

THE NEW
FULFILLED
THE OLD

*Proven Evidence That Jesus Christ
Fulfilled the Scripture*

Dr. Joseph Olutunde Ajao

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Library of Congress Number: 2003091096

ISBN :

Softcover 1931178-81-X

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FORWARD

According to statistics I have read, approximately 80% of Christians read the bible less than one a week. Further, over 90% of believers have never read the book that we all state is our lifeblood in its entirety even once. There is no doubt many reasons for this lack of devotion to bible reading, or endurance to read it diligently. One primary reason given for not reading the Word, devotionally for study is the fear of not properly understanding what is read. Certainly, this fear can be overcome, and must spiritual leaders preach/teach regularly and passionately on the importance of God's word. Yet, in spite of (for many) years of being encouraged, chided, corrected and even threatened regarding the vital good of scripture reading, the situation appears to be getting worse, not better. The church and individual believer is in great need of help in overcoming this obstacle to our growth in Christ. One such help in the overcoming process is found in this book, "The New Fulfilled the Old."

This highly readable book is both a Bible survey, an essential first step in overcoming fear, and a dynamic commentary on scripture which comes from the heart of a true leader with a passion to see God's people grow. The book you have in your hand is comprehensive without being cumbersome, instructive and enlightening. As scripture states, the Word of God is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path. This book can be used as a flashlight, and as you read the pages it will illuminate God's word, open your eyes to the wealth of scripture, and open your heart to the warmth of God's love for you.

Stan E. DeKoven

The Lord said, “The first of the first fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk” (Exodus 23:19). I give honor, glory, and adoration to the Almighty Father in creation, exalted Son in redemption, and Mighty Holy Ghost in regeneration for giving me this unique opportunity to express myself concisely on paper for the advancement of the kingdom of God, for the serious student of the word of God to tap into the rich field of the word of God and for edification of the “Trinity.” This Book came to existence by the grace (*charis*) of the blessed “Trinity,” as such I dedicate this book to the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost for the advancement of the glorious Gospel. I seize this occasion of dedication to appreciate the help that my wife Deaconess E.A. Ajao offered to me since we became one twelve years ago. God will bless you and our children, Segun and Seyi.

I cannot forget my mother who was to me larger than life itself. Ma Awero Ajao, may your soul rest in perfect peace; you are a sweet mother, a loving one indeed. Ma S. Sobande, you are a mother in a million to me. Thank you for your progressive help given to me at my point of need. God will bless you and all your children in Jesus’ name. I say a big thank you to my father who loved me and trained me in the way of the Lord. Even when the future seemed bleak, he prayed for me and told me that “It is better late than never.” I say kudos to you, Pa Gabriel Ajao. My big thank you goes to the members of Christ Gospel Church: You gave me the necessary support, you all stood by me even when those who promised that they will be there for the Church ran away when the battle was fierce. I release this Book into the hand of the “Trinity” for signs, wonders, and miracles. To anybody that purchases this book, I pray to the Almighty God that miracle will settle the issues of your life at all times in Jesus’ name. Enjoy your journey through the New Testaments and find out how the New fulfilled the Old, how everything was fulfilled in one and only one, Jesus of Nazareth, and God bless you tremendously as you feed on the engrafted words of life.

In the bygone millennium during the time of the patriarch Moses who gave us the “Torah, the Talmud” and the Pentateuch (Five Books of the Bible), the Old Testament text was their Book (Bible), he gave us the nucleus, the foundation upon which the subsequent writers built upon. The truth is that, Jesus Christ lived during the Old Testament time, and taught people from the “Old Testament Scripture” as His text. Many profound and anointed servants of God who did mighty exploits for God in their generation understood the Book of many Books as an inspired word of God, the Old Testament being the foundation, and the New Testament in every respect fulfilled the Old promises given by God Himself through the pen of 40 people.

People like Josephus Flavius, William Tyndale (the translator), Charles G. Finney, D.L. Moody, C.H. Spurgeon, Smith Wigglesworth, Oral Roberts, Billy Graham, T.L. Osborn, Dr. Stan DeKoven, Dr. Morris Cerrulo, Bishop T.D. Jakes, and other giants of faith out there believed sincerely that the Old Testament is the foundation that can never sink which the New Testament stand upon solidly, they used the Old Testament Scripture to interpret the New, and vice versa, undeniably, the explosive and miraculous manifestation followed their ministries (Acts 5:12-16). Make no mistake about it, if God used the above mentioned apostles of faith mightily by their understanding and application of the truth of the word of God. This book will help you too, to be on the fire for the Lord basically to do mighty exploit for him in your own generation. The book will teach you

- How the Old Testament is related to the New Testament.
- How to interpret Scripture with scripture for the miracle, signs, and wonders to follow your ministration.
- You will be able to Psychologize, and Theologize for an efficacious evangelistic outreach.
- You will study the Bible diligently and be approved by God in all your walk with Him.
- The Biblical and Theological knowledge based upon pragmatic application will be your portion in forming a sound doctrine.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

It is expedient to expound the fact that this Book, *The New Fulfilled the Old*, is a profound biblical survey of the New Testament and how it fulfilled the old prophetic promises of the Messiah. The gospel truth is that the New Testament Survey is foundational; it fulfilled the Old Testament in every Biblical respect.

Significantly, New Testament revelation is based upon the working out of the plan of redemption by God, through the Son, and by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

The rationale (reason) and principle on which the expositions, plans, and beliefs of the words of the two testaments are hinged unfold the Love of God that is progressive (Genesis 3:15; John 3:16 and Hebrews 1:2).

Precisely, the introduction to the Bible will open our spiritual understanding to the plans of God from the Old Testament perspective, how the progressive foundational plans were fulfilled in the New Testaments through one and only one, Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Clearly the theological and Biblical comprehension of the doctrines from the Scripture will give us a broad knowledge of the redemptive work that Christ did almost 2,000 years ago when He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The in-depth comprehension of this book and the knowledge gained from the study of the Bible will enhance and propel our faith strongly to work in the light of the Gospel and maintain our victory in Christ.

From the Old Testament prophecy of Prophet Isaiah, he prophesied that Christ Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). If we examine closely the Gospel of Evangelist Luke the physician, the 2nd chapter starting from verses 10-14 declares:

Verse 10, "Then the angel said to them, Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." Verse 11, "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Verse 12, "And this will be the sign to you. You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Verse 13 says, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying." Emphasis on Verse 14, the Biblical parallel of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that says, "I create the fruit of lips; peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him" (Isaiah 57:19). The Bible declares in the book of Isaiah chapter 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Concisely that is the will of the Father for humanity to have "Peace" in all their ways through Christ Jesus. Basically that is the essence of the New Testament exegesis: Jesus is our peace on earth and the Prince of Peace (shalom). I believe that God gave us the word. In relation to that, the

writer of Hebrews says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14 KJV).

The importance of the 66 Books of the Bible is to teach us, train believers in holiness first, and guide everybody in the way of salvation, for Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The great apostle Paul when writing to Timothy in his second epistle inferred that: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrines, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

"So that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

We could see the chains of Biblical references that the Bible is given for doctrine, reproof, correction and for instruction in righteousness in order to perfectly and thoroughly furnish the man of God unto all good works.

The Bible is the written word of the one and only one, true and living God. Suffice it is to say that the Word "Bible" means "the Book."

The Bible is one volume of the Word and will, of the living God; it consists of 66 separate books. It's important to know that the word "Scripture" is also used to refer to the word of God. Jesus Himself established that fact in the book of Luke Chapter 24 verse 44.

Verse 44 says, "Then He said to them, these are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me."

The Word Bible is not used in the Bible Era. It is a word selected by men as a title for all of God's words (Ta Biblia). Factually, the Word "Scripture" is also used to refer to God's Word. This word comes from a Latin word which means "writing."

When the Word "Scripture" is used with a capital "S" it means the sacred writing of the one true God. Significantly we have to know the origin of the Bible where it originated from—certainly enough, where the Bible, the written word of God, came from. God Himself inspired the words in the Bible and used approximately (40) forty different men to write down His will; that is His word and He meant it.

These men wrote God's Words over a period of 1,500 years.

The perfect parallel agreement of these writers is one proof that they were all guided and written by a single author. The author was God, the "Loving Father Jehovah."

God used divergent ways in instructing the human writers who wrote His Words; some of them wrote down exactly what God said. For example God told prophet Jeremiah, "Take thee a roll of a book and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel" (Jeremiah 36:2). God told prophet Moses, "He said, Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven" (Exodus 17:14). Other writers wrote what they experienced or what God revealed to them concerning the future. Another example was when Jesus

told Apostle John to write what he had seen in the isle that is called Patmos “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9). The Book further declare, “Write the things which thou hast seen and the things which are and the things which shall be hereafter” (Revelation 1:19).

Importantly, we must know that all the writers wrote the Scripture by the inspiration of God as they were directed, for the Book of Many Books says, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation” (II Peter 1:20). He revealed His word through his secretaries and protected it through the womb of the nations of Israel and passed it over to our generation.

The purpose of the Bible is obvious; it was given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16). The “Logos” or word of God teaches the way of salvation to humanity. It will help you live right and equip you to work for God.

THE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is divided into two major sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Word “testament” means covenant. A covenant is an agreement. The Old Testament records God’s original Covenant or agreement with Man. The New Testament records the New Covenant made by God through His Son, Jesus Christ. The subject of these testaments is hinged upon restoring sinful man to a right relationship with God.

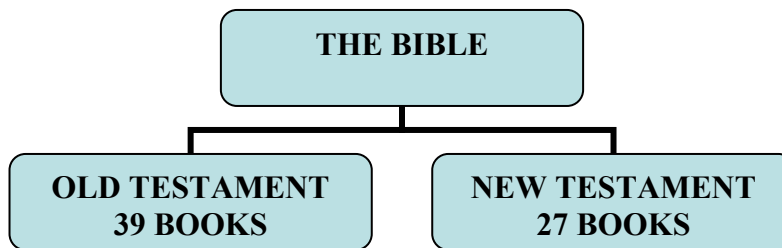
God Himself made a Law that only through the shedding of blood could sin be forgiven (Hebrews 9:22). “For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11). Old Testament sacrificing of animals symbolically represents the sacrifice that Jesus Christ would provide under the “new agreement with God”: to deliver the entire sinful world, which He did. The old covenant was in effect until God sent Jesus to establish a new relationship with men. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, a final sacrifice for sin was made.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews expounds the significance of the New Testament that was written with the blood of the one and only one Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. The Scripture declares in chapter 9 verse 11 of the Book of Hebrews, “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands that is not of this creation.” Verse 12 says, “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy place once for all having obtained eternal redemption.” Verse 13 says, “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh.”

Verse 14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Him without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Some certain schools of theology said that studying the Old Testament is irrelevant nowadays. I have to be “apologetic” at this junction that both testaments are the Words of God and we must study both in order to understand God’s message from Genesis to the Book of Revelation

(Apocalypse). Old Testament is the foundation and the New Testament fulfilled the old. More so, Jesus preached from the “Scripture” which is the Old Testament Book. He lived during “Old Testament era.” Evangelist Mathew recorded Jesus’ quotation about what the Father said concerning marriage when the Pharisees were tempting Him (Matthew 19:1-10 is a direct Biblical reference to Genesis 2:24).

GRAPHIC DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE



THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE

The unity of the Bible denotes two things: The Bible is united in content, meaning that the Bible was written by many writers over many years having a clear difference in culture, customs, and time sphere; still there are no contradictions in the writing of the human authors that recorded His word down for the past generations and the yet unborn, in that God Almighty inspired and guided their writings. The fact is that the writers of the Bible spoke on such subjects with harmony from the first Book of Genesis through the last Book of Revelation. The human authors—the writers—were infallible in their writings because God was the author (creator).

The Bible is not a collection of 66 separate Books on different subjects; the Book of Many Books is united by a major theme. The Biblical parallels and references are so amazingly united from beginning to the end. The Bible reveals God’s special plan. This purpose is stated in the Book of Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

This verse states what God has given to us in Christ, that everything—whether salvation, blessing, joy, power, wisdom, peace, grace and eternal life—is in Christ. For the Son of God says in the Gospel of John chapter 15 verse 7, “If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it

shall be done for you.” The Book of Ephesians expounds further the special plan of God and His purpose as follows.

Ephesians 1:9-11, “Having made known to us the mystery’ of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,” Verse 10, “That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him.” Verse 11, “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” The Lord God revealed His will, the “mystery” of His plan. That plan is the unity of the Scripture, His word; the theme is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinful mankind (humanity).

Christ Jesus pointed to the Old Testament that centered on Him, “And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me” (Luke 24:44). Verse 45 says, “And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the scriptures.” Christ Jesus outlined the key to their understanding of the Scriptures as follows. The major theme focused on Him as the Messiah (Redeemer) of humanity. He is Christos, Yeshua, and His name is Immanuel.

The prophetic exegesis of the Old Testament says, “Thus it is written and thus it was necessary for the ‘Christ’ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that the repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all Nations beginning at Jerusalem.” Verse 48 says, “And you are witnesses of these things.” It is expedient to believe that the Old and New Testaments both tell the story of Jesus. “The story that was ever told and never, ever been told like now.” The Old Testament prepares us for its happening because it is the foundation. The New Testament told us that it did happen; the fulfillment of the prophecy about the coming Savior of humanity unites the Bible in one major theme, the theme of “Messiah” of humanity.

Importantly, the Old Testament saints who looked forward to Jesus under the Old covenant were saved from their sins through faith in God’s promise, the “promise” of a “Savior.” The Book says, “By faith they sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; For he looked for a city which hath foundation, which builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:9-10). In the same vein the Scripture says, “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

“Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Hebrews 13:10-14 KJV).

Jesus Christ is the city of our refuge factually; everyone who looks back to it as is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, that is, the promise of salvation. In the same way through faith that it happened just as God promised.

DIVERSITY OF THE BIBLE

The Word “diversity” of the Bible signifies that the Bible has varieties. It records different ways in which God dealt with people and the different ways in which they responded to God in writing His Word. The Bible records different ways and moods in which it is written; some portions express joy while others reflect sorrow. The Holy Bible consists of divergent types of writing; it contains history, poetry, prophecy, letters, adventure, parables, miracles and love stories. Due to its variety, the Bible has been further divided into major groups of Books as follows.

THE OLD TESTAMENT DIVISION

The Books of the Old Testament which is the “foundation” are divided into four major groups: the law, history, poetry and prophecy.

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW

These books are five in number and theologians called it “Pentateuch.” They are written by the prophet Moses, when God revealed himself to him on Mount Sinai. Moses said, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And He said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew. And he said, thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live” (Exodus 33:18-20).

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

When God invited Moses to Mount Sinai, He told him to record everything He had done before Moses was born, to be a perpetual memorial for the generations yet unborn (Exodus 17:14, 31:18, 34:1-28). This Book records the creation of man and the world by God and early history of man. The contents of these Books consist of how God raised the nation of Israel up as a people through which He could reveal Himself to the nations of the world. These Books record the will of God, which is His mind, especially the “decalogues” (Torah) (Ten

Commandments). The Lord God expounds in the Book of Exodus His greatest commandments in the Law (Exodus 20:3-17 KJV). The Book of Deuteronomy 6:5 is among God's greatest commandments as are those written in Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 5:43-46 and Romans 12:17, 19. It is important to know that the Bible has Books that tell the historical legendary account of God's activities and His manifestations in the Life of the Nation and individuals that He used powerfully "for His glory."

We must be abreast of the fact that God used ordinary people to do extraordinary things. These Books are:

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Ruth
4. I and II Samuel
5. I and II Kings
6. I and II Chronicles
7. Ezra
8. Nehemiah
9. Esther

We have twelve books of history in the Old (covenant) Testament.

THE BOOKS OF POETRY

Basically, we have five Books of poetry in the Old Testament. These Books are:

1. Job
2. Psalms
3. Proverbs
4. Ecclesiastes
5. Song of Solomon

Significantly these Books are the worship books of God's people—Israel. They expound the experience of individuals, how God dealt with them supernaturally. In fact, God inspired these Books of poetry. These books are still valuable today for believers of all ages.

THE BOOK OF PROPHECY

With precision these Books of prophecy in the Old Testament are divided into two groups which are called "major" and "minor" prophetic Books (the Prophets).

It is expediently necessary to know that the Old Testament consists of seventeen (17) Books of prophecy.

THE MAJOR PROPHETS ARE:

1. Isaiah
2. Jeremiah
3. Lamentations
4. Ezekiel
5. Daniel

THE MINOR PROPHETS ARE:

1. Hosea
2. Joel
3. Amos
4. Obadiah
5. Jonah
6. Micah
7. Nahum
8. Habakkuk
9. Zephaniah
10. Haggai
11. Zechariah
12. Malachi

The term minor or major does not signify the superiority of major over minor. But the volume of their Books makes the difference in the name that they are called.

NEW TESTAMENT DIVISIONS

The New Testament has also been divided into four groups: The Gospel, History, Letters and Prophecy. In fact the Old Testament prophetic Books are prophetic messages from God to His people about what would happen in the future progressively and it did.

Many of the prophecies have already been fulfilled. Some are yet to be fulfilled, and it will be definitely fulfilled in the future. Concisely, Christianity is historical about what God said he did in history and what He is going to do by His word (“Logos”) in the future, which cannot be changed (Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 55:7-11).

More so, these Books are the last Books in the Old Testament. After the voice of prophecy ceased when prophet Malachi died, for four hundred years God did not talk to anybody. Then we entered into the era of Gospel, “the Good News.” These four Books of Gospel are as follows:

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John

Articulately, these books tell us about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Though these Evangelists used different approaches in writing their Gospel, the purpose of their records is to lead humanity to Christ, for them to believe that Jesus is the Christ (Christos), the anointed one, the Son of the Living God, Messiah of all races.

The Biblical reference to the fact that Jesus is the Savior can be found in the Gospel of John chapter 20:31-31.

THE BOOK OF HISTORY

The Book of history is the Book of Acts which can be called the activities of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles, or better still, the Holy Spirit’s actions in the Apostles that produced dynamic phenomena of miracles during the beginning of the Church age.

Importantly, this book tells us how the Church began and fulfilled Christ’s “commission” to spread the Gospel throughout the world based on the promise of the Father.

The “promised power” came in the day of Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit founded the church (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-47).

Acts of the Apostle is a Book that recorded how the first disciples (120 people) waited eagerly, praying powerfully in order to receive the promise of supernatural (preternatural) power from heavens above (Acts 1:14-15). Commendably, chapter 3 and 4 expound the beginning of the dynamic preaching and healing ministry by the Apostles, how they prayed a corporate prayer that released Peter and John from the hand of the Sanhedrin.

Sharing all things in common, the disciples embarked on unity, which was significantly unique it confirmed what they had learned from their master “Christ Jesus” who commanded them to love each other (John 15:8-10).

Evangelist John wrote, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His Love.” Verse 11 says, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full.”

Emphasis on verse 12 that says, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:10-12 & I John 3:10, 4:7-11).

CLASSIFICATION OF LETTERS

The New Testament consists of twenty-one (21) letters which are also called “Epistles.”

There are nine (9) church letters or church epistles.

Three (3) personal pastoral epistles.

There are nine (9) different letters addressed to individual and churches too.

The list is as follows:

- a. Romans
- b. I and II Corinthians
- c. Galatians
- d. Ephesians
- e. Philippians
- f. Colossians
- g. I and II Thessalonians
- h. I and II Timothy
- i. Titus
- j. Philemon
- k. Hebrews
- l. James
- m. I and II Peter
- n. I, II and III John and Jude.

Further, these letters are addressed to all believers. The essence is to guide them in living and help them do what Jesus commanded. Romans 12, especially, (is Pauline epistle), is a good example of their teaching. The Book of Romans is an elaborate theological Book. We have only one Book on prophecy called “Apocalypse” (Revelation) in the New Testament, the epistle written by Apostle John at the isle that is called Patmos (Revelation 1:9).

This Book of “Apocalypse” is the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed to Apostle John the Beloved which tells us about the final victory of Jesus and His people (His mystical body, holy nation, kingdom of priest and peculiar people). The significance of this book is to encourage all Christians to keep on living as pragmatic Christians, not mere Christians by name, till those things that are revealed will be fulfilled by the coming Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSLATION AND PARAPHRASE

It is important to add this cogent point to this exposition that the proper understanding of Bible versions must be fully emphasized on articulately. Originally, the Bible was written in three languages. Most of the Old Testament texts were written in Hebrew, except for certain parts of the Books of Daniel and Nehemiah, which were written in “Aramaic” language. The New Testament was written in Greek. Unless you are from these countries of Bible time and speak these languages, you would not understand these books in their original texts. The Bible was not originally written in your language. As a matter of fact, none of the original manuscripts of the Bible are in existence, though at the “Preface” of some Bibles, those authors may claim that their version is translated from the original manuscript. In fact, some good manuscripts exist which are copies of the original, but none of the original manuscripts of the Bible are now in existence again. God inspired some men in the early part of the centuries; they saw the necessity of translating the Bible so everyone could read it in their own language.

No two languages are the same and exactly alike; some words used in the Bible do not even exist in different languages. In essence, there would be a slight difference in Bible versions because no two languages are exactly alike. It is a fact that some words used in the Bible do not even exist in different languages.

TRANSLATION AND PARAPHRASE

There are different versions of the Bible which are too many to start mentioning, but the word “version” means a Bible written in a language different from those in which God’s word was originally written. There are two main types of versions of the Bible:

1. Translations
2. Paraphrase

- a. A translation is an effort to express what the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic words actually say. It renders as nearly as possible a literal translation for each word in the Bible. Actually, it is a word-by-word translation; additions are made only when it is necessary in order for the reader to make sense out of the meaning.
- b. A paraphrase does not attempt to translate word for word. It translates thought by thought. Apparently, a paraphrase is a restatement of the meaning of a passage. Paraphrased versions are easier to read and understand in that they are written in more modern vocabulary and grammar. Obviously, they are not an exact translation of God’s word. The Bible was inspired by God, revealed to holy men who wrote God’s words in Greek, Hebrew, and

Aramaic. The Book of Many Books is interpreted into various languages resulting in translations, and paraphrased versions of the Bible.

Suffice it is to say that geography is essential in studying the word of God in order to be well acquainted with the places where the event really took place. Basically, the Biblical geography is the study of the land where events in the Bible occurred. The profound knowledge of maps is necessary too, to show the geography of Bible lands.

In the economy of God, geography is imperatively important in that if you are geographically misplaced God will geographically replace you. The case of Elijah is a good example.

After he (Elijah) proclaimed drought for three and a half years, God said, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." Verse 4 demonstrates that God will surely provide for our needs if we geographically obey His commandments (I Kings 17:1-5).

"And it will be that you shall drink from the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." Biblical geography expounds the history and geography of the Bible and everyday life in Bible times. It also provides the date when each book of the Bible was written. Maps are used to show the geography of Bible lands. Biblical geography is a course of its own.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

Chronology means science of fixing dates, arrangement of events with dates, or the list of table showing this. God exists and functions in the realm of eternity. God is ageless and timeless; He is not governed by the earthly concept of time. Apostle Peter inferred, "But, Beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (II Peter 3:8). Factually man, however, functions in the realm of the earthly concept of time. In most of the world the dating of time is divided into two major periods. These two periods are shown by the use of initials after the number of the year.

- B.C. Number marked with these initials means the event happened before the birth of Christ.
- A.D. Number marked with these initials means the event happened after the time of the birth of Christ's death and resurrection.

For example if we say 250 B.C., it means the event happened 250 years before Christ.

B.C. and A.D. have distinctions; the larger the number is, the older the date.

Example of chronological dating: 500 B.C., 300 B.C., 100 B.C. Five hundred B.C. is older than 300 B.C. or 100 B.C. because it occurred 500 years before Christ.

A.D. 100, A.D. 300, A.D. 500.

A.D.500 is most recent because it occurred 500 years after Christ.

There are many ways we are able to know the chronological history of Bible events.

1. The Bible itself provides the dates of some events.
2. Early writings of historians provide dates.
3. Through archaeology which is the study of ancient things.

It is a science which gains knowledge of times past from the study of existing remains of their civilizations.

Obviously, Biblical archaeology is the study of remains found in Bible lands. Some of the historical records of the Bible have been gained by dating these remains.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

To start with, the Bible chronology has about 12 periods of history. We have to understand that Christianity is historical about what God said He did in history from creation to revelation.

That was the reason Apostle Paul said in the book of Hebrews chapter 1 verse 1, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,” verse 2, “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things through whom also He made the worlds.”

Some schools of thought theorized that for 400 years after the death of Prophet Malachi the voice of prophecy ceased. God did not talk to them (the House of Israel).

Dr. Stan DeKoven writes, “Note that between the ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Testaments there was a period of 386 years during which no books were written.”

That is another theological exposition. Notwithstanding, the point is that there was a long period of silence before Jesus finally came to this world.

The ministry of his cousin John the Baptist ushered in His ministry as prophesied in the Book of Many Books (the Bible by Prophet Isaiah). Precisely the major events that occurred in these twelve periods of the Bible history are as follows: The Book of Genesis records periods 1 and 2. The first period is the Abramic Covenanted time. The second period is the Mosaic Covenanted time. The major events that happened in the Bible time are as follows—Creation to Abraham (from creation 2,000 B.C.). Actually God told Moses on Mount Sinai all what he did; how he created the heavens and the earth.

The book of Genesis means “Beginnings.” Genesis tells us about the beginning of every thing except God. God was always there (JEHOVAH SHAMA).

It expounds the creation of the Universe, the fall of man into sin, how death entered the scene through disobedience of the first couple. The fall of man led to their producing a murderer, Cain, who killed Abel, his brother. The Book states the ministry of Noah, the Apostle of righteousness who preached repentance from sin, and the flood as an imminent judgment when God had not even rained on the land for once, as he had watered the land by dew.

Tower of Babel expounds how the people of that time wanted to make a name for themselves in building the tower.

Those events can be categorized as follows:

- a. The world = Genesis 1:1-25
- b. People = Genesis 1:26-2:25
- c. Sin in the World = Genesis 3:1-7
- d. God’s promise of salvation = Genesis 3:8-25
- e. Living as a Family = Genesis 4:1-5
- f. The beginning of civilization = Genesis 4:16-9:29
- g. The nations and languages of the world = Genesis 11:1- 20, 12 and 13

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It is the first official Bible Book called the Book of Beginning. This and four other Books of the Law (Luke 24:44) make up the “Pentateuch” (Five Books).

These periods cover approximately 500 years. Abraham’s experience and his descendants are the focus of the period.

From Patriarch Abraham God raised up the nation of Israel through which he wanted to reveal himself to the nations of the World. He wanted to bring the Messiah out of the nations of Israel (Israel & Judah).

Apparently, this period includes the stories of Isaac, the heir to Abraham’s possessions, to Jacob, and to Joseph, who was the second to the last born, up to the time that Jacob, who was renamed Israel, went to Egypt.

Biblically and theologically the period climaxes with the story of Joseph who was sold to the Ishmaelites who had taken him down to Egypt, where Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard, bought Joseph (Genesis 39:1-23).

Abraham to Moses (2000-1500 B.C.)

Apparently, this period covers approximately 500 years; it has been analyzed in the earlier exposition.

The Exodus (1500-1460)

Exodus is the record of Israel’s birth as a nation within the protective womb of Egypt.

The Jewish family of seventy rapidly multiplies. At the right time, accompanied with severe “birth pains,” an infant nation numbering between two or three million people is brought into the world where it is divinely protected, fed and nurtured by God.

Between the close of Genesis and the opening of Exodus, approximately 100 years passed. The family of Jacob multiplied and became a powerful nation.

The Egyptians became fearful because of the rapid increase of the Israelites so they made them slaves.

Prophet Moses was raised up for this special task of liberating the children of Israel. Under his leadership the Israelites miraculously departed from Egypt en route the wilderness to the Promised Land (One Way).

After spending 365 days on Mount Sinai, they wandered for 38 stagnated years in the wilderness because of their unbelief and disobedience to God.

The era closed with the death of Moses, God’s servant, and the leadership mantle fell on a young military man, Joshua, son of Num.

The conquest of Canaan (1460-1450 B.C.).

The generation of Joshua was the generation of faith and recorded a tremendous success. The theologian called it the Conquest Era.

Joshua led Israel into Canaan to possess the land God had promised them. The infidels, the ungodly people, were conquered militarily. The land was divided among the 12 tribes of Israel as their land of inheritances. The period of 10 years when the partitions took place was recorded in the book of Joshua.

The Judges (1450-102 B.C.) During this period, God raised judges up to rule the people of Israel. Apparently, it was a dark period of time in the history of Israel; it was a time of spiritual failure.

The Kingdom (1102-986 B.C.).

Samuel was the last judge of Israel; he established the kingdom of Israel, and anointed Saul to be King, after the people demanded for a King. This Era produced three Kings: Saul, David and Solomon each reigned about 40 years.

As a matter of fact, during this time the nation of Israel attained the highest glory in their history. The Government was profoundly established and Israel’s borders were expanded by the military genius of the anointed King David. In his song he said, “All nations surrounded me, But in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. They surrounded me, yes they surrounded me, But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

“They surrounded me like bees: They were quenched like a fire of thorns for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them” (Psalm 118:10-12). King David, by the help of God, destroyed all the enemies of God to the extent that Solomon reigned for 40 years without fighting a war.

Historically, these periods were recorded in I and II Samuel and the Books of I and II Kings and I and II Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. Conclusively, the Kingdom Era lasted for 120 years and then the Kingdom was divided during the time of Rehoboam, when the prophecy came to pass that was prophesied by prophet Ahijah the Shilonite in order to fulfill what God had told Solomon before he died (I Kings 11:1-43, 12:1-33).

The Kingdoms Divided (982-722 B.C.)

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, foolishly took to the advice of his friends who had grown up with him, who stood before him and rejected the advice which the elders had given him (I Kings 12:1-16).

When the Kingdom was divided the rest of the ten tribes said, “What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel, now see your own house, O David, and they all departed” (I Kings 12:16).

The Northern tribes revolted and established a separate Kingdom of Judah, but which was still Israel for the sake of Jacob (Gen. 32:22-31).

Judah Alone as a Country (722-587 B.C.)

After Judah broke away from Israel, the Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., then the people were taken captive into the Land of Assyria.

Concisely, the Northern Kingdom fell, not too distant from the time they broke away from the rest of the tribes.

As a matter of fact after the fall of Israel the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom of Judah lasted for 135 years.

What led to their dynasty’s long reign? It boils down to the fact that the people wholly followed God by good examples constantly laid down by their anointed Kings and prophets who reminded them of their God, the true Living God.

Judah’s Kings has shown more loyalty to God and the people had not gone so deep in sin as their counterpart did in the Northern Kingdom. Apostasy led to their quick slavery to the Assyrians.

The Captivity (587-538 B.C.)

God sent His anointed Prophets to the people of Judah.

They warned them of the impending and imminent danger that will come out of their apostasy.

In spite of the warnings of the prophets, Judah finally went deeper into sin until God gave them over to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. He took them as captives into Babylon.

The prophecy came to pass about the desolation pronounced upon Jerusalem and the people of God, who crossed the Jordan River a few hundred years back miraculously under the able rulership of Joshua, now marched away in chains to Babylon, a disgraceful thing.

The Restoration (538-391 B.C.)

God is God by Himself. He does what He wants from time to time. God used Cyrus the King of Babylon to liberate His people. King Cyrus was the son of Jewish queen Esther, the niece of Mordecai (Esther 2:1-23; 2 Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1-8; 3-7; 4:3-5; 5:13-17; 6:3 & 14; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1; Daniel 1:21; 6:28; and Isaiah 10:1). Dake's annotated reference Bible in page (488) establish the truth.

He permitted God's people to return and rebuild Jerusalem and their temple of worship.

Governor Zerubbabel led the group who returned to reestablish themselves in the Promised Land. The records of this very period are found in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

Factually, the period of restoration lasted for 147 years.

Theologically, the Old Testament closes with Israel back in Canaan.

Then came a period of about 400 years between the Old Testament and New Testament which the Biblical historians called the silent period when the voice of prophecy ceased. Any prophetic Book written during this period is called "Apocryphal." It is worthy to say that there were no Bible books written during this period. So, information on the time comes only from secular historians (writings).

During this period, Palestine was ruled by the Persian government (536-333 B.C.). The Greeks ruled from 333-323 B.C., followed by the Egyptians (323-204 B.C.).

The Syrians ruled from 204-165 B.C., followed by the Maccabees (165-63 B.C.). Rome ruled from 63 B.C. through the time of Christ.

The dawn of the New Era occurred when the Messiah, the greatest "Rabbi," ruled and reigned from 5 B.C. to A.D. 28).

After 400 years of silence God broke the inactivity of prophetic ministry. John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus Christ, was raised up by God to be the forerunner of our LORD Jesus Christ as prophesied by prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3).

Though God spoke this world into existence, the writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."

Certainly enough, Jesus was to be the Savior of the sinful mankind. God made this prophecy; it was a profound prophetic exposition that revealed His plan to the fall of mankind.

The promise of this plan of salvation was first made in the Garden of Eden when man intentionally disobeyed his Creator and bought the lies of his adversary. He lost everything that belongs to him (Genesis 3:15).

The prophet Isaiah, with his messianic prophecies, revealed the coming of our Savior. In his expository thesis he said, "Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 11:1-12; 40:1-31 and Psalm 40:1-17 (emphasis on verse 6-11).

Jesus was miraculously born of a virgin, revealed Himself to Israel as the Messiah (Luke 4:15-20). He was rejected and crucified for the sins of all mankind, and resurrected by the power of God through the Holy Spirit on the third day, which was the message of the cross. God made a law that, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22); in order not to violate His law, He offered His only begotten Son for us all.

Those Evangelists that recorded the Birth, death, resurrection and the ascension of our LORD Jesus Christ were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the Beloved.

THE SPREAD OF GOSPEL (A.D. 28-100)

The spread of the Gospel, "The Good News," is the most interesting part of the New Testament because it covers the events after the life of Jesus and His return to heaven following His resurrection and ascension.

Twice the LORD Jesus promised power endowment from the heavens based upon what the Father Himself said about His disciples before they can be effective witnesses to Him in the Gospel. Hear what Jesus said in the book of Luke 24: 49, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Luke, the physician and evangelist, recorded the admonition again in his expository Book when he said, "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which He said, you have heard from me" (Acts 1:4).

The best verse that expounds the spread of the Gospel is the 8th verse of the first chapter that says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

CHAPTER THREE

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE BIBLE OUTLINED

- A. Genesis, the Book of Beginning, expounds the creation from creation to Abraham and from Abraham to Moses.
- B. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy recorded the movement (Exodus) from Egypt to the border of Canaan.

Moses died in the land of the Moab, and he was buried in Beth Peor (Deuteronomy 34:5). The Bible declares, “Then the LORD said to him, this is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, I will give it to your descendants. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over” (Deuteronomy 34:4).

This is the gospel truth that Joshua narrates the conquest.

Judges, Ruth and part of the Kingdom’s formation explained.

These are the Books of Poetry.

I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, I Chronicles and II Chronicles narrate the two kingdoms—the Kingdom of Israel and Kingdom of Judah. Ezra the priest and Nehemiah recapitulated the captivity and the restoration of God’s people. We have the Books of Poetry: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

THE MINOR AND MAJOR PROPHETS

The major and minor prophets are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

- a. Acts is the book of history; it recorded the spread of the Gospel.
- b. The Epistles (Letters) are Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Philemon, Titus, Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude and Revelation (Apocalypse).

Historical legendary accounts about life in Bible times.

The Biblical scholars, historians and archaeological studies have provided profound and useful information about the everyday life of people in Bible times.

Before the children of Israel annexed the Promised Land, the history has it that they lived in “Tents.” Predominantly they were shepherds; they were called nomadically inclined people, having no permanent home, but moving about constantly in search of food and pastures for their herds. The Scripture declares,

“Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth” (Hebrews 11:38).

Another set of people among the Israelites were called peasant men. After the Exodus from Egypt and years of traveling in the desert, the Israelites settled in their Promised Land of Canaan. Things didn't change drastically in their behaviors and emotional makeup in that they still manifested the idiosyncrasies they were noted for while living in tents and Egypt. The so-called peasant men engaged in fieldworks or in a village craft, while the women and children kept the home.

Farming and shepherding were both important occupations; there were little or no fishing activities because of the geographical location of the Promised Land.

Carpentry work, pottery, and leather works and any kinds of village crafts were common occupations they engaged on in those days in Bible time. As a matter of fact, water was in short supply since the land was hot and dry for most of the year. They dug wells in the villages where they got their supply of water in a goatskin bucket. This “well” place provided interaction and socializing for the young and old women and men alike who looked for spouses. The national dress was long flowing robes in order to keep cool. The material of the robe was decided by each individual's purchasing power and financial ability.

The affluent, very wealthy people could afford brightly dyed cloth. In most cases, clothes indicated a man's profession, in that the priests wore special clothing and the Rabbis (those religious leaders of Israel) wore a blue-fringed robe.

Fundamentally, shoes were made of cowhide soles with leather thongs, which were fastened to the ankle; that was the style in Bible times.

Apparently, marriages were arranged by parents and their children had little or no choice, in that there was little social mixing between young people of old.

The bride was considered a working asset; she had to be paid for with a bride price. Domestic life centered in the home because of religious prevalence; certainly enough, in the Old Testament times there was no school for common men's children. They received their education direct from their parents.

During the ministerial time of our Lord Jesus Christ, a girl's education was still entirely her mother's responsibility. Boys went to a school at the synagogue from age six on. The exegesis taught in class was based upon the Old Testament, which was the real “textbook” for their class works. In articulation, the Old Testament consists of history. In fact, Judaism was the schoolmaster that brought us to the full glory of God. I mean, we Christians were historical students who were taught geography, literature and law.

Gifted students, especially exceptional ones, were sent to Jerusalem to learn from the Rabbis. It was mandatory for each boy to learn a trade too.

Traditionally, age 13 was considered to be the age of independence, like we have it in the civilized world. Eighteen years is considered to be the age of independence, considered to be the time of freedom and maturity for kids.

The Jews called the age 13 “Bar Mitzvah,” which signified a male child becoming the son of the law. That was the reason why Apostle Paul declared in his expository letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13 verse 11, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things” (I Corinthians 13:11 KJV).

There is no difference from other culture about mourning for the departed loved ones. Death among the people of Israel called for elaborate ceremonies of mourning. We can buy a cue from what took place when Lazarus of Bethany died. They sent for Jesus before he died. Intentionally our LORD Jesus waited two more days after he received the cry of help from those people that the sisters of Lazarus sent to him.

Verses 33 to 35 of the 11th chapter of John expound the emotional concern about mourning for the dead ones. The Bible declares, “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled.”

Verse 34, “And said, where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.” Emphasis on verse 35 that says, “Jesus wept.” Though Jesus lived during the Old Testament time we must be abreast of the fact that professional mourners were hired to weep that time. In the New Testament times bodies were anointed and wrapped in special grave clothes. Poor people were buried in common graves or caves, but the wealthy had special tombs dug out of rocks and sealed with a flat boulder.

As per religion and civil orientations there was no basic dichotomy, no division between civil and religious law in Israel.

The Israelites judged themselves at the gate of the city or village. The highest court in New Testament time was the “Sanhedrin,” which consisted of 70 men who met in the temple. They allowed them to pass any sentence under their legal system, save the death sentence. Going down the memory lane, the religious life of Israel centered first on the tabernacle and later changed to temple in Jerusalem. The word “Tabernacle” came from “tent,” in that, the Israelites during the wilderness journey dwelt in tents prior to their crossing over to Jordan and annexing the Promised Land.

According to the divine order God commanded Moses not to give any portion of the Land to the Levites. The Bible declares in the 18th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy from the first verse to the 3rd verse, “The priest, the Levites—all the tribes of Levi— shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel, they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and His portion.” Verse 2, “Therefore, they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as He said to them.” Verse 3 says, “And this shall be the priest’s due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it is bull or sheep they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks and the stomach.”

This law involved the Levites because they administered the religious regulation in the temple only. The Israelites had many religious days they celebrated accordingly, but the greatest religious day of the year was the Day of Atonement. On this day the high priest entered the innermost room of the temple

to make atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people. The Kingdom principle of the word of God says that the blood of goat, ram and bullock pacified God in those days, but when the blood of Jesus heats the mercy seat it satisfied God. Hallelujah. "It is finished" (John 19:30).

For the writers of Hebrews said, "For the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come. And not the very image of the things can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

"For then would they not have ceased to be offered?

"For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:1-14). Verses 9 to 10 says, "Then He said, Behold I have come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that we will have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Other festivals are Passover, which was a way of remembering how God passed them over.

Exodus chapter 12 verse 23 says, "For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two door posts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you."

The Feast of Pentecost marked the beginning of harvest, and the Feast of Tabernacles was the harvest festival. The Feast of "Purim" recalled Esther's deliverance of Israel from the hand of Haman who detested the Jews.

The Book of Esther chapter 3 verse 5 says, "When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath." Verse 6 says, "But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, the people of Mordecai."

More so, the Feast of Trumpets marked the start of the New Year. Getting to the tail end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, regular worship shifted from the main temple to the local synagogue. This practice started in the days when Israel was in captivity and there was no temple in Jerusalem.

For example the Bible says, "Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people.

"And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." (Acts 11:26) The church in this context signifies the community of believers on earth or saints in heaven or church. The Greek word is "Ekklesia," meaning the calling out, and is taken from strong concordance (a calling out). The complete word study dictionary defines "church" as "called out, congregation of the people of God." The called people are those called out, or assembled in the public affairs of a free state. How do these two definitions relate to the ongoing points asserted before, in that, the Israelites of the old had most of their worships in the tabernacle in

Jerusalem. They observed most of their feasts in these temples until the time of our LORD Jesus when worship shifted from main temple to the local synagogue. The Hebrews had great respect for their synagogue. In fact, when Solomon completed the building of the temple he prayed unto the LORD God of his fathers.

Second book of Chronicles chapter 7 verses 1-3, and verses 14-15 expounds the Biblical meaning of people's love for their synagogue. Verse 1 says, "When Solomon had finished praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house." In a nutshell God answered Solomon's prayer concerning the Temple that he built for the LORD. Verse 14 and 15, "Blessed my spirit when God answered and said, If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves, pray, seek crave and require of necessity my face and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

Verse 15 says, "Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to prayer offered in this place" (Amplified version). Furthermore, those people that begged Jesus to heal the servant of a centurion were a great demonstration of strong faith, commended by the Savior Himself; apparently, in the New Testament regular worship shifted from the main temple to the local synagogue. Luke chapter 7 verses 4 and 5 says, "And when they came to Jesus they begged Him earnestly saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving.

"For he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue." In the order of service and how it was arranged in those days, only men took an active part in the synagogue service. The women and children sat in a different section; such were the dichotomy then. The pattern of the service included statement of a creed, prayers and readings from the law and prophets. This was followed by a sermon and a time when the men could question the minister.

This reminds me of the book of Nehemiah when Ezra the scribe read the law in the open square that was in front of the water gate and he established the preaching of the "Living word" from the pulpit (Nehemiah 8:1-12). Usually the Old Testament Scriptures were contained on sacred scrolls which only the doctor of law can open, that was why, Jesus said, "Woe to you lawyers for you have taken away the key of knowledge.

"You did not enter in yourselves and those who were entering in you hindered" (Luke 11:52). In the Old Testament time during the time of Ezra, the priest and people realized that serious digging into the word of God brings total victory, but during the time of our LORD Jesus Christ the Pharisees had monopolized the knowledge of the Scripture and they themselves didn't do what the Scripture says, that was why the LORD Jesus Christ rebuked them.

Things did not change; as such the story of the Bible is set against this background of traditional family and rural life which still obtain to these days. It was also set against the background of warring empires around Israel and the influence of the Roman Empire.

Rome had extended control over Israel during the time of our LORD Jesus Christ.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOK

The books of the Bible are not arranged in chronological order. This signifies that they are not arranged in the order in which they were written. The Biblical scholars have used information from two sources to determine the dates when books were written.

The first source of the Bible sometimes refers to historical events that help date the writings, for example Evangelist Luke the physician mentioned government officials by name (Luke 3:1). From the second source were taken many early secular writings by historians and philosophers which referenced events mentioned in the Bible.

The best chronological dates given to each book is as follows:

1. Genesis written by 1400 B.C.
2. Exodus written by 1400 B.C.
3. Leviticus written by 1400 B.C.
4. Numbers written by 1400 B.C.
5. Deuteronomy written by 1400 B.C.

The Biblical theologians call the first five books of the Bible “Pentateuch” (the Books of the Law).

6. Joshua — 1235 B.C.
7. Judges — 1025 B.C.
8. I Samuel — 1000-850 B.C.
9. II Samuel — 1000-850 B.C.
10. I Kings — 970-850 B.C.
11. Psalms — 970-400 B.C.
12. Ecclesiastes — 962-922 B.C.
13. Song of Solomon — 962-922 B.C.
14. Job — 900 B.C.
15. Proverbs — 900 B.C.
16. II Kings — 850-586 B.C.
17. Obadiah — 846-841 B.C.
18. Joel — 835-796 B.C.
19. Jonah — 780-750 B.C.
20. Amos — 765-750 B.C.
21. Hosea — 755-715 B.C.
22. Isaiah — 750-680 B.C.
23. Micah — 740-690 B.C.
24. Jeremiah — 640-586 B.C.
25. Lamentations — 640-586 B.C.
26. Nahum — 630-612 B.C.
27. Habakkuk — 625 B.C.

28. Zephaniah — 621 B.C.
29. Ezekiel — 593-571 B.C.
30. Haggai — 520-515 B.C.
31. Zechariah written after 500 B.C.
32. Both chapters 9-14 were written after 500 B.C.
33. Esther — 486-465 B.C.
34. Nehemiah — 445 B.C.
35. Malachi — 433-400 B.C.
36. Ezra — 400 B.C.
37. Ruth — 399-300 B.C.
38. I Chronicles — 350 B.C.
39. II Chronicles — 350 B.C.
40. Ecclesiastes — 175 B.C.

The New Testament chronological order is as follows:

1. James — 45 A.D.
2. Mark — 50 A.D.
3. I Thessalonians — 51-52 A.D.
4. II Thessalonians — 51-52 A.D.
5. I Corinthians — 54-55 A.D.
6. II Corinthians — 55-56 A.D.
7. Galatians — 56-58 A.D.
8. Romans — 58-63 A.D.
9. Luke — 58-63 A.D.
10. Ephesians — 61-62 A.D.
11. Philippians — 61-62 A.D.
12. Colossians — 62-63 A.D.
13. Acts — 63 A.D.
14. I Peter — 64 A.D.
15. I Timothy — 64 A.D.
16. II Timothy — 64 A.D.
17. Titus — 66 A.D.
18. II Peters — 68 A.D.
19. Hebrews — 66 A.D.
20. Matthew — 68 A.D.
21. I John — 75 A.D.
22. John — 85-90 A.D.
23. Jude — 90-100 A.D.
24. Revelation — 90-125 A.D.
25. II John — 96 A.D.
26. III John — 97 A.D.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AS THEY RELATE TO OLD TESTAMENT THOUGHT

The New Testament concept emanates from the Old Testament prophecies in that the New fulfills the Old. The New Testament cannot stand, except the Old Testament be the foundational exegesis text that serves as hinges that it hangs on. In order to theologize we can see clearly that God Himself in the Book of Genesis prophesied and announced the coming of His Son who will smash the head of the serpent.

Let us examine the first prophecy that God gave about the coming of His Son after the first couple disobeyed Him and fell and God did not fail. Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 says, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed, He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." It really happened at Calvary years later when Christ Jesus defeated the devil at the battle of Golgotha. Actually the death of Jesus Christ, His burial and resurrection destabilized the devil and His resurrection finally in the third day sealed the downfall of Satan forever. That was why the greatest Apostle Paul wrote in His epistle to the Corinthians the fifty-fifth verse of the fifteen chapter, "O death, where is your sting; O Hades, where is your victory." The Scriptures declares further and says in verses 56-57 as follows. "The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us buy a cue from the book of Revelation chapter 12 verses 1-6 which says, "Now a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun with the moon under her feet and on her head a garland of twelve stars." Verse 2, "Then being with child she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth." Verse 3, "And another sign appeared in heaven; behold a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads." Verse 4, "His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born." Verse 5, "She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and His throne." Verse 6 clearly expounds the rapture that will soon occur: Those who make it and stand firm to the end will live one thousand years and two hundred and sixty days with the LORD in heaven after the rapture event.

The scripture declares that war broke out in heaven and the Archangel Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought. Verse 9 says, "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him." (The Biblical parallels is found in Isaiah 14:11-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-15.) Verse 10 confirms the supremacy of our LORD Jesus over the devil and his angels. The wealthy word of God says, "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven. Now salvation and strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down."

The precious blood of Jesus is powerful; thus the Bible says, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:11). The Bible is full of prophecies, especially the Old Testament texts that consist of messianic prophecies. Typologically it shows what God intended to do, and He did it, exactly what He commanded the Prophets to say about the coming of His Son.

The second to the last chapter of the Book of Beginning (Genesis 49) records the last words of Jacob to his sons. Verse 8 says, “Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies.” Verse 9 says, “Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down, as a lion, who shall rouse it.” A Biblical reference is found in the Book of Revelation that confirms the revelatory word of Jacob. Verse 5 of the 5th chapter says, “But one of the elders said to me, Do not weep, Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” Verse 10 expounds the truth; it sheds more light on the above Biblical reference from the book of Revelation. Genesis, chapter 49, verse 10 says, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law giver from between his feet until Shiloh comes.” The prophecy was fulfilled in the life of David. God said in the book of II Samuel chapter seven verse 15, “But my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.” Verse 16 says, “Your house and Kingdom shall be established forever before you, your throne shall be established forever.”

Let us examine the prophecy of Prophet Isaiah that he gave concerning the coming of the Messiah of humanity. We must understand that the Book of Isaiah is a miniature Bible. It has 66 chapters while the whole Scripture has 66 Books. Specifically the book gives us the exact duty that the Messiah will perform and how He will bring deliverance, joy, blessing, power, dominion and everlasting reign for his people and establish his government firmly on earth and in heaven. Isaiah 7:14 says, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His name Immanuel.” He further expounds that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and He will establish peace on earth in the life of those people who believe in Him. The Scripture declares, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

The third prophetic exposition in the Book of Isaiah the eleven Chapter of the first and the second verses declares, “There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding. The spirit of counsel and might.” These prophecies were fulfilled in the life of our Lord Christ Jesus in the New Testament. For the Evangelist Luke wrote in his Gospel, he said, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the LORD God will give Him the throne of His Father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His Kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33).

This is a progressive prophetic revelation. Biblically the order of fulfillments of the prophecies of the Old Testament accurately came to pass in the life of the one and only, the Living Oracle of God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Theologically the theme of the Old Testament and New Testament hinges upon the person of Jesus Christ. Symbolically God typified the coming of His Son in the Old Testament and realistically came to pass in His life when He finally arrived on earth. Progressively the Book of Genesis records the covenant that God had with patriarch Abraham saying, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you: And in you all the Families of the earth shall be blessed." The changed person by the grace of God, Matthew, the tax collector, recorded the fulfillment in his Gospel writing when he said, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." He pointed to the blood relationship of Jesus from the blood lineage of the Father of Faith, the progenitor of faith to the anointed king, and the Psalmist David (Matthew 1:1-25). To be honest, the historical context of Biblical Revelation which was and is still progressive can be established from the Book of Prophet Daniel chapter 9:25 that says, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublesome times."

Evangelist Luke the physician wrote, "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria." The crystal-clear fulfillment of those prophecies about Messiah that came to pass in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ was the exact confirmatory prophecy that Prophet Micah revealed about the place of Birth of the Messiah. The Old Testament exegesis of his thesis says, "But you, Bethlehem, Ephrata, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me one to be ruler in Israel, whose going forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Luke 2:1-2, Micah 5:2)

Luke recorded the fulfillment of the prophecy; the Bible says, "And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife who was with child And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:4-7)

History has a way of repeating itself. Prophet Jeremiah prophesied and said, "Thus says the LORD, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."

And the prophecy came exactly to pass when Evangelist Matthew wrote the incident that happened in Ramah. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men was exceedingly angry and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts from

two years old and under according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they were no more.” It was progressively revealed and fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ when prophet Hosea in the Old Testament days spoke, “When Israel was a child, I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son.” In the fulfillment of this prophecy, St. Matthew wrote, “When he arose, he took the young child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the LORD through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I called my son.” (Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 31:15-17; Micah 5:1-4; Matthew 2:3-6)

Theologically all the 66 Books of the Bible carry equal divine inspiration, but I love to study the exegesis of the prophecies about the Messiah that was given a prophetic ministry. The Book of Prophet Isaiah is profound when it comes to the Messiah’s prophecies.

The 40th chapter, verses 3, 4 and 5 says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low: the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth, the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’” Precisely Evangelist Luke wrote, “And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight. (Isaiah 40:3-5; Mark 1:1-3; Malachi 3:1; 4:1-6)

“Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low and the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” There was a prophecy that said, “The Messiah will be preceded by a forerunner.” Prophet Malachi prophesied, “Behold I send my Messenger, and he will prepare the way before me, And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenants in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts.”

Apostle Luke recorded it in his expository Gospel. He wrote: “When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John, what did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind. Thus is he of whom it is written! Behold I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you.” Prophet Malachi prophesied,

“Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD, And he will turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” (Luke 7:24-27; Malachi 4:4-6)

Jesus Christ confirmed the prophecy of prophet Malachi in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 11:13-14) saying, “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.” It has been prophesied that the Messiah will be called the “Son of God.” The Psalmist said in the Old Testament’s exegesis, “I will declare the decree, the LORD has said to me. You are My son, today I have begotten you” (Psalm 2:7).

The fulfillment of the Scripture in the book of Matthew says, “And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; Luke 3:21). Though the Bible is full of messianic prophecies that were fulfilled, some has been fulfilled in Him and some are yet to be fulfilled which will definitely take place very soon. Let us consider some Biblical historical revelations that are progressive, though some have come to fruition. Let us examine what Prophet Isaiah said about the Messiah, and what the Bible says in the Old Covenant exegesis.

“The spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to those who are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all who mourn” (Luke 4:17-18) confirmed the prophecy of Isaiah in the book of Isaiah 61:1-2.

When He had won the battle in the wilderness after fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, basically the victory came already in the wilderness over Satan before the final “showdown” at Calvary. The wealthy word of God says there is no other way to the promised land except the wilderness route. The way up is down unless in well digging or hole digging, that is why everyone will one time or another go through the wilderness experience; the assurance is that Jesus Christ was there and he conquered our arch-enemy Satan, so we will also win all our battles through our faith in Jesus. The Bible says that Jesus demanded for the scroll of the book of Prophet Isaiah. Let us see how the King James Version of the Bible renders it. Luke 4:17-18 says, “And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias, And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written.” Verse 18: “The spirit of the LORD is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he had sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Added to it, verse 19 says, “To preach the acceptable year of the LORD.” Theologically and Biblically this prophecy of prophet Isaiah expounds the deliverance of Israel from exile in Babylon in terms of the year of “Jubilee” according to the ritual and prevailing circumstances of that time. Invariably, the ultimate fulfillment awaited the coming of the messianic age. Jesus boldly and publicly claimed and proclaimed that He was the promised Messiah (Christos), and His fundamentally defined ministry here becomes the ongoing essence of the “Good News” of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. The exposition of Evangelist Luke clearly expounds the truth, He passed this ministry on to the disciples (Luke 9:12) and to the entire Churches all over the World (Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:1-2, 2:1-

2, 4, 5, 7). More so, the historical context of Biblical revelation, which is progressive, could be drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah. Still, in that, he was specifically given the prophecy of the Messiah as it was related to salvation. As a matter of fact the Messiah came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8). He prophesied, “He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were our faces from Him. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” (Isaiah 53:1-3)

The two Evangelists John and Luke recorded the fulfillment of the above prophecy respectively. John wrote, “He came to His own and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11). And Luke the physician wrote, “And they all cried out at once, saying, Away with this Man and release to us Barabbas.” (Luke 23:18)

Jesus is the High Priest for it is said in the book of Psalm 110:4, “The LORD has sworn and will not relent. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” Later during his public ministry Apostle Paul wrote a profound and prolific letter to the Hebrews. He said, “So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest but it was He who said to Him, You are My son, today I have begotten you.” As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:5-6).

The original recorded events can be found in the Book of Beginning, not the beginning of God but the beginning of His work as He told Moses. Chapter 14:17-18 says, “And the King of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlamer and of the Kings that were with him at the valley of Shaveh, which is the King’s dale.” Verse 18 says, “And Melchizedek King of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.”

For a profound exposition the Book of Hebrews, chapter 7 verses 1-3 says, “For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the most high God who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him.” Verse 2 says, “To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first been by interpretation King of righteousness and after that also king of Salem, which is, King of peace.” Emphasis on verse 3; this verse expounds the status of Jesus when He symbolically appeared on the scene during His pre-existence. Some Biblical parallels could be drawn from the Book of Proverbs and Daniel, which I will do later.

To start with, righteousness in this context shows that the Scripture is referring to Jesus Christ in that, no human being is perfect or righteous, only God, and Jesus came to us in likeness of God, the “Godhead,” the second person of the “Trinity.” Whenever the Scripture refers to righteousness, it signifies that those people who were called righteous earned it through faith. For example, the Apostle of righteousness, Noah, in the 7th chapter of the book of Genesis verse 1 says, “And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”

Why did God call Noah a righteous man? Was it because Apostle Noah believed the commandment that God gave him to build an ark prior to the time that heavens gave up rain? There has never been a drop of rain. It looked strange

to the generation of his time how on earth God could send the rain; it had never happened before. The Kingdom principle of the word of the living God declares, “God said what He meant and meant what He said” (Acts 10:34 & Numbers 23:19). The reason is that God called the apostle Noah a righteous person because Noah believed God; he did not believe God alone, he acted upon what God said and built an ark for the salvation of his house, hence God counted him to be righteous in His sight. Likewise the progenitor of faith, the patriarch Abraham, believed God too, and hoped against all hopes. He did not consider the deadness of the womb of his wife Sarah. The Bible says, “And he believed in the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness.” “He” in this context means God. Through the faith that Abraham had in God He counted him (Abraham) to be a righteous man. For it is impossible to please God without faith, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is God and that he will reward them that diligently seek him. That was why the writer of Hebrews included their names in the “Bible Hall of fame (Faith)” (Hebrews 11:6, 11:7 and 8). Suffice it is to say that Abraham’s encounter with the regional King of Salem is revealed centuries later as being an encounter with a typology of Jesus Christ in His role as priest of the LORD “Most High.” Melchizedek means “My king is righteous or legitimate.”

Here is another typology of Jesus Christ prior to His coming to earth that I’ve said earlier on and which I will reference accordingly. The Book of Daniel chapter 3 verse 25 declares, “He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose walking in the mist of the fire and they have no hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” In order to theologize at this juncture, what happened inside the fiery furnace ordered by Nebuchadnezzar signified a dramatic illustration of the personal presence and protection of the LORD with His people who suffered for their testimonies of Christ as their Lord and Savior. Jehovah as Shammah is already there for you as he was there for the three Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshac, and Abednego, that he delivered from the hand of the infidel king Nebuchadnezzar. The gospel truth is that God might not quench the fiery furnace of affliction in your life, but he will give you the grace to be in it and your good God will become a transformer and control the power of the fire and change it to air conditioner, a place for you to be. The assurance is that God the father in creation, God the Son in redemption, and God the Holy Ghost in regeneration will turn failure to success in your life. He will transform persecution to perfection, crisis to courage, sadness into joy, bitterness into sweet, problem into promotion, and the spirit of depression to deliverance in Jesus’ name.

For the Scripture declares, “And they overcame him (it means Satan) by the blood of the Lamb (Jesus Christ), and by the word of their testimony (Logos and Rhema); and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11 KJV). Proverbs 18:21 says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” In the same vein the Book of Many Books says, “You will also declare a thing, and it shall be established for you, so light will shine on your ways” (Job 22:28 NKJV). The Greatest “Rabbi” said, “For

assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says” (Mark 11:23 NKJV). It is imperatively important for the Children of God to use the affirmative and assertive power that is resident in the tongue accurately by confessing the word of life positively. It is true that supernatural manifestations will occur, for God has demonstrated it in creation. The Scripture says, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” God is inherently good as his word says in Genesis chapter 1 verse 31, “Then God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” Hence, out of the abundance of God’s thoughts He spoke, and at His very speaking it became what it is today; we must respect the spoken word of God. God spoke in the beginning. His word accomplished what He wanted, that is why Prophet Isaiah spoke the heart of God to us when he said, “So shall My word be that goes out forth from My mouth: It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

Jesus Christ has been very busy in the past. Even in his preexistence he had been a good God. The second person of the Trinity loved humanity dearly in creation and in redemption. In actual fact, God the Father in creation convened together with God the Son in redemption, and God the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26-28 KJV).

The Biblical theology of the words “Let us” denotes that the divine purpose is here stated, for God knew beforehand that the first man Adam will fall because he was not the real picture of God. Why? God knew that the second person of the “Trinity” would re-make man in his image, the very image of God at “regeneration.” Jesus told the learned Pharisee Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The Hebrew word for man is called “Adam” (human being, mankind), not “Adam” alone, but God meant humanity. To establish the truth enumerated above, the Scripture says, “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof, and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And 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” (Genesis 1:26-28 KJV). God the Father in creation began the job, God the Son in redemption finished the job on the Cross at Calvary (Golgotha), and God the Holy Spirit in regeneration will continue the job until Jesus Christ will come back to take the Saints to be with him during the “rapture” that is coming very soon. Let us be prepared for the feast of the “bridegroom.”

It is important for every Child of God to be regenerated by the spirit of the Living God before we can make Heaven as our homes. Christ must be in us

(Colossians 1:27). It is the Christ in us that will give us the Hope of Glory, “Shekina.”

More so, the Biblical theology of our “image and likeness” signifies one thing, not two. It implies “in our likeness of our image” (Genesis 1:26-28 NKJ). God is talking of his essence in plurality, “Elohim” (not Jehovah). Certainly enough, the apparent meaning signifies that the second person who had taken creature form in order to create, established the theological exposition exhibited above from the book of Proverbs 8:22-31. We can glean the parallels to the aforementioned truth from the books of Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3, Revelation 3:14, and I Corinthians 11:3-11. To put it in Biblical and theological perspectives, Jesus manifested his “Shekina” glory in his pre-existence when he appeared at the “fiery furnace” where the infidel king threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into. He became the transformer (thermostat) that transformed the fiery furnace into conducive atmosphere. The Book of Many Books says, “Then, Nebuchadnezzar the king (saw and) was astounded, and he jumped up and said to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered, True, O king.” Emphasis on verse 25 that says, “He answered, Behold, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt! And the form of the fourth is like a Son of God” (AMPV). It means that Jesus took outward form when He was born as a little baby in Bethlehem of Judea (Matthew 2:1). The New Testament Revelation of the word of the glorious gospel of Christ declares in John 1:1-5, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not” (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:16 KJV). The Biblical theology of the above verse denotes that Christ the Healer revealed this truth to the disciple he loved, John the apostle, during the gospel time and when he was on the island that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (John 21:7, Revelation 1:9 NKJV). Jesus Christ affirmed that his name and the “propitiation” he offered on the cross at Calvary could be appropriate by the creative power of the spoken word. Beginning from the Church “Ekklesia,” the believers in every age could employ the creative power of the spoken “Word” and obtain supernatural manifestation, from preacher to plumber, from civil servants to bus conductors, from market women to married women, from the big to the small, from the lowest to the highest. We must use the power that is resident in the tongue for signs, wonders, and miracles as Jesus did and taught his disciples and followers during his earthly ministry. For his “Doctrine” came from heaven above from the Father of Light (John 7:16-19; John 4:48; Philippians 2:5-11; James 1:17).

As a matter of fact, if we look closely we shall see the symbolic typology of Jesus Christ in every book of the Bible. I mean the preexistence of “Immanuel” before He became God-Man and Man-God (Isaiah 7:14). The book of Proverbs chapter 8 verse 22-36 expounds articulately the pre-existent love of Christ for humanity, and what he was coming to do when the Book says, “The Lord

possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled. Before the hills, I was brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep. When he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was beside him as a master craftsman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in his inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.” Verse 30 says, “Then I was by him as one brought up with Him” (God the Father in creation, God the Son in redemption, and God the Holy Spirit in regeneration). The Biblical and theological meaning of the “Trinity” denotes that when God at the beginning of his creative work said, and the Bible declared, “And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26, KJV), Christ was there in his delight, rejoicing always before him. The doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament is best established from the truth of the matter that occurred at Jesus’ baptism when the Bible says, “And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased” (KJV). The Holy Ghost descended on Christ in bodily form, and a voice coming from heaven said, “Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased,” and with the Son in attendance. Verse 31, “Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth and my delights were with the sons of men.” The Book of Daniel chapter 3:24 established the truth when the infidel king saw the “King of Kings” in the fiery furnace and the Book says, “Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, Did we not cast three men? They answered and said to King, True, O King. Look! he answered, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Daniel 3: 24-25). Further, about the historical context of the Bible, which is progressive, the Bible is God’s actions revealed. I shall infer about a few Biblical references, in that, nobody can fathom the depth, breath and length of the contents of Biblical revelation, for the Bible is historical. Christianity is historical too about what God said he did in history through His Son the one and only one. That means the only Son of the Almighty God, Jesus Christ the greatest “Rabbi.” The first prophecy about the coming Messiah was recorded by prophet Moses in the Book of Beginning, when God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman”. Emphasis on “Will”: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. Positively, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15). It signifies that God the Father in creation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, has given us his

possibilities over actualities in every level. If Satan brings sins at every level his head will always be bruised by the power of the most High in Jesus' name.

The Biblical theology of the meaning of this prophecy is best explained by what the international Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke said, "Just that one small thought helped me understand many things about God and man. For instance, Satan thinks as humans think. The fact is, Satan simply cannot understand God's mind. That is strange when you remember that he was originally Lucifer, a throne angel of God. When Jesus bruised the serpent's head, I think He inflicted some kind of brain damages upon the devil! Once Satan was full of wisdom; today he is disoriented tomorrow." I totally agree with what Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke said, for Jesus punctured the head of Satan the very moment God the Father in creation prophesied in Genesis 3:15. We have to believe what the book says about the victory God offered at the beginning of the conflict that led to the final conquest, when Christ Jesus defeated Satan at Golgotha (John 19:30, 21:1-25).

In fact, Apostle Paul inferred in his epistle to the Galatians when he wrote, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law. To redeem them that were under the law, that might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:4-6 KJV). In the same vein, the Scripture declares that, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father" (Romans 8:15 KJV).

To give it a further biblical footing, the Book says, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23 KJV). The Bible says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Ephesians 1:5 KJV). We could glaringly see that Christ Jesus has bought us over to the side of God by his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, having that in mind. We believe now that we are sons and daughters of God by adoption, and whatever we ask God because of our new status, he will do it for us to his own glorification. That is why the Bible says in second Corinthians chapter five verse seventeen, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." God even said in the Book of Beginning, when the Scripture says, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." God the Father is inherently good, for if you remove "O" from the word "Good," it becomes God, and if you put the word "O" back it becomes "Good." That means God is good all the time to us. It is a true saying that the Scripture declares, "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled the principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them

in it” (Colossians 2:13-16 KJV). The “Victory” that Christ Jesus has given to us is best expound by this scriptural quotations in that, Jesus Christ shed his blood on the Cross at Calvary, by the shedding of his precious blood, we have all-round “Victory” by faith in the “Propitiation” that Christ offered on the cross. We must comprehend the truth that the Book says, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament (New Covenant), that by the means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator” (Hebrews 9: 12-16 KJV).

Jesus Christ is the testator here in this verse. He was the first person who wrote his will and died as he had prophesied that he will lay down his life for humanity. He said he will come back to take his life up again. He made a will, by his volition, he died and the third day he resurrected and came back to execute his will. He told the Pharisees that no signs shall be given to that generation except the sign of “Prophet Jonah.” (Luke 11:29) He meant what he said, and he said what he meant. He died on the cross at Calvary. He resurrected and gave us power over the devil, demons, and principalities. I love Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 22 that says, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission.” Verse 28 expounds the issue precisely when the Book says, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” If we know the truth as the Bible declares that it will set us free, I mean the truth that we know that Christ has paid the price on the cross at Golgotha. We will obtain success at every level of our lives in Jesus’ name, for Christ is the end of the Law (the Torah) pointed to him (Luke 24:44).

The Holy Writ says in the Book of Matthew 27:26-29, “Then released he Barabbas unto them, and when he had scourged Jesus, he (Pilate) delivered him to be crucified (Verse 26 KJV). Verse 27, “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.” Verse 28, “And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.” Vehemently, verse 29 of the Book of Matthew expounds the prophecy that God gave about what His Son will eventually go through (Genesis 3:15). The prophetic word declares, “I will put enmity between thee and the Woman and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.” Verse 29 says, “And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head and a reed in his right hand and they bowed their knees before him, and mocked him saying, Hail, King of the Jews” (Matthew 27:26-29). Biblically and theologically in order to give it a broad dimension, the enmity occurred between Jesus and Satan. For Satan instigated the people against Jesus, entering into

Judas, the people, and Pilate. They demanded for a notorious thief to be released at the expense of Jesus Christ. Satan thought that if he kill Jesus, he will put to death the final judgment that God gave concerning his defeat by the blood that Christ shall shed on the cross at Calvary (Golgotha). But he was ignorant of the truth that God enacted a Law concerning "Remission" of sins, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). He forgot that God did use blood in the Old Testament days to deliver his children from bondage in Egypt when they were enslaved for 430 years, prior to Jesus' Crucifixion. (Exodus 12:40-41).

The Book of Exodus Chapter 12 verse 5 says, "Your Lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. Ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goat." Theologically, Jesus was the "Lamb of God" that the writer of the Book of Revelation wrote about; He was without blemish. No sin was found in Him. He was a male of the first fruit of the womb of Mary. "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:19-20 NKJV). Jesus Christ was rejected by his people; he was taken from among his people. The enmity caused the rejection as prophesied in the Old Testament text; the crucifixion was the bruise of Jesus' heel and the "resurrection" of the Messiah sealed the coffin of Satan. It shattered his head. We can then agree with Apostle Paul's expository letter when he wrote to the Corinthians in the first book of Corinthians chapter fifteen verse six, "After that, he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." The "Post-Resurrection" appearance of Jesus Christ affirms the truth in the letter of Apostle Paul about the Old Testament prophecy in Genesis 3:15. The main Biblical reference in verse 55 says, "O death where is thy sting, O grave, where is the victory?" Verse 57 says, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ." The Bible is God revealed, meaning that God revealed himself through the Son and the Holy Spirit, in that the extension of the revelation of the Son is continuous through the third person in "Trinity," therefore it is necessary to refer to the prophecy of Joel in establishing the furtherance of the work of Father and Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. Anytime the exegesis of the Holy Spirit's prophecy and manifestation comes to perspective, we cannot skip the Old Testament's prophetic Book of Prophet Joel. This is needed in order to put the text into historical context of Biblical Revelation which was progressive, and came to pass in the day of Pentecost when fire visited them. The scripture says, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

Progressively, Jesus commanded the disciples to tarry (to continue to be in one place for a noticeable time) in Jerusalem, until they, the apostles, will be endued with power from on high. Luke the physician, an apostle and a companion of apostle Paul, wrote, "And, 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." Tarry in that context signifies to wait, stay, abide, linger, remain,

and stick around; it doesn't mean to be idiotically idle. Christ told them that they should wait upon the Father and get the "supernatural power" from heavens above, and the Book of Acts confirmed the adherence and obedient attitude of the Apostles (Luke 24:49). The Holy Writ records the obedience of the apostles; in fact, I am amazed when I read chapter 1 verse 14 of the Book of Acts that says, "Mary the Mother of Jesus even tarried with them." What a loving Mother and an obedient woman of God. The Book declares, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers including James and Jude, Martha and all believers."

The utterance and manifestation of this prophecy came to pass when the power of Heaven invaded the abode of the believers in Jerusalem supernaturally at Solomon's Porch. Prior to the visitation, the Scripture says, "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey." Verse 13 says, "And they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James and John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James."

Verse 14 emphatically confirms that they adhered to Christ's admonition (warning, caution) to tarry and be endued with power from on high before they will start evangelizing as promised by Christ. The Book of Acts (the activities of the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministries of the Apostles) declares, "When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (NKJV). If we stop at the "powerful visitation" and "in-dwelling" of the Holy Spirit, we will limit the text, and the prophetic text of the book of prophet Joel, who specifically prophesied about the coming of the Holy Spirit, will not be the foundational prophecy that the New Testament event fulfilled in the day of Pentecost. After the "visitation" and "in-dwelling" of the power from above, they received power, started speaking in other tongues as the spirit of God enabled them, and power demonstration followed, with signs, wonders and miracles in the ministries of the Apostles. For Jesus said, "And these signs will follow those who believe; in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues," which occurred that "day of Pentecost." Peter, who earlier on denied Jesus, repented and Jesus restored him back to his spiritual station (position), preached his first sermon drawn from the book of Joel. The "New International Version" of the Bible rendered it as follows; verse 14 says, "Then stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say." Verse 15 says, "These men are not drunk, as you suppose, it's only nine in the morning." Emphasis on verse 16, "No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." And the prophetic Book of Joel, which was progressive, came into fulfillment in the day of Pentecost and Apostle Peter

said, "In the last days, God said, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." Verse 18 says, "Even on my servants both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesy." (Acts 2:14-47; 4:1-4).

That very day the prophecy was fulfilled; they spoke in other tongues (glossolalia); the fulfillment of the prophecy that predicted "outpouring" came to pass. The supernatural empowerment descended mightily upon the disciples as Christ Jesus promised them. The book says in the gospel of Luke 24:49, "Behold I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Jesus Christ sent the Holy Ghost to the Apostles in the "day of Pentecost." The day of Pentecost began the Church Era, when Church was founded by "fire of the Holy Spirit." In fact, the first congregational pastor began to pastor his flock by fire. The Bible says, "And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this sight, why the bush is not burnt" (Exodus 3:2-3). We are now living in the "Latter Days," when the Church of Jesus Christ will enter into the "full power" and the "authority" that Christ has given to us. The Book of Many Books says in the Book of Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Now is for God to bless us because we are living in the "end time."

There is no other time than now for God to bless his faithful children and he will bless us mightily in Jesus' name. Comprehensively, the New Testament Books expound the full confirmation and fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Throughout the Book of Beginning (Genesis) and the history of humanity, God showed the prophetic signs of the coming of His Son (Yeshua, Immanuel) by signs, symbols and typological inferences in history. From the Book of Genesis where God spoke into existence the heavens and the earth, and the eschatological significance of what Adam and Eve did, it revealed to us that God is a good God. He immediately offered a way out of the death sentence that he pronounced over Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15-19). God promised that he will send a deliverer who will deliver his creatures from the bondage of Satan. That was the first prophetic revelation of what the Messiah will come to do. Prophet Isaiah prophesied and said in chapter 53 verse 5 of his book, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed."

The New Testament revelation of that prophecy, I mean the Biblical parallel, says in the book of Romans 5:6 and 8, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." The book further declares, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this is the purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might

destroy the works of the devil.” Moses began to write his Pentateuch as revealed to him by God, and although Genesis, the Book of Beginning, chronicles God’s work, it still did not reveal the beginning of God, but only the beginning of his work, because nobody knows the beginning of God. He had been in existence before and He alone knows the answers to the where, when, why, and how of His existence. God is the beginning and the end; everything is consummated (made complete) in Christ Jesus His Son. Moses writes, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, let there be light and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.” The New Testament parallel of this verse of the scripture is recorded in many areas which show that Jesus is the light of the world who came to shed the divine light on the darkness of this world. Anytime the scripture mentions darkness, it refers to the devil and his kingdom. That is why the beloved Apostle John said, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light that all the men through him might believe. He was not the light but was sent to bear witness of that light. Jesus was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:4-9). The book of John 13:23-25 says, “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, Lord, who is it?” Apostle John was the one that Jesus loved dearly, that was why he gave him the “Apocalypse” on the island of Patmos. Apostle John further expounds the truth that Jesus is the light of the world when he penned down what Christ said about Himself.

Chapter 3, verse 19 says, “And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.” Jesus is the light of the world as we read from the book of Genesis. He is the “Logos” (John 1:14). “And the word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we (actually) saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his Father, full of grace (favor is further established, loving-kindness) and truth” (reference Isaiah 40:5 AMPL). The word that made manifest through the progressive revelation of the word of God in the book of Hebrews, when the writer of the book says, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3). And Apostle John wrote, “And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as to the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth.” The apostle Paul further confirmed the truth of the case that Jesus is the light of the world when he wrote in his expository book of Ephesians chapter 5 verses 13-14, “But all things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth

make manifest is light.” Verse 14, “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (KJV). Apostle Paul was a profound and prolific writer when he wrote to the Colossians in the first chapter, verses 12-18, “Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in Light.” Verse 13, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.” The fulfillment of the above exposition has its own foundation from what Jesus said through the wisest king who ever lived, when Jesus revealed His love for mankind in his pre-existence. The progressive revelation says in the book of Proverbs chapter 8 verse 22-31, “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, Nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth: and my delights were with the sons of men.” As a matter of fact, as I delve into the New Testament I discover characters who had subdued nations by their faith and conquered their enemies. Those who mastered time and by faith scaled through mountains of problems and crossed over valley of adversities, those that thought of problems as normal in every area of human endeavor they achieved all through one and only one, Christ the Savior.

Concisely the book of prophet Isaiah is a miniature Bible for it has 66 chapters while the complete Bible has 66 Books. Specifically, Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah and what he will do, and who will be the forerunner of the said Messiah. Firstly, it is noteworthy to say that the day Jesus Christ inaugurated His public ministry he demanded for the scroll of the Book of Isaiah. As Evangelist Luke recorded it in the Book of Luke 4:17-20, the Bible declares, “And He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” Verse 17 says, “And there was delivered unto Him the book of prophet Isaiah, and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written.” Verse 18,

“The spirit of the LORD is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty for the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty, those who are oppressed: to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” Verse 20 says, “Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, and they said, Is this not Joseph’s son?” The beloved apostle John understands what he said in his gospel when he said, “And the Word (LOGOS) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace (Charis) and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus’ teaching and doctrines did not resemble that of the Pharisees in that the Book says, “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me” (John 7:16). The Pharisees detest Christ because he did not attend any “Rabbinical School”; he is not recognized as a “Rabboni” by the Pharisees; he was not one of them. Hence, they marveled at his profound understanding of the “Scripture” hermeneutically. They said in verse 15, “And the Jews marveled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” Jesus understood the question that they asked above, when they said “Is not this Joseph’s son?” It was a word they meant to deride and scoff him and his messianic claim, in that they did not expect their Messiah to come from a carpenter’s storefront. They were expecting the Messiah to come from the palace of a king.

We have to know that from the beginning of creation God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (I Corinthians 1:27 KJV). The Bible is one chain of event having only one theme, “Man has sinned and God promised that the Messiah will come and he will die, and resurrect to deliver humanity from eternal damnation.” That is the basis for the Old Testament exegesis, even Jesus affirmed it in the New Testament post-resurrection time. He said, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved (necessary) Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day” (Luke 24:46 KJV). The 39 Books consist of promises, deliverance, salvation, blessing, wisdom, grace, mercies, love, hope and importantly the coming of the Redeemer. As a matter of fact, the reason is to draw believers unto Jesus Christ, the Messiah of humanity. The 27 Books of the New Testament consist of the Birth, Resurrection, or better still, the birth, the ministry, the death, resurrection, ascension, post resurrection, and the movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of his apostles and all believers. The life of our LORD Jesus Christ—from His youth, up to the time that He inaugurated His public ministry, till the time that He ministered and fulfilled the prophecy of Prophet Isaiah—was, and still is, an exemplary life worthy of praises and emulation. Why do I say this? Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12 KJV). Christ has given us the mandate to do as he did, even more than what he did. So, He

revealed Himself to Apostle John at the island of Patmos when the Book declares, “I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9 KJV). Theologically, the New Testament, which was written by the Blood of Jesus, is the Biblical fulfillment of the Old Testament’s prophecies. Meaning that the Messiah came as the prophets prophesied. He did what God spoke through the mouths of all His prophets, from Moses to Malachi and John the Baptist. Clearly, Jesus discovered himself in the “Scripture.” He identified and affirmed the place where the Scripture says something about his ministry and Messiahship (John 4:25-26).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNMISTAKABLE SIGN OF THE MESSIAH

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel which is translated God with us.” With that in mind, it leads us to the next segment that stipulates a serious exposition of the Bible knowledge. Theologically, in order to establish a sound exegesis to expound the divine meaning of what Christ came to do from the Old Testament’s foundational Book through the New Testament’s revelation and fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophesied about in the New Testament Books, like Romans, Galatians, first and second books of Corinthians, it is relatively important to study the characters in the Bible basically to consolidate our faith that what they did we can also do, and that we can receive what they received through faith which is the “article” (point, detail, element item, and particular thing) of Christian faith, the basis for our foundation in God. For the Bible says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6 KJV).

Diligent in this verse means being constant in effort to accomplish something; attentive and persistent in doing anything; done or pursued with persevering attention. It is important to study the life of individual people in the Bible, I mean, those who subdued the nations, as the Book of Many Books said, “And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11:32-34 KJV). They were formed by the failures, built up by their battles, delivered by their desperations, and by their faith they prayed profoundly, to pursue, to overtake, to possess their possessions. The New Testament’s individual people like Paul, Mary, Martha, Peter, Philip the Evangelist, and the main character of the “New Covenant,” Jesus of Nazareth, the man of Galilee who was Man-God and Godman, who prayed for humanity in the garden of Gethsemane to the extent that the Book of Many Books says, “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44 KJV).

The New Testament events like the “day of Pentecost,” Peter’s sermon, Stephen’s confession of faith and death. (Acts 7:1-60). The conversion and salvation of Saul of Tarsus who, by God’s grace, became the greatest Apostle Paul of all ages. As a matter of fact, we must expound the New Testament’s doctrine. “Doctrine” denotes

teaching, for example, doctrine about justification by faith, salvation and the like. Biblically and theologically, there must be and there will be an in depth study of the truth that the New Testament fulfilled the Old Testaments in all aspects, biblically and theologically. In our study, we will examine the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the ministry and responsibility of the believer. Certainly enough, prior to a profound expository approach to the above-mentioned points, it is important to complete a chapter outline on every Book of the New Testament. From the study of those books, we shall understand how to form “doctrine” from the letters of the great apostles, and why we should apply a sound hermeneutical application to our preaching for the Power of the Holy Spirit to emanate from the pulpit and heal, bless and deliver the children of the living God. The role of the Holy Spirit in the Church can never be ruled out, because this is the time of the Holy Spirit (the “Latter Rain” of the Power of the Holy Ghost upon the Church of God) (Lev. 26:1-7, Joel 2:23-28). The ministry and responsibility of the believers are essential when it comes to a close examination as regards witnessing (evangelism, and winning souls for Christ, the one, and the only one, the living Messiah of humanity). The Gospel of St. Matthew is the first synoptic Gospel; it has semblance with the eyewitness account of Evangelist Mark, and that of the physician turned evangelist, Luke, a faithful companion of Apostle Paul who was a prolific writer and who wrote thirteen powerful epistles.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

The apostle Matthew, the tax collector, was the author of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Although some theologians and Biblical scholars did not agree that St. Matthew wrote this Gospel. As a matter of fact, this Gospel does not identify its author. Early church fathers and tradition attribute it to Matthew the Apostle and a former tax collector. Save his name and occupation, little is known about him. The Church tradition says that for fifteen years following the resurrection of the LORD Christ Jesus, he preached in Palestine and then conducted missionary campaigns in other nations. He is called also Levi, a Jew of Galilee who wrote the Gospel to his audience the Jews, and now to all nations. For the concluding part of his thesis he says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19 KJV). The exact date could not be ascertained. Some school of thoughts says that the external evidence, such as quotations in Christian literature of the very first century, testifies to the early existence and use of Matthew’s Gospel of Christ Jesus as their references. Church Leaders of the second and third centuries generally agreed that Matthew’s gospel was the first Gospel to be written, and various statements in their writings indicate a date between A.D. 50 and 65. However, many modern scholars feel that both Matthew and Luke relied heavily on Mark in writing their Gospels. In the Gospel record of Apostle Matthew the ongoing tension between Jew and Gentile that is reflected in the Gospel suggests a period when Judaism and Christianity still overlapped. The purpose of the gospel according to St. Matthew was to present Jesus as the Messiah and as the Son of David, to elaborate this truth in such a way that it would aid Christians in their controversies with the Jews. He shows how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy and how the law is filled with new meaning and supplemented in the person, words and works of Christ Jesus while on earth.

Jesus Christ is the rock of ages; other grounds are sinking sands, that is the reason Jesus told Peter, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18-19; Romans 9:33; 1 Corinthians 10:4 KJV).

Evangelist Matthew also points out how Israel’s rejection of Christ is in accordance with prophecy, and how that rejection caused the transference of the divine privileges of the chosen people from the Jewish to the Christian community, “Ekklesia.”

Thus the Book of Many Books says, “The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Israel) and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruit thereof” (Matthew

21:42-43). Factually, each of the gospels is unique in their style and purpose. The gospel (Good News) contains the primary sayings, history, and story of the life of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. Each writer is writing his Gospel to a certain audience so that they might understand clearly that Jesus Christ is the anointed one, the Messiah, who is the son of the living God, "Christos." Bear it in mind that the Gospel of Matthew was written primarily to the Jews and secondarily to all mankind, for the scripture says in the book of Luke chapter 2 verse 10, "Then the angel said to them, Do not be afraid for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." Gospel of Jesus is for all people, all nations, and all purposes. Matthew the evangelist presented his gospel to Jews that Jesus is he long-expected Messiah (Matthew 1:1). The Bible confirms the truth (Hebrews 12:2). Evangelist Matthew's style of writing presented Jesus as the "Son of David" as it was prophesied, that David will not fail to have his children as kings on the throne of Israel. Factually, Jesus came from the lineage of David and He is rightfully a king. His Royal genealogy is given in chapter one of the book, the Gospel according to Matthew. The Book of Many Books says in Matthew chapter 12 verses 22-23, "Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute, and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw." Emphasis on verse 23 that says, "And all the multitudes were amazed and said, could this be the son of David?" The psalmist David was praying for his son, Solomon, before his death in the book of Psalm chapter 72 expounds explicitly by prophecy the kingly office of the Messiah. Verse 17 tells it all, "His name shall endure forever: his name shall continue as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call Him blessed." Precise summation of the content of St. Matthew is as follows: the primary focus of this Gospel as mentioned earlier on is to project Jesus Christ as the great messianic King, as the Son of David, as the one who had the right to sit upon the throne of David. Yet, Jesus was more than just a political king, He is a spiritual king and Savior of all. The disciples asked Jesus when He will return the kingdom to Israel; they thought that Jesus came to be a political leader. The Book of Many Books says, "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The above statement indicates that they recognized Jesus as a reigning king, the king of kings, and the Lord of Lords. They did not know that He was to rule the Kingdom of God in heaven and on earth. That is why the Scripture says, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32 KJV). More so, the Word of God says, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:36-37).

The Scripture is infallible; Jesus Christ is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, that is why the Book says in Revelation 19:15-16, "And out of his mouth

goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The Scripture revealed progressively from the prophecy of Isaiah and the Book of Many Books says, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon the kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with peace from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7 KJV). To endorse the above exposition with further Biblical truth, the Scripture declares, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom (Sovereignty) of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15 KJV). Revelation chapter 12, verse 10 says, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night.”

Great and mighty is the Lord our God, the creator of the Universe. He is the controller of heavens and the earth in that the Book of Many Books says, “And after this things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God” (Revelation 19:1 KJV). We know that the Scripture says, “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10 KJV). The Bible says, “And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the Word of God.” (Revelation 19:13) Jesus is the Word that became flesh, apostle John said in his gospel, “And the Word (Logos) was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14 & Psalm 68:11 KJV).

The time that Jesus (Joshua or Yesua) used on earth was full of emulations, that was why evangelist Matthew decided to show the Jews and humanity that Jesus was the long-awaited, expected Messiah (Matthew 1:1). The prophets had prophesied of the kingly office of the Messiah. The Biblical reference in the book of St. Luke established the fact and the truth that all prophets who came made mention of Him, that Jesus was the main “theme” of their messages though they prophesied individually at a given period of time. Jesus said, and Holy Writ declares, “And he said unto them, these are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the Psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44, Deut. 18:15-19).

Graphically the Gospel of St. Matthew particularly portrayed Jesus as King, if you examine the visit of the wise men. John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus

Christ who was the forerunner, confirmed that Jesus was the King and the Lamb of the “Living God” which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29 KJV).

The Sermon on the Mount explicates the kingdom of heaven; it is the truth, and relatively authentic that only a king can operate in a kingdom, the realm of his office (Royal Position). (Matthew 6:9-13) The transfiguration shows that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. The voice that came from heaven established His position as the King of Glory; thus God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:5; Revelation 19:16 KJV). If God is the absolute owner of His heavenly kingdom the Son of God who is Jesus automatically became a rightful owner. Hence, He is a King of Glory. Jesus’ crucifixion alleviates our fears by His crucifixion and His resurrection and ascension by the cloud Limousine. Only a spiritual and profound powerful King of Glory can ride the cloud Limousine to heaven above, and sent the spirit of authority to His followers. The authority is a “delegated power” based upon right in Christ and every scriptural virtue by Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ’s Sermon on the Mount in chapter 5 verse 1-48 of Matthew’s Gospel contained the royal manifesto of the Law given by the King of Glory as regards the Laws of His Kingdom. To buttress the truth of the word of God, verse 3 says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The main concern of Evangelist Matthew was the coming of a promised Messiah. We must be abreast of the truth that John the Baptist who was Jesus’ cousin would have been the greatest prophet in all ages had he not doubted that Jesus was the long-expected messiah, Savior, “Christos” (Luke 1:39-63). Why? In that, he was given a unique assignment to identify the Savior for the Jews first and then Greeks also. Before he doubted, the Bible declares in the Book of John 1:29-34 (KJV), “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

Later when he was arrested and imprisoned he sent word to Jesus. The Bible says in Matthew 11:2, “And when John had heard in prison about the work of Christ, he sent two of his disciples.” Verse 3 says, “And said to Him, Are you the coming one or do we look for another? Then Jesus replied to the question raised by John’s disciples. He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than him” (Verse 11 NKJV). As a matter of fact the Jews were steeped (to permeate or permeated with or as if with water, or soaked) with the Old Testament Scriptures. Evangelist Matthew perceived that Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament. In fact, every jot of the Old Testament Law pointed to Jesus (“torah,” precept or statutes). Jesus Himself

said this about the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him. Luke chapter 24 verse 44 says, “Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalm concerning me.”

We must stand firm in any situation that we may find ourselves, for a standing position is always a winning position by upward motion. Whatever it seems today might not be the end result; things are changing, though. God will never change by his Word; He changes situations. Do not lose hope and faith because of lateness in paying your bills, or the move of God is delayed a bit. “Delay is not always a denial, while a detour is never a dead end.” If God delays, that does not imply that he is denying you of your right in him, or if you detour on your way going to your destiny, as it may sometimes occur. Do not change your mind; uphold what you believe in. Christ Jesus is the Messiah; he will surely see you through. Matthew’s Gospel attempts to link the two great covenants that God made with His people. God is a covenant making God and covenant-fulfilling God. Apostle Matthew compared David’s Covenant and Abraham’s covenant together, which the Biblical theologians called Davidic and the Abrahamic covenants. He juxtaposed the covenants and brought the truth out of the covenants that God is faithful to His Word. The Gospel of St Matthew shows that Christ Jesus fulfilled both of these covenants as the Scripture prophetically revealed.

In the annals of history, God entered into an agreement with Abraham his friend, and promised him that through him all the families of the earth should be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). Abraham and Sarah tried to help God when the promise did not come to pass as God had promised them, for Sarah gave her maid to her husband a mistake not a miracle that caused hatred between Jew and Arab nations to date (Gen. 16:1-6). For there was an interval of twenty-five years before the time that God said to Abraham: “And they said unto him, where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, behold in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him” (Genesis 18:9-10).

Davidic covenant was a covenant of a kingship for God said, “And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (II Samuel 7:16). The fulfillment: David’s son was a king and Abraham’s son was a sacrifice, Jesus of Nazareth the One and only One was the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He was the Lamb of God that was sacrificed for the whole world. In the opening of his gospel, Evangelist Matthew started with the birth of a king, and closed with the offering of a sacrifice. The key expression is “the kingdom of heaven” found only in the gospel of Matthew. This expression is a Hebraism evidently taken from Daniel’s prophecy in chapter 2:44 which says, “And in the days of these kings shall the god of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it

shall stand forever.” The God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom, an everlasting one for sure.

A Biblical reference could be drawn from the book of Isaiah chapter 9 verse 7 which says, “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end upon the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. From the mouth of the king himself, Jesus said in the book of John chapter 18: 36 and 37, “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” Verse 37 says, “Pilate therefore said to Him, Are you a King then? You say rightly that I am a King. For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice”(NKJV).

In conclusion, the outline of the Book of Gospel according to St. Matthew is as follows: From chapter 1:1-2, and verse 23, it expounds on the coming of the reigning King of Glory. The direct Biblical reference is found in the book of Isaiah 7:14, 9:6 and 11:1-6. The proclamation of the kingdom is found in chapter 3 verses 1-16 and verse 20. Chapter 21 verses 1-20, and verse 24 expound the rejection of the King of Glory, which gave the great opportunity to the Gentile nations. It engendered them to embrace Christianity in entirety. Chapter 21 verses 1-28 and 20 tells us about the “triumphant” entrance of the King of Glory into his domain, for the Bible says, “of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Whatever is your mountain of problem today, tomorrow Jesus Christ will level it by the bulldozer of His word, the word of life, and every hill of adversary will become plain by the spirit of the living God in Jesus name (John 6:63 and Zechariah 4:6).

CHAPTER SIX

AN INTRODUCTION TO ST. MARK

Suffice it to say that the church tradition gave the authorship of this Gospel to Mark, whose name does not appear in the book itself. There is general agreement among Biblical scholars that the author of this book is identified as John Mark in the book of Acts 12:12. Mark is identified by early church fathers—Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria—as a close associate of Apostle Peter. The truth about the authorship is that St. Mark recorded the life of Jesus Christ according to the eye-witness accounts given by Apostle Peter and other Apostles. John Mark was the son of Mary whose home was in Jerusalem; it seemed to be a center for Christian leaders (see Acts 12:12). Mark went to Syria with his well-to-do cousin Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) from where both accompanied Paul on his first Missionary Journey.

The style and theme of the gospel of St. Mark is unique. Suffice it is to say that the terse, pointed style of Evangelist Mark—with his stress on facts and actions rather than too much themes or topics—distinguished this book as the most vivid account of the life of Christ among the other Gospel writers. Basically, it is the briefest of the four Gospels; it is also more detailed. In that, the words “immediately” or “at once” occur more than thirty times in this gospel.

The audience that evangelist Mark primarily wrote his Gospel to are the Roman Christians then, and is for Christians of nowadays too. The gospel depicts Jesus as the servant of the LORD. The basic concept of this Gospel is to show to the mind of the Roman citizens that Jesus had every right to be the ultimate leader because He was the ultimate servant. In the Gospel of St. Mark we see an emphasis on Jesus’ deeds more than His words. The Romans cared very little for the words of a man but cared a great deal for their deeds. Factually, the gospel of St. Mark pragmatically depicts the above mentioned truth, when the Roman centurion was speaking to Christ, and the Scripture says, “Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it” (Luke 7:6-8 KJV). He believed that Jesus should not bother to come to his house, that he should say one word that will settle the issue. Guess what! Miracle settled the issue because he believed in actions and deeds. He believed that Jesus was the Son of the Living God. We see in St. Mark’s Gospel that Romans showed great respect for one who was willing to lay down His life for a greater cause, like Jesus did for the humanity. Precisely, we see in the Gospel of Mark the ministry

of Christ as a servant that He was filled with wisdom, not that Jesus was filled with wisdom. He was the wisdom of God for the Book of Many Books says, “For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom but we preach Christ crucified to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (I Corinthians 1:22-24 NKJV). Obviously, the Book of I Corinthians 1:30 says, “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30 KJV).

Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry labored faithfully for the scripture declares that, “But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.” Verse 6 says, “Jacob’s well was there, Jesus therefore, being wearied from His Journey sat thus by the well. It was about six hour” (John 4:4-6). As the Scripture declares that Moses was faithful in the house of God, the Book says, “My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house” (Numbers 12:7). So Jesus was more faithful to what His father commanded him to do. Evangelist Mark depicts Christ Jesus as a powerful, overcoming, and authoritative Savior shown by His actions more than His words. For Jesus Christ was filled with wisdom, as a matter of fact, He is the wisdom of God. The first Book of Corinthians 1:24 says, “But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

There are some things we have to know about the Gospel of Mark. He did not include Jesus’ genealogy in that Mark presented Jesus as a servant of the Living God.

Certainly enough, he referred to the Old Testament exegesis when he quoted the prophecy pertaining to Jesus. The prophet prophesied about the office of a Messiah, as one who would be a “servant.” For instance the Book of Many Books says, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.” Verse 2 says, “As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” Verse 3 says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.’” Prophet Isaiah, who came exclusively with the prophecies of Messiah, was the gospel preacher, the evangelist of the Old Testament, had been what God called him to do in his book, for the book of Isaiah has 66 chapters while the whole Scripture has 66 Books, his Book is a miniature Bible. He said in chapter 42 verses 1-7, “Behold! My servant whom I uphold, my Elect one in whom my soul delights, I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break: And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth; He will not fail nor be discouraged. Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His Law. Thus says God the LORD who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it; who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it. I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness, And will hold your hand: I will keep you and give you as a

covenant to the people. As a light to the Gentiles. To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison. Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.” (Isaiah 42:1-7, 61:1-7; Luke 4:17-20)

Isaiah 52:13-15 and 53 expounds the sacrifice that the Messiah will offer when he finally arrives. The Gospel of Mark portrays Jesus as a “Servant” of the Most High, the “Baptism of Jesus,” the calling of the Twelve. Jairus’ daughter was healed by the powerful word spoken by Jesus Himself. Jesus’ majestic walk on the sea depicted Him as a servant of God who had authority over everything, including nature, and whatever that is in the whole Universe. For the Bible says, “The earth is of the LORD’s and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1 KJV).

The manner in which the LORD Jesus served as an obedient servant is significantly analyzed as follows:

Jesus Christ served in humility based upon compassion. The Biblical References are found in the book of Mark 1:36-38, 44, 3:6-12, 7:36.

He served in tenderness, in perfection, submission to the will of His Father. The Biblical References are found in the Book of Mark 1:30-31, 9:27, 10:13-16.

Amidst opposition, Jesus Christ served His Father wholeheartedly by healing the sick, preaching and teaching the word of the living God. Evangelist Luke recorded the saying of Jesus when He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country” (Luke 4:24). The Biblical References are Mark 1:24, Mark 2:1-12, 3:1-5, 5:40, 8:11.

Jesus served in self-sacrifice. To know the real Jesus who labored and sacrificed for humanity, you have to meet Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Chapter 14 verse 36 says, “And He said Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me, nevertheless not what I will, but what you will.” Evangelist Luke expounds the encounter in the garden of Gethsemane vividly and empirically. The Book of Many Books says, “And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).

Christ served in “Agape” Love, for the Bible says, “For God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16 NKJV). Apostle John the Beloved recorded the saying of Jesus vividly in his gospel when Jesus Christ said, “As the Father loved me, I also have loved you, abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandment and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:9-11). To understand what Christ meant is to lay emphasis on verses 12 and 13

that say, "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." Verse 13 says, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:9-13).

Evangelist Mark based his Gospel upon the Old Testament prophecy, in that, Old Testament is the foundational work of God Almighty, and the Son came to fulfill all the prophecies given by the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Christ in the New Testament (Luke 24:44; Exodus 13:21-22; Proverbs 8:22-31). The Old Testament cannot stand without the New Testament. In preparation and presenting the servant of God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to the whole world, evangelist Mark wrote, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, Comfort, yes, comfort My people! says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" (Mark 1:1 & 3 and Isaiah 40:3 NKJV). The Old Testament Book declares in the Book of Many Books, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (KJV). The exegesis of the verse implies that God called John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, to prepare the minds of the people down for the Messiah's messages.

In that, the people must be prepared for the ministry of our LORD Jesus Christ. The basis for John the Baptist's ministry is to reveal the Savior to the house of Israel, the Hebrews and the whole world. To establish this truth, evangelist John wrote, "And I know him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am come baptizing with water" (John 1:31).

Further Biblical exposition stipulates the labor of the servant; how Christ labored for humanity is found in the Book of Mark 1:14, and Scripture says, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom." Mark 8:31 says, "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Those verses designate what Jesus said about Himself and His ministry, even the beloved physician Luke quoted prophet Isaiah's Corpus in his gospel when he presented the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The Book of Many Books says, "And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the Book of the prophet Esaias and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book and He gave it again to the Minister, and sat down, And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him" (Luke 4:16-20). Verse

21 expounds it all, it says, "And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Meaning that what Prophet Isaiah prophesied many years ago before Christ was born came to pass that day, eventually the Messiah emerged as prophesied in the Book of the Old Testaments, hence, the New Testament fulfilled the Old Testament.

The gospel truth is that the Book of Prophet Isaiah is unique because he came to predict, prophesy about the coming Messiah, what his jobs will be like, how He will emerge. More so, the 66 chapters of his Book symbolically represent the 66 Books of the Bible and the theme is hinged upon the predictions of the Savior.

Chapter 9 verse 7 of the Book of Isaiah says, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

The rejection of the servant, Evangelist Mark recorded in his gospel and the Book of Many Books declares, "And He began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and Chief Priest and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

"He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter saying, Get behind me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Mark 8:31-33).

The Gospel writer declares further in Verse 34, "When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take his cross and follow me." Christ Jesus declares the truth about what Isaiah prophesied when the prophet said, "He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation. For he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people was he stricken, "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him, he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:8-10 KJV).

The Gospel clearly shows that the "Messiah" will be rejected and killed by his people. The writer of the Book of Hebrews says, "Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:20-22 KJV). As a matter of fact, Jesus knew he would die, through his death, burial, resurrection and ascension he will defeat the devil by giving forgiveness of sins to people, and he will buy them over to the side of Almighty God. The sprinkling of the tabernacle and the vessels of the ministry signify the "elected ones" that God called to be his messengers of the "Gospel." They are been purified by the blood of Jesus, sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost. The direct Biblical reference is found in the Book of Exodus 24:8, when

the Scripture declares, “And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.”

Finally, in closing to the survey of the Gospel of Mark, the Evangelist said something about the exaltation of the servant. For a clear Biblical and theological computation, the Book says in the epistle of Apostle Paul recorded in the Book of Philippians chapter 2 verse 5-11, “Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (not robbery of) but made Himself of no reputation taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” Emphasis on verse 9, that says, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him—“Him” in this context signifies Jesus) and given Him the name which is above every name (Phil, 2:5-11 KJV). The exaltation in the book of Philippians and that of Mark expounds the fact that God exalted His Son through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The exaltation came through the mind he had. What was the mind? The humble mind is the humble Spirit for he humbled himself and obeyed his Father strictly to the Letter and Spirit.

What occurred in the Gospel of Mark chapter 16:1-20 has been prophesied by the Psalmist David and the prophets especially Prophet Isaiah. It is expedient to examine the book of Psalm chapter 56 verse 13 that says, “For you have delivered my soul from death, have you not kept my feet from falling that I may walk before God in the light of the living. The spirit of the Living God spoke through King David about the “Messiah,” Jesus Christ. God said, “I will deliver the soul of Jesus from death. He will keep His feet from falling so that He may walk before God.” Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God, now advocating and soliciting for humanity. If you have a good case and you have no good Lawyer, Jesus has taken up your case. Fear not, you are on the winning side with Christ Jesus. He has never failed in the past, and he won’t fail now, hence rejoice.

More so, the Psalmist said, and the Book declares, “The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of your enemies. Your people shall be volunteers in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning. You have the dew of your youth.” Emphasis on Verse 4 that says, “The LORD has sworn and will not relent, you are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:1-4 NKJV). The Psalmist further said, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire; My ears you have Opened. Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require. Then I said, Behold, I come in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God, And your Laws is within my heart” (Psalm 40:6-8 NKJV). The Book of Many Books says, “Then I said, Behold, I have come”—in the

volume of the book (Scripture, the Bible, Book of Many Books). Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offering for sin, You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them (which are offered according to the law). Then He said, Behold I have come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second, by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (Hebrews 10:7-10 and Isaiah 1:11-19). For prophet Isaiah came; he prophesied and said, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills.

"And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD. To the house of the God of Jacob: He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law. And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem the word that made manifest is the end of the law."

The "Pentateuch" pointed to Him (Isaiah 42:1-3, Luke 24:44). Isaiah the prophet prophesied further, "Behold, My servant whom I uphold, My elect one in whom my soul delights? I have put "My Spirit" upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged; Till He has established justice in the earth. And the coastlands shall wait for His Law." To give these Scriptures a Biblical perspective we could see that the Law of Moses, the prophet and the Psalms, prophesied about the Messiah to the house of Israel at different times in History. Jesus became everything to us in the Old Testament time symbolically. God revealed the coming of His Son Jesus in many forms, progressively in many ways. He appeared in the "fiery furnace" while helping Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:24-25).

He was the Lamb that Abraham killed instead of Isaac. For the Bible says, "But Isaac spoke to Abraham his Father and said, My Father. And he said, Here I am my Son. Then he said, Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the Lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My Son, God will provide for Himself the Lamb for a burnt offering. So the two of them went together" (Jehovah Jireh) (Genesis 22:7-8). Jesus came to us through the Wisdom of Solomon in the book of Proverbs 8:22-31. Jesus came to us symbolically in the Book of Genesis as the ram at Abraham's altar; in the Book of Exodus as the Passover Lamb; in Numbers as the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night; in Deuteronomy as the "City of our refuge"; in Joshua as the scarlet thread out of Rahab's window; in Judges as our righteous Judge; in Ruth as our kinsman redeemer; in I and II Samuel, he is our trusted prophet; in the books of Kings and Chronicles he is our reigning king; in Ezra he is the faithful scribe; in Nehemiah he is the rebuilders of everything that is broken; in Esther he is the Mordecai sitting faithfully at the gate; in Job he is our redeemer that liveth; in Psalms he is my Shepherd and I shall not want; in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes he is the wisdom of

God; in Song of Solomon he is the beautiful bridegroom; in Isaiah he is the suffering servant; in Jeremiah and Lamentations he is the weeping prophet; in Ezekiel he is the Wonderful Four-faced Man; in Daniel he is the fourth Man in the midst of the fiery furnace; in Hosea he is my love that is forever faithful; in Joel he baptizes with the Holy Ghost; in Amos he is our burden bearer; in Obadiah, he is our Savior; in the Book of Jonah he is the great foreign missionary that takes the whole word of God to the whole world; in Micah he is the “Messenger” with the beautiful feet; in Nahum he is the “Avenger”; in Habakkuk he is the watchman who is ever praying; in Zephaniah he is the Lord mighty to save; in Haggai he is the “Restorer of our heritage”; in Zechariah he is our Foundation; in Malachi he is the Son of Righteousness with healing in his wings; in Matthew thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God; in Mark he is the miracle worker; in Luke he is the “Son of Man”; in John he is the Door by which everyone of us must enter; in Acts he is the shining Light that appears to Saul on the road to Damascus; in Romans he is our Justifier; in I Corinthians he is our Resurrection; in II Corinthian he is our Sin bearer; in Galatians, he is our Redeemer from the Law; in Ephesians he is our un-searchable Riches; in Philippians he met all our needs; in Colossians he is the Fullness of the God-Head Bodily; in I Thessalonians he is our Faith, Hope and Love; in II Thessalonians he is the seed of truth, as he is the seed of the woman; in Timothy he is the Mediator between God and Man; in Titus he is our blessed hope; in Philemon he is a friend that sticks closer; in Hebrews he is the blood of the everlasting covenant; in James he is the Lord that heals the sick; in I and II Peter he is the Chief Shepherd; in I, II and III of the Book of John he is Jesus who has the tenderness of Love; in Jude he is the Lord coming with 10,000 saints; and in the Book of Revelation he is the lifted-up one. Therefore, lift up your eyes, Church, for your redemption draweth nigh. HE IS THE KING OF KINGS, AND THE LORD OF LORDS.

He came to us through the Passover Lamb, the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. The Book says, “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year, ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats” (Exodus 12:5). Typologically, it implies that Jesus Christ would be taken out of his people to be crucified by them for their remission of sins and salvation. Symbolically, Jesus is the Lamb that God killed to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. The Scripture says, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coat of skins, and clothed them.” He came to us through meal offerings, and burnt offerings; He came to us through the snake that was hanged on a tree in the wilderness that symbolically signified the death of Jesus on the cross.

Jesus even said in the book of John 3:14, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (Numbers 21:9). In all our ways we have to lift Jesus up. If He has His own way in our lives we will never be the same again.

The Book of Many Books says, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”

(Hebrews 12:2 NKJV). He is the author and the finisher of our faith. He is the Bishop of the Whole Universe, things beneath and heaven above (Philippians 2:10). Jesus opened the physical and spiritual eyes of His disciples when the Scripture says, "Then they drew near to the village where they were going and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent, and He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass as He sat at the table with them that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him and He vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:28-31). If we go to a deeper level, Biblically, the Book of Many Books tells us that we will at resurrection have the body like Jesus. After He resurrected and was transformed by the power from heaven above, He wined and dined with His disciples. He is coming back again to establish the Kingdom of God forever during his second coming. No wonder the Bible says, "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope." For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so, God will bring with Him those who slept in Jesus, they will rise with incorruptible bodies (1 Corinthians 15:39-58 NKJV 1 Thessalonians 4:13).

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. The second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is going to be glorious for all believers. The angels prophesied; they admonished the disciples and comforted them in the book of Acts chapter one verse 9 to 11 saying, "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched. He was taken up and a cloud (Shekinah=Glory) received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. Who also said, men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." "Yeshua" is exalted above everything, that was why the Apostle to the Gentiles wrote in the book of Hebrews the first verse of the first chapter, saying, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the Fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." The Book of Many Books says, "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and uphold all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high."

Conclusively, the King of kings said it all when the Scripture declares, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He has risen from the dead." Jesus is the risen King by the words of two angels who broke the good news about His resurrection. They said in the

Book of St. Luke chapter 24 verse 6, "He is not here but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee." Jesus Christ is alive today for the Book of Many Books says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) It implies that Jesus is He that came, that is to come, and that will be forever. What He did during his short powerful and dynamic ministration is still progressive. He gave the Church the power to do what He was doing. He even promised them greater things than what he did, that is why the Scripture says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." You will do mighty exploits for Him, and for the advancement of His Kingdom, for he said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Further, the Book says, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." It signifies the truth that divine ability will be operative in the lives of those people that believe in Him. May His omnipotent power be operative at all times in our Lives in Jesus' name (John 14:12' Luke 18:27; and Revelation 19:6).

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPOSITION ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

The gospel according to St. Luke was written by Luke himself, a Jew. The beloved physician writes about a Jew to the Jews. He was a faithful companion of the greatest Apostle of all ages, the Apostle Paul. He was also the writer of the Book of Acts, known as the Activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministries of the Apostles. The book was addressed to Theophilus who was an unknown person of apparently Greek origin, clearly a Gentile. The central idea and the major theme of the Gospel is the Universal grace of God and its emphasis to the Son of Man depicting Christ as a perfect man that ever lived on this earth. The Greek people and student idealists alike would seek for the truth. In fact truth is parallel; it is universal, and Jesus was the ultimate truth that has ever occurred or happened to humanity. Truth could only be found in a perfect or ideal man shown clearly by Luke. Christ was that ideal man. Factually, in the gospel of St. Luke there is also a devotional theme. There is a powerful emphasis on prayer with a note of joy and praise in it. More so, the physician also honors womanhood in his gospel.

Thirdly, he went into Biography of Christ Himself, bringing Christ lineage into focus. Evangelist Luke emphasized on the humanity of Christ. We see Christ expressing feelings in the mentality of His ministry.

The Book of Luke is a very powerful book on the gospel of Jesus Christ showing the son of Man as that perfect Man. Jesus Christ is One and the only one that could provide salvation and a way for us to live, whereby we could all become what God created us to be. St. Luke closes his gospel of Christ excellently well by his precise emphasis on the promise of power from on high that the Father promised, and Jesus reminding them before He ascended on high.

The Book of Many Books says, “And 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” (Luke 24:49-53 KJV). Apparently, verses 52 and 53 confirmed the truth that the Apostles adhered to Christ’s commandment and they received the power from above in the day of Pentecost. The Book says in Verse 52, “And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” Verse 53 says, and I love it, “And were continually witnessing without stopping, in the temple, praising and blessing God.” Amen.

Concerning the date of this gospel, some Biblical scholars assumed that Evangelist Luke used Mark’s Gospel as a source in writing his own account, dating the third Gospel in the A.D. seventies. Others, however, point out that Luke wrote his gospel prior to Acts which he wrote during Apostle Paul’s first Roman imprisonment about A.D. 63.

Evidently, Evangelist Luke was in Caesarea during apostle Paul's two years' incarceration there (Acts 27:1). They believed that he would have had an ample opportunity during that time to conduct the investigation he mentions in chapter 1:1-4. Based upon this fact, Luke's gospel may be dated around A.D. 59-60 but as late as A.D. 75. The purpose of this gospel is stated here when Evangelist Luke clearly states his purpose in writing this gospel, which is basically to present an orderly account (Acts 1:1-3) so that Theophilus may have historical evidence of the teaching he had received of all that Jesus began both to do and teach during His earthly ministry.

Precisely, Luke addressed his gospel to Theophilus, but the central "theme" and idea are hinged upon the solid rock of the truth that all believers must have the assurance that Christianity is not one of many speculative systems searching for theological ethical values, but that this movement is bound up with an eyewitness and event in history.

Suffice it to say that Luke substantiates the certainty and accuracy of his work with four reasons.

1. Luke is concerned with the early origins, with priority give to eyewitnesses (Luke 1:2).
2. His aims were to present an accurate and precise eyewitness account of the gospel of Jesus Christ for a profound comprehension.
3. All accounts are to be in chronological order.
4. Basically to present his account with certainty based upon accuracy,

In achieving his aims, Evangelist Luke traces in his two volumes the Christian movement from its beginnings with Jesus of Nazareth to its development into worldwide fellowship, transcending the limits of Jewish nationality and embracing Jews and Gentiles. In that, the gospel (Good News) is for all Nations; that is to say that it is for humanity at large. For Jesus said in His last keynote address to the faithful disciples, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning from Jerusalem or at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:44-48 KJV). Though we were not there two thousand years ago when the powerful word of commissioning went out from the mouth of our LORD Jesus to His first called disciples who later became His Apostles, even now we are experiencing the "Power changer" of the activity of the Holy Spirit dynamically in the body of Christ today. More so, my life is a living testimony to the power of the gospel of Christ. The truth of the Scripture is that God from time immemorial uses the foolishness of the world to confuse the wise. The Book of Many Books says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (I Corinthians 1:28 KJV).

My past was undoubtedly small and bad, that is why the Scripture declares in the Book of Job 8:7 (KJV), "Though thy beginning was small, yet thy later end

should increase.” To bring the word “small” into expository perspective, it does not imply being little in size or amount; what it does mean is the vicissitudes of life, satanic delay and limitations that Satan placed upon the lives of those people that God gave the commandments to go over but whom he wants to limit so that they can go under. The gospel truth is that God has given us the commandment to go over; we will not go under in Jesus name. “Bad,” not in American slang expression of “Good,” but based in the semantics of the word’s original meaning in Queen’s English, it stinks. No power would have changed and transformed my life the way Jesus did when I ran into Him on my way going down to Damascus as Apostle Paul did who was formally Saul of Tarsus and by a divine mutation he became the apostle Paul, the Ambassador of gospel extraordinary to the Gentile world (Acts 9:1-16). Since my encounter with the risen Christ I’ve never been the same. In fact, I will never be the same forever for I will keep on renewing and transforming my mind to conform with Christ’s expected standard. For Paul wrote in his elaborate theological Book of Romans, chapter 12 verse 2 saying, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2 KJV).

In a nutshell, Luke’s primary emphasis is on the humanity of Christ. We see Christ expressing feelings and are involved in the mentality of His ministry. If we examine closely the gospel of Luke we would find many places where Jesus expressed the human aspect of His being in that He was fully man and fully God 100%.

Based upon the prophecies of the minor and major Prophets, Isaiah prophesied and said that, “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel.

“Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good” (Isaiah 7:14-15 KJV). Listen to the opening of the 4th chapter from verses one to three that says, “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the wilderness. Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing; and when they were ended, he after ward hungered.

“And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread” (Luke 4:1-3 KJV). The Evangelist Luke showed the aspect of Jesus’ humanity but thanks be to the Almighty God, Jesus was fully man and fully God 100%.

He began to release the word of God in Him saying, “It is written,” which defeated the devil. Jesus was rejected in His hometown after His first public appearance when He made Himself known as the Messiah and began His teaching, preaching, and healing ministry.

The last sentence of verse 22 of the fourth chapter says, “Is not this Joseph’s Son?” Meaning, “This is Joseph, the carpenter’s Son who grew up in the shop among us, and we knew His youth days while He was a toddler.” They scornfully despised Him and rejected His claim to be the long expected Messiah of the Jews. The verse that he read directly affirmed the truth that Jesus fulfilled the

prophecy given by the Prophet Isaiah. That was why Luke recorded what Jesus said in verse 21, and the Book declares, “And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Both “rhema, and “Logos” were fulfilled that he went back to Nazareth, hence the new fulfilled the old.

Jesus responded and said in verse 23, “And He said unto them, ye will surely say unto me this proverb. Physician, heal thyself: Whatsoever we have heard done in Carpernaum, do also here in thy country.” The fulfillment of what Christ said came to pass during His crucifixion day when he was crucified. The Scripture says, “And there were also two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” This verse is the fulfillment of what He said at the beginning of his “Healing ministry” in the book of Luke 4: 23. The book says, “And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God” (Luke 23:32-35). This is the repetitive form of Satan’s temptation of what he tried to do in the wilderness when he told Jesus that, “If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread” (Luke 4:3 KJV). Likewise, at the tail end of Jesus’ ministry when He was about to make the “Blood atonement” for the sins of humanity, then Satan appeared through the people basically to stop the “Redemption.” He wanted Christ to use His divinity contrary to the agreed plan that Jehovah His Father gave to Him before the Word “Logos” became flesh (Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:14). We must be abreast of the truth that the devil is still the same; if he tempted the Lord Jesus Christ at every level of His earthly ministry, he will tempt us too. But the gospel truth is that God has given us victory over him at every level. It is profound when the Bible says, “Submit yourself therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7 KJV).

The glorious gospel of Christ, exegetically recorded by Evangelist Luke, portrays our Lord Jesus as the Son of Man and the following points expound it precisely.

The Biblical scholars believe that the gospel of the physician Luke was written to the Greek of Jesus’ days. As a matter of fact, he had the Greek community first in his mind when writing the gospel. Secondly, he wrote the Gospel to all mankind, or better still, to humanity, in order not to favor any sexes. That was the reason why Jesus said prior to His ascension in the book of Matthew chapter 28 verses 19-20 said: “Go then and make disciples of all the Nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The Book declares in chapter 28 verse 20, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Amen (Matthew 28:20 KJV). The Biblical semantics of the word always denotes that Jesus Christ is with us all the way to the end of the age for He is Alpha and the Omega.

The greatest Apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: For it is the power of God unto Salvation; to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). The Book said in the gospel of St. Luke chapter 2 verse 10, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

Verse 11 and 12 say, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the LORD." The Word and works of Almighty God are progressive. The prophetic word of the messianic prophet Isaiah came to pass when the oracle declared many years before the fulfillment: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Verse 12 confirmed the Isaiah's prophecy in the Old Testament when Isaiah prophesied and said, "Therefore the LORD Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

The purpose of the gospel of Christ is to reach humanity at large. That is why John the Baptist, the foremost messenger of Christ who was his cousin, said in the gospel of John chapter 1 verse 35 and 36:

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God." Jesus was the Lamb of God slain for the salvation of mankind. Apostle John the Beloved recorded and said in his Gospel, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The basic purpose is to reach humanity with the Gospel of Christ (Luke 19:10). Luke's gospel is the gospel for the sinners. Evangelist Luke the Physician in his gospel portrays our LORD Jesus Christ as the only "Perfect Man that has ever lived on this planet earth," and He was. He is, that was why the greatest Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8 KJV).

Luke's genealogy goes back to Adam. The respected learned elder wanted the people to fully comprehend where Jesus came from, historically and prophetically from the Old Testament dispensation. Basically to establish the truth that the Messiah was fully Man and fully God 100% and He is the Godhead the second in the Trinity, the son of the Most High, the God Almighty.

The prophets prophesied progressively that the Messiah would be a Son of Man. The first prophecy came from God Himself when He punished the disobedience of Adam and Eve during the time that the rule of conscience failed woefully. God had nothing to do with the injury of Adam's sins, because He warned him, but He mercifully pronounced a remedy for the eternal death, the separation that would have occurred from what they did, and announced the coming of the second Adam.

The greatest Apostle Paul said in his epistle to the Roman which was an elaborate theological Book, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned."

Verse 13 declares, "For until the Law sin was in the world but sin is not imputed when there is no Law." Verse 14 says, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression who is the figure of him that was to come." (Romans 5:13-14) In order to theologize at the juncture, Adam in fact was not the picture. He was the negative of Christ to come and He did come. That is why you cannot call any family dysfunctional because all have sinned through the disobedience of Adam and Evil. What makes you to be negative today if properly taken care of can make you to be positive tomorrow, so do not give up but keep trying because you can succeed if you give it another try.

In his book, *The Journey Through the New Testament*, Dr. Stan DeKoven writes, "The prophets had prophesied that the Messiah would be a 'Son of Man' (Genesis 3:15, 22:18 and the Book of Isaiah 7:14-16, 9:6), the prophecy expounds the sign, His name, and His office and Government."

It is expedient to say that the prophets prophesied that the redeemer will be a "Son of Man," not an ordinary man but a sinless man. For Isaiah said in the eleventh chapter of his prophetic thesis, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

Verse 2 says, "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of Wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

"And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears." Verse 4 says, "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth, and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his tips shall he slay the wicked." The above exegesis of the Old Testament establishes the truth about the Redeemer being fully man and fully God 100%. In that the qualities expounds in those verses reflect the humanity of Christ in the "Godhead," Messiah of all who was, is, and to come, the second person of the Trinity.

More so, the Old Testament prophets prophesied that the Christ would be born of a virgin woman. They portrayed graphically Jesus as the perfect man that has ever lived on this planet called earth. In that, in one of His public hermeneutical teachings somebody said, "We have not seen a thing like this in Israel," because Jesus taught like one who has authority not like the scribes. On one occasion, somebody said, "Blessed is the womb that conceived you." Christ Jesus began a ministry without a poster, radio announcements or a business card, but thousands upon thousands came out to listen to Him, and at age 12, He brought the scholars of His days down on their knees because His Wisdom was too profound as prophesied by the prophets. When the hour came for Him to complete His assignment, they brought Jesus before the Pilate. In fact, what occurred there consolidated the truth that He was a "teleios" or a perfect man. Firstly, in the gospel of John chapter 18:1-40, when Judas Iscariot brought a band of men and of officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees to the "Brook Cedron" where Jesus was talking to His Father in fervent prayer, He knew what

will happen. When they approached Him, He said, “Whom seek ye?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said unto them, “I am he.” And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them.

As a matter of fact, Jesus said that statement twice, and twice they fell down. Thank God we are not Jesus or we would have used our authority, I mean the God aspect of our being, to protect ourselves from their evil plans to kill us. We would have called down the fire from heaven to consume them. Instead of that, Jesus surrendered to the will of His Father based upon the agreement He had with Him, to deliver humanity from eternal death that Adam and Eve caused by their disobedience.

A precise account of the gospel of St. Luke, which portrays Jesus as the “Perfect Man,” could be found under these sub-headings or topics as follows: (i). Visit of the Shepherds, Luke 2:15-20. (ii) The Birth of Jesus Christ, Luke chapter 1 and 2 respectively. The attitude and character of our LORD Jesus in the gospel account affirmed that Jesus demonstrated 100% human aspect of Himself consistently.

Chapter 4 verse 1 says, “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the wilderness.” Verse 2, “Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended He afterward hungered.” Verse 3, “And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” Verse 4, “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God.” Simplistically the above verse affirms the fact that Jesus was hungry, characteristic of human nature. For the fact that devil approached him and tempted him shows that Jesus was fully a human being and fully God when he used the spiritual essence of his being to defeat the devil, and when he began to release the word of “Yah” that is, “it is written.”

To stop here will limit the proofs that Jesus was a perfect man. If we dig deeper a bit, the event at the garden of Gethsemane established the truth that Jesus was a perfect man. He was in need of help from the Father. If He was not Man-God he would not have prayed the way He did. The Son of God did not need to pray if He used the divine aspect of his being.

Concisely he prayed earnestly as we often did when facing tribulations. Clearly verse 42 declares, saying, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will but thine, be done.” By my understanding of this verse, I believe that Jesus was confused a bit whether to use His supernatural power by telling His Father to remove the sufferings that he agreed to suffer in order to deliver humanity from the bondage of eternal death and Satanic influences, or better still, to go further and complete the task i.e. to go further and complete the task by adhering strictly to His promise of delivering humanity. For the book says, “And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

The parables of the sower, the Good Samaritan, the lost sheep, as well as the little children whom Jesus blessed, the Rich Young Ruler, the Penitent Thief and

the Ascension consolidate the graphic facts that Jesus came in bodily form as had been prophesied by the Prophets.

In the Gospel of St. Luke the humanity of Christ's Incarnation is emphasized. Evangelist Luke gives the full particulars concerning the virgin birth of Jesus. More so, he expressed His emotion when He was toiling with His hands, weeping over the city, kneeling in prayer, suffering in agony. Five out of six miracles in the gospel were miracles of physical healing as recorded.

Factually, the gospel of Luke concentrates on the "Outcast" of the earth, I mean the Gentiles who were outside the "Covenant." Only the giving of God, of our LORD Jesus, brought us into the covenant promised of God. For the book says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new."

The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 33).

The healing of a centurion's servant expounds the fact that God does not heal based upon blood lineage, but His mercy cuts across unto the Gentiles too, from the beginning of His work. For God says, "I will be merciful unto who I will show my mercy." (Ex. 33:19)

The story of the publican (Luke 18:13). The recognition of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2) and the great mercy shown to the condemned thief on the cross establish the truth that our LORD Jesus Christ loved humanity and He demonstrated the love in every action He took during His earthly ministry. I shall be glad to add the cleansing of the Ten Lepers into the listed records of Christ's love for humanity. Verse 13 of the 17th chapter in the gospel of Luke says, "And they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master have mercy on us." Verse 14, "And when He saw them he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the Priests.

"And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed." Verse 15, "And one of them, when he saw that he was (cleansed, healed) turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God." Verse 16 says, "And fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks and he was a Samaritan." Emphasis on verse 17, "And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" Jesus in His humanity taught His hearers morals, how to be grateful unto somebody who helped you in your time of needs. He is "Jehovah Shammah," ever present at the time of need. In order not to limit the teaching of Christ to morals alone, He pronounced perfect and permanent healing upon the leper who was grateful. Verse 18 says, "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Verse 19 says, "And he said unto him. Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole," meaning that his faith had made him perfect and complete.

Certainly enough, the Gospel of Luke expounds Christ's humanity expressly, but he was the only evangelist who showed the other aspect of our LORD Jesus Christ exercising His spiritual man, more than any other Gospel writers. We see Christ praying. Jesus emphasized prayer during His earthly ministry. He prayed to the extent that one of His disciples said, "LORD, teach us how to pray," and He taught them. Jesus knew the importance of prayer in His public ministry and

more so, very expediently important to His divine assignment that His Father called Him to complete.

Basically to establish this Biblical fact, we see Jesus Christ praying at His baptism. The book of Luke chapter 3 verses 21 and 22 declares, “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.

“And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved son in thee I am well pleased.” Jesus taught His audience, I mean His hearers, the importance of prayer to their lives.

Jesus even prayed at His baptism; this action connotes a cogent admonition to all believers that Christians are supposed to pray fervently at all times. Anywhere, anytime. The prayer that is born of faith with Biblical fasting, a comprehensive study and understanding of the word of God based upon empirical and pragmatic application of the engrafted word of life, helped Jesus to successfully perform and complete His work. While He was the Son of man and the word of God on earth, Jesus was found of praying, He often pray alone and in public. Chapter 5 verse 16 says, “And he withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed.” In this “Spiritual Profession” there must be balance, spiritual leverage emanating from prayer power, gift, character and attitude. It is a wise saying that any minister called to this noble and glorious profession must know how to pray personally and in the public for a success in soul winning and evangelistic outreach of the ministry, in order to advance the kingdom of God by plundering hell and populating Heaven with prayer power propelled by effective evangelism.

Christ Jesus during His earthly ministry drew the power from heaven by prayer. Though He prayed openly and constantly, He loved talking to His Father privately. Evangelist Luke recorded a powerful scenario when Jesus Christ prayed alone in the wilderness, then miracle manifested even in the life of His enemies (the Pharisees). The Book says, “And He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.” Luke chapter 5, verse 17 says, “And it come to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the Law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea and Jerusalem: and the power of the LORD was present to heal them” (Luke 5:16, and 17).

In the same vein, we see Christ Jesus in action when He drove out those people who were buying and selling in the House of the LORD. Apostle Mark wrote: “And they came to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold dove. And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, It is written: my house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? But ye have made it a den of thieves” (Mark 11:15-17).

The event in Christ’s ministry fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah who prophesied before Christ was born of Mary. The Book says, “Even them will I

bring to my holy mountains, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.” We must remember that “Prophet Isaiah” came to prophesy about the coming Messiah. Immediately he heard God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit conversing (Isaiah 6:1-13). The heavens released him to go and tell the house of Israel about the coming Savior.

Jesus was a powerful house of prayer during His short and dynamic ministry on earth. He admonished the chosen disciples to pray without ceasing. What a powerful advice He gave them! He demonstrated by pragmatic teaching what He believed in and that was what he taught His hearers.

As a matter of fact, I personally love what Jesus did by prayer power. The Book says, “And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). Certainly enough, the wealthy word of God declares, “What is achieved by prayer must be maintained by prayer,” for prayer is the master key and our faith will open the treasure of heaven. Definitely we know that the family that prays together stays together.

Christ Jesus received the immeasurable power supply from heavens above by prayer during His baptism before the Baptism of fire of the Pentecost. He received directions from His Father through prayer; He did nothing of His accord except what the father instructed Him to do. He will first talk to His Father before He does anything. That was why He seriously warned the disciples before His ascension to heaven by Cloud Limousine back to the Father. He admonished, “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endured with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

“Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem” signifies that they should wait, and their waiting should be in one accord, praying all manners of prayers of power and authority for service. Precisely, He meant for them to be baptized by fire of the Holy Spirit and receive “Dunamis” or the ability of the third person in the Trinity, the activities of the fullness of Holy Ghost. Christ Jesus said it in a plain language prior to His ascension and Luke the physician recorded it as follows in the book of Acts chapter one, verses four to eight declaring, “And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the Promise of the Father.” That is to say, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost that we fulfill the “promised power” which God gave through Jesus to continue the work that the Lord began to do for three years. Jesus said further, “Which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, “but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5) When they therefore were come together, they asked Him, saying, LORD, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.” They were demanding a political power that will give them independence from the Roman Government that occupied Israel. Instead of a political power Christ promised the spiritual power first (the supernatural, and preternatural). The truth is that at His second coming He will install His spiritual and political governments. “And He said unto them it is not for you to know the times or the

seasons, which the father hath put in His own power, but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Christ’s statement established and sealed the Greatest Commandment of all ages (Acts 1:5-8).

Jesus Christ prayed constantly on the mountain during His earthly ministry. It was possible for Him and praying on the mountain was considered effective in that nobody will disturb you and that will give you total concentration. The warm weather in the east, to say the least, prompted Christ to seek a place where there will be cool air. As a matter of fact, my country, Nigeria, and most parts of the African nations, took a cue from what Jesus did on the mountain. They usually have their prayers on the mountains, especially the yearly prayer anniversaries, or periodical prayer conferences. Luke 9:28-29 says:

The second person of the Trinity Jesus Christ of Nazareth the hope of realizing the Glory exemplified Himself through His prayer life. Nobody has ever prayed the way He prayed; His emphases were based upon prayer.

In fact, His life was full of prayer to the extent that He saturated Himself with prayer. By His Prayer Life He became the first person in the New Testaments who conquered Satan through fasting and prayer. (Matthew 17:21; Luke 22:43-46)

That is why the Book says in the Book of Luke chapter 11 verse one to ten: “And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, LORD (Boss), teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us, And lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil.” Verses five to eight illustrate figuratively and pragmatically the empirical approach to God in prayer. Verses nine and ten expound what the LORD’S Prayer is all about when the Holy Writ says in verse Nine: “And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shalt find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Verse ten is the answer to an effectual prayer of faith that says: “For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened (KJV). In the same vein in Luke 23:34, Christ Jesus prayed for His friends, not His friends alone, but He prayed for His enemy too. He taught and admonished His hearers, the disciples, to love and pray for their enemies (Matt. 5:31-48).

He did not say or teach it; he practiced whatever he said at the time of His earthly ministry. The Book says in Luke 22:31-32: “And the LORD said, Simon, Simon behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.” By my understanding of these verses, Christ Jesus prayed for Apostle Peter in that the devil desired to tempt and derail Peter’s faith. Why? If we look around the

verses before the emphatic word of our LORD Jesus concerning Peter, we would see that Jesus instituted the LORD'S SUPPER (22:19). He had given His disciple power and influence about the kingdom of God's principle, power and authority over the enemies. We must know this fact that Satan hates influence; he is an influence seeker and attention seeker (Isaiah 14:11-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-15). He detests what Christ gave to His disciples for Christ revealed the trick of Satan in that, he is a tempter. Verse 28 of the 22nd chapter of Luke says: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation." The LORD Jesus Christ pressed further and said in verse 29, "And I appoint unto you kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me," that is influence and authority to use the power of the kingdom of Heaven on earth which Satan detest.

More obviously stated, Christ said in verse 30, "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In the same vein when Apostle Peter responded to Christ's powerful question about who He was, in the book of Matthew 16:13-19, Peter answered by the Spirit of the LORD Almighty God. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." If we go deeper about the wordings and what Peter grasped about Jesus, we would discover that Christ in Greek word is called "Christos," which signifies the Messiah, the promised anointed King who conquered Satan who will deliver His people from the load, yokes and bondage of Satan (Isaiah 10:27, Matt 16:13-19).

Basically to interpret Chapter 22 of the book of Luke about influence given to the Apostles and better still, the believers as well, Christ Jesus in His response to Peter's divine knowledge about who He was is recorded in verses 18-19 as follows: "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Note that Christ said, "I will give you keys." Keys in that context stands for knowledge about how to use the word of God to make contact with heavenly portals and open any bloody doors of obstacles that Satan (diabolos) can put in the way of the Apostle Peter and other believers who recognize the identity and authority that Christ has over all things (Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:9-27; Ephesians 2:4-10 and Galatians 4:4-7).

I love this part: Christ Jesus demonstrated that powerful, fervent and effectual prayer of the believer availeth much. He showed us the stuff He was made of through prayer. He had defeated the devil in the garden of Gethsemane before He made an open show of them.

Hear what Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle to the Colossians in chapter 2 verses 13 to 15 which says, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

The above verses connote and expound the encounters of our LORD Jesus Christ twice with devil and he defeated him woefully. Let us examine Luke's account in Luke 22: 40-42. "And when He was at the place, he said unto them, pray that ye enter not into temptation.

"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast and kneeled down, and prayed. Saying, Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." Verse 44 shows how Christ prayed and the degree of His commitment to His Father through His prayer before He delivers humanity from the bondage of Satan. The Bible declares, "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

The event at the garden of Gethsemane confirmed that Christ empirically practiced what He taught His hearers during His earthly ministry. He was a powerful House of prayer; all believers in Him must emulate, cultivate His attitude to prayer.

Conclusively, the action of our LORD Jesus Christ on the cross was recorded by Luke and the rest of the evangelists. This singular occurrence showed us Christ's heart of forgiveness. He demonstrated the spirit of forgiveness. The Book says, "Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; For they know not what they do And they parted His raiment and cast lots."

Compassion was the basis for Jesus' miracles, and is the foundation of His love for His Father and humanity. He even prayed for the dying thief on the cross. The Bible says in the book of Luke chapter 23 verse 40, "But the other answering rebuked him saying, Dost not thou fear God seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds but this man hath done nothing amiss." Verse 42 says, "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 10:33, 15:20; Mark 1:41, 5:19 and 9:22). This is a great lesson in that Jesus laid a solid foundation of our salvation on compassion; in fact, compassion signifies a deeper love, a profound sympathy for your friends and enemies alike No wonder Apostle John said in his Gospel writing, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

In the same light of the scripture, the Book says in the Book of John 15 verses 9-14, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandment and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." We must love one another as Jesus loved us, we could see glaringly clear now that every Christian ethic and power manifestation of God hinged upon love.

As I believe that faith will work by love, I also hope that everything including spirit of prayer and manifestation will work by love, for God is love (I John 4:8-18).

CHAPTER EIGHT

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

Apostle John was said to have written this fourth Gospel by the early church tradition. Historically, Apostle John belonged to the “inner circle” of Jesus’ followers (Matt. 17:1; Mark 13:3). Down the memory lane it was said that Apostle John moved to Ephesus, probably during the Jewish war of A.D. 66-70 when he continued his ministry. Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons in the later part of the second century, stated that: “John the disciple of the LORD, who also leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence in Ephesus in Asia (against heresies) (John 3:11). Certainly enough, the Gospel of John among the four gospels stands in a class by itself.

Basically it portrays in a general outline the life and mission of Jesus Christ. It is quite different in structure and style from the other Gospels. Just as a coin has two sides—both of which are valid—so Jesus Christ too has two natures. He was fully man and fully God. He is the second person of the “Trinity.” He is the light of the world. He is the Lily of the Valley, the Rose of the Sharon; He is the Bread of Life, He is the Rock hewed out of the mountain. He is the Eternal Rock of Ages, and other grounds are sinking sands. He is the Light for those people who are in the darkness. He is the power for the feeble; He is all in all for us (Ephesians 3:20). He is the Manna; He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; He is the LORD of Lords. He is the King of Kings. He is the Lamb of God. Further, about the historical background of John the Apostle, he was the son of Zebedee and brother of James, also called a “Son of Thunder.”

The purpose is to prove conclusively that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life. To give this specific idea a Biblical footing, the apostle John said, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in the Book (the Book of many Books). But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and by believing ye might have life through him” (John 20:30-31).

Dr. Stan DeKoven said, “The fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, depicts Jesus as the son of God. This is every man’s Gospel. It was not written to any specific group as the other Gospels were, but is written primarily to the totality of mankind.” Another school of theological thought said that the Gospel was written to new Christians and searching non-Christians alike. He further expounds that John’s primary concern in his Gospel is the possession of a personal Savior. His purpose was to write this Gospel to inspire faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. In a broad sense, John wrote to provide the Christians of the province of Asia (now in Asia Minor) with a fuller understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He wrote the gospel specifically for them to imbibe the character of

Christ and His idiosyncratic mind, in order to demonstrate those virtues at all times.

The Gospel of Apostle John was by far the deepest and most spiritual book found in the Book of Many Books (the Bible). More so, no other Gospel has the depth and profound revelation of the deity of our LORD Jesus Christ. Apostle John explicitly presents the Gospel of Christ from the incarnation through the private ministry to the victory over death; we see the depletion of Christ as the perfect Son of God in total obedience to His Father. Christ, in his public preaching and teaching, referred to God as His Father. The Gospel of John chapter 14 verse 1, says, "In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Verse 12 says, "Verily, verily I say unto you. He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father."

Furthermore, Christ Jesus said in the 15th chapter of the Gospel of John verse one, "I AM the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." Evangelist John in a deeper revelation of Christ Himself expounds His claim as one with the Father when he, John, recorded Christ as referring to "I AM," spoken throughout this book. Chapter 10 verse 30 declares, "I and my Father are one." If we go deeper, Jesus introduced the concept of "Trilogy," which is the inseparable concept of God the Father in creation, God the Son in redemption, and God the Holy Spirit in regeneration with a profound emphasis on oneness of the "Trinity."

Vehemently, as I've said at the opening of this chapter, the purpose we should grasp and uphold are twofold. The first current of thought that flows throughout this book is an absolute faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth who is the second person of the "Trinity." The second current of thought is eternal life, through faith in the LORD Jesus Christ. The eternal life is for all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by faith. For the Bible says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). To put things in a better perspective, before we examine the truth that the Gospel of John has to offer, we must locate the time that the Gospel was written. As a matter of fact, the same tradition that locates John in Ephesus suggests that he wrote his Gospel in the latter part of the first century. In the absence of substantial evidence of the contrary, most scholars accept this tradition. Good enough, John and the synoptic Gospels have a unique style to offer. While John most likely knew of the other three Gospel accounts, he chose not to follow their chronological sequence of event as much as a topical order. In this case the gospel writer must have used common oral, literary traditions.

The broad outline is the same; and some particular event in Jesus' ministry are common to all four gospel books, in that the gospels were written at almost the same century, which signified that the writings were contemporary. As the truth about John's Gospel is presented, we see that it has some certain things which distinguished it from the three Gospels. Instead of the familiar parables,

John has lengthy discourses. In place of the many miracles and healings in the synopsis, John uses seven carefully picked miracles which serve as signs. The gospel of John is peculiar for it has the seven "I AM." The ministry of Jesus Christ revolves around three Passover feasts instead of the one cited in the synopsis.

The "I AM" saying is uniquely "Johannine," meaning John. The Apostle John present Jesus' relationship with His disciples as very intimate and personal, as Jesus as the Christ in personal relationships with His disciples in a way that all Christians hope to obtain.

Let me quickly insert an illustration at the junction, in any setting. Whether in political, social or religious organizations nowadays, it is the position and the physical outlook of the leader that will differentiate him as the leader. In that, the type of dress, the way he talks, the car he uses and the type of environment that he lives in will show that he is superior to his followers. The musicians in my country Nigeria, especially the way they dress, distinguished them from the rest of the group.

While on stage, the band boys will wear cheap dresses while the leader spots a nice and expensive dress. Glory be to God, Jesus was not like that. He was clothed and saturated with humility till He accomplished victory for humanity. No wonder the writer of Hebrews said, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

"But one in a certain place testified saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownest him with glory and honor and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he puts all in subjection under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him (Jesus)" (Hebrew 2:5-8). Verse 9 says, "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Verse 14 declares, "Forasmuch then as the children are partaker of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death," that is, the devil.

The writer of Hebrews further stated, "When he said, sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hardest pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:8-11 KJV). Apostle Paul in his powerful letter (epistle) to the Philippian church told the brethren, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross." Christ's humility produced a unique obedience to the will of His father "JEHOVAH" and He finished the salvation of humanity on the cross by his

death, burial, resurrection and ascension. No wonder the greatest Apostle advised all Christians when he said, “Look unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of your faith” (Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 12:2).

The book says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

“But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.” As a matter of fact, from the incarnation through the private ministry to the cross—where he gave victory to humanity by His death, burial, resurrection and ascension—we see the depletion of Christ as that perfect Son of God in total obedience to His Father Jehovah, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the Bishop of the Universe.

As a matter of fact, the word of God is against the proud person. Prophet Habakkuk said in his expository prophetic book chapter 2 verse 4, “Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him but the just shall live by faith.” “Diabolos,” the devil, who is the accuser of brethren, a slanderer, who by his proud look and mind wanted to be like God, when he was given the second position in the hierarch of the heavenly government, he wanted to embark on heavenly hegemony. He planned his onslaught but God dislodged and annihilated his mutinies. The book of Isaiah 14:11-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-15 expound his evil plans extensively. Then he was brought to nothingness. Why had God brought the devil to this destitute position where he is today? “He was brought low because of his pride,” the Bible says. “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness” (Ezekiel 28:17). Jesus came to destroy the works of devil, that is why the Book of Many Books says, “He that committeth sin is of devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3:8). “I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.” The book of Ephesians 4:12-13 says, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The meaning of these verses denote that Jesus came to give the saints the believer’s perfection in all aspects of their lives.

The book declares, “Till we all come into unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” To go deeper in the truth that these verses revealed progressively, it will be tantamount to the fact that we must all come to perfection in Christ and obtain the fullness of His personality, and character for character is everything. No wonder Apostle Paul wrote a powerful letter to the

Corinthian brethren and he said in the second epistle, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new).” In order to dissect the word *New*. It signifies something that never existed before, appearing for the first time, a thought developed, made, produced, manifested, and experienced or the first time (II Corinthians 5:17). Christ Jesus obeyed God the father and He became the Bishop of the whole universe, for God had placed everything under His control.

If we move further to verses 18-20, the Book of Many Books says, “And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are “ambassadors” for Christ as though God did beseech you by us. We pray that you in Christ’s stead be reconciled to God. Our obedience in Christ will enable us to obtain the ministry of reconciliation, and by His grace and his word we will reconcile the world to God through Christ impartations of His personality and ability to evangelize and bring the whole world to God the Father by plundering the kingdom of hell, and populating heaven by the power of the Holy Ghost.

In the same vein, the Old Testament, in jogging up the memory of the Hebrews, says, “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God to observe and to do all His commandments which I command you this day that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

“Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shalt be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.” To sum up the promises of blessings for obedience that runs from verses 1 to 14, definitely, there will be rewards for obedience, and punishment for disobedience (Deut. 28:1-14).

If the LORD God through the Law (Torah, and Decalogue) blessed those people that obeyed in the Old Testament time, I am absolutely positive that God will abundantly bless any one that surrenders his or her life to Christ. The proof and evidence could be inferred from the epistle of Apostle Paul to the Galatians. The greatest of all Apostles writes, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13- 14; Genesis 12:1-3). There is a very intimate and personal look at Jesus as the Christ in a personal relationship with His disciples in a way that all Christians hope to obtain.

First and foremost the word “intimacy” denotes the state or fact of being intimate, and the adjective “intimate” means pertaining to the innermost

character of a thing, fundamental, most private or personal (Into-me-see=intimacy).

If you study the gospel of John closely you will deduce the fact that the first inner circle of Christ Jesus among the Apostles were not novice or ignoramus people when it comes to knowledge of the “Mosaic law” that promised a Savior, deliverer for the Jews. The opening chapter of the gospel of John is impregnated with many revelatory words as per Jesus who is the word that made manifest, and His relationship intimately to the disciples first, and the world at large. Hear this, Evangelist John said, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was light of men.” Verse 4 says, “In him was life and the life was the light of men. Christ Jesus is the life of humanity; he is all in all for us.” Verse 5 says, “And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.” He is the light of the world; he showed His greatest light (“Shekinah”) in the wedding ceremony at Cana of Galilee to establish His office as the the Messiah of humanity. What happened at Cana of Galilee established the faith of the disciples in Jesus who was their master and the greatest “Rabbi,” in that He performed the miracle that has never occurred in the history of the Jews (I shall come to that later).

He is identified as the incarnated “word of God” with dynamic supernatural power and authority from Heaven above to back it up. The scenario convinced the disciples and as a result, an intimate relationship was established between him and His disciples throughout his earthly ministry because of the supernatural display of His power. If we examine verse 14, the beloved Apostle John who leaned upon the breast of our LORD Jesus Christ said, “And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth.”

The witnesses of the first Apostles who were John the Baptist’s disciples consolidate the fact that they were profoundly versed in the Old Testament exegesis of the scripture concerning Christ. Verse 35 says, “Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the lamb of God, and the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is interpreted as master), where dwellest thou?” (John 1:35-38). He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt and above with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. The action of the first recorded disciples depicted the unique love that they possessed, which Christ saw in them. They acted upon their love (“Agape”) and showed it to others. As the LORD our God was and still is compassionate unto us all, Philip and Andrew showed the love they felt for Christ to their brothers. They went and brought them to Jesus Christ who emphasized that they must demonstrate love to others, in a way that all Christians hope to obtain and show it to all races. In terms of faith, Christ was the most faithful of all. What does it mean? Christ Jesus was the first person that performed miracles

pragmatically, by using only the spoken word from the written word (Rhema and Logos).

First and foremost His temptation in the wilderness depicts Him as the Word of God when he began to release the spoken Word and the promises of the Lord God. He said, "It is written," which destroyed and demolished the power of Satan called the devil. Biblically, the scholars inferred that Jesus discovered himself as the "Word of God" when He began to study the Scripture diligently. From there He discovered the true knowledge about Himself as the Christ. He even advised His disciples to study and read the scripture.

That was why the Apostle Paul advised his son in the LORD Timothy to study diligently in order to show Himself approved unto the LORD (II Timothy 2:15). The term "Faith" has a profound meaning to the LORD, which He spoken about often during His public teaching and preaching.

Jesus demonstrated that He was a man of faith and that if one has faith, he can accomplish anything for God by faith (Jeremiah 32:27; Luke 18:27). I've mentioned earlier the event that occurred at Cana of Galilee when He commanded them to bring six waterpots of stone out after the manner of purging of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece and He turned it to wine, he electrified and facilitated the marriage better with wine, or that is to say, the best wine. Jesus is the best wine.

When we say that Christ Jesus was the most faithful of all who have come to this word, I will come to that. I was about to make a point of reference to what Andrew and Nathaniel did at the beginning of Christ's calling or forming His able disciples. The first called followers were Philip, Andrew, Nathaniel and Simon Peter. Andrew and Philip demonstrated agape love for others especially their brothers who were their neighbors. Permit me to explain what they did before I dissect the faithfulness of Jesus to the father and why? The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 1 verse 40 says, "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him (Jesus) was Andrew, Simon, Peter's brother."

Verse 41 says, "He first findeth his own brother Simon and saith, we have found the Messiah which is being interpreted, the Christ." (Note the disciples of John the Baptist were raised in the Mosaic Law, especially the Jews, and were expecting the deliverer called Christ anointed one who conquered the devil, death and sin and is the champion of all.)

Verse 42 says, "And brought him to Jesus, and when Jesus beheld him he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah: thou shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone."

Verse 44 says, "Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." Verse 45 declares, "Philip findeth Nathaniel and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and prophets did write Jesus of Nazareth the Son of Joseph." Their actions convey many meanings to me; it really blessed my spirit. It shows good discipleship and a profound relationship with their brothers and Christ himself.

Back to the point that I raised before, that Christ was the most faithful of all people that had ever lived on earth. Inferring to what occurred after His

discussion with the Woman of Samaria that boils down to tribal and religious is briefing and dialogue, the book expounds clearly what makes His faith strong and unique. Verse 31 of the 4th chapter says, "In the meanwhile His disciples prayed him saying, Master, eat. He responded with affirmative zeal, He said, I have meat that ye know not of." Verse 33 says, "Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him out to eat?" Verse 34, "Jesus said unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

The above statement gives us many conclusions as regards His being the faithful person to the Father. In plain meaning inferred from this figure of speech, it signifies that Jesus knows why He came to the world knowing full-well what He came to do. (Thomas Edison said, "Labor and courage are not enough without purpose and a direction.") That statement of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah about Him that says, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of Host will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7). If we study the Word "ZEAL" from the Greek context (Dictionary of Complete Old and New Words of the Bible) or (Vine) called "ZEAL" Zelos (2205) zeal in the following passages (John 2:17) with objective genitive zeal for thine house. So in the mind of the writer of Romans, chapter 10:2, a zeal for God signifies a fervent mind.

Strongly used toward Him, that is, to God, in fact, in some texts, the best have "ponos" labour (Note: Fervent). Christ was fervent in faith and exceptionally zealous for the Father and His work of soul winning through salvation.

Further as regards the faithfulness of Jesus the Holy Book says in John chapter 2 verse 14-17, "And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting.

"And when he had made a scourge of small cords he drove them all out of the temple and the sheep and the oxen and poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things; hence make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

Emphasis on verse 17 that fulfilled the prophecy and the Psalm that says, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Psalm 69:9).

Christ indeed was the most faithful of all when He said in the book of John 5 verse 30, "I can of mine own self do nothing as I hear, I judge and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will, but the will of he that which sent me." In Christ's faithfulness He ministered to His disciples though "Yeshua." Christos the Messiah had several heart-to-heart talks with His disciples and each time He used figures of speech, parables or satire. The disciples would come to Him secretly at His most convenient time and he would then explain the scriptural meaning of the parables and figures of speech to them.

Basically I will choose some occasions that Jesus in His faithfulness and tenacity of heart ministered to His disciples. The Book says as a subheading in the spirit-filled King James Version Bible, "Christ heals the blind man," as the

rendering goes in John, chapter 9 verses 1-7. “And as Jesus passed by he saw a man, which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”

“Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent me; while it is day the night cometh, when no man can work.

“As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

“And said unto Him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, sent). He went His way therefore, and washed and came seeing.”

Certainly enough, Jesus Christ ministered to His disciples first; He told the truth of the case to them on why the man was born blind. He had no cause to, I mean, there was no reason at all for Christ to explain the miraculous thing that occurred to the blind man to the Pharisees, but He took time out to tell the disciples first before it occurred. In His faithfulness He ministered to His disciples. The Book says in verse 23 of the 12th chapter, “And Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come, that the son of man should be glorified.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit.

“He that loveth his life in this world shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

“If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.” Further, Jesus said in verse 27, “Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.” Verse 28 says, “Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have glorified it, and will I glorify it again” (John 12:23-28). The above verses denote the fact that Christ Jesus showed His messianic authority to His dearest followers. Yahweh the Father answered the Son and glorified His Son again. Apparently, He showed them by action and word that He was the Messiah and the Father knew about it and even sent Him to die for the human race, and deliver them from destruction (Psalm 107:20).

Verse 30 expounds the truth of the case when the Bible says, “Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.” In Christ’s faithfulness He washed the disciples’ feet to teach leadership. Christ was so profound during His short stay on earth.

His wisdom was indescribable and inexplicable. He did not teach leadership while He was walking on water, raising the dead to life, opening the eyes of the blind and healing those that were tormented by evil spirits.

He ministered to them faithfully while washing their feet. He taught them the lesson that:

- (a) Whoever will be the first must first be the last.
- (b) He taught them humility and it is applicable to us today.
- (c) The way up is down except in well digging or grave digging.

When you are completely down to nothing you are up to something by God's power and grace. Chapter 13 verse 12 declares, "So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?"

"Ye call me Master and LORD and ye say well: for so I am. If I then, your Lord and master have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his LORD; neither he that is sent is greater than he that sent him" (John 13:12-16).

Christ in His faithfulness while He ministered to His disciples announced His departure. Verse 31 of the 13th chapter says, "Therefore, when He was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the son of man glorified and God is glorified in Him. He said in verse 33, little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me and I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come: so now I say to you." Emphasis on verse 34, "A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another: as I have loved you that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have loved one another." In His faithfulness He ministered to His disciples and told them about the convenience of His father's house in heaven where all believers hope and are destined to be.

When He said, "Let not your hearth be troubled: ye believed in God, believe also in me.

"In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (John 14:1-4).

Verse 12 says, too profoundly, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he, that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my father."

This is too good to be true. Christ said in verse 13, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do (not even shall) but," He emphasized on the verb (will I do), "that the father may be glorified in the son. Again," He said in verse 14 for the Apostles' sakes to be totally convinced, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

That sounds like an open check for them to write any figure that they required. In Christ's faithfulness, that is the grace that He gave to them. He ministered to His disciples and admonished them to love one and another. More so, He advised them to love Him and keep His commandments then He promised to send them the comforter (who is the third person in Trinity, the Holy Ghost). Verse 15 of the 14th chapter says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Verse 16, "And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter: that he may abide with you forever."

Verses 17-31 expound the sermon and admonition that Jesus gave to the disciples on the subject of Holy Ghost. They grasped the knowledge that Christ imparted unto them; hence they waited and prayed. The promise came on the day

of “Pentecost” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-3). In His faithful ministrations to His disciples He taught them the relationship of the believers to Himself when He said, “I (singular) am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except you abide in me. Jesus said, I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing.”

I would like to emphasize verse 7 of the 15th chapter, Christ said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Christ gave His disciples the authority of “Logos.” The written word that made manifest through the spoken form (John1:14), that is to say, if they abide first.

The word “abide” grammatically signifies to stand firm, remain, go on being in Him, in His commandments, then there will be reward from Heaven. The reward of miracles to their answered prayers made consistently in their ministration or undertakings. Christ ministered to His disciples from the tenacity of His soul when He said in verse 12 of the 15th chapter, “This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I’ve loved you.”

Verse 13, says, “Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Thereafter, He called them friends. He did not call them followers again. He gave them the condition and prerequisite to access this powerful possession that belongs to believers. The condition is their obedience: Perfect submission to the will of the father. Then they are qualified, in that the “IF” condition is delivered to them. Christ the Rock and the Messiah, the anointed one, by His anointing He cared for the needs of the people with compassion.

To approach this point, I know that the gift of life that Jesus gave to Lazarus exemplified Him as a life giver who cared for the people, even up to raising the dead to life. John chapter 11 verses 1-44 expound it all.

To be precise, I will pick some verses to buttress my point that Christ cared for people in His faithfulness to the father and humanity. Verses 1-3 of the 11th chapter declares, “Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

“It was that Mary who anointed the LORD with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore, his sister sent unto him saying, Lord behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

Take note of the phrase “a certain man was sick, named Lazarus.” This phrase connotes the truth that Lazarus was actively involved in Christ’s ministry. He might have even been one of those people that financed the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase “a certain man” distinguished Lazarus as a known person to Christ and His ministry. See the remark of his sister in verse 3,

“Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

Christ responded and said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

What I am driving at is as follows: Whatever a believer is going through, no matter what it is, God knows about it and will show His glory through it. Luke chapter 6 verse 38 says, “Give and the gift shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” Meaning that Christ responded to their call with a word of assurance, with the word of faith that comforted them. Furthermore, it shows that Christ appreciates Lazarus’ contributions to His ministry and Christ resolved to care for Lazarus’ need of healing. Sadly enough, the man died, but joy unlimited, the author of life was there at the time the family, friends, and the disciples needed to see Christ who is the resurrection and life in action. In verse 14, Jesus told the truth that Lazarus is dead and He is glad for the disciples because He wasn’t there. Why? For the disciples and the whole world of His time to see the display of His messiahship.

Mary and Martha exercised their faith in the future. They said, had Jesus there when their brother was at the point of death, He would have stopped death from taking the life of their brother Lazarus. But Jesus said unto them, “Thy brother shall rise again,” and Martha saith unto Him, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Christ showed her his messiahship, what He is, and said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me shall never die.” Believest thou this? Christ cared for the needs of the people. In fact, He wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus though He was fully man and fully God. Verses 34-36 established the truth when the Book says, “And said, Where have ye laid him (Lazarus). They said unto Him, LORD, come and see.” Verse 35 says, “Jesus wept.” Verse 36, “Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him.” You can see the conviction in their minds; even the Jews who detests Christ’s ministry said Jesus loved him because he wept for Lazarus. The above event consolidates the point raised that Christ Jesus cared for the need of the people. In His faithfulness He was willing to receive the poor and the outcasts. For example, He allowed Mary to touch him and anoint Him with an expensive ointment of “spikenard” which was very costly. Verse 9 of the 12th chapter declares, “Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.” Christ in His faithfulness submitted to death in order to show His obedience and submission to the father who in turn gave us life abundantly (John 10:10). The book says obviously in the book of Philippians chapter 2:5-11 when Apostle Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he

humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the LORD to the glory of God the father.” Jesus faced the cross faithfully, having a strong faith that His father will not let Him down. Chapter 16 verses 25-33 says, “These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the times cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the father for you. For the father himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.

“I came forth from the father, and am come into the world again; I leave the world and go to the father.” Verses 29-33 have these to say about His revelatory words, His boldness and courage in anticipating His death on the cross.

Very clearly He told His disciples then and the Book is telling us now in verses 29-31 which sums up the essence of Christ’s death and resurrection: “His disciples said unto him, Lo now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do you now believe.”

Verse 32 expounds the truth that the disciples will scatter as soon as he is arrested; by His crucifixion they will run for their lives.

The book says, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone because the father is with me.”

This verse 33 is an eternal promise that Christ gave before His death when He said, “These things I have spoken unto you (it means that it was not the first time He had manifested and shown Himself as the Messiah, Savior, and deliverer of the humanity) . . . that in me ye might have peace” (Isaiah 9:6) . . .”In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world” (it signifies “diabolos” or the devil and his cohorts). I love to address this, I mean, Christ triumphing over the devil, death, and all powers of darkness. Apostle Paul inferred when he wrote about Christ’s victory in the book of Colossians chapter 2 verses 12-15: “Buried with Him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead.” Verse 13, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Emphasis on verses 14 and 15, “Blotting out the handwritings of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

Verse 15 says, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly triumphing over them in it.”

Our Lord Jesus faced the cross victoriously believing that the father will never disappoint Him. He triumphed over it through the resurrection, and

ultimately His ascension to His throne at the right hand of the father confirmed that he came from the Father (“Yahovah”).

The second letter of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians would be appropriate to the above mentioned truth when chapter 2 verse 14 says, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the Savior of his knowledge by us in every place.”

Similarly, the book says in first Corinthians chapter 15 verse 53, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Verse 54 says, “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Verse 55 says, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?” Verses 56-57 expound the Biblical parallel of victory (triumph) that Christ’s death and resurrection stand for when apostle Paul wrote, “The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law.” Verse 57 says, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ.”

The Holy Writ says profound things about the victory of our LORD Jesus over death and His victory confirmed through His ascension to heaven and how He is sitting at the right hand of “Yahweh” soliciting and advocating for us (Romans 3:24; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; I Peter 3:22 and Revelation 5:1).

In terms of eternal life, Jesus was the incarnate word. To put the record straight, Evangelist John the Beloved was concise when he wrote, “But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” Full of grace and truth (John 1:13-14; Proverbs 8:22-31) Christ Jesus the anointed one, who by His anointing we find grace for grace, expounds the truth that Jesus was eternal from the beginning when Proverbs 8, verse 22 declares. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way before His works of old. Verse 23, “I was set up from everlasting, From the beginning, or ever the earth was.” Verse 24 declares, “When there were no depths, I was brought forth when there were no fountains abounding with water.” Verse 25, “Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.” Verse 26, “While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields nor the highest part of the dust of the world.” Verse 27, “When he prepared the heavens, I was there when He set a compass upon the face of the depth.” Verse 28, “When He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep.” Verse 30 reveals the truth that Jesus as the wisdom of God was talking through the wisest king, the preacher, the son of David, Solomon when the Bible says, “Then I was by Him, as one brought up with him and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” To buttress the above truth, the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he said, “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24, Rom. 8:28). Jesus admonished the Jews about His pre-existence when He said in John chapter 8 verses 51-58, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” Verse

52, “Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that thou hast a devil, Abraham is dead, and the prophets and thou sayest, if a man keep my saying he shall never taste of death.”

Verse 53, They asked, “Then said the Jews unto him, Art thou greater than our father Abraham which is dead? And the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?” Verse 54, “Jesus answered, if I honour myself, My honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me: of whom ye say, that he is your God.” Verse 55, “Yet ye have not known him: but I know him: and if I say I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him and keep his saying.” Verse 56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.” Verse 57, “Then said the Jews unto him, Thou are not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” Obviously, verse 58 sheds light on the fact raised above that Christ Jesus was eternal from the beginning, when He Himself affirmed it and the Holy Writ declares, “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am.”

- i. I am. I in singular signifies that God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are one and forever. That was why apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Jews. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever.”
- ii. “Apocalypse,” the Book of the Revelation of our LORD Jesus Christ, says in the very first chapter verse 8, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the LORD which is, and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.”
- iii. “Christos the Anointed One” was obedient to the point of death. He laid down His life for humanity based upon the agreement He had with His father in order to deliver humanity from the pangs of death and destruction. He was more than willing to empty Himself and lay down His divinity to take on humanity’ To forsake His pre-existence in heaven and become the lamb that was slain for the human race. Verse 31 of the 8th chapter of the book of Proverbs says, “Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delight were with the sons of men.”

He deliberately relinquished His divinity, He even said that, “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

John 10:15-18 says, “As the father knoweth me, even so know I the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.” Verse 16, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”

Verse 17, “Therefore doth my father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.” Verse 18, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” Verse 16 denotes the truth that the Gentiles too, those who are outside the “Abrahamic” covenant, will come

into Christianity, in which you and I have the golden opportunity of becoming Christians today. Jesus willingly emptied His divinity to take on humanity that He might experience the totality of that humanity, that He might be able to present to all people the opportunity to taste of the eternal life that He has always had with his father. Apostle John expounds it clearly in the above verses written above (Hebrews 2:5-18, 3:1-18).

Chapter 4, verses 14-16 of the Book of Hebrews says, “seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heaven Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Verse 15, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Verse 16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” As a matter of fact, Christ Jesus became the son of man so that all humanity will become children of God. The first Bible verse that I learned in my life when I began my primary school in Nigeria in the early sixties was John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Jesus came as the Great “I AM,” God in a human body bringing eternal life to all mankind.

Without any iota of doubt, and beyond every reasonable doubt, Christ was fully man and fully God, and is the great “I AM” according to the wisdom of God revealed through the wisest king Solomon in the book of Proverbs 8:22-31. We could see clearly that He had been the eternal one from the beginning. Further, any time God wants to show Himself to His creatures, He shows up as the great “I AM.”

Down the memory lane when God appeared to Moses at that time, God was now ready to use him. He introduced Himself as I AM, in that when the man Moses was ready to lead and serve God and God’s people at 40 years. God was not ready for him because the ministry of prophet Moses shows us the clear picture that God will spend much time in the foundation of anyone that He will use mightily for His own glory. The Book of Exodus records the movement of “Yahweh’s.” people in the 3rd chapter, verse 11, “And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” Verse 12, “And he said, Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee and that I brought for the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.” I love this verse. Moses was accurate when He said in verse 13, “And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them.

The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you and they shall say to me, What is his name. What shall I say unto them?” Verse 14 declares, “And God said unto Moses: I AM THAT I AM, and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, “I AM” hath sent me, unto you.”

First and foremost, theologically if I must theologize from the above statement of God, He manifested Himself in three “I AM’s.” Significantly, I AM stands for an eternal being who has no beginning. God is the ancient of days and

is an everlasting God; that was why the writer of the book of Hebrews in the 13th chapter of verse 8 says, “Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever.”

God said, “I AM THAT I AM.” That shall you say to the children of Israel. I AM hath sent me unto you.” The I AM stands for God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; hence the Trinity had been even from time immemorial.

In John’s Gospel, he presented Jesus Christ as the great I AM, having been the beloved who slept in the breast of our LORD Jesus Christ. This was the way He saw Christ in sevenfold witnesses.

Certainly enough, the outline of the Gospel of John about the Savior could be summarized as follows.

- a) Written generally to all mankind; notably the people of Judah’s day were much like the masses of today.
- b) The primary purpose and aim of the Gospel of St. John is that men might believe that Jesus is the “Christ” and be led to Him as Messiah (John 20:31).
- c) The exact key word of the gospel is “Believe.” It occurred 98 times.
- d) The prophets both minor and major prophesied that the Savior and Messiah would be fully man and fully God (Isaiah 9:6, 40:3-5, 47:4; Jeremiah 23:6).
- e) The picture in John’s Gospel which particularly portrays Jesus as the Son of God, i.e., Jesus having a discussion with the woman of Samaria, the healing of the nobleman’s son, Jesus and Nicodemus, the True Vine, the feeding of 5,000, the Great Physician, the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World, the Triumphant Entry, the Last Supper, and Jesus in Gethsemane.
- f) The Revelation of His Deity in John’s Gospel.
 - i. He speaks of God as “My Father” 35 times.
 - ii. He speaks with absolute authority. He says, “Verily, verily” 25 times in the Gospel of St. John.
 - iii. Christ has titles in the gospel that shows his deity. Only in the gospel of John is called “the Lamb of God,” and “the Word of God.”

God is called the Creator, and Jesus is called the only begotten of the father.

- g) He is revealed as the great “I AM.” Parallel to this see Exodus 3:14; it was revealed in sevenfold witnesses.
 - i. I AM the Bread of Life (6:35).
 - ii. I AM the Light of the world (8:12).
 - iii. Before Abraham was I AM (8:58).
 - iv. I AM the Good Shepherd (10:11).
 - v. I AM the Resurrection and the Life (11:25).
 - vi. I AM the Way, the Truth, and Life (14:6).
 - vii. I AM the True Vine (15:1).

h) The sevenfold affirmation of His Deity:

- i. John the Baptist: "This is the Son of God" (1:34).
- ii. Nathaniel: "Thou art the Son of God" (1:49).
- iii. Peter: "Thou art the Son of God" (1:49).
- iv. Peter: "Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Matt 16:16)
- v. Martha: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (11:27).
- vi. Thomas: "My Lord and my God" (20:28).
- vii. John: "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:31).
- viii. Christ Himself: "I am the Son of God" (10:36)

i) John is concerned with the possession of a personal Savior.

j) The outline of the book:

- i. The incarnation of God ("I came forth from the Father," 1:1-18)
- ii. The parable ministry ("And am come into the world," 1:19-12:50)
- iii. The private ministry ("Again I leave the world," chapter 13:19)
- iv. The victory over death ("Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascent unto my Father, and your father, and to my God and your God," 20: 17)

CHAPTER NINE

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

The book of Acts has a theological and Biblical name that expounds the works of the Holy Ghost in the ministry of the disciples. It could be renamed the Activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciples or the disciples ministries empowered by the activity of the Holy Ghost.

The book of Acts does not specifically mention its author but many indicators point to the physician Luke the Beloved physician. The book of Colossians 4:14 authenticates that the author was the same person as the one who wrote the third gospel (Luke 1:1-4). He was a close associate of Paul, as indicated in the “We” sections of the book.

The writer was a man of culture, as indicated by his literary style: He had a universal outlook and he revealed an interest in medical matters. In addition, church tradition uniformly declares that Luke was the author of Acts.

Therefore, the bulk of the evidences, both external and internal, supports the author. Taking a cue from the book of Dr. Stan DeKoven who said, “The book of Acts is typically known as the Acts of the Apostles but in reality it is the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. It shows the establishment of the church, as the Apostles and those that came to know Christ as Lord and Savior went about witnessing and fulfilling the great commission that Jesus gave in Matthew 28:18-20.”

This book was most probably written by Luke, the beloved physician, and is a sequel to the gospel of Luke. It presents the dynamic history and the development of the early church from the ascension of Christ to Paul’s imprisonment.

About the Date: Ascertaining the date that the book was written has to do with the style of the author; some schools of thought affirm that evangelist Luke tells the story of the early church within the framework of geographical, political, and historical details that could only fit in the first century. For example: Luke’s use of regional Roman governmental titles, which only someone living at the time could know precisely.

The opening of the book declares, “In the former account (which I prepared), O Theophilus, I made a continuous report dealing with all the things which Jesus began to do and to teach.

“Until the day when He ascended after Jesus, through the Holy Spirit had instructed and commanded the apostles (special messengers) whom He had chosen to stay together and pray together for the power of heaven to visit them” (Acts 1:1-2 Amp.).

Logically the Biblical scholars dated the book of Acts writing near the end of the apostles’ imprisonment there in about A.D. 62. In the beginning the church was established in the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a center of commerce and

religious activity for the children of Israel and Hebrew people. But after a period of time—primarily because of the lack of fulfillment of the mandate given by Jesus Himself to go to all the world and preach the Gospel—persecution began. It came to the church and eventually the center for religious life, centered in the cities of Antioch and Ephesus.

Apparently, persecution is synonymous to progress and promotion, though the church did not want to go out and win souls as Christ had instructed (Acts 1:1-8, Acts 1:15). When great persecution came to the church they were scattered to every part of the Bible world of that time. Certainly enough, the book of Acts provides the basic History of the spread of Christianity during the three decades immediately following the death and resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ.

The Book of Acts is a sequel to the life of Christ in the Gospels, and it records the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. As a matter of fact it was the mandate of Jesus Christ, the “Great commission,” to make disciples of all nations which are fulfilled in the Book of Acts. (Matt.28: 18-20).

The mighty power and the miracles of the Holy Spirit were evident in both Jerusalem, the cities of Antioch, Ephesus, and the Gentile nations, and eventually to the nations of the world.

Acts of the Apostles confirms the picture and what Jesus planned and ordained the church to be. If we examine the Book of Luke closely, we will see the truth of the matter which God the Father told His Son to impart and confer on His disciples and eventually the believers alike. Luke chapter 24 verse 49 says, “And, 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.”

When you see promise, you will see power; they go all together. In the same vein Christ Jesus said in the book of Acts 1 verse 4, “And while being in their company and eating at the table with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised, of which, He said, you have heard me speak” (John 14:16, 26,15:26).

In the book of Acts we see a church that is filled with power of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness in Jerusalem, and eventually moving to Judea, Samaria and to the very uttermost parts of the earth. Dynamically, a tremendous explosion of the church birth occurred during this time, with the primary characters found in the book of Acts being the Apostle Peter and later Saul of Tarsus who met with Christ. He was transformed into the greatest Apostle of all ages on his way going down to Samaria to persecute the church all the more.

The precise focus of the book of Acts is witnessing. For whom? For Christ. Acts chapter 1 verse 8 says, “But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the bounds) of the earth.”

The basic and primary purpose of the book of Acts is to show how the ascended, the risen Christ, continued to do His salvation, deliverance and conversion works through the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit for the establishment of the church of Christ on earth and the propagation of the power

of the “Resurrection” given to the Church and the believers. The terse analysis is shown below:

1. The progressive work of the Holy Ghost, which is the secondary purpose, is hinged upon the fact that he gives authoritative information concerning the historical activity of the leadership, and laymen of the early church as examples for us today to follow.
2. The word “Witness” is the key word in the Book of Acts, and is used over 30 times. The second powerful word is “Holy Spirit,” and is used about 70 times in Acts of the Apostles.
3. The characteristic feature of the Book of Acts is the recording of sermons and addresses, especially those of the apostles of Christ.
 - a. There are a total of twenty-four addresses or excerpts. Nine addresses purported to have been written by Apostle Peter, such that can be found in these chapters and verses. Acts 1:16-22, 2:14-36, 3:15-26, 4:8-12 and 29-32, 8:20-25, 10:34-43, 11:5-17, 15:7-11.
 - b. Nine addresses also were written by Apostle Paul such as Acts 13:16b-41, 14:15-17, 17:22b-31, 20:18b-35, 22:1-21, 24:10b-21, 26:2-23, 27:21-26, 28:17-20.

At this junction we must know the naked truth that the letters of Apostle Peter and Paul were the core and corpus of the New Testament Books which formed the nucleus of the New Testament Books.

The Apostle James too wrote in the Book of Acts; or to put the record straight, he contributed to the Biblical History of the Acts when he said in the 13th verse up to verse 21 of the 15th chapter:

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, hearken unto me. Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name (15:15b-21). And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written: ‘After this I will return and will build again tabernacle of David which is fallen down and I will build again the ruins therefore and I set it up.’”

He was quoting the prophecy of the Prophet Amos in the book of Amos 9:11.

The faithful Apostle Stephen became the first martyr in the early formation of the church in Jerusalem. His text was exegetically profound, crisp and direct to the point that the Jews could not hold their peace; they lost their sense of decency and justice when they took the laws into their hands and killed Stephen by stoning him to death (Acts 7:52).

Gamaliel, too, addressed the council of Pharisees. In fact, he was an eminent Pharisee that taught apostle Paul the “Mosaic law” and the Judaism religion (Acts 5:34, 22:1-3, 26:5 and 23:6). Hear what Apostle Paul said in the book of Acts chapter 22 verses 1-4. “Men, brethren, and Fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you. And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to

them, they kept the more silence and he saith, I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women.”

Demetrius addressed the people too. That is why the Book says in the book of Acts 19 verse 24, “For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana brought no small gain unto the craftsmen.” Emphasis on verse 27, the Holy Writ declares, “So that not this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised and her magnificence should be destroyed whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.”

It would be a noteworthy and imperatively important at this point in time to say that the evil spirit too gave its address when unprepared and unspiritual sons of Sceva went out to cast evil spirits out of the people that were possessed. The Scripture declares in Acts chapter 19 verses 13-16, “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits in the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? The man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.” They were beaten by the evil spirit because they did not know the LORD they made mention. If they had the full knowledge of Christ Jesus and Christ was in them (I John 4:4), the evil spirit would have recognized them and left (James 4:7, Colossians 1:27).

Festus: The Book says, “And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here crying that he ought not to live longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you and especially before thee, O King Agrippa that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him” (Acts 25:24-27). Festus too gave his address before King Agrippa during the trial of Apostle Paul. His trial then turned to be a profound, prolific evangelistic legacy for us Christians now, in that Apostle Paul wrote most of his powerful epistles while he was in prison. The system might try to imprison you but no power can imprison the power of the living God and those people who are in Him. Not everybody that is in prison can be imprisoned; those who are in sin today are in jail, For Jesus said, “Whoever you serve is your master.” In the same vein, Pilate too, during the trial of our LORD Jesus, said in the book of Luke chapter 23 verse 4, “Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.”

Likewise Festus declared during his address that he found nothing against the great Apostle Paul before he was catapulted to Rome. More so, in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts verses 35-40 explicate the address of the town clerk.

Beyond every imagination the book of Acts presents a graphic description of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If we go further deeper than survey, we could see that at the opening of the book itself the promise of God spoken by the mouth of our LORD of Lords and KING of Kings came to pass when the Apostles and believers gathered together in one accord.

The humility of Mary the blessed one and the mother of our LORD Jesus Christ ignites my passion for the spirit of humility when the Book declares in Acts Chapter 1 verses 13-14, "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew the son of Aphaeus and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James." Verse 14 declares, and that is where I drew my inspiration, "These all continued with one accord with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren. This is powerful, in that Jesus commanded them and His mother too complied with what He said. They waited for the promise hopefully and patiently. The book says, "All continued with one accord," meaning that Holy Ghost did not come immediately after the ascension of Jesus; they continued in one accord, laboring in fasting and prayer. They believed in high expectation. More so, the Scripture says, "in prayer and supplication." It means that they gave thanks for the expected baptism of the power of the Holy Spirit even before it occurred.

With the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren, my Biblical comprehension of the last part of this sentence extends to the border of the fact that James, Judas (that Jude who wrote the Book of Jude), Christ's other siblings, including their mother, believed Jesus for what He told them before His crucifixion, though Mother Mary endured the contradictions and injustice of realities they meted out to her Son Jesus during his earthly ministry. She is exempted from the groups of the unbelievers in her home. Suffice it to say that James, Jude (Judas) and the others did not believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be until He resurrected. As they say, your household will be the first set of people who will disprove your calling. "For a prophet will be without honor in his house or country." The book endorsed my claim when the Scripture says in Luke 4 verse 24, "And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country." The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and effusion of the spirit came when the believers stayed in one accord; they adhered to Christ's commandment and by their simplistic obedience to a divine instruction birthed a powerful conflagration of the power and authority of the fire of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 12:29).

We must come to the truth of the matter, for Christ expounds that His cousin John the Baptist baptized with water but the disciples shall (a dynamic verb) be baptized with the (one and the only one) Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, not many days hence. The inducement came as promised by him who baptizes with fire, Christ Jesus (Luke 24:44-49, Acts 2, 4:23-31, 8:14-17; 10:44-

48 and 19:1-6). I sincerely believe that the time and space will permit me to expound the divine mutation that occurred in the life of Apostle Peter. Prior to the day of Pentecost, Brother Peter had been an enigmatic disciple, very difficult, inquisitive, adamant, recalcitrant, and a position-seeking person, though he was bold and spiritually sensitive among the rest of the disciples. As soon as he was baptized he became the first person in history who preached one night and converted 3,000 people to Christianity. He based his text upon the exegesis, the profound, and prolific Book of Prophet Joel who prophesied the event that occurred that day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41; reference: Joel 2:28).

The second event that encouraged me to be a “glossolalist” was the incident that happened at the very gate that is called Beautiful. Listen to what the Book says in Acts 3:1-8: “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms of them who entered into the temple.

“Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked for alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.” I believe that the Book says, “He (God) gives strength to the feeble.” If we believe real good that this miracle happened, every aspect of our life that is dropping will listen to the word of God and harken to the name of Jesus and receive strength now in Jesus’ name.

Verse 8 says, “And he leaping up stood, and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping and praising God.”

Beyond every reasonable and imaginable doubts the Apostles were led by the power, guidance, authority and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, for the book says, “The anointing shall break the yokes” (Isaiah 10:27; Acts 8:29, 15:28, 16:6, 7).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, better still, the King James Version says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despised wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7). The parallel scripture in the book of Proverbs further declares, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

“For by me thy days shall be multiplied and the years of thy life shall be increased” (Proverbs 9:10-11).

Fear is the necessary article that will lead us to faith, and is the opposite side of faith. I am not talking about natural fear—“Phobos” or fright—but fear in its full concept. In the above passages, the preacher (Solomon), the son of David, meant a “holy fear” that birthed profound obedience and adherence in disciples’ heart. It could be said of all believers today.

Ananias and Sapphira lied unto the Holy Ghost because of their ignorant attitudes. The Holy Spirit could not be lied to. Had they heard Jesus Christ when

He said in the book of Matthew 12:32, “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in the world, neither in the world to come,” they wouldn’t have lied to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God, the third person in Trinity, and is the spirit that resurrected our LORD Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees sinned against the Holy Spirit by calling it “Beelzebub,” denying the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ by categorizing His working power as the power of the demon. In the same vein, Ananias and Sapphira kept back some money collected from the land they sold, conniving together against the Holy Ghost and were thus smitten by the wrath of the Holy Ghost. The instant judgment of death sentence pronounced on this couple by the power of the Holy Spirit from Apostle Peter’s mouth brought fear into the minds of the Apostles and the early church.

Immediately, the fear brought boldness and courage to the Apostle’s life for they believed strongly that the power given to them during the day of Pentecost was genuine, hence they went out boldly to witness for Christ.

And the book testifies to this when it says in the 12th verse of the 5th chapter of the Acts of the Apostle: “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch.” This incident teaches the fear of the LORD, obedience and faithfulness to God, and our commitment to him when it comes to God’s business. We have to be committed to our commitment in serving the LORD of Host.

Christ promised power and authority. In fact, power is called “dunamis,” from Greek word that is translated to dynamic, dynasty and dynamism.

Simplistically, authority is a delegated power based upon right. If this is so, Jesus did not establish a feeble Church. He established a powerful church without wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27).

This began from the time that He breathed the power of the Holy Spirit to them for a short preamble of the power and ability, up to the time that He promised power in the 24th chapter of Luke. Verse 49 says it all when Evangelist Luke recorded it, “And behold I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry (wait) ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

Christ Jesus in His last speech, I mean, His last sermon of encouragement to His disciples, said, “For John truly baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5). He promised immersion of the fire of the Holy Spirit, “For my LORD your God is a consuming fire” (Hebrew 12:29).

Elijah even said in his mission of fire against Baal’s prophets to show that “Yahweh is God,” “And call ye on the name of your gods,” and I will call on the name of the LORD and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken” (I Kings 18:24).

Our LORD God is a mighty one. God the son who came to earth as told in the volume of books as it is written of Him (“Logos”) who became flesh, affirmed the gifts, signs and wonder for His church (Ps. 40:7-8; John 1:14).

For the signs, or let us start from the gifts, the Psalmist was right when he saw glaringly and clearly into the future progressively. He spoke the heart of God out when the scripture declares, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them as in Sinai in the holy place.

“Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou has received gifts for men: yea for the rebellious also the LORD God might dwell among them” (Parallel scriptures Proverbs 8:22-32; Ephesians 4:5-11; Psalm 68:17-19).

The most appropriate text that best expounds what Jesus promised about (gifts, signs and wonder) is found in the book of Mark chapter 16 verse 15, which declares, “And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Verse 16 says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Emphasis on verse 17 that says, “And these signs will follow those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons: they will speak with new tongues.” If we closely examine the text, the book says, “And these signs will follow those who believe,” which signifies that signs and wonders will positively follow those who believe.

Jesus emphasized that in His name they will cast out demons. Simplistically, it means that the believers will go out in the name of Jesus and the power of heaven will help them because they believe in the name of Jesus which will perform the miracle (Philippians 2:10-11).

And the book says, “And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe and therefore speak” (2 Cor. 4:13).

In the same vein the scripture declares, “For the scripture says, Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame” (Romans 10:11). Christ Himself endorsed the believers, I mean the committed disciples, during His physical appearance on this planet earth. When He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father.” Faithful and trustworthy is the Father. What He promised through His Son, He will perform it by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a faithful word and dependable when the book says, “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (John 14:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:24 and Hebrews 10:23). These Bible verses expound the promise accurately (Acts 1:4, 2:23, 2:39, 7:17, 13:23, 23:21, 26:7).

When the promise came to pass in the day of Pentecost the Apostles and other believers who were with them received “power” (Acts 1:14, 2:1-47). The church received power, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and divine mutation occurred in the Household of God, the mystical body of Christ on earth. The Church became a confessing church (Acts 2:4). They began to witness for Christ (Acts 1:4-8).

- a) They were endorsed by the people who heard them speaking in other tongues (Acts 2:7).
- b) The timid and fearful Church changed; it became a dynamic and powerful Church. Apostle Peter became an energetic and powerful preacher; he used the Scripture accurately to the point that three thousand souls were added unto the church (Ekklesia) (Acts 2:37, Acts 4:4).
- c) The church became consistent after the baptism of the Holy Ghost, for the book says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
- d) The church became a sharing congregation, for the Bible declares, “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common” (2:44-45).
- e) The Church transformed to a contributing church, for the book says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:46).
- f) Faith is contagious, in fact, when the Holy Spirit filled the disciples and the believers who were with them, they were baptized by the power of the Holy Ghost and they became powerful witnesses for Christ as He had promised the church (Acts 1:5-8).

Conclusively, we must know the truth that the book of Acts is summarized by Acts 1:8. When the book says, “But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Analytically, the greatest Rabbi said the disciples shall receive power; that is, the Baptism of Holy Spirit, to be precise, the baptism of fire, because Jesus baptizes with fire of the Holy Spirit even till now (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:4-8).

Christ is the anointed one. By His anointing the disciples will receive His anointing “unction” and will be transformed into witnesses and they will witness with his anointing in Jerusalem (in their homes and cities), from there to Judea, adjacent villages and cities, to Samaria, an advancement of the Gospel to other countries, and unto the utter-most part of the world.

The Gospel that is sent to all nations of the universe is, in fact, the gospel of truth, that Jesus came to the world based upon the prophecy of God in Genesis 3:15 and by the fulfillment of the progressive prophecies of the minor and major prophets. Jesus is the ultimate truth that has ever happened to humanity, and truth is universal, parallel in all ages.

- a) Power for witnessing (1:1-2, 47)
- b) Witnessing in Jerusalem (city evangelism) (Acts 3:1-8:3)
- c) Witnessing in Judea and Samaria (Home mission) (Acts 8:4-12:25)
- d) Witnessing in the uttermost part of the earth (Foreign mission) (Acts 13-28)

CHAPTER TEN

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Preamble: After the four Gospels we see the activities of the spirit of God (Holy Ghost) in the life of the disciples and the true believers in Christ, and His word coming to life, in that, Christ's words are life and spirit because it sustains (John 6:63).

Biblically, the Acts and all the epistles (letters) were written by the spirit, though, the Book says, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

Why was the inspiration of the Scripture given, and what is the importance of the above written Biblical virtues? Verse 17 sheds the light and answers the question. "So that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Basically the book of Acts tells how the church began and fulfilled Christ's commission to spread the Gospel throughout the world. In the same vein, the epistles consist of the powerful writings of a former Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee whose monotheism, molten instinct and belief were broken by the almighty power of the blessed Savior on his way to Damascus where he met the risen one and only one Christ Jesus, the loving Redeemer.

In fact others contributed to the writings of the New Testament, and we know that the bulk of Apostle Paul's (Epistles) letters and that of Apostle Peter's formed the basis for the New Testament (Corpus) books, of the 27 books that we have as the blood-washed Holy Spirit—sanctified books of the New Testament. Apostles James, Jude and John too wrote letters among the New Testament Books.

About the author, we must be familiar with his background before we can enjoy the epistles (letters) written by this giant of a servant of God who changed Nations, people, kings, and humanity at large by his powerful letters which changed destinations to destiny.

Apostle Paul's (Pauline epistles) writing were profound and still fresh because we are preaching his sermons up to this present time and I believe that his writings would stand until eternity, and through eternity. I love this man of God for his revelation of Christ, His Highness, and His magistrate. Christ Jesus revealed himself to the Apostle and his life had never been the same until he transformed to the presence of Him who changed his life on the way going down to Damascus (Acts 9:1-17).

About the occasion and date: Apostle Paul wrote this epistle to the Roman as the Biblical scholars inferred in A.D. 56 while he was in Corinth taking a collection to help the needy Christians in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-28).

He planned to go to Jerusalem (15:22-24, 1:10 and 11) with the collection then visit the Church in Rome. The Apostle Paul had not yet been to Rome, but he had been preaching the Gospel since his conversion in A.D. 35.

During the previous ten years he had founded churches throughout the Mediterranean world. Now he was nearing the end of his third missionary journey. The epistle to the Romans is therefore a matured thesis of his understanding of the gospel rather than Judaism (an elaborate theological Epistle).

He wrote to tell the Romans of his impending visit. The letter was likely delivered by Phoebe (16:1, 2).

The Purpose of this Book: The theologians and Biblical scholars said that the epistle to the Romans is an elaborate Theology. If we examine closely and we go deeper we would see that the book is more than elaborate theology; it is a revelation of God which contains an orderly, logical development that is filled with the great themes of redemption, the guilt of all mankind, our inability to earn favor with God, the redeeming death of Christ, and the free gifts of God (Romans 11:29), the gift of salvation which is free to be received by the faithful alone.

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the church in Rome. This letter is broken down into two primary parts, the first being doctrinal, clarifying teaching on God's plan for humanity; going further beyond theology, it is a revelation of God's provision of salvation through faith (Romans 4:1-25, 5, 6, 7).

Pragmatically, the book detailed the life all Christians need to live regardless of cultural background and social orientation. As a matter of fact, this book is probably the most outstanding of Paul's writings in terms of doctrinal teaching found within the word of God.

Paul, with mastery and understanding of the scripture, presents a picture of our universal guilt and the sinful nature that we all have within us. The fact that all men must come to a personal relationship with God through His Son Christ Jesus is clearly and profoundly presented. For the Bible says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

More so, the book says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our LORD (Romans 3:23, 6:23).

Further Outline: Romans expounds the plan of salvation, the method being justification or righteousness by faith, which is universal for all mankind.

The gospel is for all nations; symbolically the life of Patriarch Abraham in his obedience and faithfulness to God began the blessings that came from a life of faith in God. Through him the Nations of the world were blessed (Genesis 12:1-4).

Almighty God is a covenant-making and covenant-fulfilling God, that is the reason why the Apostle Paul said, "Let all men be liars and God is faithful." Truly His word is "yea and Amen." The free gift of salvation is powerful enough to eliminate even the desire for continuation in sin. It depicts that there is a struggle for the mind where sinful tendencies due to the lust of the flesh occur.

There are three powerful sins that entice man to a complete life of sin and destruction.

- a) The lust of eyes
- b) The lust of flesh
- c) The pride of life

Glory be to the father of our LORD Jesus Christ who was and still is a giving God, who gave us Christ Jesus that died for our sins; through our faith, total submission and surrendering to His Lordship we have power to overcome sins, and live a life of victory over sin and devil.

The establishment of that wonderful divine plan is a new spiritual life of liberty. At one point in our lives we were enslaved to the law of sin, and death. That is the divine principle of cause and effect, but now alive in Christ, justified, made right by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That is the reason why the book says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new” (I Corinthians 5:17).

The great Apostle Paul said in the book of Hebrews 9:22, “And almost all things are by law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Gen 9:4-7; Rom 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7)

Simplistically, it is well said in the second epistle of Apostle Paul to the Corinthians when the scripture declares in verse seventeen of the 3rd chapter, “Now the Lord is that spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” The spirit of the Lord has given us liberty in Christ, hence we are completely born into the family of God, bought by the price that Christ paid on the cross and made perfect in Him at the time of our conversion to Him.

A primary theme in Romans is how faithfully following after the things of God will bring a restoration of Israel. It is a promise, not just for the nation of Israel but the mystical Israel which is the church (“Ekklesia”). The drawn-out ones, the body of Christ Jesus (the anointed one who defeated Satan).

The pragmatic aspect of the profound, prolific book of Romans which was written for an elaborate theological understanding by Apostle Paul who expounds the Christian duties (Acts 11:26), relationships to one another, civic and social duties, the duty of living life in peace and harmony with self, nature and our God. He expresses the great need for continual striving to fulfill the pattern of godly Living and serving God with all of our heart. For the sake of a systematic record of theological computation of the book of Romans, the Apostle extraordinary wrote to the believers or saints in Rome (1:7, 15). As a matter of fact, Romans expounds our justification in Christ in that Christ, the anointed one who died for us and paid the price (debt) for our sins by his death on the cross, liberated humanity from eternal death. Justification Biblically signifies the “acquittal” (an acquitting) or discharge by law, a setting free or being set free by judgment of the court. In the courtroom of heaven, God the father had pronounced us free from the bondage of sins and death in that His only begotten son Jesus died for us

already and resurrected for our sakes. To put the record straight, Jesus said in the book of John chapter 8 verse 32 declaring, “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” He further emphasized what He came to do for humanity and verse 36 has the fact when the Book of Many Books says, “If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” The Biblical parallel of these verses emanates from the pen of the beloved Apostle whom Christ loved, John. The epistle of John, the very first epistle chapter 3 verse 8 says, “He that committeth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose the son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

The Apostle further established the victory that Christ has given to them that believed in Him, when the book says in I John 5:4. “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Moreso, it is by faith that we believe that Christ had justified us by His death, burial and resurrection.” At large, the book of Romans is intended for all men (humanity) both Jews and Gentiles (References Romans 2:1, 3, 17, 11:13). We must know the fact that this epistle was written from Corinth about 58 A.D.

If we go deeper a bit, the notion/perception that Apostle Paul had in mind before he wrote this epistle, as evidently contained in his Roman epistle, was to educate the believers in Rome about the debt that Christ paid through His death and resurrection. The Apostle Paul presents the “glorious gospel” to them when he began from his understanding of Judaism that was the schoolmaster which brought Christianity to the limelight. He had no errors to correct or disorders to reform as in the other epistles.

To recapitulate the above-mentioned points as per the book of Romans, I believe that the general reasons for the epistle, however, seem to be categorized in three simple ways, i.e.,

- a) To teach the believers at Rome the foundational doctrine (Teaching) of salvation through and by only one person, Jesus, and to protect them against the error of the Judaizers (Romans chapter 1-8).
- b) He expounds the position of God regarding Israel in her unbelieving position (chapter 9-11).
- c) Imperatively to urge the Romans believers to enter fully into the principles and practices of daily Christian living.

In order to theologize at this very point, the theme of the book is hinged upon chapter 1 verses 16-17 says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

Verse 17 says, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Old Testament exegesis of the book of prophet Habakkuk says in the second chapter of verse 4, “Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

In a nutshell, the theme is brought forth as justification through the righteousness of God which is attainable by all who believe through faith in Christ Jesus only.

The fact that the Apostle Paul treated the major “doctrinal truth” in the book of Romans as justification and sanctification. They are two legal Biblical words found in the gospel which is powerful. It is important to all believers to know what the words stand for and connote.

- a) Justification in the Amplified Bible’s definition connotes the “imputing” to the believer, the act of being clothed with the righteousness of God, for in God through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have our standing, I mean, right standing in God. For theological and biblical computations, “The Righteousness of God” is emphasized about sixty-five times in the book.
- b) Sanctification is a legal word too. It is a progressive application of the righteousness of God to the experiential life of the believer. Theologically, it signifies the works of the Holy Spirit through the believers. Sanctity means saintliness or holiness, the fact of being sacred or inviolable.

Holiness theologically is the doctrine (teaching) of separation, believers, saints alike, separating themselves from the world and its lusts. Apostle James said in his epistle chapter 4 verse 4 declares, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

Conclusively, justification then refers to the believer’s standing and position before God, while sanctification deals with the daily living of God’s righteousness.

Theologically, the dichotomous approach to the book of Romans could be seen in two major divisions:

- a) The first half of the book of Romans deals with what God did for us. Simplistically it is called justification in Biblical terms. From chapter 1-8.
- b) The second half of Romans from chapter 9-16 deals with what we may do with God through our obedience to Him.

It could be called sanctification which instructs the believer how to wholeheartedly follow the living God. Sanctity is what God requires in that sanctification denotes holiness, and holiness is a doctrine of separation, meaning to separate, purify oneself for a living God and live a holy life. As a matter of fact, the latter half of the book admonishes the believer to have his life measure up to his belief.

The believer is saved to serve not to be selfish, and say “me” only. Thus the Christian life must be lived in its proper relation to God, self and others. We have to be magnanimous and share with others in Christ.

The Outline of the Book is deduced as follows:

- I. Doctrinal Development of what God did for us (chapter 1-8)
 - a) The necessity of Justification (1:1-3, 20)
 - b) The exposition of Justification (3:21-5:21)
 - c) The effects of justification (3:21, 5:21).
- II. The practical application of God’s work to daily living pragmatically could be deduced from the 9th chapter to the 16th chapter.
 - a) How to live a successful Christian life of a born-again child of the living God (chapter 9-11)
 - b) How to serve God could be found in chapter 12-16. God created us to serve Him. Our services to Him must be in form of worship.

Praise and worship are what God requires of us; the rest of the Christian virtues are for personal advantages to God’s children, i.e., faith, fasting, vigil, healing, blessing, power and eventually making heaven as our abode are personal gains that believers should crave for.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

Preamble: The genuine author of the book of I Corinthians has never been challenged. In style, language and profound theological exposition, it belongs to the greatest of the Apostles in all ages, the Apostle Paul. In order to Biblically theologize at this standpoint, I will sincerely submit the fact that both I and II books of Corinthians were written for a pastoral counseling basically to resolve doctrinal and practical problems within the local church. Apostle Paul's authority and authorship gives the letter an apostolic application to all the churches of God even in the present day (Corinthians 11:1-6).

The Author: Saul of Tarsus, who was formerly a Pharisee, and a son of a Pharisee who persecuted the church all the more, but met with the risen Christ on his way going down to Damascus (Acts 9:1-22).

By unmerited favor of the only begotten son of God, he met with grace and his life was changed; he became a new man in Christ, an apostle extraordinary to the Gentiles, he became apostle Paul according to his blood lineage, he came from the family of King Saul the Benjamite.

The Occasion and Date: Apostle Paul established the church at Corinth about A.D. 50-51, when he spent eighteen months there on his second missionary journey (Acts 19). He had received disturbing reports concerning moral laxity among believers in Corinth. To correct the situation, he sent the church a letter (I Corinthians 5:9-11).

Going down the memory lane some theological school of thoughts said that the letter he wrote was lost in transition. Shortly afterward, a delegation sent by Chloe, a member of the church in Corinth, reported to Paul concerning the existence of divisive factions in the church.

Before Apostle Paul could write a corrective letter, another delegation from Corinth arrived with a letter asking him certain questions (I Corinthians 7:1, 16:17).

To correct the aberration, Apostle Paul sent Pastor Timothy to Corinth to help correct the condition in the church then (I Corinthians 4:17). Apostle Paul then wrote the letter that we know as I Corinthians, expecting it to reach Corinth before Pastor Timothy could be there (I Corinthians 16:10). Since Apostle Paul wrote the letter near the end of Ephesians ministry (16:8), it may be dated about A.D. 56.

The Purpose—We must be abreast of the fact that the letter was a pastoral letter written to ameliorate and resolve doctrinal practical problems within the local church. It is applicable to today's problems that we have in the local churches, the body of Christ. The epistle deals with necessity of discipline to bring about Christian conduct and character in individuals' lives.

The church in Corinth was a powerful church, as apostle was powerful too in Christ himself. In his letter he dealt with some of the excesses and doctrinal problems as emphasized before in the above passages.

Apostle Paul first brings a picture of his own apostolic authority and ability to speak to the needs and the problems of ritual of that time. In fact, some Judaizers challenged his apostolic qualification; they reasoned that he, Apostle Paul, was inferior to Peter, James and John. That is to say that because he did not belong to the first called apostles, he was inferior to them.

They accused him of taking the gospel to the Gentiles in that they told the Christians to keep the law in conjunction with their faith in Christ, it was unbiblical and contrary to Apostolic teaching. The doctrine kills but the spirit makes alive (John 6:63; 2 Corin. 3:6-17).

Apostles focused on the truth of bringing cleansing to the church of social evils prevalent at that time of church age. This epistle is a pragmatic book which covers a wide variety of subjects which are still germane today; that means, the epistle is relevant to today's church issues. In fact, we preachers of today are still preaching Pauline Epistles that will stand till time, not time alone but through eternity—till we shall see the LORD.

Not every teaching of his can be applied because of the prevalent cultural leanings and background of that very time, but some are still relevant to today's problem in the Church.

As we shall see in the outline of the book, the divisions within the church are addressed and the disorders within the church about spiritual gifts, a sectarian spirit, incest, lawsuit formation, marriage and divorce, eating food offered to idols, wearing of the veil, the Lord's Supper, and the resurrection of the body. He also answered various questions that must have been posed to him prior to actually writing this letter back to the Church at Corinth.

In the second half of the book from chapter 12-16, Apostle Paul dealt with the regulations for corporate worship and various teachings on the resurrection of Christ and its importance in our life. The Apostle Paul, in much of his writings, could be characterized as very doctrinally oriented, but in this epistle to the Corinth, he primarily deals with the practices of truly living the Christian lives (Acts 11:26) based upon the plan of God.

God's intention is for all to be men and women of integrity, walking upright with one another. In so doing he is laying a strong foundation for the believers in the church in Corinth. We can learn much from Paul's writings in this First Book of Corinthians.

Firstly, I Corinthians was written by Apostle Paul in order to foster and impart discipline to the body of Christ then. Now the epistle is relevant in bringing sanity, discipline and uprightness to the body of Christ in this millennium church era.

The epistle is written to the saints at Corinth but intended for all men (humanity in general). The founding of the church in Corinth is described in Acts chapter 18. In late A.D. 52 Apostle Paul during his second missionary journey founded this church that was composed of Gentiles. In fact, Apostle Paul was

sent to the Gentiles too as well as sent to the Jews, but he was an apostle to the Gentiles.

As I've said the purpose or occasion for the epistle was the distressing problems within the church he founded at Corinth. Biblically, nobody has right to enforce his apostolic right on any church nowadays unless the church is founded by that person. Nobody can enforce his apostolic power or right on the church that God used me to establish. The biblical qualification stipulates that you have to establish a church before you can have an apostolic right on it. Apostles are the sent-out ones, or church planters (Ephesians 4:1-12).

He wrote to ameliorate as I've said these problems, i.e., division among brethren, condoning of immorality, their lawsuit against one another, the abuse of the Lord's supper and general disorder in their corporate worship. As have submitted earlier on, the purpose of Paul's epistle to the Corinth was twofold.

- a) To correct the disorders which had arisen within the Corinthian Church
- b) To answer the questions which had been submitted to him for his apostolic authorization

These problems within the Corinthian Church were due to three kinds of selfishness which had blinded them spiritually.

- a) Self-admiration—their intellect had deceived them
- b) Self-will—their conscience had dulled
- c) Self-indulgence—their passions had not been restrained

The greatest danger of the Corinthian Church was not from without but from within.

Apostle Paul began to address the issue when he said in chapter one verse ten: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10-16).

Verse 11 says, "For it hath been declared unto me or you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."

Verse 12, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ."

Verse 13, says, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Verse 14, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gainus."

Verse 15, "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name."

Verse 16, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas besides; I know not whether I baptized any other."

Verse 17, says, "For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." The first problem addressed as we could see in these texts (verses) is the

rivalry and strive that resulted over preference for religious leaders based on their assumed superior wisdom; probably most were claiming to be superior to Paul's party.

As a recipient of revelation, no one stood as close to the fountainhead of Christianity as Apostle Paul had. He expressed gratitude that he had baptized only a few, lest any one could claim baptism in the name of Paul and assume undue allegiance to him or privilege position before others.

The gospel has to do with Jesus Christ. One's allegiance belongs to Him and all positions are made available in Him, Christ Jesus our Lord.

The purpose of the 1st book (Epistle) to the Corinthians gives a pastoral counseling; hence, it is a pastoral letter written to resolve doctrinal and practical problems within the local church. Paul's authorship gives the letter near the tail end of his Ephesians ministry with his apostolic application to all the Churches of God (Chapter 11:16).

The background of the letter reveals some of the typical Greek cultural problems of Paul's day, including the gross sexual immorality of the city of Corinth. The Greeks were known for their idolatry, division philosophies, spirit of litigation and rejection of bodily resurrection.

Corinth was one of the most important commercial cities of the day and controlled much of the shipping between the East and the West. It was located on the narrow neck of the landbridge between the mainland of Greece and the Peloponnesian peninsula. The city is infamous for its sensuality and sacred prostitution. Even its name became a notorious proverb: "to Corinthianize" meant to practice prostitution.

The letter consists of Paul's response to ten separate problems. I want to submit the truth that no Epistle in the New Testament gives a clearer insight into the life of the first-century church than I Corinthians. In it Paul provides straightforward instructions for such moral and theological problems as sectarianism, spiritual immaturity, Church discipline, ethical differences, the role of the sexes and the proper use of spiritual gifts. Where these same problems exist in the modern-day Church, the remedies are the same.

Those from non-Pentecostal or non-Charismatic Churches may receive a fresh challenge from the vitality and spiritual gifts evident in the Corinthian Church and may lay aside traditional prejudices against such things. To go deeper in explanation, those from Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches, where worship is less structured and spiritual gifts are prominent, may re-examine their own practices in the light of Paul's guidelines for congregational services.

Down to heart, the letter contains an unmatched revelation of the cross of Christ as a counter to all human boasting (chapter 1-4). Apostle Paul cites Christ as our example in all behaviors (chapter 11:1) and describes the Church as His body (chapter 12). Especially important are the powerful consequences of Christ's resurrection for the whole of creation (chapter 15).

The pragmatic manifestations or the gifts of the spirit make up the best known passages about the Holy spirit (chapters 12-14). The role of the spirit is to

reveal things of God to human spirit in a way that prevents all ground for pride (chapter 2:1-13).

The name LORD is very prominent in this epistle (I Corinthians 1:31; 2:8-16; 3:20; 4:4; 5:4; 6:13). This is very significant since the trouble within the church was due to their failure to recognize Jesus Christ as LORD. Only as they crown Christ LORD of their lives will He bring order out of disorder.

The 1st book of Corinthians is intensely practical; the pragmatic and empirical aspect touches upon certain issues in depth more than other books, such as those of Christian liberty, marriage and divorce, the LORD's supper, the Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, women ministries, the meaning of Christian Love, the order for corporate worship and the resurrection from the dead.

Suffice it to say that the epistle of Apostle Paul to the Corinthian brethren has theological and Biblical relationship with other books such as:

- a) Romans—The Epistle, more than an elaborate theological tutorial, expounds Doctrinal preparation, establishes foundation of Christianity rooted and grounded upon the scripture. The Book of Romans set the Norm (standard) for Christ-like living and the faith of our father Abraham as he lived an exemplified life of faith worthy of our emulation.
- b) In placing the Epistle of the Corinthians side by side we could infer that the Apostle “Extraordinary” addressed the issue of discipline, wrong practice, exposes faults and shows sub-norm.
- c) Galatians was written to correct heretical believe in the midst of the Galatian Church and believers as well. We could say the Book of Galatians corrects the wrong doctrine and practices. It exposed faults in the Galatian Church then. If we apply the truth of the book of Galatians to the present day church issues, we will have the same result that occurred then during the time of Apostle Paul.

By way of conclusion and brief submission of the outline of the Book of I Corinthians, I would say that:

1. Discipline of Christian conduct (chapter 1:11). Chapter 13:11 says, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. When I became a man I put away childish things.”
 - a) Division within the church (chapter 1:1-4 and chapter 21). The body of Christ is supposed to be one body. In the writing of Apostle Paul himself in his epistle to the Corinthian church, chapter 12 verse 12, he says, “For as the body is one, and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many are one body so also is Christ.” For verse 13 declares, “For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all to drink into one spirit.”
 - b) Apostle Paul wrote to address disorder within the church. Chapter 5:1-6 expounds what Apostle Paul meant for the church for he admonished them

in these two chapters. Chapter 11:18-20 further addresses the issue of disorder in the church and instructs them about the Holy Communion (LORD'S Supper). The book says, "Now in giving you these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse." Verse 18, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you: and I partly believe it." Verse 19, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Verse 20 says, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the LORD'S Supper." As a matter of fact Apostle Paul admonished and corrected their behavior in the church. He imparted discipline into them by way of instruction.

- c) The book answers questions they posted to Apostle Paul. Chapter 5:1-10 and 33 expounds those answers that apostle Paul gave on many questions posted to him.

2. Part II of the epistle focused on instructions in Christian conduct, and is found in chapters 12-16.

- (a) For further explanation, chapter 11:1-14 and 1 Corin. 14:40 instructs the believers about regulation for corporate worship.
- (b) The most vital part of this epistle educates the believers and teaches us what we are supposed to know on the subject of Resurrection (chapter 15:1-58).

CHAPTER TWELVE

INTRODUCTION TO II CORINTHIANS

To be crisp and spicy the book of II Corinthians is a letter of comfort written to the church and is a sequel to the first epistle that came from the pen of Apostle Paul, the giant of an apostle.

In this letter, the Apostle Paul is writing for the purpose of laying the firm foundation in preparation to his actual coming to that church personally. He was a Pastor of many Pastors; he eventually writes direct from the heart of a Pastor, comforting the believers with the same comfort that he had been comforted by God.

The Apostle Paul had experienced great difficulties in his life since the time he abandoned his faith in Judaism and this religion was the schoolmaster that brought Christianity into the limelight. He was a Pharisee, the son of an eminent Pharisee who understands Judaism inside out; he was profound in the knowledge. The Pharisees, Scribes, the Sanhedrin and Sadducees gave him a hard time.

As a matter of fact, after his conversion on his way going to Damascus to persecute the church more than normal (Acts 9:1- 43), the Son of God, Yeshua the risen LORD, appeared unto him and he saw the risen LORD in His glory. The day he was translated to the third heavens, he was given a unique ministry (II Corinthians 12:1-10).

His latter days in ministry were used in relating this powerful experience that he had when he encountered the light of the word of God Himself (John 1:1-14). The Apostle Paul's life was never the same; until his death he began to preach the Gospel. Many people did not believe him, even the first called Apostles, until the LORD gave Barnabas the ministry of reconciliation who introduced apostle Paul to the brethren. He was then absolved of his past negative activities against the way of Christianity; he became one of them.

The Apostles even gathered together in prayer, and the Holy Spirit gave Saul and Barnabas their first missionary assignments. The book says in Acts 13:1-3, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers as Barnabas and Simon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

"As they ministered to the LORD and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

As God knew that He will use me in a unique way while I was drinking Larger Beer, likewise God knew He will use Saul of Tarsus mightily when Saul was converted to Christianity, and changed his name to Paul the Apostle from the Saul who persecuted the Church. In the book, the scripture says, I mean the son of God Himself, said, "Whatever man sow, so shall he reap." What Apostle Paul did to the body of Christ when he was an ardent Pharisee, he in turn reaped what

he sowed greatly. Apostle Paul was the only Apostle that faced untold hardship and persecution more than any other called Apostles in any other era.

Suffice it is to say that Apostle Paul had experienced great difficulties in his life and ministry in terms of opposition of the devil and devilish people that he really encountered when he began his ministry.

Apostle Paul said in the midst of all, God is able to comfort His people with His grace, mercy, love and kindness no matter what they encounter in this life. That is the reason why the Apostle Paul said, “And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you. For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:9).

Verse 7 expounds why Paul said that the grace of God was sufficient for him; the book declares, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelation, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet (give a blow or inflict) me, lest I be exalted above measure.” The Apostle used his life as an example for the Corinthian brethren that in spite of the fact that he had his weaknesses, God used him mightily to reveal things of the spirit as per the word of God.

Although he wrote letters that changed nations, nationalities, destiny, destinations and souls, he still had a thorn in his flesh. I believe the thorn might be his weakness or aspiration that was not fulfilled.

Throughout this book of II Corinthians you will see Paul talking about his ministry and his right to speak into their lives. He defended his apostolic right and calling. The book says in II Corinthians chapter 12 verses 11-12, “I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you. For in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

“Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” It is interesting to note that many people who consider themselves spiritual gurus will attempt to speak into the lives of the saints of God without earning that right and respect.

The Apostle Paul had the right to speak into the lives of these believers because he had paid the price to do so by his calling and commission he received from the author of life Himself. The apostle extraordinary had sacrificed his life on behalf of the sheep of Christ and therefore deserved that double portions of honor.

I believe sincerely in my heart that the revelation of Christ that he saw on his way to Damascus changed his life forever; he saw the resurrected, risen Christ in His full glory and he was transformed and he received extraordinary “unction” anointing with a special mission to the Gentiles.

Another important theme in this book is the need for Christian stewardship of caring for the needs of others, especially the poor. The greatest theme found in this book is God’s ability to comfort and also our responsibility as Christians to give comfort to one another, to give care for those who are hurting.

Experience is the best teacher, they say. Apostle Paul experienced hardship first-hand throughout his ministry; he faced challenges even from the hands of learned people who were the Pharisees. The Apostle of our faith, Jesus Christ, too came to the world to experience what we are going through and He tasted death for humanity so that He can deliver them. He did deliver us through the experience on the cross at Calvary when He defeated the devil and his cohort.

Apostle Paul himself wrote in most of his epistles, especially the one he addressed to the Hebrews, in chapter 12 verse 2 saying, “Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

In Hebrews Chapter 4 verse 14-15 he says, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heaven, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” Verse 15 says, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with feeling of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

We must remember that this epistle was written to the same circle of readers in the first epistle.

The purpose of this epistle is presented by Apostle Paul himself in the 13th chapter verse 10 of II Corinthians; the Book says, “Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness according to the power which the LORD hath given me to edification and not to destruction.”

He wrote this epistle in order to lay the preparatory groundwork necessary before his arrival in order to render him a recognized status in authority so as to minister edification to them. At this junction I shall buttress the point raised above as regarding what the Apostle said about edification not destruction; he wrote about edification as soon as he addressed the problem of confusion and jealousy that the spiritual gifts brought to this Church.

The apostle writes in the first epistle to the Corinthian Church chapter 14 verse 3: “But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort.”

The Book of Many Books is a book of prophecy, I mean progressive revelation—that means that the scripture is given by inspiration (God breathed) and significantly it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16). In the same vein, the purpose of the scripture, as even stated by apostle Paul is for edification that he mentioned in the second epistle chapter 13:10, is for exhortation and comfort.

That is why the scholars said that God will show the sign and symbol of what He will do before it happens typologically. The book of Isaiah says in chapter 40:1-2, “Comfort, yes, comfort my people, says your God, speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. For she has received from the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.”

Verse 3 says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Verse 4 says,

“Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth.”

Typologically, the prophet Isaiah was prophesying about the coming Messiah, that His forerunner will prepare the mind and souls of the people down before the advent of the Savior, and the Messiah will come with “unction” of gladness that we settle the issues that people might have.

Basically, when the Savior Jesus Christ was ready to start His ministry after He had defeated the devil in the wilderness by using the engrafted word of life to defeat him, Evangelist Luke recorded it and the Book says, “And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book. He found the place where it was written.

“The spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.

“To set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18-19). The blueprint prophecy was fulfilled in the life of our LORD Jesus Christ in that He came to comfort those who are mourning and are gravely brokenhearted.

In a nutshell, apostle Paul realized the grace that he got from his encounter with Christ. He was completely blind for three days; he received grace for grace and Jesus sent him out too to minister to the brokenhearted people, hence he wrote the book of II Corinthians to comfort the brethren at Corinth.

Before we go further, I want to mention the powerful and comforting word of apostle Paul to the church when the Book says, “I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

“For you know the grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that you through His poverty might become rich” (II Corinthians 8:8-9). These verses are profound in that the work of Christ was explained vividly. God gave Him in exchange for what humanity might suffer so that he will be the antidote to all negatives that the devil may bring along our ways.

The first epistle is essentially disciplinary and corrective; the second epistle proposes and aims to build up the body of Christ, however the apostle precisely was known as a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee who knew Mosaic Law, I mean, Judaism inside out (Acts 23:6).

He was a dangerous Pharisee, an ardent one who persecuted the body of Christ. Basically after Barnabas had introduced him to the brethren in Jerusalem and Antioch standing in-gap for him, he began his ministry, then he wrote again to the church at Corinth which he established.

After establishing his prerequisites and calling to the new faith, The Way, that he formerly persecuted, Apostle Paul was accused by his enemies who were of the Judaist party of lightness and indecision—purposing at one time to come and then changing his mind (II Corinthians 1:16-18) and in chapter 2, engendered them to charge him with pride (1:24, 3).

They suggested that he was deceitfully cunning in conduct (12:16). The truth of the matter is that people will form an opinion of you by their own standard, but the opinion of people is not your real self. Where you are does not change who you are.

They did to him as they exactly did to the master who called us to the ministry (Matthew 16:13-20). They called him names, i.e., Elijah, John the Baptist, one of the prophets and Beelzebub. That signifies that the opinion of people about you and me is wrong, in that apostle Paul was not what they called him.

In our ministerial duties people will call us names, but we must look unto the owner of the vineyard who called us to His service and stand firm to move forward, in that: "A standing position is a winning position by upward motion" (Exodus 14:13-18).

Apostle extraordinary intended to teach the doctrine of Christ; I mean he had earlier on said in his epistle to the Romans that: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of the LORD unto salvation," (Romans 1:16) in spite of the fact that they bluntly underestimated and doubted his apostleship and authority (12 & 11-12).

They even attacked his personal appearance as inconsistent with his teachings, forgetting that the book says, "A righteous person will have a heart like a lion." To take a cue from the counsel that God gave to Joshua when his master died, (Yahweh) said, "Be strong and very courageous." It was the secret that God (Elohim) in concept by Himself gave to Joshua, who brought God's people to the promised land by miraculous manifestation.

Apostle Paul knew this and reapplied it to his epistle. He was all that profoundly stylist. Paul was distinctive in writing and preaching. Therefore, most of his epistles (letters) attempts to establish Paul's apostolic character and authority in that God will never do encores. He will never duplicate anything, hence no other person can beat the apostle Paul; neither can another Joseph beat this Joseph, for the book says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully created in the likeness of God" (Psalm 139:14).

Importantly apostle Paul said that he became everything to everybody so that he can win souls for Christ. His second letter to the Corinthians relates more personal history in this epistle than in any other of his letters; he became an ardent historian. He is very concerned with the question of his glorying or boasting, presumably because the Judaist opponent of his raised the question. It is mentioned 311 times in this epistle that he retaliated by going down the memory lane historically how he met with Christ's favor when he escaped from Damascus in a basket (11:32-33). We must remember that his ministry began on his way going down to Damascus (Acts 9:1-20).

Paul related his unique experience of conversion to the Judaizers who queried his apostolic qualification. As a matter of fact, "If God hired you, nobody can fire you." From the dawn of history of God's calling, He had never called anybody to be a witness to anybody's call to ministry. (If God called you to go over you can never go under.)

In Christendom today those old and insecure pastors do query the calling of young and dynamic pastors. They thought that they are the only persons who could sanction the young pastors' calling. Instead of them giving encouragement, with vendetta they criticize the young ones in an attempt to destroy the glorious calling that God called them to; I have been a victim too.

They did not have the right to query his apostolic right and qualification, but such was the case. Then he further buttressed his claim by relating what happened to him the day he met with the risen Christ (12:1-4; Acts 9:1-19).

He told them in a plain language about his thorn in the flesh (12:7). Everybody has a thorn or thorns, in that thorns denote problems, troubles and crosses in one's life. Without one you are an ordinary person because the thorn will not allow you to lose your edge. It is the motivator that will help you to reach the stage or standard that God set for you.

What God told apostle Paul is what He is telling everybody who is laboring in the vineyard of God that: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

The thorn in the flesh were the rejections that Paul faced, as well as non-inclusion to the first circle of the apostles who were illiterates but saw Christ firsthand. His past racked up the role that he played against the Apostles and believers as well, which helped him to be a "unique weapon" in the hands of God, for all these shortcomings resulted to a special kind of anointing in his life to the extent that he wrote 13 powerful epistles (11:23-27) as well as four pastoral epistles.

In recapitulation, the theme of the book is "comfort." The reason for declaring comfort to the brethren is the all-sufficiency of Christ through the bestowal of His grace on all believers in every walk of life.

- a) The Epistle begins with "comfort," i.e., the God of all comfort (1:3).
- b) The middle of the Epistle gives the reason for their "comfort":
 - i. The reason for comfort—having all-sufficiency in all things (9:8). Being content in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. The source of this "comfort"—"My grace is sufficient for thee" (12:9).
- c) The Epistle ends with "comfort"—be of good comfort. (13:11).

Besides the question of apostleship, the letter treats extensively the subject of liberal giving (chapter 8 and 9). Precisely, giving is the kingdom's principle for getting wealth and strict obedience to God's commandment (Deuteronomy 8:18, Luke 6:38). Apostle Paul teaches these principles:

- a) He admonished his hearers to give, even out of poverty. For Christ our LORD and personal Savior taught His hearers who care to listen to give to God, and people out of their hearts, for God doesn't see the way man sees. "God looks unto the heart while man looks unto the face (I Samuel 16:7).

- b) He advised believers to give not sparingly but generously (II Corinthians 8:9-14).
- c) He said we should give willingly, straight from our hearts, not money alone but whatever we laid down for God, whether our money or gifts or properties, we must give out willingly, for out of the abundant of thoughts, mouth speaketh. (8:3).
- d) Give proportionally. We have to teach our congregation not to strain themselves to give; they should give according to what they have in their disposals. More so, we must bless those who give generously and willingly as well as those people who give so little, even those who wanted to give and do not have because no condition is permanent in Christendom. He who has not today will have tomorrow. For the Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the thoughts that I have for you, the thoughts of God not of evil, to give you a hope and a future."
- e) We must give cheerfully (9:7) to God and to everybody; we must not give as if they forced or coerced us to give, but with tenacity of heart.

Outline of the book:

- i. Paul's ministry (chapter 1-7)
- ii. Christian stewardship (chapter 8-9)
- iii. Paul's Apostleship

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS

Preamble: Galatians is the only pastoral epistle that Paul specifically addressed to a group of churches. Galatia was not a city, but it was a region of Asia Minor which included many towns in that region. The name originated in the third century B.C. when a tribe of people from Gaul migrated to the area in the first century A.D. The term “Galatia” was used geographically to denote the north central region of Asia Minor where the tribe of Gaul had settled politically to designate the Roman province in south central of Asia Minor. Apostle Paul, the greatest and giant of them all, sent his letter to the churches in the province of Galatia, an area that included the towns like Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

The date of Galatians hinges upon the correlation of these chapters of the book of Galatians 2:1-10 and the Acts of the Apostle chapter 1 and Acts. 11:30, 15. Apostle Paul probably wrote the letter about A.D. 55 or 56 when he was in Macedonia or Corinth on his third missionary journey.

Indisputably, Apostle Paul wrote this letter to these Churches existing in that region of Asia Minor.

The purpose or reason for this letter denotes that Apostle Paul addresses the issues of legalism in the church. The theologians and Biblical scholars called this epistle the letter that addressed heretical belief between the church and among believers. Obviously the Judaizers taught that certain Old Testament laws were still bounding upon Christians. They reasoned that God’s promises extended only to Jews, and the Gentiles must be circumcised before they could fully experience salvation. The Judaizers did not deny that scriptural faith in Jesus was necessary, but insisted that it was inadequate. One must add to faith observance of the law.

They were wrong and heretical because Jesus was the end of the law. The “Decalogue” was given to the Israel until the arrival of Messiah in order for them to look up unto God to be upright until “Christos” will come, as soon as the son of God appeared. He fulfilled the laws. He was the only human Godhead who did not sin; hence He died for humanity’s sins so that we can become children of God.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). “Neither is there salvation IN ANY OTHER; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

The epistle to the church in Galatia was written by the Apostle Paul. It is not written to one specific church but to the various churches in the area of Galatia in Asia Minor. In some ways this book is known as the declaration of independence, not independence from God, but independence from legalistic church activity. It is a book whereby encouragement is given to walk in Christian liberty, which is the fulfillment of the law of love.

Galatians expounds the contrast between law and grace and what grace stands for. (God reaches at Christ's expense) of faith and works of the flesh and the power of the cross of Christ. Here the Apostle Paul explained the beauty of the cross, the importance of activating the grace in one's own life.

When we identify with the cross of Christ and allow the cross of Christ to be a focal point of our own lives, the Holy Spirit begins to transform us into the very image of Christ. We recognized the liberty that Christ has brought us unto Him. It gives us life, a life that is pleasing to God. Galatians chapter 5 verse 1 says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

We know that Galatians denotes Christians' liberty, written to the churches of Galatia, an area of Asia Minor. There are two theories as to where these churches may be. The North Galatians theory asserts that the churches of Galatians were in the area visited during Apostle Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 14) and revisited on the second journey (Acts. 16:1-5).

The Judaizers performed real damage that warranted the Apostle Paul to write the letter to them. They attained some appreciable measure of success in preventing the Church from experiencing a rapid and fast growth during the Biblical Evangelistic era. Their doctrines were heretical compared to the real doctrines and Gospel that the Apostle Paul preached. They emphasized the falsehood (fallacy) that one had to become a Jewish proselyte and be under the law to be saved. Apostle writes to reassert the glorious gospel of our LORD Jesus that Christian liberty is given on the ground of justification through faith.

The epistle shows that the believer is no longer under the law but is saved by faith alone. (Ephesians 2:8-10). To put the record straight from the pen of Apostle John the Evangelist who leaned on the chest of our LORD Jesus, "John bore witness of him, and cried saying, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me.

"And of his fullness have all we received and grace for grace." Emphasis on verse 17 that says, "For the Law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:15-17). If we could go deeper, the Apostle Paul too said in the book of Ephesians chapter 2 verses 4-9, "But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith he loved us.

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved). And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Suffice it to say that the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians addressed the issues of heretical doctrines that the Judaizers were carrying around to disqualify Paul. The theme of the book is obviously that of Christian liberty. The key verse is in chapter 5:1 in which I have stated above.

Though the letter has been designated as the Christian's declaration of independence, this "liberty" is a pot of lawlessness and is not shown to be

freedom from law. Rather liberty is freedom in law, that is to say that if you are in Christ you become a new creation; the old has passed away, behold everything becomes a new” (II Corinthians 5:17). The liberty that we have in law by grace that is given to us is the life that the father commanded His Son to release for humanity’s sake. For Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, to kill and to destroy, but I have come to give you life and life more abundantly” (John 10:10).

In order to understand this freedom in law that Apostle Paul wrote about, we have to comprehend what the author of life, the Lamb of God, the greatest Rabbi said himself (Immanuel, Christ Jesus). After He absolved the woman caught in adultery of the death sentence already passed on her by Mosaic Law—for we know that the law or letter kills, but the spirit, I mean the spirit gives life (II Corinthians 3:6)—he forged ahead and said in the 32nd and 35th of the 8th chapter, Book of John, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Verse 36 declares, “If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Christ was talking about the reason why He came to the sinful world at the very beginning of His public ministry. To further buttress the fact that Christ Jesus came to set us free from the laws and rituals of the old Testaments that were types and shadows, he said in the 63rd verse of chapter six of John’s Gospel: “It is the spirit that sustaineth, the flesh has got no gain; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life.” We give praises to God Almighty for having given us His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The concise verse evidently demonstrates the love that the Father has for humanity.

Theologically and Biblically the book of Galatians is a book of contrasts, how?

- a) Law shows us our need: Grace shows God’s provision for meeting that need. Law is of works, saying “do,” while Gratis is a free gift, saying “done.”
- b) The contrast of faith and work denotes that faith receives salvation by simply believing. Works receive salvation by striving to earn it.
- c) The contrast of the works of the flesh and the fruits of the spirit. The flesh naturally produces the works of the flesh. The fruit of the spirit must be cultivated and grown to maturation in the victory that God has provided for us in
- d) His Son, by the empowerment and inducement of the charismatic “unction” of the Holy Spirit.
- e) The contrast of the world and the cross. The worldly system is based upon selfishness. The cross system is based upon a selfless sacrifice.

The comparison of Galatians to the book of Romans.

- a) In the book of Romans we find our standing upon the solid faith in Christ, for Apostle Paul used the example of Abraham's faith to expound while we must approach God by faith.
- b) In the book of Galatians we take our stand. We are already mature in the LORD. Both books dealt extensively with the subject of justification by faith. However, in the book of Romans, Paul treats the subject systematically, while in Galatians he treats it polemically (defending it against error).

Outline of the book:

- a) Paul defends his Apostolic Authority (Personal defense) in chapter 1:2.
- b) Paul defends the gospel (doctrinal) in chapter 3:4. Paul defends the spirit-led life in chapter 5:6.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE LETTER OF APOSTLE PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

By the way of introduction this letter was written by the Apostle Paul (1:1). As a matter of fact he wrote it during his two-years imprisonment in Rome (about A.D. 60). Tychicus was the messenger who carried this letter to its destination. Profound examination of the book of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon seems to indicate that these letters were written at about the same time and place. Although Paul also served a prison term in Caesarea, it seems reasonable that his references in these letters are to his Roman imprisonment, where he was at liberty to preach the Gospel (Acts 28). However, he was imprisoned but the word of God was not.

The Ephesians epistle may have been a circular letter intended for a number of churches. In some of the old manuscripts the words “at Ephesus” are missing. Furthermore, there are no personal greeting, no reference to specific problems or situation in a local church, and the teaching seems to be from a broad perspective. It was likely that the church at Ephesus, where Paul ministered for over two years, was included in this letter. It is quite likely that this letter was intended for a large group of churches in the general geographical area of Ephesus.

In this epistle the word “Church” (Ekklesia) means the “Universal Church.” Paul speaks of the church as being established by God in His eternal purpose through redemption in Christ—the obedient son of His. The conduct of the believer stands in contrast to his former way of life—referring to his spiritual life as in the heavenly sphere “through the power of the Holy Spirit” (1:3, 20, 2:6, 3:10 and 6:12).

The Apostle Paul founded this church, the Ephesians Church; he used his apostolic authority over the only churches that he founded. During that time this church “Ekklesia” was powerful. Very powerful was the foundation of the church built solidly upon the sound revelatory word of God that Apostle Paul received from Jesus when he met Christ on his way going down to Damascus.

During his ministerial days, there were many converted Jews in the early churches who wanted to isolate themselves from Gentiles who were believers. Certainly enough, Apostle Peter too wanted to isolate himself from the Gentile believers, but Christ annihilated the spirit from him through the vision he saw (Acts 10:1-22). At a point Apostle Paul accused him of tribalism too, until God delivered him from that syndrome and saw the revelation from God that he should kill and eat the animals he saw in his dream (Acts 11:1-8).

The Apostle Paul saw that attitude as anathema (accursed) and is writing to express the wonderful unity of the church and how we have all been brought

together into a unity of the truth of our faith. In one and only one, Christ Jesus, the son of the most High God.

Taking a cue from his previous letter written to the Corinthian brethren chapter 12 verses 12-14 says, “For as the body is one, and hath many members all the members of that one body being many are one body; so also is Christ.”

Verse 13 says, “For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles whether we be bond or free and have been all made to drink into one spirit.” Verse 14, “For the body is not one member but many.” Verse 24 expounds the point raised that Christians mustn’t discriminate or isolate themselves from unbelievers in that we had been Gentiles before we found grace (charis) and favor from the LORD, remembering that the Father of Faith (Abraham) too was a Gentile before God commanded him to circumcise himself and He established his covenant with him (Genesis 17:1-27).

I Corinthians 12, verse 24 declares, “For our comely parts have no need but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor” (that part which lacked). The Apostle Paul in this epistle to the Ephesians described the Revelation of the mystery. He got the full scope of the revelatory knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ through the risen Christ, himself, the day he met Him on his way to Damascus.

Though he was not as dynamic in preaching as Apostle Peter was, the unique anointing that destroyed every yoke comes from his epistles. The New Testament church is still preaching the epistle of Apostle Paul even till the present moment. From the very beginning of time, from the foundation of the World, Christ, the Trinity, the Godhead had determined that the church would be birthed and is going to be a powerful and dynamic church.

To endorse the above raised point, the second person of the Trinity said it openly during His earthly ministry that He “will build.” He did not say “I may” or “I shall,” but said “I will build my church and the gate of (hades) hell will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:13-20).

The church is not an afterthought by God but His divine plan for the propagation of the (Glorious) Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Church in this context does not signify the blocks of building or big citadel; he does mean the body of believers. “Ekklesia” (drawn-out ones and holy and separated from the world), gathering and fellowshiping together in their worship to God Almighty

The book of Ephesians revealed the divine origin of the church (“Ekklesia”). The body of Christ, the full plan of the salvation (soteria) of God extended to humanity, the empirical, pragmatic application of such a great mysterious and divine plan of God for all mankind.

In the empirical and pragmatic aspect of church life, the Apostle Paul speaks of a need for unity, the importance of a consistent walk with the LORD Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus—God in flesh, the Apostle of our faith, the Bishop of the universe—is the life we must live and look forth unto. For Apostle Paul said, “Look unto Jesus, the author and the finishers of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

Apostle Paul emphasized and admonished the church to deal with our old nature (Adamic nature). For death came through one person (Adam) but grace

and truth, salvation and deliverance came from the “Logos” of God (christos), the Messiah, the anointed one (Christ Jesus of Nazareth). (Romans 5:12-16)

Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect, will of God.” In identifying with what Apostle Paul told the Roman brethren the epistle to the Ephesians too encourage believers to renewing our minds and putting on the new-self and walking in purity and light of God’s word in our homes and lives, not only in our homes alone. The epistle advised believers to dress up for war at all times; we must forsake our “comfort zone” and come to our “combat zone,” fighting a good fight of faith and having the victory from God, for the book says, “If God be for us who can be against us” (Romans 8:31).

This is one of the most powerful epistles among the one written by the giant of apostles. It has been called the Gospel of the Apostle Paul to the church, but he preached Jesus to them. The Apostle Paul prayed a profound prayer in the 3rd chapter starting from verse 14-20 which has become a model prayer in this New Testament Era. (Ephesians 3:14-20; James 5:13-18)

Conclusively as per the preamble to the book of Ephesians, a clear and comprehensive picture of God in believers and in the role of the church is powerfully portrayed for the church to occupy its rightful position that Christ ordained it to be (a dynamic church) in Acts 1:4-8.

Theologically the book of Ephesians could be called or designated as the BODY OF CHRIST.

- a) The epistle was written as an encyclical (papal letter to bishops) letter, intended for general circulation to all the churches in that region; it has no customary personal salutation of the Apostle Paul.
- b) Apostle Paul’s intentions are not focused on correcting errors as to further establish the truth of the word of God. He desired to strengthen their faith to give their faith life of the word of God (John 6:63) and encourage their hopes. Paul sums up this epistle and the importance of writing it, hinged upon the advice that he gave that all things are in Christ, that is, things in the heavens and the things upon the earth (1:9-10). The major emphasis is on the Body of Christ, the church which is ordained of God to carry out Christ’s program.
- c) The theme of the book is the unraveling of the mystery of the body of Christ, the “mystery” is that the Gentiles are to have an equal position with the Jews (Eph. 3:6). The church is not an organization but a dynamic organism, the body of Christ, of which Christ is the head. Every believer is a member of Christ’s body.
- d) Those books, Ephesians and Colossians, emphasize the truth of the church as the body of the “risen Christ” of which Christ is the head. The book of Colossians sets forth the dignity of our LORD Jesus Christ, with emphasis upon His headship, while Ephesians sets forth the sublimity of the church with emphasis upon the nature of the body. Also as to style,

Colossians is largely controversial while Ephesians is almost free from controversial elements.

- e) The content of Ephesians may be viewed with reference to three different postures.
 - i. Sitting = of the believers (chapter 1:2). The believers' position is vividly described as being seated with Christ in the heavenlies (2:6).
 - ii. Walking = (chapter 3-4). The believer is called on to walk in a manner fitting his calling (4:1).
 - iii. Standing (chapter 5:6). The believer's life is seen as a warfare in which he must stand against the wiles of the devil; a standing position is said to be a winning position (Exodus 14: 13-14) by an upward motion for our righteousness is in God (right standing).

Suffice it to say that the first half of the book of Ephesians from chapter 1-3 elaborately describes what are the blessings of the believer who is "in Christ" (Blessed in Christ) (1:3). Chose in Him (1:4). Adopted by Christ (1:5). Accepted in the beloved (1:6). Forgiven in Christ (1:7). Revealed His will in Himself (1:9). All things centered in Christ (1:10). An inheritance in Christ (1:11). Glorified in Christ (1:12-13). Have faith in Christ (1:15). Accepted in the beloved (1:6). Forgiven in Christ (1:17). Hope in Christ (1:18). Power in Christ (1:19-20). Quickened in Christ (2:5-6). Created in Christ (2:13). Growing in Christ (2:2). Built in Christ (2:22). Boldness through Christ.

Outline of the book:

- i. The believer's position (chapter 1-3)
- ii. The believer's conduct (Chapter 4-6)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

The preamble to the epistle of Apostle Paul to the Philippians: The epistle is classified as the fourth of Apostle Paul's prison letters written shortly after Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon (probably around A.D. 61).

The letter was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 59-61). The Biblical references to Caesar's household (4:22) and to the imperial guard (1:13) point to Rome as the origin of this letter. When the church in Philippi had known that Paul was imprisoned in Rome, they sent a gift to Paul through Epaphroditus (4:18).

Paul wished to thank the Philippians for their gift and he also took the opportunity to report on his own circumstances. He then encouraged the Philippians to stand firm in the LORD, to exhort them to humility and unity. He commended what pastor Timothy and Epaphroditus did for him in that they stood by him; they did not despise his chains.

Epaphroditus was sent by Apostle Paul who took the letter to the church in Philippi after he, Epaphroditus, recovered from his sickness. (2:25-29).

The letter to the Philippians, written to the church in Philippi and to be distributed to other churches, addresses the need for the church to rejoice even in the midst of difficulty. The believers nowadays do personify and ascribe to the 4th chapter of the 19th verse to themselves when praying for their need to be met. They will say that, "And my LORD shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

They did not understand that the Philippian church had made an exchange by biblical principle, by sending a gift to the Apostle Paul which was a good aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God (Philippians 4:18). Abraham made an exchange when he came back from the defeated "Chedorlaomer" and the kings who were with him (Genesis 14:17). And the king of Salem blessed him who was Melchizedek. This is a book of joy, and rejoicing which is the central theme, being the LORD Jesus Christ Himself the Bishop of the universe.

The book of Philippians is portraying Jesus as the source of spiritual life. He's the reason that we preach and proclaim the word! He is the highest motivation for every Christian to serve God with gladness of heart and profound humility (Philippians 2:5-11). He is the only perfect one and our example for living.

He is the totality of knowledge and our supreme prize that we are to seek after. When we consider His coming we rejoice with great joy. He has unlimited power and the ability to bring about divine supply, exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or can even think.

Christ will supply all things. We see it as a beautiful picture of the joy and zest for living, in that intimate relationship with our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ brings Joy to our lives (Nehemiah 8:10).

Theologically the book of Philippians designates rejoice. The epistle is written to the church at Philippi the first church which Paul founded in Europe. The establishment of the church is described in Acts chapter 16. Paul had come there in response to a vision and the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9).

The essence of the epistle was primarily to express his gratitude for a gift which the Philippian brethren had sent to him, and also to send them a fervent admonition, to be steadfast and humble in Christ for total breakthrough and all-round victory. I love the way Apostle Paul presents the humility of our LORD Jesus Christ, though Christ used meekness as his own disposition.

When the Book of Many Books says in Philippians. He began in verse 3 of the 2nd chapter when the Book says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory: but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others."

Emphasis on verse 5, "That let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Verse 6, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Verse 7, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Verse 8, "And being found in fashion as man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Let me pause a bit before I go further by my understanding of this analogy of the truth; the Apostle Paul was telling us that by Christ's volition, he did not equate himself with God though He had the right to do so, for He is the second person of the Trinity. In order to accomplish what the Father commanded him to do, he then made himself low, so that He could achieve that inestimable goal for humanity.

Verse 7 says, "He made himself of no reputation," meaning that he did not come to earth to make names for himself but to do the will of His Father the LORD GOD. There is always reward for obedience, for what Christ did, the father intentionally elevated His name more than everything and all things, no wonder when the book says even in Psalm before the advent of Savior. The Bible says that God exalted, raised, lifted his word (Logos) equivalent to the Son of God (Jesus) more than His name.

The letter of Apostle Paul to the Philippians brethren distinguishes itself as a letter of commendation having no notes of condemnation in it. In this manner it is essentially in contrast with the book of Galatians. It is a letter of thanksgiving to God, love for converts at Philippi and joy at their spiritual warfare that brought victory for them at the name of Christ Jesus.

An important feature in this book is its general absence of teaching (doctrinal discussions). This epistle is basically empirical, a pragmatic approach rather than doctrine (teaching). The only exception perhaps is the reference to Christ's humiliation and exaltation (2:5-11) which comes the closest to Paul's affirmation of Christ's deity.

This letter describes the joyous Christian life. Even in the Old Testament time the king's cup-bearer, I mean the man Nehemiah who said when they discovered the richness of the word of God that birthed the "pulpit Era" (water gate). The book says, "Then he said to them go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet and sent portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for today is holy unto our LORD; neither be ye sorrow for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:1-10).

We Christians must derive our joy from the real source which is God, no matter what we are going through in that the possibilities of the word of God will transcend our out of action to action. In fact, Apostle Paul's joy came not from his circumstances (he was then a prisoner) but from the LORD Himself as source. He is an all-sufficient, omniscient God.

The word "joy" or "rejoice" occurs sixteen times in this book. Here Apostle Paul is the rejoicing one in that he knew the person of Christ who called him. His knowledge of Christ was the revelation that he got when he encountered Jesus on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-28, II Corinthians 12:1-6). The key verse is 3:1.

"Yeshua," Christos," or Messiah is beautifully portrayed throughout this epistle in relation to His body. Apostle Paul, who lost everything in order to gain Christ's knowledge and personality, because he wasn't there when Jesus walked the roads of Palestine and taught them powerful message of repentance, mentioned Christ's name forty times in this epistle.

In reference to His body, He is presented in the following manner:

- a) Christ, the believer's life (chapter 1)
- b) Christ, the believer's example (chapter 2)
- c) Chapter 3 = Christ is the believer's hope
- d) Chapter 4 = Christ, the believer's strength

Outline of the book:

- i. Joy in living (chapter 1)
- ii. Joy in service (chapter 2)
- iii. Joy in fellowship (chapter 3)
- iiii. Joy in rewards (chapter 4)

In truth stand firm always because it is universal. Joy is a byproduct of the Holy Spirit, an experience that can be obtained from the Holy Spirit alone by knowing the Messiah well in the spirit. The letter closes with a final exhortation to remain truthful, for life could bring no problem which could not be overcome with help of Christ (Philippians 4:8-13).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

AN INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

The precise preamble of the book of Colossians presents our LORD Jesus Christ as all sufficient, Almighty everlasting God. This epistle was written to reinforce the concept that is presented in the book of Acts, in Him (Christ Jesus) we live, and move and have our being. It was powerful in that Jesus said He came to give us life, not just life but an abundant life (John 10:10). The epistle was written to the church in Colosse which was a city in the area of Asia Minor like Ephesus and Galatia too were located in the region. This Colossian church was thought to have been founded by Epaphras, one of the able followers of Apostle Paul in Christ. The Apostle Paul confronts doctrinal error to ensure that no philosophy of men or humanistic ideology influenced their walk with God.

The manifestation of miracles does not come from philosophy, psychology, sociology or biology; it comes from the proper declaration. Proclamation of the word of the Living God comes the powerful manifestation of incredible miracles in the gathering of believers. Apostle Paul in this epistle laid the solid foundation of Christ. His power, demonstrated by His death on the cross and His resurrection, liberates humanity from old (Adamic) life and eternal death.

He gives warning regarding worship of anything other than Christ himself as the head of the church and against becoming overly religious in daily activities. As is characteristic of most of Paul's writings, he deals with some very practical issues as well. This includes family life and how we are to operate within a local fellowship.

The need for us to be constantly in prayer for one another and remember to give and nurture the poor as Christ would have done is presented as a duty for all believers as an outgrowth of God's marvelous Grace imputed to humanity. No wonder that the Apostle Paul said, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you, the hope of realizing the glory" (Colossians 1:27).

The Apostle John, too, admonished the children of God as a parallel scripture to that of Apostle Paul when he said, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

The Epistle could be called "the All sufficiency of Christ." We must be abreast of the fact that Christ Jesus is sufficient for us. Christ is our grace, power, character, integrity and the life we live.

The Colossian epistle was written to a church which Paul had not yet visited (1:4, 7, 8, 2:1). The epistle implies that Epaphras had founded the Colossian church (1:7). Philemon's house provided a meeting place for the Colossian church. Their son, Archippus, mentioned in 4:17, was probably the resident pastor of this church.

Basically the purpose of this epistle was to combat heresies of Jewish exoticism which had made inroads into church of Colosse. The two chief heretical views Paul fights are these:

- a) Analytically, according to the exorcist of varying degrees, ranging from man to God, Christ was viewed as a superior being but not as God, the second person of the Trinity.
- b) There was proposed a false asceticism.

The Scripture's approach of Apostle Paul wasn't an indigent attack but rather to make an effect with presentation of counter truths. Here Apostle Paul carefully sets forth the supremacy of His redeemer who delivered him and used him mightily, above all principalities and powers (1:13-19) and the completeness of His redemption (1:20-21). He also shows that true spirituality is not asceticism but a positive new life in Christ, producing purity of thought and conducts.

Colossian epistle has a special christological character. It deals specifically with the person and work of Christ. It emphasizes Christ as the Head and to his headship and to His body. It serves to establish the majesty and glory of Christ.

The book is divided into two major parts or sections. The first half of the letter (chapter 1:2) pertains to doctrine while the second half deals with practical considerations. The practical portion is in many respects like a condensation of Ephesians. The doctrinal section sets forth the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. The practical section set forth a contrast of the old man (3:9) and the new man (3:10) in Christ.

Apostle Paul admonished the Colossians include those that were against philosophy, legalism, ritualism, enticing words and angel worship (2:4-21). They are to hold the Head (2:19), which means to have a true understanding of the glories of Christ.

Outline of the book:

- i. The Head of the body is Christ (chapter 1-2)
- ii. The Life of the Body is Christ (chapter 3-4)

The epistle ends with a mention of the rich collection of fellow workers in the Gospel with whom Paul had fellowship. Note the distinguishing peculiarities of each one.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

INTRODUCTION TO I THESSALONIANS

By the way of introduction the book of I Thessalonians is among the earliest of Paul's writings. It was written during Paul's year and a half of ministry in the city of Corinth. Probably in A.D. 51 while on his second missionary journey. From Philippi, Paul had gone onto Thessalonica, a seaport trade center. Here Paul ministered for three weeks in the Jewish synagogue, reasoning out of the scriptures (Old Testament) that Jesus was the Christ.

Some Jews and many Greek proselytes believed, but the opposition became so strong that Paul found it necessary to leave. Visiting Berea en route, he went on to Athens and Corinth (Acts 17).

The point is that the epistle was written by Apostle Paul on his second missionary journey. He received tremendous opposition to the planting of the church and ministry to the Greeks. Yet the power of the Holy Spirit was evident to bring about salvation in this community of Greek believers.

The primary themes of this book include commendations, personal reminiscences and counsel and exhortation on living the Christian life. Again, it is a very practical book that deals with issues of hope as one anticipates the second coming of the LORD Jesus Christ.

In this book we see the Apostle Paul giving great commendation to those that walk faithfully before the LORD. In view of the fact that Christ is coming again, we need to live a life of faithfulness before him and to occupy or live our lives in Him and fulfill our obligations until he comes.

In light of that, we need to live a life of purity since we do not know when he might return. Further, we are to live in hope, recognizing the second coming of Christ. We need to remain watchful in light of the fact that Christ is coming back again to gather the saints unto him (John 14:1-4).

It is our blessed hope that we have as Christians. No specific time frame is given by Paul predicting the coming of Christ. It is apparent throughout his writings that they had a sense He could come back in their time. It is interesting that every church age has had the same sense. Certainly Christ must come in our time; we hope as believers that Christ will come during our generation, but until that time, we must occupy, work and labor for the sake of the Gospel, the kingdom of God, until He comes.

Biblically and theologically this is an epistle that announces the coming of Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul presented the facts in this epistle as if Jesus will come during his time. Originally the epistle is written to the church at Thessalonica which was planted by the Apostle Paul in the course of his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-10).

Although Paul was evidently there only for one month the church was firmly established through the Apostle's sound Biblical teaching (it was called then scripture, not Bible in Bible time).

The Bible scholars believe that this is the first epistle written by the Apostle Paul. The aim of this letter is to correct some misunderstandings that the Thessalonians had regarding the return of our LORD Jesus Christ. Their misconceptions were basically two i.e.:

- a) They were in sorrow concerning their beloved who had died having become believers. They thought that these would have no part in Christ's second coming.
- b) Their concept of the immense and inevitable return of the Lord was profound. The LORD'S return had caused them to cease their work and sit idly for the return (4:11-18; 2 Thess. 3:6-10).

The response of Apostle Paul to these erroneous concepts were that the hope of the deceased believer was based on faith in Christ, His death and resurrection. For Christ said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Since Jesus Christ died for our sins and resurrected for our justification and sanctification, that signifies that if we die physically now and we believe in Christ we shall be raised up in the day of resurrection. Apostle Paul inferred that the believing dead will be resurrected and be the first to meet the LORD at His coming (4:13-18). Apostle Paul admonished and instructs them to go to work for others did not want to work, in that they believed that it was unnecessary to work when the end of the world was imminent. Apostle Paul used his wealth of the word of God and his office as an apostle to explain that anybody who was idle and did not work is not entitled to eat unless he or she works (4:13-18, 4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:10).

The major subject of this epistle is obvious, quite apparent, the LORD'S return, mentioned in every chapter of the book (1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:13-18, 5:2). Paul states that the second coming was to serve for comfort and encouragement, but not as an excuse for idleness or speculation about unknown times. The coming of the LORD is accompanied throughout the scriptures by command for godly living and so they are told to "watch" and be sober (5:6). The second coming of Christ is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament (a ratio of once every twenty verses).

The theme of the epistle in regards to the believer's walk in view of the coming of the LORD: Believers were well advised to keep on working worthy of God (2:12, 3:13, 4:1-7, 12:5-23). The content of the book strives therefore for the securing of purity of life and industry of service, more than just instruction in doctrine.

The frequent use of the name "LORD" for Jesus is distinguishing here. The title is used twenty-five times in the book. Being Paul's first epistle, it was important to establish the LORDSHIP of Christ. Furthermore, the Lordship of Christ is clearly to be tied to the glorification due Him at His second coming, and thus is frequently mentioned here.

Outline of the book:

- i. Faithfulness in view of Christ's coming (chapter 1)
- ii. Service in view of Christ's coming (Chapter 2)
- iii. Purity in view of Christ's coming (Chapter 3)
- iv. Comfort in view of Christ's coming (chapter 4)

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

INTRODUCTION TO II THESSALONIANS

Shortly after Apostle Paul wrote the first letter to the Thessalonians, he then backed the first letter up by writing the second letter to clarify some misunderstood facts in the first epistle. The Apostle Paul expounds profoundly things concerning the day of the LORD, or the second coming. The apostle from Tarsus corrects the misunderstanding that many had that the second coming of Christ was imminent and guaranteed in their lifetime. Though their expectation of the LORD in their time is Biblical, when we say the coming of the LORD is imminent, that will create awareness and expectation in them for Christ Himself said nobody knows the time and season that the second coming will be. Even the angels didn't know; only His father knows (Matt. 24:36).

What Christ said in verse 36 is contrary to the word guaranteed in their lifetime. That was why apostle Paul wrote to correct the notion that only Jesus and the father knows when He is coming. He assisted them to understand that the timing of the man of lawlessness or man of sin, the man of eminent wickedness, would come before the second coming of Christ. He does not give any clear indication through his writings of when that actual time would be. He did a lay out even as Christ did in Matt. 24:1-39 and 25. Some of the general signs would be unrest, famine, wars and various events would occur, including apostasy, in the church (abandoning one's faith for something else).

Self-exaltation of the man of sin, even that; a satanic personage would arise that would ultimately be destroyed at the coming of Christ. He gives an appeal to all Christians to live according to sound scriptural doctrine.

In this letter we also see how the apostle Paul, in a very vulnerable manner, shares that we must live a life in positive response to one another. We are to patiently endure with each other, not allow busybodies and idle talk to go on, but respect one another, labor with one another for the sake of the kingdom of God.

The biblical name for the second epistle to the Thessalonians could be called Triumph in Tribulation. This epistle was probably written to Thessalonian brethren at Corinth soon after Paul wrote the first epistle. The report and response of the affairs at Thessalonica since the reception of the first epistle had come to Paul.

This second Epistle serves to correct misunderstanding concerning the day of the "LORD"—which the book says will be like a thief in the night. False teachers had led them heretically to believe that the great and dreadful "Day of the LORD" had already come. The believers at Thessalonica were suffering persecution which further distressed them with the thought that they were not passing through the great tribulation (1:4-7).

Paul shows that two specific events must take place before the "Day of the LORD" is ushered in.

- i. A great apostasy must set in of falling away from the faith, the faith of many people waxing cold.
- ii. The revelation of “man of lawlessness” or the “man of sin” (diabolos) instrument of which is the Antichrist. This Antichrist is a Greek word, meaning “man of eminent wickedness” (against Christ). The sin of man has its final fruition in the man of sin (2:1-17).

The tone of this epistle is more severe and official than the previous epistles. Here he must give more stern warning, including those against spurious epistles. Some forged letters and false verbal messages purported to be from him had helped to deceive the Thessalonians.

Paul takes this opportunity to encourage them in their tribulations especially in patience and trustfulness (1:4). He assures them that there will be a time of righteous judgments when wrongs are righted and vengeance will be meted out to all oppressors (1:5- 7). This epistle is applicable today; in fact, the words of our LORD God written by human secretary are now words of eternal value for all.

We must be fully aware that when we call problem normal, and believe that tribulation will become triumphs, failures will become success in that success is failure turn inside out. When we believe that God can turn mistakes to miracles, calamity into calmness, crises into courage, fear into faith, problem into promotion, scarcity into sanctification and abundance. Then, we are mature adults ready for the second coming of our LORD Jesus Christ which is called the great and dreadful “Day of the LORD”. They are further advised to take the delay of the LORD’S coming for opportunities of service for Him. He then discussed these opportunities in chapter (3:1-15).

Outline of the book:

- i. Tribulation and the LORD’S coming
- ii. The unconverted and the LORD’S coming (1:7-12)
- iii. The signs before the LORD’S coming (2:1-12)
- iv. Service and the LORD’S coming (2:13-3:18)

CHAPTER NINETEEN

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST BOOK OF TIMOTHY

This epistle is one of the pastoral epistles that apostle Paul wrote to his son in the Gospel, I mean personal pastoral epistle. Historically, on their very first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas preached in Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, and experienced success amid persecution.

It is likely that a Jewess named Lois and her daughter Eunice were converted to Christ during that ministry. Eunice was married to a Gentile, by whom she had an only child, Timothy, who later became Apostle Paul's child in the ministry. The fact is this, Timothy was instructed in Jewish religion but his father refused to allow his son to be circumcised.

From the beginning a close relationship developed between apostle Paul and Timothy. When apostle Paul came back on his second missionary journey he found Timothy worshipping in the local church and they gave good report about him. He, Paul, added him to his apostolic crew members and got him circumcised not because of legalism but to enhance their ministration to the Jewish people too, in that the apostle Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles.

There are several examples of father/son relationships within the word of God. The most supreme, of course, being that of Jesus and His father. We have also seen in the patriarchs how the father endeavored to pass on to the son that which was required of them for a successful living, for example we see how Jacob (Israel) loved Joseph, the son of his old age that came from the only woman he cherished labored for and loved (Rachael).

In this first epistle to Timothy and also in II Timothy we see how the apostle Paul is writing to give counsel and exhortation to his son in the LORD, who was a young pastor at the church. The letter jogged up the memory of the young pastor about the profound scriptural doctrine that Paul had taught him during their short stay together.

Apostle Paul warned Pastor Timothy to be careful for, and aware of, those that would try to undermine the church through legalistic teaching, the work that God had planted there. He is encouraging Timothy as a young man to fulfill the vision and the calling that God placed upon his life.

Apostle extraordinarily loved Pastor Timothy passionately; a sense of Paul's heart in terms of his love for Timothy can be found in this book. He advised Timothy to correct heresies and to raise up faithful men and faithful women who would be able to continue the ministry.

He focuses on the qualifications of Bishops (pastor of many pastors) and deacons as well, in terms of their spiritual maturity in a similar way that Jethro, the priest of Midian, did with Moses as father-in-law to son-in-law. Apostle Paul counsels Pastor Timothy in terms of his ministry of teaching and caring for the

sheep. The Bible scholars will say that Apostle Paul was a spiritual loving Father to the young Pastor Timothy faithfully.

In the 5th and 6th chapters we see the apostle Paul dealing again with very practical matters concerning the old and young, concerning widows, church elders and their rulers and that they must know what to do in the house of the LORD, regarding the duties of servants and how to deal with contentions in the church.

Apostle focuses on the peril of riches and the importance of duty in fighting the good fight of the faith. He gave a charge to Him to continue to faithfully fulfill the call that God has placed upon his life. It is a beautiful picture of a prefectural, almost doting, father who desperately loves and cares for his son Timothy, hoping to provide for Him the tools for a successful ministry. What a wonderful model for ministry training in the body of Christ! Today, it is worthy to emulate and pragmatically practice in the mystical body of Christ today.

The book of I Timothy is biblically and theologically called “Spiritual oversight.” This letter was written to Timothy, a native of Lystra, whose mother was a Jewess and whose father was a Greek. He was converted through Paul at the age of fifteen years on Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 16:1); seven years afterwards he became Paul’s companion.

This Epistle was occasioned by the fact that Paul had been suddenly called to Macedonia where he would be delayed. Timothy had been left in charge of the Ephesians church (1:3). The epistle was written to instruct Timothy concerning problems which he would face as a spiritual leader in the church. As a matter of fact, though the Bible is very old in writing, the message therein is, as always, new. A Pastor who wants to be successful in the ministry now must shun the love of money, lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life. The instruction is applicable to every young minister nowadays. What is good for the goose is equally good for a gander. The profound study of the I and II books of Timothy are important for every servant of God to do the principle highlighted in the book and to have success in ministry.

The purpose of the epistle then was twofold.

- i. To exhort Timothy to rectify the development of heresies. Timothy seems to have been timid and retiring by temperament (I Timothy 1:6-8).
- ii. To instruct him in the particulars of his duties as overseer and the function of others in the Ephesians church.

The theme of this epistle seems to be “Behavior in the household of God” (3:15). In this regard instructions are given concerning prayer and worship, the behavior that qualifies a man for spiritual leadership (chapter 2 and chapter 3). In chapter 4-6 instructions are given concerning spiritual duties.

The earlier epistles of Apostle Paul laid the foundation for the church. The qualifications for these officers are set forth in 3:1-13. Practical advice is given in chapters 4-6 for governing the flock of God.

- i. They are to avoid all kinds of heresies and watch their own conduct (4:1-10).
- ii. They must give time to study (4:11-16).
- iii. They must exercise discretionary caution in dealing with various groups within the church (5:1-6, 10).

Paul emphasizes in this letter not so much about the teaching of sound doctrine, but rather the reasons for the imperative need of sound doctrine. He shows that the real end of all doctrine is love (1:5). The essentially differentiated sound doctrine from false doctrine.

Outline of the book:

- i. The need of sound Doctrine (chapter 1)
- ii. The nature of prayer (chapter 2:1-8)
- iii. The necessary qualification for spiritual overseer/overseers
- iv. The nurturing of spiritual duties (chapter 4-6)

CHAPTER TWENTY

INTRODUCTION TO II TIMOTHY

Certainly enough, the apostle Paul continues to instruct his son in the LORD, the young Pastor Timothy, in his ministerial duty or duties. He also has a special request for Timothy. Paul had a need that could freely ask of his son as spiritual father to Timothy. The request would have been considered virtually a command to young pastor Timothy to bring to Paul things that he could need for his comfort in the prison.

Apostle Paul said, “What can separate us from the love of Christ.” If Jesus suffered we must expect to suffer and endure suffering in any form for the sake of His kingdom and our Faith in Him that gives us the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). I believe that Paul wrote most of his epistles from the Roman’s Jail. At times when we feel lonely we are not alone. God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are with us. This was the time of Emperor Nero, who was a beast in human flesh; he hated the Christians because of his pride, for the Greek deify the Emperor as god.

Just like those kings who reigned during Moses and Christ’s time, they did not believe that another king can rise up and reign except their dynasty alone. When Nero encountered the first set of Christians and heard them talking about “YESHUA” then he started killing them out of fiery rage.

The church at Ephesus was the largest of all churches around; then, it began to decrease numerically, in that, those coward elders who were close to the pastor Timothy ran away when Nero began the killing of Christians.

Hence, Timothy too began to doubt whether he should continue in his faith, be apologetically resolute or run away and abandon his faith and the church. This letter was a personal pastoral letter from Paul’s heart. He is trying to strengthen Timothy who was frail, apparently timid, and young.

Apostle Paul was advising Timothy direct from the bottom of his heart not to be ashamed of his testimony and of presenting the Gospel of Jesus to those to whom he was called to minister to (preach to). In his second letter Apostle Paul expressed and demonstrated his “LOVE” for Timothy (AGAPE), his desire to see him become a strong spiritual soldier. He likened that to an athlete and a husbandman. As a spiritual athlete he must keep the rules of the game; as a husbandman of a vineyard he needs to expect fruits.

He wants him to keep in mind truths that have been taught to him (Timothy) by the Apostle Paul during his apostolic ministerial exercise that involved serious grooming of Timothy. He further counsels him against heresies and those that would try and bring legalism upon the church.

The glorious Gospel of Christ is different from the law of Moses. In fact, Jesus affirmed that the laws pointed to him. What we understand now is that the letter kills, while the spirit makes alive (John 6:63; II Corinthians 3:6; Luke

24:44-49). Christ Jesus confirmed the above quotation when he said in John 4:24, “God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” In the same vein the Bible says, “It is the spirit that quickeneth (make alive); the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).

Apostle Paul too said in the book of 2 Corinthian 3:17 that the LORD is the spirit. Where the spirit of the LORD is, there is liberty. Legalism is out of charismatic Christian setting and worship. Apostle assisted Timothy in dealing with things like strife and other difficulties that might rear its ugly head in the church. Vehemently apostle Paul addressed the issue of apostasy; this issue was prevalent among the Jews, even those ones who lived during the Old Testament times who saw the miraculous working wonder power of the living God.

From the dawn of Biblical time, I mean Era, up to this present time, “apostasy” is one of the easiest sin that a believer can commit. “Apostasy” simply means turning away or forsaking the faith you first embraced. He warned about social corruption that he believed would come, and Timothy’s need to fight against these spiritual vices through the power of prayer and the ministry of the word of God in earnest and profundity.

In the last segment of the epistle Paul gives a solemn charge to Timothy. Again he encourages him, exhorting him to be faithful in that good name is better than rubies; character is the principle thing and faithfulness to God, to the people that we serve, is the hallmark of a profound and successful ministry.

Since Paul was at the end of his road, it was evident that they will behead apostle Paul. He kept on writing powerful epistles which we are preaching today. The kingdom dynamics of the word of God says nobody can imprison the word of God; you cannot persecute what God allocates and protects. You did not have to be in prison before you can be imprisoned. The jail was the last place one can expect such powerful encouragement letter to come from; that shows us and teaches us an eternal lesson that Paul was the greatest Apostle who loved God, Christ and the Holy Ghost. By the empowerments of the Holy Ghost he fulfilled his call faithfully and kept his faith in God.

I love apostle Paul’s last farewell address to Timothy in chapter 4 verse 6-7. He says, “For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” That affirmed what he earlier on taught Timothy, when apostle Paul said in his first epistle to Timothy chapter 6:12, “Fight a good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life where unto thou art also called and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses”. A pastor must be a man of his word, you have to do what you preach too.

Importantly apostle Paul must have believed in Holy Spirit transferring of the anointing. He did that before, when he laid his hand upon Timothy and transferred the “unction anointing” on Timothy. Hence, like a natural father who wants to breathe his last breath on earth, he will purposely bless his children before he dies. Just like Jacob, the man Israel, did and blessed all his children

according to how they served their father and how each of them performed in life simplistically by being obedient to him.

Apostle Paul was expecting his son in the LORD to come and see him. He wanted so desperately to see his son for the last time before he dies. There is such a need in these days for that father/ son relationship within the body of Christ; the older men are to teach the younger men; the older women are to teach the younger women, passing on a rich spiritual heritage on to another.

This will ensure the development and the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ which is the responsibility of the mature servants of God in Christ. Sad enough, what we see nowadays in most leaders are insecurities, jealousy, envy, persecution, slandering, and mudslinging towards the young and gifted upcoming pastors by their elders who are supposed to nurture them until they mature as Apostle Paul did in the life of Timothy.

In fact, persecution brings promotion, and profound anointing to the younger pastors. Now, we are praying for the older ones who did not want the younger ones to fulfill their destiny to stop being bitter so that they can be better. For we young pastors found out the truth: that maturity does not come by age; it comes by responsibilities. They must be responsible. Loyalty is the biblical term for the second pastoral epistle of Apostle Paul to young pastor Timothy. This epistle was the last letter he wrote on earth before his martyrdom.

Apostle Paul was a prisoner of Roman government, though he was a Roman citizen. He was closely confirmed a security risk and confined to a dungeon waiting for execution time (4:6). Some Bible scholars said it was some day in May, A.D.68

According to tradition the apostle was led outside of Rome on the Ostian road and accorded the death of a Roman citizen, that of beheading.

The threefold Roman accusation leveled against the apostle were extraordinary and Christians of Nero's days were:

- a) Accused of atheism which rendered their persecution so Intense, for Roman citizens regarded their Emperors as gods and they worshipped them. Christians worship the unseen God, hence they called them atheists.
- b) Accused of hatred of human race, since they lived separately and different from the wickedness of other people.
- c) Accused of being law breakers, since they continued to serve and worship God when they were forbidden.
- d) Lied against by Nero when they wanted to remove him as emperor and he instructed his ally to put part of Rome ablaze, and the beast of a human being said Christians did it and they were penalized for what they did not do.

The purpose, aim, and reason of the epistle (theme) unite under the metaphor of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, a faithful servant. In fact, Paul said that nothing can separate him from the love of Christ; even then death could not for death will

catapult him before the LORD Jesus Christ (2:3). Death is a vehicle that will bring us to the reality of God when we see Him where He is. The conduct of this soldier is essentially to be one of loyalty under any circumstance.

This loyal soldier is further to an evidence conduct as exemplary in Christ (chapter 1): courage (chapter 2), steadfast (chapter 3), and fervent (chapter 4). Preach the word and be ready always to serve God.

This epistle combines with the book of II Peter and Jude warn against apostasy, which had already begun to be evidenced. The voices of such apostasy are clearly enumerated in (3:1-9).

This epistle is rich in its metaphors. Timothy is exhorted to be:

A courageous soldier (2:1-4, 4:7-8); a careful athlete (2:5, 4:7-8); a faithful farmer (2:6); a diligent workman (2:15); a clean vessel (2:50-21); a Gentile who became a servant of the LORD (2:24-26) and a trusted steward or trustee (4:8).

Apostle Paul himself, facing perilous times, instructs him that Timothy's knowledge of the word or God is what will sustain him in loyalty to God and others (3:14-17).

Timothy is warned against three things which can cause him to become disloyal as a good soldier of the Calvary. These are as follows:

- a) Love of self (3:2)
- b) Love of pleasure (3:4)
- c) Love of the world (4:10)

He warned him not to love money which is the mark of unfaithfulness to God and the root of every evil. (I Timothy 6:9-10)

Outline of the book:

- i. Loyalty to the LORD in spite of any suffering (chapter 1)
- ii. Loyalty to the LORD in Christian service (chapter 2)
- iii. Loyalty to the LORD in spite of APOSTASY
- iv. Loyalty to the LORD in spite of Desertion of others (4:6-22)

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS

To know me very well you have to know my background, where I came from, where I am now and where I am going to. This epistle to Titus is another personal pastoral letter to the man Titus. The giant of an Apostle wrote this letter himself. I love apostle Paul: He was too profound, articulate, and prolific when it comes to writing letters. Brother Titus was a Gentile of Gentiles who loved the apostle Paul dearly. He was a beloved friend and a helper of the apostle Paul. He was a companion and associate of Apostle Paul and Barnabas on their journey to Jerusalem. He proved himself to be a faithful and trustworthy person wherever he went on errands for the LORD under the apostle's leadership.

Titus was an unselfish man; apparently Paul had left him in Crete as the overseer of various churches and he was in Rome with apostle Paul during Paul's later imprisonment. He seems to have been more of a study man than Timothy and perhaps more mature than Timothy. The apostle Paul is writing to encourage him to go on to even further godliness.

Though there is a lack of doctrinal teaching in the book of Titus, there is an emphasis on purity of doctrine for good living. He also focuses on the ministerial duties of Titus as an overseer or bishop of the various churches in his domain (area). As such he encourages him to bring the church into proper order and discipline since the spirit of God will flow through proper order.

Secondly, to present sound doctrine, to respect those that are elderly, to teach and exhort young men and young women, to live a life of godliness. This is especially important than ungodliness, when you recognized that this is a church that did not have the foundational of spiritual teaching as the Hebrews had. It expresses the need for a solid foundation to be built for each believer.

The law and the prophets were not studied for the most part by those that were in the Greek and Roman churches. Therefore, there remained the tremendous need to lay that strong foundation.

Apostle Paul also urges Titus to fight heresies, especially the Gnostic teachings and Jewish legalism and finally expresses the blessed hope that we have because we are saved by the grace and the mercy of God.

To theologize and give a biblical name to the epistle of Paul to his beloved friend Titus who was the Bishop of Crete, I would say the epistle is simply known as "godliness." As a matter of fact, godliness with contentment is a great gain. The word contentment from Greek root word is called *autarkeia*, the satisfaction to be pleased with what you have at a given period that does not signify that you will not aspire for more.

This epistle is written to Titus, one of Apostle Paul's converts (1:4). As I said earlier on, Titus had accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem at the

conclusion of their missionary journey to Europe (Galatians 2:1-6). Titus was originally a Gentile and was not circumcised (Galatians 2:3).

Three things seem to have occasioned the writing of this epistle:

- a) The condition of God's Work in Crete. Brother Titus, who was the Bishop of Crete, had been saddled with responsibilities of ministering to the church on the island of Crete (1:5).
- b) Titus' need of instruction and encouragement. The going of Zenas and Apollos to the Island.

Apostle's aims and purpose of writing this letter is much like that in I Timothy and these bear a similar objective. They are twofold.

- a) To relate God's ideal for a local church, namely, orderly organization in government, emphasis was placed on soundness in faith, the word of God and practical works of ministry.
- b) To relate God's ideal for a Christian worker, namely, godliness of life, sound faith, and a sober disposition and chastened speech.
- c) The theme of the book is "the essential of godly conduct" by all who are believers. The key phrase of this epistle is "good works" (2:7, 14; 3:8, 14; 1:16; 3:5). The key passage in the book is in chapter 2:11-14.
- d) Here Titus, the Bishop of Crete, is charged to oppose false teachers. The heresies assailed in this epistle were of Jewish and not Gnostic origin. Many Jews resided on the island.
- e) The Cretians are not given a good character by the Apostle Paul. He quotes the words of one of their own poets and asserts that this testimony was true. The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies (1:12). They were noted as being a turbulent race, neither peaceable among themselves nor very patient to foreigners. Thus Paul knew that the charges concerning church order were vitally important and would be undoubtedly unwelcome even by most of the Cretian converts. Paul had entrusted Titus to a delicate mission. Whenever we are entrusted with mission that seems dangerous, we mustn't fear for we will be successful; we must obey for we shall meet God right there for His name is "JEHOVAH SHAMAH".
- f) Purposely, because of the turbulent temperament of the Cretians, Paul finished his epistle with giving a specific method of dealing with heresies, and heretical people (3:9-11). They are to be rebuked sharply and rejected if not brought to repentance after two admonitions. The guidelines are obviously still to be followed today for they are timeless and true.

Outline of the book:

- i. Instruction on an orderly church (chapter 1)

- ii. Instruction on a sound church (chapter 2)
- ii. Instruction on a practical church (chapter 3)

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON

Christianity is a unique religion that is different from any sects, any religion in the whole world; it is not an organization, but a divine organism formed by one and only one, Jesus Himself.

My assertion emanates from the power of Gospel, what the Gospel stands for, though Gospel is a “Good News” (tiding) (Luke 4:16-20). Far more than that from my understanding of the Gospel in relationship to Christianity, I believe it is an exchange that only God can do, and He did it all on the cross at Calvary (Golgotha) (John 3:16; Acts 11:26). Our Lord is a giving father, for He gives generously.

This is a letter of apostle Paul per Onesimus, in behalf of a runaway slave and thief. The apostle clearly uses the analogy of what Christ did for us; he bore all our sins and punishment, in the same vein apostle Paul presented himself as Onesimus, as the slave who stole the property of Philemon. In other words, he was saying that he took the position of Onesimus as the LORD JESUS did when he became the righteousness of God.

The short letter from the apostle Paul to Philemon, a resident of Colosse, is a rather private letter of intercession from Paul on behalf of Onesimus. For Christ to intercede for the humanity, the wealthy word of God says, “You must have a profound intimacy with God before you can be an intercessor.” When prophet Moses who gave us the (Torah) law saw the passing glory of God, he became a profound intercessor and did not remain the same until his death.

Onesimus was a runaway slave of Philemon, and in this letter the apostle Paul is pleading his case to Philemon to receive back Onesimus. Christ is our mediator. He, sitting down at the right hand of God, is advocating and soliciting for us. If you have no lawyer pleading your case, just allow the King of Kings to plead for you and you will be a winner always (Hebrew 12:1-2; I John 2:1).

Though a runaway thief, he has become a devoted disciple of Christ and a very close and masterful helper for the apostle Paul.

God is not a God of second chance; He is always merciful and forgiving many of us. Before we became stable we had many chances that we lost just like the prodigal son who took all his inheritance and squandered it. He came home and asked for forgiveness. A sincere repentant spirit will receive a profound forgiveness from God. I believed honestly in my heart that this letter is teaching us forgiveness and Reconciliation based upon love.

As children of God we must be ready to forgive anybody who might have wronged us at any rate and reconcile with them without hesitation.

This letter was a beautiful letter of intercession pleading for forgiveness and restoration of Onesimus, as a personal favor to the apostle Paul. In the letter, apostle Paul reminds Philemon of his duty, of Christian brotherhood of obeying

the scripture to restore Onesimus. He was to receive him as though he was receiving Paul himself. The Apostle Paul, of course, had given much of his life to Philemon and to the church and had every right to ask a favor.

He must receive him because it is the word from the apostle Paul. This is a story of restoration. He was more concerned for Onesimus—though a loss to him—and Philemon’s growth and relationship than his own comfort.

Outline of the book:

- i. Salvation (verses 1-3)
- ii. Paul’s love for Philemon (verse 7)
- iii. The appeal for Onesimus (verse 8-22)
- iv. Promise of Paul to Philemon (verses 17-22)
- v. Greetings and benediction (verses 23-25)

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The author of this unique epistle is unknown; I believe sincerely in my heart that either Paul, Barnabas, Luke, or perhaps even Apollos might have written this letter but the style resembles that of Apostle Paul's.

Though some scholars point out certain internal evidences that may indicate a Pauline authorship, I too submit the fact that Apostle Paul might have been the author of this book. Why?

Judaism was the schoolmaster that brought Christianity into maturity and forefront; the Judaic exegesis and Hermeneutics could not have come from a novice.

The masterful presentation of the letter that points out the overwhelming superiority of Christ over all they had experienced under the law must have come from an expert in "Decalogue" (Torah Hebrew), which favors the Apostle Paul because of the Technical know-how, profound understanding of the Judaism in contrast and relationship to Christ. The transition of the Homiletics display of the theological dexterity that we found in the book of Hebrew affirms that this letter was originally written primarily to Hebrew Christians who were expecting the second coming of our LORD Jesus Christ. Most early Christians were Hebrews. The writer directs the letter to them wherever they may be found; in it the writer focuses on the danger of relapsing into Judaism, or at least giving too much credence to ceremonial observances.

It is primarily a doctrinal book that also has some practical teaching of exhortation; the text expounds the truth that Jesus Christ suffered and tempted in all ways.

In this book we see Christ having brought a better covenant than the old covenant. In the New Testament Christ had a higher calling, a heavenly calling as our great High Priest; because of the work that He has done we can rest in the labor that He has completed.

In the book of Hebrews we see the preeminence of Christ presented and of Christ's priesthood and the appeal to us also to be a part of the priesthood of Christ: all of us being individual priests unto Him. He shows how Christ was priest similar to Melchizedek who was a type of Christ. Biblically, God shows revelatory words and works through signs, symbols and typology before it will come to past. I believe that Christ was this Melchizedek before He was known as a baby who came through the womb of his mother Mary. There are many scriptural proofs and evidences that established the fact that Jesus had been involved in humanity's affairs before He came as our Savior. He had been playing the role (Daniel 3:1-30; Proverbs 8:21-31; I Corinthians 10:1-4; Exodus 13:21).

In the practical Homiletics in this book of Hebrews, we see a pragmatic teaching (Doctrine); we see believers exhorted to steadfastness and mutual encouragement as the grace of God is worked out in their lives.

There are strong warnings against backsliding and of becoming a ceremonial believer rather than going on to follow the teachings and precepts of Christ.

In the famous 11th chapter we see the role call of faith and the heroes both of victory and defeat. We see the need for Christian discipline to be watchful and to live a life where Christ is preeminent amongst all things.

The 11th chapter is so popular and profound; it is known in the Christendom as “Biblical Hall of Faith.” I so much love the book of Hebrews; from the very beginning of the chapter 1 to the last chapter 13th it is explicitly presented, if you are in the spirit, the reading or the studying of the text will change your life and you will never be the same again.

Reflecting in the past when I started digging deep into the goldmine of [God’s] word after I had tried everything and did not work, I realized that everything was just vanity. (Ecclesiastes 1:2 NKJV). I never started studying the Bible (the Living Word of the Living God) so that I can quote the Bible and impress others, or better still, to be a renowned evangelist or pastor of a church or a leader of some ministries.

I began to study the Bible in order to find my darling mother who was to me larger than life itself. She died on me when I was a young kid. I started digging into the word of truth to find something to hold on to, so that I will not commit suicide for my life was too difficult then, until I opened the book of Hebrews and I went to the 11th chapter of the book. I read through to the end of the chapter that gave me victory. The wonderful thing that happened was that I found the definition of faith that began a foundation of a house of faith that was built in me till now. Faith is contagious; I thank the God Almighty that establishes a relationship with me by faith.

The first verse says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” As the engrafted Word of God became a “Now” word in my life, I began to do what I cannot do before: I crossed the valley that I couldn’t cross; I scaled through the huddles that I could not surmount (Gen. 1:1-3; Psalm 119:89 & 130; Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 107:20; Heb. 11:3; Mark 11:22-24).

From that day up till now I have not been the same thing again in my Christian walk with the Almighty and Eternal God. When the right attitude gets hold of the Book of Hebrews, it will right the wrong in anybody’s life but the truth is that, the writer of Hebrews opened the chapter with “Now” word and went ahead to define faith in its basics; he then mentioned the names of the Heroes of Faith. When he got to verse 6, the writing is a prolific experience that I had, with the “Rhema” of the word transforming my natural faith to the mighty faith and the impossible became possible for God, for the Book says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (God)” (Hebrews 11:6)

Sincerely speaking, impossibility disappeared in my life based upon the foundation of the truth of God's word. I came to God, He washed me and delivered me by His word. "When I was not saved, I was not saved, when I got saved I got saved" (John 8:32 and 35, John 17:17).

I did not come to him and became idle. He began to use me mightily for His glory; He gave me my reward; I sought for Him with diligence (hard) and He rewarded me. He (God) is still rewarding me today because of my unflinching faith in Him, through His Son Jesus, and by the Baptism of the Charismatic gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is a powerful book in living a life of Faith in its fullest by faith always. Faith in the preeminence of Christ who bought a complete covenant through His own blood with which we received our eternal salvation and deliverance.

Outline of the book:

- i. Introduction: Christ the final revelation (1:1-3)
- ii. Christ better than Moses and Joshua (3:1-4, 4:13)
- iii. Christ better than Aaronic priesthood (4:14-7:28)
- iv. Christ the better covenant (8:1-10-10:18)
- v. Faith the better way (10:19-12:29)
- vi. The conclusion (13:1-25)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

Preamble: The author of this letter identifies himself simply as James. The name was a common name then. The New Testament lists at least five men named James, two of whom were Jesus' disciples and one of whom was His brother.

Tradition has ascribed the book to the LORD'S brother and there is no reason to question this view; the Jewish converts who lived outside of the issues of patience and of practical faith lived out in spiritual works believing that we could be saved by work of faith alone without Faith itself.

In this book of James, the writer discusses the difference between true and false religion. The marks of a true religion is joy and patience amidst difficulties, unanswered prayer, problems, tribulations and failures of many kinds; believers must develop an unwavering faith, acceptance of one's position in life, the ability to endure and stand firm during the times of temptation and trials.

Brother James who was the leader of Jerusalem church also instructs us in recognition of God's ability to deal with any source of problems and temptation.

When we adhere and yield to the source of our power which is God, He will then supply the weapons from the source. He will give us power (Psalm 62:11), in that power belongs to God and bless us greatly. It is highly expedient for a believer to know where his power comes from.

Apostle James emphasized on being the hearer and the doer of God's word because there is a clear distinction between listening, hearing and understanding mind. Of truth I believe that God will give us hearing ears and understanding hearts.

Believers that become the hearer and the doer of the word of God will not only have successful living on earth but will inherit the kingdom of God (John 3:16, 6:63 and Matt. 6:33).

The importance of spiritual hearing and of patience when provoked, forsaking of evil, and meekness, which is quiet strength, will be ours and the divine virtues a must will emanate from divine wise living.

When we receive the truth of the word of God, the best that He Has for us, in that, God is the best, it will propel us to search out the truth and to live a life of great purity simplistically for truth is parallel and universal.

Apostle James also focuses on the need for good works as proof of our faith. Mere intellectual assent to the doctrines of Jesus Christ will not bring changes. Nor will our works bring rewards for the Christians, if the works are for work's sake only.

Works which come out of a believing and saving faith will bring ultimately rewards for Christians here on earth and in the kingdom of heaven that is to come.

Finally, James also teaches specifically that we must live a godly life, of warning for the rich (affluent), exhortation in regards to the coming of the LORD. The apostle gave us instructions having to do with pastoral life, such as prayer, healing, confession and the duty to take the Glorious Gospel of Christ to the whole world through the whole Word.

The book established the fact that out of the five James mentioned in the Bible, this one we are talking about was the half brother of our LORD Jesus Christ. Such findings strengthen my faith; if we could see some brothers and sisters that the Bible identifies our LORD with, it means that my JESUS, the Savior of humanity, is not a bogus, or just a fiction. He was and still is the real Jesus who delivered me and called me to His Glorious service (Galatians 1:18-24). James, the writer of this epistle of James, was the son of Joseph the carpenter and Mary, and thus a half brother of the LORD CHRIST. In Matthew 13:55 he is mentioned first in a group of four brethren of Christ and was apparently the eldest son of Joseph and Mary.

Epistle of James is one of the most practical books in the New Testament. The writer deals with everyday affairs, covering such matters as one's speech, business ventures, personal relationship with others, disagreements with other brethren, employment relations and other problems which continually affect our lives.

While Peter discusses the testing of faith, James is concerned with the endurance of "patience" of faith through trials. James approaches faith by applying it to every area of human life. The key verse is 1:4. The word "patience" occurs seven times, distinctively at the beginning and conclusion of the epistle (1:3, 4, 5:7, 8, 10, 11).

Patience in James is more than a calm resignation to the inevitable. The passage in 1:4 suggests that the patience of James is active. It works as various trials come upon us. We are to persevere in patience in order that its perfect work of refining us may be completed in our lives. Patience involves the understanding that we are being "perfected" by God.

A sub theme of James is "wisdom." To have working patience, we must have a true wisdom to discern the divine purpose, plans and dealings of God in our lives and profit by them. James has been called the epistle of Christian wisdom. Whereas II Peter emphasized knowledge, wisdom is the application of knowledge. Wisdom is the principle thing, that is why God gave us the wisest king who revealed the heart of God in two profound books (the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and God said, "Wait a minute, I am not through," then He gave us the Book of James in the New Testament for a pragmatic application for our daily Christian works and walks with God who called us to His Divine service).

Though II Peter emphasized knowledge of God's word, James in his practical thrust emphasizes wisdom described in James 3:17. The way to receive this wisdom is simply to ask (James 1:5).

James has a remarkable similarity in his epistle to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-13). it is obvious that this letter is purposely designed as a commentary on this great discourse of the

LORD in Matthew. The Bible student will profit greatly by studying the parallel of each book of the Bible in that the Bible is the Book of Many Books that contains God's Power.

James strongly emphasizes the necessity of prayer in the everyday life of the believer. James himself was known as a man of prayer (James 5:13-17). Tradition says that he prayed so much that his knees became hard and calloused, like a camel's knees. He urges prayer in his closing section of chapter 5:16-18 as mentioned above.

Outline of the book:

- i. The test of patience (1:1-27)
- ii. The nature of patience (2:1-3; 12)
- iii. The word of patience (3:13; 4:17)
- iv. The application of patience (4:19; 5:20)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE PREAMBLE TO FIRST BOOK OF PETER

This epistle without any iota of doubt was written by Simon Peter, disciple of Jesus Christ and an Apostle of our LORD Jesus Christ. He was highly favored by Christ Jesus because of his enigmatic nature, very bold and courageous.

Peter is a most interesting character within the New Testament. He was a man of great passion, a man of great inconsistency and yet one who was used mightily of God to bring the Gospel throughout Jerusalem and to the Greeks and Romans as well.

He wrote this letter to Christians who are scattered throughout Asia Minor, both Jews and Gentiles converted during the beginning of church age in the apostolic age. These are churches that were largely founded by the Apostle Paul and he is giving a message of encouragement, instruction, and added admonition too.

First of all, I believe that Peter's primary purpose was to encourage and strengthen the believers to feed the flock of God. Throughout the letter of I Peter we see the word "suffering" and that Christ has come to give us victory, salvation, a living hope which will not fade away, and divine power which comes to us through faith. We are even to rejoice in the midst of trials in that God will purify His church and individuals which is a part of His mysterious fore-ordained plan.

Peter further exhorts believers to be purified, to become holy and separated unto God. Not to allow evil desires to be prominent in the heart, but to be the living stones, vibrant. As Christ is the chief cornerstone, we are to be living stones within the fibers of the body of Christ.

Further, he deals with the believer's position and duties which are honorable. We are to follow civil codes and recognize duties that we have toward one another and the household of faith. He has specific teaching on wives and husbands and their relationship to one another and again finalizes his teaching on the need to be aware of those that would try to disrupt the flock, the need to follow the elders within the local church and show them great respect and to live a life of humility before all mankind. Peter had made tremendous strides from the impetuous man with "foot in mouth" tendencies. He is an example that with man it is impossible (salvation, restoration), but with God all things are possible. In the same vein, Luke the physician wrote in his gospel of Christ that things that are impossible with men are possible with God (Luke 18:27, Jerem. 32:27).

The epistle of first Peter theologically is known as "Suffering." It was written to strangers scattered throughout various provinces of Asia Minor. This epistle was written about A.D. 60 from "Babylon" (5:13). The question is whether this reference is to ancient Babylonians in Mesopotamia or whether Peter is using the term symbolically for the city of Rome. That Peter refers to Rome seems the best

interpretation. That Peter was in Rome is testified to by Ignatius, Papias, first Clements, Tertullian and other apologetic Bible historians and fathers of the early church. The purpose of the epistle is to encourage believers in times of suffering for Christ. Anybody that follows Him must be His servant and must be ready to face suffering he Himself suffered. The word suffering is prominent in the letter found in the book ten times in reference to the believers (2:19, 20; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 13, 15, 19; 5:9-10) and seven times in reference to Christ (1:11; 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:10).

This is the epistle of HOPE in the midst of suffering(s). Peter is clearly the apostle of Hope. Peter's answer to suffering is the word "Hope" found in 1:3, 13, 21, 3:5, 15. He shows Christ as our example in suffering. As a matter of fact, the writer of Hebrews too said in the 4th chapter, starting from verses 14-15, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our confession and profession." Verse 15 says, "We have not an high priest which can not be touched, with feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

If we have hope in suffering is the surest foundation and a way out of any problem that faces us. If your spirit is not broken you cannot be broken by any means. Hope is the foundation of miracle in suffering, which is a means of winning glory by faith in Jesus Christ. Peter thus actually exalts suffering.

Apostle Peter discussed his subject of suffering is the will of God for believers (4:19). Therefore a believer is actually "called" unto suffering (2:21). This suffering proves our faith and the believers should expect suffering (4:12) and not be troubled by it (4:13).

Apostle Peter has a practical emphasis. All doctrinal statements could be parallel truth elsewhere in the New Testament with the exception of the subject of the fate of the impenitent dead. It contains no speculative interest, no theological discussion of depth. Peter came to understand the pragmatic Christian life through Jesus Christ and he then admonished all Christians to follow his steps.

Consistent with Peter's temperament as a man of action, this short epistle contains a large number of imperatives, the need of command (34 times).

Apostle Peter thus shows us that living for Christ makes real demands upon the believer. He showed in the book of Acts, 3rd chapter from verse-1-17 that he was a man of action. After they had received the power from the Holy Spirit, went with Apostle John to the temple that is called "Beautiful" where he healed a man cripple from his birth whom the book says fixed his attention on Peter and John after Peter had said, "You look us very well, silver nor gold I have not but what I have I give to you, in that, in the name Jesus of Nazareth stand up and walk." I believe sincerely in my heart that the man did not believe what Peter said, or better still, he had the belief that Peter was the man he used to know, and his faith did not rise up to the miracle that God was using Peter for, hence Peter held him by his wrist and pulled him up. What an action man he was (Acts 3:7).

Outline of the book

- i. The perspective of the believer in suffering (1:1-2, 10)
- ii. The pressure on the believer in suffering (2:11-4:6)
- iii. The practice of the believer in suffering (4:7-5:14)

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

INTRODUCTION TO II PETER

The second epistle was written by Apostle Peter, but it was quite different from the first written epistle which the theologian called “knowledge of God’s wisdom.”

Apostle Peter deals with doctrine a little bit but primarily used the epistle as a warning against corrupt teachers and those that would scoff against the church and God’s word. In this letter we see Peter writing as a shepherd (Teacher and Pastor) to God’s sheep with grave concern on his heart, truly an Apostle of Christ.

There was a prevalence of false teaching in the society and a general corruption and apostasy in the society. To counteract that, he instructs on the need for positive spiritual life, to follow the precious promises of God, to remember the teaching of the apostles and to follow them.

The false teachers and doctrines that Peter fought against were heresies, false teachings that deny the deity of Christ. He brings judgments against them and warnings.

Apostle Peter thoroughly condemns sensuality and excesses of lifestyle of apostasy (turning away from the faith that one embraced before and of living a life of sensuality rather than true Christian liberty). For the Book of Many Books says in II Corinthians chapter 3 verse 17, “The LORD is the spirit where the spirit of the LORD is, there is Liberty.”

We have to live life according to the primary law of love for God is love and love for one another. For the Bible says, “Who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” God is a life-and love-giving God. He is the source of everything, for He created all things for His own pleasure.

Apostle Peter (recognized Apostle Paul as the great giant of apostles but the apostle of the apostles—I mean my dearest Paul from Tarsus), when he faced guillotine before he died, his very concern was that believers everywhere continue steadfastly in the doctrine they had been taught. Pure doctrine is still needed today.

Faithfulness is one of the major themes you will find within the words of God from Abraham all the way through to the book of Revelation. There is a call to faithfulness as Christians. It is one of the primary ingredients that is necessary for stability in our walk with Christ. It is desperately needed in our day and time for men and women called to live faithfully before their God and with one another. There are those that would scoff against the Gospel; there are those that would try to steal from us our great liberty that was won for us by Christ’s death on the cross. Therefore we must fight the good fight of faith and be faithful to what Christ has brought us to.

Empirically, Apostle Peter’s second epistle is in contrast to his first epistle.

The comparison is as follows:

I EPISTLE OF PETER		II EPISTLE OF PETER	
A	Personal pastoral, fatherly, dignified and gentle	A	Prophetic denim citation, and severe pragmatic apostolic advice
B	Emphasis upon hope	B	Emphasis upon knowledge
C	Concern about suffering	C	Concern about false teaching

The key emphasis in this epistle is of knowledge occurring twelve times in chapter 1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 16, 20; 2:20, 21, 3:3, 17, 18 (sixteen times in Greek) Peter's antidote to false teaching is true spiritual knowledge. The key to combating false teaching is the knowledge of the truth for Jesus said, "You will know the truth and it will set you free" (John 8:32). Basically, you must be aware of the fact that you have the truth, and the truth that you know will set you free.

Apostle Peter must have remembered Hosea's lament: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). More so, Peter's quoting in his epistle from Hosea would support the supposition.

The key verse is 3:18. Peter desires that they grow in both grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore they must grow in grace as well as knowledge. This knowledge is more than mere academic concepts. It is a knowledge that must be spiritual and express itself in action through the "Rhema," the spoken word of the Living God.

For the LORD Christ Jesus said in the 6th chapter of Gospel of John verse 63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak to you, they are life and they are spirit." The heretical influence that he combats was "anti- Legalism"(against the Law) which was the Gnostic influence. Its result was an immoral tendency which manifested in sinful living. Peter exhorts his readers to holiness.

This epistle is also eschatological in nature. Here again, Peter is the Apostle of Hope. He presents the Hope of the second coming of Christ. Apostle Paul's application is that the believer should conduct himself accordingly in godliness and faithfulness as he looks for the return of the LORD Jesus Christ (3:11, 12).

Peter includes a solemn warning in this epistle against sin and sinners. Judgment is a strong inference in this second epistle. In chapter two he refers to various judgments in Old Testament times. The flood, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the sinning angels. This judgment is applied in reference to those false teachers who lead others astray (chapter 2) and a future judgment upon the world of sin by fire (chapter 3). They who are judged are guilty of willful ignorance, for true "Knowledge" is available of one's will, but we must accept it.

Outline of the book:

- i. The convictions of faith—knowledge and the believer's walk (chapter one)
- ii. The contention for the faith—knowledge opposing heresies (chapter 2)
- iii. The consummation of the faith—knowledge and the second coming (chapter 3).

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

INTRODUCTION TO I, II AND III JOHN

The writer of these three epistles was John the Beloved who leaned upon the breast (chest) of our LORD Jesus Christ. It is expedient that this be commented on since they were so intimate then during the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John was called the beloved Apostle as I've mentioned above. He was the disciple that was closest to Jesus Christ; I believe he was the confidant of our LORD Jesus Christ while He was on earth.

The epistles of John were written to his beloved children in the faith. In the first epistle we see John exhorting his precious children to live a life at peace with one another as members of the family of God.

The primary word in I John is LOVE "AGAPE." We are to live a life of love with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. He also gives a stern warning for those who do not live affectionately, lovingly with one another.

He stresses the importance of knowing Christ and of knowing one another to recognize that God is life and light and that the condition of a divine fellowship is to walk in the light with confession of word in acceptance of Christ as our advocate, that is the reason why the Bible says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Our need for obedience is seen in the test of fellowship, obedience to Christ, obedience to Law of the spirit of humility (Galatians 5:22). For the book admonished and encouraged us to emulate the character and personality of Christ when the scripture declares, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5-11).

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery of be equal with God. But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servants and was made in the likeness of man."

Emphasis is laid upon verse 8 that says, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

He warns against loving the world and the fact that the Antichrist and apostasy will come. He recognizes that truth is what we must abide in.

In the third chapter of the 1st Book of John he discusses the righteous love of God and the need for us to live a life of brotherly love. We are to walk in truth in the divine love (AGAPE) that God has given. He is a giving God for His word attests to this when the Book of Many Books says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal (everlasting) life" (John 3: 16).

He finally deals with faith in love and its overcoming power that through the love of Christ we can be overcomers.

In II John, we see the walk in truth of the Word of God, is the key word found in loving and obedience and will bring truth into one another's life. The first Adam lost everything through disobedience but the second Adam (Christ) a life-given son of God gave the life back abundantly (John 10:10) through His obedience to the father in that He learned obedience. The instruction, everything that He did came from the father for he did what He saw the father doing.

He also encourages us to avoid worldly error and not to depart from the teachings of Christ. It is very interesting in our days of no moral absolutes and virtuous living has been lost in our days. This is the scathing search for the truth. It is the truth in the inner man that can set you free.

The son of God says, "You will know the truth and the truth shall set you free and He is the only person who can set us free, for He said if the son of God set you free, you are free indeed" (John 8:32 and 36).

The freedom that we desperately need comes through the knowledge of truth in the son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. We know that our father is the God of truth and He desires imperatively that we keep ourselves from deception, which can be brought into the Church through false teachers and false doctrines. Facts are different from the truth. Truth is universal and Jesus is the one and only one, the truth the Bishop of the whole universe (John 14:6) and Jesus the Messiah of humanity.

In the third epistle of John we see the key word is hospitality. This is written to Gaius, who apparently was an evangelist at the time of the Apostle John.

Abraham the Father of Faith through his hospitality entertained the angels! Meaning the first Trinity in the Old Testament era by the ritual of that time came to him and blessed him after a nice meal (Genesis 18:1-19).

We really don't know who Gaius is but we know that he was one who was worthy of the affection of John, a consistent Christian who walked in the truth and was a man given to hospitality.

He was apparently a pillar in the church who was ambitious and somewhat racist in orientation. He tried to overlord the vineyard of God and is being rebuked by the Apostle.

In contrast again, we see Demetrius who was a model church man, a man of positive reputation. The final word that comes from the Apostle is a word regarding Christian ministries. Those who preach and teach are worthy of welcomed hospitality and honor.

Those that are giving the pure milk and meat of the word are certainly deserving of double honor. For precise categorization see the following pages for each book's brief analysis.

I JOHN—THEOLOGICALLY IS FAMILY LOVE:

1. 1st Book of John is closely related to the Gospel of John since the apostle was the writer of the Gospel that asserts Christ's deity, while the Epistle emphasizes His humanity. The Gospel gives an announcement of salvation while the Epistle gives the assurance of salvation (thus the key verse is 5:13). Both speak of Christ as the "WORD," LOGOS," and have very similar vocabulary.
2. John the Beloved could be called the Apostle of LOVE (AGAPE). The word Love occurs more often in this book than in any other New Testament book. The word and its derivatives occur 51 times in the Epistle. Love and all His attributes here are God's very essence and the center from which it springs (Proverbs 4:23, 23:7). This Love is to be likewise manifested through believers. God is Love, that is the reason why He loved the world and everything that He created.
3. Apostle John wrote against the Doctrine of Gnostic who deemed the reality of Christ's humanity. This was an oriental dualism taught in Ephesus in John's day which regarded evil as an eternal attribute of matter. Thus flesh was considered evil and Christ, so they reasoned, could not have had a fleshly body to be sinlessly perfect.
4. John deals in this Epistle with opposites: death and life, darkness and light, confidence and fear, righteousness and unrighteousness, Christ and Antichrist, love of God and love of the world.
5. John emphasizes the concept of the "Family of God" and whereas Apostle Paul conceives of the natural man as out of favor with God, John conceives of the natural man as outside of the family of God. The terms in the letter reveal it as a family letter and those who are believers are the "Children of God" and His family (3:1; 5:1, 2).
6. A subtheme of this Epistle is that of "FELLOWSHIP." The word is used by John to describe the ideal relationship between God and His children (1:3, 6, 7). Some have seen fellowship as the keynote to the book chapter showing the requirement for fellowship (2:1-17), the character of fellowship (2:18-20), the enemy of fellowship (chapter 3), the test of fellowship.

Chapter 4 the practice of fellowship: fellowship (5:1-12). The foundation of fellowship (5:13-21), the privileges of fellowship. Fellowship is the practical realization of Family Love.

Outline of the book:

- i. The basis of family love (1:5-2, 2:29)
- ii. The nature of family love (3:1-4, 6)

- iii. The result of family love (4:5-7,12)

ANALYSIS OF II JOHN = WALKING IN TRUTH

1. It's often said that the truth is universal, and nothing can take the place of the truth. The Book of John II is a personal note, sent by the Apostle John to an elect lady and her children whose names are unknown. It appears from verse 10 that she had entertained an itinerant ministry who had visited the community. Apostle John had been impressed with their devotion to the truth. This epistle is written, of course, to all believers as well. The key word is "truth." John knew how persistent the false teachers were in this area. He entreats the lady and others to be walking in truth and to keep the Lord's commandment (Verses 10-11). Truth is seen here as the body of teaching which believers have received from Almighty Father. All teachers and teaching are to be tested by the truth.

Outline of the book:

- i. The truth of the Father (Verse 1:6)
- ii. The Deception of the Deceivers (Verse 13)

JOHN ON HOSPITALITY

1. This is the shortest book in the New Testament (in Greek); it is described and directed to a person Gaius of whom nothing else is recorded in scripture concerning him.
2. The key word is "hospitality." The letter commends the hospitable spirit of Gaius in showing an open-door policy to believers and strangers (Verse 5). He is encouraged to continue his ministry of Love.
3. In direct contrast to this was the spirit of Diotrephes. It (itinerant ministry evidently sent by John) had visited the church but Diotrephes had spoken against the Apostle and had refused to recognize the messenger of the Gospel and had opposed those who received them. It seems that he wanted to have the preeminence. The actions and the spirit of Diotrephes are severely condemned.

Outline of the book:

- i. The commendation of Gaius' hospitality (Verses 1-8)
- ii. The condemnation of Diotrephes' inhospitality (Verses 9-14)

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDE

In fact, there are six individuals named Jude in the Bible, I mean the book of New Testament. Only two are likely to have written this book of Jude.

The apostle Jude (see Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13) is probably Thaddeus of Matthew 10:2.

Another Jude is the brother of James and the half brother of the LORD Jesus Christ. The brothers of our LORD Jesus Christ are named in Matthew 13:55 as James, Joses, Simon and Judas.

Since the letter had no apostolic logo on it, we can say that Jude was most likely the brother of apostle James and both were half brothers of our Savior.

Jude warned the believers of his days to be careful of the perils of backsliding, the unbelievers as well.

This is a letter of warning. He used the illustration of those angels who did not keep their habitation and lost their position and status (1:5-6). Jude warned the people against immoral teachers and the tremendous amount of heretical teaching being presented which endangered the very faith that Christ had died for.

The letter was written as a defensive apologetics of our faith, the Bible faith. It warns against punishment that comes for backsliding and likens the punishment of Israel as a type similar to the fate of fallen angels as mentioned earlier on.

The characteristics of depraved teachers are described with great clarity. References to various prophecies are presented and he summarizes Christian duties as mutual edification and prayerfulness, of giving love towards God, trusting Christ for our salvation and of being active in the local church especially, as it comes to soul winning the eagerness of God.

It's a very interesting book. Its divine counseling admonitions and advice are especially written for those days but which we can easily apply to our present condition.

The epistle of Jude is called the perils of unbelief; the writer of the book identifies himself as Jude and "brother of James" (Verse 1); this would then make him to be the younger brother of our LORD Jesus Christ.

This letter admonishes the believer to contend earnestly for the saving faith that our LORD died for. This is a wake-up call to be apologetic when it comes to that kind of faith. For the Book says it is impossible to please the LORD without faith, anybody that comes to Him (God) must believe that He is and that He is the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Whereas II Peter anticipates the problem of false teachers coming amidst the flock, Jude realizes the problem as already present.

Jude warns of serious consequence of unbelief. He uses the Old Testament example of Israel's unbelief (Verse 5). The unbelief of the fallen angels which manifested itself in rebellion (Verse 6) and that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Verse 7). This is climaxed with Jude's future reference as to what he will do to "ungodly" sinners (Verse 14-15). Here the key word is "remembrance."

In this epistle there is a careful correlation drawn between correctness of doctrine and holy living. I believe when Brother Jude was talking about the angels, he meant the event in Genesis 6:1-4. Brother Jude emphasizes this by admonitions against ungodliness. Three examples are taken from the Old Testament of ungodliness: Cain as a picture of willful sin; Balaam as a picture of the sin of greed; and Korah as a picture of presumptuousness (Verse 11). By these examples Jude also characterizes the false teachers of whom he warns. Here the key word is "woe."

The closing verses (20-25) describe the responsibility of the believer in the face of increasing apostasy and ungodliness. In this section the key word is "keep." Believers bear two responsibilities in the spiritual realm.

(a) To himself:

- i. He is to build Himself up in the faith (Verse 20)
- ii. Pray in the Holy Spirit (Verse 20)
- iii. Keep himself in the Love of God

(b) To Others:

- i. To have mercy on others (Verse 22-23) as he has received mercy from (Verse 23), and.
- ii. To save some of them out of the fire (Verse 23)

Outline of the book:

- i. Faith's Defense against unbelief (1-4)
- ii. Faith's Departure into unbelief (5-16)

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

(APOCALYPSE)

The book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John the Beloved who leaned on the bosom and chest of our LORD Jesus.

The Revelation of our LORD Jesus was revealed to him while he was exiled on the isle of Patmos.

It is a vision or revelation that Jesus Christ 1:1-12 gave him through signs, symbols and figures. To fully understand this book, one should comprehend symbols, signs and figures in order to dissect and unravel the code behind the Apocalypse.

The Book deals with the eschatological theology of the age, suggesting an overall theme for the book of Revelation, which is a moral and spiritual conflict of the ages. The central figure of course is the Lamb of God, who is the final victor over all the allied powers of evil.

There have been copious books and theories written regarding this book. We will not take time to try to review all the various theories in regards to the book of Revelation.

There are more books than enough written on this topic. It is clearly a revelation of the goodness, grace and mercy of God culminated in the coming of the Lamb and the great triumph in which all who believe in Christ shall enjoy.

Whatever our beliefs, any teaching on the Book of Revelation should lead us to a deeper relationship with the LORD and hope in Christ's triumphant coming. So come, our LORD, come!

This Book of Revelation can be called the revelation of Heaven. It was directed towards the seven churches of Asia Minor (Chapter 1:11). The theme addressed by the book of Revelation is persecution from without and serious problems within threatening the churches. The date of the writing may be placed about 90-5 A.D.

The Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) is apocalyptic. The term means to reveal or to uncover something which has been veiled beforehand. The book is written in signs and symbols, characteristic of apocalyptic scripture. Apostle John states that the message was sent and signified (chapter 1:1). There are between three and four hundred symbols in the Book of Revelation. The secret to understanding the symbols of the book is to trace the symbols back to their Old Testament origins and to understand their usage there. We must be abreast of the fact that the scripture interprets itself.

The Old Testament is the foundation of the progressive prophetic Revelation of the WORD of GOD, while the New Testament fulfilled the progressive recorded and revealed by activity of the word of God.

For example Prophet Isaiah by the spirit of the Living God prophesied and he said, "Therefore the LORD Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel."

Many years later the prophecy came to pass when angel Gabriel appeared to a woman favored out of all women of her day; she was a virgin. The Book says in Luke chapter one verse 26: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee.

"To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary (Blessed Mother of our LORD JESUS CHRIST)."

Further, when the apocalyptic book says in Revelation chapter 12 verses 1-12, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

"And she being with child cried travailing in birth and pained to be delivered.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth, and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born."

Verse by verse, upon verses confirmed the Old Testament prophecy. "Apocalyptic" was the word of the living God that He said, at first, in the beginning of ages when Adam and Eve fell through their disobedience.

Revelation chapter 12 verse 5 says, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne." Then Genesis chapter 3 verses 14-15, says, "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou art done this thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of field, upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life."

Emphasis on verse 15 that says, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head and thou shall bruise his heel."

In reality what the coded apocalyptic word denoted was the battle between "Immanuel" ("God with us" or Jesus) and "diabolos" that is called Satan. In the Book of Genesis, the Book of Beginning, God Revealed what Jesus Christ will come to do.

The son of man, who was fully God and fully man, died on the cross and I believe that His resurrection, I mean, death, burial, resurrection and ascension sealed the destiny of the devil. For Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians chapter 15 verses 53-55, "For this corruptible must put on incorruptible and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptible and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Verse 55, "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory."

Apparently the book of Revelation chapter 12 verses 1-12 quoted earlier on predicts the eschatological event that will take place at the second coming. Even I Corinthians chapter 15 verses 53-55 predicts the future events that will definitely take place. Though Jesus and Satan had met twice now, in fact Jesus had won twice. They met because He was the wisdom of God, the King of Kings and the LORD of Lords.

The final battle will be at the second coming when the devil will be thrown to the bottomless pit (Revelation 21:1-15).

- a) Apocalyptic Hermeneutics are based upon four main schools of interpretation of the book. The present views understand the greater part of the book as fulfilled in early church history.
- b) The historical view understands the entire book as being fulfilled during the present age.
- c) The futurist view understands the greater part of the book as pertaining to event in the end time.
- d) The idealist view understands the book as symbolic of the conflict between good and evil, with no reference to specific time.

The numerology of the book is elaborate and strikingly significant. The number four occurs frequently. Four living creatures before the throne, four angels at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, etc.

The Number seven is even more prominent: seven churches, seven candlesticks, seven stars, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders, seven spirits, the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, the seven-headed beast, seven mountains and seven kings. Number seven implies perfection.

The Revelation speaks of the reality of the world to come. The present world has its sorrows, evils and heartaches, but these things cannot enter the world to come. Revelation presents heaven not as a place of escape, but as a place of fellowship for those who have been faithful to the Lamb of God, which is Christ.

Whereas the teachings about the end are in terms of blessings with God for the redeemed, separation away from God and punishment are decreed for the unrighteous.

Judgments move throughout the book. Judgments meted out in sevenfold issues (seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, etc.) are detailed in the book. This is the climactic culmination of the fulfillment of the Promised Day of the LORD. Not only the final judgments on earth are described, but also the final judgments of the righteous to life eternal with Christ and unrighteous unto eternal damnation (20:5-11).

Outline of the book:

Suffice it is to say that Apostle John had given the outline of the book.

- i. Write the things which thou hast seen (1:1-20)
- ii. Write the things which are (2:1-3, 21)
- iii. Write the things which shall be hereafter (4:1-22, 5)

In conclusion the scripture established the truth of the matter beyond any iota of doubt that Jesus Christ fulfilled the scripture. I implore you today to give your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, who will keep your soul saved on the day of resurrection when the righteous will rise to eternal joy with Christ and the ungodly, unrighteous to eternal damnation.

There is still a chance for you to choose where you will live your eternity. Thanks be to the Lord our God who gave the word "Logos." For the book says great was the Company of those who published the word. We will be great now and at all times until Christ comes back. This is the evidence that the new fulfilled the old.

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