

# SALVATION ESSENTIALS



**Faith**  
**Reconciliation**  
**Redemption**  
**Sanctification**  
**Pentecost**  
**Guidance**  
**Healing**

## SALVATION ESSENTIALS

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## Divinity

Perhaps one of the first roles you ascribe to God is Creator. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Ge 1:1). God was present "before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world" (Ps 90:2). In Genesis the "Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Ge 1:2). Simultaneously "by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth" (Col 1:16). This was Jesus Christ who is "the image of the invisible God" (:15). Then God saw that everything "was very good" (Ge 1:31). This is all scriptural because it "is given by inspiration of God" (2Ti 3:16). "Prophecy of Scripture . . . [came as] holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2Pe 1:21). Some religious books may have stories about creation but they'd be mythological. However, astronomers have recently estimated how many billions of years old the universe is. Adam and Eve lived at a certain time but you can't necessarily ascertain when that was. The Bible refers to creation many times to emphasize its importance, reinforce your understanding, and build faith in God.

Psalms relate God's achievement. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host" (Ps 33:6). "He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever" (104:5). This is accomplished because "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength" (93:1). "The heavens are

telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (19:1). The psalmist reflects saying "I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and stars which You have ordained" (8:3). The theme continues in the New Testament. "Turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (Ac 14:15). "You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Rev 4:11). "He made from one man every nation of mankind" (Ac 17:26) and "gives to all people life and breath and all things" (:25). Isaiah recognizes "But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand" (Isa 64:8). Malachi says "Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us?" (Mal 2:10). It's part of a cooperative endeavor because "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). The purpose is "that they would seek God . . . [because] He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist" (Ac 17:27-28).

## **Revelation**

The book of Revelation begins with "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show" (Rev 1:1). It was the "testimony of Jesus Christ" (:2) and sent to John "who testified to the word of God" (:2). God had appeared to them in a "pillar of fire" (Ex 13:21) and "thick cloud" (19:9) which was to "give them light" (13:21) and so that they would "believe" (19:9). At Mt. Sinai God appeared with "thunder and lightning flashes . . . and a very loud

trumpet sound" (19:16) so the "people may hear" (:9). The Lord spoke to Moses, Aaron and Miriam (Nu 12:4) and they "came out" (:4) to the tent of meeting. Then God addressed Aaron and Miriam about speaking against Moses. They should have been more careful because when God speaks revealing himself you should pay attention.

How is it that you can hear and understand God? God had said, "Let Us make man in Our image" (Ge 1:26). "In the image of God He made man" (9:6). Being in the image does not mean having been cloned. It means "according to Our likeness" (1:26) as James states that we are men "who have been made in the likeness of God" (Jas 3:9). How it functions depends on God's sovereign purpose. "The Lord appeared to [Moses] in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush" (Ex 3:2). When Moses decided to investigate "the Lord saw that he turned aside" (:4) and spoke to him. If we are open to God he will reveal what he desires. Moses' situation was special because God said, "With him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the Lord" (Nu 12:8). As Christians we "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created" (Eph 4:24) and "is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col 3:10). God said through Jeremiah that "you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer 29:11). There is a general revelation available from nature and the works of God and special revelation through scripture (the

Living Word) and subjective experience which lines up with God's word. "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true . . . the true God and eternal life" (1Jn 5:20).

## **Spirit**

"God is spirit" (Jn 4:24). "No one has seen God at any time . . . [however, Jesus] has explained Him" (1:18). God "possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see" (1Ti 6:16). Isaiah said, "You are a God who hides Himself" (Isa 45:15). He is "invisible" (1Ti 1:17). God says, "I dwell on a high and holy place" (Isa 57:15). Zophar asked, "Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do?" (Job 11:7). How "unfathomable [are] His ways!" (Ro 11:33).

Why is God's revelation essential? It is because of the relationship with God man finds himself in since God had said "you will surely die" (Ge 2:17) if Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Even though God created man in his image and likeness and said "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High" (Ps 82:6) he also stated "Nevertheless you will die like men" (:6). The psalmist asked, "What is man that You take thought of him?" (Ps 8:4). Man is just a created being and "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'" (Ex 3:14) which shows the difference. "God is not a man" (Nu 23:19). Therefore man does not innately know about the divine. Jesus knew what was required when he asked, "Who do

you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15). Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (:16). Jesus recognized and said "flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (:17). Therefore the Lord has optimistically offered, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa 1:18). At the anthropological level God reaches out with analogical revelations to achieve a redemptive relationship.

## **Infinite**

God is omnipotent which means he is all-powerful. He has infinite capacity to accomplish what he wants and the authority to exercise that power. John expresses it with "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns" (Rev 19:6). "Job answered the Lord and said, 'I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted'" (Job 42:2). "He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have you done?'" (Da 4:35). "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?" (Mt 20:15). "You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?' On the contrary, who are you O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it?" (Ro 9:19-20). Jesus "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb 1:3). "Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'" (Mt 19:26). The Lord said to Abraham, "Is anything too

difficult for the Lord?" (Ge 18:14). Paul acknowledged that God was "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (Eph 3:20).

God is omniscient because he has infinite understanding of all things. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens" (Pr 3:19). "He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite" (Ps 147:4-5). "Who gave Him understanding . . . [or] taught Him knowledge? (Isa 40:14). God's ability is reflected in his knowledge, wisdom and understanding. "With Him are wisdom and might; to Him belong counsel and understanding" (Job 12:13). "Daniel said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him . . . He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.'" (Da 2:20-21). Wisdom is the joining of the knowledge of truth with experience in life. "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things" (:22). "For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you. Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding" (36:4-5). "In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will" (Eph 1:8-9).

God is omnipresent which means he is in all places at all times. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good" (Pr 15:3). "Where can I go from Your Spirit? "There is no creature hidden from His



sight" (Heb 3:13). Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lay hold of me" (Ps 139:7-10). Solomon exclaimed, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built?" (1Ki 8:27). "Am I a God who is near,' declares the Lord, 'and not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' declares the Lord" (Jer 23:23-24).

## **Sovereign**

God is unique. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!" (Dt 6:4). "There is no God but one" (1Co 8:4). Isaiah says "He is the God who formed the earth . . . to be inhabited" (Isa 45:18). God said "I am the Lord, and there is none else" (:18). Furthermore God says, "I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the Lord" (43:10-11). He directs to "turn to Me and be saved . . . for I am God, and there is no other" (45:22). There is "one body and one Spirit" (Eph 4:6) and "one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" (1Ti 2:5). We are to "turn from these vain things to a living God" (Ac 14:15) to "serve a living and true God" (1Th 1:9). "The Father has life in Himself" (Jn 5:26). You could "fall

into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31). There is also a "seal of the living God" (Rev 7:2).

God is sovereign. "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Ps 115:3). God is eternal (Ge 21:33; Dt 33:27). "Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Ps 90:2). You can depend on God. "I, the Lord, do not change" (Mal 3:6). With God "there is no variation or shifting shadow" (Jas 1:17). God always does what is right. "The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds" (Ps 145:17). "The sum of Your word is truth" (Ps 119:160). "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). God also protects. God is "their help and their shield" (Ps 115:9) and "our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble" (46:1). "He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2Th 3:3). "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but . . . will provide a way of escape also" (1Co 10:13). But we make mistakes. However, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jo 1:9).

## **Holy**

God is holy and you can trust him. "Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?" (Ex 15:11). "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy" (Rev 15:4). Holiness is to be separated from the commonplace or vulgar. Seraphim proclaim his holiness (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8).

"Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44) because without sanctification "no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). To be holy is being dedicated to God's purposes. God is the one "who sanctifies you" (Lev 20:8). However, "if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves" (1Jn 1:8). We do not rely on "a righteousness of my own" (Php 3:9) which is inadequate that "comes through the Law" (Gal 2:21). We depend on "the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Php 3:9). "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). God's righteousness is a perfect standard of right behavior. "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just" (Dt 32:4). He is "the Lord our righteousness" (Jer 23:6). "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne" (Ps 89:14). "I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the Lord." (Jer 9:24).

God is good. Jesus said, "There is only One who is good" (Mt 19:17). "The Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations" (Ps 100:5). "The Lord good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (Ps 145:9). "You are a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness" (Neh 9:17). God "because of His great love with which He loved us . . . made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:4-5). "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8). "I trust in the loving kindness of God forever and ever" (52:8). Therefore "give thanks to" (Ps 30:4) and "bless His holy name" (103:1).

## Trinity

*Triune* means three in unity. When it applies to God it pertains to three persons in one Godhead. The word *trinity* is not found in the Bible and the Old Testament does not directly teach it. However in Genesis God said, "Let Us make man in Our Image, according to Our likeness" (Ge 1:26). Then after man was created he said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil" (3:22). The Trinity is inferred by the use of the plural pronoun "us." Later God said, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech" (11:7). Then Isaiah "heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'" (Isa 6:8).

The three, equal members of the Trinity cooperate because they are one God. But tritheists believe that the three members of the Godhead are entirely separate and have individual hierarchical importance. Also, those who believe in Sabellianism say God takes the form called for at the time saying that there is only one God and no multiple personages. However, the Bible has passages which mention A) the Father and Jesus, B) the Father and Spirit, C) the Son and Spirit, and D) God, Holy Spirit and Christ. In the first case "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1). "Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His Son's name?" (Pr 30:4). "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'" (Ps 2:7).

Because "God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16) he "sent forth His Son" (Gal 4:4). Jesus says, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (Jn 6:38). Their relationship is such that "no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27). Then because of what was accomplished at the resurrection "whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1Jn 4:15). "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him" (Col 2:9). John said "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1Jn 1:3).

In the second case "the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God" (1Co 2:11). It is "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts" (Zec 4:6). The interrelationship is seen as when "the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders" (Nu 11:25). Nehemiah relates to the Father and Spirit by saying "You bore with them for many years, and admonished them by Your Spirit through your prophets" (Neh 9:30). "He who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you" (1Th 4:8). In the third case Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit" (Ro 1:4). Isaiah cites the Messiah and Spirit with "for He said, 'Surely they are My people but they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit'" (Isa 63:10). A unilateral example is when "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1Sa 16:13).

The Holy Spirit "intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Ro 8:27).

## Unity

God being collectively one is similar to Adam and Eve who would "become one flesh" (Ge 2:24). "God created man in His own image . . . male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27). It is like a puzzle. Without the other piece it would be incomplete. Each piece is different and the image would not be whole unless all is pieced together. "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise" (1Co 7:4) with the other partner. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct yet one in nature and character. Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). He said "the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (10:38) and "I and the Father are one" (:30). He also prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are" (17:11). Being one also means having a single mind and purpose. Jesus prayed "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one" (Jn 17:21-22). "Do you not know . . . that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price" (1Co 7:20).

Perhaps the Trinity is most clearly seen with all three working together with purpose. "For there are three

that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: these three are one" (1Jn 5:7 KJV). The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God" (Lk 1:35). "Now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit" (Isa 48:16). In Jesus' baptism "Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased'" (Mt 3:16-17). Jesus was in the water, the Father spoke from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove. All three are present and separate. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me" (Isa 61:1). Hebrews reports "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience?" (Heb 9:14). It is "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:2). Later Jesus applied this truth by saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). He also said, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:16-17). Paul offered "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Ro 15:16). Paul prayed "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and

the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2Co 13:14).

## **The Son of God**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (Jn 1:1). He is "the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father" (:18). He said to the Father, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24). Jesus said it was "the glory which I had with You before the world was" (:5). This was before the Creation. "He is before all things" (Col 1:7). Jesus has "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb 7:3). He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13). He is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). "I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am" (Jn 8:58). "In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col 2:9). This relationship is cited as having been predicted by a prophet regarding a Messiah being born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:4). The facts are scripturally correlated. The scriptures are "God-breathed" (2Ti 3:16) as the Spirit "carried along" (2Pe 1:21) the writers. What is written about Jesus is from the Spirit. God "has testified concerning His Son" (1Jn 5:9). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would "teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you" (Jn 14:26 NIV). That is why they had knowledge impossible to know otherwise. Jesus was "in the beginning with God" (1:2). "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (:3). "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the



earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands" (Heb 1:10). "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col 1:16). "The world was made through Him" (Jn 1:10). It is He "for whom are all things, and through whom are all things" (Heb 2:10).

## **Son of David**

Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Ge 3:6). One of God's responses was to the serpent. He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head" (:15). When you consider God had said to Adam, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (1:28), Eve's seed could be anyone. But God had a plan. Ultimately an angel announced that, "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Matthew records a "genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David" (Mt 1:1). "Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah" (:16). The name "Christ" means that God had anointed him supernaturally with power to accomplish what he had been assigned to do. It was further explained that "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Lk 1:32-33). Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" (Mt 22:42). They answered, "The son of David" (:42).

The Jews believed this because of what Nathan prophesied to King David that, "the Lord also declares to you that . . . I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2Sa 7:11-13). David prayed that God would "confirm it forever, and do as You have spoken" (:25). Even though there is no eschatological foundation in the Old Testament for a Davidic dynasty, Jews regarded the promise as God potentially returning to restore Israel's monarchy. There is a Hebrew word "mashah" which deals with anointing with oil. The word "mashiach" comes from it which refers to the "anointed one" who would become this messianic king. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ" (Ac 17:3).

Peter explained "that God had sworn to [David] with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne" (Ac 2:30). "He was a prophet" (:30) and predicted "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Ps 16:10). "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets" (Am 3:7). Peter said that David "looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ" (Ac 2:31). "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses" (:32). He also said that Jesus was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (:23). God's plan is cited by Matthew (Mt 1:22-23) when he quotes the prophecy "the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name

Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). Matthew also speaks of the prophecy regarding the Messiah being born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:6) quoting "from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2).

## **Christ and Lord**

At Corinth Paul began "solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (Ac 18:5). The angel had said "there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). He was "born for you." Mary was told "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Scripture says Jesus is Lord. Jesus confessed, "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am" (Jn 13:13). Peter stated "that God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2:36). "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Php 2:11). When a person is referred to as a "lord" it means he occupies a supreme place.

When Peter explains Jesus' position he shows "having been exalted to the right hand of God . . . [he] received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Ac 2:33). Being exalted would be occupying a "supreme place" and he can be referred to as "Lord." To prove it Peter explains that from Jesus' position "He has poured forth this which you both see and hear" (:33). This is substantiated because he quotes "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind" (Joe 2:28). Even Jesus refers to prophecy to make a point. He asks

the Pharisees, "How does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,'" (Mt 22:43) for "if David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" (:45). The reference is "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Ps 110:1). Jesus was proving that he was the Messiah and "no one was able to answer Him a word" (Mt 22:46).

Part of Jesus' assignment was "to teach and preach in the cities" (Mt 11:1). But he told them, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (Jn 7:16). This is not to conclude that he was just a messenger. After the resurrection he declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). "All things that the Father has are Mine" (Jn 16:15). Jesus had told them to wait until he sent the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49) "whom the Father will send in My name" (Jn 14:26). Jesus told them "when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (16:13). All scripture is true. "He who sent Me is true" (8:26). Jesus said that the Spirit "will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak" (16:13). Jesus had said "the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world" (8:26). He said that the Spirit would "glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you" (16:14). Jesus always gave God credit. When he quoted Exodus 20:12 he said it was the "commandment of God" (Mt 15:3) and that "God said" (:4) it. When he quoted Exodus 3:6 he said it was "spoken to you by God" (22:31). When teaching he asked "have you not read?" (19:4) and declared they were "not understanding the Scriptures" (22:29). He quoted

Deuteronomy 8:3 to prove, "It is written" (Lk 4:4) and Isaiah 29:13 to emphasize Isaiah's prophecy (Mk 7:6). He knew that the "Jews ask for signs" (1Co 1:22) so he gave them the "sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mt 12:39). He also quoted Psalm 110:1 as an example of an Old Testament anointing where "David himself said in the Holy Spirit" (Mk 12:36). This confirms that, "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (Jn 14:26). "I did not come to abolish [the Law] but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). "My words will not pass away" (24:35).

## **God is Faithful**

Being faithful means following through on a promise you've made. "The Lord is not slow about His promise . . . not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "He who promised is faithful" (Heb 10:23). However, we must "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering" (:23). By faith Sarah had Isaac because "she considered Him faithful who had promised" (11:11). "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1Th 5:24). It is the way God is. It is his name. John said, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True" (Rev 19:11). He "made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever" (Ps 146:6). "In the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness" (Ps 89:2). "The witness in the sky is faithful" (89:37).

You are faithful when a friend knows he can depend on you for help. She should be "faithful to her husband" (1Ti 5:9 NIV). "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps His covenant" (Dt 7:9). She is "your wife by covenant" (Mal 3:14) so "do not break faith" (:15 NIV). "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2Ti 2:13). "Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David" (Isa 55:3). "All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Ps 25:10). Deuteronomy 7:9 also says God "keeps His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments." Faith and love go together. "My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him" (Ps 89:24). "The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness" (La 3:22-23).

God's faithfulness is manifested. "I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; for You have worked wonders, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness" (Isa 25:1). "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He" (Dt 32:4). "The word of the Lord is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness" (Ps 33:4). We are the recipient of God's work, but it is a two-way street. "Those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (1Pe 4:19). "My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the

land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me" (Ps 101:6). Therefore "the Lord preserves the faithful" (Ps 31:23).

## **God is Compassionate**

Moses desired to know more about God (Ex 33:18). God answered "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you" (:19). He already knew Moses "by name" (:17). Consequently "the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin'" (34:6-7). When God said he would declare his name he also stated "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on who I will show compassion" (33:19). God understands when someone is going through a trial and in his concern he endeavors to alleviate suffering. He is sympathetic and considerate and desires to demonstrate kindness. He expects us to practice it too. Jesus taught "go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE'" (Mt 9:13). Furthermore Jesus said "if you had known what this means . . . you would not have condemned the innocent" (12:7). Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 where "compassion" is translated from "mercy" (NIV) and "loyalty" (NASB).

How does God accomplish his purposes? How would humans even comprehend? God is "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph 3:20). Isaiah 55:9 says "My ways [are] higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." "He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end" (Ecc 3:11). God does "great things which we cannot comprehend" (Job 37:5). In his "hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (12:10). It does not depend on man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy" (Ro 9:16). God works through people despite their predispositions. Lot and his family were saved because "the compassion of the Lord was upon him" (Ge 19:16). "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Ro 8:28). God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but . . . will provide a way of escape" (1Co 10:13). God made Israel "objects of compassion before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them" (1Ki 8:50). "God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials" (Da 1:9).

### **God is Gracious**

Gracious and compassionate applies to God (Ex 34:6). Many scriptures pair the two terms together (Ex 33:19; 2Ch 30:9; Ne 9:31; Ps 102:13,112:4; Isa 30:18; Joel 2:13; Jnh 4:2). To be gracious is to be benevolent,



congenial and loving. To be compassionate is to be charitable, kindhearted and merciful. These characteristics are the motivation for everything God does. Jesus told Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). When Jesus saw "the people, He felt compassion for them" (Mt 9:36) and was "moved with compassion" (Mt 20:34, Mk 1:41). They cried to God "in their time of distress [and he] heard from heaven, and according to [his] great compassion gave them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors" (Ne 9:27).

Another term paired with "compassion" in the Bible is "lovingkindness" (Ne 13:22; Ps 25:6,40:11, 69:16, 103:4,106:45-46,119:76-77; Isa 54:7-10; Jn 4:2). Paul said to "put on a heart of compassion" (Col 3:12). Love is the main ingredient. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:36). Paul said "if there is any consolation of love, . . . if any affection and compassion . . . [be] of the same mind, maintaining the same love" (Php 2:1-2). Jesus said, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love" (Jn 15:9). "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (:13).

The Lord proclaimed further that it is he "who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin" (Ex 34:7). "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness" (Da 9:9). "The Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (Jas 5:11). "He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them" (Ps 78:38). "He who confesses and

forsakes [his transgressions] will find compassion" (Pr 28:13). Therefore "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph 4:32 NIV).

## **God Judges and Is Just**

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (Gal 6:7). God has built a cause-and-effect into life which automatically judges. "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near" (Dt 32:35). "I will repay", says the Lord" (Ro 12:19). "God is not one to show partiality" (Ac 10:34). There is "no injustice with God" (Ro 9:14). He is "the one who impartially judges according to each one's work" (1Pe 1:17). "We know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things" (Ro 2:2). "How unsearchable are His judgments" (Rev 15:3). "Righteous and true are your ways" (:3).

What you do makes a difference because it determines whether you will "inherit the kingdom" (Mt 25:34). What qualifies is if you help feed, clothe and house people, and visit people when they are sick or in prison (:35-36). They "were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds" (Rev 20:12). It should make one take notice that his actions are actually recorded. "Whatever good thing each one does, he will receive back from the Lord" (Eph 6:8). "You recompense a man according to his work" (Ps 62:12).

Paul quotes this regarding "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" (Ro 2:5-6). Jesus says "My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Rev 22:12). "By perseverance in doing good . . . [you receive] eternal life" (Ro 2:7). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (3:16). But "He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life" (1Jn 5:12).

God is "the Judge of all" (Heb 12:23) but "not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son" (Jn 5:22). He is "the One who has been appointed by God a Judge of the living and the dead" (Ac 10:42). "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Ro 2:16). "There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known" (Lk 12:2). Is there a time for this? "We will all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Ro 14:10). "He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Ac 17:31). "Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" (:30). He "is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "He ordered [the

Apostles] to preach to the people and solemnly to testify" (Ac 10:42) about it. "The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven . . . dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2Th 1:7-8). "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish" (Jn 10:27-28). "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2). However, "He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Mt 25:41).

## **Judgment**

Is God's judgment complicated because there are so many different people and religions? Perhaps it can be simplified to just the Jew and the Gentile. God "desires all men to be saved" (1Ti 2:4). It is evaluated when we all "appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2Co 5:10). "All the nations will be gathered before Him" (Mt 25:32). It is "on the day when . . . God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Ro 2:16). God has clearly revealed his divinity and power such that it is obvious and "they are without excuse" (1:20) if they don't concur. This is at the "great white throne" (Rev 20:11). "The dead were judged

from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds" (:12). "He will separate them from one another" (Mt 25:32) and "say to those on His right, 'Come . . . inherit the kingdom'" (:34) and "those on His left, 'Depart from Me'" (:41). "Those who did the good deeds [will go] to a resurrection of life, [and] those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment " (Jn 5:29). We know God is fair because he "does not show partiality" (Dt 10:17) and "in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him" (Ac 10:34-35).

Judgment and reward are synonymous because "My reward is with Me" (Rev 22:12). God will "render to every man according to what he has done" (:12). He will "search the heart, . . . test the mind . . . [and] give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds" (Jer 17:10). Each will "be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done" (2Co 5:10). There are principles God judges by. "Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:7-8).

## **Man Created**

On the sixth day "God created man in His own image" (Ge 1:27) in "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). "It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it" (Isa 45:12). "It was Adam who was first created" (1Ti 2:13) and

in Hebrew his name means "humanity." In an extended sense the word "flesh" is also humanity. The human race inherits from Adam for, "as in Adam all" (1Co 15:22), applies to everyone. "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Ge 1:31). Therefore it cannot be concluded that man is inherently sinful.

When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden he "commanded the man" (Ge 2:16) "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (:17). It was not said that "you will drop dead" as if it was poisonous. So to die must mean that death was not part of God's scheme of things, but it would transpire if Adam was disobedient. "The Lord fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man" (Ge 2:22) and they "were both naked and were not ashamed" (:25). However, Eve "took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (3:6). "It was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1Ti 2:14). Transgression is defined as lawlessness and it is against God's instruction because God asked, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Ge 3:11). But when they ate of the fruit of the tree "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked so they . . . made coverings for themselves" (3:7). They had "become like one of us knowing good and evil" (:22). Did they know being naked as good or evil? They didn't feel shame before, but it seems they did now. They had to replace the innocence of their previous condition with a covering and God, himself, had to make

"garments of skin for Adam and his wife" (:21). In Laodicea they didn't know that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and **naked**" (Rev 3:17). God advises "buy from me . . . white garments that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your **nakedness** may not be revealed" (3:18).

What had Adam done? He was "the one who sinned" (Ro 5:16). What is sin? It is a "transgression" (:15) or "offense" (:15 KJV). It is also a "trespass" (:15 RSV). You've seen signs saying "NO TRESPASSING." "God commanded...you shall not eat" (Ge 2:16-17). But Adam violated the command. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). The result was "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (:12). But others "had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam" (:14). Then "death spread to all men" (:12) because "in Adam all die" (1Co 15:22). Sin is the culprit because "the sting of death is sin" (1Co 15:56). "The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23). Therefore "sin reigned in death" (5:21) and "death reigned" (:17). "Death works in us" (2Co 4:12). One might respond that everyone has to die naturally anyway. But you should consider "him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14).

## **Repent from Sin**

How would you answer a person who asked, "Why would I have to repent if I didn't sin like Adam?" (Ro 5:14). Adam sinned because he broke God's commandment (Ge

2:17). He disobeyed (even rebelled) because he was not deceived (1Ti 2:14). Perhaps he ate the fruit Eve gave him because he just wanted to keep her happy. Maybe he rationalized that death would be only a temporary disciplinary action. It's possible he considered knowing more and becoming wiser would be worth it. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). It's as though we, as descendants, have inherited the "original sin." Since "by a man came death" (1Co 5:21), through solidarity with Adam, "death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Ro 5:12). "Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant" (Hosea 6:7). Our guilt is imputed in a legal way as if a contract has been violated and a judgment has taken place because the ground has been cursed (Ge 3:17-18). This is the Adamic Covenant where Adam, as the representative of the human race, causes God to introduce physical death saying, "You [will] return to the ground, because from it you were taken" (:19). Others may say that Adam's nature became corrupted by the sin and that we inherit the corruption and sin automatically (Ro 5:19). Calvinists believe that we are incapable of being spiritually saved except for God's grace. So if you repent for these reasons you acknowledge that "through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous" (:19).

"Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" (Ac 17:30). The Holy Spirit convicts "the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me" (Jn



16:8-9). John the Baptist began preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2). The purpose of it was "for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4). It is because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). Then "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mk 1:14-15). Paul said, "Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" (Ac 17:30). Isaiah said to "turn from transgression" (Isa 59:20) and Ezekiel said to tell him to "turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way" (Eze 3:19). Paul said "the Lord will . . . bring to an end . . . the activity of Satan . . . with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth to be saved" (2Th 2:8-10). The disciples told Jesus about the Galileans who Pilate had killed. He replied, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:3). To perish means to die or be destroyed. God said to Ezekiel, "Warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live" (Eze 3:18). Jesus said, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). Also, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish" (10:28). The Lord is "patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "Do you not think . . . that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Ro 2:4). "The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation" (2Co 6:10). It is "repentance toward God" (Ac 20:21).

## Sin and Death

Some might say that the rendition of Adam and Eve is just a metaphor because evolution proves otherwise. But God said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife . . . cursed is the ground because of you" (Ge 3:17). "By a man came death" (1Co 15:21) and "you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:3). Death is firstly interpreted as physical death. "Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death" (Heb 11:5). "It is appointed for men to die once" (9:27).

Sin is the reason for the problem. You are "dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). Consequently you "shall be condemned" (Mk 16:16) and therefore must be "saved from wrath" (Ro 5:9). Sin contributes to the inevitable. It is "cause and effect" because it's a "law of sin and of death" (8:2). "The outcome of those things is death" (6:21) since there "is a sin leading to death" (1Jn 5:16). It is said we live in the flesh. However, "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die" (Ro 8:13). "The mind set on the flesh is death" (8:6). "With my flesh [I serve] the law of sin" (7:25) "resulting in death" (6:16). "While we were in the flesh, the sinful passions . . . were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death" (7:5).

Paul was acutely aware of sin. "Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh" (Ro 8:5). "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (:8). He made it clear that it wasn't just his opinion of

what sin is. In fact, even though "sin was in the world . . . [it was] not imputed" (5:13) before the law. "Apart from the Law sin is dead" (7:8). "I would not have come to know sin except through the Law" (:7). It was a "commandment, which was to result in life" (:10) by way of a "ministry . . . in letters engraved on stones" (2Co 3:7). "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase" (Ro 5:20). Therefore "the Law is spiritual" (7:14).

This behavior is explained as man's "flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24). It could be said that man's human nature is physical, sensuous and earthy. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). Man's flesh is but "a wind that passes and does not return" (Ps 78:39). "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades" (Isa 40:6-7). He continues with "the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these" (Gal 5:19-21).

Paul concludes by saying "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Ro 7:18). "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9). He states "no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" (:17). Sin reigns "in your mortal body" (6:12) and is a "body of death" (7:24). "The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin" (Gal 3:22) "making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is

in my members" (Ro 7:23). The "pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25) "easily entangles" (12:1) and sin can become "master over you" (Ro 6:14). It has "lusts" (:12) and "coveting of every kind" (7:8). You can be "led into" (2Co 11:29) and "caught in any trespass" (Gal 6:1). Then you can "be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13).

## Wrath

Is God angry at the world? On the contrary, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn 3:16). However, it happened that "every intent of the thoughts of . . . [man's] heart was only evil continually" (6:5). So God "was sorry that He had made man on the earth" (:6). It is not a matter of retribution because "God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world" (Jn 3:17). God sent "the Son into the world . . . that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn 3:17). John saw the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). Jesus "will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Your sins will be "wiped away" (Ac 3:19) because "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). The "Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10). Jesus said "'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE', for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9:13).

In society there is a penalty to pay when someone has transgressed the law. It is a legal matter of "judgment" (Jn 5:24). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). "'The life of the flesh is in the blood . . . for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes

atonement” (Lev 17:11). God anticipated this because Christ “was foreknown before the foundation of the world” (1Pe 1:20) and “His works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb 4:3). Therefore Christ became “the Lamb that was slain” (Rev 5:12) “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10). Christ “gave himself as a ransom for all” (1Ti 2:6). “There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men” (1Ti 2:5). “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Ac 4:12). “Besides Me there is no savior” (Isa 43:11). Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (Jn 14:6).

“If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Ro 8:13). If you live then does that mean you won't die? That isn't the context, for another interpretation of death is that you are not alive spiritually. “You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die” (Rev 3:1-2). “I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich” (:18). “Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief” (:3) and “remove your lampstand out of its place” (2:5). God both gives and takes. Realistically speaking “to live is Christ” (Php 1:21) and “in Christ all will be made alive” (1Co 15:22). Since “Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness” (Ro 8:10).

## Be Transformed

Why is it necessary to repent from sin? Sin originated in the Garden of Eden. God had commanded Adam, "From the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Ge 2:17). But Eve "took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (3:6). However "it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1Ti 2:14). Transgression is defined as lawlessness and it is against God's instruction because God asked, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Ge 3:11). Consequently the sin had to be dealt with. The serpent was "more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (:1) and deceived Eve (:1-5). God told him Eve's seed "shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (:15). This person who was promised was the seed of Abraham "that is, Christ" (Gal 3:16) because "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Ge 22:18). Christ came "to destroy the works of the devil" (1Jn 3:8). Christ died that "He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14). This was all necessary because Adam was "the one who sinned" (Ro 5:16) and "by a man came death" (1Co 15:21), but "in Christ all shall be made alive" (:22).

"In Adam all die" (1Co 15:22). Paul says "you were dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth,

and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Ge 6:5). These are the works of the devil that Christ had to overcome. Humans are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph 2:3) because they live in a worldly way "according to the prince of the power of the air" (:2). We "lived in the lusts of our flesh" (:3) and a person who indulges in "the desires of the flesh and mind" (:3) "is dead even while she lives" (1Ti 5:6). When Paul became aware of sin through the Law he said "it killed me" (Ro 7:11). But there is a way to "save his soul from death" (Ja 5:20). "When we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:5). Jesus said, "You have no life in yourselves" (Jn 6:53) so we are saved "according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Ro 12:2). "Repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away" (Ac 3:19). God accomplishes this because he said, "I will put My Spirit within you" (Eze 36:27). John said that Jesus "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mt 3:11). "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17). "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn 3:6). We are "born again to a living hope" (1Pe 1:3) "through the living and enduring word of God" (:23).

## **Heaven or Hell?**

People say "I'm a good person. I even believe there is a God. If there is a hell I wouldn't go there because I'm not a bad person." So where would you fit in with

Romans 1:18 which says “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”? Supposedly you wouldn’t suffer God’s wrath if you weren’t godless or wicked. What does “godless” mean? If you didn’t believe in God then that would qualify. But James 2:19 says that even “the demons also believe, and shudder.” Does that qualify them as being a friend of God free from God’s wrath? By definition they are not in that category even though they are familiar with God.

The goal is to get to heaven, but how? If you know the proprietor then you would be allowed entry. The key is knowing God. It must be in a personal way, otherwise, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME" (Mt 7:23). It is possible because Romans 1:19 talks of "that which is known about God." It is the "truth of God" (:25) and is "understood" (:20). Daniel 12:4 says in the last days "knowledge will increase." Since God "made the heavens with skill" (Ps 136:5) does man know God by intelligence and reason? That is not possible because to make the leap from the physical to the eternal requires God's revelation. "God made it evident to them . . . since the creation of the world" (Ro 1:19-20). "His invisible attributes . . . have been clearly seen . . . through what has been made so that they are without excuse" (:20). This includes "His eternal power and divine nature" (:20). This revelation is "faith [which] comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (10:17). In Greek it is "rhema" which means the "Living Word" or God himself speaking. It



operates continually for "I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer 31:3).

## **Provision**

"Since the creation . . . [God is] clearly seen" (Ro 1:20). That "they knew God" (:21) you get the impression that it was the default condition of man to know him. However, Romans 1:18-32 explains that God's wrath is directed against the unrighteous. According to Paul they didn't start out that way. Does this discuss man's downhill slide from the beginning or is it a picture of every person's potential journey established by choosing his own fate? In a negative sense it is God's wrath one would wish to avoid, but in a positive way it is being saved by Jesus' provision which insulates from wrath. The question is where is our starting point? Are we inherently righteous because it says that man knew God from creation? If that was the case then if someone didn't spoil his own inherent righteousness God would rescue him regardless even though he hadn't heard the Gospel. But the Bible doesn't say that. It says in Romans 5:19 that "through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." If men are inherently sinful then they must be saved regardless of whether they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18) or not.

What constitutes the backsliding Paul relates which a conscientious person would endeavor to avoid? They didn't apply their knowledge since "they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks" (Ro 1:21). It was a deliberate

decision because “they did not see fit to acknowledge God” (:28). They “suppress the truth” (:18). They “exchanged the glory” (:23) and “the truth of God for a lie” (:25). In their pride they claimed “to be wise” (:22) and “worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (:25). By their behavior they sealed their own fate. When they “became futile in their speculations” (:21) it gave “birth to sin . . . [which] brings forth death” (Jas 1:15). Therefore God “gave them over” (Ro 1:24, 26, 28) to the desires of their hearts. “Their foolish heart was darkened” (:21) in the form of “impurity” (:24) and “degrading passions” (:26) which are acts of sexual indecency. They received “in their own persons the due penalty of their error” (:27). Finally “God gave them over to a depraved mind” (:28) and worse things happened. This would bring into question the doctrine of eternal security. If they didn't “hold fast . . . until the end” (Heb 3: 6) then they wouldn't be saved.

## **Consequences**

How do you qualify to get to heaven? “Not everyone . . . will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father” (Mt 7:21). God will give “to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life” (Ro 2:7). “The judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things” (2:2). There is “the truth of God” (1:25). Therefore following the truth is essential. What do you think the destiny of those who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (1:18), “exchanged the truth of God for a

lie" (:25), and "do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness" (2:8) will be? There will be "wrath and indignation . . . tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil" (:8-9). You take the wrong direction when you don't "honor Him as God or give thanks" (1:21). When you claim "to be wise" (:22) yourself and do "not see fit to acknowledge God any longer" (:28) you become "selfishly ambitious" (2:8). "It flatters him in his own eyes . . . [and] he has ceased to be wise and to do good" (Ps 36:2-3). You serve instead "the creature rather than the Creator" (1:25) and your "heart was darkened" (:21). "You are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of . . . the righteous judgment of God" (2:5). Their "end will be according to their deeds" (2Co 11:15). But if you go the right direction there will be "glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good" (Ro 2:10).

The Jew has the Law, so you might say God judges them that way since "the doers of the Law will be justified" (Ro 2:13). Also, "all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law" (:12). Then, Gentiles who do not have the law but "have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law" (:12). In addition, "if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?" (:26). What about a person who does NOT "suppress the truth (Ro 1:18)", has NOT "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image" (:23), and has NOT "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (:25)? They would be Gentiles who "do instinctively the things of the Law . . . [which are] a law to themselves" (Ro 2:14). It would "show

the work of the Law written in their hearts" (:15). When "God made it evident to them" (Ro 1:19) it was to their heart. "God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (Ro 12:3). Even Paul recognized that he "received [his revelation] from the Lord (1Co 11:23) and he "received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12). Therefore "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve" (Jos 24:15). You don't receive salvation by osmosis. Be careful because "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2Co 4:4).

## **Born Again**

Two characters in the Bible were concerned about the consequences of what they had heard. Nicodemus was "a ruler of the Jews" (Jn 3:1) and Jesus concurred saying he was a "teacher of Israel" (:10). The Jews had the Torah but "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:4). Jesus said to him "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3). Jesus also had a rich young man come to him and ask "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mk 10:17). He was like Nicodemus and said "I have kept all these things from my youth up" (:20). But Jesus' solution was "go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (:21).

There are specific instructions to accomplish this. You must:

- “He who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion” (Pr 28:13).
- “Repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away” (Ac 3:19).
- Be “converted and become like children” (Mt 18:3).
- “He who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk 18:14).
- “Him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God” (Ps 50:23).
- “Depart from evil and do good, so you will abide forever” (Ps 37:27).
- “He who practices the truth comes to the Light” (Jn 3:21).

Salvation is available because:

- “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).
- “He who believes in the Son has eternal life” (Jn 3:36).
- “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved” (Mk 16:16).
- “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Ac 16:31).
- “Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins” (Ac 10:43).
- “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (Jn 1:12).

## Gospel

Yard sales are popular. You hear about them in the newspaper or from signs on the street. Salvation is popular, but unless you hear about it, you can't find it. "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Ac 4:12). Therefore "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED" (Ro 10:13). For if they don't know about Jesus Christ then they can't call upon his name, and since there is "no other name" (Ac 4:12) they can't be saved and go to heaven. In fact the gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Ro 1:16). Without access to it, salvation is scripturally impossible.

One might say that this is easier said than done. Even Jesus said "it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:23). The disciples responded, "Then who can be saved?" (:25). Jesus replied, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (:26). Jesus instructs "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed" (Mt 8:13). "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mk 9:23).

Romans 10:8-18 summarizes Paul's message. The fact that "the word is . . . in your heart" (Ro 10:8) is equivalent to being "within them" (1:19). "The word of faith which we are preaching" (10:8) has gone to "the ends of the world" (:18). The verse quotes "the heavens are telling of the glory of God" (Ps 19:1). God's "invisible attributes,

His eternal power and divine nature . . . [are] understood through what has been made” (Ro 1:20). According to Paul it is now “their voice” (10:18) and “their words” (:18) instead of the heavens doing the preaching. So if someone has “never heard” (10:18) the message he will not have the “faith” (:17) to “call upon the name of the Lord” (:13). If you have the message and “if you confess . . . and believe . . . [in Jesus] you shall be saved” (:9).

You must hear:

- It is “the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph 1:13).
- “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching” (Jn 7:17).
- “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2Ti 3:16).
- It has been “written so that you may believe” (Jn 20:31).
- It is the “power of God for salvation” (Ro 1:16).
- He has “brought us forth by the word of truth” (Jas 1:18).
- It is the “living and enduring word of God” (1Pe 1:23).

## **Believe**

There’s a saying “seeing is believing.” However, Jesus said “you have seen Me and yet do not believe” (Jn 6:36). “He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6). “Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Ro 10:9). How do you hear with your

heart? “If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him” (Rev 3:20). Communication is “inspired by God” (2Ti 3:16). “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit” (Ro 8:16). When Peter heard, Jesus said, “flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17). It is by “faith which comes through Him” (Ac 3:16). “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Ro 10:17). Therefore it is “by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8-9). But when you hear the sayings you must “act on them” (Mt 7:26). Otherwise you will be like “those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved” (Lk 8:12).

Believing is positive and not passive. It reflects that you are a “new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2Co 5:17). You have been delivered from “the domain of darkness, and transferred . . . to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col 1:13). It is essential that it be expressed. “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (1Jn 4:15). Confession is made “resulting in salvation” (Ro 10:10). “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven” (Mt 10:32).

By a deliberate decision you “believed” (Eph 1:13), “received” (Jn 1:12) and were “reconciled to God” (Ro 5:10). You have “redemption through His blood” (Eph 1:7). Redemption is the price paid to ransom you from slavery to



sin. The Father “will pass over you” (Ex 12:13) and “you were sealed in Him” (Eph 1:13) because you profess dependence upon the “covering” of the blood of Christ for your life. You are no longer bound by your tendency to commit sin. You “have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10) and “reconciled to God through the death of His Son” (Ro 5:10).

## **Reconciliation**

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa 53:6). Since man couldn't help himself God decided to solve the problem. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn 3:16) as a propitiation. He was “revealed” (1Ti 3:16) and sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Ro 8:3), "has come in the flesh" (1Jn 4:2), and was made "in the likeness of men" (Php 2:7) as a "descendant of David" (Ro 1:3). He “was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification” (Ro 4:25). God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf” (2Co 5:21) and he was "offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). "He died to sin once for all" (Ro 6:10) and "condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3). Therefore "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:11). We are “always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” (2Co 4:10). Because of what Christ accomplished “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God” (Gal 2:20). Paul said "I

have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (:20).

It appears as though you're leading a double life. But that's not a good thing because "a double-minded man, [is] unstable in all his ways" (Jas 1:8). Therefore you have to stay focused. "The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Ro 8:6). "Set your mind on the things above" (Col 3:2). "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Ro 12:2). "As He is, so also are we in this world" (1Jn 4:17) and, of course, He is in heaven. To put it into practice we "present yourselves to God . . . as instruments of righteousness" (Ro 6:13). "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col 3:23). Even the twenty-four elders didn't take credit for what they did because they "cast their crowns before the throne" (Rev 4:10). It is a matter of perspective giving credit to God who created it all. John said "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). "If we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord" (Ro 14:8).

## **Promise**

How God justifies today is based upon how he declared Abraham righteous. God promised Abraham "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Ge 22:18). God referenced the stars and stated "So shall your descendants be" (Ge 15:5). "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (:6). His hope was in the promise and his faith was in "the

assurance of things hoped for" (Heb 11:1). Abraham had "the faith . . . that he might be the father of all who believe" (Ro 4:11). He believed that God was "able also to perform" (:21) it. Then God's ability produced Isaac and Abraham became "heir of the world" (:13).

There is more to this promise than meets the eye. It was also made to "'your seed,' that is, Christ" (Gal 3:16). "Scripture . . . preached the gospel beforehand" (:8) in the Old Testament which was a "covenant previously ratified by God" (:17). That is why it is not a blanket promise to heirs of the Jewish race as "to seeds" (:16) but rather to "the seed [who] would come to whom the promise had been made" (:19). The promise is the "blessing of Abraham which might come to the Gentiles" (:14). "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (:29). The promise is "given to those who believe" (:22). "It is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham" (:7), "blessed with Abraham, the believer" (:9), and ultimately "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (:26). This is the promise of the gospel which says "he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and . . . has passed out of death into life" (Jn 5:24). We therefore "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal 3:14). The righteousness of God is revealed "through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (Ro 3:22). This results in justification and being written in the "book of life" (Rev 20:15).

## Justification

What is justification composed of? You are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness" (Ro 3:24-25). Christ gave "His life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28) and therefore "in Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). If you believe that he is the "propitiation for our sins" (1Jn 2:2) then "by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works" (Eph 2:8-9). You become "the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). God justifies you by declaring you righteous because you believe that Christ accomplished something for you since you couldn't do it yourself. To him who "believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Ro 4:5). Crediting is an accounting term denoting transferring value to someone's account. God deposits Christ's righteousness to your account if you believe which results in justification. In addition, just as Abraham was circumcised "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1:13). God "gave to us the Spirit as a pledge" (2Co 5:5). The goal becomes being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro 8:29). This is accomplished "through sanctification by the Spirit" (2Th 2:13). "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God" (Rev 2:7).

## **Gives Eternal Life**

In nature a person tries to survive. Even Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Are you supposed to do anything necessary to survive? Jesus warns, "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it" (Mt 16:25). There was a situation in Smyrna where Jesus instructed through John, "You will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10). This "momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2Co 4:17). It depends upon your perspective. "Things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Co 4:18). "The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:8). "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2Co 5:1). So our focus should be on eternal things.

The "free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (5:11). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). Christ "died for sins once for all" (1Pe 3:18). "Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9). Therefore "he who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life" (Jn 3:36). Jesus cautioned the Jews, "You think that in [the Scriptures] you have

eternal life . . . [but] you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life" (5:39-40).

## **Imparts Immortality**

God "alone possesses immortality" (1Ti 6:16).

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8).

He "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1Ti 1:10). How do you pursue and possess eternal life? "Those who by perseverance in

doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Ro 2:7). "Fight the good fight of faith; take

hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1Ti 6:12).

"He who hates his life in this world will keep it to life

eternal" (Jn 12:25). "There is no one who has left [house, family, business] . . . for My sake and for the gospel's sake,

but that he will receive a hundred times as much now . . .

and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mk 10:29-30). "The

dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed .

. . . for this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:52-53).

Eternal life is having a relationship with God.

Moses spoke to God face to face. "Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take off the

veil until he came out" (Ex 34:34). "Whenever a person

turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2Co 3:16). When

Christ was resurrected "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mt 27:51). It is "a hope both sure

and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb

6:19). "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the

throne of grace" (4:16). It is a proactive decision. James

said, "Do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles" (Ac 15:19). "Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is the 'day of salvation'" (2Co 6:2).

## **Redeemed Us**

Early church councils determined that Jesus was one with the Father, and as incarnated, was of the same essence as human beings. They described it as a hypostatic union. The spirit of man is mentioned in the New Testament, and on the cross, Jesus cried out, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Lk 23:46). Humans have a soul. Paul said "may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete" (1Th 5:23). In Gethsemane Jesus exclaimed, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death" (Mt 26:38). Hebrews explains "He had to be made like his bretheren in all things" (2:16) being "tempted in all things as we are" (4:15). He shared in an existential humanity as experienced by normal people and was not given an "ideal" humanity where he would be immune from temptation. "Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (2:14). He "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us" (Col 2:14). An elder said, "The Root of David, has overcome" (Rev 5:5). Jesus said, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades" (1:18).

When you redeem something you buy it back as if retrieving it from a pawnshop. We've all seen movies where someone is kidnapped and a ransom is demanded. There is a price for releasing a captive. Mankind has been in bondage to sin. But Jesus "became a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) and we are "bought with a price" (1Co 6:20). His "death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (Heb 9:15) and it is he "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14). He is the "one mediator also between God and man . . . who gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5-6). We are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Ro 3:24). "In Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). "You were not redeemed with perishable things . . . but with precious blood" (1Pe 1:19). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12).

### **God Guaranties**

God has "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works" (2Ti 1:9). Israel didn't apprehend it because "they did not pursue it by faith, as though it were by works" (Ro 9:31). "Seeking to establish their own [righteousness], they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (10:3). "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph 1:4). He called us "according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2Ti 1:9).



Jesus "was foreknown before the foundation of the world" (1Pe 1:19). But don't "neglect so great a salvation" (Heb 2:3). At a banquet there was a person "not dressed in wedding clothes" (Mt 22:12). The king said, "bind him . . . and throw him into outer darkness" (:13). "Many are called but few are chosen" (:14).

What guaranty is there that you can follow through with your commitment? Paul's confidence is "that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php 1:6). It depends on God. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). It works because God has "sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22) "as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). Because Jesus "continues forever . . . He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb 7:24-25). "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Ro 8:35). Nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God" (:38). "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day" (Jn 6:39).

Where does the threat to a believer come from? It is because "they themselves are in the world" (17:11). Therefore Jesus asked the Father to "keep them in Your name" (:11). As a result, "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (10:29). Paul was "convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2Ti 1:12). Peter said we "are

protected by the power of God through faith" (1Pe 1:5). Also, "your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (5:8). "But He who is born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him" (1Jn 5:18). "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (4:4).

## **Increase in Knowledge**

It is important for each person to take to heart what the Bible says. With Israel "their heart was not steadfast toward Him" (Ps 78:37) and they "did not believe in His wonderful works" (:32). The elders "had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done in Israel" (Jos 24:31). "They quickly forgot His works" (Ps 106:13) "nor were they faithful in His covenant" (Ps 78:37). "The Lord said to Samuel, . . . 'they have rejected me'" (1Sa 8:7). Paul said that "he who rejects this is not rejecting man but God" (1Th 4:8). That is why John says of Jesus that "the Word was God" (Jn 1:1).

A writer on theology wrote that God has placed something in each man's heart to want to know him. Paul said "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ" (Php 3:8). In man's current state "we see in a mirror dimly" (1Co 13:12). I attended church once with a man I saw recently who told me that he had died during hip replacement surgery and went to heaven and saw his parents and others he knew. His wife prayed for him in the operating room and he returned to life and now gives his testimony at church meetings. When I

asked, he explained that even though the people there didn't have earthly bodies you knew who they were. It's as if on earth you see as if in a mirror's reflection, but in heaven "face to face . . . [and] know fully just as I also have been fully known" (13:12). The purpose is to be "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10) and have "grace and peace be multiplied in you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2Pe 1:2). Paul prayed you would "abound still more and more in real knowledge and discernment" (Php 1:9) and that God may give you a "revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph 1:17). At the basic level you "come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2:4). More accurately you "believe and know the truth" (4:3) because you are "to be saved and come to the knowledge" (2:4). It is a "true knowledge" (Col 3:10) by understanding "the grace of God in truth" (1:6). Also, it is "the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (3:10). We then "attain to . . . knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man" (Eph 4:13).

## **Be Sanctified**

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17). Must you, then, act differently? God told them, "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). To be a certain way means you have to live that way. How do you know what is required? Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). Sanctification in Greek means setting apart, and in Hebrew it is making something ceremonially clean. Jesus participated and said, "For

their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (:19). Jesus "that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Heb 13:12). In the Old Testament tabernacle "the blood of bulls and goats . . . [was used in] sprinkling those who have been defiled" (Heb 9:13). It was to "sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh" (:13). In the same way it is "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled by His blood" (1Pe 1:2). Jesus did this for his church "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph 5:26). Paul referred to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (1Co 1:2). He said "you were washed, . . . sanctified, . . . [and] justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11). "Both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father" (Heb 2:11).

God provides sanctification at salvation in that "they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Ac 26:18). "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). To make it possible God said, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (Eze 36:26). He also said, "I will give them one heart . . . for their own good" (Jer 32:39). "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart . . . in order that you may live" (Dt 30:6). Will not "the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:13). Therefore "present your

bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Ro 12:1). God told Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them . . . and let them wash their garments" (Ex 19:10). A person must "possess his own vessel in sanctification" (1Th 4:4) and you must "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1Pe 3:15). Then "do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Ro 8:4) and "walk in newness of life" (6:4). "Walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light . . . and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1Jn 1:7). "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely . . . [so you will be] without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 5:23). "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14).

### **Must Persevere**

Peter said "they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Pe 2:20). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1Jn 5:11). But Jesus said, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up" (Jn 15:6). Branches "were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith" (Ro 11:20). You persevere by "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith" (1Ti 1:19). Therefore be careful "that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God" (Heb 3:12). "The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith"

(1Ti 4:1) and will "have fallen from grace" (Gal 5:4). Jesus said, "There are some of you who do not believe" (Jn 6:64) and "many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore" (:66).

If "they are again entangled in [defilements] and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first" (2Pe 2:20). "It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them" (:21). But "we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance" (Heb 3:14) and "our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (:6). Even Paul said "I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified" (1Co 9:27). "Jesus said to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also do you?' Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God'" (Jn 6:67-69).

## **About Faith**

If you are going through a difficult time undoubtedly someone will encourage you by saying "have faith, it will all work out." One meaning is that you should be positive because being negative makes it worse. There are no guarantees. But having faith demonstrates that you are optimistic and are hoping for a good outcome. A factual prognosis may be realistic but Biblical faith has its own

rules. God "gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" (Ro 4:17). Therefore if we follow the Bible "we walk by faith, not by sight" (1Co 5:7). We become "those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Ro 4:16).

God instituted faith. He "said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country . . . to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation'" (Ge 12:1-2). Abram acted in faith and "went forth as the Lord had spoken to him" (:4). God later reminded him saying "'I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans'" (15:7). God had promised Abraham an heir saying, "'So shall your descendants be'" (:5). "'Abraham believed God'" (Ro 4:3) and "'faith was credited to Abraham'" (:9).

### **What Faith Is**

Abraham exercised faith by believing. But it isn't mental gymnastics. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God" (Heb 11:3). Even though "what is seen" (:3) is visible they were "not made out of things which are visible" (:3). It requires faith to accept this. "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph 2:8). "It is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace" (Ro 4:16). "It is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph 2:8-9). It was a promise that Abraham "would be heir of the world" (Ro 4:13) and faith ensures "that the promise will be guaranteed" (:16).

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith because it says "faith is." If the text consisted of metaphors they would be likenesses, but one part says "faith is . . . the conviction of things not seen" (11:1) which is more of a definition. We weren't witnesses when "the worlds were prepared by the word of God" (11:3) but "that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them" (Ro 1:19) and "His invisible attributes . . . have been clearly seen" (:20). This evidence is not unlike what is presented in a court case which substantiates the truth. You see the reality of what had been previously unproven when it is spelled out by God through faith. Faith is the tangible evidence which comes only from God.

### **Faith is Surety**

"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb 11:1 NIV). Assurance and certainty apply to "of what" a person has confidence in will come to pass. If it is "of things" (11:1 NASB), it is from, concerning or belonging to the existence of what is desired or expected. Hope must be based upon something potentially happening in the first place. When you are hopeful you are optimistic that your expectations are reasonable. But from a Biblical standpoint it is faith from God that makes hope authentic.

God told Abraham his descendants would be as the number of stars (Ge 15:5). But the time came when "Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing" (18:11). In a natural way there was



no substance for Abraham's hope. But God said "Sarah your wife will have a son" (:10). Therefore Abraham was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (Ro 4:21). Abraham was aware of natural impossibilities because it was "against hope" (:18). No realistic person would hope in something impossible. But Abraham "in hope . . . believed . . . according to that which had been spoken" (:18). It was with scriptural hope based upon God's promise. Faith is the substance for hope because the assurance is inherent in the promise. Also, Abraham "with respect to the promise . . . did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving Glory to God" (:20). What God had spoken contained what convinced Abraham so that he could faithfully believe in it.

## **Word of Faith**

Faith is released by words. "By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (12:37). "The tongue has the power of life and death" (Pr 18:21). "The tongue of the wise brings healing" (12:18). Jesus taught "out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). The faith you have is expressed in speech. "What he says will happen" (Mk 11:23). It works because of the characteristics of the communication. Jesus said "the words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life" (Jn 6:63). He also reveals "I am in the Father . . . [and] the words I say to you are not just my own" (14:10).

It has to be in accordance with God's words "in you" (:7). The words are there if you meditate on the book of the law (Jos 1:8). They are there because "Your word I have treasured in my heart" (Ps 119:11). "From Your precepts I get understanding" (:104). "The unfolding of Your words gives light" (:130). "Your testimonies . . . are my counselors" (:24). "Jesus answered, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Mt 4:4). He repeats it being written in verses 7 and 10. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa 8:20).

### **Believe in Faith**

Jesus "healed all who were ill" (Mt 8:16). The people who came to him for this had faith in God (Mk 11:22). "Two blind men followed Him, crying out, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David!'" (Mt 9:27). Jesus asked, "'Do you believe that I am able to do this?'" (:28). The blind men answered, "'Yes, Lord'" (:28). Jesus responded, "'It shall be done to you according to your faith'" (:29). Then "their eyes were opened" (:30). They believed Jesus could heal them and were healed because of their faith. "'For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart'" (Mt 12:34). "'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart'- that is, the word of faith" (Ro 10:8).

A centurion asked for help saying, "'Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented'" (Mt 8:4). He said to Jesus, "'just say the word, and my

servant will be healed" (:8). Jesus responded, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed" (:13). Because the centurion believed that all Jesus had to do is speak the command Jesus said, "I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel" (:10). "The servant was healed that very moment" (:13). The centurion had the faith and believed. A Canaanite woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter. Through their talk Jesus ascertained that she believed he could heal her and said, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish" (Mt 15:28). "Her daughter was healed at once" (:28).

Both the centurion and Canaanite woman had "great faith." They were persistent and "strong in faith" (Ro 4:20). They believed and kept their focus. If you don't, then circumstances will undermine your confidence and your faith will be too small to get what you want (Mt 14:29-31). Peter "seeing the wind" (:30) lost focus. Thomas' focus was on seeing because he said "Unless I see . . . I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). When he did see, Jesus told him "be not faithless, but believing" (:27 KJV). Jesus said "see my hands . . . stop doubting and believe" (:27 NIV). Not having faith and doubting are synonymous. That is why Jesus said, "do not be unbelieving, but believing" (:27 NASB).

## **Hear by Faith**

"Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Ro 10:13). "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him

whom they have not heard?" (:14). Fortunately "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (:17). The Greek term for "word" is "rhema" which means uttered by a living voice. The "word of God is quick" (Heb 4:12) which means it is alive. When God speaks, it is present tense having "been granted for Christ's sake" (Php 1:29) to "believe in Him" (:29). "Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1:13).

Without knowing the truth you don't have faith to believe. It comes by "listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13). It is "hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel" (Col 1:5). It has worked in you "since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth" (:6). It is "the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation" (:23). "You have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:21).

## **Mystery Revealed**

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham" (Gal 3:8). "In Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). It is "the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations" (Col 1:26). The Apostle Paul was a steward "of the mysteries of God" (1Co 4:1). He said "we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages

to our glory" (2:7). It was hidden and God had to reveal it. Paul said "He made known to us the mystery of His will" (Eph 1:9). He said it was "God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery" (3:3). "This grace was given . . . to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery" (:8-9). Paul said "when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ" (:4). We base our faith on God's revelation. It "was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (:5). Paul told the Galatians "that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man" (Gal 1:11). He said "I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (:12). Furthermore Paul said it was "to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles" (:16).

Paul told the Colossians that "I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit" (Col 1:25). The mystery revealed is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (:27). It is "God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3). Paul said "the mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32). He prayed that "utterance may be given to me . . . to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (6:19). He also requested that "God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ" (Col 4:3).

Paul told the Galatians "we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ" (Gal 2:16). Therefore "you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (3:26). Paul explained "'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me'" (2:20). This is the mystery (Col 1:27). "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20). We are "those who believe and are saved" (Heb 10:39 NIV).

## **Have Faith**

God made man in the image and likeness of God (Ge 1:26). He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (2:7). Hebrew for "breath" means breath, wind, or spirit. "God is spirit" (Jn 4:24) and he communicates with man. "That which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them" (Ro 1:19). "God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (12:3). "'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart'" (10:8). It is "with the heart a person believes" (:10). It applies to "the hidden person of the heart" (1Pe 3:4) or "inner man" (Ro 7:22).

You have to pay attention to God. "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Ro 1:20). But "even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God" (:21). It's because "a

natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God" (1Co 2:14). It's an eternal decision. "Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). Paul prayed that "may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete" (1Th 5:23).

"Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). But spiritual things are foreign to the natural man "because they are spiritually appraised" (1Co 2:14). Therefore you must become a "new creature" (2Co 5:17). When that happens "old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (:17). You become a new person "inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit" (Ro 2:29). "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn 3:6). Then "our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2Co 4:16).

## **Grow in Faith**

"The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!'" (Lk 17:5). Jesus had been teaching them and apparently they felt that they didn't have the ability to carry out what had been taught. Jesus said they would need "'faith like a mustard seed'" (:6). One time they couldn't cast a demon out and Jesus said it was "'Because of the littleness of your faith'" (Mt 17:20). Jesus explained "'if you have faith the size of a mustard seed . . . nothing will be impossible to you'" (:20). Previously Jesus had taught that "'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed . . . [which] is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants'" (Mt 13:31-32). Therefore

your faith must grow "but God was causing the growth" (1Co 3:6). This demonstrates "your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (2:5).

Abraham "grew strong in faith" (Ro 4:20). He was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (:21). Abraham had confidence in God. Jesus said "'Have faith in God'" (Mk 11:22). "By grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph 2:8). It is by righteousness "which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Php 3:9). It is based upon "the faith of the gospel" (1:27) and "the hope of the gospel" (Col 1:23) in which "you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast" (:23). Your faith grows as you mature and it is recognizable as when Paul "heard of your faith" (Col 1:4, Eph 1:15). The Colossians had been "built up in Him and established in . . . faith" (2:7). Paul rejoiced to see "the stability of your faith in Christ" (:5). It was Paul's responsibility to be with them "for your progress and joy in the faith" (Php 1:25). He was in the "sacrifice and service of your faith" (2:17). He stated that "your faith grows" (2Co 10:15). Faith grows when you are "striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Php 1:27).

## **Receive Faith**

Abraham was "fully assured" (Ro 4:21) of what God had promised. He attained "the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery" (Col 2:2). How is knowledge received? Paul prayed for people asking "that you may be filled with the



knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col 1:9). He prayed that God would "give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph 1:17). It is received by the spirit. Paul prayed that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (:18). God "gave us the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22). He asked for them "to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:16-17). When "increasing in the knowledge of God [you are] strengthened with all power" (Col 1:10). You learn "what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph 1:19). You "abound still more and more in real knowledge and in all discernment" (Php 1:9) "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10). In Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3). The result is that you "put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (3:10). You begin "to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge . . . [and are] filled up to all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19). You attain "the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man" (4:13). You endeavor to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Php 3:10).

### **Believe in Heart**

"With the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10) which is the "inner man" (Eph 3:16). Man is composed of "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). "The Lord God formed

man of dust from the ground" (Ge 2:7) which is the body. The brain is a physical organ and we make decisions with our intellect. But you "believe in your heart" (Ro 10:9) which is from another capacity. That source is from when God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Ge 2:7). Job said the "'Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life'" (Job 33:4). You could limit God's creation if you only considered Solomon saying "they all have the same breath" (Ecc 3:19) or Isaiah stating, "Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils" (Isa 2:22). But a distinction is made by Solomon saying, "Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?" (Ecc 3:22). He says "man goes to his eternal home" (12:5) and "the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (:7). Zechariah states that it is the Lord who "forms the spirit of man within him" (Zec 12:1). He is the "Father of spirits" (Heb 12:9). Moses referred to the Lord as "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num 27:16). Jesus "became a life-giving spirit" (1Co 15:45) and "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (Jn 20:22). Therefore be careful of an "unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God" (Heb 3:12).

### **Faith Presented**

"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). Is the Old Testament less relevant than the New Covenant? When you consider that what happened to Israel was "written for our instruction"

(1Co 10:11) it is applicable. We are no different than them. "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours" (Jas 5:17). They had to follow God themselves and God doesn't change (Mal 3:6). "They were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ" (1Co 10:4).

God led Israel "performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years" (Ac 7:36). "He led them with the cloud by day, and all the night with a light of fire" (Ps 78:14). The Lord said, "Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth" (Dt 4:10). Moses said, "You, O Lord, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them" (Nu 14:14). Later he said, "Has anything been heard like it? Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived?" (Dt 4:32-33). "To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; that there is no other besides Him" (:35).

Therefore, when we read this we, too, can comprehend. It provides the faith we need. "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life" (Dt 4:9).

## Faith Demonstrated

Moses recounted saying, "You were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God" (Dt 1:26). They "gathered together against" (Nu 14:35) and grumbled against (:27) God. They "turned back from following" (:43), did not listen to his voice (:22), and spurned (:11) God. "The Lord said to Moses,. . . 'How long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?'" (13:11). God said "they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways" (Ps 95:10). Moses said, "You did not trust the Lord your God" (Dt 1:32).

Joshua and Caleb were optimistic. Caleb said "we will certainly overcome it" (Nu 13:30) because "the Lord is with us" (14:9). He said that God "will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes" (Dt 1:30). God said, "My servant Caleb . . . has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully" (Nu 14:24). Caleb said "do not fear" (:9), but the people said, "Our brethren have made our hearts melt" (Dt 1:28). They did not know God "and said, 'Because the Lord hates us . . . [he will] deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us'" (:27). But Moses knew better saying, "the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you" (4:31).

Jesus encountered the same problem. The religious authorities observed, "This man is performing many signs. If we let him go like this, all men will believe in

Him" (Jn 11:47-48). Jesus tried to deal with their unbelief saying, "But if I do them, though you do not believe in Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (10:38). "Though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" (12:37). Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Lk 18:8). Israel "failed to enter [the Promised Land] because of disobedience" (Heb 4:6). "The word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard" (:2). "They were not able to enter because of unbelief" (3:18). Therefore "let us hold fast our confession" (4:14) because "we who have believed enter that rest" (:3).

### **Faith in the Power of God**

Faith has different applications. Christians believe in "the" faith which is professing "by" faith what Christ accomplished on the cross through "having" faith in the power of God who brought it to pass. It is because of faith that God "has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (Col 1:12). It motivated Paul to "press on toward the upward call of God" (Php 3:14). It is an upward direction because God "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). This is "at His right hand in the heavenly places" (1:20). We are "buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12). "As He is, so are we in this world" (1Jn 4:17). Jesus said, "They are

not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jn 17:14). "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20). But if heaven and earth are mutually exclusive then how can you be in two places at once? You have a heavenly "position" while in an earthly existence. However, the latter can be upgraded. It is Christ "who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to himself" (:21).

"To the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it" (Dt 10:14). "It pleased the Father . . . to reconcile all things to himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven" (Col 1:19). His purpose is "the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth" (Eph 1:10). It is "the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name" (Eph 3:15). "God highly exalted Him" (Php 2:9) "far above the heavens . . . to fill all things" (Eph 4:10) "so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Php 2:10). You have a position in heaven even though you live on earth. God "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph 1:3). There is even the responsibility to disseminate "the manifold wisdom of God . . . through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (3:10). But you must "put on the full armor of God . . . [because] our struggle is . . . against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (6:12). Take up "the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all

the flaming arrows of the evil one" (:16). Therefore, since "you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col 3:1-2).

## **Faith is Optimistic**

An idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be derived from its words. "Pie in the sky" is such a phrase. You know what it means only from experiences having heard it used in certain contexts. It means that an idea or plan is so unrealistic or impractical that it will never materialize. It is an empty promise or impossible dream. Such a person has his "head in the clouds" meaning that he is a dreamer and out of touch with reality. The empty wish is "pie in the sky" meaning that it won't come to pass. There's a phrase criticizing a religious idealist who is "so heavenly preoccupied that he's no earthly good." In 1911 a labor organizer named Joe Hill wrote the phrase about pie in a song criticizing the Salvation Army song "In the Sweet Bye and Bye." He was critical of preaching which contained promises of future rewards but did little to alleviate suffering in this life. He wrote, "You'll get pie in the sky when you die." But "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). It is not false hope as in the idiom above. But there is a caveat. Proverbs 13:12 says "hope deferred makes the heart sick." When you become depressed it's possible to lose faith if your expectation vanishes. Nonetheless, "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15).

Don't assume you must accomplish something unilaterally as Israel "presumed to go up to the hill country" (Nu 14:44) and their enemies defeated them. Sarai assumed that "the Lord has prevented me from bearing children" (Ge 16:6) and it resulted in Ishmael being born (:15). At the right time the Lord said "Sarah your wife shall have a son" (18:10) even though she was "past childbearing" (:11). Therefore cast "all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1Pe 5:7). Moses' solution is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul . . . [and] follow the Lord your God and fear Him . . . [and] listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him" (Dt 13:3-4). It is "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts" (Zec 4:6).

### **Faith Inherits**

When you inherit something it is passed down from an ancestor and you have legal right to possess it. Terah took his family from Ur "to enter the land of Canaan" (Ge 11:31). After he died "the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country . . . to the land which I will show you'" (12:1). He also said, "'I will make you a great nation'" (:2). "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance" (Heb 11:8). Then he was told, "'Your reward will be very great'" (Ge 15:1). But he didn't see how it was possible because his only heir was his head servant (:2). God replied, "'One who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir'" (:4). Then God directed him, "'Count the stars, if you are able to count them . . . so shall your



descendants be" (5). Consequently Abram "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (:6). "God has granted [the inheritance] to Abraham by means of a promise" (Gal 3:18). God said, "I have made you the father of a multitude of nations" (Ge 17:5) which took the form of a covenant. God said, "This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male shall be circumcised" (:10). It was a "sign of the covenant" (:11), and without it, a person "has broken My covenant" (:14). God then said, "I will give you and your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (:8).

In order to accomplish this it would have to be a miracle, but that would prove that only God could do it. When the "Lord appeared to Abram" (Ge 17:1) he said, "Indeed I will give you a son by her . . . and she shall be a mother of nations" (:16). "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive . . . since she considered Him faithful who had promised" (Heb 11:11). God told Abram, "You shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him" (Ge 17:19). Furthermore, God said, "I have chosen him . . . in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him" (18:19). They sang, "Thou wilt bring them and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, . . . Thy dwelling" (Ex 15:17). This was Mount Zion in the Promised Land where the temple was later built. Joshua was told by Moses, "Go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to

their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance" (Dt 31:7).

## **Your Inheritance**

In the garden God told the serpent that Eve's seed would bruise him on the head, and his would bruise hers on the heel (Ge 3:15). This was what the future had in store. He also foretold to Abram that his descendants would be "strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years" (15:13). Through God's planning and action "we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:11). God brought Israel "out of Egypt with a mighty hand" (Dt 9:26). He told Israel, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and . . . redeem you with an outstretched arm" (Ex 6:6). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13). Moses prayed, "Do not destroy your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness" (Dt 9:26). God had adopted Israel. "They are Your people, even Your inheritance" (:29). "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance" (32:9).

God's plan began long ago since "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham" (Gal 3:8). This understanding "in other generations was not

made known to the sons of men" (Eph 3:5). "For ages [it] has been hidden in God who created all things" (:9). "He predestined us . . . according to the kind intention of His will" (1:5) and made it "known to us . . . according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him" (:9). It is the "manifold wisdom of God . . . in accordance with the eternal purpose" (3:10-11). It is an all-encompassing plan. It is a "view to the redemption of God's own possession" (1:14) "to bring to light what is the administration" (3:9) "suitable to the fullness of the times" (1:10). "Since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions . . . those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). God has "qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints" (Col 1:12). It is an "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph 5:5). "The reward of the inheritance . . . is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col 3:24). This conforms with God telling Abraham, "I am thy exceeding great reward" (Ge 15:1 KJV). It results in "that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:7).

### **Survive by Faith**

I grew up when there was constant fear of a nuclear war with Russia. It was believed that godless propaganda produced people who became antagonistic to our way of life. Is it possible to program the mind of someone so they become a particular kind of person? "As he thinks within himself, so he is" (Pr 23:7). You might call it a mind set. In this sense you could expect retaliation to

threats because it's "survival of the fittest." But with Christians it is "with the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10). The Bible often uses the heart as a metaphor for the spirit. You are "renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph 4:23). You should "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18). We "live by his faith" (Hab 2:4) because "we walk by faith" (2Co 5:7). "By faith Sarah . . . considered Him faithful who had promised" (Heb 11:11). "By faith [Moses] . . . endured, as seeing Him who is unseen" (:27). Others had a longer time horizon and "these people died in faith, without receiving the promises" (:13) but they "saw them from a distance" (:13 NIV). However, "God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect" (:40 NIV).

Christ said "you will be hated by all nations because of My name" (Mt 24:9). He also said "an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God" (Jn 16:2). Some were tortured . . . , experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment . . . , stoned . . . [and] were put to death with the sword" (Heb 11:35-37). It is because "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God" (Ro 8:7). That is why Jesus said "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Mt 10:34). But there should be a point of commonality. However, as citizens of the same country even Republicans and Democrats violently disagree. People in the same geographic region start wars of ethnic cleansing. "Nation will rise against nation" (24:7). It will "wear down the saints" (Da 7:25) "but the people who know their God will display strength and take action"

(11:32). They "by faith conquered kingdoms . . . and obtained promises" (Heb 11:33). They "escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, [and] became mighty in war" (:34). They all "gained approval through their faith" (:39) and "God is not ashamed to be called their God" (:16).

## **Overcome by Faith**

In the New Testament "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (Rev 1:6). In the Old Testament the priests "shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering . . . [because] they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat" (Eze 44:17-18). In Christianity doing anything that produces sweat is considered doing it "in your own strength." One of Christianity's basic tenets is that "by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). But even though faith is from God it must be exercised. Jude said he "felt the necessity to write you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force" (Mt 11:12). It sounds like exercising faith is hard. It is "tested by fire" (1Pe 1:7) and "the testing of your faith produces endurance" (Jas 1:3). "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1Jn 5:4). On an individual level "the faith which you have, have as your own

conviction before God" (Ro 14:22). "God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (12:3). "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith" (2Co 13:5). But if you doubt yourself then your "eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin" (14:23). Your relationship with God is strengthened when you exercise faith. Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer. One day the king asked why he was so sad. Nehemiah told him the truth and the king asked how he could help. Then Nehemiah's rapport with God was demonstrated when, on the spot, he "prayed to the God of heaven" (Neh 2:4). God's answer was instantaneous and Nehemiah requested to be sent to Judah to rebuild the city (:5). On a group level God gives various workers "for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith" (Eph 4:12-13). Paul told them they should be "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Php 1:27). "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev 3:21).

## **Pray**

Prayer is communication with God. We are to "pray to God" (1Co 11:13, 2Co 13:7). Jesus instructed "pray to your Father who is in secret" (Mt 6:6). In a sense it is talking because Jesus said, "When you pray, say" (Lk 11:2). Daniel was "speaking in prayer" (Da 9:21). However, Jesus warned, "you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray on the street corners" (Mt 6:5). He instructed rather to "go into your inner room, [and]

close your door and pray to your Father . . . who sees what is done in secret" (:6). How can you be sure the message has been received? We know that "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us . . . [and] we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (1Jo 5:14-15). Even Jesus stated, "I knew that You always hear Me" (Jn 11:42). Daniel expected the communication to succeed. He prayed, "Our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and . . . let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary" (Da 9:17). Solomon expressed, "O my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and Your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place" (2Ch 6:40). "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears attend to their prayer" (1Pe 3:12).

## **Prayer**

How and when do you pray? "Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness to pray" (Lk 5:16). "He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives" (22:39). "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there" (Mk 1:35). "After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone" (Mt 14:23). "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God" (Lk 6:12). However, it didn't require Jesus to be in isolation to pray. "Praying alone, the disciples were with him" (Lk 9:18). But for a little privacy he said, "Sit here while I go over there and pray" (Mt 26:36).

Prayer originated in the Old Testament. Worship occurred during the Feasts of the Lord such as when "the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering" (Lk 1:10). Daniel was devoted to prayer and "continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God" (Da 6:10). Even Cornelius, a Roman soldier, explained, "'I was praying in my house during the ninth hour . . . [and he was told] your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God'" (Ac 10:30-31). Paul said "I want men in every place to pray" (1Ti 2:8). Methods vary. Jesus "knelt down and began to pray . . . [and then] rose from prayer" (Lk 22:41,45). He referred to when you "'stand praying'" (Mk 11:25). It is a matter of relationship and respect. Jesus taught them to pray, "'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name'" (Mt 6:9). "Jesus spoke these things; and [lifted] up His eyes to heaven" (Jn 17:1).

## **Prayerful**

Prayer is serious as when someone is ill. "The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up" (Ja 5:15). Times are tough because "the end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer" (1Pe 4:7). You are to take it seriously and "devote yourselves to prayer" (Ro 12:12, 1Co 7:5, Col 4:2). To be devoted is to be focused and attentive by "keeping alert in it" (Col 4:2) and "on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Eph 6:8). Paul urges that prayers "be made on behalf of all men" (1Ti 2:1) and wants "men in



every place to pray" (2:8). He directs to pray "in everything" (Php 4:6) "at all times" (Eph 6:18) "without ceasing" (1Th 5:17). Jesus taught "that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart" (Lk 18:1). Paul said he was "always offering prayer with joy in my prayer for you all" (Php 1:4). "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (Ja 5:16).

## Praying

"One of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples'" (Lk 11:1). Paul said "we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col 1:9). Prayer and asking are associated. You can't ask without praying, but you can pray without necessarily asking for anything. However, asking is commonly associated with prayer because "we know we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (Jn 11:42). "In all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Mt 21:22). Jesus said, "All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted to you" (Mk 11:24). "In that day you will not question Me about anything . . . [for] if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you" (Jn 16:23).

There are certain characteristics of prayer. "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18) A petition is composed of requests. "Be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (:18). Paul also instructed "that entreaties and prayers, petitions and

thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men" (1Ti 2:1). He said "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplications with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Php 4:6). Daniel said "I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications" (Da 9:3). He had been "praying and giving thanks before his God" (6:10). Solomon emphasized the value of prayer when he interceded for Israel. He said God would deliver them if they "'repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity'" (2Ch 6:37) and "'pray to their land which You have given to their fathers'" (:38). Of course, preventive maintenance is also important. Jesus said, "'Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone'" (Mk 11:25). He also said, "'Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation'" (Lk 22:46).

### **The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

"Moses received the plans for the Jewish tabernacle from God on Mt. Sinai. Then the Lord told Moses to make sure that he constructed the temple "after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Ex 25:40). But we, ourselves, are the "true tabernacle" (Heb 8:2) and "temple of God" (1Co 3:17). Therefore we must be careful to make sure that our lives conform to God's plan for us.

The plan begins at salvation when we are introduced to this "city of the living God" (Heb 12:22) and "church of the firstborn" (Heb 12:23). Jesus is the "minister

of the sanctuary" (Heb 8:2). He "pitches" our tabernacle (Heb 8:2) from His "throne...in the heavens" (Heb 8:1). He establishes us after the pattern of the tabernacle which is an "example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb 8:5). Heavenly things can only be created by God Himself, because He is the "builder and maker" (Heb 11:10) and "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps 127:1). This is why Jesus will "baptize [us] with the Holy Ghost" (Mt 3:11).

We are to "go on unto perfection" (Heb 6:1) and be "perfect, even as [our] Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:48). How do we do this? "This is the work of God, that [we] believe on him whom he hath sent" (Jn 6:29) and "by him...offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb 13:15). We are then "weaned from the milk" (Isaiah 28:9) as the righteousness of God is revealed unto us from "faith to faith" (Ro 1:17). Then we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2Co 3:18) if we behold Him with "open face" (:18).

Solomon's temple illustrates this changing process toward perfection. In the temple "there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward" (Ezekiel 41:7). Jesus has promised that when you and I are baptized in the Holy Spirit "[we] shall receive power...and [we] shall be witnesses" (Acts 1:8). This empowering also increases our ability to "worship the Father in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is symbolically the second chamber of Solomon's temple because we go from

the "lowest chamber to the highest by the midst" (Ezekiel 41:7). Also, it represents the inner court of the tabernacle of Moses or the holy place. One of the items in the Holy Place is the lampstand which symbolizes the seven spirits of the Lord. It was this same Holy Spirit who was poured forth on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were celebrating this "feast of weeks" (Dt 16:10). Therefore, since it was on Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was given (Ac 2:4), we study this event in relation to the Old Testament feasts of the Lord to better understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The priest had to go from the Outer Court through the Inner Court to enter the Holy of Holies. That's why the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an important step in our Christian walk. We are to "come boldly before the throne" (Heb 4:16). This is the place in the tabernacle where the ark of God's presence is. We are citizens of God's holy city (Heb 12:22,23) because He writes the name of that city upon us, "which is New Jerusalem" (Rev 3:12). However, we must continually seek the city, (Heb 13:14) because we have to make ourselves "ready" (Rev 19:7) as a "bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2). As the Lord prepares us, the city comes "down from God out of heaven" (Rev 21:2). The shadow of the heavenly tabernacle is transformed into the Bride of Christ.

### **The New Creature Life**

Our walk begins with being "born again" (Jn 3:7). We know that we depend upon the Creator for our very life.

"The Lord God...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Ge 2:7). But He breathes again upon a man if that person will "believe on his name" (Jn 1:12). This is how we receive our "new creature" (2Co 5:17) life.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples the first time after His resurrection, "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'" (Jn 20:22). The word *breath* in Greek is *pneuma* and means "spirit" or "wind." It is this Holy Spirit which is breathed into our being. In the Bible there are only two times (which represent the two kinds of life) that God breathed upon man in this way.

### **The Disciples Receive the Holy Spirit After the Resurrection**

It is important to see that the disciples were "born again" when they received the Spirit after Jesus breathed upon them. Jesus had the Holy Spirit to give because "being by the right hand of God exalted, [he had] received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost" (Ac 2:33). Jesus told Mary, "'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father'" (Jn 20:17).

Up until that time "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn 7:39). Then "by his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb

9:12). When He returned after entering the Holy Place, the disciples could not "touch him" for we read that He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands" (Jn 20:27).

If you remember, Jesus had previously said, regarding His ascension, "Touch me not" (Jn 20:17). Also, He would not have told Mary about His ascension at that time if it had not had meaning for the disciples to be able to receive the Spirit when He appeared to them upon His return. We also remember the disciples discussing Jesus' statement: "A little while, and ye shall see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father" (Jn 16:16).

Jesus had said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (Jn 14:18) and "we [the Godhead]...will make our abode with [you]" (Jn 14:23). "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (Jn 14:20). "When Jesus returned to them, He came with the Comforter. The "Lord is that Spirit" (2Co 3:17). Paul says, "Know ye not...that Jesus Christ is in you" (2Co 13:5)?

## **The Disciples Sealed in Christ at Salvation**

Up to this point the disciples knew the Holy Spirit because Jesus had told them "for he dwelleth with you" (Jn 14:17). But since their names had already been "written in heaven" (Luke 10:20) when Jesus appeared to them upon His return and breathed upon them, they "received him,

[and] to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (Jn 1:12).

Therefore, because they had been "born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:6), the prophecy that they would receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 7:39) was fulfilled since they now knew Christ no more "after the flesh” (2Co 5:16) but "in the Spirit” (Ro 8:9). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro 8:9). This is the message of salvation. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1Co 12:13). "There is one body, and one Spirit,...one Lord, one faith, [and] one baptism” (Eph 4:4,5).

When you are confronted with the baptism of the Holy Spirit you must know what you have to start with at salvation so you can judge what it is that is to be added and how it relates to your position as a believer. As believers, we are "one body: so also is Christ” (1Co 12:12). As members of His body, He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). It is in Christ "in whom we have redemption” (Eph 1:7) and "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance” (Eph 1:11). And since it is He "in whom [we] also trusted, after that [we] heard the word of truth, the gospel of [our] salvation", it is He "in whom...[we] were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13).

In other words, "by one Spirit” (1Co 12:13) we are "baptized into Christ” (Gal 3:27). We are "complete in him” (Col 2:10) at redemption, so the baptism of the Holy Spirit

only contributes to our position as believers. These blessings are all available to the person who will "believe on his name" (Jn 1:12), who has been baptized into Christ, and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

### **Passover as a Picture of Salvation**

We see that the disciples received the Holy Spirit from Jesus when He appeared to them, and that they were baptized into the body of Christ "by" and "with" the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished by the blood of Christ at Calvary. But to understand it from the perspective of the feasts of the Lord, we must understand the meaning of the blood of the lamb killed at Passover as a type of the blood of Christ. "We have redemption through his blood" (Eph 1:7). Jesus "hath purchased [us] with his own blood" (Ac 20:28).

The children of Israel were told by God, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you" (Ex 21:13). In Egypt when the Lord passed over the houses with the blood over the door, He "sealed" or "protected" the people within from the plague. Without this protection "every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean" (Nu 19:15).

This is why the celebration of Passover requires that "there be no leaven found in [the] houses" (Ex 12:19). Leaven is a type of sin, and our "sins are forgiven" (1Jn



2:12). Therefore, since no leaven is "in our house" because we are "clean through the word which [Jesus has] spoken unto [us]" (Jn 15:3), we are protected by the "seal" or "covering" of the Holy Spirit at redemption.

### **Israel's Journey as a Picture of Being Sealed and Led by the Holy Spirit**

As believers we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2Co 3:18) just as Israel was brought "out of the land of...Egypt through a land that no man passed through" (Jeremiah 2:6). It was a walk "in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25) by following the Lord "Who went in the way before [them]...in fire by night, to shew [them] by what way [they] should go, and in a cloud by day" (Dt 1:33).

Israel was all "under the cloud" (1Co 10:1) which illustrates that God seals us with the Holy Spirit when we are saved. He does not take "away the pillar of the cloud" (Ex 13:22). In the same manner the disciples received the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22) when they were baptized into the body of Christ" (Gal 3:27) and "sealed..., and given the earnest of the Spirit in [their] hearts" (2Co 1:22).

Therefore, as believers, in order for us to do the "work of God...[we must] believe on him whom he hath sent" (Jn 6:29). That's all that is necessary to be "led by the Spirit of God" (Ro 8:14). Just as Israel was sealed and led from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, so we as believers are sealed and guided in our lives.

## **Israel's Celebration of the Feasts of the Lord**

How else is Israel's experience an example for us, or a pattern by which to better understand our own relationship with God? Israel continued to celebrate the feast of Passover on its journey through the wilderness, just as we daily celebrate our being saved. The Lord said to them, "This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord through your generations" (Ex 12:14). In addition, the Lord said, "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year" (Ex 23:14). Leviticus 23:2,3 shows that feasts are sabbaths, and God has commanded, "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you" (Ex 31:13).

The feasts are separate, individual celebrations in Israel's history as well as experientially in our lives. "But when the people of the land shall come before the Lord in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in...shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in" (Eze 46:9). Each time we meet with the Lord, we are changed and "leave by another gate" which illustrates that the feasts are unique but celebrated in the context of the believers' spiritual lives "three times a year."

You see, then, that there is a continuity in the feasts. There is a progression between Passover and Pentecost in our spiritual lives just as Israel journeyed between Egypt and Mt. Sinal. The progression is fulfilled

by observing to "keep the feast of unleavened bread" (Ex 23:15) and then the "feast of harvest" (Ex 23:16). Also, "Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks" (Dt 16:10).

### **Passover Leads to Pentecost**

"In the fourteenth day of the first month...is the Lord's passover" (Lev 23:5). Then "it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex 12:41). Next "in the third month...the same day came they unto the wilderness of Sinai" (Ex 19:1). If God causes an event to take place on exactly the "selfsame day," then it behooves us to consider the timing of other events as well.

For instance, there is about one-half of a month after Passover remaining in the first month and at least three days (Ex 19:11) transpire in the third month, which is a passage of approximately fifty days (the word pentecost means "fiftieth"). The Lord said, "shall ye number fifty days" (Lev 23:16) and celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. "The day of Pentecost was fully come" (Ac 2:1) when the Spirit was poured forth because God waited until precisely the right day for it to happen.

We see a similar passage of time in the New Testament between the resurrection and Pentecost where Jesus "shewed himself...forty days" (Ac 1:3)", and after He departed the disciples returned to Jerusalem, which was a "sabbath day's journey" (Ac 1:12) away. Then in the Old

Testament "the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them...and be ready against the third day" (Ex 19:10,11). So Moses and Joshua waited for God to invite them up to Mt. Sinai (Ex 24:13). In the New Testament Jesus "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Ac 1:4). So they tarried in Jerusalem (Lk 24:49) and "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Lk 24:49) in the "upper room" (Ac 1:13) in preparation for the Feast of Pentecost. We see that the travel, consecration, and waiting situations are similar in the Old and New Testaments.

### **Pentecost as Separate From Passover**

When we see that "all these things happened unto [Israel] for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition" (1Co 10:11), we can understand how the event of Passover has meaning in our lives. In addition, we see clearly because the Old Testament "vail is done away in Christ" (2Co 3:14). Finally, we know that the scriptures "beginning at Moses" (Lk 24:27) concern Jesus because in His life He fulfilled the Old Testament types of Passover and Pentecost.

Since Calvary is a fulfillment of the historical event of Passover, and since a direct parallel exists between the expiration of time and experience of Old Testament Israel and the New Testament disciples, then Pentecost must be a fulfillment of the historical event of Israel's Mt. Sinai experience. Consequently, since Calvary is a picture of

redemption, Pentecost must be a picture of what is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance" (Ps 89:15). The "joyful sound" is the trumpet which signals the feasts, and those who understand its implication are able to personally celebrate the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles in their lives.

### **Day of Pentecost as a Separate Experience for the Disciples**

We remember that the disciples received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed upon them. Then we know that they were sealed and had the Holy Spirit in them. But next, Jesus said, "Behold, I send the promise of my father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk 24:49) for "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Ac 1:5). How could they be baptized after they had been baptized into His body when they received the Spirit?

The answer concerns the Greek word *bapto*, which was a common term used in the garment industry. It has the connotation of being made fully wet with fluid in the manner of staining as with a dye. The disciples had received the promise of the Spirit in their hearts (2Co 1:22) and now they were to receive the promise in the form of power "upon" them. This is shown by the fact that "all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud" (1Co 10:2). "A

cloud covered the mount" (Ex 24:15). "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount" (Ex 24:18).

Therefore, the word *baptism* applied here is a picture of another "immersion" of the believer into an additional truth or capacity within God. The Holy Spirit comes "upon" him as if the Spirit has approached (ie. come upon) him in a new way. We remember that the believer "entereth in" (Eze 46:9) to a new worship experience or meeting with God in each of the three feasts of the Lord (Ex 23:14).

### **Day of Pentecost Fulfills Historical Event of Israel on Mt. Sinai**

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come...there came a sound from heaven" (Ac 2:1,2) "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Ac 2:4) and they received "the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Ac 2:38). The disciples had waited fifty days since receiving the Spirit when Jesus breathed upon them, and now had received the gift of the Spirit "upon" them from "on high."

Therefore, we conclude that the first feast of Pentecost after the resurrection was not the official beginning of the ministry of the Holy Spirit on earth, but that He was already present when Jesus breathed upon the disciples. In this sense, the proximity of Passover and Pentecost (being only fifty days apart) is significant. Jesus said, "Behold, I send (ie. am continuously sending) the

promise of my Father upon you” (Lk 24:49). The disciples had received, were receiving, and would receive again the presence of the Holy Spirit as He was poured forth.

It is clear that New Testament Pentecost is related to Israel's Mt. Sinai experience. The disciples in the upper room heard God's voice such as it was "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" (Ac 2:2), whereas Israel said, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex 20:19). At Mt. Sinal "there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Ex 32:28), and at Jerusalem "there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Ac 2:41).

Since the disciples had already received the Holy Spirit, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Ac 2:16,17). So if we wait for Him (Isa 64:4), we will experience this outpouring and see the greatness of God because He will do "terrible things which we looked for" (Isa 64:3).

### **Speaking in Tongues Is Initial Evidence**

With...other tongues...will I speak unto this people" (1Co 14:2). The Spirit gives the "utterance" (Ac 2:4). Isaiah says, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest" (Isa 28:12). God said, "I create the fruit of the lips" (Isa 57:19) and will therefore heal, lead, and bring us into rest and peace (Isa 57:18,19). Noah would bring rest because it was prophesied that "comfort concerning

our work” (Ge 5:29) would result from his obedience in building the ark.

If you are in Christ, you will be saved because you will "know that" (your) redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). Speaking in tongues is a restful sign that we have received a "Comforter, that he may abide with (us) forever" (Jn 14:16). "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb 4:11).

"These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues" (Mk 16:17). It is a personal privilege for any believer who has "heard the word" (Ac 10:44). At Pentecost, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues" (Ac 2:4). Also, in the case of Cornelius and his household "the Holy Ghost fell on all them" (Ac 10:44) and "they [those present] heard them speak with tongues" (Ac 2:4). Also, in the case of Cornelius and his household "the Holy Ghost fell on all them" (Ac 10:44) and "they [those present] heard them speak with tongues" (Ac 10:46). Furthermore, Peter and John went to Samaria to help believers receive the Holy Spirit (Ac 8:14-17). As the people were baptized in the Holy Spirit, Simon observed (Ac 8:18) what he could "see and hear" (Ac 2:33). It was the same in Ephesus. When the Holy Spirit fell upon the believers, they "spake with tongues" (Ac 19:6).



But some ask, "What meaneth this" (Ac 2:12)? Can't we be baptized in the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues? Paul was baptized, for he said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1Co 14:18). He also said, "I would that ye all spake with tongues" (1Co 14:5) and he ordered the Corinthians to "forbid not to speak with tongues" (1Co 14:39).

How is this manifested? God pours "out of [His] Spirit upon all flesh" (Ac 2:17). When the Holy Spirit falls upon you, you are filled, and the utterance of tongues is communicated by the Spirit through your spirit (Ac 2:4). Paul says, "If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth" (1Co 14:14). This is a heavenly language for he said, "I speak with the tongues of men and of angels" (1Co 13:1). You can also "sing with the spirit" (1Co 14:15). However, some might object that with the spirit the "understanding is unfruitful" (1Co 14:14). But if "we know not what we should pray" (Ro 8:26), the Holy Spirit knows what another person needs (Ro 8:27). Intercession occurs when we pray "unto God" (1Co 14:2) in tongues for that person. You can also "pray that [you] may interpret" (1Co 14:13) to understand what has been spoken.

The reward for a person who prays in the spirit is that he "edifieth himself" (1Co 14:4) and a person is established in the Spirit by "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). Some argue that speaking in tongues is not for everyone because 1 Corinthians 12:30 asks, "Do all speak with tongues?" However, this reference pertains to one of the nine gifts to the Church wherein "if any man speak in

an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three" (1Co 14:27). This gift is for certain people in specific situations where the "whole church be come together" (1Co 14:23). It is a means by which the unbeliever becomes aware of the existence of God" (1Co 14:22).

## **Pentecost as a Separate New Testament Experience**

Hearing that certain converts in "Samaria had received the word of God" (Ac 8:14)", Peter and John went and "prayed for them" (Ac 8:15). Paul also went to Ephesus and found "certain disciples" (Ac 19:1). These apostles wanted to make sure that the new believers received the Holy Spirit. Paul "said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed" (Ac 19:2)? When they replied that they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost", Paul asked them, "Unto what then were ye baptized" (Ac 19:2,3)?

People are water baptized into the truth they receive. A disciple, then, is a follower of the truth he has learned because he has to "bear his cross" (Lk 14:27) in order to follow Jesus. The new disciples replied that they had been baptized "unto John's baptism" (Ac 19:3) with the baptism of repentance" (Ac 19:4). The truth they had been baptized with was like that of Apollos' teaching. He "taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John" (Ac 18:25) which was "that [people] should believe on him [Jesus] which should come after him [John]" (Ac 19:4). But when Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos and

"expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Ac 18:26)", showing that "Jesus was Christ" (Ac 18:28), Apollos received the complete gospel. Thus the new converts "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Ac 19:5).

Peter and John discovered that the Samaritans, too, were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Ac 8:16) but that the Holy Ghost "was fallen upon none of them" (:16). We know that we become "sons of God" when we believe "on his name" (Jn 1:12). But where is the Holy Spirit at salvation such that He might have "fallen upon" us? In the Scriptures we see that:

1. "He that believeth...shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).
2. "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 7:50).
3. "By grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:8).

Thus, we conclude that we are saved when we believe with the faith we receive by grace from God. Furthermore:

4. "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn 7:39).
5. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (Jn 20:22).

Therefore, since Jesus had been glorified, the disciples properly received the Holy Spirit because they were recognized as believers. Finally:

6. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1:13).
7. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22).

When you believe, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit. So it is simply by the exercise of faith (nos. 1-3) that you receive (nos. 4-5) the Holy Spirit in your heart (nos. 6-7). Therefore, we have the Holy Spirit within us when we are saved through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans that "they might receive the Holy Ghost" (Ac 8:15), they were expecting another anointing of the Holy Spirit. When they laid hands upon the believers, "they received the Holy Ghost" (Ac 8:17) just as "when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on" (Ac 19:6) the Ephesians. Scripture doesn't require that hands be laid on a person for him to be saved, but "Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given" (Ac 8:18). This shows that Passover and Pentecost are separate New Testament experiences.

A distinction is also seen in the feasts concerning leaven. At Passover "shall there be no leaven found in [the] houses" (Ex 12:19). Whereas at Pentecost "two wave loaves...shall be baken with leaven" (Leviticus 23:17). However, both feasts have in common the requirement to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18) by "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col 3:16). But with the baptism of the Holy Spirit there is a step of faith involved, for "how

much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Lk 11:13)?

## **Pentecost in the Life of Jesus**

We see that Jesus was obedient to partake of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in His life. Jesus was born of the Spirit (i.e. Passover) because Joseph was told that "that which is conceived in [Mary] is of the Holy Ghost" (Mt 1:20). Then He received the promise of the Holy Spirit for "John [the Baptist] bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (Jn 1:32).

This was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 11:2 in which Jesus later stated, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach...heal...[and] set at liberty them that are bruised" (Lk 4:18). The feast of Pentecost is therefore kept by exercising the power inherent in the spiritual gifts of the promise as a "freewill offering...according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee" (Dt 16:10). "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Lev 25:10).

The Jubilee is the bringing forth of the continuous sound of the silver trumpet. It signals the festival and year of Jubilee and is symbolic of the feast. A church which blows this trumpet flows in this ministry and says "to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves" (Isa 49:9). "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet

of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month” (Lev 25:9). The impact of the feast of Pentecost carries into the feast of Tabernacles.

### **Pentecost as Open Heaven**

The uniqueness of this feast in Jesus' life is also seen in His baptism when "the heavens were opened unto him” (Mt 3:16). In his dream, Jacob saw the Lord God standing in heaven at the top of a ladder and speaking (Ge 28:12,13) just as when Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (Jn 1:51).

Jacob called the place where he was "Beth-el” (Ge 28:19) which means "God is in this place." Jesus sought to be baptized by John (Mt 3:13) and had a meeting with God. The divine communication that resulted under the open heaven followed Him throughout His ministry because "it abode [remained] upon him” (Jn 1:32). Jesus even spoke of Himself as "the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn 3:13).

### **Be Baptized With the Holy Spirit**

God gives the Holy Spirit "to them that obey him” (Ac 5:32). Jesus was obedient to be baptized by John because He said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Mt 3:15). It took place when Jesus was praying” (Lk 3:21). You don't have to do anything extraordinary to qualify because on Pentecost the disciples were just "sitting” (Ac 2:2) in "one place” (Ac 2:1).

However, "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Ac 1:14).

Peter said, "Repent,...be baptized...and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Ac 2:38). But it is possible to "receive not, because ye ask amiss" (Jas 4:3). So "ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas 1:6). "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Lk 11:13)? Therefore, "what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk 11:24). "Every one that asketh receiveth" (Lk 11:10). "No good thing will [the Lord] withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps 84:11). The Lord promises to "pour water upon him that is thirsty" (Isa 44:3). So make sure that you don't come behind in [this] gift" (1Co 1:7) because you know "it shall be given you" (Mt 7:7).

### **Must Have Vision**

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Pr 29:18 KJV). A synonym for "vision" is to have a revelation of the direction you are going. If it is the wrong direction you may get out of control. The Greek word "perish" means to cast off restraint. When you restrain yourself you hold back from doing the wrong thing and keep yourself under control. But if you make only arbitrary choices you go your own way. "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Jdg 17:6). In Micah's case he had a "graven image" (:4) and "household idols" (:5). By neglecting responsibility you

don't discipline yourself to do the correct thing. You have to focus on the vision or goal. You need a roadmap for your future.

"Would that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would discern their future!" (Dt 32:29). Perhaps you have a map but haven't looked at it. Furthermore, God says "I know the plans that I have for you . . . plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope" (Jer 29:11). If you follow God's revelation there is a guaranty. "My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all my good pleasure" (Isa 46:10). "The counsel of the Lord, it will stand" (Pr 19:21). Your "descendants will inherit the land" (Ps 25:13). If you trust in these promises it will happen.

### **Know God's Will**

How do you discover the vision? "The God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will" (Ac 22:14). How do you discern God's will? "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God" (Jas 1:5). God gives wisdom "to all men generously and without reproach" (:5). Ask God "that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col 1:9). Then you will be able to "stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (Col 4:12). "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph 5:17). It is your privilege since "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (Jn 4:34). It is "the work to which I have called them" (Ac 13:2).



There are "good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

Understanding comes with knowledge. "I will instruct you and teach you" (Ps 32:8). Counseling is intimate. "With Your counsel You will guide me" (Ps 73:24). Directions can come spontaneously, or instructions and teaching can be received over time. The Bible is the main resource because "Your testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors." (Ps 119:24). "From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (:104-105). "The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (:130).

There's no reason to waste your time for you want to be "making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Eph 5:16). Since God gives you "the desires of your heart" (Ps 37:4) then is it okay to just do what we feel like doing? "The mind of man plans his way" (Pr 16:9) but "many plans are in a man's heart" (Pr 19:21). "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Pr 16:25). However, there is a "way you should go" (Isa 48:17) because only God can "instruct him in the way he should chose" (Ps 25:12). It is personal. It is the "way which you should go" (Ps 32:8).

God had a job for Gideon and He would provide the power to get it done (Jdg 6:34). Since both were involved it was "for the Lord and for Gideon" (7:18). By obedience we take up our cross (Mt 16:24) acknowledging that it is by

grace and follow (:24) indicating that practical endeavors in life must spiritually work themselves out. We are to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Php 2:12). The Greek word for salvation is the same one Paul uses in Philippeans 1:19 for being saved (delivered) from prison. This is the practical side of working it out. "I will show you my faith by my works" (Jas 2:18). But we are saved "not as a result of works" (Eph 2:9). How do we keep from doing it our own way? We "walk by faith" (2Co 5:7). Then God "leads you" (Isa 48:17) and "directs his steps" (Pr 16:9). "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Php 2:13). But we aren't robots. However, we must pay attention because in the Tribulation they "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev 14:4). Therefore, exercise your faith through your actions because God enables you to properly carry it out.

### **Plans are Dynamic**

How do we implement these plans? You must "be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is" (Ro 12:2). It is through "spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col 1:9). It is with a renewed mind (Eph 4:23) that it is discerned. "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts" (Pr 20:27) which lights up the things to see. The "Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Ro 8:16). "The anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and . . . His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and . . . you

abide in Him." (1Jo 2:27). "Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night" (Ps 16:7).

His "sheep follow him because they know his voice" (Jn 10:4). Hearing implies that you stay close. This means close by because "You have taken hold of my right hand" (Ps 73:23). "I will counsel you with My eye upon you" (Ps 32:8). "The Lord knows the way of the righteous" (Ps 1:6). You begin to spiritually see because "your eyes will behold your Teacher" (Isa 30:20). "Your ears will hear a word behind you, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right or to the left" (:21). The result is peace of mind. It is the "peace of God, which . . . will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Php 4:6). It happens because of letting "the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Col 3:15).

Start moving in a logical direction because you can't steer a ship unless it's underway. Don't presume that you know everything that God wants to do "for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:9). God realizes "who is blind but My servant?" (42:19). However he says "I will lead the blind by a way they do not know" (42:16). Therefore "do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Pr 3:5-6). "Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established" (Pr 16:3). The results are positive since he "teaches you to profit" (Isa 48:17). You will "abide in prosperity" (Ps 25:13).

It is God's purpose to build you up and protect you. "He restores my soul; He guides me" (Ps 23:3). "Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." (:4). A shepherd leads and protects his flock with these implements. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (:4). "You are my rock and my fortress . . . [and] will lead me and guide me." (Ps 31:3). "The Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places" (Isa 58:11). "He leads me beside quiet waters" (Ps 23:2). Therefore "cease striving and know that I am God" (Ps 46:10).

### **Walk with God**

To lead or guide means to direct someone by a certain route to a destination and be involved on the way. "Plans" (Pr 16:3), "purpose" (Isa 46:10), and "the steps of a man are established by the Lord; and He delights in his way" (Ps 37:23). "He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Ps 23:3). A path is a trail and doesn't zig-zag all over the place. "He will make your paths straight" (Pr 3:6). God will "make darkness into light before them and rugged places into plains" (Isa 42:16).

Walking with God depends on relationship. Enoch was taken because he "walked with God" (Ge 5:24). "We are his workmanship . . . for good works . . . that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10). Walking is step by step. Since "the Lord will continually guide you" (Isa 58:11) that explains how steps can be established. It works because

"I am continually with You" (Ps 73:23). To be able to hear effectively we have to improve our hearing by "practice" (Heb 5:14) having our "senses trained" (:14). You've heard the saying "use it or lose it." Through practice you protect against becoming "dull of hearing" (:11). "The complacency of fools shall destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely" (Pr 1:32-33).

Abraham is a prime example of how God can guide you. "The Lord said to Abram: 'Go forth from your country . . . to the land which I will show you'" (Ge 12:1). Abraham was attentive in that "he who has an ear, let him hear" (Rev 2:7). He also concurred with "prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers" (Jas 1:22). Abraham "with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Ro 4:20). God promised "'I will make you a great nation; and I will bless you'" (Ge 12:2). It would work out over the years. Abraham was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (Ro 4:21). "So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him" (Gen 12:4). You can only act on what God has spoken to you. Any other basis is presumption.

## **Walk by Faith**

How can you be sure it's God speaking? There are "many kinds of languages in the world" (1Co 14:10). "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1Jn 4:1). Fortunately we have "the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17) in us. With the Holy Spirit there is

no guesswork. "You will know the truth" (Jn 8:32) convincingly. Communication that comes abruptly and disturbs is not from God. Instructions demanding to do something quickly before it's too late are not God's. "God is not a God of confusion" (1Co 14:33).

Because the Spirit is in you, guidance speaks as "deep calls unto deep" (Ps 42:7). A higher plateau of interaction exists because God says "'I will make all My mountains a road, and My highways will be raised up'" (Isa 49:11). You become aware of what to expect ahead of time. Reminders may come regularly as inner assurances or observable confirmations. Long-term conviction will persist and it may grow as evidence of anticipated fulfillment. With Abraham "the Lord appeared to Abram" (Ge 12:7), "the Lord said to Abram" (13:14), Melchizedek "blessed him" (14:19), "the Lord came to Abram in a vision" (15:1) and "the word of the Lord came to him" (:4). It must transpire "according to that which had been spoken" (Ro 4:18). It is for today because "it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham" (Gal 3:7) and "blessed with Abraham" (:9).

"All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal 3:27). You have "laid aside the old self" (Col 3:9) and have "put on the new self" (:10). This is only possible with the help of the Holy Spirit. "The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Ro 8:6). It is activated by those who "set their minds on . . . the things of the Spirit" (:5). You then serve in the "newness of the Spirit" (7:6). The result is "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22).

"You are saved, if you hold fast" (1Co 15:2) to "the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand" (:1). Initially it is with that "same spirit of faith . . . we also believe" (2Co 4:13). "God was causing the growth" (1Co 3:6). It demonstrates that "your faith would not rest in the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1Co 2:5). Then we are to "stand firm in the faith" (1Co 16:13). In a human way you get tired when you stand or hold on to something for a long time. But God handles that too. It is "He who establishes us" (2Co 1:21). "In your faith you are standing firm." (:24). Therefore it is God giving you the faith to stand.

You then become aware that you "walk by faith, not by sight" (2Co 5:7). It's possible to "take pride in appearance, and not in heart" (:12). But you live by what is in your heart. This is no surprise because God "gave us the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22). Then "your faith grows" (2Co 10:15). You can depend on God's help because he "is faithful, through whom you were called" (1Co 1:9). There will be challenging moments but "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able" (1Co 10:13). Monitor your standing and "test yourselves to see if you are in the faith" (2Co 13:5).

## **Rejoice in Hope**

"We exult in hope of the glory of God" (Ro 5:2). To rejoice is to celebrate something rewarding, and God's glory would certainly qualify. But since it is a hope it is unseen because "hope that is seen is not hope" (Ro 8:24).

"Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off" (Pr 23:18). Central to this hope is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). This is the "hope that is in you" (1Pe 3:15) because it is the "hope of salvation" (1Th 5:8). Through rejoicing you proclaim "the hope and resurrection" (Ac 23:6). You rejoice because your "faith is the assurance of things hoped for" (Heb 11:1) since you know "hope does not disappoint" (Ro 5:5).

Hope is in being "fellow heirs" (Ro 8:17) in terms of "the revealing of the sons of God" (:19) regarding "the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (:21). We rejoice knowing "we have a building from God . . . eternal in the heavens" (2Co 5:1). We don't rejoice selfishly because "a horse is a false hope for victory" (Ps 33:17). Consequently one's "hope is in the Lord his God" (Ps 146:5) and "my hope is from Him" (Ps 62:5). Therefore rejoicing means resting on "the hope of eternal life" (Tit 1:2) and "looking for the blessed hope" (2:13).

Hope is the end product of tribulation because it "brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope" (Ro 5:3-4). We are to rejoice in hope and persevere in tribulation (Ro 12:12). "This hope we have as an anchor" (Heb 6:19). The expectation is for "the redemption of our body" (Ro 8:23) because "in hope we have been saved" (:24). Tribulation causes you to remember and "this I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope" (La 3:21). "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Ro 15:13).



## **Permissive Will**

“He who has an ear, let him hear” (Rev 3:13). But if you hear will you also obey? Be careful not to dismiss what God is saying to you. Balaam had this problem even though he proclaimed “the Lord [is] my God” (Nu 22:18). Balak had asked him to curse Israel (:6). Then Balaam sought God for direction and God said, “Do not go with them” (:12). He talked to God, heard his voice, and got his answer. Then Balak said, “I will indeed honor you richly” (:17). Balaam was enticed and rationalized thinking “what else” (:19) God might say. When asked again God permitted him to proceed but cautioned him (:20). Furthermore “God was angry because he was going” (:22). Why did God allow it the second time? Romans 12:2 says there is a “good and acceptable and perfect” will of God. In Balaam’s case God acceded to a less than perfect compromise. Some call this God’s permissive (i.e. not perfect) will. If a person lacks faith then “let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord” (Jas 1:7). But if you “delight yourself in the Lord He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 37:4).

## **Israel's Attitude**

God “leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way” (Ps 25:9). “Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should chose” (Ps 25:12). Humility is the right attitude because then you’ll be receptive to God. “None of those who wait for You will be ashamed” (Ps 25:3). “Trust in the Lord with all

your heart" (Pr 3:5). Israel was guilty of going their own way. They "tempted God in the desert. So He gave them their request" (Ps 106:14-15). There are consequences to disobedience because he "sent a wasting disease among them" (:15). They "quickly forgot His works" (:13), and additionally, "forgot God their Savior" (:21). If we don't pay attention and pray we can forget too. When you follow the Lord he "will go before you . . . [and] be your rear guard" (Isa 52:12). "But you will not go out in haste" (:12). Making haste presumes you are doing your own thing. Doing so represents lack of faith because he "who believes in it will not be disturbed" (Isa 28:16). Israel suffered the consequences of doing their own thing. We must realize that these things are "written for our instruction" (1Co 10:11).

## **Wait on God**

We are to wait on God for an answer when we have a problem or decision to make. However, it is appropriate anytime as in waiting "for your God continually" (Hos 12:6). To wait means to tarry, hope for, or to expect. It doesn't mean to put yourself "on hold" or be sitting next to the telephone waiting for a call not knowing when it will come. You must be actively involved and positive. "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps 27:13).

Waiting isn't just academic. You might be in a "time of trouble" (Ps 37:39) or in a "pit of destruction" (Ps 40:2).

The psalmist exclaimed "I am weary with crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God" (Ps 69:3). Another cried "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words" (Ps 119:147). A third professed "O Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong" (Ps 30:7). And there are times where "the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression" (Isa 30:20). Paul told the Corinthians about "our affliction which came to us in Asia" (2Co 1:8). The rationale is that "the sufferings of Christ are ours" (:5). Paul said "we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so we despaired even of life" (:8). The purpose is "so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God" (:9). God said "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (2Co 12:9). Jesus said "apart from Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The result is that God "comforts us . . . so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction" (:4). Paul cited that God "delivered us from so great a peril of death" (:10).

God has "acted on our behalf" (Ps 68:28). He "acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him" (Isa 64:4). God "delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him" (Ps 35:10). "He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power" (Isa 40:29). "He is their strength in time of trouble . . . [and] helps them and delivers them . . . and saves them, because they take refuge in Him" (Ps 37:39-40). God is "my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken." (Ps 62:6). He is "the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God" (:7). God has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever

forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" (Heb 13:5-6).

"Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength" (Isa 40:31). It applies to all ages because even "youths grow weary and tired" (:30). "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage" (Ps 27:14). "With the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10). Therefore, without this strength you will lose heart (Ps 27:13). But remember it is "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit" (Zec 4:6). Make sure you aren't trying to save your own life for you "shall lose it" (Mk 8:35). But whoever "loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it" (:35). You defend against being self-centered with this mindset. "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col 3:23).

## **Trust God**

Waiting on the Lord has benefits. "May those who wait for You not be ashamed" (Ps 69:6). "The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him" (La 3:25). "The Lord favors those . . . who wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 147:11). "They all wait for You to give them their food in due season" (Ps 104:27). Trust in God and you will be blessed (Ps 40:4). To Israel possessing the Promised Land meant to seize or occupy it. "Those who will wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land" (Ps 37:9). "Keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land" (:34).

“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him” (Ps 37:7). “Wait in silence for God only” (Ps 62:5). “It is good that he waits silently” (La 3:26). When you are quiet you can hear God when you pray. It is God’s character your faith is based on, therefore “I will wait on Your name” (Ps 52:9). “In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence” (Pr 14:26). “The people who know their God will display strength and take action” (Da 11:32). Therefore “let the weak say ‘I am a mighty man’” (Joe 3:10).

Wait for God’s response because it is the intervention you require. “I wait for Your word” (Ps 119:74, 81). “In His word do I hope” (Ps 130:5). “We do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us . . . according to the will of God” (Ro 8:26-27). Then God’s “EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER” (1Pe 3:12). As a result “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Ro 10:17). It is the “conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1) because it’s component of faith convinces you. “Wait for the Lord, and He will save you” (Pr 20:22). Then you must appropriate the solution.

## **Be Strong**

God told Joshua to “cross this Jordan . . . to the land which I am giving . . . to the sons of Israel” (Jos 1:2). God said “no man will be able to stand before you” (:5) because “the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (:9). He commanded “be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed” (:9). He promised “I will not fail you or forsake you” (:5). But he warned “be careful to do

according to all the law . . . that you may have success” (:7).

To be courageous you “let your heart take courage” (Ps 31:24). You believe in and focus on God’s promises. “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You” (Isa 26:3). Jesus, himself, was resolute because he said “the Lord God helps Me . . . therefore, I have set My face like flint” (Isa 50:7). Courage means to make your heart firm. You hold firm to your goal when circumstances try to dissuade you. You will have to persevere to prevail. Encourage yourself by cultivating your faith so it develops. A tiny mustard seed grows into a tree (Mt 13:32). Be assured that “for all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God” (Ro 8:14). “For such is God, our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death” (Ps 48:14).

If you need help you have the assurance of Psalm 91:15. “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him, and honor him.” It is more than God just coming to the rescue. “With a long life I will satisfy him, and let him behold My salvation” (:16). “You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created” (Rev 4:11).

## **Marriage**

God created man in his image. But in Genesis 3:19 God said to Adam that he was created from the dust of the earth. Obviously dust is not God's image. Genesis 2:7

says God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." It seems likely that God's image relates more to spiritual existence than merely physical.

Genesis 2:18-23 is in context with verse 2:24. "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him'" (:18). She would be created from Adam's rib (:21) rather than from the ground Adam came from (3:19). The origin of the woman was from the only representative of the same species and God "named them Man" (5:2). But Eve was a helper in her own right because she was named so since she would become "the mother of all the living" (3:20). When God "brought her to the man" [Adam said] "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (2:22-23).

## **God Joins**

"In the beginning God created" (Ge 1:1). Jesus said "from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female" (Mk 10:6). How long ago was the beginning? I wonder how long Adam had been alone before it was decided that being alone was not good (Ge 2:18)? Genesis 2:15 says God put Adam in the Garden of Eden to tend it. He even named the animals God brought to him (2:19). It is said that a dog is "man's best friend." But even it couldn't alleviate Adam's loneliness. When Adam was by himself God told him not to eat of certain trees

(2:17). Eve was not present to hear this which may have been instrumental in her being deceived.

Jesus concludes his answer with "they are no longer two, but one" (Mt 19:6). Adam confirmed it saying Eve was "bone of my bones" (Ge 2:23). Hebrews 4:12 says God's word divides between the soul and spirit as if separating the joints and marrow. The marrow is the life-producing part in the innermost area of the bone. Therefore they shared the gift of life. Malachi said "Have we not all one Father? Did not God create us" (Mal 2:10)? "Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his" (2:15).

Jesus continues saying, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mt 19:6). What is now one due to God's work should not be undone. There is a sense that you cannot destroy something that God has created to be permanent. Genesis 2:24 says that a man leaves his father and mother. God had removed the rib from man (:22) and with it created the woman and Adam was to be "joined to his wife" (:24). Life is propagated by an unbroken leaving and uniting process.

## **God Unites**

What does joining together to become one entail? The first phase might include how God prepares and introduces the two people in the first place. You could say it would involve the courtship and marriage ceremony experience. The second phase would include the maturation of the



personal relationship over time. Such an interdependent relationship is the foundation of the family. Are there any Old Testament patterns that illustrate how God joins people together? In Genesis 24 there is the story of Isaac and Rebekah. God had given Abraham a promise regarding his offspring (:7). Because of this Abraham said to his servant that God would "send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there" (:7). "All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Ro 8:14). It is the Lord who makes a journey a success (Ge 24:21). This would apply to any Christian's life.

The journey begins with prayer. The servant prayed for God to make him successful (:12). We are to present our requests to God (Php 4:6). The servant was specific with his request because he asked "may it be" (Ge 4:14) in the situation he was in. Then it was God's turn to select "the one you whom You have appointed" (:14). There is a parallel with Adam and Eve where God "brought her to the man" (2:22). Finally you must watch closely to see what God does (24:21).

At some point a recognition by faith in the quest is offered such as the ring and bracelets (:22) and a confession that the "the Lord has guided me" (:27) is spoken. Details are shared with the other party because we see that Rebekah told her brother "This is what the man said to me" (:30). The opportunity to agree or disagree follows. The servant said "tell me; and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left" (:49).

Their answer was "The matter comes from the Lord" (:50). At this point it was acknowledged that "the Lord has prospered my way" (:56). Then it was time to ask Rebekah "Will you go" (:58) and she said "I will" (:58).

## **By Covenant**

The story ends when Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent (Ge 24:67). There is no ceremony mentioned. But we must be careful to observe the customs to properly understand how God joins. In Israel there were agreements between the families of the betrothed as well as the individuals themselves. Engagement was equivalent to marriage in many ways. In Genesis 29:19 Jacob made an agreement with Laban to marry his daughter. When the proper time had passed he said "Give me my wife, for my time is completed" (:21) A feast was given (:22) and a bridal week followed (:27).

Where are they scripturally joined? Malachi 2:14 explains that "she is your companion and your wife by covenant." A marriage covenant is more than a temporary convenience covered by a prenuptial agreement. When two parties made mutual promises to each other in the Old Testament they formally walked between two halves of an animal sacrifice (Ge 15:9-11). That sealed a contract which had certain terms. However, with marriage the person pledges his whole self. Hebrews 13:4 says "marriage is to be held in honor among all." Then God becomes a witness (Mal 2:14). Jesus became a witness when he observed "you have had five husbands, and the

one whom you now have is not your husband" (Jn 4:18). It seems that the first five fulfilled the marriage vows whereas with the last they were unmarried.

## **Covenants**

Ezekiel 17 is a good example of a covenant. The king of Babylon made a treaty with Israel and it was executed by an oath (:13). But Israel's leader despised the oath and broke the treaty (:16). He broke the covenant (:18). "Will he who does such things escape" (:15)? "He shall not escape" (:18).

Israel was in a covenant relationship with God. "My covenant . . . they broke . . . [even though] I was a husband to them" (Jer 31:32). Israel ignored God's warnings, rejected his precepts, turned to idols, and behaved as other nations did (2Ki 17:15). In Malachi 2:10 they profaned the covenant of their fathers. It was a lasting covenant and was to have been propagated via the progeny of Israel because God was "seeking a godly offspring" (:15). But the covenant was broken by intermarriage (:11). Does this qualify as officially breaking the contract? In Jeremiah 33:20-21 God says if the terms of a covenant are violated then "My covenant may also be broken."

In a marriage covenant there are guidelines (Jer 11:6). It is a covenant of love to be obeyed wholeheartedly (1Ki 8:23). It is kept by paying attention to the duties of the covenant (Jer 11:10) and by not forgetting the promises

made (Ps 103:18). But it can be undermined by the wrong attitude (1Ki 11:11) and an unfaithful heart (Ps 78:37). This leads to forgetting the promises (Dt 4:23) and rebelling against the agreement (Hos 8:1). Then the violator will reject the other party and turn away (Dt 31:20).

## **Becoming One**

The "one concept" is imbedded in God's creation. It was Jesus' desire to promulgate unity by giving them glory "that they may be one, just as We are one" (Jn 17:22). This involves a higher spiritual principle. Ephesians 2:15 says his purpose is "so that in Himself He might make the two into one man." Christ "nourishes and cherishes" (5:29) the church since "we are members of His body" (:30). In the same way husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies" (:28). Husband and wife should be like "Christ and the church" (:32). "He who loves his own wife loves himself" (:28). This is similar to one of the two commandments upon which the Law and Prophets depend (Mt 22:40). It is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (:39).

Unity is the objective. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Eph 5:31). The purpose of Christ caring for his body, the church, is the reason why the man leaves parents and unites with his wife. Paul says it is a "mystery" (:32). Furthermore, it is the same reason Jesus gave the Pharisees that divorce was unscriptural when he quoted Genesis 2:24. This

quote is identical to Paul's in Ephesians 5:31. The two reasons are synonymous. Being a member of Christ's body is why a divorce between Christians is prohibited. So does such a divorce presume that the parties have lost sight of their standing and purpose in Christ?

## **A Mystery**

Perhaps this is too hard for many to accomplish because the "mystery is great" (Eph 5:32). Is it too much to ask to live "on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10)? Maybe you'd have to be like Paul who wished "that all men were even as I myself am" (1Co 7:7). Even Matthew 22:30 states that a heavenly existence will be achieved where they will be "like angels in heaven." Is it important to be aware of your spiritual existence? Romans 8:27 says there is a "mind of the Spirit", and a mind denotes intelligence. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit" (Jn 4:24). This implies you have spiritual intelligence which goes beyond the physical brain to accomplish things like loving your wife and neighbor as yourself.

There is other knowledge available so the mystery doesn't overwhelm you. First Corinthians 15:45 says "'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." But James 2:26 points out that "the body without the spirit is dead." That means that man has a spiritual dimension that transcends the body. Furthermore, Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 "may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete." The body

and spirit are distinctive parts. Something to think about is that since the spirit has intelligence, what you know and have become will be taken with you to heaven (or hell) afterwards.

The mystery must be taken out of it. You have heard it said that a successful marriage takes work. In our society people go to their daily work. A Christian's work is to "believe in him" (Jn 6:29) and his daily steps are a "walk by faith" (2Co 5:7). Therefore a good marriage is a regular exercise of daily faith. But "faith, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas 2:17) so "do not deal treacherously" (Mal 2:16).

What composes the works that will sustain a marriage? Ephesians 5:33 mentions the main ingredient. "Each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband." Without love you generate only noise (1Co 13:1). Therefore "live by faith" (Gal 2:20) which works through love (5:6). Love is insurance that you don't break the faith that Malachi warned about. First Corinthians 13:13 says there is "faith, hope and love . . . but the greatest of these is love."

## **By Cleaving**

Genesis 2:24 directs a couple to cleave to each other in order to become one flesh. The meaning of "cleave" is to glue together. The process begins by them choosing to be together, promising that they will fulfill the covenant, and trusting that each will do his best. They will then

function as one. God, also, is at work in this joining process as "a cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart" (Ecc 4:12).

It is worth considering whether being "one flesh" is literal or figurative. "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband" (1Co 7:4). It is a matter of ownership. "You are not your own" (6:19). "You have been bought with a price" (:20). Closeness and interdependence bonds a marriage together. There is the "natural use of the woman (Romans 1:27)" which synergistically makes the two one flesh. This is brought out in an unusual way. 1 Corinthians 6:16 says sexual relations with a prostitute joins them in one body. Even though there is a connotation of one literal body it makes more sense to regard it as figuratively representing a commitment between two people which brings them closely together. So when "one flesh" is used in Genesis and the Gospels it is a figure of speech denoting oneness. Both Jesus and Paul quoted "a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

### **God's Plan for Healing**

Healing is a facet of God's plan. His plan for Abram was to "make you into a great nation" (Ge 12:2). In addition, God said "'To your offspring I will give this land'" (:7). The location was at Shechem and the Canaanites were there (:6). The Lord confirmed it by making a covenant with Abram (:18). "Abram believed the Lord, and

he credited it to him as righteousness" (:6). Many years later God said to Abram "I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers" (Ge 17:2). He even changed his name to Abraham (:5). God again promised to give Canaan to his descendants (:8). Furthermore he said "my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you" (:21).

Another part of God's plan unfolded when he brought "the Israelites out of Egypt" (Ex 12:51). Moses reminded them that Canaan was their destination because it was "the land he swore to your forefathers to give you" (13:15). After they crossed the Red Sea "the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them" (15:25). Not only did he deliver them from Egypt but he became "the Lord, who heals you" (:26). However, their responsibility was to "listen carefully . . . [and] pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees" (:26). If they were disobedient he would not protect them against the diseases the Egyptians suffered (:26). Healing was one of God's provisions for the Israelites but it was conditional. "Worship the Lord your God, and . . . I will take away sickness from you" (Ex 23:25). "The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt" (Dt 7:15). "However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees . . . all these curses will come upon you" (Dt 28:15).



## Basis of Healing

God's choosing and leading Israel is valuable history. "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1Co 10:11). Old Testament content is meaningful to Christians even though "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (Heb 7:22). Are we permitted then to copy-and-paste only what we feel applies from the Old Testament to the New Testament? You can only be selective if the New Testament states that something has been superseded. We must realize that "I the Lord do not change" (Mal 3:6). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). Therefore, his desire to heal continues.

The Psalms confirm this. The Lord "forgives your sins and heals all your diseases" (Ps 103:3). Some ills are your own fault. They "became fools . . . and suffered affliction" (107:17). Then they called for help and "he sent forth his word and healed them" (:20). Was this physical or spiritual? It was partly the former since they "loathed all food and drew near the gates of death" (:18). Is it strange that God's word was involved in the healing? Not scripturally. God's words are "life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body" (Pr 4:22). If you follow the instructions you can be healed. Then you must profess the advice because "the tongue of the wise brings healing" (12:18). "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (8:21).

## **Took Infirmities**

Is the healing manifested in the Old Testament in effect today? "Christ is the mediator of a new covenant . . . to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (Heb 9:15). How are the old and new connected? The new covenants that he "healed all the sick . . . to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases'" (Mt 8:17). Isaiah 53 is quoted. The word "diseases" used by Matthew refers to Isaiah's "sorrows" (:4). That fulfillment occurred when "Jesus went throughout Galilee . . . healing every disease and sickness among the people" (Mt 4:23). "The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isa 53:5). The meaning is that it applies currently. At the Last Supper regarding his crucifixion Jesus said "'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'" (Lk 22:20). Those wounds cover our healing today.

## **Anointing**

Jesus "stood up [in the synagogue] to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him" (Lk 4:17). He read the prophetic message about the Messiah which includes "the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me" (Isa 61:1). It prophesied that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power" (Ac 10:38). "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (1:8). "He went around doing good and healing all who were under power

of the devil, because God was with him" (10:38). Jesus said, "it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work" (Jn 14:10). God's "power had gone out of him" (Mk 5:30). Jesus acknowledged "the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing" (5:19).

Jesus also read, "He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind" (Lk 4:18). To Isaiah this was "release from darkness for the prisoners" (Isa 61:1). This happened literally since Jesus directed them to tell John "the blind receive sight" (Mk 11:5). For others "these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name . . . they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (Mk 16:17,18). "Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (Jn 14:12). "The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people" (Ac 5:12). "People brought the sick into the streets . . . so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them" (:15). "Stephen . . . did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people" (6:8). "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul . . . and their illnesses were cured" (19:11).

### **Point of Contact**

Is there a method to follow for healing? There is usually a point of contact through which God's power flows. A woman in a large crowd thought "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed" (Mk 5:28). Then "she felt in

her body that she was freed from her suffering" (:29). "She [had] heard about Jesus" (:27) and approached him from behind in the crowd. Others had heard also. "When the men of that place recognized Jesus . . . [people] begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed" (Mt 14:35,36). Also Paul's "handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured" (Ac 19:12). Did God impregnate the cloth with supernatural energy? That would be science fiction. God is omnipresent. In his omnipotence he knows when to personally manifest his power. "I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled" (Jer 1:12).

Another point of contact is touch. "Jesus put forth his hand and touched him . . . and immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Mt 8:2,3). "He touched her hand and the fever left her" (Mt 8:14). He "put fingers into his ears . . . and touched his tongue" (Mk 7:33) and his "ears were opened . . . and he spoke plainly" (:35). "They brought a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him" (Mk 8:22).

### **Laying on Hands**

You might say the official method for healing is "the foundation of . . . the laying on of hands" (Heb 6:1). People were aware of this because "they begged him to place his hand on the man" (Mk 7:32). Jairus "pleaded earnestly with him . . . come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live" (Mk 5:23). Laying on of

hands is doctrine because it was part of the Old Covenant and used in the annual festivals. The priests were to "lay their hands on its head" (Ex 29:10). This transferred the sins of the people to the sacrifice which was a type of Christ.

"Jesus put his hands on the [blind] man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored" (Mk 8:25). In the synagogue where he was teaching Jesus saw a crippled woman. He said to her "you are set free from your infirmity" (Lk 13:12). "Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God" (:13). Then after the resurrection Jesus told them "these signs will accompany those who believe" (Mk 16:17). "They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (:18). The father of the chief official of Malta was ill. On Paul's visit "after prayer, [he] placed his hands on him and healed him" (Ac 28:8). We can surmise that the miracles God did through the apostles (5:12), Stephen (6:8), and Paul (19:11) were accomplished by the laying on of hands.

## **Motivation**

Healing is a two-way street. It is available to everyone because Jesus "went around doing good and healing all" (Ac 10:38). "The people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all" (Lk 6:19). But you have to be open to accept the healing. You can't have a closed mind. For example, Jesus made a trip to the town where he was born and raised. The

people remarked "Isn't this the carpenter?" (Mk 6:3). Then "they took offense at him" (:3). Consequently "he could not do any miracles there, except lay hands on a few sick people and heal them" (:5). It is more than just a lack of cooperation. "Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of the miracles had been performed, because they did not repent" (Mt 11:20). Few allowed miracles in Nazareth. Jesus was saying "it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you" (:22). He was "amazed at their lack of faith" (Mk 6:6) of the people in his hometown.

You've heard "necessity is the mother of invention." If you are sick you have a motivation to become well. If there is hope for a cure you optimistically take advantage of the opportunity. "A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean" (Mt 8:2). A centurion asked for help saying, "Lord, . . . my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering" (:4). "A ruler came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live" (9:18). "Two blind men followed him, calling out, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David!'" (:27). "Ten men who had leprosy met him . . . and called out in a loud voice, 'Jesus, Master, have pity on us!'" (Lk 17:13). Notice that they all had confidence in who he was and that he was capable of healing them.

## **Believe**

It requires a commitment on the part of the recipient to receive healing. It had to be ascertained verbally or in some way spiritually substantiated. Jesus asked the blind man ""Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (Mt 9:28). A Canaanite woman even had to provide proof by saying ""even the dogs eat crumbs that fall from their masters' table"" (15:27). Although Jesus said he'd go to the centurion's house to heal his servant, the centurion had confidence in orders and said, "I am a man under authority . . . [and] say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it" (8:9). Therefore he said to Jesus ""just say the word, and my servant will be healed" (:8).

The result of being healed was predicated on the petitioner's belief. When the blind men answered ""Yes, Lord"" (Mt 9:28) Jesus said, ""According to your faith will it be done' . . . and their sight was restored" (:29-30). To the Canaanite woman "Jesus answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour" (15:28). In reply to the centurion Jesus said, ""I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith"" (8:10). Then he directed the centurion, ""Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.' And his servant was healed at that very hour" (:13).

## **Faith**

Jesus is willing to heal, for when the leper asked, he said ""I am willing, . . . Be clean!"" (Mt 8:3). But you

have to be ready to receive. When the blind man said he was ready Jesus replied, "According to your faith will it be done to you" (9:29). You have to have faith to believe. "It is with your heart that you believe" (Ro 10:10). "Faith comes from hearing" (:17) so you must have input. But it is with your inner self and not exclusively with your intellect that you believe in spiritual things. "Everything is possible for him who believes" (Mk 9:23).

Jesus said, "Have faith in God" (Mk 11:22). To believe is having faith. "If you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (Mt 21:22). "Therefore all things which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you" (Mk 11:24). Verse 24 beginning with "therefore" is predicated on the preceding one. Jesus explained "if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him" (:23). The person commands something to happen and then believes he has already received it. Also he does not doubt it will be done. When Peter "saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, cried out" (Mt 14:30). Jesus caught him saying, "You of little faith . . . why did you doubt?" (:31). Peter had the faith because Jesus said, "Come" (:29), but doubt cancelled faith.

### **Your Words**

The centurion knew that all Jesus had to do was "just say the word" (Mt 8:8). "He drove out the spirits with



a word and healed all the sick" (:16). Faith is released by words. "By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (12:37). "The tongue has the power of life and death" (Pr 18:21). "The tongue of the wise brings healing" (12:18). Jesus taught "out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). The faith you have is expressed in speech. "What he says will happen" (Mk 11:23). It works because of the characteristics of the communication. Jesus said "the words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life" (Jn 6:63). He also reveals "I am in the Father . . . [and] the words I say to you are not just my own" (14:10).

### **Authority**

God gave Jesus "the name that is above every name: (Php 2:9). He had "the highest place" (:9). "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow" (Php 2:10). By this authority he commissioned the disciples to spread the Good News (Mk 16:15). They would manifest this power "in My name" (:17) and "signs will accompany" them (:17). Their efforts would be "greater things . . . because I am going to the Father" (Jn 14:12). This would "bring glory to the Father" (:13). Jesus said "I will do whatever you ask" (:13). He had said "in that day you will no longer ask me anything" (Jn 16:23). When he was with them their questions were posed to him. But with Jesus in heaven "my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (:23) "so that your joy may be made full" (:24).

Peter knew because he told the cripple "what I have I give you" (Ac 3:6). He had the faith because he understood that "by his wounds we are healed" (Isa 53:5). Peter got the man's attention by looking "straight at him" (Ac 3:4) and the man was "expecting to get something from them" (:5). Peter transmitted the faith because he gave (:6) it. It was a heavenly request because he expressed "'in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk'" (:6). The Father "will give you" (Jn 16:23) the response and Jesus "will do" (Jn 14:13) what you ask. So when Peter "helped him up . . . the man's feet and ankles became strong . . . and [he] began to walk" (Ac 3:7,8). The people "were filled with wonder and amazement" (:10).

## **Ask**

There is liberal permission for what to ask of God. "Ask, and it will be given to you; . . . for everyone who asks receives" (Mt 7:7,8). Your Father will "give good things to them that ask him" (:11). "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Php 4:6). "You do not have because you do not ask" (Ja 4:2). "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives" (:3). "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Mt 6:8). Paul "implored the Lord three times that it might leave me" (2Co 12:8) but God said 'My grace is sufficient for you'" (:9). "If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him" (1Jn 3:21-22).

Therefore "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (1Jn 5:14-15). Then do like Paul who said "I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told" (Ac 27:25). "We who have believed enter that rest" (Heb 4:3). Therefore "Do not fear or be dismayed . . . for the battle is not yours but God's" (2Ch 20:15). However we are to "fight the good fight of faith" (1Ti 6:12) because "for without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb 11:6). But to fight doesn't mean self-effort. "Are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal 3:3). God works miracles among you by hearing with faith (:5).

## **Receive**

Years ago a "name it and claim it" doctrine surfaced. It sounded like guarantying something on your gift list or getting money to miraculously materialize as in winning the lottery. "Your heavenly Father knows that you need" (Mt 6:32) provisions to eat, drink and wear (:31). If you seek God first "all these things will be added to you" (:33). The Bible says this and Jesus is "the Word" (Jn 1:14). He said "if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (Jn 15:7). The deceptive doctrine says that you can speak just about anything into existence you wish. But it doesn't consider that it has to be in accordance with God's words "in you" (:7). The words are there if you meditate on the book of the law (Jos 1:8). They are there because "Your word I have treasured in my heart" (Ps 119:11). "Jesus

answered, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Mt 4:4). He repeats it being written in verses 7 and 10. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa 8:20).

## **Overcome Depression**

“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32). If you are in a depression you are not free. A doctor told me that the reason it is called depression is that it depresses the functions of the body. Your mental health is the holistic condition of your emotions, feelings, mood, thoughts and behavior. If it malfunctions it could be considered a mental illness. When you get physically sick it is called an illness. However, mentally you might not be able to even explain how you sense that something isn't right. In fact, depressed people often don't seek treatment because they don't even recognize they have a treatable disorder. If there is a biological source then it should be treated as a medical disorder. It's because brain chemistry is unbalanced which affects thinking and nerve functioning.

Even though the source is biological it has the result of affecting you emotionally because your thoughts monitor the predicament and your hope suffers because you can't visualize a solution. You, in effect, become helpless to figure out your own dilemma. This inadequacy leads to lack of confidence in yourself and feeling worthless. If you've always been a responsible person you may even begin to feel guilty. Then pessimism could be

right around the corner. But God made man in His image and likeness (Ge 1:26) and you are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14). Therefore “‘the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, . . . [are] ‘to give you a future and a hope’” (Jer 29:11).

Any solution for a Christian is contained in God’s promises. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps 46:1) and “my hope is from him” (62:5). If you are genuinely depressed then grandiose plans are beyond your capabilities. Therefore “cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1Pe 5:7). This means not to worry. “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). It also means that God is able to work things out, although the timing and process might not be what you expect. “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the Lord, it will stand” (Pr 19:21). “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (16:9). Deep in your heart you believe (Ro 10:10). If you know in your heart something needs to be done then your mind won’t mislead you. You can feel confident when you take that step. God does “enlarge my steps under me” (Ps 18:36). You need to take one step at a time.

### **By the Church**

God officially established healing in the church. "To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1Co 12:7). One is "gifts of healing" (:9). In this case the gift is a ministry through the one assigned.

We know that you need faith to receive healing. "Faith by the same Spirit" (:9) is provided so you possess it to receive healing. You might say the gifts are interactive. Faith to operate and receive the gift of "miraculous powers" (:10) is necessary. "God has appointed . . . workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing" (:28). "Do all have gifts of healing?" (:30). "He gives them to each one, just as he determines" (:11).

In the church if anyone is sick he should call the elders (Ja 5:14). They should "pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord" (:14). It will heal him and "the Lord will raise him up" (:15). It is a collective endeavor to "pray for each other so that you may be healed" (:16). "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (:16). This is illustrated in the case of a fig tree (Mt 21:18-20). Jesus told them they could "do what was done to the fig tree" (:21). Furthermore "if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (:22). "Believe you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mk 11:24). "By his wounds you have been healed" (1Pe 2:24). It has already been done and just needs to be manifested. Jesus instructed the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would" (Mt 8:13). He told the woman, "Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (Mk 5:34). Healing is the "children's bread" (Mt 15:27). Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour" (:28).

Your faith heals you (Mk 5:34). You have faith because “My words abide in you” (Jn 15:7). Paul said “the word is . . . in your heart” (Ro 10:8). “Let the word of Christ richly dwell in you” (Col 3:16). It “comes from hearing” (:17). It’s “by the word of Christ” (:17). It’s “the word of faith which we are preaching” (:8). Faith is confidence built on the trust that the word is “forever . . . settled in heaven” (Ps 119:89). Faith is inspiration because the “unfolding of Your words gives light” (Ps 119:130). Therefore “walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light” (1Jo 1:7) and it will work out.