinary Strategist! The Mighty God! The Father of Eternity! The Prince of Peace! Great and vast is his dominion. He will bring immeasurable peace and prosperity. He will rule on David's throne and over David's kingdom to establish and uphold it by promoting justice and righteousness from this time forward and forevermore. The marvelous passion that the Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies, has for his people will ensure that it is finished!

Isaiah 9:6-7 (TPT)

Complete dominion rests on the Savior's shoulders. In order for us to share in that dominion He invites us to get in the yoke with Him. The pillars of His throne are righteousness and justice, through which He rules and has dominion. and how we rule through Him in the earth. We are not waiting for heaven. Righteousness doesn't need to be enforced in heaven. The Bible states the Kingdom would start when the Messiah was born.

The Kingdom doesn't just magically come in and take over the earth. It is a process that happens over time. It keeps increasing, it keeps being established by Jesus through His Ekklesia, His mature saints who have learned how to rule and reign according to righteousness (what is right in the heart of God) and justice (making things right according to what God has revealed).

We must come to a complete understanding of the Ekklesia. Until we are mature in the things of God, until we are able to hear the voice of the Lord clearly, we cannot effectively understand how righteousness and justice operate in the Kingdom. We would make decisions on our own, using our own reasoning and understanding, our own desires, our own wants. That cannot happen in God's Kingdom. We must be absolutely sold-out to the heart and will of our Heavenly Father. Nothing else will do.

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."
Matthew 9:35-36 (NLT)

Jesus announced or proclaimed the good news about the Kingdom, not just the good news about salvation. Remember, that is what preaching is. "Preaching" or announcing is NOT a vocation. It is the responsibility of every student (disciple) and person of the Ekklesia. It happens every day with every step we take.

Wherever Jesus went, He announced the Good News. He carried the message with Him wherever the Father directed His steps. A part of that message was healing. A part of it was looking at the people and seeing their needs. There were people who were confused. People are more confused than ever in our day. Many are confused about things that should

never be confusing. No one knows who to believe, even believers have a hard time discerning truth. They need the message of the Kingdom.

There are those who are helpless, who do not know where to find help, not just concerning Christianity and salvation, although the starting point is indeed the blood of Jesus. Most people don't have leaders they trust. They have false leaders who constantly say, "Do as I say, not as I do". True leaders in the Ekklesia follow Jesus and they will never lead you anywhere but to the King.

This is what Jesus saw when He said that the harvest was great, but the workers few. There are so very few true leaders who will lead you directly to Jesus. There are very few true leaders who have matured in the things of God to the extent where Jesus rules supreme in every area of their lives. There are very few true leaders who understand the heart of God well enough to understand His righteousness and His justice.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You. Psalm 89:14 (AMP)

Just a few weeks ago the news reported about a group of people in a particular state that went before their school board to protest the vulgar and sexually explicit content in children's school books. I suddenly found myself praying to the Lord of the harvest and thanking him for sending laborers to the school board.

I began to pray that God would raise up laborers and place them into the positions on the school board. I began to pray for libraries and laborers to come forth in the libraries of that state to rise up and combat this evil. I prayed for laborers in the schools who would stand up and fight. I prayed for those called to write godly books to be used in the schools. I prayed for laborers in the government arena to come forth and be elected who would have the plans and strategies of heaven to deal with these situations.

Suddenly, I understood with clarity what Jesus meant when He said the laborers are few. This is what He meant when He said “Pray for laborers”. We need laborers in all the fields of harvest, not just “ministers of salvation”. The harvest is not just the unsaved, it is the world. It is the cultures of the world. It is the nations. It is the Kingdom of God on earth. We need laborers who understand righteousness and justice and how to rule in the earth through the dictates of the King. We need laborers in every cultural area of society.

I will give you the keys (authority) of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind [forbid, declare to be improper and unlawful] on earth will have [already] been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose [permit, declare lawful] on earth will have [already] been loosed in heaven.”
Matthew 16:19 (AMP)

This Bible passage is a declaration of truth from the mouth of Jesus after Peter declared who Jesus was. When we get a true revelation of Jesus and His Kingdom, and we allow Him to be King in our lives, He will give us the keys. The keys relate to the revelation of Jesus and the Ekklesia He would establish, along with forbidding and releasing.

The Kingdom is not a place to visit. It is a place to live. It is our inheritance. To learn more about righteousness and justice, read my first book *The Mountain Belongs to the Remnant*. There is an extensive study on that topic in the book. Kingdom life is exciting! There is no better place to live than in the heart of God.

The Nations and the Seven Mountains of Culture

We have already mentioned the seven mountains of culture and how important that truth is. We have talked about the wicked sit on these high places and rule. There is a shaking taking place and these rulers are being toppled. There is a lot

of teaching on how the godly take over these mountains, but a lot of the teaching is still filtered through religious glasses.

We still picture a hierarchical structure with those in control at the top. It is not a matter of just replacing leadership on each of these cultural mountains. In the end, the only mountain that is in control is God's mountain where He rules through His people, His Ekklesia. It will not be ruled through some aspect of the "church" or religious mountain.

It does not happen from the top down, but rather, from the bottom up. Maturity is key to it all. We must get back to discipling our children in the things of God. Discipling or educating and training them not only in spiritual things like reading the Bible and praying. We teach them to attend "church" and give their tithe, and follow all the rules of religion, but we are not teaching them what we should be teaching.

Foundational truths are important for every new believer, but we cannot stop there. We must train them to hear God's voice, to obey Him, to follow His leading every day. We must teach them how God has answers for every area of life, education, finances, entertainment, religion, government. We must teach them from an early age how to get the answers and how to apply them to every day life. We must teach them about the counterfeit and how to fight.

There is a reason why writers in the Bible emphasized proper family life first. If we cannot apply the Kingdom principles in our families, how can we apply Kingdom principles to our cities, our states, our nations. When we grasp the Kingdom principles and they become a way of life for us, then whole societies will see and understand God and His ways. That will affect not only every cultural area of society but the leadership in that area as well.

Many scriptures show when the Ekklesia grows into maturity there will be a light in her that others will see. When she truly becomes the City on a Hill that she was meant to be,

the nations will come to the brightness of her light, the glory of her King who reigns within her.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the LORD shall rise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. The nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Isaiah 60:1-3 (MEV)

The nations are an important part of Jesus' inheritance and ours as well. The word for nations could be translated people or people groups. There are basically seven cultural areas that affect the lives of people groups, every one of our lives to some extent. They are named differently by different people, but are basically these seven: religion, education, family, government, arts and entertainment, media and communications, business.

Places of authority, like these seven cultural areas, are often referred to in the Bible as high places and mountains. Proverbs chapter eight discusses the high places of the earth. Read it in a more modern translation. Wisdom and understanding were used by the Lord to create the earth in the very beginning and even now wisdom and understanding are crying out to be heard from the very high places of the earth. The cultural centers of the earth need wisdom and understanding to perform their God-given responsibility.

Wisdom and understanding have a voice. That voice needs to come through those who understand the true meaning of wisdom and understanding, the Ekklesia. We need laborers to step into their positions to bring wisdom and understanding to the high places concerning the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and justice. Other voices are going to be silenced.

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. Proverbs 8:15,16 (MEV)

This is wisdom in the heart of God speaking. Who are the kings and princes who reign and decree justice in the gates, in the entry to the cities, in the doorways? It is the Ekklesia who rules under the authority of the King of kings. Gates of cities were often where laws were made and business was conducted.

As the Ekklesia, established by the Master Builder Himself, we have the keys to the Kingdom. We have the keys to our cities and all that is contained within them. The cry of laborers for the harvest is a cry for the maturity of the saints to be established so the Ekklesia can go forth and take the cities and the nations for her Lord. The harvest is ripe, but the harvest is not what we have been told it is.

The Harvest of the Earth

What is the harvest? It is more than we have thought it to be. We hear a lot about revival in the “church” world and an end-time harvest of millions of souls being saved. Now the claim is for a harvest of over one billion souls. Our goal is not to get people saved, so they can just go to heaven. Our goal is to get them saved, disciplined, and prepared as a part of the Ekklesia to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth so we can present the nations of the earth to our Lord. Can you image the impact a billion-person Ekklesia would have on the world?

Let’s do an examination of what the Bible says about the harvest. The current paradigm picture of an end-time harvest comes partly from Revelations chapter 14.

I looked and behold—I saw a white cloud, and sitting upon it was one like the Son of Man, wearing a golden crown and holding a sharp sickle. Another angel came out of the temple, shouting out to the one sitting upon the cloud, “Take your sickle and reap, for the time of reaping the harvest has come and the harvest of the earth is ripe!” So the one sitting upon the white cloud gave his sickle a mighty swing over the earth and reaped its harvest. Revelation 14:14-16 (TPT)

We see the sickle, but we have missed the crown. Both are relevant in these verses. Most people see the harvest of the earth as people ripe for salvation, but this passage doesn't say that is the harvest. There are two harvests according to these verses! What? A second angel comes with a sickle. There are still a lot of mysteries hidden from us, yet to be revealed. Read the next few verses.

Then another angel came out of the heavenly temple, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar of incense—the angel with authority over fire. He shouted out with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Take now your sharp sickle and harvest the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” So the angel gave his sickle a mighty swing over the earth and gathered the grapes from the vine of the earth and threw them into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city until blood poured out of the winepress as high as the horse’s bridle for a distance of one thousand six hundred stadia.

Revelation 14:17-20 (TPT)

What did Jesus have to say about the harvest? He said it first using a parable.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ’

Matthew 13:24-30 (NKJV)

The good seed had been sown, but then men slept. Sounds pretty much like us, today! We have been asleep for a long time. The enemy sowed bad seed while everyone was

asleep. People are awakening today realizing we have been asleep while evil has hidden itself in plain sight. Jesus explained the parable to His disciples (His students).

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
Matthew 13:36-43 (NKJV)

Reading these verses we now know that the harvest is much more than people ripe for salvation. People are the seed! The harvest is the separation of the true from the false, the righteous from the wicked, the wheat from the tares.

We are just beginning to see some of the mysteries revealed. There is still a lot more to understand. None of us see clearly yet. There does appear to be a final harvest that covers the entire earth when it is time and all the kingdoms of the earth are ready to be presented to the King of kings. Jesus said to let the tares grow with the wheat until it is harvest time. Then they will be separated.

God created a field, and He called it the Earth. The Son of Man (Jesus) then planted good seed in the field (the earth) and those good seeds are the children of the Kingdom. The King is Jesus, the one who wears the crown and holds the sickle in Revelation, chapter 14.

Jesus further explains that the tares (fake wheat) that were found in the field (in the earth) were also seeds but were children of the devil. The devil formed his own kingdom, his own cultural centers, his own form of ruling and he has

children who operate from the rules and regulations of the devil's counterfeit kingdom, Babylon. They operate right alongside the true children of God and God's Kingdom. Their deeds were lawlessness.

There is a mighty harvest at the consummation of God's plan for earth when the tares are removed from among the children of God, when the children of God are told to flee from Babylon before she falls. She is going to fall. The harvest is when the tares, the wood, hay, and stubble and all works of the flesh and the devil are burned with fire. Both the Matthew passage and the Revelation passage talk about fire. The harvest is what separates the kingdom of Babylon from the Kingdom of God!

The King is preparing for His return to earth as King. The nations will be his. But, first there has to be a separation. That separation and the two harvests is going to cause a great wailing and gnashing of teeth. I believe that not only refers to the true children of satan, those who worship him, but it includes those who claim their works are for the Kingdom of God, but are really works from the kingdom of self. Those works are wood, hay and stubble.

There is going to be great sorrow for those who suddenly realize they have spent their entire life building something that was for themselves and not for God. They are going to cry when they realize a lot of it has been wood, hay, and stubble and is all gone in a moment when the fire of God hits it.

There is more of a revelation here that we need to see. God told His people in the very beginning of time that as long as the earth existed there would be springtime and harvest. Jesus told His disciples as recorded in the ninth chapter of Matthew, the harvest in His day was plenteous. His people were lost and no one taught them. There were so few who had compassion on them, so the disciples were instructed to pray for more workers for the harvest.

He wasn't talking about the harvest at the end of the age. He was talking about in the moment they were living. He

was talking about the advancing of the Kingdom in the earth. Understanding the harvest was important. Laborers were needed to understand when it was time to remove the tares and separate that which is false and evil from that which is true and good.

Every mature member of the Ekklesia must know how and when to harvest. This is a part of discernment. When we are faced with ministering (serving) another person, we must be able to discern by the Spirit of God what is right and what is wrong, as well as what should go and what should remain, what is righteous and what the corrective action should be. We must be able to tear down in order to build to help mature the saints. That is what reaping the harvest is all about.

We, as the mature saints of God, the Ekklesia, are called as laborers to fields God wants to harvest today. It is not just about salvation, but it is about separating the fake from the real, the tares from the true wheat. We are called to the harvest field of our cities, our states, our nation to separate what is wicked and a part of satan's kingdom from that which is righteous and a part of God's kingdom on earth.

We cannot separate the spiritual side of an individual from the physical side. We live in a physical body and therefore the spiritual aspects of our lives affect every other cultural area of life. This is true when we talk about cities, states and countries. The Ekklesia is not about training individuals or nations just for spiritual life, but how to use their spiritual life to effect change in all the cultural areas of physical life.

We are to invade the mountains of society, all seven mountains of our cultural and through justice apply righteousness (God's will) to the mountains. We are NOT to topple these mountains just to replace them with Christian rulership of the mountains, which seems to be the current mindset. We are not just looking for a moral or ethical rulership, although that is better than a wicked rulership. We are looking for God to rule from His heart through a yielded people with no self-interest.

Joseph the dreamer interpreted a dream that the Pharaoh of Egypt had. There were seven good years and seven bad years. The solution did not come from either the seven good years or the seven bad years. It came from one leader with wisdom and understanding to devise a plan. That man was Joseph.

This is a picture of Jesus. The solution for our problems today in society, in all our cultural areas, is not going to come from any of the seven mountains, whether good or bad, but it is going to come from the Lord of wisdom and understanding Himself. In this hour we see the religious leaders of our day trying to come up with solutions and to be the ones who topple the mountains and take over. But it is not going to be so.

There is only one true mountain and that mountain is Mount Zion. Jesus, is the ruler of that mountain and He chooses to rule through His Ekklesia, His mature ones who know His heart and His ways and refuse to bow to another. When Jesus sends forth true laborers into the harvests of our cities, our states, our nations, they are from the true Ekklesia who has eyes only for her King. Her desire is to do as He says, and separate the real from the fake and harvest the real for the King of kings. The one true mountain stands above all other mountains and rules them.

How does all this fit in the doctrine of the rapture? I honestly don't know if it does. God has not chosen to tell me one way or the other. He told me things were not going to happen like I had been taught. So, I wait for His continued revelation.

There are still many mysteries to be solved and many promises to be fulfilled. It is okay to question, to discuss, to speculate how this all comes together. However, the days of developing doctrine from speculation are over. Jesus is the Spirit of Revelation, and in His time and His way, secrets will be revealed.

We can no longer take new revelation from God for today and build walls around it like has been done in the past.

We must continue seeking His face and moving forward as new revelation comes from the throne room of heaven. We are still a long way off from discovering the fullness of our God.

Oh, Lord, I pray. Visit your people once again and let the blinders come off. Let them see clearly what you are building and let them determine in their hearts that they will build no longer on a foundation of their choosing, but only on You as the true foundation. Let the paradigm shifts that are needed come in power and let our minds be renewed to the truth.

Closing

The Kingdom of God is real and it is holy. The paradigm shift bringing understanding of the true Ekklesia is well underway, as well as the shift to change our focus from “church” to Kingdom. We are beginning to see the harvest of the earth in a new light.

Nations have not shown much interest in God or following God’s ways. That is changing. The whole earth is beginning to shake and quiver in anticipation of the true Ekklesia coming into a recognition of who she really is and what she is meant to do. The nations will be disciplined as Jesus commanded.

When shaking comes to something, it means all the garbage and muck float to the top. The same is true when fire is applied to gold or silver. When the shaking comes and when the fire of God comes, that which is pure will sink to the bottom and lay on top of the foundation which is Jesus. The impurities and garbage go to the top where they are skimmed off and destroyed. Separation at its best.

The kingdom of Babylon is going to fall and along with it the spell that rebellion has had over the people of the earth for centuries. Chains of bondage are going to be broken. God’s Kingdom of heaven is now preparing to invade earth. It is just waiting for the people of God to arise and understand who

they are. The King is waiting for His bride to make herself ready.

The deception satan has used to keep people under his control is coming to an end. Confusion has existed for a long time. No one trusts anyone. Sickness and disease are everywhere, even in the mind. Violence has been unleashed in our streets. The mention of God is even forbidden in many places. Wars are everywhere and fear is uncontained.

The “church” that claims the name of our wonderful Lord is corrupt and vile. Who can see it? The jealousy of God is coming forth today just as it did in the day of Ezekiel.

He reached out what seemed to be a hand and took me by the hair. Then the Spirit lifted me up into the sky and transported me to Jerusalem in a vision from God. I was taken to the north gate of the inner courtyard of the Temple, where there is a large idol that has made the LORD very jealous. Ezekiel 8:3 (NLT)

God’s people had set up a massive idol at the north entrance to the yard of the temple. That was only the beginning of what Ezekiel was about to see.

“Son of man,” he said, “do you see what they are doing? Do you see the detestable sins the people of Israel are committing to drive me from my Temple? But come, and you will see even more detestable sins than these!” Then he brought me to the door of the Temple courtyard, where I could see a hole in the wall. He said to me, “Now, son of man, dig into the wall.” So I dug into the wall and found a hidden doorway. “Go in,” he said, “and see the wicked and detestable sins they are committing in there!” So I went in and saw the walls covered with engravings of all kinds of crawling animals and detestable creatures. I also saw the various idols worshiped by the people of Israel. Ezekiel 8:6-10 (NLT)

God moved Ezekiel through different parts of the temple showing him more detestable things. He then told Ezekiel it was because of the sins of His people that the whole nation was in violence and treating God with disrespect. The same is true today. The Ekklesia must rise up and fight against

this evil. We can no longer sit and twiddle our thumbs and make beautiful music.

**“Have you seen this, son of man?” he asked. “Is it nothing to the people of Judah that they commit these detestable sins, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and provoking my anger?
Ezekiel 8:17 (NLT)**

In chapter nine of Ezekiel God’s glory came with thunder. The Ekklesia is going to arise in the earth and the glory of the Lord is going to be seen across the nations. God will once again thunder and the people of the earth will know there is a God. God is not going to do it by Himself. We must cooperate with Him and be jealous with Him for His creation. There is murder and injustice in the earth and in the “church”. God has said, “Enough is enough!”

The leaders of Israel were standing between the porch and the altar as written in the book of Ezekiel. They were pointing to someone other than God. The place between the porch and the altar is the place where God’s leaders stand as the bridgeway to God. A multitude of our leaders today are standing in that place and instead of showing the way to God, they are showing the way to other gods. They say they are calling you to Jesus, but it is a different Jesus.

The glory came after six men came with their weapons of war and one man dressed in linen clothing carrying a writer’s inkpot. That is a picture of the Ekklesia. The number six is for man and Jesus is the priest dressed in linen who goes forth with “It is written”. It is complete. What was commanded by the God of heaven has been done. When the Head is united with the body in one accord, the destruction of the religious spirit is nigh at hand.

**Then the man in linen clothing, who carried the writer’s case, reported back and said, “I have done as you commanded.”
Ezekiel 9:11 (NLT)**

In this same chapter the people who wept and sighed at the evil in the temple were to be marked and protected by God. Are we weeping over the condition of God's house today? Are we marked by God because of our love for His people and for Him? Does the cry of God for His Ekklesia to come forth dwell strongly in our heart?

God revealed more to Ezekiel and then in chapter 11, he was told to prophesy. God said as a result of the prophecy brought by Ezekiel, the people would know it was God.

and you will know that I am the LORD. For you have refused to obey my decrees and regulations; instead, you have copied the standards of the nations around you.” Ezekiel 11:12 (NLT)

Many of the houses that claim to be houses of God today have refused to obey God's decrees and regulations. Instead, they have done business exactly like the world around them. God is saying “Enough is enough”.

Are we going to arise to the occasion? Are we going to call for the destruction of the evil houses that have destroyed the reputation of our Lord? Let the vehicles that bring disgrace to His name be scattered all over the highways and let their supply be cut off so they produce no more vile and evil seed. Are we going to call for the Ekklesia to be what God has called her to be?

We have been satisfied to just trust what man has taught us. We build theology and doctrine from just a few verses of the Bible. We teach it to others and they accept it all hook, line, and sinker without questioning and studying for themselves. God created earth for a special purpose and we have lost our purpose.

His plan for mankind to inherit earth and have dominion never ended. From beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation the message is clear. Yet, we have allowed satan to distract us and keep us from our mission. We have allowed him to keep us in a controlled environment instead of out in the world advancing the Kingdom of God.

It is the time for restoration. Jesus is held in the heavens until the restoration of all things. Once we enter into the fulness of the understanding and wisdom of the Kingdom, we will see even more what awaits us, if we would only believe.

Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Acts 3:20,21 (NLT)

The Kingdom of God belongs to us and we will not rest until it is ours. It is our glorious, blessed inheritance. Our righteous decrees and declarations in the earth will have an effect. The plans and strategies given to the Ekklesia from heaven are going to change nations and cities. The nations of the world are going to become the nations of our God and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever and ever and ever! Hallelujah and Amen!

Discussion Questions for Chapter 20

- 1 – “The God of peace crushing satan under His feet” seems like a contradiction. Explain what you believe this means.
- 2 – God told Moses the people needed to prepare three days for an event. What was the event God told Moses the people needed three days to prepare for? How does that apply to us today?
- 3 – Explain the paradigm shifts that are mentioned in this chapter and described throughout this book. Why are they needed?
- 4 – Explain the beginning of the enemy’s counterfeit kingdom and how it evolved over time. Why is this important to know?
- 5 – Describe your thoughts concerning Babylon before reading this book and how those thoughts have changed. Do you hear God calling to come out of Babylon? If not, ask God about it. What do you think coming out of Babylon means?
- 6 – What does righteousness and justice mean to you? Why do you think the Bible says that these are the pillars of God’s throne? How are they used in ruling and reigning in the Kingdom of God?
- 7 – Have you heard of the seven-mountain concept before? If so, how did your thoughts change after reading this chapter? Do you believe God is in the seven-mountain concept? Explain your position and ask God to give you clarity of what is in His heart.
- 8 – Explain why the call to come out of Babylon is so important.

9 – Describe your thoughts on the harvest and how they may have changed while reading this book

10 – How has reading this book changed your perspective? Do you feel a renewed sense of excitement and joy for what God is doing in the earth? If not, ask God to reveal to you what is needed to have excitement and joy returned to your heart.