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Chapter 1

THE SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED

The Holy Bible is the word of God, both living and everlasting. It is true, steadfast and unchangeable. The Bible was written by holy men of old, as they were moved, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is a light to guide the feet of all those who seek and a light to shine upon the path of all who believe and trust in him. It is a plumb line to make straight the life of all and a sharp two-edged sword to convict of sin and evil. It is a strong cord of love and tenderness to draw the penitent to Christ Jesus. It is a balm of Gilead anointed by the Holy Spirit. It can heal, make alive and change the drooping heart. It is the distant thunder of the storm of wrath and retribution that shall overtake the unheeding. The Bible, God's word will never change. Men have tried to make it match their deeds, only to find that the only true identity comes from man's deeds matching the word of God. Many things have been tried, but only the anointed Word of God will stand forever.

From the Holy Scripture Comes the Evidence:

2 Tim. 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Philip. 3:16

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Psalms 119:89

For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.

2 Tim. 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God

may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Psalm 119:105

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

John 5:39

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

1 John 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Isaiah 8:20

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

1 Thes. 5:21

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Acts 17:11

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

1 John 4:6

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Jude 1:3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Ephes. 6:17

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Psalm 119:59-60

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. [60] I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

Philip. 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; [10] That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; [11] Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Often the best way to influence someone is to pray for him or her. Paul's prayer for the Philippians was that they would be unified in love. Their love was to result in greater knowledge of Christ and deeper insight (moral discernment). Their love was not based on feelings but on what Christ had done for them. As you grow in Christ's love, your heart and mind must grow together. Is your love and insight growing?

Paul prayed that the Philippian believers would “discern what is best”—in other words, that they would have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad, vital and trivial. We ought to pray for moral discernment so we can maintain our Christian morals and values. Hebrews 5:14 emphasizes the need for discernment.

The “day of Christ” refers to the time when God will judge the world through Jesus Christ. We should live each day as though he could return at any moment.

The “fruit of righteousness” includes all of the character traits flowing from a right relationship with God. There is no other way for us to gain this fruit of righteousness than through Christ. See Galatians 5:22-23 for the “fruit of the Spirit.”

Chapter 2

THERE IS ONE TRUE GOD

There is just one True God. He is living. He is the maker of heaven and earth and all that is in them. He is the beginning and the end. He always was and will forever be. He is holy, mighty, tender, loving and glorious. He is worthy of all possible love and honor, confidence and obedience both now and forever. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three, equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

The Father: His glory is exceedingly bright, so much that mortal man cannot look upon His face and live. His heart is filled with love and pity for those who are lost. He freely gave His only begotten Son to redeem and reconcile them unto Himself.

The Son: Co-eternal and co-existent with the father, was conceived of the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary. He took upon Himself the form of man. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows. By the shedding of His precious blood upon the cross of Calvary, purchased redemption for all that would believe upon Him. Through this, He broke the bonds of death and hell. He rose from the grave and ascended on high leading those who were captivity to freedom. He is the great mediator between God and man. He is now at the right hand of the Father making intercession for those of whom He laid down His life.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. The spirit of the Father is shed abroad, omnipotent, omnipresent, performing an inexpressibly important mission upon the earth. The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin of righteousness and of judgment. He is forever drawing sinners to Jesus the Savior. He is rebuking, pleading, searching, comforting, quickening, teaching, glorifying, baptizing and enduing with power from on high. All those who yield to His tender calling preparing for them a great day at the Lord's appearing.

From the Holy Scriptures Comes the Proof:

Isaiah 43:10

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

Isaiah 44:8

Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

Exodus 33:20

And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

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.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Job 38:4-7

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. [5] Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? [6] Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; [7] When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Matthew 1:23

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Isaiah 43:11

I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour.

1 Tim. 2:5-6

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; [6] Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Ephes. 2:18

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

1 John 5:7

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

John 15:26

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

2 Cor. 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

John 16:7-14

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. [8] And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: [9] Of sin, because they believe not on me; [10]

Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; [11] Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. [12] I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. [13] Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. [14] He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Unless Jesus did what he came to do, there would be no gospel. If he did not die, he could not remove our sins; he could not rise again and defeat death. If he did not go back to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come. Christ's presence on earth was limited to one place at a time. His leaving meant he could be present to the whole world through the Holy Spirit.

Three important tasks of the Holy Spirit are (1) convicting the world of its sin and calling it to repentance, (2) revealing the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes, because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, and (3) demonstrating Christ's judgment over Satan.

According to Jesus, not believing in him is *sin*.

Christ's death on the cross made a personal relationship with God available to us. When we confess our sin, God declares us righteous and delivers us from judgment for our sins.

The truth into which the Holy Spirit guides us is the truth about Christ. The Spirit also helps us through patient practice to discern right from wrong.

Lesson 3

MAN FELL FROM PERFECTION

Man was created in the image of God. He walked in holiness and purity, but by voluntary disobedience and transgression, he fell from the Eden of purity and innocence to the depths of sin and iniquity. Because of all this, men became sinners by choice and sold themselves to the bondage of Satan. This caused them to be void of that holiness required by the law of God. Man became guilty and without excuse, rightfully deserving the condemnation of a just and holy God.

From the Holy Scriptures comes the proof:

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Romans 12:21

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 5:12

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:

Romans 5:19

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

John 3:6

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Psalms 51:5

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Romans 5:15-19

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. [16] And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. [17] For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) [18] Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Romans 8:7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Genesis 6:12

And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Genesis 3:9-19

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? [10] And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. [11] And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? [12] And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. [13] And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. [14] And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: [15] And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. [16] Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. [17] And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; [18] Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; [19] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Ephes. 2:3

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our

flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Romans 1:32

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Matthew 20:15

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

Galatians 3:10

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Ezekiel 18:19

Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Ezekiel 18:20

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Romans 1:20

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Romans 3:19

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are

under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Galatians 3:22

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Before faith in Christ delivered us, we were imprisoned by sin, beaten down by past mistakes, and choked by desires that we knew were wrong. God knew we were sin's prisoners, but he provided a way of escape—faith in Jesus Christ. Without Christ, everyone is held in sin's grasp, and only those who place their faith in Christ ever get out of it. Look to Christ—he is reaching out to set you free.

Chapter 4

REDEMPTION BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

While we were yet sinner, Christ died for us. By Divine appointment of the Father, Jesus took the place of the sinner. He bore his sins, received his condemnation and death. He fully paid the penalty by shedding his life's blood, allowing pardon for every one who should believe upon Him. By simple faith and acceptance of the atonement purchased on Mount Calvary, the vilest sinner may be cleansed of his iniquities and made whiter than driven snow.

From the Holy Scriptures, we Study to Understand.

Isaiah 53:5

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Titus 2:14

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify

unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Isaiah 55:7

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Hebrews 7:25

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Isaiah 1:18

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Chapter 5

SALVATION RESTORED THROUGH FAITH

The salvation of sinners is wholly through grace. We have no righteousness or goodness of our own wherewith to seek divine favor. We must come to God, throwing ourselves upon the unfailing mercy and love of the one who bought us and cleansed us in His own blood. We must plead the merits and the righteousness of Christ the Savior, standing on His word and accepting the free gift of love and pardon.

The Evidence of Salvation is Found Through the Holy Scriptures:

Ephes. 2:8

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Romans 3:10

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Isaiah 64:6

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

John 6:47

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Ephes. 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

In order to realize how great a gift salvation is, we need to remember our former natural, unclean condition. Have you ever felt separate, excluded, hopeless. These verses are for you. No one is alienated from Christ's love or from the body of believers.

Jews and Gentiles alike could be guilty of spiritual pride—Jews for thinking their faith and traditions elevated them above everyone else, Gentiles for trusting in their achievements, power, or position. Spiritual pride blinds us to our own faults and magnifies the faults of others. Be careful not to become proud of your salvation. Instead, humbly thank God for what he has done, and encourage others who might be struggling in their faith.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

You are free to choose between two masters, but you are not free to manipulate the consequences of your choice. Each of the two masters pays with his own kind of currency. The currency of sin is death. That is all you can expect or hope for in life

without God. Christ's currency is eternal life—new life with God that begins on earth and continues forever with God. What choice have you made?

Eternal life is a free gift from God. If it is a gift, then it is not something that we earn, nor something that must be paid back. Consider the foolishness of someone who receives a gift given out of love and then offers to pay for it. A gift cannot be purchased by the recipient. A more appropriate response to a loved one who offers a gift is graceful acceptance with gratitude. Our salvation is a gift of God, not something of our own doing (Ephes. 2:8-9). He saved us because of his mercy, not because of any righteous things that we have done (Titus 3:5). How much more we should accept with thanksgiving the gift that God has freely given to us.

Chapter 6

JUSTIFIED THROUGH FAITH

Upon sincere repentance, that is having godly sorrow, whole-hearted acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ for all who call upon Him, may be justified by faith. Those who accept the precious blood of Jesus in place of condemnation may have the most blessed peace, assurance and favor with God. With open arms of mercy and pardon, the Savior waits to receive each penitent who will in unfeigned contrition and supplication for mercy, open the door of his heart and accept Him as Redeemer, Lord and King.

The Holy Scriptures Give Evidence of Repentance and Acceptance:

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: [2] By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to them, which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Luke 1:77-79

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, [78] Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, [79] To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The Jews were eagerly awaiting the Messiah, but they thought he would come to save them from the powerful Roman empire. They were ready for a military Savior, but not for a peaceful Messiah who would conquer sin.

This was God's promise to Abraham to bless all peoples through him (see Genesis 12:3). It would be fulfilled through the Messiah, Abraham's descendant.

Zechariah had just recalled hundreds of years of God's sovereign work in history, beginning with Abraham and going on into eternity. Then, in tender contrast, he personalized the story. His son had been chosen for a key role in the drama of the ages. Although God has unlimited power, he chooses to work through frail humans who begin as helpless babies. Don't minimize what God can do through those who are faithful to him.

Why did John live out in the desert? Prophets used the isolation of the uninhabited desert to enhance their spiritual growth and to focus their message on God. By being in the desert, John remained separate from the economic and political powers so that he could aim his message against them. He also remained separate from the hypocritical religious leaders of his day. His message was different from theirs, and his life proved it.

John 6:37

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Jesus did not work independently of God the Father, but in union with him. This should give us even more assurance of being welcomed into God's presence and

being protected by him. Jesus' purpose was to do the will of God, not to satisfy Jesus' human desires. When we follow Jesus, we should have the same purpose.

Chapter 7

THE NEW BIRTH

The change that takes place in the heart and life of a Believer, is a very real one. The sinner is then born again in such a glorious and transforming manner that the old things are passed away and all things are become new. The things once most desired are now abhorred while the things one abhorred are now held most sacred and dear. Now having imputed to him the righteousness of the Redeemer and having received of the Spirit of Christ, new desires, new aspirations, new interests and a new perspective on life, time and eternity fills the blood-washed heart so that his desire is now to openly confess and serve the Master. He is now seeking forever those things that are above.

From the Holy Scripture, We See the Evidence:

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee," Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God".

2 Cor. 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

John 15:19

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Romans 3:24-25

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [25] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Psalms 1:1

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psalms 1:2

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

In this book, the psalmists praise God for his justice, express confidence in God's compassion, recount the depravity of man, plead for vindication, ask God to deliver them from their enemies, speak of the blessedness of the forgiven sinner, and portray God as a shepherd. We should worship God with the same sense of adoration found in these psalms.

The writer begins his psalm extolling the joys of obeying God and refusing to listen to those who discredit or ridicule him. Our friends and associates can have a profound influence on us, often in very subtle ways. If we insist on friendships with those who mock what God considers important, we might sin by becoming indifferent to God's will. This attitude is the same as mocking. Do your friends build up your faith, or do they tear it down? True friends should help, not hinder, you to draw closer to God.

God doesn't judge people on the basis of race, sex, or national origin. He judges them on the basis of their faith in him and their response to his revealed will. Those who diligently try to obey God's will are blessed. Their happy condition is like healthy, fruit-bearing trees with strong roots (Jeremiah 17:5-8), and God promises to watch over them.

Chapter 8

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIFE THROUGH SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil and of dedication unto God. Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by the faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit. Having been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and having received the witness of the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is the will of God that we be sanctified daily and become partaker of his holiness, ever growing stronger in faith, power, prayer, love and service.

Evidence The Need of Sanctification From the Holy Scriptures.

1 Thes. 4:3

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

1 Thes. 5:23

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 4:18

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Hebrews 6:1

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Romans 8:5

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

Isaiah 35:8

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

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Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2

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.

Hebrews 13:12

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Hebrews 12:14

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

1 Peter 1:15

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

1 Peter 1:16

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? [2] God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? [3] Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? [4] Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [5] For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: [6] Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. [7] For he that is dead is freed from sin. [8] Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: [9] Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. [10] For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. [11] Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:13

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Romans 8:12

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

Romans 8:13

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:

and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Philip. 2:12

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Philip. 2:13

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

1 Peter 1:5

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God will help us remain true to our faith through whatever difficult times we must face. The “last time” is the judgment day of Christ described in Romans 14:10 and Rev. 20:11-15. We may have to endure trials, persecution, or violent death, but our souls cannot be harmed if we have accepted Christ’s gift of salvation. We know we will receive the promised rewards.

Chapter 9

WATER BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Saviour and Lord are to be baptized. By this they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. Water baptism should be in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, according to the command of our Lord. It is a blessed outward sign of an inward work: It is a reminder to us that even as our Lord died upon the cross of Calvary so we reckon ourselves now dead indeed unto sin. The old nature is nailed to the tree with Christ, and that even as He was taken down from the tree and buried, so we are buried with Him by baptism unto death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we should walk in newness of life.

Water Baptism as Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures:

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Acts 2:37

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 3:27

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Col. 2:12

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.

1 Peter 3:20

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

1 Peter 3:21

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Acts 22:16

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,:

Matthew 28:20

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

Acts 10:47

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

Acts 10:48

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

In this case, the people were baptized *after* they received the Holy Spirit, publicly declaring their allegiance to Christ and identification with the Christian community.

Cornelius wanted Peter to stay with him for several days. He was a new believer and realized his need for teaching and fellowship. Are you as eager to learn more about Christ? Recognize your need to be with more mature Christians, and strive to learn from them.

Chapter 10

Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper consisting of the elements – bread and the fruit of the vine—is the symbol expressing our sharing the Divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a memorial of his suffering and death and a prophecy of His second coming and is enjoined on all believers “till he come”.

This commemoration and observing of the Lord's supper by the sacred use of the broken bread is a precious type of the Bread of Life, even Jesus Christ, whose body was broken for us; and by the juice of the vine, a blessed type which should ever remind the participant of the shed blood of the Savior who is the true vine of which His children are the branches. The serving and receiving of this blessed sacrament should be ever preceded by the most solemn heart-searching, self-examination, forgiveness and love toward all men, that none partake unworthily and drink condemnation to his own soul.

Holy Communion as evidenced by the Holy Scriptures:

1 Cor. 11:26

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

1 Cor. 11:27

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

1 Cor. 11:28

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

2 Cor. 13:5

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

The Corinthians were called to examine and test themselves to see if they really were Christians. Just as we get physical check-ups, Paul urges us to give ourselves spiritual checkups. We should look for a growing awareness of Christ's presence and power in our lives. Only then will we know if we are true Christians or merely imposters. If we're not taking active steps to grow closer to God, we are drawing further away from him.

2 Peter 1:4

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The power to grow doesn't come from within us, but from God. Because we don't have the resources to be truly godly, God allows us to "participate in the divine nature" in order to keep us from sin and help us live for him. When we are born again, God by his Spirit empowers us with his own moral goodness. See John 3:6; John 14:17-23; 2 Cor. 5:21; and 1 Peter 1:22-23.

Chapter 11

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism of the holy Spirit and fire according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all believers in the early Christian Church. With it comes the enduing of power for life and service and bestowment of the gifts and uses in the work of the ministry. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the incoming of the promised Comforter in mighty and glorious fullness to endue the believer with power from on high. It is to glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives inspired utterance in witnessing of Him, and will foster the spirit of joyous Spirit-filled soul winning in the fields of life. This, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the believer may have every reason to expect His incoming to be after the same manner. The outpouring of Holy Spirit came upon Jew and Gentile alike in Bible days. We believe that this experience is available to all dedicated believers.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit's Promise as Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Acts 14:17

Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Acts 1:5-8

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. [6] When they therefore were come together, they asked of

him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? [7] 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. [8] 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 8:17

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:44-46

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. [45] And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. [46] For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

1 Cor. 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Luke 24:29

But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

Acts 1:4

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Acts 1:8

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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 8:12-17

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. [13] Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. [14] Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: [15] Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: [16] (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) [17] Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:44-46

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. [45] And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. [46] For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

Acts 11:14-16

Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. [15] And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. [16] Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 15:7-9

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

[8] And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; [9] And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Chapter 12

THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

With the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes such experiences as: An overflowing fullness of the Spirit, a deepened reverence for God, an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work as well as a more active love for Christ, for His Word and the lost. The Holy Spirit is as a mighty rushing wind and as tongues of living flames that can shake and set ablaze those communities for God. He is also as a gentle dove, easily grieved and wounded by impiety, coldness, idle conversation, boastfulness, a judging or criticizing spirit and by thoughts and actions dishonoring to the Lord Jesus. It is the will of God that we live and walk in the Spirit, moment by moment, under the precious blood of the Lamb; treading softly as with unshod feet in the presence of the King; being patient, loving, truthful, sincere and prayerful. We must not murmur, but be instant in season and out of season serving the Lord.

Scripture References to verify the Spirit Filled Life.

John 7:38

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

John 7:39

(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Acts 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Acts 2:43

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

Hebrews 12:28

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace,

whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Mark 16:20

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Ephes. 4:30-32

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: [32] And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephes. 6:18

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2

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.

Galatians 5:16

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

1 Cor. 3:17

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

In the church built on Jesus Christ, each church member would be mature, spiritually sensitive, and doctrinally sound. However, the Corinthian church was filled with those whose work was “wood, hay, straw,” members who were immature, insensitive to one another, and vulnerable to wrong doctrine (1 Cor. 3:1-4). No wonder they had so many problems. Local church members should be deeply committed to Christ. Can your Christian character stand the test?

A building is only as solid as its foundation. The foundation of our lives is Jesus Christ; he is our base, our reason for being. Everything we are and do must fit into the pattern provided by him. Are you building your life on the only real and lasting foundation, or are you building on a faulty foundation such as wealth, security, success, or fame?

Two sure ways to destroy a building are to tamper with the foundation and to build with inferior materials. The church must be built on Christ, not on any other person or principle. Christ will evaluate each minister’s contribution to the life of the church, and the day of judgment (“the Day”) will reveal the sincerity of each person’s work. God will determine whether or not they have been faithful to Jesus’ instructions. Good work will be rewarded; unfaithful or inferior work will be discounted. The builder “will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames” means that unfaithful workers will be saved, but like people escaping from a burning building. All their possessions (accomplishments) will be lost.

Just as our bodies are the “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19), the local church or Christian community is God’s temple. Just as the Jews’ temple in Jerusalem was not to be destroyed, the church is not to be spoiled and ruined by divisions, controversy, or other sins as members come together to worship God.

Chapter 13

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit has gifts to bestow upon the believing church of the Lord Jesus Christ: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Each is given according to the degree of grace and faith possessed by the recipient. These gifts are divided to every man severally, as He, the

Holy Spirit, will that they are to be most earnestly desired and coveted in the order and proportion wherein they prove most edifying and beneficial to the church.

The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. These should be put forth, cultivated and diligently guarded as the resultant adornment, the constant, eloquent, and irrefutable evidence of a spirit-filled life.

Evidence of the Gift and Fruit of the Spirit from the Holy Scriptures

1 Cor. 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

1 Cor. 12:13

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.

1 Cor. 12:11

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

1 Cor. 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Romans 12:6-8

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; [7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him

do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must (1) realize that all gifts and abilities come from God; (2) understand that not everyone has the same gifts; (3) know who we are and what we do best; (4) dedicate our gifts to God's service and not to our personal success; (5) be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God's service.

God's gifts differ in nature, power, and effectiveness according to his wisdom and graciousness, not according to our faith. The "measure of faith" (Romans 12:3) or the "proportion to his faith" means that God will give spiritual power necessary and appropriate to carry out each responsibility. We cannot, by our own effort or willpower, drum up more faith and thus be more effective teachers or servants. These are God's gifts to his church, and he gives faith and power as he wills. Our role is to be faithful and to seek ways to serve others with what Christ has given us.

Prophesying in Scripture is not always predicting the future. Often it means preaching God's messages (1 Cor. 14:1-3).

12:6-8 Look at this list of gifts and imagine the kinds of people who would have each gift. Prophets are often bold and articulate. Servers (those in ministry) are faithful and loyal. Teachers are clear thinkers. Encouragers know how to motivate others. Givers are generous and trusting. Leaders are good organizers and managers. Those who show mercy are caring people who are happy to give their time to others.

It would be difficult for one person to embody all these gifts. An assertive prophet would not usually make a good counselor, and a generous giver might fail as a leader. When you identify your own gifts (and this list is far from complete), ask how you can use them to build up God's family. At the same time, realize that your gifts can't do the work of the church all alone. Be thankful for people whose gifts are completely different from yours. Let your strengths balance their weaknesses, and be grateful that their abilities make up for your deficiencies. Together you can build Christ's church.

John 15:8

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my

disciples.

Luke 3:9

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Confession of sins and a changed life are inseparable. Faith without deeds is dead (James 2:14-26). Jesus' harshest words were to the respectable religious leaders who lacked the desire for real change. They wanted to be known as religious authorities, but they didn't want to change their hearts and minds. Thus their lives were unproductive. Repentance must be tied to action, or it isn't real. Following Jesus means more than saying the right words; it means acting on what he says.

Chapter 14

DIVINE HEALING

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers. We believe Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and the afflicted in answer to believing prayer. He who is the same yesterday and forever has never changed. He is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and make alive the body into newness of life, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who every pray with submission to His Divine and sovereign will.

Divine Healing as Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures

Matthew 8:17

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Matthew 9:5

For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

Mark 16:17

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:18

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Acts 4:29

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

Acts 4:30

By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

James 5:14

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

James 5:15

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

James 5:16

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Isaiah 53:4

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:5

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Matthew 8:16

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

Matthew 8:17

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Matthew continues to show Jesus' kingly nature. Through a single touch, Jesus healed (Matthew 8:3, 15); when he spoke a single word, evil spirits fled his presence (Matthew 8:16). Jesus has authority over all evil powers and all earthly disease. He also has power and authority to conquer sin. Sickness and evil are consequences of living in a fallen world. But in the future, when God removes all sin, there will be no more sickness and death.

Chapter 15

THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit with divine appointments for the fulfillment of the great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the First born which are written in heaven. God's purpose concerning man is to seek and save that which is lost, to be worshipped by man and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and King, and having thus been born into the family and invisible body or church of the Lord, it is the sacred duty of the believer, whenever this lies within his power to identify himself with and labor most earnestly for the building up of God's kingdom with the

visible church of Christ upon the earth. To carry on His work believers meet together edifying, encouraging, establishing one another in the most holy faith, and working harmoniously together as dear children who are many members, but one body of which Christ is the head.

The Church and its Mission as Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures

Psalm 111:1

Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Acts 2:47

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Acts 16:5

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Romans 12:5-8

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. [6] Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; [7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Malachi 3:16

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

Malachi 3:17

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Ephes. 1:22

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Ephes. 1:23

Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephes. 2:22

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Hebrews 12:23

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Acts 1:8

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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Matthew 28:19

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 28:20

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Ephes. 4:11-16

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [13] 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 fulness of Christ: [14] That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

[15] But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: [16] From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Our oneness in Christ does not destroy our individuality. The Holy Spirit has given each Christian special gifts for building up the church. Now that we have these gifts, it is crucial to use them. Are you spiritually mature, exercising the gifts God has given you? If you know what your gifts are, look for opportunities to serve. If you don't know, ask God to show you, perhaps with the help of your minister or Christian friends. Then, as you begin to recognize your special area of service, use your gifts to strengthen and encourage the church.

God has given his church an enormous responsibility—to make disciples in every nation (Matthew 28:18-20). This involves preaching, teaching, healing, nurturing, giving, administering, building, and many other tasks. If we had to fulfill this command as individuals, we might as well give up without trying—it would be impossible. But God calls us as members of his body. Some of us can do one task; some can do another. Together we can obey God more fully than any of us could alone. It is a human tendency to overestimate what we can do by ourselves and underestimate what we can do as a group. But as the body of Christ, we can accomplish more together than we would dream possible working by ourselves.

Working together, the church can express the fullness of Christ (see the note on +Ephes. 3:19).

Christ is the truth (John 14:6), and the Holy Spirit who guides the church is the Spirit of truth (John 16:13). Satan, by contrast, is the father of lies (John 8:44). As followers of Christ, we must be committed to the truth. This means both that our words should be honest and that our actions should reflect Christ's integrity. Speaking the truth in love is not always easy, convenient, or pleasant, but it is necessary if the church is going to do Christ's work in the world.

Some Christians fear that any mistake will destroy their witness for the Lord. They see their own weaknesses, and they know that many non-Christians seem to have stronger character than they do. How can we grow up into Christ? The answer is that Christ forms us into a body—into a group of individuals who are united in their purpose and in their love for one another and for the Lord. If an individual stumbles, the rest of the group is there to pick him or her up and help him or her walk with God again. If an individual sins, he or she can find restoration through the church (Galatians 6:1) even as the rest of the body continues to witness to God's truth. As part of Christ's body, do you reflect part of Christ's character and carry out your special role in his work?

1 Cor. 12:28

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

1 Cor. 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

As musical instruments must play each note in order for the music to be clear, so Paul says words preached in the hearers' language are more clear and helpful. There are many languages in the world (1 Cor. 14:10), and people who speak different languages can rarely understand each other. It is the same with speaking in tongues. Although this gift is helpful to many people in private worship, and helpful in public worship with interpretation, Paul says he would rather speak five words that his hearers can understand than 10,000 that they cannot (1 Cor. 14:19).

Chapter 16

Giving and Receiving

The method ordained of God to sustain His ministry and the spread of the gospel after His command is “giving, and generally accepted throughout the churches. It will also raise the spiritual moral of His people to the extent that God must bless them. We are commanded in Malachi 3:10 to Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try me now in this; says the Lord of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. The ministry of prosperity is found in giving.

The Blessing of Giving and Receiving is Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures:

Luke 6:38

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and 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.

2 Cor. 9:7

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

1 Cor. 16:1

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the

churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

1 Cor. 16:2

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Luke 21:1-4

And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. [2] And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. [3] And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: [4] For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. [2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. [3] And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Isaiah 48:15-17

I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

[16] Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. [17] Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

1 Chron. 4:10

And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me

indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Psalm 37:3-5

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. [4] Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. [5] Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Psalm 34:8-11

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. [9] O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. [10] The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. [11] Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: [11] So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. [12] For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. [13] Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Psalm 67:5-7

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. [6] Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. [7] God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Jeremiah 1:12

Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

Proverbs 3:9

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

Proverbs 8:18

Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

Proverbs 8:21

That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Proverbs 11:25

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

These two verses present a paradox: that we become richer by being generous. The world says to hold on to as much as possible, but God blesses those who give freely of their possessions, time, and energy. When we give, God supplies us with more so that we can give more. In addition, giving helps us gain a right perspective on our possessions. We realize they were never really ours to begin with, but they were given to us by God to be used to help others. What then do we gain by giving? Freedom from enslavement to our possessions, the joy of helping others, and God's approval.

Chapter 17

THE BLESSED HOPE AND THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

The Blessed hope is the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent blessed hope of the church.

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on earth for one thousand years. The millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace.

Through the Holy Scriptures, we learn of the Blessed Hope and the Millennial Reign of Christ.

The Resurrection:

1 Thes. 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1 Thes. 4:17

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Romans 8:23

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

1 Cor. 15:51

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

1 Cor. 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The Rapture of the Saints:

Zech. 14:5

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

Matthew 24:27

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:30

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Rev. 1:7

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Rev. 19:11-14

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him

was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev. 20:1-6

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. [2] And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, [3] And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. [4] And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. [5] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. [6] Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The Establishment of Universal Peace:

Isaiah 11:6-9

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. [7] And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. [8] And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. [9] They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

A golden age is yet to come, a time of peace when children could play with formerly dangerous animals. Not all of this was fulfilled at Christ's first coming. For example, nature has not returned to its intended balance and harmony (see Romans 8:9-22). Such perfect tranquility is possible only when Christ reigns over the earth.

Psalm 72:6-8

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. [7] In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. [8] He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

Micah 4:3

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Micah 4:4

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

Chapter 18

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ is personal and imminent: He will descend from Heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. In that hour, no man knows before hand. The dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord. The Word says: "Occupy until I come". The work of spreading the gospel, the sending forth of missionaries, and the general duties for the building up of the church should be carried on as diligently, and thoroughly, as though neither ours nor the next generation should live in the flesh to the glorious day. He will come. We know not when, but we know we are living in the time of his coming.

The Evidence of the Second Coming of Christ is found in the Holy Scriptures.

1 Thes. 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1 Thes. 4:17

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Titus 2:12

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Matthew 24:36

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Matthew 24:42

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matthew 24:44

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Hebrews 9:28

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.

Luke 19:13

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Luke 12:35-37

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; [36] And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. [37] Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Jesus repeatedly said that he would leave this world but would return at some future time (see Matthew 24-25; John 14:1-3). He also said that a kingdom is being prepared for his followers. Many Greeks envisioned this as a heavenly, idealized, spiritual kingdom. Jews—like Isaiah and John, the writer of Revelation—saw it as a restored earthly kingdom.

Christ's return at an unexpected time is not a trap, a trick by which God hopes to catch us off guard. In fact, God is delaying his return so more people will have the opportunity to follow him (see 2 Peter 3:9). Before Christ's return, we have time to live out our beliefs and to reflect Jesus' love as we relate to others.

People who are ready for their Lord's return are (1) not hypocritical, but sincere (Luke 12:1), (2) not fearful, but ready to witness (Luke 12:4-9), (3) not worried,

but trusting (Luke 12:25-26), (4) not greedy, but generous (Luke 12:34), (5) not lazy, but diligent (Luke 12:37). May your life be more like Christ's so that when he comes, you will be ready to greet him joyfully.

Chapter 19

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND HELL

The dead, both small and great shall be raised and stand with the living before the judgment seat of God. There will be a solemn and awful separation take place wherein the wicked shall be cast into hell and the righteous to life eternal. That judgment will be fixed and unchangeable for the state of man. The unbelieving, the abominable, the murders, the idolaters, all liars, and they who have reject and spurned the love and sacrifice of a redeemer will also be cast into hell. By bypassing the cross of Christ, they have sealed their doom. Eternal life comes only through Christ.

The Holy Scriptures reveals the Evidence:

For Judgment:

2 Cor. 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Matthew 13:41-43

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; [42] And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. [43] Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

For Hell:

Rev. 20:10

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Rev. 20:15

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev. 14:10

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

Rev. 14:11

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Rev. 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Rev. 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Ezekiel 33:11

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

The exiles were discouraged by their past sins. This is an important turning point in this book—elsewhere in Ezekiel the people had refused to face their sins. Here, they felt heavy guilt for rebelling against God for so many years. Therefore, God assured them of forgiveness if they repented. God *wants* everyone to turn to him. He looks at what we are and will become, not what we have been. God gives you the opportunity to turn to him, if you will take it. Sincerely follow God, and ask him to forgive you when you fail.

Chapter 20

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

Heaven is an indescribably glorious habitation of the living God. This is a place the Lord has gone to prepare for His children that unto this city, whose builder and

maker is God, The earnest believers who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and have overcome by the word of their testimony will be taken. Here, the Lord Jesus Christ will present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle. There will be great joy when they will ever behold Christ and an everlasting kingdom. We, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The Evidence of a New Heaven and New Earth as given by the Holy Scriptures

1 Cor. 2:9

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

John 14:2

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.

Rev. 22:5

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.

Rev. 21:4

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Rev. 7:15

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Rev. 7:16

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Rev. 7:17

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The great tribulation” has been explained in several ways. Some believe it refers to the suffering of believers through the ages; others believe that there is a specific time of intense tribulation yet to come. In either case, these believers come through their times of suffering by remaining loyal to God. Because they remain faithful, God will give them eternal life with him (Rev. 7:17).

It is difficult to imagine how blood could make any cloth white, but the blood of Jesus Christ is the world’s greatest purifier because it removes the stain of sin. White symbolizes sinless perfection or holiness, which can be given to people only by the death of the sinless Lamb of God on our behalf. This is a picture of how we are saved through faith (see Isaiah 1:18; Romans 3:21-26).

2 Peter 3:13

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The day of the Lord is the day of God’s judgment on the earth. Here it is used in reference to Christ’s return. Christ’s second coming will be sudden and terrible for those who do not believe in him. But if we are morally clean and spiritually alert, it won’t come as a surprise. For other prophetic pictures of the day of the Lord, see Isaiah 34:4; Joel 3:15-16; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Rev. 6:12-17. Realizing that the earth is going to be burned up, we should put our confidence in what is lasting and eternal and not be bound to earth and its treasures or pursuits. Do you spend more of your time piling up possessions, or striving to develop Christlike character? God bless you.

