

12 SECRETS OF LIFE

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The Face of God

"The face of God" represents the embodiment of God's existence, which alone can satisfy man's spiritual hunger and thirst to know the One who is revealed by creation, the written Word, and the Holy Spirit.

He has revealed Himself through creation. "All things were created through Him and for Him."¹ "The Lord God formed man of dust from the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being".² As the scriptures acknowledge, "have we not all one father?"³ He wants everyone to see what His plan is⁴: a way made for man's redemption, a way for man to put on a new nature⁵, that is, to be able to enter into His presence, to see Him in the face of Christ.⁶

The new nature of life is for the one who finds wisdom, who finds life, "and obtains favor from the Lord."⁷ As Jesus Christ said, "the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life"⁸, and "is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"⁹ Then, "seek first His Kingdom"¹⁰ by laying up "a good foundation"¹¹ for eternal life.¹² That is the way to pass into His eternal presence, and see Him face to face.¹³

God reveals His desire for a personal relationship with man by the written Word.¹⁴ This desire is mutual, confirmed by man's hunger and thirst to see the face of God.¹⁵ Which is further supported by, "search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!"¹⁶ "I walk in faithfulness to you"¹⁷, and my "mind is stayed on Thee".¹⁸ These affirmations confirm man's desire to please Him, since we know that He "searches the mind and tries the heart"¹⁹ to see if He is loved with all of one's heart, soul, and mind.²⁰

We must not be conformed to this world²¹, but believe that "with joy [we] will draw water from the wells of salvation"²² and "shall be satisfied."²³ For the Lord is "the bread of life"²⁴ and "a spring of water welling up to eternal life."²⁵ Therein, "He satisfies him who is thirsty, and the hungry He fills with good things"²⁶ "without payment."²⁷ Therefore, rejoice to hear the Spirit and the bride saying, "Come".²⁸

Come, that I may see You face to face, because You said, "if my people will turn from their wicked ways, then I will...forgive their sin."²⁹ I "seek the Lord and His strength"³⁰, "for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous."³¹ "Now we see in a mirror dimly"³², but "as for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness"³³, "and His face [is] like the sun shining in full strength."³⁴

Yet, my foot slips and I stumble when I am tempted, and lured, and enticed by my own desire of temptations.³⁵ However, "no temptation has overtaken [me] that is not common to man."³⁶ All temptations glitter like gold, such as the pursuit of man's approval.³⁷ Even His anointing (transition from flesh to Glory)³⁸ satisfies the flesh and may distract one from receiving more from the Holy Spirit. This conflict of interest may be summed up by the Apostle Paul's confession that "I of myself serve the law of

God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”³⁹ Nevertheless, temptations can be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit at work within the life of a believer.⁴⁰

In addition God has revealed His will, that is, His desire to communicate with man through the **Holy Spirit**. “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”⁴¹ Jesus said “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.”⁴² “God has revealed to us through the Spirit”⁴³, that “which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.”⁴⁴

“As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness.”⁴⁵ The scriptures further say, “blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied”⁴⁶ upon beholding the face of God, but when will this be?

The Lord’s answer is, “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.”⁴⁷ Righteousness is the essence of His presence, the key to the revealing of His face, but how can this be accomplished?

Its accomplishment comes through satisfying His requirements, such as “sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of steadfast love”⁴⁸, as “you walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice”⁴⁹, and “do not yield [your] members to sin...but yield...[yourselves] to God” as instruments of righteousness.⁵⁰ Then the desire of the heart, “open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord” will be answered.⁵¹

In conclusion, each person must stand steadfast in confidence; based on creation, the written Word, and the belief that “through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness.”⁵² “For our sake He made Him to be sin, He who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”⁵³ Therein, by faith we can be sure that we will “see His face.”⁵⁴ “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.”⁵⁵

Amen.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE FACE OF GOD

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- ¹Colossians 1:16b, Revelation 4:11, - - ²Genesis 2:7, - - ³Malachi 2:10a, - - ⁴Ephesians 3:9, - - ⁵Colossians 3:10, - - ⁶2 Corinthians 4:6, - - ⁷Proverbs 8:35, - - ⁸Matthew 7:14, - - ⁹Matthew 6:25b, - - ¹⁰Matthew 6:33, - - ¹¹1 Timothy 6:19, - - ¹²1 John 5:11-12, - - ¹³1 Corinthians 13:12a, - - ¹⁴John 3:16-18, - - ¹⁵Psalms 27:8-9a, - - ¹⁶Psalms 139:23, - - ¹⁷Psalms 26:3, - - ¹⁸Isaiah 26:3, - - ¹⁹Jeremiah 17:10, - - ²⁰Matthew 22:37, - - ²¹Romans 12:2, - - ²²Isaiah 12:3, - - ²³Matthew 5:6, - - ²⁴John 6:35, - - ²⁵John 4:14b, - - ²⁶Psalms 107:9, - - ²⁷Revelation 21:6c, - - ²⁸Revelation 22:17a, - - ²⁹2 Chronicles 7:14, - - ³⁰Psalms 105:4, - - ³¹1 Peter 3:12, - - ³²1 Corinthians 13:12a, - - ³³Psalms 17:15a, - - ³⁴Revelation 1:16, - - ³⁵James 1:14, - - ³⁶1 Corinthians 10:13a, - - ³⁷Romans 1:32, - - ³⁸1 John 2:27a, - - ³⁹Romans 7:25b, - - ⁴⁰Acts 1:8, - - ⁴¹Job 33:4, - - ⁴²John 16:13, - - ⁴³1 Corinthians 2:10a, - - ⁴⁴1 Corinthians 2:12, - - ⁴⁵Psalms 17:15a, - - ⁴⁶Matthew 5:6, - - ⁴⁷Matthew 6:33a, - - ⁴⁸Hosea 10:12a, - - ⁴⁹Proverbs 8:20, - - ⁵⁰Romans 6:13, - - ⁵¹Psalms 118:19, - - ⁵²Galatians 5:5, - - ⁵³2 Corinthians 5:21, - - ⁵⁴Revelation 22:4a, - - ⁵⁵Revelation 22:21.

The Family

God has instituted eight covenant (contract) relationships to establish the family as the foundational strength of a “People”. Its strength is grounded in love (1 John 4:7-8, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). The trinity of God exemplifies love (1 John 4:9-10), by demonstrating a perfect family, revealing the characteristics of fatherhood, motherhood, and son-ship. Truth, strength and love represent fatherhood (Psalms 119:160a; 73:26; John 3:35); grace represents motherhood, by providing comfort and encouragement (Hebrews 4:16; 1 Peter 5:10); “full of grace and truth” represents son-ship (John 1:14). God is the originator of the family and has revealed the heavenly model for an earthly entity (Genesis 1:27-28a; Ephesians 3:14-19). Herein, three aspects of the family will be considered: covenants, requirements, and communication with love.

First, the eight **covenants** God made with mankind reveal that each covenant was dependant upon the family. The covenants were as follows:

1. The Edenic (Genesis 1:28-30),
2. The Adamic (after the Fall) (Genesis 3:16-17),
3. Noemic (Genesis 9:8-17),
4. The Abrahamic (Genesis 12:2, 7; 15:4; 22:16-18),
5. The Mosaic (the Passover) (Exodus 12:12-14),
6. The Palestinian (a choice of life or death was offered each family member) (Deuteronomy 30:19 20),
7. The Davidic (David’s eventual heir was to be the Messiah, Jesus Christ) (2 Samuel 7:16),
8. The covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah; the promises are to the family as a group, and to each member (Hebrews 8:10-12).

In addition, each of the eight covenants reveals a necessary attribute for the family:

<u>COVENANTS</u>	<u>ATTRIBUTES</u>
1. Edenic	Love (1John 4:8-11),
2. Adamic	Trust (Proverbs 3:5),
3. Noemic	Hope (Romans 15:13),
4. Abrahamic	Blessings (Galatians 3:8-9),
5. Mosaic	Unity (John 10:30, 38, 14:9-10, John 17:20-23) [marriage relationship (1 Corinthians 11:3)],
6. Palestinian	Blessing and Curses (Deuteronomy 30:19a),
7. Davidic	House and Kingdom made sure; throne established for ever (2 Samuel 7:16),
8. House of Israel and Judah	new covenant (Hebrews 8:13a).

The characteristic pattern for the family was established by God, and in the New Testament Jesus reaffirmed the pattern (Matthew 19:4-6). He also said “no house divided against itself will stand” (Matthew 12:25). Extending this concept, individual family covenant requirements are crucial for the survival of a people.

Second, Family Covenant **requirements**: the family begins with “leaving and cleaving” (Genesis 2:24), which suggests both physical (sexual), and spiritual (personal relationship with God and mate) union (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). Marriage is more than just satisfying sexual, social, and economic purposes; it involves both members of the couple as:

1. Helpers (Geneses 2:18, Ephesians 5:25),
2. Companions (Malachi 2:14),
3. Providers (Proverbs 31:10-31, Song of Solomon 2:3-6, 16),
4. Givers of themselves for the development of each other (Ephesians 5:26, 28, 33)

Then, as parents, the couple faces at least five areas of responsibility regarding children:

1. To nurture them (Ephesians 6:4),

2. To provide for them (2 Corinthians 12:14c),
3. To teach them (Proverbs 22:6),
4. To discipline them (1 Timothy 3:4),
5. To love them (Titus 2:4).

Children, in turn, have covenant responsibilities:

1. To respect their parents (Proverbs 23:22),
2. To obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3),
3. To honor their parents (Exodus 20:12).

Even though the covenant of family is one of mutual love, support, and commitment, there will arise problems to be solved. God's word is the key to solving them. The Apostle Paul warns that if one marries there will be worldly trouble (1 Corinthians 7:28b). Eight likely causes are:

1. Lack of commitment, which leads to dissatisfaction that produces quarreling, and if not checked, results in separation—first emotional, and physical—then abandonment, followed perhaps by divorce,
2. Outside pressure,
3. Media messages,
4. Mass media that perverts the Word of God and desensitizes one to sin,
5. Materialistic attitudes,
6. Unbiblical relationships are presented as being acceptable,
7. Lack of love,
8. Poor communication; communication is both verbal and nonverbal—research suggests that:
 - a. Only 10% of spousal communication is by words,
 - b. Less than 40% by tone of voice,
 - c. Over 50% of what is received from one's spouse is nonverbal (body posture, movement, and facial expressions); actions do speak louder than words,
 - d. We should try to transmit love through every action and expression, as well as through words.

Nevertheless, if a communication breakdown occurs, it can be resolved. Each involved member should apply God's principles to his heart. The resulting remorse and forgiveness within each heart will restore the relationship (1 John 4:11-12, Romans 12:9-10, 18, Psalms 37:5). The practice of good communication is necessary to avoid problems. A few helpful rules to follow are:

1. Avoid negative communication (Ephesians 4:29),
2. Maximize positive communication by complimenting and affirming one another (Titus 3:2),
3. Choose the best response and timing in terms of the situation (Proverbs 15:23),
4. Speak honestly and kindly (1 Peter 2:1; Ephesians 4:15),
5. Practice listening from the other's perspective. Listen without interrupting or correcting (Proverbs 24:3-4).

Third, **communication with love** in part is exemplified by:

- ▶ "Cleaving", to cling to (Genesis 2:24a),
- ▶ "Friendship" (Song of Solomon 5:16),
- ▶ Becoming "one flesh", togetherness (Genesis 2:24b),
- ▶ Being "imitators" of God (whereby one complements the other) (Ephesians 5:1-2),
- ▶ "Being subject to one another" (Ephesians 5:21-30),
- ▶ "Wives, be submissive to your husbands" (1 Peter 3:1a); "husbands bestow honor on your wives" (1 Peter 3:7),
- ▶ Showing love and respect (Ephesians 5:33),
- ▶ Demonstrating faithfulness in intellectual, emotional and physical relationships (Ephesians 3:16-19, 1 Corinthians 1:10),
- ▶ Honoring the other "as you wish that [the other] would do to you" (Luke 6:31),
- ▶ Demonstrating mercy (Matthew 5:7),
- ▶ Promoting freedom from fear (1 John 4:18a).

In conclusion, the Christian family is the nucleus of God's chosen people. It is bound up in covenant relationship with God, and its members operate under specific guidelines and directives. The love of God is the cohesive element that holds each unit together, and helps it to bond with other units, forming the family of God.

Amen.

The Church

“The Church” (Matthew 16:18) is a body of believers established on the revelation knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 16:15-17).

Its fundamental precepts are:

1. His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25),
2. His ministry, which began with His baptism (Matthew 3:16-4:1),
3. His death by crucifixion (Luke 23:20-22, 33, 46, Matthew 27:50),
4. His resurrection (Matthew 28:5-10, Luke 24:46),
5. His ascension (Mark 16:19, Acts 1:11),
6. The Holy Spirit, who was sent in His name (John 14:26, Luke 24:49),
7. Water baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by His authority (Matthew 28:19b, Mark 16:16, Colossians 2:12),
8. His commission (Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19a),
9. Salvation in His name alone (Acts 4:12, Luke 24:47).

Thus, Jesus Christ is the builder of the Church (Colossians 1:18, Acts 2:47b, 1 Corinthians 12:13) while the believers’ activity, directed by the Holy Spirit, forms the Church (1 Corinthians 3:9, Acts 2:47).

Definitions:

- The Church, the body, you “are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).
- The Children of God, are “all who received Him, who believed in His name”, to them “He gave power to become children of God” (John 1:12).

The Church of God is endowed with three responsibilities: purpose, authority, and methodology.

I. Its **purpose** is three-fold:

- A. To be a bride (Revelation 21:2), which means:
 1. A people called out of the world for Himself (2 Corinthians 11:2, 5:20),
 2. A people redeemed from sin (Revelation 5:9),
 3. A people who possess pure religion (James 1:27) and who display a distinct identity in the world (Deuteronomy 14:2, 26:18, Titus 2:14).
- B. To proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God by making converts (Acts 16:28-34, 17:22-34). The converts are to do the same (2 Timothy 4:5). The Kingdom of God refers to the rule of God (Hebrews 1:8, Matthew 12:28, Mark 1:14-15, Revelation 11:15). As a sign of authority the disciple has been given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 16:19).
- C. To infuse a bond of unity between God and man (John 17:20-23).

II. Its **authority** as revealed by scripture has no temporal power or earthly functions (John 18:36). Rather, its qualities are that of “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Therefore, “we must move into agreement with what God wants to do” 1. “The test of preparedness to receive the authority is the capacity to receive the Grace” 2. However, “without faith---faith in the Holy Spirit, faith in the Holy Spirit in our converts---we can do nothing” 3. (Acts 1:8, John 16:13, Mark 13:11, Acts 2:1-4, Hebrews 2:4). We must accept the fact that a man need not know much to lay hold on Jesus Christ.

III. Its **methodology** is:

- A. The simple Gospel (not of Law, but of the Spirit) which presents:
 1. God, the creator (Genesis 1:1),
 2. Jesus, the son, the redeemer and savior (1 John 4:14, Isaiah 49:26b, Titus 2:13),
 3. Holy Spirit, the believers’ in-dwelling source of power (Acts 1:8).
- B. The teaching of two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion:
 1. Baptism seals the believer in the unity of faith (Romans 6:3-4), acknowledging oneness in Spirit with God the Father, and requires: repentance and faith on the part of the candidate (Luke 24:47, Acts 20:21, Mark 11:22).
 - The importance of Baptism: a new believer is baptized into Christ Jesus in order that Christ may perfect his or her repentance by faith (Romans 1:17, Acts 14:22).

2. Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper, to be taken in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
- C. Presentation of the main facts concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ: His death (Mark 15:24-29, 33-39), burial (Mark 15:44-46), and resurrection (Mark 16:9-14).
- D. Teaching from the written word of God, that is, the Old and New Testaments (1 Corinthians 10:11, Hebrews 10:7).
- E. The bringing of interested unsaved hearers speedily and directly to a point of decision (Romans 2:4-11), asking them to accept Jesus (2 Corinthians 6:2). They need to act on their choice (Matthew 4:18-22). If they reject Jesus Christ, they are to be rejected by the Church (Luke 10:16).
- F. Instruction: teach disciplines (2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6, 1 Corinthians 11:2-3, 23-34, 1 Timothy 6:20, 2 Timothy 1:13, 2:2, 3:14, 16, Titus 1:9, 15-16).
- G. Worship is called for in the scriptures, but no definite form or pattern is established (Ephesians 5:18c-20).
- H. Leadership by:
 1. Elders, bishops, or overseers (the different titles represent the same duties) (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-3),
 2. Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13) with specific qualifications (Acts 6:1-6).
- I. Evangelism, "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2).

In conclusion, the Church is founded on the solid foundation of Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, and is established in authority and power from God, operating under definite guidelines to establish the unity between God and man.

Amen.

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The Sabbath

The "Sabbath" (Exodus 20:8, 11b), embodied within the Mosaic Law was the holy order of God (Romans 7:12). The issue concerning the Law and the Sabbath has produced contention in the Church over which is the proper day to worship, Saturday or Sunday. The argument for Saturday is based on two points:

1. It was commanded to Israel (Deuteronomy 5:15, Exodus 31:13-16),
2. It was a sign between God and Israel (Exodus 31:17).

The argument for Sunday worship may be clarified by the following scriptures that support a change in the day of worship from Saturday (the seventh day) to Sunday (the first day of the week).

- Hebrews 10:9b "He abolishes the first in order to establish the second."
- Hosea 2:11 "And I will put an end to all her [Israel's]...Sabbaths and all her appointed feasts" (refer to 2 Chronicles 31:3).
- Galatians 5:18, "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law."
- 5:1, 4-5 "For freedom Christ has set us free.... You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.... For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness."
- Romans 7:4, 6 "Likewise...you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another [Jesus Christ].... But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit."
- Galatians 3:23-26 "Now before faith came, we were confined under the law.... So that the law was our custodian.... But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith."
- Hebrews 7:12 "For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well."
- Colossians 2:16-17 "Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food...a festival...a Sabbath." The message is: the Law is discharged and replaced by a new commandment (John 13:34).
- Romans 6:14 "Sin [increased by the Law: Romans 5:20a, 7:12-13] will have no dominion over you because you are not under law but under grace."
- Hebrews 10:8-10 "...You [Father God] have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'Lo I have come to do Your will'. He abolishes the first order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Supportive scriptures:

1. *2 Corinthians 3:7-11*, "what once had splendor has come to have no splendor",
2. *Hebrews 8:6-13*, "enacted on better promises",
9:15-17, "redeems them from under the first covenant",
3. *Ephesians 2:15*, "by abolishing...the law of commandments and ordinances",
4. *Acts 15:10*, "why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"
5. *Galatians 4:10-11*, "You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have labored over you in vain",
6. *1 Corinthians 9:20-21*, "though not being myself under the law".

In conclusion, the issue must be resolved between those who differ in opinion so that strife will not prevail over love (Hebrews 12:15, 1 Corinthians 13:4-6, 1 John 3:16, 4:7, Hebrews 13:1), and indeed, that the Church may present herself without spot or wrinkle, not only to Christ, but also to the eyes of the world (Ephesians 5:27).

Amen.

Spiritual Children

The Holy Bible presents **children** as being in one of two spiritual groups. Those who have a sinful (selfish) nature are **of Satan**.¹ To them God says, "you are dust, and to dust you shall return."² "'Woe to the rebellious children,' says the Lord."³ Those **of God**, however, are different: they are those who have acknowledged their sinful nature, and "received Him, those who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God."⁴ Each of us is a child of his physical father, and as such has his human (that is, sinful) nature⁵ until we invite Jesus Christ into our hearts and become children of God.⁶ Unless we do this we are separated from God.⁷

Man, formed from the dust of the earth⁸ was created in God's image;⁹ the breath (the spirit) breathed by God into the clay form gave it life. It became a human being,¹⁰ created in the likeness of God¹¹ with the ability to understand.¹² God named the first human being Man (meaning mankind, different from the animals), and he was the beginning of the human race.¹³ Next, the Lord God made a woman out of a rib He took from the man.¹⁴ Then God gave the man a personal name, Adam¹⁵ (if "man", it is a mistranslation)). Adam named the woman Eve.¹⁶

When God breathed the breath of life into him, man was without blemish, and enjoyed fellowship with God.¹⁷ But when the man deliberately disobeyed God's command,¹⁸ God identified that action as "sin".¹⁹ By rejecting God's guidance, Adam became a rebellious son, and forfeited the intimate relationship he had had with God. In doing this he gave his allegiance to Satan, the first rebellious spirit.²⁰

God created angels to "do His word," and to praise Him.²¹ He created one angel, Lucifer, to the height of perfection, and gave him abilities the other angels did not have,²² but because "iniquity was found in [him]"²³ he was cast out of Heaven.²⁴ Lucifer, "Day Star, son of Dawn,"²⁵ was cast down to the earth, and he was newly identified as the "red dragon,"²⁶ that "ancient serpent" called the "Devil, and Satan".²⁷ His name in the Hebrew language is Abaddon, (which means destroyer).²⁸ To understand more about the character of Satan read Job, 1:6-12, 28:22.

God's description of Satan is found in Ezekiel 28:12b-19, and Isaiah 14:12-21. God reveals that Satan accelerated his efforts to be "like the Most High" by convincing Eve to place her trust in him, and Eve in turn persuaded Adam.²⁹ Satan instigated Adam's disobedience to God's command,³⁰ thereby giving birth to sin.³¹ Because of Adam's sin, mankind inherited the sin nature, the nature of Satan. Thus natural man is of the devil,³² and sets his mind on the flesh,³³ rejecting his creator, thereby causing his creator to reject him. God declared His rejection when He said, "you are not my people,"³⁴ "you refuse to come to me,"³⁵ "you who sin, children of the Devil,"³⁶ "a people who walk in darkness,"³⁷ "a sinful nation."³⁸ "I also will choose affliction for them."³⁹

When Eve bore Adam a son, he received his father's corrupted human spirit, as has every one born since then. Ecclesiastes 11:5, asks how one can presume to know "how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child"? It is a mystery of God, but it is so. Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve, grew to manhood and learned to make choices. Abel's choice pleased God; Cain's did not.⁴⁰ Each child (person) makes his own choice, actively for God, or passively for Satan. God's promise, "if you do well,"⁴¹ offered man a renewed personal relationship with God. Yet, being persuaded by Satan to not do well⁴² gives one's sin nature its power.⁴³ On the other hand, to do well releases God's power.⁴⁴ The covenant to "do well" existed from the time of Adam, about 4,000 B.C. to the covenant law of Moses about 2,000 B.C.⁴⁵ During that period of time the Holy Bible identifies only two men who "mastered", "did well", and "walked with God": Enoch⁴⁶ and Noah.⁴⁷

The first group mentioned above is those who possess the mind and spirit of Satan.⁴⁸ Everyone in the second group, who live in God's Spirit, is the "living".⁴⁹ He said, "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 20:16 [some Bible translations omit this part of the verse]), and God has chosen you to put on a new nature.⁵⁰ You who "are called and chosen and faithful" will be with the One called, "Lord of lords and King of kings,"⁵¹ and will not to be destroyed by Him.

In spite of man's rejection of Him,⁵² God provided the way for the renewal of the relationship.⁵³ To become a child of God each person must make the decision to do so. Some people say they have not "chosen" either God or Satan, but the choice is subtle---if one does not actively choose God, he has

indirectly chosen Satan, the world, and death. So, “yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life.”⁵⁴ The choice can be made at any time before death, but only after the decision is one referred to as “living.” Those who were spiritually dead⁵⁵ are alive to God⁵⁶ by the Spirit⁵⁷ in Christ Jesus,⁵⁸ as soon as they make the choice for God. Therefore, you are not slaves,⁵⁹ but God’s children.⁶⁰ He addresses you as children,⁶¹ for you are led by the Spirit⁶² to be His children.⁶³

As God’s children⁶⁴ be blameless and innocent⁶⁵ offspring who testify to Jesus Christ⁶⁶ as the children of promise do.⁶⁷ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God;⁶⁸ “the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants,”⁶⁹ confirmed by the Spirit when we cry, “Abba! Father!”⁷⁰ Jews, even as Gentiles, must be born again to have fellowship with Him. As God said, “if my people who are called by my name, humble themselves,”⁷¹ “then I will walk among them.”⁷² Israel,⁷³ whom I have chosen,⁷⁴ whose names are written in my book,⁷⁵ and on whose heart is my law,⁷⁶ are a people united,⁷⁷ and they shall be my people.⁷⁸ Thus, they may also obtain salvation⁷⁹ unto eternal life,⁸⁰ to be gathered together forever.⁸¹ Then who shall separate the chosen children of God from God in Christ Jesus our Lord?⁸²

Also, “by this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God.”⁸³

In conclusion, the whole world is in the power of the evil one,⁸⁴ simply because it has not made a decision for God. From the above, it may be seen that in Adam all died, but in Christ all may live.⁸⁵ The first man, Adam, was from the earth, and the second, Jesus, was from Heaven.⁸⁶ The difference is that Adam’s aroma is one of death to death, and the other an aroma from life to life.⁸⁷ As one man’s act led to sin, the other’s led to life.⁸⁸ The act of the first man was to break the law,⁸⁹ and “he who [continually] commits sin is of the devil,”⁹⁰ whereas the second man’s act gives life, so, “let no one deceive you. He who does right is righteous, as He is righteous.”⁹¹ Satan’s servants are disguised as children of the light,⁹² but they are of the darkness, for they are without understanding.⁹³ They are without hope⁹⁴ waiting to be judged,⁹⁵ not knowing that their names are not written in God’s Book of Life.⁹⁶

Amen.

FOOTNOTES FOR SPIRITUAL CHILDREN

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- ¹ John 3:12a, Ephesians 2:3, - - ²Genesis 3:19, - - ³Isaiah 30:1, - - ⁴John 1:12, - - ⁵Genesis 5:3, - - ⁶1 Peter 1:23, - - ⁷Isaiah 59:2, - - ⁸Genesis 2:7, - - ⁹Genesis 1:27, - - ¹⁰Job 33:4, - - ¹¹Genesis 1:26a, - - ¹²Job 32:8, - - ¹³Genesis 5:2, - - ¹⁴Genesis 2:22, - - ¹⁵Genesis 3:17a, - - ¹⁶Genesis 3:20, - - ¹⁷Genesis 3:8, - - ¹⁸Genesis 3:11-12, - - ¹⁹Genesis 4:7b, - - ²⁰Isaiah 30:1, - - ²¹Psalms 103:20, Luke 2:13, - - ²²Ezekiel 28:12b, - - ²³Ezekiel 28:15, - - ²⁴Revelation 12:7-9, - - ²⁵Isaiah 14:12, - - ²⁶Revelation 12:3, - - ²⁷Revelation 12:9, - - ²⁸Revelation 9:11b, - - ²⁹Genesis 3:6, - - ³⁰Genesis 2:15-17, - - ³¹Romans 5:12, - - ³²1 John 3:10, - - ³³Romans 8:5-8, - - ³⁴Hosea 1:9, - - ³⁵John 5:40, - - ³⁶1 John 3:8a, - - ³⁷Isaiah 9:2, - - ³⁸Isaiah 1:4, - - ³⁹Isaiah 66:4, - - ⁴⁰Genesis 4:4-5, - - ⁴¹Genesis 4:7a, - - ⁴²Genesis 4:8, - - ⁴³1 Corinthians 15:56, - - ⁴⁴Acts 26:18, - - ⁴⁵Exodus 31:18, - - ⁴⁶Genesis 5:22, - - ⁴⁷Genesis 6:9, - - ⁴⁸Matthew 13:38-39a, - - ⁴⁹2 Corinthians 6:16b, - - ⁵⁰Colossians 3:12-13, - - ⁵¹Revelation 17:14, - - ⁵²Genesis 3:6b, - - ⁵³2 Peter 1:4, ⁵⁴Romans 6:13, - - ⁵⁵Ephesians 2:1, - - ⁵⁶Romans 6:11, - - ⁵⁷1 Peter 3:18, - - ⁵⁸1 Corinthians 15:22, - - ⁵⁹Galatians 4:7, - - ⁶⁰Matthew 5:45a, - - ⁶¹Hebrews 12:5-7, - - ⁶²Romans 8:14, - - ⁶³Revelation 21:7, - - ⁶⁴John 1:12, - - ⁶⁵Philippians 1:15, - - ⁶⁶Revelation 12:17, - - ⁶⁷Galatians 4:28, - - ⁶⁸John 3:6, - - ⁶⁹Romans 9:8, - - ⁷⁰Romans 8:15-16, - - ⁷¹2 Chronicles 7:14, - - ⁷²Leviticus 26:12, - - ⁷³Genesis 35:10-11, - - ⁷⁴1 Kings 3:8, - - ⁷⁵Daniel 12:1c, - - ⁷⁶Isaiah 51:7a, - - ⁷⁷Jeremiah 32:38-39, - - ⁷⁸Ezekiel 37:23, - - ⁷⁹2 Timothy 2:10, - - ⁸⁰Matthew 25:46b, - - ⁸¹Matthew 24:31, - - ⁸²Romans 8:35, 38-39, - - ⁸³1 John 4:2-3, - - ⁸⁴1 John 5:19, - - ⁸⁵1 Corinthians 15:21-22, - - ⁸⁶1 Corinthians 15:45-50, - - ⁸⁷2 Corinthians 2:16, - - ⁸⁸Romans 5:18-21, - - ⁸⁹1 John 3:4, - - ⁹⁰1 John 3:8a, - - ⁹¹1 John 3:7b, - - ⁹²2 Corinthians 11:13-15, - - ⁹³Deuteronomy 32:28, - - ⁹⁴Ephesians 2:12, - - ⁹⁵Revelation 20:12, - - ⁹⁶Revelation 20:15.

Discipleship

A disciple of Jesus Christ is called a “Christian.”¹ “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.”² A true disciple is committed, and is a servant and a teacher.

- I. One who is **committed** will learn from the teachings of the Master, and will teach others what he has learned, as did the apostles,³ and will live according to God’s Word.⁴ This requires a total surrender of oneself to Jesus Christ⁵ in order to follow Him.⁶ The word “follow” means more than bodily movement or lip service; it implies four things:
 1. Listening to Him,⁷
 2. Seeking to learn,⁸
 3. Growing in understanding,⁹
 4. Obeying His teachings.¹⁰

The decision to “follow [Him]”¹¹ includes three essentials:

1. To deny oneself, that is to give up one’s self-interest, in daily obedience to Him,¹²
2. To take up one’s cross daily,¹³
3. To develop the characteristics of Christ-like love.¹⁴

These three personal disciplines produce a spiritual focus¹⁵ that becomes evident in the life of a disciple.¹⁶ The evidence of personal commitment is revealed in at least three areas of one’s life:

1. A respect for the Bible, the divinely-inspired, infallible Word of God,¹⁷
 2. A desire to serve others, beginning with the denial of self,¹⁸
 3. Evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.¹⁹
- II. **Servants:** “this is how one should regard us, as [committed] servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”²⁰ Attending to the affairs of God’s Word, being diligent as soldiers,²¹ even to the performing of domestic or public services²² is being useful to the kingdom of God.²³ Thus it can be seen that discipleship is a process that is progressively developing a Christian profile based on faith.²⁴
- III. To be identified with Christ Jesus a person will **teach** and will train other Christians,²⁵ he will “look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others”,²⁶ he will bear worthy fruit,²⁷ and glorify God,²⁸ he will follow Jesus Christ in love, faith, and obedience,²⁹ study the Word of God and carry it out in daily living,³⁰ he will love as Christ loves,³¹ understand the importance of prayer and practice it,³² he will live a life of service to God,³³ share the “Good News” with the world,³⁴ and be totally committed to God.³⁵

To surrender completely to Christ’s call is the first step to becoming a disciple. Each person progresses through three stages in his walk toward discipleship: first from being an unbeliever³⁶ to his acceptance of Christ and is saved.³⁷ Finally if he continues in the Word, Jesus says that he is a disciple.³⁸

The development of a disciple begins within the unbeliever’s heart when he hears of God’s saving grace.³⁹ It is the Holy Spirit who brings conviction to the unregenerate soul.⁴⁰

Second, when the unbeliever makes a verbal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, he needs to be nurtured with “milk”, that is, “fed” the first principles of God’s Word.⁴¹ The “milk” prepares the way for the “meat” of the Word as the believer matures.⁴²

Third, as he matures, the growing Christian should demonstrate characteristics that show him to be devoted to Jesus Christ, such as taking part in prayer, worship, giving, church attendance, Bible study,⁴³ and evangelism.⁴⁴ He will want to develop personal relationships with fellow believers, and a life of empowered service, bearing fruit under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ The maturing Christian will use the personal gift(s) apportioned to him by the Holy Spirit⁴⁶ for the purpose of building up the body of Christ,⁴⁷ by taking his place in ministry.⁴⁸

The ministering “disciple” is committed to teach and train others. As this responsibility is lived out, the disciples become dependent on and in service to one another.⁴⁹ They are partners, laboring together in ministry,⁵⁰ that is, in the act of serving under the power of the Holy Spirit.⁵¹

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come⁵² to empower believers to continue His work on earth.⁵³ Disciples are directed by the Lord to be filled with the Spirit.⁵⁴ The disciple who yields to the

Holy Spirit releases the power of God to fulfill His appointed objective.⁵⁵ Therefore, a disciple who is baptized with, and filled with, the Holy Spirit has God's power to accomplish the will of the Father.⁵⁶

In conclusion, the call to discipleship is a call to commit oneself to Christ Jesus,⁵⁷ and follow Him in service.⁵⁸ Thus, a disciple must take up his cross daily, and follow Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a lifelong maturing process.

Amen.

FOOTNOTES FOR DISCIPLESHIP

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- ¹Acts 11:26, - - ²John 15:8, - - ³2 Timothy 2:2, 1 John 1:5, - - ⁴Deuteronomy 8:3b, - - ⁵Luke 14:25-33, - -
⁶Matthew 4:18-22, - - ⁷Isaiah 46:9-10, 45:22, - - ⁸Matthew 11:29, John 6:45, - - ⁹1 John 5:20a, Isaiah 43:10-11,
Ephesians 5:17, Hebrews 11:3, - - ¹⁰John 14:15, 1 Samuel 15:22, - - ¹¹Matthew 16:24, - - ¹²Ephesians 6:7, - -
¹³Matthew 10:38, Luke 14:27, - - ¹⁴1 Corinthians 13:3-8a, - - ¹⁵Matthew 28:19-20, John 17:18, - - ¹⁶Matthew 7:18,
- - ¹⁷Hebrews 4:12, - - ¹⁸Romans 1:9-12, Hebrews 6:10, - - ¹⁹1 Corinthians 3:5, - - ²⁰1 Corinthians 4:1, - -
²¹2 Timothy 2:4, - - ²²1 Corinthians 4:2, - - ²³2 Timothy 2:21, - - ²⁴Romans 10:17, 14:22a, 1:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:3,
- - ²⁵Titus 2:1, - - ²⁶Philippians 2:4, - - ²⁷Matthew 3:8, - - ²⁸Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Peter 4:16, - -
²⁹Matthew 22:37, Mark 2:5, 1 Peter 1:14-15, - - ³⁰2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Timothy 4:7, - - ³¹1 John 3:16, - -
³²Matthew 21:22, - - ³³John 12:26, - - ³⁴2 Timothy 4:5, - - ³⁵Job 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, - - ³⁶1 Timothy 1:13, - -
³⁷Romans 10:9-10, - - ³⁸John 8:31, - - ³⁹1 Corinthians 2:11, - - ⁴⁰John 16:8, - - ⁴¹1 Peter 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2a, - -
⁴²Hebrews 5:14, - - ⁴³Romans 12:9-13, - - ⁴⁴Matthew 28:19, - - ⁴⁵Acts 1:8, - -
⁴⁶Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, - - ⁴⁷Ephesians 4:11-12, - - ⁴⁸Ephesians 4:16, - - ⁴⁹Galatians 5:13,
- - ⁵⁰2 Peter 3:15-17, - - ⁵¹Galatians 5:25, - - ⁵²Acts 1:5, - - ⁵³John 16:13, - - ⁵⁴Acts 1:4, 8, Ephesians 5:18b, - -
⁵⁵Matthew 4:1, 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, Acts 19:6, 1 Peter 4:14, - - ⁵⁶Luke 4:14, Romans 8:27b, - - ⁵⁷Psalms 37:5, - -
⁵⁸Proverbs 3:5-6.

Empowered

The Holy Spirit is the awesome power of God revealed in Creation, in the redemption of man, and by His presence in the redeemed man. The Holy Spirit will be viewed from three perspectives: His identity, His entrance into one's heart, and the evidence of His presence in the heart.

I. The Bible identifies the Holy Spirit as:

A. The Spirit of God,¹ the third person of the "Trinity",² Who among other things:

1. Reveals Christ Jesus as Savior,³
2. Encourages unbelievers to accept Christ's salvation,⁴
3. Is the power from on High,⁵
4. Bears witness to Jesus Christ,⁶
5. Is the "Spirit of truth,"⁷
6. "Will declare to you the things that are to come,"⁸
7. "Will teach you all things" (John 14:26, as an example: Acts 1:16),
8. Is the believer's source of power and guidance,⁹ once He is "received."¹⁰

The early Christians recognized that there was a difference between the indwelling, "born anew" presence of Christ's Spirit,¹¹ and the Holy Spirit baptism.¹² The indwelling of Christ's Spirit brings salvation and lordship to a believer's life.¹³ The Holy Spirit baptism gives dynamic to God's directives,¹⁴ further supported by:

- Remember what the Holy Spirit has already done,¹⁵
- Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit so that His power will be more apparent (Isaiah 40:29, Luke 10:19 --- the "scorpions" mentioned in Luke 10:19 are not insects, but people who oppose God (Ezekiel 2:6).

Additional scriptures: Acts 4:8, 31, 9:17, 13: 9-11, Ephesians 5:17-18.

B. A "helper" or "counselor":

1. "To be with you forever,"¹⁶
2. "Whom the world cannot receive."¹⁷

C. The believer's source of power, released by Spirit-filled living, which requires:

1. Continual faith in God,¹⁸
2. Devotion to God (affection: Philippians 1:8, worship: Psalms 95:6-7),
3. Obedience to God.¹⁹

D. The one who fulfills prophecies of God's Son.²⁰

II. How to open your life that the Holy Spirit may come in:

- A. Be "continually...praising and blessing God,"²¹
- B. Be in prayer for the purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit baptism,²²
- C. Ask the Father for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and do not stop asking until you receive it.²³
Keep in mind that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who:
 1. Obey Him,²⁴
 2. Believe in Christ Jesus,²⁵
 3. Are baptized (immersed) in the name of the Lord Jesus.²⁶

The language of the New Testament is Greek. The Greek phrase, "be filled..." in Ephesians 5:18 has four characteristics:

1. It is a command,
2. The commandment is for continuous action,
3. It is not exclusive, but for "all of you", for every Christian,
4. It is God's work; only God can fill a person with His Spirit.²⁷

III. The evidence of His presence in ones heart:

- A. The reflection of the character of Christ,²⁸
- B. The use of an unknown tongue (that is, a God-given prayer language).²⁹

- Jesus said that being filled with the Spirit would enable one to be His witness.³⁰ When one is filled with the Holy Spirit, one voluntarily lives under the Spirit's control,³¹ and is spiritually able³² to:
 1. Go beyond his ordinary self in reflecting the likeness of Christ,³³
 2. Be of service to Him,³⁴
 3. Be in true Christ-like service (ministry),³⁵
 4. Be ready to give a testimony about Jesus Christ.³⁶

Therefore, a practical goal is to be Christ-like,³⁷ and the only way to do this is to receive the Holy Spirit into ones life.³⁸

Praying in an unknown tongue is the spiritual connection between a Spirit-filled person and God. It is a means (way) of communication. A few supporting scriptures are: Jude 20, Ephesians 6:18, Romans 8:26, Acts 10:44-46a. As one prays in the Spirit, God reveals His will,³⁹ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, one has amazing love,⁴⁰ exceptional wisdom,⁴¹ boundless forgiveness,⁴² incredible endurance,⁴³ and extra-ordinary courage, mercy, and compassion.⁴⁴

In conclusion, the redeemed are expressly commanded to receive the Holy Spirit for the purpose of communicating with God. This in turn leads to maturity and the accomplishing of His purpose. In such a person the Holy Spirit is ever-present to comfort, encourage, guide, and make all things possible to the glory of God.

Amen.

FOOTNOTES FOR *EMPOWERED*

¹Genesis 1:2, Romans 8:9a, - - ²Matthew 3:16, Isaiah 48:16b,, - - ³Luke 2:25-32, - - ⁴Acts 11:1-17, - - ⁵Luke 24:49, - - ⁶John 16:14, - - ⁷John 16:13a, - - ⁸John 16:13b, - - ⁹Ephesians 2:18, Psalms 48:14, - - ¹⁰Acts 19:2, - - ¹¹2 Corinthians 13:5c, Galatians 2:20b, - - ¹²John 1:33b, - - ¹³Acts 4:12, Luke 6:46, - - ¹⁴Acts 2:17, Luke 4:1-2a, - - ¹⁵Luke 1:35, - - ¹⁶John 14:16, - - ¹⁷John 14:17a, - - ¹⁸Mark 11:22, - - ¹⁹Acts 6:29, - - ²⁰Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, - - ²¹Luke 24:53, - - ²²Acts 1:14, - - ²³Luke 11:13, - - ²⁴Acts 5:32, - - ²⁵Galatians 3:22, - - ²⁶Acts 19:1-5, - - ²⁷Acts 8:18-20, - - ²⁸Philippians 1:20, - - ²⁹Acts 2:4, 19:6, - - ³⁰Acts 1:8, Matthew 24:14, - - ³¹1 Corinthians 2:4, James 4:5, - - ³²Ephesians 6:13-18a, - - ³³2 Corinthians 8:3, 1 Peter 4:10-11, - - ³⁴Ephesians 6:6-7, - - ³⁵Acts 20:22-23, - - ³⁶Acts 20:20-21, 1 John 5:8-12, - - ³⁷1 Corinthians 2:16b, - - ³⁸John 20:22, - - ³⁹John 14:26, - - ⁴⁰Matthew 5:44, - - ⁴¹Ephesians 3:10, - - ⁴²Acts 26:18, - - ⁴³Hebrews 12:1, - - ⁴⁴Matthew 9:8

The Work of the Spirit

The early Church was like a seed, bursting into growth, putting down roots and pushing its way up through the earth (through many obstacles) until it took its place among all the other plants (religions of the world). The Church broke forth onto the pages of history, establishing and maintaining itself under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit in three ways: by its spiritual focus, its advancement, and its authority.

The **spiritual focus** of the Church under the direction of the Holy Spirit was, and still is, to worship God.¹ It is led to think in spiritual terms,² and to produce branches (believers).³ Why? It is because Jesus Christ commands the believer to produce fruit.⁴ There are two reasons for the command to bear fruit: first, for the glory of God,⁵ second, for “wages.”⁶

The effectiveness of the Holy Spirit’s work may be seen by the wide-spread results of any one of Jesus’ teachings concerning a vine, a tree, or other parts of nature that He used to demonstrate spiritual truths. For example, Jesus spoke of Himself as the “true vine.”⁷ When looking at a vine, one usually sees only two of its essential parts. The most obvious parts seen are the vine and its branches. However, the least obvious part that is seldom seen is the life-giving “sap” (life blood). Compare this idea to what Jesus said: “I am the true vine,” and: “you [believers] are the branches,”⁸ and “it is the [Holy] Spirit that gives life.”⁹ The Holy Spirit is the fruit-producer.¹⁰ The spiritual man is a conduit through whom the Holy Spirit may bring the natural man from darkness into God’s marvelous redeeming light.¹¹

The Apostle Paul frequently admonished church members to turn away from their old (sinful) nature,¹² and to protect their new nature.¹³ A man’s new nature is born of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Jesus said, “I am the true vine.” “The vine is not the root merely, but **all**—root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruit.”¹ All born-again believers are the “branches,”¹⁵ which illustrates that the redeemed man has a place in the body of Christ. God’s Word to the believer, that is “the branch,” is to bear fruit.¹⁶ The branches are exhorted not to quench the Holy Spirit¹⁷ to avoid punishment.¹⁸

The Church’s **advancement** was, and continues to be, accomplished by co-operative and faithful believers who rely on the Holy Spirit. So, how does one identify a faithful Christian? A faithful Christian is known by his production of good fruit.¹⁹ Jesus also pointed out, a “tree is known by its fruit.”²⁰ Therefore, a maturing Christian may be compared to a tree,²¹ a tree of life.²²

The illustrations taken from nature are confirmed by the Scriptures’ depicting the Apostle Peter, and others, as “fruit-producing trees”: Peter said to them, “Repent...and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”²³ Then, expanding this concept to the other apostles, the people “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship.”²⁴ “And the Lord added to their number day by day those being saved.”²⁵ “Many of those who heard the Word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.”²⁶ “And the Word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.”²⁷ The Spirit told Peter to go to Cornelius’s house,²⁸ and as he began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, the Gentiles,²⁹ just as it had on the Jews.³⁰ Barnabas was sent to Antioch,³¹ “and a large company was added to the Lord.”³² As Christianity spread among the Gentiles, “the Holy Spirit said, ‘set apart for me Barnabas and Saul [Paul] for the work to which I have called them.’”³³ Paul and Barnabas addressed the Jews: “It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have sent you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.’”³⁴

The **authority** of the Church is established by Jesus Christ,³⁵ and by the work of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Many people today minimize the importance and the function of the Holy Spirit. The Lord specifically warned against this: “whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”³⁷ Denying the function of the Holy Spirit may stem from a “darkened... understanding...

due to their hardness of heart,”³⁸ prompting their refusal to rely on Him, thus the admonishments of Galatians 3:2-5, Romans 8:9, Hebrews 10:29-31, and Ephesians 4:30.

The work of the Holy Spirit is primarily a work within the heart, and it is this work that produces change in a life through revelation knowledge.³⁹ Revelation knowledge is “the extraordinary power of man’s mind directed by the Holy Spirit to receive the truth of the Gospel and to grasp in a very short time its main principles”², which result in the rebirth and maturing of a Christian. This concept parallels the apostle Paul’s prayer for the believer, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit [the Holy Spirit] of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him [Jesus Christ], having the eyes of your heart enlightened.”⁴⁰

Paul did not reject the Holy Spirit or His work. Nor did he reject a believer because he demonstrated little evidence of the Holy Spirit’s power at work within him.⁴¹ Rather, he encouraged and admonished him⁴² that he might “bear fruit for God”⁴³ in his “new life of the Spirit.”⁴⁴

The Church, by identifying itself spiritually with God, reveals a division between people, those separated from God by sin,⁴⁵ and those in union with Him because their names are written in the “Lambs book of Life.”⁴⁶ But, how is a believer to recognize real fruit?

Believers may build church buildings, provide air conditioning and many other comforts, and produce programs, activities, and Bible study classes. However, should all of these things, activities, and studies be considered fruit, or, should they just be considered as human conveniences?⁴⁷ The spiritual man is warned not to fall into a self-gratifying state of bondage,⁴⁸ that will diminish his fruit-bearing.⁴⁹ Natural Man may pose as a spiritual man, but he remains carnal⁵⁰ because of his sin.⁵¹

The carnal man enthrones himself⁵² and thinks in worldly terms.⁵³ To illustrate: a planter (a carnal Christian leader) has the seed (the convert), and he likes to keep it in a barn (the church building) where he can hold it for safekeeping. Why would he do this?

The planter may not sow the seed for anyone of several reasons. First, he may like his seeds, and want to keep them because they give him pleasure.⁵⁴ Secondly, he may think that the seeds, that is, the new believers, need his teaching before they are sown (sent out).⁵⁵ They may not be able to reproduce if they are sent out before he thinks they are “ready.” There are pastors, teachers, and disciples who apparently do not have faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to teach the new believer.⁵⁶ These leaders, consciously or unconsciously, hinder the believers by “teaching” them in human terms. The “seeds” eventually become satisfied with being taught, and no longer want to be sown, that is, they no longer yearn to share the Gospel.⁵⁷ Thirdly, it may be for the planter’s (the leader’s) self-preservation, characterized by pride,⁵⁸ his seeking self-gratification,⁵⁹ and deviating from true worship to the worship of images (idols) and empty wind.⁶⁰

Idols may be defined in part as: molten images, that is, objects of worship, such as statues of persons who have died,⁶¹ and “wind,” a form of empty worship like burning incense or candles.⁶² God rejects those who follow these forms of worship rather than that which He requires.⁶³

In conclusion, a maturing Christian can be identified as a disciple of Jesus Christ by his love for other believers,⁶⁴ because he is empowered by the Holy Spirit,⁶⁵ is an active participant in the body of Christ, the Church⁶⁶ and is one through whom the Holy Spirit produces fruit.⁶⁷

Amen.

REFERENCE

1. Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secrets, Philadelphia, Continental Press, 1958, 115.
2. Archdeacon Moule, Half a Century in China, 141, 142.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

¹Hebrews 13:15, Philippians 1:11, Revelation 19:5, - - ²John 17:18, - - ³John 15:2, - - ⁴John 15:16a, Matthew 28:19-20, - - ⁵Romans 7:4, John 15:8, - - ⁶John 4:36, - - ⁷John 15:1, - - ⁸John 15:5a, - - ⁹John 6:63a, - - ¹⁰2 Corinthians 9:10, - - ¹¹Acts 2:37-38, Ezekiel 36:26-27, 1 John 1:5, - - ¹²1 Corinthians 5:7-8, Galatians 4:8-9, Ephesians 4:22-24, - - ¹³1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Galatians 5:16, - - ¹⁴John 3:5-6, - - ¹⁵John 15:5a, - - ¹⁶Matthew 3:8, - - John 15:8, - - ¹⁷1 Thessalonians 5:19, - - ¹⁸Matthew 3:10, John 15:2a, 6, - - ¹⁹Matthew 7:16-20, - - ²⁰Matthew 12:33, - - ²¹Psalms 1:3, - - ²²Proverbs 11:30a, - - ²³Acts 2:38a, 41, - - ²⁴Acts 2:42a, - - ²⁵Acts 2:47b, - - ²⁶Acts 4:4, - - ²⁷Acts 6:7, - - ²⁸Acts 11:12, - - ²⁹Acts 11:14, - - ³⁰Acts 11:15, - - ³¹Acts 11:22 - - ³²Acts 11:24, - - ³³Acts 13:2, - - ³⁴Acts 13:46-47, - - ³⁵Matthew 28:18, Mark 16:15, - - ³⁶Acts 1:8a, Luke 24:49, - - ³⁷Matthew 12:32b, - - ³⁸Ephesians 4:18, - - ³⁹Ephesians 1:17, 3:3, 2 Corinthians 12:1, - - ⁴⁰Ephesians 1:17-18, - - ⁴¹Galatians 3:1-5, 6:1, - - ⁴²1 - - Thessalonians 4:7-8, - - ⁴³Romans 7:4, - - ⁴⁴Romans 7:6, - - ⁴⁵Romans 3:10-11, 7:14, - - ⁴⁶Revelation 13:8, 21:27, - - ⁴⁷1 Peter 1:14-15, - - ⁴⁸Revelation 3:17-18, - - ⁴⁹2 Peter 3:16b, - - ⁵⁰Romans 8:7-8, - - ⁵¹Ephesians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 2:14, - - ⁵²1 Corinthians 3:3, - - ⁵³Luke 16:8, 1 John 2:15, - - ⁵⁴1 Corinthians 15:36, James 5:5, - - ⁵⁵Jeremiah 7:8, - - ⁵⁶John 14:26, Hebrews 8:10-11, - - ⁵⁷Titus 1:16a, - - ⁵⁸2 Corinthians 10:18, - - ⁵⁹Galatians 6:8a, - - ⁶⁰Isaiah 41:29, - - ⁶¹Exodus 20:4-5a, - - ⁶²Hosea 8:7a, - - ⁶³Psalms 51:17, - - ⁶⁴John 13:35, - - ⁶⁵Acts 1:8a, - - ⁶⁶Ephesians 3:20-21, - - ⁶⁷John 4:36.

The Nature of Sin

Original sin was initiated when the man violated the Lord God's command: "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."¹ Later, the man denied responsibility, saying, "the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."² Thus sin, instigated by Satan through the serpent, entered God's creation.³ "Its desire is for you, but you must master it."⁴ Master sin by "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ",⁵ and exercise control over desires that give birth to it.⁶ Satan, the embodiment of sin, rules mankind through sin and death;⁷ sin that clings so closely,⁸ and its appeal is pleasure:⁹ the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.¹⁰

The lust of the flesh involves dishonorable passions: "fornication, impurity, licentiousness [unrestrained immorality], idolatry, drugs, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like."¹¹ "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth."¹² "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature [Satan] rather than the Creator."¹³ This continues to be acted out today by men and women who give up natural relationships with one another for unnatural relationships with members of the same sex.¹⁴ The result is "he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption."¹⁵

The lust of the eyes lures and entices with desire that leads to sin and Death.¹⁶ It attracts "simple ones, scoffers, and fools,"¹⁷ as well as God's men. Even King David¹⁸ and Samson¹⁹ were ensnared by the lust of their eyes,²⁰ when they failed to fear God.²¹ May this serve as a warning to God's children.

The pride of life produces worthless people,²² who are loudmouthed boasters.²³ They have "haughty eyes and a proud heart,"²⁴ which will lead them to their destruction.²⁵

In conclusion, these three categories of sin reveal its lawless nature,²⁶ which seems right to a man.²⁷ Natural man is deceived about the true wages of sin: death.²⁸ The fallen angel Death²⁹ cloaks all human death as being natural, inevitable, and without eternal consequences, but scripture reveals this as a deception.³⁰ Thus disguised, Death executes death through the spread of sin,³¹ which has many snares.³² God's word testifies, "as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."³³

Amen.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE NATURE OF SIN

¹Genesis 2:16-17, - - ²Genesis 3:12, - - ³Genesis 3:13, - - ⁴Genesis 4:7, - - ⁵Romans 3:22a, - - ⁶James 1:15, - - ⁷Romans 5:12, - - ⁸Hebrews 12:1, - - ⁹Hebrews 11:25, - - ¹⁰1 John 2:16, - - ¹¹Galatians 5:19-21a, - - ¹²Romans 1:18, - - ¹³Romans 1:24-25, - - ¹⁴Romans 1:26-27, - - ¹⁵Galatians 6:8a, - - ¹⁶James 1:14-15, - - ¹⁷Proverbs 1:22, - - ¹⁸2 Samuel 11:2-4a, - - ¹⁹Judges 16:1, 4, - - ²⁰Matthew 5:28, - - ²¹Romans 13:18, Psalms 36:1, - - ²²Proverbs 6:12-14, 17-19, - - ²³Jude 16, - - ²⁴Proverbs 21:4, - - ²⁵Proverbs 16:18, - - ²⁶1 John 3:4, - - ²⁷Proverbs 14:12, - - ²⁸1 Corinthians 15:56, Romans 6:23a, - - ²⁹Job 28:22, - - ³⁰Revelation 20:14-15, - - ³¹Romans 12:5, - - ³²Psalms 18:5, - - ³³Revelation 21:8.

God's Watchman

The theme “watch” runs throughout the Old and New Testaments as a reminder against sin. When a watchman abandons God’s instruction to be careful, the body of believers, the “church”, is exposed to severe consequences. God has given His people a watchful word: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses” with the admonishment to choose life,¹ which is linked to “blood”, the life of the flesh.²

During the **Old Testament period**, God’s chosen watchmen were strictly instructed regarding the crucial importance of their watch.³ They were to alert God’s people of any impending danger by sounding an alarm.⁴ If a watchman did not sound an alarm and one person under his charge perished, “his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand.”⁵

During His ministry Jesus, as the Chief watchman before God, said, “I lost not one.”⁶ Will present-day Church watchmen be able to say the same? Are Church leaders (Watchmen) “keeping faithful watch over your souls,”⁷ “warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that [they] may present [to God] every man mature in Christ?”⁸ Certainly not; instead, many church leaders are “hirelings,”⁹ and they have driven many sheep away from the fold.¹⁰ These leaders are without understanding,¹¹ and the Church (the body of believers) has reason for alarm because the burning desire to represent the Spirit of Christ in the world is all but put out. Although there are many believers within the Church who fervently uphold the true Christian Spirit, generally churches exhibit and promote an air of religion and worldliness that is un-Christ-like.

The Lord Jesus Himself raised an alarm for the Church. In Revelation He gave five warnings to Church members and leaders (Watchmen) that are applicable for reinstatement into His Church fellowship:

1. Repent for “you have abandoned the love you had at first,”¹²
2. Repent, for allowing false beliefs to be present in the Church,¹³ which means repentance for any teaching which in part or totally deviates from or distorts the Word of God especially pertaining to the following issues:
 - a. God “created the heavens,”¹⁴ He “is not a man;”¹⁵ He “is a devouring fire, a jealous God;”¹⁶ He “is greater than man;”¹⁷ He “is exalted in His power...who can say [to Him], ‘Thou hast done wrong?’”¹⁸ He “is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;”¹⁹ He “is the king of all the earth;”²⁰ He is Spirit²¹ He is faithful;²² He “will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus;”²³ He “is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything;”²⁴ He is love.²⁵
 - b. Father God is the father of Jesus Christ;²⁶ He loves the Son;²⁷ He is still working;”²⁸ He raises the dead and gives them life;²⁹ He is the vinedresser.³⁰
 - c. Jesus Christ was borne³¹ of a virgin,³² He is the “Word”;³³ He established a new covenant which replaces the old covenant;³⁴ He is the Resurrection;³⁵ He will come again;³⁶ He and the Father are one;³⁷ He only does “what He sees the Father doing.”³⁸
 - d. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth;³⁹ He will guide you into all truth. He will declare to you the things that are to come;⁴⁰ He will teach you all things.⁴¹ The admonishment is to be filled with the Spirit,⁴² the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead, dwelling in you, will also give life to our mortal body.⁴³
 - e. Sin is all wrongdoing;⁴⁴ all have sinned;⁴⁵ whatever does not proceed from faith is sin;⁴⁶ if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,⁴⁷ and make Him a liar.⁴⁸ Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.⁴⁹
 - f. Redemption is by God’s grace;⁵⁰ through Jesus Christ we may obtain eternal redemption⁵¹ by the blood of His cross;⁵² which has freed us from our sins,⁵³ and assures us of the forgiveness of our trespasses.⁵⁴
 - g. Salvation comes by faith “from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ;”⁵⁵ for everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved;⁵⁶ “if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the

dead, you will be saved;”⁵⁷ “he that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the...only begotten Son of God;”⁵⁸ “but as many as receive Him, to them who believe in His name, He [gives] power to become children of God;”⁵⁹ “for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God—not of works, lest any man should boast.”⁶⁰

- h. Retribution, that is, well-deserved punishment for the worthless. At the time of their punishment they shall perish.⁶¹ “They will go away into eternal punishment;”⁶² this is the second death, the lake of fire; “and if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he [will be] thrown into the lake of fire,”⁶³ “for the wages of sin is death.”⁶⁴
- i. Religion, “holding the form of Religion, but denying the power of it.”⁶⁵ For instance, the most popular “Christian Religions” in the world today that embrace this error are the: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox (Greek), Christian Science, Spiritualist, Jehovah Witnesses, Armstrong, Mormon, Yoga, and Protestant. A noteworthy illustration of this is the “Force of Faith” movement: say it, do it, receive it, tell it, which demotes God and Christ to the deification of man and Satan.¹

Each born-again believer has the responsibility of being a “Watchman.”⁶⁶ The warnings apply to everyone in the body of Christ,⁶⁷ not just to the leaders.⁶⁸

God identifies all people as being in one of two groups; the redeemed (Watchmen) and those not redeemed:

- Those being saved,⁶⁹ and those who will perish.⁷⁰
- Those who are coming to the light, or who are in the light,⁷¹ and those who will remain in darkness, or are returning to it from the light.⁷²
- Those who are counted as sheep (those who have repented), and those who are goats (those who refuse to repent).⁷³
- Those who are “wheat”, and those who are “chaff.”⁷⁴
- Those who see, and those who are blind.⁷⁵
- Those who praise God,⁷⁶ and those who curse God.⁷⁷
- Those who are born of the Spirit, and those who are born of the flesh.⁷⁸

It is the Lord Jesus who reveals the Father to those whom He chooses,⁷⁹ and those given to Him by the Father will come to Him.⁸⁰

The Watchman’s responsibility is to speak to the unredeemed in the name of the Lord,⁸¹ to speak the Word of God as the Holy Spirit directs.⁸² He must do this because, “as it is written, ‘no one understands, no one seeks for God.’”⁸³ “For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all,”⁸⁴ as seen among those who have repented for their sin. God began reconciling the world to Himself in Christ Jesus.⁸⁵ Those who believe in His name receive power to become His children,⁸⁶ and their names are written in the Book of Life.⁸⁷ Their steps are ordered by the Lord,⁸⁸ and His orders are delivered to them by the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹

The Holy Spirit is the one who initiates the believer’s contact with the lost, and directs the discourse,⁹⁰ bringing the hearer speedily and directly to a point of decision.⁹¹ In the case of those who reject the Watchman’s invitation, the Watchman must advise them that they are rejecting God,⁹² and then warn them of the consequences of their rejection.⁹³

Obedient Watchmen will not be held responsible for the unredeemed, those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life,⁹⁴ whose fate is the second death (in contrast to natural or temporal death).⁹⁵ The second death is described in part as a “lake that burns with fire and sulfur.”⁹⁶ The decision against them is made by the “Lord God, the Almighty,”⁹⁷ who “will render to every man according to his works.”⁹⁸ They will be judged⁹⁹ under the New Covenant.¹⁰⁰

In conclusion, a Watchman equipped with the Holy Spirit¹⁰¹ is admonished to “Watch.”¹⁰² If he does not, hear the warnings of Jesus Christ: “I will remove your lamp stand [and you too] from your place,”¹⁰³ “I will come to you soon and war against [you] with the sword of My mouth,”¹⁰⁴ I will throw you into

great tribulation,¹⁰⁵ I'll come upon you like a thief,¹⁰⁶ "so be zealous and repent,"¹⁰⁷ and finally, "he [the Watchman] who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."¹⁰⁸

Amen.

Reference

1. Hank Hanegraaff, Christianity in Crisis with Study Guide, Eugene Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, copyright 1997.

FOOTNOTES FOR GOD'S WATCHMAN

¹Deuteronomy 30:19, - - ²Leviticus 17:11, - - ³Ezekiel 3:18, - - ⁴Joel 2:1, - - ⁵Ezekiel 33:6, - - ⁶John 17:12, 18:9, - -
⁷Hebrews 13:17a, - - ⁸Colossians 1:28, - - ⁹John 10:12-13, - - ¹⁰Jeremiah 23:1, - - ¹¹Isaiah 56:10-11, - - ¹²Revelation
2:4, - - ¹³Revelation 3:20, - - ¹⁴Genesis 1:1, - - ¹⁵Numbers 23:19, - - ¹⁶Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29, - - ¹⁷Job
3:12, - - ¹⁸Job 36:23, - - ¹⁹Psalms 46:1, - - ²⁰Psalms 47:7a, - - ²¹John 4:24, - - ²²1 Corinthians 1:9, - - ²³Philippians
4:19, - - ²⁴1 John 3:20, - - ²⁵1 John 4:8b, - - ²⁶Matthew 3:17, - - ²⁷John 3:35, 5:20, - - ²⁸John 5:17, - - ²⁹John 5:21, -
- ³⁰John 15:1, - - ³¹Isaiah 9:6, - - ³²Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25, - - ³³John 1:1-5, 14, - - ³⁴Luke 22:20, - -
³⁵1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, Romans 1:4, - - ³⁶Acts 1:11, John 14:3, - - ³⁷John 10:30, - - ³⁸John 5:19, - - ³⁹John 15:26, -
- ⁴⁰John 16:13, - - ⁴¹John 14:26, - - ⁴²Ephesians 5:18, - - ⁴³Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 3:16, - - ⁴⁴1 John 5:17, - -
⁴⁵Romans 3:23, - - ⁴⁶Romans 14:23b, - - ⁴⁷1 John 1:8, - - ⁴⁸1 John 1:10, - - ⁴⁹James 4:17, - - ⁵⁰Romans 3:14, - -
⁵¹Hebrews 9:12, - - ⁵²Colossians 1:20, - - ⁵³Revelation 1:5b, - - ⁵⁴Ephesians 1:7, - - ⁵⁵Romans 10:17, - - ⁵⁶Romans
10:13, - - ⁵⁷Romans 10:9-10, - - ⁵⁸John 3:18, - - ⁵⁹John 1:12, - - ⁶⁰Ephesians 2:8-9, - - ⁶¹Jeremiah 10:15, - -
⁶²Matthew 25:46a, - - ⁶³Revelation 20:15, - - ⁶⁴Romans 6:23a, - - ⁶⁵2 Timothy 3:5, - - ⁶⁶1 John 3:16, - -
⁶⁷1 Corinthians 9:22-23, 1 Timothy 4:16, Luke 15:4, - - ⁶⁸Ezekiel 3:18, - - ⁶⁹Matthew 10:22, - - ⁷⁰Luke 13:3, - -
⁷¹Matthew 4:16, - - ⁷²Matthew 6:23b, 2 Peter 2:21-22, - - ⁷³Matthew 25:33, - - ⁷⁴Matthew 3:12, - - ⁷⁵John 9:39, - -
⁷⁶Hebrews 13:15, - - ⁷⁷Isaiah 8:21-22, - - ⁷⁸John 3:6, - - ⁷⁹Matthew 11:27, - - ⁸⁰John 6:37, - - ⁸¹John 20:21,
- - ⁸²Acts 2:33, - - ⁸³Romans 3:11, - - ⁸⁴Romans 11:32, - - ⁸⁵2 Corinthians 5:19, - - ⁸⁶John 1:12, - - ⁸⁷Philippians 4:3, -
- ⁸⁸Psalms 37:23, Proverbs 20:24a, - - ⁸⁹John 16:13, - - ⁹⁰Acts 10:19-33, 20:23, 2 Corinthians 9:10, - -
⁹¹2 Corinthians 2b, - - ⁹²Luke 10:16, - - ⁹³Acts 18:6a-b, Matthew 10:14, - - ⁹⁴Revelation 13:8, - - ⁹⁵Revelation 2:11b, -
- ⁹⁶Revelation 21:8, - - ⁹⁷Revelation 16:7, - - ⁹⁸Romans 2:6, 2 Timothy 4:14, Revelation 20:13, - - ⁹⁹Revelation
20:12a, c, - - ¹⁰⁰Matthew 26:28, - - ¹⁰¹Hebrews 13:21, - - ¹⁰²Mark 13:37, Luke 21:36, - - ¹⁰³Revelation 2:5, - -
¹⁰⁴Revelation 2:16, - - ¹⁰⁵Revelation 2:22a, - - ¹⁰⁶Revelation 3:3b, - - ¹⁰⁷Revelation 3:19, - - ¹⁰⁸Revelation 3:22.

See

God has spoken: "See."¹ Man may "see" in any of three ways: with his physical eye, with his understanding and within his spirit. The three concepts will be illustrated from the Word of God.

1. Seeing with the eyes: the prophet Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him...?"¹ "Do not look on his appearance."² Joseph's master's wife cast her eyes upon him.⁴ On seeing Ruth Boaz asked, "Whose maiden is this?"⁵ The Lord said to Abram, "Lift up your eye...the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants for ever."⁶ In the New Testament, Mary stood weeping at the tomb; "she stooped to look in, and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain."⁷ She turned around and saw Jesus.⁸
2. Seeing with the understanding is "seeing" the meaning of something, as illustrated by the following scriptures: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"⁹ "Look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug."¹⁰ A psalmist adds, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."¹¹ Another psalmist said, "the fear of the Lord is wisdom."¹² And another, "the unfolding of your word gives light."¹³ "I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of years."¹⁴
3. Seeing within the spirit by revelation knowledge is to suddenly know something that was hidden. The supporting scripture for this concept is "surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing His secret to his servants the Prophets."¹⁵ There are four ways in which this occurs: by the written or spoken word, by dream, by vision, or by one's eye of spiritual understanding.
 - a. **By the written or spoken word:** "the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall."¹⁶ God gave Moses "two tablets of the covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God."¹⁷ The Apostle John wrote what he saw in a book and sent it to the seven churches in Asia Minor.¹⁸ "I [John] saw in the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne a scroll, written within and on the back sealed with seven seals."¹⁹ Then John heard, "go take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."²⁰ Taken from the gospel of Luke one hears, "He spoke by the mouth of His Holy Prophets."²¹ Then Ezekiel heard Him say, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you."²² Also, the word of the Lord came to Joel, "hear this, you aged men, give ear, all inhabitants of the land."²³ "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says 'Today when you hear his voice do not harden your hearts'"²⁴
 - b. **By dream,** that is, by things seen while sleeping: "once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more."²⁵ Joseph said to his brothers, "listen to this dream that I dreamed."²⁶ Joseph had another dream.²⁷ One night they both dreamed, the cupbearer and the baker;²⁸ the baker said, "I also had a dream."²⁹ "After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed;"³⁰ "and Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I have had a dream;'"³¹ "then Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'the dreams of Pharaoh are one.'"³² "The mystery of the dream was revealed by Daniel."³³ "But as [Joseph] considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream."³⁴ The wise men, being warned in a dream, departed another way,³⁵ "an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream."³⁶ Joseph, being warned in a dream, withdrew to the district of Galilee.³⁷
 - c. **By vision,** that is, things seen as in a dream while one is awake: "after these things the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision."³⁸ "The vision of Isaiah;"³⁹ "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne."⁴⁰ Ezekiel saw visions of God.⁴¹ The Prophet Daniel said, "a vision appeared to me."⁴² "Write the vision, make it plain."⁴³ "Jesus commanded them 'Tell no one

the vision.”⁴⁴ “The Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’”⁴⁵ Peter said, “I saw a vision.”⁴⁶ The Apostle Paul said that he “was not disobedient to the Heavenly vision.”⁴⁷

Many people today accept the fact of Biblical visions, but deny the validity of present-day visions. They are from God, however, and should not be ridiculed.⁴⁸

- d. **By the eyes of spiritual understanding:** the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have given into your hand Jericho.”⁴⁹ “The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me, His word is upon my tongue.”⁵⁰ “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”⁵¹ “And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.”⁵² “For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.”⁵³ “The Holy Spirit will teach you all things.”⁵⁴ “For the Spirit searches everything.”⁵⁵ “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit.”⁵⁶ “It came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁷ The Apostle Paul said that he went up to Jerusalem because of revelation knowledge.⁵⁸ Also, Paul stated; “how the mystery was made known to me, by revelation.”⁵⁹ “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘come.’”⁶⁰

In conclusion, the three ways of seeing (with one’s eyes, with understanding, and in one’s Spirit) are embodied in the word “See”. It is God’s will that His creation “see” His true nature: His love, seen in redemption, His righteousness, seen in Jesus’ life, and His grace, seen in the new birth.

Amen.

FOOTNOTES FOR SEE

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- ¹Joshua 6:2, - - ²1 Samuel 10:24a, - - ³1 Samuel 16:7, - - ⁴Genesis 39:7 - - ⁵Ruth 2:5, - - ⁶Genesis 13:14-15, - - ⁷John 20:11-12, - - ⁸John 20:14, - - ⁹Matthew 7:3, - - ¹⁰Isaiah 51:1-2, - - ¹¹Psalms 118:22-23, - - ¹²Psalms 111:10, - - ¹³Psalms 119:130, - - ¹⁴Daniel 9:2, - - ¹⁵Amos 3:7, - - ¹⁶Daniel 5:5, - - ⁷Exodus 31:18, - - ¹⁸Revelation 11:1, - - ¹⁹Revelation 5:1, - - ²⁰Revelation 10:8, - - ²¹Luke 1:70, - - ²²Ezekiel 2:1, - - ²³Joel 1:1-2, - - ²⁴Hebrews 3:7-8, - - ²⁵Genesis 37:5, - - ²⁶Genesis 37:6, - - ²⁷Genesis 37:9, - - ²⁸Genesis 40:5, - - ²⁹Genesis 40:16, - - ³⁰Genesis 41:1, - - ³¹Genesis 41:15, - - ³²Genesis 41:25, - - ³³Daniel 2:28b, - - ³⁴Mathew 1:20, - - ³⁵Matthew 2:12, - - ³⁶Matthew 2:13, - - ³⁷Matthew 2:22, - - ³⁸Genesis 15:1, - - ³⁹Isaiah 1:1, - - ⁴⁰Isaiah 6:1, - - ⁴¹Ezekiel 1:1, - - ⁴²Daniel 8:2, - - ⁴³Habakkuk 2:2, - - ⁴⁴Matthew 17:9, - - ⁴⁵Acts 9:10, - - ⁴⁶Acts 11:5, - - ⁴⁷Acts 26:19, - - ⁴⁸Joel 2:28, - - ⁴⁹Joshua 6:2 - - ⁵⁰2 Samuel 23:2 - - ⁵¹Matthew 3:11b, - - ⁵²Luke 2:26, - - ⁵³Matthew 16:17 - - ⁵⁴John 14:26, - - ⁵⁵1 Corinthians 2:10b, - - ⁵⁶1 Corinthians 12:7, - - ⁵⁷Galatians 1:12, - - ⁵⁸Galatians 1:1-2, - - ⁵⁹Ephesians 3:3, - - ⁶⁰Revelation 22:17.

Visions

God was far from my thoughts that afternoon, but as I approached the small chapel my attention was drawn to it. Although I had not given it a thought during the months I had walked by it, suddenly I had an intense awareness of God's presence there. Yet, at the same time, a presence of great strength began to resist God, pulling my thoughts in the opposite direction. Then I began to hear voices within myself, clarifying the conflict. The voice of God was saying, "come!" The other voice was demanding that I stay with him. In addition to their voices, my own thoughts were swirling around in my head. I wanted to go to God, but there was a desire to remain as I was. In front of the chapel, the struggle in me reached the breaking point: accept God's call or reject it. I knew that I must make a choice. I sensed that God was offering me something beyond my human understanding. There also was an awareness of light, but not just light: the light was life itself and my heart hungered for it. Although there was a tremendous uncertainty involved in accepting it, because the other voice was not silent---it was appealing to every sinful passion that flowed in my veins---I spoke to God, saying, "if You are in there, You had better come out and get me, or I'm going by".

That arrogance before a holy and almighty God was laced with fear and guilt about my despicable life-style. I had spoken my heart as had the thief crucified next to Jesus.¹ Immediately, I felt a hand on my right shoulder. I turned, but no one was there. As I completed the turn, I knew that God had entered my life; I was changed. Before, I had been spiritually dead, now I was alive to Him. Praise God, He looked on my heart, dismissed the words spoken in self-righteous pride, and forgave my sin.

I began to read the New Testament, and my friends saw a change in me. The Spirit of Christ had begun His work, and before long, I experienced a day vision. I did not identify it immediately as being from God, but as I pondered it, I began to understand that I was to share His gospel in Asia.

Through the years, having the Bible in hand or close at hand, and His Word in my heart, has empowered me to resist Satan, the Lord's archenemy, on numerous occasions. The "world" had its day in my life, and it is only by His power, and because I cast myself upon His mercy, that He has upheld me.² It is to His honor and glory that I am able to serve Him with fear and trembling, fear meaning awe, and trembling because of my humanity.

God revealed His purpose for me over a period of time, showing me parts, as of a puzzle, through His written word, by visions, and from confirming words of knowledge from spirit-filled believers. The primary focus of God's work for me is China. I am in prayer for, and eagerly seeking, those who hold a similar vision.

A part of the purpose for my life is to "bring the people of China up to God", which is a confirming prophecy from a Chinese Christian brother in China who did not personally know me at the time.

One vision concerning China was of a man on his knees in the middle of a courtyard, with his arms held stretched out, while another man beat him with a whip or rod (I do not remember which) in the presence of many on-lookers. As I watched, I was asked if I would take his suffering. I said that I would. As I stretched my arms out, I prayed that the man would not cry out or renounce our Lord. Those beating him finally threw him down and made some charge to the on-lookers, and then left. While I prayed, and watched, as far as I could tell, he did not cry out or renounce the Lord. The vision was repeated a short time later, and I again prayed, as before. Months later, a member of my church handed me a copy of a China Christian magazine. She said that God had told her to give it to me. As I read through it, I saw an article with a picture of the man in the vision. The article said that on several occasions he had been publicly persecuted for his faith, but had not cried out or renounced the Lord. Somehow the picture had been taken, and published, and finally it had reached me. I concluded that it

was a confirmation of the validity of the visions and I perceived that I was being prepared for a future work in China.

Another vision concerning China pictured the penetration of the country by a spearhead entering from the coastline somewhere south of Shanghai. The spearhead moved west-northwest to a point in the vicinity of the city of Jiayuguan. As the head moved westward, it stretched over the country sweeping north and south. The area included roughly coincides with the territorial limits of the Ming Dynasty era (1368-1644) (see map at the conclusion of this writing). The second part of the vision, immediately following the first, pictured something like a waterfall, but the water I saw streaming down was blood-red.

Another part of what God has revealed to me concerns Cuba. I had a dream about the repentance, new birth, and baptism of the president of that country. In the dream various member of his cabinet were also baptized. Cuba, like a blossoming flower in a wasteland, will burst forth, sending its sweet fragrance of life throughout the earth, reaching into the deep darkness, to bring forth repentance unto life everlasting.

I ministered in Cuba, after the dream, and was planning to go again. All the necessary documents were in place when I was informed that I could not get a seat on the weekly flight. God had changed my plan to His: he reminded me of a brief conversation that I had had with a pastor from Guatemala, who had extended an open invitation to visit his church. I immediately called him and made arrangements to leave on the earliest flight. The Lord worked in a marvelous way. I perceived that Guatemalan Christians would spread the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Central, and South America. Since then I have come to understand that God wants "Secrets of the Revelation of Jesus Christ" and the "Twelve Secrets of Life" to be distributed to the Church throughout Latin America.

From reading and listening to men of God, I have observed a recurring theme: someone needs to rise up and usher in the "presence of God". There necessarily follows a four part question, who, when, where, and how:

- I. **"Who":** God, and not man, will make the choice. Men raised up by Him in every country, at about the same time, under the power of the Holy Spirit will be agents in God's release of "the fountain of living water."³ The fountain is identified as the "Lord", and the living water is His salvation message without payment."⁴ "In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh."⁵ The means as confirmed by, "I [John] saw [an] angel flying in mid-heaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people."⁶
- II. **"When":** in God's timing (not that of man), by the "signs" of the present time, probably very soon. At the appointed time "the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest."⁷ "For there is hope for a tree [Jesus Christ], if it be cut down [His death], that it will sprout again [His resurrection], and that its shoots [the Church and Israel] will not cease. Though its root [source of life] grow old in the earth [though interest wither], and its stump die in the ground [the "dead stump" can be seen in church groups that once had the Spirit burning in their midst, but are now dead or dying; the Church without the Holy Spirit is indistinguishable from the world], yet at the scent of water [Christ's second coming] it will bud and put forth branches [in every nation and tribe and tongue and people] like a young plant" [a rapid burst of growth throughout the earth].⁸ Now is the time to "sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of steadfast love; break up the fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that He may come and rain salvation upon you."⁹ So "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water."¹⁰

- III. **“Where”**: specific places, that is, former and present-day standing wells of salvation, prepared by God, which will be revealed to His chosen ones. “Standing wells” are places where God revealed His redeeming presence through chosen men and women, to enlighten large numbers of people. Those standing wells will become “Artesian wells”¹, uncapped by God Himself, where “faithfulness [in obedient servants] will spring up from the ground, and righteousness [Jesus Christ] will look down from the sky.”¹¹ “For I will pour water [the Word of salvation] on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground.”¹² Then “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”¹³
- IV. **“How”**: by God’s Holy Spirit. “And when He comes, He will convince the [whole] world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”¹⁴ “So that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He makes His sun [Jesus] rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain [the Holy Spirit] on the just and on the unjust.”¹⁵ “Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness [the Spirit of Christ]; let the earth open [its artesian wells], that salvation may sprout forth, and let it cause righteousness to spring up also; I the Lord have created it.”¹⁶ “Saying to the prisoners, ‘come forth’, to those who are in darkness, ‘appear.’”¹⁷ Thus, “let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; His going forth is sure as the dawn; He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”¹⁸ “Be glad, O sons of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord, your God; for He has given the early rain for your vindication, He has poured down for you abundant rain, the early [correction, contrition, and conversion for righteousness] and the latter rain [receiving the grace of Christ, bringing forth fruit, and fullness of preparation ripe for harvest], as before,”¹⁹ and “the glory of God will cover the earth,”²⁰ then “the whole earth [will be] full of His glory.”²¹ “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this,”²² and it will be “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”²³ Men chosen by God, prepared by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the world vision will respond, “here am I! Send me.”²⁴

These chosen men will be enlightened, as was Isaiah, commissioned by God, and directed by the Holy Spirit.²⁵ The Lord declared to him (and to all mankind) a world vision, “draw near, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there.”²⁶ Jesus wanted men to be submissive to God, even as He Himself was.²⁷ His directive to His disciples was, “as the Father has sent Me, even so I send you,”²⁸ also declaring before the Father, “as You did send Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”²⁹ Then, He affirms His directive, “behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”³⁰ Following this pattern, appointed men who hold the world vision, told by the Holy Spirit of things to come,³¹ will evangelize the world. They will be used by God as were those who, “moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God.”³² Likewise, when He uncaps the artesian wells (fountains of living waters), those appointed will proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, “behold, I send My messenger [the Holy Spirit] to prepare the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple.”³³ The one who prepared the way for His first coming was the Holy Spirit, working through John the Baptist.³⁴ The one sent to prepare the way for His second coming is again the Holy Spirit, working through His faithful chosen servants.³⁵ His sudden coming³⁶ to His temple [each believer],³⁷ the Church [the body of believers],³⁸ will usher in the end of the age.³⁹

Thus, before the end of the age, the Holy Spirit will reveal the world vision to the Father’s chosen disciples, a direct result of the prayer of the Church, “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”⁴⁰ Many disciples have answered His call to go into the harvest fields of the world in preparation for the coming close of the

age. So, “the saying holds true, ‘one sows, and another reaps.’ I sent you [a chosen one] to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”⁴¹

China’s standing well, dug by Hudson Taylor (beginning: 1854), will, among others, when uncapped by God, become an artesian well. Their release will be explosive, and the Holy Spirit will cover the land as described above. His message will touch every heart, some to acceptance and thus to son-ship in God. It will occur in a moment of time, as lightening passing through the darkness, separating those who choose life⁴² from those who choose death by rejecting life.⁴³ This scene will be repeated throughout the earth sometime during the 70th week of Daniel’s prophetic vision (probably in the early 21st century).

The second part of the China vision reveals the unfolding of further prophecies to be fulfilled in China (and throughout the earth) during Daniel’s 70th week:

- “The oracle concerning the valley of vision.”⁴⁴
- “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.”⁴⁵
- “A stern vision is told to me; the plunder plunders, and the destroyer destroys.”⁴⁶ “The destroyer will come upon every city, and no city shall escape.”⁴⁷
- “I [John] saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the Word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image, and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.”⁴⁸
- “Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith in Jesus.”⁴⁹
- “For the Lord God of hosts will have a day of tumult and trampling, and confusion in the valley of vision; a battering down of walls and a shouting to the mountains.”⁵⁰ Other related scriptures: Revelation 14:7, 19:15, Jeremiah 10:21, 4:19-20, Matthew 5:13, Malachi 4:3, Isaiah 63:3, and Ezekiel 7:16.
- “Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets.”⁵¹

“At some point the Chinese Communist Party may [will] become alarmed at the threat to Beijing’s authority and seek to reverse the devolution [Christianity] at whatever economic cost, in order to save its own political skin.”² I believe this is the explanation of the red streaming down in the vision.

In conclusion, the Lord Jesus’ return to the earth will be preceded by far-reaching events, not only shaking the natural physical order of things, but also the world order as established by man. This two-fold shaking is currently being felt and seen in every realm of human existence (disease, natural disasters, wars, and rumors of wars). “The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power, and with pretended signs and wonders and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”⁵² Therefore, “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 perdition.”⁵³ “When people say, ‘there is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be [for those who have rejected Jesus Christ] no escape.”⁵⁴ The prophet Habakkuk prophesied “for there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it, it will

surely come, it will not delay.”⁵⁵ Habakkuk’s prophecy was revealed in “The Revelation to John”, and the fulfillment of this prophecy is at hand.

Amen and amen.

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1. Tommy Tenney, The God Chasers; Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., Shippensburg, PA, 17257-0310, pp. 107-108.
2. Ross Terrill, The New Chinese Empire; Basic Books; Perseus Books Group, New York, NY, 10016-8810, pp. 24.

FOOTNOTES FOR VISIONS

¹Luke 23:42, - - ²1 Peter 1:5, - - ³Jeremiah 17:13b - - ⁴Revelation 21:6c, - - ⁵Acts 2:17, - - ⁶Revelation 14:6, - - ⁷Isaiah 32:15, - - ⁸Job 14:7-9, - - ⁹Hosea 10:12, - - ¹⁰Revelation 14:7, - - ¹¹Psalms 85:11, - - ¹²Isaiah 44:3a, - - ¹³Habakkuk 2:14, Isaiah 11:9b, - - ¹⁴John 16:8, - - ¹⁵Matthew 5:45, - - ¹⁶Isaiah 45:8, - - ¹⁷Isaiah 49:9a, - - ¹⁸Hosea 6:3, - - ¹⁹Zechariah 3:1, Joel 2:23, - - ²⁰Numbers 14:21, - - ²¹Isaiah 6:3, - - ²²Isaiah 7:9b, - - ²³Zechariah 4:6b, - - ²⁴Isaiah 6:8b, - - ²⁵Isaiah 48:16c, - - ²⁶Isaiah 48:16a, - - ²⁷Matthew 26:39, - - ²⁸John 20:21b, - - ²⁹John 17:18, - - ³⁰Matthew 10:16, - - ³¹John 16:13b, - - ³²2 Peter 1:21, - - ³³Malachi 3:1a - - ³⁴Matthew 3:1-3, Luke 1:17, - - ³⁵Acts 1:8, - - ³⁶1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10, - - ³⁷1 Corinthians 3:16, - - ³⁸Ephesians 5:30, - - ³⁹Matthew 13:39b, - - ⁴⁰Matthew 9:37-38, - - ⁴¹John 4:37-38, - - ⁴²Acts 2:21, - - ⁴³Isaiah 53:3a, - - ⁴⁴Isaiah 22:1a, - - ⁴⁵Joel 3:14, - - ⁴⁶Isaiah 21:2, - - ⁴⁷Jeremiah 48:8a, - - ⁴⁸Revelation 20:4b, - - ⁴⁹Revelation 14:12, - - ⁵⁰Isaiah 22:5, - - ⁵¹Amos 3:7, - - ⁵²2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, - - ⁵³2 Thessalonians 2:3, - - ⁵⁴1 Thessalonians 5:3, - - ⁵⁵Habakkuk 2:3.

Ming Dynasty Map

