

Luke

Chapter 1

35 And the angel said to her the Holy Spirit¹ shall come upon you and the power and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you and therefore the holy child shall be called the Son of God.

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75- In holiness² and righteousness in His sight all the days of our lives.

¹ The Holy Spirit has always served a central roll in everything that God has done. From the beginning we read of His roll as the one who moved upon the face of the waters to bring forth that which the Word of God announced (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 104:30). Now at this time the Holy Spirit overshadows a young virgin named Mary so that the Word might be made flesh. The Holy Spirit who is equated with the Most High in this verse brings forth the greatest miracle of creation, Christ Jesus!

We must recognize that the Holy Ghost is the overseer of the church (Acts 20:28; John 14:26; 16:11-15; Acts 13:2, 4; 15:28; 16:6). He is the One that the Father and Christ Jesus sent to lead us to help us and to teach us to do the things that pleases God. Who is the Holy Ghost and how do we begin to understand His work? It was by the Holy Ghost that David wrote the Psalms (Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16). It was by the Holy Ghost that Isaiah prophesied (Acts 28:25). It was by the Holy Ghost that the scripture were brought forth (2Peter 1:21). It was by the Holy Ghost that men like Zachariah prophesied (Luke 1:67). It is by the Holy Ghost that men now prophesy (Acts 2:17; 1 Cor 12:10; 14:5,24,31). It was by the Holy Ghost that Jesus gave commands (Acts 1:2). It was by the Holy Ghost that Jesus was conceived (Luke 1:35). It was with the Holy Ghost that Jesus was anointed (Acts 10:38). It is with the Holy Ghost that Jesus will baptize (Matthew 3:11). It was by the Holy Ghost that demons had to flee (Matthew 12:28). It is by the Holy Ghost that miracles will work (Galatians 3:5). It is by the Holy Ghost that we must be born again (John 3:5-6). It is by the Holy Ghost that we receive power from on High (Acts 1:8). It is by the Holy Ghost that we are sanctified (Romans 15:16, 1Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Cor 6:11). It is the Holy Ghost that teaches us how to speak (1 Cor 2:13). The Holy Ghost is the promise of the Father (Acts 2:33; Luke 24:48). When men refuse to believe, it is the Holy Ghost that they resist (Acts 7:51) Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor 6:19). The gospel must be preached in power and in the Holy Ghost (1 Thess 1:5). We keep those good things given to us by the Holy Ghost that dwells in us (2 Tim 1:14). Jesus now dwells in us by the Holy Ghost which He has given us (1John 3:24).

² The Greek word for holiness (hosiotes), that is used here and in Ephesians 4:24 has a special meaning. In classical Greek the word 'hosia' denotes the everlasting principles of right" (Word Study in the New Testament). It is therefore correct to assume then that the Greek word used here for holiness concerns the eternal laws of God. The meaning of "this proper behavior" concerning the eternal laws of God would extend beyond what would be acceptable for a period of time such as the Law of Moses or another covenant to facilitate yet another step towards the ultimate desire of God but would be the very expression of that behavior. There are some who argue that this word (hosiotes) should be translated 'purity' or 'perfection' (A Handbook of the Gospel of Luke Reiling, J., & Swellengrebel, J. L. (1993], c1971). Could it be that there exist in everyone who has been born of the Spirit an untapped divine ability to be everything that God intended men to be when He first created them in His likeness and image? Is it possible that because we have not been willing to believe that we can live in this blessed realm, that we have been deceived into accepting a lifestyle far less than what God purposed for us in redemption? By the Holy Spirit Zacharias prophesied concerning the age of the Messiah, an age which has no end. The age of the Kingdom and reign of the Messiah began 2000 years ago and of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7; Colossians 1:14). Zacharias announced to all mankind what God would do for us through our Savior Jesus Christ. He was introducing the new birth and the new self, created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24). Through this awesome work of grace God has given to us an unspeakable gift. He has delivered us from the fear that had caused us to live in bondage all of our lifetime (Hebrews 2:15; Luke 1:74; Genesis 3:10). God has filled us with His Spirit and given us the Spirit

Chapter 2

14- Glory to God in the highest peace on earth good will³ towards men⁴.

Chapter 4

13 And all of the temptations⁵ of the devil being finished he withdrew from him until an opportune time.

of adoption so that we can call God or Father and serve Him as He before ordained, in holiness without blame before Him in love (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:4-5). There is absolutely no question about God's desire for us to be holy for He tells us in no uncertain terms to be Holy even as He is Holy and that without holiness we will not see Him (1 Peter 1:15-16; Hebrews 12:14).

³ The Koine text-tradition is older than the 6/7 centuries. Also the Peshitta translates with the same "good will (hope) towards man" as well as older Palestinian attestations (038 Gr. Aleph c, Euseb.). The reading containing endokia can clearly be traced back to the second century. Also according to many good sources it is relatively uncertain whether Irenaeus and Origen read endokia or endokias but their expositions make it clear that they did not think of man's good will, but of the divine will to save (Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) Furthermore, the Koine text tradition which uses the nominative ENDOKIA follows very well with DOXAN/ EIRENE/ENDOKIA, (Glory/Peace/Good Will) which are all in the nominative case. I would argue that changes were made to deliberately add the sigma in order to spin the verse ever so slightly towards a doctrinal bias. God came to save all mankind even though they were His enemies (1 John 2:2; Titus 2:11; John 12:32; Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21).

⁴ There have been many modern scholars who argue that the text should read, "Glory to God in the highest Peace on earth to men of good will (Douay); "among men with whom he is pleased (RSV)." However, I would argue that sense the choice comes down to the genitive or the nominative case then I am in favor of the Koine text tradition as DOXAN/ EIRENE/ENDOKIA, (Glory/Peace/Good Will) are all in the nominative case. Some may argue that it only makes sense to go with the GNT text that have the genitive case because after all those who will benefit from God's grace are those who are favorably disposed towards God. However, the Peace that was brought to us by the Lord Jesus Christ extends, according to Paul, to those who are near and to those who are far off (Ephesians 2:17; Colossians 1:20). Especially in light of the fact that His blood was shed not only for our sins but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2; Titus 2:11; John 12:32). Jesus provided a kipper for all of mankind when He went into the Holy of Holies with His own blood (Leviticus 16:16; Hebrews 9:24, 26). Thus He extended Peace to all mankind not to just those who were favorably disposed toward Him but even those who were His enemies (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21).

⁵ There are two very important things about temptation that we must grasp: One is that temptation comes from an external source; not internal to the saints. Two, Satan is the source of the temptation to defy God. While it may be noted that God examines man, even as He did Abraham, He never tempts man to be disobedient to His will and to His ways (Genesis 22:1-19; James 1:13).

The story of Jesus' temptation is very revealing to us. It reveals the dynamics of temptation. First of all, we must recognize that Jesus was a pure man, there was no "root of iniquity" in Him. There was no internal source, such as an evil nature, from which that temptation came. The temptation came directly from the Satanic realm. We are also allowed to view the same dynamics of temptation when Eve was being tempted of the Devil. One who was innocent and pure came under the influence of the mind of Satan, and was brought to a point of decision as to what she would choose. Satan is very persuasive and convincing with His power of deception, and the only defense against him is the illuminating power of the word of God. As the light overthrows the darkness, even so the word of truth will overthrow the deceptive lies of the satanic power.

As a child of God, you must also recognize that the temptation to be disobedient to God comes from an external voice. It comes from the spirit of disobedience, and the god of this world. All that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life - is external to the nature and true desire of the

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor He has sent me to heal the shattered hearts to announce freedom to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind to the oppressed go free⁶.

Chapter 6

born-again saint. If you will recognize that these temptations are not expressions of your own internal desires, but rather the mind of the satanic tempting you to be disobedient; then with resolve you can submit yourself to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Let the word of God and the word of your testimony be the sword and shield of your defense against the deceiver.

⁶ What does the ministry of Jesus look like? Well, because of the plain account of scripture we can remove all the guesswork. The ministry of Jesus was one that set every person free from whatever sin, sickness or disease that held them in prison. There are four verses of scripture that provide a summary of the ministry of Jesus- Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8 and Matthew 8:17. These verses of scripture are all in the context of what Jesus did to set men free from the oppression of the devil. Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom of God and the acceptable year of the Lord. He came announcing that the kingdom of darkness was subdued and defeated by the Kingdom of God. Every prisoner to the realm of darkness, which includes sin, sickness and disease, was now free to go.

The most disheartening thing is that so many people in the church today have taken the position that the ministry of Jesus is no longer available. They reason that His ministry ended with the first century church. Still others who do not take such an extreme position have changed His ministry and now reason that the principles of psychology must be included into the therapy of God and have diluted the power ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ with the methods of man. Today more than ever men need to see Jesus. They need to see the miraculous ministry of Jesus that sets men free from their prison of sin, sickness and disease. The religion of "Modern Christianity" is blocking everyone's view and running interference with the ministry of Jesus. Just as the religion of the Pharisees and the Sadducees ran interference in the days of Jesus the religion of those who say that they are followers of Jesus but do not do what He said are running interference today.

The really good news is that the ministry of Jesus has not gone away. Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior is still here! He is in every assembly where His saints are gathered in His name and He is still doing the same things that He has always done. The Holy Spirit has come with the sole purposes of revealing Jesus and glorifying Him. The church is the corporate body of Christ, which by virtue of being His body cannot reveal another Jesus but the same Jesus that we encounter in the four gospels of the New Testament. If you say that this is not your experience then you better recognize that something is wrong. If you do not have the Jesus that was revealed to us in the pages of the four gospels then you have a different Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4). You have been ensnared by the doctrines of men and you better run to the Jesus of the Bible. We must resolve ourselves to follow Jesus and not men. We must be willing to believe and practice only those things which He said in His word and abandon all the opinions and doctrines of men that lie in wait to deceive us and bring us back into the prison house that the gospel of Jesus liberated us from.

Lets make a decision today to follow Jesus. I know that it may cost you but lets consider the men and women of the past who laid everything down and even lost their lives pursuing and standing for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. We do not have to worry about different interpretations when we consider the fact that Jesus put into action exactly what the scripture means by "opening prison doors," "The Spirit of Yahoah is upon me because Yahoah has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor He has sent me to bind up the shattered hearts to announce freedom to the captives and release from bondage for the imprisoned" (Isaiah 61:1). Jesus put into action and demonstrated what His ministry is all about when He opened the eyes of the blind and released them from their prison house of darkness. When Jesus cast out the devils of those who had been bound all of their lives by them, then the whole notion of "setting the captives free" looses all of its uncertainty. Let us return to the ministry of Jesus and the standard and glory that He baptized His church in. Let us begin a study of the ministry of Jesus and then become devoted to His ministry both in terms of what we receive and what we give (Mathew 10:8).

18-They came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases and those tormented by unclean spirits were also cured⁷.

19- And the whole crowd was trying to touch Him because power⁸ came out of Him and healed them all.

38- Give and good measure will be given to you, pressed down, shaken together and running over, they will give into your bosom, for the same measure that you measure will be measures back to you⁹.

⁷ These verses of scripture tell us why people came to Jesus 2000 years ago and also why they will come to Him today. The love and compassion of God has not changed for people. God loves the sick and diseased today as much as He ever has. The availability of His power to cure everyone who reaches out to touch Him is also still as present today as it was when He began His ministry. In fact, it is suppose to be even more available now that His ministry is to be replicated in all those who believe (Mark 16:17-18; John 14:12; Acts 1:8, 2:39). The ministry of Jesus simply took on a new dimension when He passed into heaven (John 7:37-39). After His resurrection and ascension He became the one who baptizes His servants in the Holy Spirit and Fire empowering them to function in His power (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:4). His power is the life giving power of the Holy Spirit that flowed out of Him to heal everyone who came to Him. It is this same life giving power that is to flow out of all who believe and out of the midst of the church today (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-28).

We have not been called of God to do anything other than to reveal Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 11:1; Philippians 1:21; Colossians 1:27; 3:2; 1 John 4:4; Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 1:19; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 1 Peter 1:11; Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23). The whole function of the Holy Spirit is to both reveal Jesus to us and to make Him known through our lives (John 7:39; 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 6:20). It was by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit flowing through the life of Jesus that He did all that He did and Jesus has given us the same supply of the Spirit (Luke 4:14; John 1:33; Acts 10:38). If we have any other kind of ministry than the ministry of Jesus then it is an earthly manmade ministry that consist of nothing more than wood, hay and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Colossians 3:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:8-9).

⁸ It is wonderful to realize that Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever (Hebrews 13:8; Psalms 102:27; 2 Corinthians 11:4). The power of God that was manifested in Jesus Christ is available more today than when Jesus walked the earth 2000 years ago (John 14:12; Acts 2:33; Mark 16:17; Isaiah 9:7). Today Jesus pours forth His power to heal and deliver through those who will receive.

Essential to the healing of these people was not the prayer of Jesus but the power that flowed through Him. In fact, there were many who did not even need Jesus to touch them, all they needed to do was to touch Him and they were healed (Matthew 14:36; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44-47). When the power of Jesus flowed into a person whatever they needed was supplied by the life giving flow of the Savior.

This same power of the Lord Jesus flows through His servants today. The life giving flow that comes from the throne of God proceeds forth from us as rivers of living water (John 7:39; Revelation 22:1-2). These rivers of living water that flow out of us will makes the lame to walk and the blind to see it opens prison doors and sets the captives free. Jesus was not here for just a moment in time to bring the life and power of God to a needy humanity but He lives forevermore. If we will find our place in the realms of the heavenly then the power of Jesus will find a free course through our lives to touch all of humanity (Ephesians 2:6; 1:19-20; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 3:2-3; John 12:26).

⁹ God's people must always maintain a disposition of giving. God is the biggest most unselfish giver that exist and he wants us to be just like Him. He is the one that causes the sun to rise upon the evil as well as the good and sends rain on the unrighteous and righteous alike (Matthew 5:45). Our heavenly Father wants us to act just like He does so that we may be called His children. Jesus even goes so far as to command us, in this context, to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48). If we are going to accurately represent our heavenly Father then we must be willing to give generously and not withhold from anyone no matter how we feel about them. The generosity of our heavenly Father overwhelms us with so many benefits and blessings everyday. It is essential that we do not take them for granted and forget all of His benefits and become unthankful and stingy (Psalms 103; 68:19). Of course the greatest gift that He gave us was His only begotten Son who counted our lives more precious than His own and gave Himself as a ransom for our sins. Oh we must not let our souls forget to bless Him for all of the gifts that he daily loads us up with; all these wonderful things that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). When we consider all

Chapter 7

8- For I also am a man set under authority¹⁰ having under myself soldiers and I say to one go and he goes and to another come and he comes and to my servant to this and he does it.

15- And he that was dead sat up and began to speak and He gave him to his mother¹¹.

that He gave to us when we were alienated from Him by wicked works how much more can we now expect Him to do for us as His sons and daughters. Our faith should rise up with a shout of thanksgiving and a cry of praise for all that God has done and continues to do (Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 2:12).

In that we have been given so much we must also freely give. However, if we do not freely receive what is given then we will not freely give. If we have received forgiveness then we are empowered to give forgiveness just as generously. God who is so generous in His nature request that we show forth His glory with the same generosity. God reveals to us that through cooperating with His generosity we will discover a realm where men themselves will also rise up and give to us, heaping their things into our bosoms (Isaiah 60:17). The Lord Jesus tells us here in this passage some of the things that He wants us to give. He wants us to love our enemies, do good and lend and expect nothing in return, not to judge nor condemn, to be merciful, to forgive and to give. The Lord Jesus is asking for us to give in every respect of life. We must understand that in every dimension of our life the way that we give is the way that we will receive. The way that we judge is how we are going to be judged (Matthew 7:2b). The way that we so mercy is how we will receive mercy. In whatever measure we give whether good or bad is the measure that we will receive multiplied back again (Mark 4:24). If we sow to the flesh we will reap a whirlwind and if we sow to the Spirit we will reap everlasting life (Gal 6). If we sow sparingly then we will reap sparingly and if we sow generously we will reap generously (2 Corinthians 9: 6-8). If we will forgive 490 times in a day we will also be forgiven as much (Matthew 18:21-35). Therefore, if we are willing to be generous even as our Father in heaven is generous then we will be overwhelmed with even more than can be imagined by the one who will causes all grace to abound in our lives so that we may have all sufficiency in all things (Ephesians 3:20; Psalms 40:5; 2 Corinthians 9:8-11).

¹⁰ Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and earth and He has extended that authority to us through His name (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9; Ephesians 1:21; Mark 13:34). Jesus has given us authority to function in His authority by making us the children of God (John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 1:21). The Roman Centurion provided us with the definition of what authority is. Authority is the power to command those things, which have been placed in subjection to you. The centurion simply said that authority gave him the right to order things done and so therefore he was certain of the right that Jesus had to order things done.

When Joshua was anointed by God to take the place of Moses and function in his authority Joshua found that even the sun and the moon had to obey him when he was advancing the cause of the kingdom (Joshua 10:12-13). We have been placed under the authority of Jesus and given authority to do those things that Jesus did and even greater things (John 14:12-14; Matthew 21:21). God has not restricted us to one realm but has determined that we should function with authority in every realm: spiritual, physical and financial.

There is an outstanding characteristic of a person who has authority: they know it. They function in a certainty and a boldness about those things that they have been given power over. In the New Testament authority denotes the creative power of Gods word. It is this kind of authority that Jesus functioned in and gave to His disciples. God's degree is that His will should prevail in the world of men. As God's people we must be persuaded of His will and then insist that His will be done in every area of life. We have the right to insist. We have the right to command a thing for the word of authority the word of faith has been placed in our hearts and in our mouths. Every power that would attempt to stop the blessings of God and the advancement of the kingdom has been made subject to those who have been given the authority to execute the will of God in the name of Jesus (Ephesians 1:18-23; 6:10; Mark 3:15; 6:6; Luke 10:19; John 17:21-23). I pray that you will rise up like Joshua in the authority that has been given you and speak to the mountains of hindrance and tell them to be removed!

¹¹ Part of the ministry of Jesus and the messianic witness was the dead were raised to life (Luke 7:22). Raising the dead by the power of God was not new to the people of God. Elijah had raised a young man from the dead as well as Elisha. Elisha was used by God to raise two people from the dead: one while he was alive and one after he was dead. A double portion of the anointing of Elijah had been given to Elisha and as a result Elisha was given the grace to do twice as much as Elijah. In that Elisha only raised one

18- And the disciples of John reported all these things to him.

19- And calling for two of his disciples John sent them to Jesus saying are you the Coming One or do we wait for another?

20- And coming to Him the men said, John the Baptist sent us to you to ask you if you are the Coming One or do we wait for another¹²?

person from the dead while he was alive his bones contained as it were one more miracle of power to raise the dead. When a man was thrown into the same cave where the bones of Elisha lay the man was raised up from the dead as soon as his body touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:21).

Although, we only have a record of three people that Jesus raised from the dead we can be sure that there were more (Mt 9:18; Mark 5:18; Luke 8:49; John 11:39-44; 12:1,2,17). It may be that at least three of these events were highlighted to demonstrate that the anointing of Jesus was greater than any anointing that had existed in those before Him. Jesus also gave this same anointing to His disciples whom He commanded to go and raise the dead, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Mt 10:8). The same anointing and power was witnessed in Paul's life (Acts 20:9; Romans 15:19). Furthermore, the same anointing is witnessed today in the lives of God's people. Many will say that it is not so but the facts are they were not there when the dead child was laid upon the platform in Papua New Guinea and the child came back to life. They were not there when the dead baby was brought to the church and was raised to life again. They were not there when the dead man who was propped up in the corner and commanded to live and he lived. They were not there when the dead person was brought into the church service by his grieving relatives and then went home with the family rejoicing over the goodness of God. Men will accuse us of lying but what is the motive? Would it be fame or money? Well most of those who have seen this kind of display of the power of God paid for their own crusades in some of the poorest countries of the world. There is far more scrutiny involved in claiming that one was raised from the dead than there are praises from men. Even more importantly all liars will have their part in the lake of fire and there is no lie worth telling for that. The facts are that Jesus is still raising the dead as much as he is still saving people from their sins. However, one is going to have to be willing to have more than just a casual Sunday morning meeting relationship with Jesus. We will have to be willing to preach Jesus and not ourselves. We will have to be willing to stand up and proclaim the words of this life no matter what it costs us. God who cannot lie said these works, which I do shall the believer do and greater works. Let me encourage you to believe what Jesus said above what everyone else says, after all He alone has the words of eternal life. The same One who has promised you eternal life commanded us to be His witnesses.

¹² The greatest prophet that ever lived found himself questioning who Jesus was. John the Baptist who was a cousin of Jesus was anointed by God to prepare His way (Luke 1:26; Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2-3). He had also been commissioned by God to identify the Messiah for all Israel (John 1:31-33). There were certainly many preconceived ideas that the prophet John the Baptist had of Jesus. Like all of the many other leaders in Israel he knew the scriptures that prophesied of the coming Messianic age. It was not within the framework of their thinking to see this mounting opposition against Jesus much less a rejection and crucifixion.

John had prophesied many things of Jesus that was not taking place. He had prophesied that his axe was in already laid to the root and that the Messiah would cut down the unfruitful but he did not see the judgments taking place that were written in the scripture (Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:10; Malachi 3:1-3; 4:1). He announced to the people that Jesus would be the One who would baptize them in the Holy Ghost and fire but Jesus was not moving like that. The judgments were more silent and invisible choices of the people of Israel and the Baptism would not begin until Jesus was enthroned in the heavens not the nation of Israel! They would have to wait for the next age at the time of His second coming before all of their expectations would be realized. Jesus simply did not look like what they had expected.

Jesus gave a real simple answer to those who had come from John. He gave them the strongest proofs possible that the age of the Messiah was underway. At the moment of their arrival He was busy doing those things that He was sent to do He was healing the diseased and those who had plagues. He was casting out devils and making the blind to see. He told the disciples of John to go and report to John what they both saw and heard- the blind see, the death hear, the crippled walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised and the poor have the gospel preached to them. This would be all the proof that John would need for this is indeed the evidence of the age of the reign of Christ (Isaiah 26:29; 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 61:1; Matthew 8:16-17).

21- And right at that time He healed many from diseases and plagues and evil spirits and had given sight to many that were blind.

22- And Jesus answered saying go tell John what you see and what you hear because the blind receive their sight the crippled walk, lepers are cleansed the deaf hear the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

23- And blessed is the one who is not offended in me.

24- And the messengers of John having gone He began to speak to the crowd about John, What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed being shaken by the wind? (1 Kings 14:15) (did you go out just to admire the scenery?)

25- Rather, what did you go out to see? A man in soft apparel? Look those in splendid apparel and living in luxury are in a royal palaces. (what were you expecting to find when you went out there?)

26- What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes and more than a prophet.

27- This is concerning that which written, "Behold I am sending my messenger before you who will prepare your way before you."

28- Also, I tell you there is no greater prophet of those born among women than John the Baptist yet the lesser one in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is.

29- And all the people who heard including the tax collectors declared God righteousness having been baptized by John's baptism.

30- But the Pharisees and the lawyers had rejected God's plan for them refusing to be baptized by him.

31- To what then will I compare the men of this generation and what are they like ?

32- They are like children sitting in the market place calling to each other and saying we played the flute for you but you did not dance we sang a dirge but you did not weep.

33- For John the Baptist came eating no bread and drinking no wine and you say he has a demon.

34- The Son of Man came eating and drinking and you say behold a glutton and a drunkard a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

35- But wisdom is justified by all her children.

36- And one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him and He came into the house of the Pharisee and reclined to eat.

37- And behold in the city a woman who was a sinner having learned that he was dining in the house of the Pharisee brought an alabaster box of ointment.

38- And standing behind his feet weeping began to bath His feet with her tears and dry them with her hair and continued to kiss his feet and anoint them with oil.

There are many today that want to pretend as though Jesus healed the sick from time to time when in reality it was the continual ongoing purpose of His ministry. When the disciples came they were not receiving a special show this was a snapshot of what it was like to be around Jesus. The proof that Jesus was and is the Messiah and that He is now seated at the right hand of God and reigning with power is the same today as it was for John the Baptist. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us to empower us not only to do the same works that He did but to do even greater works. The purpose of the church is to reveal Jesus! The purpose of our assemblies is that the fullness of God might be revealed as the Holy Spirit both reveals and glorifies Jesus in our midst with the same mighty signs and wonders of His power that took place nearly 2000 years ago. God demands that we provide the proof and the evidence of the age of Christ and that proof is only realized in the demonstration of the Spirit and power (Luke 24:49; John 7:38-39; 14:12; 15:5,16; Mark 16:17; John 17:21-23; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; etc.).

39- And seeing this, the Pharisee who invited him said in himself, "If this were a prophet, he would know what sort of woman this is who touches Him; for she is a sinner¹³."

40- And Jesus answered saying to him Simon I have something to say to you and he said teacher speak.

41- A certain creditor had two debtors one owed five hundred denari and the other five.

42- But when they could not pay He canceled both of their debts now, which one will love him the most?

43- And Simon replied saying, I suppose the one for whom He canceled the greater debt and he said you have judged rightly.

44- And turning towards the woman he said to Simon see this woman I enter your house you did not give me water for my feet but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

45- You gave me no kiss but she from her coming in has not stop kissing my feet.

46- You did not anoint my head with oil but she anointed my feet with perfume.

47- For this reason I tell you her sins which are many are forgiven because she has shown great love but the one who little is forgiven loves little¹⁴.

¹³ Any encounter with Jesus is dramatic and spectacular. The Pharisee could not even begin to comprehend what was happening with this woman who was a sinner. She stood at the threshold of redemption, under the influence of the awesome glory of the love of God; and wept. It has been said that a picture paints a thousand words, but let me say that the presence of God conveys a message that words cannot express. When one experiences the mercy and acceptance of God in the face of all their own sinfulness, the combination produces a flood of deep emotion.

How could it be possible that a woman so full of sin could feel so completely accepted by the one who never knew sin? Her interaction with Jesus was of the dearest and closest sort. Yet while the woman who was a sinner experienced the glory of heaven, the Pharisee who had devoted himself to God found further reason to doubt. He was not only insensitive to whose presence he was in, he was also full of wrong assumptions. He thought that Jesus was only a prophet. He thought that if He were a prophet, He would have the gift of discernment. He also thought that such a great prophet would not allow a sinful person to touch him.

Jesus not only knew who the woman was; He also knew who the Pharisee was, and what he was thinking. The charismata of the Spirit came with floods of mercy to reach into the blinded mind and senseless heart of the Pharisee. God's love and mercy will not be restricted by sinfulness, nor by hardened religion. The love of God reaches out with His manifest glory to every state of sinful men, and beckons them to come. He stretches out the glory of His presence; and manifests His power to convince the gainsayer, and to love the rejected. Let the word of God and the Spirit of God so rest upon us that Jesus may be fully seen in our interaction with every sort of hurting and sinful man.

¹⁴ How much have you been forgiven? In reality everyone needs the same level of forgiveness. However it is only when we encounter the presence of Jesus that we become aware of our need. His splendor and purity has the same effect on every man. Just as Isaiah, who though he were a consecrated and obedient prophet, when he saw the glory of God he cried out I am undone (Isaiah 6:5)! Simon the Pharisee had reason to trust in himself because of his religious practices but he actually was as in need of forgiveness and redemption as much as the woman who was a sinner. Simon like Saul of Tarsus was blind to his sin and need for a savior (Romans 7:12-20). Simon thought that he could trust in his observance of the law and his religious practices and was unable to see the true condition of his heart. Jesus addressed the same blindness of mind among the Pharisees when they were unwilling to recognize their sin (John 8:24-32). Simon loved Jesus just enough to invite him to his house and he was forgiven just enough for Jesus to be willing to come. Simon thought he was so much better than the woman because he was aware of his spiritual need. The Almighty God was in his house but he was so self-absorbed with his own religious practices that he was unaware of his visitation. Had he only been willing to recognize who Jesus was He would have been overwhelmed with the same kind of love and affection. Simon, just like many other Pharisees of his day, had no clue that the condition of their spiritual nature was totally unacceptable to God. They were unaware

48- Then he said to her Your sins are forgiven.

Chapter 8

1- And it came to pass afterwards also he went through cities and villages proclaiming and bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God and the twelve were with him.

2- And some of the woman who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases Mary called Magdalene from whom seven devils went out.

3- Also Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward and many others who provided for them from their resources.

4- When a great crowd gathered and those from the city came to Him, He spoke through a parable.

5- A sower went out to sow his seed and as he sowed some fell upon the road and was trampled and the birds of heaven devoured it.

6- And some fell upon the rocks and as it grew it withered because it did not have moisture.

7- And some fell in the midst of thorns and the thorns grew and choked it.

8- And some fell into the good ground and produced fruit a hundredfold saying, those who have ears to hear listen!

9- Then His disciples asked Him saying what does this parable mean?

10- And He said to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God but to other by parables that seeing they shall not see and hearing they shall not understand.

11- This is the parable: the seed is the word of God.

12- And those on the path are those who hear then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart so that they do not believe unto salvation.

13- And those upon the rocks when they hear receive the word with joy but these have no root these believe for a while but in time of trial fall away.

14- And those that fell among thorns are those that hear and along the way the cares and wealth and pleasures of this life choke it and no fruit matures¹⁵.

that the law was only a schoolmaster that would train them of their need for a change of nature (Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Galatians 4:6).

It was not the woman's love that saved her but it was her faith that was expressed through her love that saved her (Luke 7:50; Galatians 5:6). One of the shocking things about this interaction was that the woman seemed unaware of her sin. She was a woman who was well aware of the opinion of the Pharisees concerning her presence. She knew that she was unwelcome in their house (Matthew 9:11; Mark 2:16). Yet, she was so overwhelmed by the love of Jesus and felt so comfortable and accepted by Him that she not only wept at his feet but kissed them! Could there be a more perfect description of how God empowers us to love Him through His love for us, "Herein is love not that we loved Him but that He loved us!" The woman so empowered by the love and acceptance that she felt for Jesus moved passed every obstacle of rejection to embrace the One who came to seek and save those who were lost.

¹⁵ It is of vital importance that we recognize that the world is a bed of thorns and briars. All that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life - are contrary to all that belongs to the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. There are too many Christians who have attempted to serve God and yet hold on to their lives in this world (Matthew 10:39; Matthew 16:25; John 12:25). It is one thing to believe that God can use one's business and vocation to impact the world around them; it is altogether a different thing to set our hearts and affections upon the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world.

Thorns and thistles represent the curses of sin. It is essential that every believer identify those things that they might entertain that belong to the lust of this world. Those things that belong to this world and to its iniquity will ruin everything that God has done in the life: everything that He transformed by His word and

15- But that in the good ground are those who hear the word, hold it fast in an honorable and good heart bring forth fruit by perseverance¹⁶.

25- And He said to them, Where is your faith¹⁷? And being afraid they said to one another, Who is this that commands even the wind and the waves and they obey Him?

by His Spirit (Isaiah 32:13; Hebrews 6:8). The distractions of this life will choke the word of God and the life of the Spirit, stunting our growth and preventing any real spiritual maturity. We must be willing to drive out those things that would attempt to steal our time and affections away from the things of the Spirit (Colossians 3:1-4; Romans 8:6-7). Those things that would impose themselves upon us as seemingly harmless compromises would eventually turn our hearts from God, and snare us in sin (Numbers 33:55; Joshua 23:13; Judges 2:3).

¹⁶ Through the new birth God gave us the good ground of a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26; Psalms 24:4; Matthew 5:8; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4). This is the right kind of soil for the word of God to be planted in. However, there are not just four different kinds of soil there are also different responses to the word. The correct response is to hear the word and hold it fast. The Greek word (katechousin) that is translated 'hold fast' is actually a very colorful word, which can mean 'enraptured,' 'possess,' 'ecstasy,' and 'inspire.' We should have the word in possession, we should be enraptured by it, it should inspire us and the power and glory of it should cause ecstasy but more than anything else we must hold tightly to it. We cannot let it slip from our thoughts and less our commitments to the Lord Jesus be forgotten even for a moment. The enemy of our soul has set himself against us and looks to find some area of our life to exploit and overthrow (Ephesians 6:10-11; 1 Peter 5:8). The word of God however, is the sword of the Spirit and it produces a shield of faith. It is the force of truth and the light and revelation of God that will both expose and overthrow the lies and deception that Satan seeks to work against us. It is Spirit empowering and the living force of Gods creative power that will work effectually in all who believe.

There is yet another word in this verse that speaks of the proper response to the word of God that you have heard and it is the one that is translated perseverance (hypomone). In the Old Testament it is translated by words that mean to 'wait on God' or "cleave to God." It is by waiting on God that we renew our strength it is in cleaving to God that we escape the disastrous traps of wrong choices (Isaiah 40:31; Deuteronomy 4:4). God's word and His desires are unchanging. They are the same today as they were in the eternal past and will be the same in the eternal future. God desires us to love Him, to serve Him, to walk in His ways of life and to cleave unto Him (Deuteronomy 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20; Joshua 22:5; John; Acts 11:23; Romans 12:9; John 1:15; 15:10; 1 John 5:2-3). If we receive the word of God as the treasure and gift of life that it is then we will hold it fast and cleave to it more than to our own lives for in it our lives will be preserved and all the treasure of God revealed.

If we hold fast to the word of God in an honorable and true heart then through the perseverance of cleaving unto it when the world rushes by us with all its temporal pleasure and self gratifying temptations we will be safe. As we hold it fast and wait on God we will be able to stand in the evil day when the storms of life threaten all that we have and all life's affections being laid before us we find our hearts unmovable (Luke 6:48). By a steadfast commitment to walk in the Spirit and obey Gods word the abundance of fruit that God has called and ordained us to bring forth will spring up a hundredfold in our lives (John 15:5, 7, 16; 2 Peter 1:8-10). The Lord Jesus says today even as He did then, let every one who has ears to hear listen (Luke 8:8)! He has given each person the ability to examine their own hearts and determine for themselves what their response has been to the word of God. If we have received His word and held tightly to it then it will surely produce all the good things that God has promised!

¹⁷ One of the primary things that Jesus taught His disciples was how to function in faith. He was continually rebuking them for a lack of it, as well as making examples of those who displayed it. Unlike many scholars and theologians, who over the years have attempted to define faith in numerous ways, Jesus defined faith in a way that was always associated with a supernatural display of power. If we look only at the gospel of Matthew, we can easily see that Jesus expected the disciples, and all those who would hear, to move in faith for the miraculous.

The first time Jesus mentions faith is in association with the expectation that we should have for divine provision (Matthew 6:30). Then when Jesus encounters the centurion, He highlights an example of great faith, pointing to the fact that the centurion only needed Jesus to "speak the word" (Matthew 8:10,13).

Chapter 10

17-And the seventy returned with joy saying Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name¹⁸.

19- See I have given you the authority¹⁹ to tread on snakes and scorpions and over every power of the enemy and absolutely nothing can hurt you.

When a paralyzed man was brought for healing, Jesus once again pointed to the faith that would result in the miracle of healing (Matthew 9:2). The woman with the issue of blood, who knew that all she needed to do was to touch Jesus in order to receive a miracle, was rewarded with the words, "Your faith has made you well" (Matthew 9:22). Peter was eager to walk on the water with Jesus; and knowing that all he needed was a word from the Master, stepped out in the miracle provision of faith, and walked on the water until he became afraid; and learned yet another lesson on faith as he began to sink. Jesus said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). They watched as Jesus was at first reluctant to respond to the Syrophonecian woman, but in the end said, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done to you as you wish" (Matthew 15:28).

All of these many lessons on moving in faith find their climactic resolve in the words of Jesus, when He declared: "Nothing shall be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). Whether it is a command for a fig tree to dry up, or for a mountain to be cast into the sea - those who have faith will say what they will, and it will come to pass (Matthew 21:21-22). God has called and elected us to have such a relationship with Him: that whatever we ask, He will do (Matthew 21:22; John 15:16; John 14:12). We can be confident that those things that God has promised will surely come to pass, if we remain faithful, and hold fast to our confession of faith; for God is faithful who promised, who will also do it (1 John 5:14-15; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Corinthians 1:20). If we ask anything according to His will, He will do it! His will is expressed in His words - which can never pass away (Mark 13:31; Matthew 24:35; Luke 21:33).

His word declares that it is His will that the blind see, the deaf hear, the crippled walk, the devils go out of those who are afflicted by them, and the dead be raised to life again! It is God's will that we prosper and be in health, even as our soul prospers. It is His will that we walk in righteousness, holiness, and purity! It is His will that we have the power of proof for the message that we proclaim: that Christ Jesus has risen from the dead. It is His demand that we be His followers, and imitators of His deeds and conduct (Ephesians 5:1; Luke 10:19; John 14:12; Mark 16:17-20). To do so then, we must give ourselves to the same message of the Kingdom of God that He preached, and the miracles which He performed. If we will give ourselves to living by His word: speaking and doing those things which He has declared, then we will have His results. If we refuse to waver or to be moved by doubt, and instead recognize who Jesus is, and the gift of God that He has given us; then we will surely see all the miraculous realms of faith produce what otherwise would have been impossible. Jesus says to us today: "Only have faith!" (Mark 5:36).

¹⁸ The name of Jesus carries with it all power and authority both in this world and in the world to come (Ephesians 1:21; Matthew 28:18). In His name every devil must obey us, every disease must go and even the natural order of things must alter their course at the authority of His name (Acts 3:16, 16:18; Luke 10:9,19; Matthew 14:29; Philippians 2:10). The demonstration of the authority of Jesus name must be a living reality in our lives if we are to truly testify of His absolute authority and the defeat of Satan.

There are so many who are in a quandary as to where to start. They want to serve Jesus and be all that He has called and elected them to be but they do not know where to begin. Yet the answer is right in front of us. We begin by being born of God and receiving authority to be the children of God. Then we allow Jesus to baptize us with power from on high. Once this has happened we simply do what He has commanded us to do. We command the devils to leave those places they have occupied, we lay hands on the sick and thereby preach the gospel of salvation.

¹⁹ When we were born of God He gave us the authority to be sons of God (John 1:12). It is a kingdom authority that we have been given to execute the will of God on earth. We have been given conquering power to cast out devils and to set the captives free (Matthew 10:1; 28:18-19; Mark 3:15; 16:17; Luke 9:1; 1 John 4:4; 5:4-5;). We have been commissioned by God to go everywhere and proclaim liberty to those who have been held in bondage and to liberate every person, place and thing from the power of the devil.

Chapter 11

8- I tell you even though he would not get up to give because he was a friend but because of his shameless insistence²⁰ he wakes up to give him whatever he needs²¹.

Jesus who is head over all principalities and powers, right now in this world, has caused us to be seated together with Him in His heavenly dominion, all powers and authorities being subject to Him (Ephesians 1:19; 2:6; 1 Peter 3:22; Romans 5:17). It is our responsibility to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God in both word and deed and to reveal to all mankind that the King of Kings now reigns over all (Matthew 4:23; 9:28, 35; 12:28; Luke 9:2, 60; 10:9; 11:20; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:31; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20).

²⁰ A very socking word appears here in this scripture, it is a word that basically means insolence (anaideia). It has for a synonym a word that means unseemliness or shameless (atimia). The Greek word 'anaideia' may be translated 'impertinence, impudence or shameless. It expresses a bold state of being somewhat sassy or as the English may say 'cheeky.' It is a lack of sensitivity to what is proper, it is a disposition that ignores convention yet the Lord uses it to describe how we should pray. We all stand back and say how can this be? Does the Lord really expect that we should be so full of confidence concerning His will that we should demand it and not accept anything less? Could it be that we have too often been willing to settle for less than the will of God because of unbelief or religious conventions? Have we failed to recognize that it is Gods good pleasure to give us His Kingdom and to provide for us according to His riches in glory!. Are we unwilling to believe that all that He has said in His word is ours and that the enemy of our souls constantly attempts to run a blockade against Gods divine provision through our unwillingness to contend for the faith?

Surely, it is not God that needs to be convinced that He must wake up and give us what we have requested but it is us that must be convinced that these things are ours. We be willing to be so certain about His promises that we will not let up until we have received whatsoever we have asked. The seemingly somewhat rude behavior of asking, knocking and seeking is a must if we are going to receive those things that we have asked for. When we know that what we ask is God's will then certainly we will be persistent. We will keep on until we have those things that we know that Father has commanded. Where is our boldness and confidence with God? Are the things that He has promised true? Is God faithful to all that He has declared? Yes, Yes and with bold and confident assurance I say Yes! Then why should we cower or in anyway let up until that which the Lord has demanded is ours. God's demand must become our demand and His promises our realized provision. God never said no to our request we just stop short of believing until the request was granted, without faith it is impossible to please God.

²¹ After Jesus had been praying his disciples came to Him asking Him to teach them to pray (vs.1). Part of our Lord's response to them was the example that He gives of a man who by all rights should be left alone because it was late and he was in bed asleep. However, because of a bold and almost stupid insistence on the part of his neighbor he gives him whatever he wants.

The one asking for help seems to be totally insensitive to what is proper. In fact, his own need becomes greater to him than the need of anyone else and out of this desperation he abandons all the proper protocol and places a demand on his neighbor. His neighbor does not rise and give him what he needs out of a sense of friend-ship but because he will not go away otherwise. The man in bed feels that the one outside is impudent and clueless concerning his proper place and to shut him up he has to get out of bed and get him what he wants so the story unfolds something like this. We see one man in bed and another consumed by his own need. Forgetting everything that is proper the one man starts banging on the door demanding that the other get out of bed and meet his need. The neighbor awaking out of sleep attempts to get rid of the insensitive guy thinking "of all the nerve" but because the guy is so clueless he sighs throws back the covers and gets up. He comes to the door after fumbling with the lamp and totally bewildered to see his neighbor standing there with a hurry up look on his face.

Why would Jesus describe such a scene to us? What kind of disposition was He attempting to instill within those who desired to pray the kind of prayers that would be answered? Knowing that it is Gods good pleasure to give us the kingdom why should there be within our disposition such a seeming insolence? God wants us to pray to Him in fact, He requires it of us. Yet, there must be more than just meeting the requirements there must be something of an absolute expectation and insistence on our part no matter how

13- If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him²².

Chapter 12

13- And someone in the crowd said, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.

14- And He said to him, man who appointed me to be a judge or arbitrator over you.

15- And He said be careful and on guard against covetousness because a mans life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.

21-So it is for the one who stores up for himself and is not rich towards God²³.

unreasonable the request may be. God wants us to move past all of the protocol and come boldly and confidently to the heart of His affections regardless of who we are and what we think is proper. God is ready to answer us and give us whatever we need.

²² Jesus did not talk about "gifts of the Spirit" in the detail that Paul did. Rather, Jesus referred to things like power, authority and glory. The word 'charismata' was not used to describe the things that Jesus referred to when talking about the realms of the Spirit that He had made available to the saints as Paul did in his letters. Jesus talked about gifts in the context to salvation that supplies each individual with the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 4:10; 7:38-39).

What Jesus did give rather than a single charismata, was authority. He gave to each one the authority to be sons of God (John 1:12). Jesus gave authority over all unclean spirits to cast them out and to cure every disease and every sickness (Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:15; 6:7). Jesus provided authority to the believer not in just one expression or dimension of the kingdom of God but all authority over all the power of the devil (Luke 10:19).

Jesus came in the power of the Holy Spirit and He gave that same power to those who would follow Him so that they could represent the kingdom of God just as He did (Luke 9:1; Acts 10:38; Luke 24:49). This is a power that is given by the accompanying presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Luke 4:18). This is a power given to the believer so that Jesus Himself might be revealed by those who preach in His name (John 16:13-15; Galatians 1:16; Romans 15:19). It is a power that shows the supremacy of God over all the powers of darkness. The power of the gospel that proves that Jesus was raised from the dead and living in His disciples (Luke 10:19; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8; Matthew 12:28; 28:18-20; Acts 4:33).

He gave us the same glory that the Father had given Him so that we could be one in fellowship and purpose (John 17:21-23; 14: 23). He gave to us the opportunity to receive of His fullness through the grace that He so freely gave (John 1:16; Ephesians 3:19). Those that have received all of this through the act of Gods generous gift of the Holy Spirit are equipped to do whatever the Holy Spirit would lead us and inspire us to do (John 7:38-39; 1 Corinthians 12:7,11). When there is a need to cast out a devil then the gift of the Holy Spirit supplies the power and authority to do so. When there is a need to reveal the secrets of the heart then we discover the inspiration and insights of the miracle power of the Holy Spirit to do that as well. He is the One who is in charge and we are those who are to follow Him in total dependence and obedience to His will and direction. Let us now arise and shine with the splendor of the glory of the Only Begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus our Savior!

²³ When we allow our life to be consumed with our possessions and a passion to obtain more possessions are hearts becomes impervious to God and spiritually we are wretched, miserable, poor and blind (Luke 12:15; Revelation 3:17). There is a way however, to be rich towards God and to have your treasure in heaven rather than in earthly things. Our hearts and passions must be directed toward the needs of others. The blessings and provisions that we are given are not to be hoarded and used for our own selfish interest but are given to us to bless others. The focus of what we do with the good things that the Lord blesses us with must be first upon the Kingdom of God and what we can do to cooperate with God's plan to reach all mankind with the gospel. Secondly, our interest must be directed towards those who are in financial need:

32- Do not fear little flock for it is your Fathers delight to give you the kingdom²⁴.

35- You must have your loins girded up and your lamps burning.

36- Also like men waiting for their Lord to return from the wedding so that when He comes they may immediately open the door when He knocks.

Chapter 13

11- And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years; and she was doubled over and not able to stand upright²⁵.

the poor the orphans and the widows are our responsibility and especially those who are of the household of faith (Luke 12:33; Mark 10:21; 2 Corinthians 9:9; Galatians 2:10; James 1:27; Luke 6:34-35, 38).

The Lord makes rich and adds no sorrow with it. Father's blessing will make us wealthy. However, there is a responsibility that comes with wealth. That responsibility is to be a good giver. It is therefore in the giving that we are developed by God to receive. If we are faithful with the little that we have then we will also be faithful with the much that our Heavenly Father wants to bless us with. Yet the even weightier issue is, will we walk in love and do these things by the Spirit. Will we allow the love and compassion of Christ Jesus to rule our hearts and constrain us to take care of the needs of others (1 John 3:17; 2 Corinthians 8:9).

²⁴ The kingdom was given to Israel but they were unwilling to be obedient to God and bring forth the fruits of the kingdom (Matthew 21:43). God wanted Israel to walk in the realms of His love and goodness, which would produce for them days of heaven on earth but they refused to follow after Him (Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 11:21). In the love and mercy of Fathers heart He opened the door to anyone, Jew or Gentile to come into a new kind of nation that would bring forth the fruits of the kingdom.

God has a kingdom of people on the earth now. Although we still look for a future day in which the kingdom of God will come to rule sovereignly and absolutely over all of the earth the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is presently the evidence and glory of that kingdom or at least we are suppose to be (Ephesians 1:21-23; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinthians 4:20; Isaiah 26:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). The kingdom is the realm of the Spirit or the realm of heaven where we interact with God, worship the Lord Jesus, walk in righteousness and move in the miraculous. It is the kingdom that we are to place first and foremost in our daily lives (Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31). The evidence of the kingdom is the abundant life, the eternal life or the life of Christ that brings forth a demonstration of the Spirit in righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17; John 7:38-39; Romans 8:4,9 Galatians 5:22-25). It is the power and authority over all sin, sickness, disease and poverty (Matthew 12:28; Luke 9:1; 10:9; Acts 10:38; Romans 15:19-20 3 John 2). The position of every saint today in the kingdom is with Christ at the right hand of authority and power (Ephesians 2:6; John 1:12; Revelation 1:6). It is God's desire that all of the manifestations and benefits of the kingdom be revealed in our lives both as a blessing to us and a witness to the world around us.

²⁵ There are many people bound by the devil - but Jesus was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8; Luke 4:18). This poor dear woman was bound by Satan for 18 years. As far as we know she faithfully walked to the synagogue for the sabbath meetings, even though she was doubled over and could not walk upright. Little did she know that her faithfulness was about to be rewarded, and her day of captivity was about to end. Jesus, seeing this woman bound by Satan, did not ask her if she wanted to be healed, and did not inquire about her faith. Even though the atmosphere was charged with every suspicious and critical spirit, Jesus was not going to be hindered from accomplishing the work that the Father had given Him to do. Jesus came to confront every power of Satan and to destroy it wherever He encountered it; and He would not tolerate Satan's power over this woman for another day.

When Mark summarized the ministry of Jesus, he said: "And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils" (Mark 1:39). Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power to heal everyone oppressed of the devil. The spirit of the Lord was upon Him to set every human being free from their prison of sin and sickness. It was Satan that held men in this prison, and Jesus was the One that was

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Chapter 16

11- If then in the unrighteous mammon you have not been faithful who will entrust to you the true riches²⁶?

Chapter 17

5- And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith²⁷."

sent to liberate all mankind. This is the good news, the gospel of the kingdom: the day of captivity and bondage to sin and sickness has come to an end.

We must realize what we are up against, and recognize that if Jesus had to be anointed with the Holy Ghost and power to do the work of the ministry and preach the gospel of the kingdom - how much more must we? There are too many of us who attempt to approach the crises and needs of people through human sympathy and ability. We have to recognize the power that is behind all sin and sickness; and confront it with the authority of Christ Jesus and the power of the Holy Ghost. If we are going to spoil the strong man's house and participate in setting the captives free, then we are going to have to bind the strong man (Matthew 12:29). The miracle power of the Holy Ghost was given to us to cast out devils, and to overthrow every work of Satan (Matthew 12:28; Acts 19:12; Acts 8:7; Luke 9:1; Mark 6:7; Mark 16:17; Ephesians 6:19-11). If we will confront the powers of Satan the way that Jesus both demonstrated and commanded for us, then we will certainly see the results that Jesus had.

²⁶ The true riches are those things that belong to the special anointings that God gives, that produce divine abilities in men (2 Thessalonians 1:11; 1 Timothy 1:12; Ephesians 1:17-18; Ephesians 3:16). God gave Aaron a special anointing to be High Priest. He gave Samuel a special anointing to be prophet, and Saul a special anointing to be King. God gave Paul a special anointing to be an Apostle - and has open the door to many opportunities for us today.

What God holds in the highest order of essential things is faithfulness, both in the small things as well as in the big (Numbers 12:7; 1 Samuel 2:35; Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 4:20; Matthew 25:21,23). We cannot afford to approach even the smallest opportunities with anything less than the same concern and intensity that we would with the greatest opportunity. The proper balancing of our check books, the proper concern and judgment behind the things that we spend money on, the jobs that we take up in the ministry, and the people that God has brought into our lives - all must be of the greatest importance to us. We must realize that these things are not only our training grounds, but our proving grounds as well.

If we will be mindful of what God commands and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, then the Lord will prepare us unto every good work (2 Timothy 2:21; Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 13:21; Colossians 1:28; Romans 4:20). Remember that the mercies of God are new every morning. You may have failed in the past, but if you will be more conscious of your responsibilities and opportunities today, then you will see the promotion that God has planned for your life! Don't forget: it does not matter if it is material wealth or spiritual wealth, we are only the stewards and not the owners.

²⁷ What is faith? It is easy to recognize what faith can do for both the Gospels and the Book of Acts is full of the glorious demonstration of the power of faith. When we read the Epistles of Paul we come to understand how faith works as he reveals that it is a fruit as well as a gift of the Spirit, thus we learn that we must yield to the Holy Spirit if faith is going to work (Galatians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). We know how faith comes to us as time and again we hear the announcement of the faith that is by Jesus Christ (Acts 3:16; Hebrews 12:2; Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9; 2 Peter 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:3; Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16,20; 3:23). Yet, to understand what faith is we must look a little closer at the scriptures.

As we look back into the Old Testament we discover very quickly that faith is comparable to trust. The first man that is highlighted in the Bible for having moved in faith is Abraham. He believed God! Why, because he had come to trust Him. Abraham had become a friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). Throughout the pilgrimage of Abraham's children we discover that God lead them on a journey to teach them to trust Him even as their father Abraham did. When the link is made between the trust of the

6- The Lord replied, If you have faith as a mustard seed you would say to this mulberry tree be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey you²⁸.

10- So you also, when you have done all you were commanded say that we are servants not deserving of praise for we have done that which was our duty²⁹.

Chapter 18

Old Testament and the faith of the New we discover once again a call for mankind to come into a relationship with God and discover that life is far more than the things that we concern ourselves with on a daily bases (Matthew 6:30). In a word we discover that faith is a bond of relationship that is an expression of God's own love. This bond of relationship could not be expressed or defined in a greater way than that which existed between Jesus and His Father.

²⁸ God wants us to believe for great things. He has made it possible that whatever we ask Him he will do (Matthew 21:22; John 14:13; 15:7, 16; 16:23; 1 John 3:22; 5:15). He has given to us a supernatural faith that moves mountains and causes nature to rearrange its order to adjust to whatever we say.

The smallest amount of faith can accomplish wonders beyond the wildest imagination and God has made available an unlimited supply to us (Mark 11:22; 1 Corinthians 13:2; Hebrews 11:6 Acts 6:5,8; 11:24). The right kind of faith is the faith that believes that God can do anything. This kind of faith only needs His word and the confidence that whatever we ask He will do it. The right kind of faith is the kind that is born out of a love relationship with the Lord Jesus and is committed to bringing honor and glory to His name.

We must allow the Spirit of God that has been given to us to reveal the power, authority, glory and honor that God has called us to. The same grace and purpose of God took Joseph to the highest position of the greatest Kingdom on earth (Genesis 41:39-41). It brought Joshua to an authority that commanded the sun and the moon to stand still (Joshua 10:12). It enabled Elijah to call fire down out of the sky (2 Kings 1:10). It gave Daniel wisdom and knowledge that was so great that all of the enemies of God, which lived around him confessed that in Daniel was the "spirit of the gods" (Daniel 4:8,9,18; 5:11). The same Spirit was in Paul who testified to the world of the grace of God by the power of signs and wonders and by the power of the Spirit of God (Romans 15:19).

²⁹ Surely there can be no higher honor than to be granted the privilege to function in faith and in the authority of Christ Jesus (John 14:12; John 20:21; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:8). The disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith, and His response was basically, "Get to work!" We have all received the same grace that Paul received, but has our response to God been the same? Paul said: "The grace of God was not bestowed on me in vain, but I labored more than anyone else" (1 Corinthians 15:10). He was excited and happy to go to work. There are so many gifts and expressions of the Holy Ghost that the majority of Christians have never experienced. The reason they have not stepped into what the apostles and disciples had - after a very short time with Christ - is that they have not gone to work. We only need the signs and the wonders and the demonstration of the Spirit when we are at work. These great exploits and deeds of the Holy Ghost are for setting the captives free! So let's have some fun, and become engaged in the ministry of Jesus. We are His ambassadors, His co-laborers, and co-inheritors (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Romans 8:17). We are the sons of God with the authority to represent the kingdom; so lets go to work!

Samson was anointed to deliver Israel from their enemies; so when he was at work he could walk away with the gates of the city, or kill thousands with the jawbone of a donkey. Joshua was anointed to lead Israel into the promised land; so when he was at work he could command the sun to stand still, and the moon not to move. Now, we have been anointed to preach the gospel! We have been anointed to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison doors to them which are bound (Luke 4:18; 2 Corinthians 1:21). We can pray and ask God to do all these things through our lives; but unless we go to work, the anointing is not going to be demonstrated through us. However, if we are willing to engage in the service of the King of Kings, then the things that we need to accomplish the task are going to be there for those who will believe. God has required these things of us: moving in the faith and the power of the Holy Spirit is our duty, so no one has to talk God into blessing us with this ability. This is our servitude, our responsibility. It is what we have been commissioned to do; so everybody just get busy, and watch as the mighty hand of God works great exploits of faith through you! Get to work!

- 1- And then He told them a parable about why it is necessary to always pray and not to be discouraged.
- 2- He said there was a judge in a certain city that did not fear God and did not respect man.
- 3- And there was a widow in that city who also kept coming to him saying grant me justice against my accuser.
- 4- And he was unwilling for a while but afterwards he said to himself, Even though I do not fear God and have no respect for man.
- 5- Yet because this widow will not give up bothering me I will grant her justice unless her continual coming wears me out!
- 6- And the Lord said listen to what the unjust judge said.
- 7- And will not God provide justice for His elect that cry to Him day and night and is longsuffering to them?
- 8- I tell you that he will do justice for them quickly and yet when the Son of Man come will He then find faith upon the earth³⁰?

Chapter 19

- 10- For the Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost³¹.

³⁰ In the context of why men ought to always pray and not to weary, Jesus remarks, "When the Son of Man comes, will He then find faith on the earth?" Will there continue to be faith that expects miracles and believes in the absolute power of God to heal save and deliver - when the Son of Man, Christ Jesus comes? Is there faith and expectation in your heart today that God will supply all of your needs?

Today men edit our Bibles and make every attempt to dilute the word of God, and remove the power of faith from our lips and from our hearts. They falsely tell us things like Mark 16:17-18 does not belong to the oldest manuscripts; while all the time some of the oldest existing manuscripts not only contain the passage, but the oldest church writers also refer to it. The footnotes of those who would remove the power of faith do not reference that Mark 16:9-20 is found in the Codices Alexandrinus, Washingtonensis, Ephraemi; and that it is also found in the Epistula Apostolorum, Tatians Diatessaron, Augustines Harmony of the Gospels, and that it was referred to at the 7th Council of Carthage, Aphraate's, Demonstration of Faith, Ambrose's Prayer of Job and David; along with other references that predate their beloved Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

Listen to the faith of one preacher Peter Chrysologus, who was Bishop of Ravenna in 433 A.D.: "In addition to this, the greatest indication of firm faith consists in the following signs. The devils, that is, the ancient foes, get exorcised from human bodies. One language intelligible in many others conies forth from one mouth. Serpents grasped in the name of Christ lose the power of their venom. Through Christ, cups of poison have no power to harm those who drink them. Bodily diseases are cured at the touch of one who preaches Christ. 'These signs,' He says, 'will attend those who believe: in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak in new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall get well.' Therefore, O man, be a physician to yourself through your faith, to keep from being forced to employ other physicians at your expense and to buy at great prices what you already have free of charge. Pray, brethren, that in the present life we may always be aware of the medicine of faith. Pray that when we are awaiting Christ and He is on the point of coming, we may be free from anxiety and exult because of our good conscience."

³¹ Oh what love, what amazing devotion exists within the heart of God - that He would come seeking us! God in His love has elected and called the whole world to come into His presence, and be His sons and daughters (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9; John 12:32; John 1:12; John 15:16). In His desperation to save us He pursues after us, and then stands pounding with urgency at the door of each person's heart (Revelation 3:20). Those who respond to Jesus receive the blessing of His abundant life and presence - taking up residence within their lives. We are called "sought out;" for the Lord pursued us with all His might (Isaiah 62:12). He laid aside all of His riches and majesty and became a servant: to bare away our sins and to take away our iniquities, to clean away all of our filthiness, and to make for us garments of righteousness (Isaiah

Luke 21

24- And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and they shall be led away captive into all nations and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled³².

Chapter 24

47 And that repentance³³ and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name unto all nations beginning at Jerusalem.

61:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 8:17). The Lord lifts up His voice calling and pleading with all mankind to come and receive the gift of life!

Unfortunately, many people do not realize that they are lost. Their comforts and false securities have deceived them into believing that they know what they are doing. The religious think that they can depend upon their religion, the wealthy think that they can depend upon their riches, the intellectual believes that they can depend upon their knowledge; but all these things will fail (Ezekiel 34:16; Jeremiah 9:23-24).

³² There have been those who have taught that this scripture will be fulfilled during the time of the Tribulation; but this is not the case. Israel as a nation will not be deported during the time of the Tribulation. They will possess a certain degree of power for the first three and a half years, and then in the last three and a half years they shall flee into the mountains of Israel and shall be protected by God (Revelation 11:3-6; 12:6; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:16).

The nation of Israel began to be deported from Israel in 70 A.D. by the Roman Empire, and by 132 A.D. there were comparatively very few Israelites remaining; and the nation of Israel ceased to exist. In 1948, the miracle of the rebirth of an extinct nation took place. Then by 1967, the occupied West Bank was delivered into the hands of the nation of Israel after the Six Day War. Some believe that we should mark 1948 as the day that Jerusalem was no longer trodden down by the Gentiles; and others believe it should be 1967. However, the fact remains that the Temple Mount is still occupied by an Islamic Mosque (The Dome of the Rock). When we consider the phrase 'trodden down' as referring to Jerusalem being desecrated, we must recognize that so long as The Dome of the Rock remains - Jerusalem is still in part being trodden down. In reality no matter how we approach this issue, we are surely living in the final days of the "Times of the Gentiles." These are the final days of God's pleading with the nations to repent. We know that the gospel of kingdom will be preached in all of the nations before the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled (Matthew 24:14). When the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled, God will turn His attention to the redemption of Israel as a people and a nation (Romans 11:25). The day of the Lord will not come as a surprise for those who are walking with the Lord, but those who act wickedly and refuse to walk in the light shall be snared with deception and destroyed by their own rebellion (1 Thessalonians 5:1-7; Daniel 12:6-7,10).

Jerusalem will be once again trodden down by the Gentiles when the Antichrist enters Jerusalem and desecrates the temple (Matthew 24:15; Daniel 8:13-14; 9:27; Daniel 11:31). This event will take place in the middle of the Seven Year Tribulation (Revelation 11:2; Daniel 8:13-14). This final period of desecration and Gentile domination of Jerusalem will be ended by the coming of the Lord Jesus with all of His saints, who will destroy the armies of the Antichrist and set up His capital in Jerusalem (Revelation 19:11-16; Zechariah 14:3-11; Obadiah 1:17,21; Ezekiel 37:26; 43:4-9; Psalm 132:13; Isaiah 2:1-3; Jeremiah 3:17).

³³ Repentance is the miracle of conversion. Repentance is a gift that is granted to us through the power of the preaching of the gospel. It is far more than remorse for wrong doing it is a complete transformation of nature. Through ones willingness to hear the good news and respond to the call of God a person is liberated from the powers of darkness and given divine ability to walk in joyous obedience to God. Whereas John the Baptist preached a repentance that demanded people to be baptized in repentance symbolized by an emersion in water Jesus preached a repentance that would cause those who responded to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. Repentance demanded a complete breaking with the past no matter how good or how evil a person may be. Repentance is an act of surrender to God, which is met with the power of salvation and the ability to do all that God has commanded. It is the destruction of the old and the bringing forth of

49- And behold I send the promise of My Father upon you but wait in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high³⁴

the new. It is conversion that causes a person to become like a little child. As a little child the once arrogant and independent person takes on a new nature of submission to and dependency upon God.

All preaching and every miracle is for the purpose of bringing men to repentance (Luke 5:8; Matthew 11:20). Repentance is essential in view of the coming kingdom of God and therefore was the message of Jesus and is the message of the church today (Mark 1:15; Luke 24:47).

³⁴ Jesus sent the glorious promise of the Father to rest upon the church, and to remain with the church throughout its existence: the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,26; 15:16; 16:7). It must grieve the heart of the Father so deeply that many who occupy the ranks of His church refuse to acknowledge the promise of the Father (John 7:38-39; Acts 1:8; 2:4). They refuse to acknowledge the position and activity of the One who has come to reveal and glorify Jesus (John 16:13-15). For the church to be the body of Christ, the manifestation of the living ministry of Jesus - it must by necessity be anointed with the same Holy Spirit that Jesus was empowered with (Acts 10:38; Luke 4:18; Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Acts 2:33; 1 Corinthians 12:7,11).

It certainly is hard to imagine that we would call ourselves the church yet refuse the ministry of Jesus, who baptizes His people in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; 19:4-6). How can anyone refuse this great honor and precious gift of God? We have been given the best teacher, guide, and mentor that could have ever been imagined: the Holy Spirit. He wants you to know Him. He wants to teach you all about Jesus and all about the ways of the Kingdom of God - won't you surrender to Him today and let Him lead you and tabernacle in your life? (Romans 8:14,16; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:16,25).