

EAGLES FLY HIGH!



PASTORS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS VERSION

By David Tait

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (Revelation 12:11)



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Many thoughts, particularly in ‘The First and Last Word’, have been crystallised by the following works of Kevin Connor.

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EAGLES FLY HIGH!

FROM PASSOVER – THROUGH PENTECOST – TOWARDS TABERNACLES

PASTORS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS VERSION

by DAVID TAIT

***HOLINESS *HELPS *HARVEST**

**A selection of material, specifically oriented towards students of the Word,
compiled from the trilogy ‘Eagles Fly High!’ A revelation on God’s past, present
and future plan for the individual believer and ‘The Church’.**

**They overcame him (satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the
word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death. (Revelation 12:11)**

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A NOTE FROM DAVID.....

This book is a compilation of materials selected from the trilogy (3 book series) 'Eagles Fly High!' specially for those who wish to learn what 'The Word' reveals about God's plan for us as individual believers in Jesus and for His 'Church' as a whole. For His plan was foreshadowed from the beginning of Genesis and clearly revealed to Moses through the patterns of Moses Tabernacle and the Feasts of the Lord. Finally, it was beautifully and succinctly summarised in a single verse in the very last book of the Bible, as found in Revelation 12:11.

Fun and feelings are great, but our life must be based upon the unchangeable, eternal, immutable (has a solid sound to it! Means 'not subject to variation in different cases.')

Word of God. Unless our lives and actions are based upon a solid foundation of The Word, we are bound to stray away from God's will for us. For the only concrete, infallible knowledge we have of the nature of God, (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and His plan for mankind is contained within its many pages.

Being honest, the Bible is not the easiest book to absorb and understand, nor is it meant to be. For it is deliberately written in a way that requires Christians, the followers of Jesus, to search out for themselves the infinite truths that it contains. We do not have to do it all alone however, as the Father has graciously given the Holy Spirit to dwell inside each believer, to teach us the truths the Bible contains and to guide us, as we attempt to apply them to our lives.

He has given us two 'Testaments', the Old and the New. This was not by chance, as nothing in God is by chance. For we require an understanding of both the Old and the New to obtain the full picture of God's plans and purposes for His precious creation – us! It is not possible to neglect the Old if we wish to fully understand the New. Sorry about that! I am not sorry really, for the Old Testament contains treasures aplenty, just waiting to be discovered by the willing reader. From bloodthirsty battles to intrigue in the Courts of Kings, from infidelity and murder to holy and righteous living, the Old Testament provides a fascinating, revealing and vital backdrop to understanding the New.

I must admit to not being clever enough to work this out for myself, but once I was taught some of the amazing truths it contains, my understanding of the whole Bible increased dramatically. So please, as we now delve into these areas and relate them to the more familiar teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, take the time to try and understand what the next 120 pages contains. Even if it does seem difficult the first time, particularly if this is all new to you. But if you persist, I am sure you will become as excited and inspired by God's glorious plan as I have.

I have tried to make this book as interesting and life giving as I am able. However learning does require effort on the student's part too. A teacher can try to impart knowledge clearly and inspirationally but in the final analysis, it is up to the student to absorb and apply the principles being taught. It does take time and effort. If you are not in that place at the moment, still please try to read through it for the general truths it brings out and come back to the details another time. You will find the effort well worthwhile.

Of course I am only human, so inevitably I look at things with my 'David Spectacles' on. So please, don't take all, or that matter any, of what I say as being the 'gospel truth.' Please check me out in the Word, seeing what it says there for your self. I might be making it all up! While I would not deliberately do that, I can and do make mistakes. Ask my wife and family! I haven't reached perfection yet. A way still to go!

So, that's enough talking - let's get on with it! I trust what follows will be life changing for you too, as it has been for me.

As we journey together through this book we must never forget that the centrality of our faith is found in the death of Jesus upon the cross at Calvary. Without His obedient and loving sacrifice, the truths revealed in the following pages would be worthless. This anointed, non translatable poem says it all.

SEVEN TIMES SHED FOR ME

- Matthew 27:46* *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaacthani” He cried,
My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?
On the stroke of the ninth hour he died
Rejected, cruelly nailed to the God deserted tree.
My Jesus, shedding his blood for me.*
- Luke 22:42* *To Gethsemane he came, the holy one
Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me;
Yet not my will, but yours be done.
For I’ll ever be obedient, until you set me free.*
- Luke 22:44* *Being in anguish he prayed more earnestly,
His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.
The disciples exhausted, slept on peacefully.
Returning from his prayers, by Jesus they were found.
My Jesus, he shed his blood for me.*
- Luke 22:47* *While he was still speaking a crowd came up,
Included traitor Judas, with whom he did sup.
The chief priests, officers, soldiers and all,
They arrested him, for that was their call.*
- Matthew 26:67* *At the chief priests house they questioned him,
Spit in his face and struck him with their fists.
The cup of his blood now overflowing its rim,
Grieving eyes closing, seeing through mists.
My Jesus, again he shed his blood for me.*
- Matthew 27:11* *So Jesus, my Saviour, to Pilate was now taken,
His determination to do God’s will, never shaken.
27:11 “Are you the king of the Jews?” Pilate demanded,
“Yes it is as you say”. My Saviour then remanded.*
- Matthew 27:23* *“What crime has he committed?” The people, they were consulted.
27:22-3 “Crucify him! Crucify him!” The rabble cried out loud.
27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them, Pilate’s feelings most insulted,
27:26 While he had Jesus flogged, simply to please the crowd.
A third time, my Jesus shed his blood for me.*
- Isaiah 50:6* *Seven hundred years before that terrible day,
Through the prophet Isaiah my Jesus did say,
“I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting”,
To happen to Jesus, God’s son, was not befitting.*

Isaiah 50:6 *"I offered my back to those who beat me,
My cheeks to those who pulled out my beard."*
With beard gone, Oh God, how could it be,
So intense the pain, more than he had feared.
Four times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.

Matthew 27:27 *Then the Governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium.*
No peace for him there, no place to rest, was no sanatorium,
27:28 *They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,*
Preparing my Jesus to die, out on that awful limb.

Matthew 27:29 *They twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head,*
27:29 *They put a staff in his right hand, for truly he was the righteous king.*
They used the staff to beat the thorns in deeper and deeper instead,
27:30 *Struck him on the head again and again, making worse his suffering.*
Five times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.

Psalm 22:15 Under the weight of the cross, voice slurred,
*"My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth",*
Step by step weakening, as he headed south.

Psalm 22:16 Hung on to the cross, *"they pierced my hands and my feet."*
Matthew 27:33-4 *At The Place of the Skull. There they offered Jesus wine to drink.*
The time was coming near, with his Father again to meet.
His blood poured out, his body near death, it began to shrink.
Six times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.

Mark 15:33 *Darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour,*
An 'awe-full', fearsome display of God's fury and power!
Mark 15:37 *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last,*
His worldly pain, now a thing of the past.

John 9:33 *The soldiers came to Jesus and found that he was already dead,*
So now there was no need to break his legs.
A lunging spear into his side, spewing forth blood so red,
All poured out, right down to the dregs.
This final time, Jesus shed all his blood for me.

Yes, seven times my Jesus shed his blood for me,
Receiving from the Father, forgiveness of all my sin.
He came to earth; he died, forever to set me free,
He opened the heavenly gates, now to welcome me in.
All because, seven times, Jesus shed his blood for me.

My thanks to Dr Derek Prince for his insights
in discovering and teaching this truth.

David Tait: 20 January 2000

REVELATION 12:11

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

WE OVERCOME SATAN BY BELIEF IN JESUS
who is

'THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB'

*Words are cheap, dreams are free,
'Tis our heart that God does see.*

FAR FROM PERFECT - BUT ALLOWING GOD TO WORK ON IT!

THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY

WE OVERCOME SATAN BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
who is

'THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY'

*Wise men's words illuminate the moment,
But God's Word is an eternal flame.*

THE HIGHEST CALL – TO BE THE LIVING WORD

**THEY DID NOT LOVE THEIR LIVES SO MUCH AS TO
SHRINK FROM DEATH.**

WE OVERCOME SATAN BY OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF THE FATHER
as we

'LOVE NOT OUR OWN LIVES SO MUCH AS TO SHRINK FROM DEATH.'

*Reach for a light bulb and God provides the ladder.
Reach for the stars and He designs you a spaceship.*

DEPENDENT UPON GOD, INTERDEPENDENT AMONGST EACH OTHER,
INDEPENDENT OF THE OLD NATURE.

A LITTLE ABOUT SCRIPTURE AND REVELATION

As I expect you will have gathered by now this is not a deep theological presentation! That doesn't mean though, that it is without a scriptural basis, indeed the very opposite. Before we get into the heart of the matter, there are two areas relating to scripture I would like to cover, which have been of great importance to me in my walk with the Lord. I hope they will help you too and show a little more of where I am coming from. They relate to the sources of our knowledge of God and the concept of 'types and patterns' in scripture.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

There are three basic sources of this knowledge, all three of which will be seen throughout the pages ahead, God willing.

1. **The Word of God.** That is the word given by God to the writers of scripture and recorded in the Bible. This has been, is and will remain always, the most accurate and reliable source we have available to us of the nature and will of God.
2. **Revelation of the Word of God.** While God's word never changes, our understanding of it does. God graciously reveals deeper truths to those who seek. None of us have all the truth, for then would be God! The recent new level (for me) of understanding of the book of Ruth that follows later, is a good example of this. These "understandings" do need to be affirmed by others of good standing, to confirm their correctness.
3. **Revelation of the Spirit of God,** as placed in mankind's mind by the Holy Spirit. Usually as thoughts or impressions, visions or dreams. This is a tricky and controversial area to say the least! Why? Because revelations can come from one of three sources:
 - a. **The Holy Spirit.** Fantastic! A normal part of walking with the Lord being recorded many times in both the Old and New Testaments.

- b. **The Human Spirit.** In obvious error if claimed to from the Holy Spirit. Although most often well meaning, these reflect the desires of the heart of the "revelator", are unlikely to be correct, and are certainly not inspired.
- c. **Counterfeit Satanic Spirit.** Obviously in error, and the most dangerous of the three. Particularly so, as most often, it contains a certain amount of truth along with the deception. Satan is usually far cleverer than telling out and out lies that can be seen to be obviously wrong. Rather he mingles truth and error in a package designed to deceive us that he is 100% right. This leads us, subtly at first, but finally more openly, into error.

So how do we determine what spirit is of God and what isn't? Unfortunately the answer is not always as clear cut as we would like it to be, hence why so many problems arise. So what happens then? Many deny the validity of all revelation of the spirit, throwing the baby out with the bath water so to speak. Grieving the Holy Spirit and missing out a deeper understanding of the nature and will of God. So how do we tell, (discern, to use the right religious term) which spirit the words we hear, are from? This problem area is dealt with in *1 Corinthians 2:6-16*. In summary, it says that we will only understand which of the spirits we are hearing from, by the Holy Spirit telling us whether what we hear is right or wrong. This understanding takes time to develop, but as we progress towards spiritual maturity, we better learn to hear, understand and trust the Holy Spirit, as He works in our life.

Now I realise this explanation does not give the black and white answer we would wish for. But it does give the 'Christian' answer, which I hope will become clearer and clearer as we move through the chapters ahead. For Christianity is not a system of beliefs, it is a personal relationship with a loving God. I don't know about you, but my experience has been that it takes time and effort to build relationships. I

know, much to my sorrow and discredit, that it has taken me 29 years to build a relationship with Kathy that I could have had much earlier, had I been prepared to make the effort and to listen! So it is with God. We will learn to discern the spirits, more and more, as we develop a closer relationship with our heavenly Father. No short cuts I'm afraid.

However there are also several practical areas we can look at when looking to see if a "revelation" is likely to be of God.

1. Does the Revelation Line Up With Scripture? No matter who or where a revelation comes from, if it doesn't line up with scripture it is not of God. Full stop. No further questions required. No excuses valid.

2. Does the Revelator's Life Line Up With Scripture? While none of us are perfect, least of all me as you will be rapidly grasping, does the man or woman's life mostly live up to the principles they talk about. This can often be difficult to discern particularly with well-known leaders, to whose private lives we are not privy. But take the time and make the effort, to find out as much as you can before making a judgement on a person's revelation, one way or the other.

3. Have the Revelator's Previous Revelations Been Accurate? An excellent test, particularly to those who claim to be prophets of future events. It never ceases to amaze me how gullible people are, hanging on to a prophet's present words when they have been consistently wrong in the past. Of course we all make mistakes, but there needs to be a consistency of accuracy for the words to be given credence. Watch out here David, you could be hoisted by your own petard! But this again, is not a book about end-time events as such, but an invitation to be part of a body who, through God's leading, will help fulfil God's destiny for His church, in the way He desires, not as David says.

I fully realise that what follows, in the chapters ahead, will be discarded by some as being false revelation. I can safely predict, without any prophetic insight being necessary, that I will be

accused as a heretic by some, for any insights that the Lord may graciously have give me. Unfortunately that is the fate bestowed on anyone with a new revelation (How about Jesus!) by those who feel they "have it all" already. Sadly, such is the history of the church. A truth is given, accepted, enacted and then nothing. Nothing more is allowed. How sad, for God's truth is never changing but ever revealing. Revelation, including what follows, will never be final until the Lord's return. That is the reason why I talk a fair bit about 'me'. My life, my background, experiences, attitudes and hopes, warts and all, are included to give you a basis for making your own judgement. For I am fully confident the Lord is speaking through me. The decision as to whether you firstly, accept it, and secondly, whether you wish to participate in it, is up to you.

TYPES AND PATTERNS IN SCRIPTURE

When I found out about these concepts – no - realities, my total understanding of scripture and the level of my faith mushroomed. I would like to share these with you now so that hopefully the light may come on for you as it did for me (if it hasn't already). An understanding is also required so that you can see how the revelations that follow have been compiled.

1.Types in Scripture: This was an amazing discovery and a real faith builder for me. For I like to know that things don't happen just by chance. Are you the same? It did wonders for my faith when I realised that the coming of Jesus wasn't just a good idea that God had on the spur of the moment, but something that was planned from the beginning of time. For there are a number of people in the Old Testament who in certain aspects of their lives, are types or pictures of Jesus, sometimes thousands of years before He was born. In fact, it started right from the beginning, with Adam. But surely not Adam, David? He was responsible for the mess we are in now! What's your authority? Well I trust my authority is the best – scripture! Take a look with me at *1 Corinthians 15:42-49*. For space reasons I will just quote enough to give the idea.

“.....The first man Adam became a living being, the last Adam, (i.e. Jesus) a life – giving spirit.....The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.....And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.”

I trust the Apostle Paul’s argument is convincing, even if mine is not. Yes, Adam had a physical body of similar type to Jesus who was to come. There are many other examples where the leaders of the Old Testament exhibited characteristics of Jesus. Our study on the book of Ruth, that follows later, is full of these “types”, with all the leading characters being pictures of elements in today’s world. Isn’t it just amazing how words written thousands of years ago, can

still be of relevance today, in ways in which the writers could not have imagined. It just has to be God!

2. Patterns in Scripture: Another ‘scripture changing’ experience was when I had God’s patterns in scripture, explained to me. We will spend a lot of time later considering patterns that God used in His dealings with mankind. They reflect the heart of God, illustrated in places and forms of worship, as well as in His dealings with His people. These, as we will see, are amazingly interconnected, and still of extreme importance to us in the days in which we live. You will have to read on for examples. Sorry to be such a ‘spoil sport’ but I do have to leave some incentive for you to turn over the page! I trust you will then share my excitement too!

NOTES...

POWER OF THREE IN GOD AND HIS CHURCH

THE POWER OF 3 IN GOD

One of the most powerful “discoveries” the Lord has granted me in my walk with Him has been the significance of the number “three” in God’s heavenly order. For those of you who have studied “numerics”, that is the study of the significance of numbers in the bible, this will come as no surprise. For “3” is recognised as being the number of God. It doesn’t take a genius (so even I can understand) that the “GOD” of the Christian faith is a very specific deity of 3 parts, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, normally called the “Trinity”.

Three in one, yet one in three. Now that is more difficult to understand! A mystery. We have to depend on God the Father to reveal this truth to us, through Jesus, our intermediary with Him, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, God living within us. Confused? We need to ask God to reveal this mystery to us and over time, as our relationship with Him deepens, He does. Maybe this sounds like typical “spiritual speak”, a pat answer, but I have certainly found it to be coming true for me. It does take time though.

The best example in our physical world, for attempting to explain this mystery, is to look at water, an essential of life. Water can be found in three forms, usually as a liquid, but also as a solid in the form of ice, and as a gas, in the form of steam. Three forms of the same substance, the form determined by temperature variations. Spiritually, God like water, is an essential of life, although sadly, many reject Him.

ONE GOD in three forms, fulfilling differing spiritual roles. God the Father, the designer of the universe, a spirit being

“who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.” (1 Timothy 6:16)

God the Son, for

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.” (Colossians 1:15-16)

Yes Jesus is the human image of God, the creator and ruler of the universe. We could do with Him here now, to explain how creation did evolve! Ask the maker for the real answer! Would quickly solve a lot of arguments!

And finally, God the Holy Spirit, our spiritual teacher, guide and comforter, helping us find our way through the intricate intimacies of life – when we allow Him to!

“But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come.” (John 16:13)

The verse also provides insight into the unity of the Godhead as well as defining the role of the Holy Spirit.

I have just had a thought! Must be inspired! Wouldn’t it be great if we could have 3 differing bodies for different purposes. A sure way to win the Olympic decathlon! The strong body of the sprinter (without the need to take steroids!), the slim, lean body of the distance runner for the 1500 metres, exchanged for one of sheer bulk and power for the field events. An unbeatable combination! Sometimes I think an invisible body would be very handy too! A fly on the wall perhaps? Better say no more!

While the mystery of the Godhead is awesome and has challenged the understanding of Christians down the ages, what follows is just absolutely amazing! For through the “power of three” God reveals His plans for His church. From the beginning of time until the return of Jesus! Truly exciting? Yes! Because as we

approach end times, we can see God’s ultimate plan and purpose for us and His church become a reality. What could be more exciting than that? Beats a Big Mac any day!

THE POWER OF 3 IN THE CHURCH

The “power of 3 in the church” is what this book is all about, indeed what the church is all about, as we approach the climax of this age! We will explore some of the many truths God is revealing through His word, in so many different ways. His plans for the past, present and most importantly, the future of His church and His people, are excitingly revealed and confirmed

consistently throughout scripture. We are going to travel down an exciting, stimulating, yet challenging path, exploring what the future holds for those who are willing to answer God’s call today, to commence building His church of tomorrow, right now.

The table below enables us to become more familiar with the patterns of three established time and again throughout God’s word. The scriptures are examples only. If you are really keen, or don’t believe what you see, try seeking out further references in your concordance. A computerised concordance is a real timesaver – or I am sure it will be when I get one!

THE POWER OF THREE

PATTERN OF...	JESUS	HOLY SPIRIT	THE FATHER
NOTE: The patterns or types are split into two sections for clarity, emphasising their main thrust. All can be applied to both the individual and the church however, so should not be looked upon as being mutually exclusive.			
THE CHURCH			
DEVELOPMENT	TRADITIONAL/ EVANGELICAL	CHARISMATIC/ PENTECOSTAL	END TIME/ TABERNACLE
<i>Matthew 16:18 Colossians 1:18-20</i>	<i>Ephesians 1:22-23</i>	<i>John 14:16</i>	<i>Matthew 26:39</i>
PROGRESSIVE TRUTH/S REVEALED	Salvation by Grace thru’ Faith in Jesus	Holy Spirit Baptism or Release	Obedience to God’s Will
<i>John 3:21,8:31-32 1 John 5:6-8</i>	<i>Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 3:21-26</i>	<i>Acts 2:1-4 Joel 2:23a,28</i>	<i>Hebrews 10:9-10 Joel 2:23b,29-32</i>
FEASTS OF THE LORD	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles
<i>Leviticus 23:4-44</i>	<i>Leviticus 23:4-14</i>	<i>Leviticus 23:15-22</i>	<i>Leviticus 23:23-44</i>
MOSES TABERNACLE	Outer Court	Holy Place	Holy of Holies
<i>Exodus 25:1-27:21</i>	<i>Exodus 27:1-19</i>	<i>Exodus 26:1-37</i>	<i>Exodus 26:1-37</i>
THE EXODUS	Red Sea	The Desert	Promised Land
<i>Exodus,Numbers,Deutrnny,Joshua</i>	<i>Exodus 12:1-15:21</i>	<i>Exodus14:21-22,15:22 on</i>	<i>Joshua 1:1-24:33</i>
THE OVERCOMERS	Blood of the Lamb	Word of Testimony	Submission to Death
<i>Revelation 12:11</i>	<i>Reelation12:11a</i>	<i>Revelation 12:11b</i>	<i>Revelation 12:11c</i>
THE 3 THAT TESTIFY	Blood	Spirit	Water
<i>1 John 5:6-7</i>	<i>1 John 5:7</i>	<i>1 John 5:7</i>	<i>1 John 5:7</i>

PATTERN OF...	JESUS	HOLY SPIRIT	THE FATHER
<u>THE INDIVIDUAL</u>			
DEVELOPMENT <i>Hebrews 6:1</i>	Salvation <i>John 10:9</i>	Spirit <i>Acts 9:17</i>	Submission <i>Colossians 4:12</i>
THE NEW COVENANT <i>Jeremiah 31:33</i>	The Sacrifice <i>Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:9-10</i>	The Seal <i>Acts 1:4-5, 2:1-4, Eph. 1:13-14</i>	The Promise <i>Hebrews 8:10</i>
3 PARTS OF MAN <i>1 Thessalonians 5:23</i>	Body <i>1 Corinthians 6:18-20</i>	Spirit <i>1 Corinthians 7:34</i>	Soul <i>Matthew 10:28, 16:26</i>
3 PARTS OF THE SOUL <i>Hebrews 8:10-11</i>	Mind <i>Romans 12:2</i>	Emotions (Heart) <i>Romans 10:9-10</i>	Will <i>1 Corinthians 7:37</i>
NEW TESTAMENT TRIAD <i>1 Corinthians 13:13</i>	Hope <i>1 Thessalonians 5:8</i>	Faith <i>Romans 1:17</i>	Love <i>1 Corinthians 16:13</i>
THE 3 BIRDS <i>Matthew 6:26, Revln. 19:17-21</i>	Sparrow <i>Psalms 84:3-4</i>	Dove <i>John 1:32-34</i>	Eagle <i>Revelation 12:14</i>
THE MAGI'S GIFTS <i>Matthew 2:1-12</i>	Myrrh <i>Mark 15:23</i>	(Frank)incense <i>Exodus 30:34</i>	Gold <i>Exodus 25:10-22</i>
PARABLE OF TALENTS <i>Matthew 25:14-30</i>	One Talent <i>Matthew 25:18</i>	Two Talents <i>Matthew 25:16</i>	Five Talents <i>Matthew 25:17</i>
PARABLE OF 10 MINAS <i>Luke 19:11-27</i>	Kept 1 Mina <i>Luke 19:20-24</i>	Earned 5 Minas <i>Luke 19:18-19</i>	Earned 10 Minas <i>Luke 19:16-17</i>
BUILDING FAITH <i>1 Corinthians 12:4-6</i>	Gifts <i>1 Corinthians 12:4</i>	Service <i>1 Corinthians 12:5</i>	Working <i>1 Corinthians 12:6</i>
THE POWER OF 3 <i>David's Revelation</i>	3x1 = 3 <i>N/A</i>	3x3 = 9 <i>N/A</i>	3x3x3 = 27 <i>N/A</i>

This list, while not complete, is comprehensive enough to switch the light on, even in my simple mind. Surely all these similarities cannot be just chance? I think that God is trying to say something here – in fact I am sure of it - because He has confirmed it to me. How about you?

Yes, the pattern is there for all to see. The Christian walk is a journey towards maturity, not just an event. It saddens me to meet people whose only highlight in their walk with Jesus has been their salvation. This applies also to those who stop at the baptism, or release, of the Holy Spirit. For there is so much more to be had! Today, God is calling us as individuals and a 'church', to a new level of faith, commitment and maturity in Him.

This progression is clearly illustrated in the pattern set down in the Feasts of the Lord, where we move through Passover to Pentecost, then on to participate in the Feast of Tabernacles. It certainly excites me! How about you? To be part of the promised final move of God, preparing the way for the return of Jesus! Nothing could be more spiritually satisfying and rewarding. Yes,

we live in the days when the Lord's promises are finally being fulfilled.

But how do you know this with such confidence, David? Firstly, because the Lord has confirmed it to me. Secondly, and more importantly, because He has confirmed it through His word.

The table above summarises many but by no means all, of the patterns of scripture that point to the biblical pattern of a three-part God working in a three-part way in His dealings with His creation, humankind. Before looking further, we can draw some general conclusions from the table itself.

1. God does indeed have a "triune" (three-part) but unified nature.
2. His triune personality is revealed in many varying ways through His word.
3. The triune patterns of His nature are reflected in His dealings with us, His creation, both as individuals and as members of His church. And most importantly....

4. The way He has dealt with His people in the past is in accordance with His triune nature. This, in turn, establishes the pattern for His dealings with us now and in the future.

This is just another confirmation of *Hebrews 13:8*.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

We generally view this as a comforting scripture, revealing that we can always depend upon God. But too, because God never changes, we can extrapolate from what He has done in the past, to see what He is doing now and will do in the future. That has certainly been a revelation to me and I hope will be to you too, if it hasn't already been.

In the pages ahead we are going to take a more detailed look at the course God has purposed for His people from the beginning of time. We will see how consistent God is in His dealings with us, for there is nothing new in God. What does change though, is our human perception or understanding of what He has done, is doing and will do. But this book is not intended to be the final word on the future of the church and God's people, but instead reflects what the Lord has graciously shown us at the present time. As He wills, and as we are ready to receive it, further enlightenment will undoubtedly be revealed. To reiterate, we are on a journey, not merely attending an event. For that is where so many churches and Christians are conned into participating in the lie of the devil - believing they have it all and need no longer seek more of their God.

For it is a truism that, those who have been at the forefront of the last move of God are sadly, very often, the loudest critics of the next. This is how denominations are formed – a truth is revealed and exalted so highly that no further revelation is desired or allowed. Another denomination. So what alternative does God have? He must find a

new group of people to hear and implement His further revelation. And so the cycle continues.

Some say, this may be the case with others, but it doesn't apply to those of us in Pentecost! Well, sorry, I have some very bad, but also very good news for you! For not only is Pentecost not the final destination for God's church and people, but it too, has in many places, become formalised and institutionalised.

One particular, if extreme, example forcibly made this point to me. I read an article setting out the precise way one should raise their hands in worship of the Lord. Now I may be missing something, but I cannot for the life of me see anywhere in scripture where it states, “Thou shalt only praise the Lord with thy hands fully raised, thou palms facing forwards”! Now I must admit to being highly prejudiced in this very important matter. For when I raise my arms to the Lord my palms are generally upwards facing! I do realise that most people are not like me in this. But I refuse to feel condemned to eternal damnation, by the way I raise my hands in worship of my God. I am sure the Lord will forgive me if I am wrong in this, provided it is not the unpardonable sin of course! The huge internal battle I had to win when I first wanted to raise my hands in worship, in a church where it is not the norm, will I hope, stand in my favour. Besides, I have the excuse that I did not learn how to raise my hands in the right school! Yes, for me, hand raising was motivated by that feared word of religious people – spontaneity!

Well, that is enough of that. I do hope though, that it makes us all think of areas which have become “institutionalised” in our personal and church lives. For if we are to be enlightened by what God will reveal in the pages to follow, we need to put aside our preconceptions, and be prepared to embrace not only new ways of thinking, but also a new and greater commitment to action. If I haven't scared you off already, please join me on this journey. A journey to explore the exciting future that awaits us when we are prepared to truly embrace the final part of *Revelation 12:11*,

POWER OF THREE IN GOD AND HIS CHURCH

“they loved not their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

The third part of this amazing verse must be missing in most Pentecostal bibles, as you rarely here it quoted along with the very popular first

two parts! (It is probably not in the bible at all in more traditional churches, as you virtually never hear the verse quoted there, not even in part). I wonder why? It can't be, and isn't, as bad as it seems - surely! In fact it is not bad at all! So let's now find out why.....

NOTES...

WALKING IN THE WAY: OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

Living our life today while preparing for His return.

THE DECISION

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

LIVING THE LIFE

“They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the lamb (Jesus – ‘The Way of Salvation’) and by the word of their testimony; (The Holy Spirit – ‘Life through the Spirit’) they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” (The Father – ‘Jesus is Lord’) (Revelation 12:11)

The Way of Salvation

“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” (Mark 10:15)

Life Through The Spirit

“For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” (Romans 8:13-14)

Jesus is Lord

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything..... Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:2-4,12)

A TESTIMONY.....

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7-8)

WHY WALK IN THE WAY?

Why walk in the way? This is a very good question for a Christian to ask. Many sincere Christians will say, “all we need to do is genuinely accept Jesus as ‘Saviour’”. Once saved, always saved. God’s grace does it all. For that is all that is required to get the reward of eternal life, isn’t it? This is a valid view, supported by scripture. As an example, *Romans 11:29*. “for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.” These believers are called ‘Calvinists’, named after a great man of God, John Calvin, who promoted this viewpoint. Taken to its extreme though, this view can promote lawless living - for all will be forgiven on the day (of judgement) because I have been “saved”! Not an argument the righteous John Calvin would have agreed with though!

On the other side of the fence are the Armenians, who believe that an individual Christian has personal responsibility for maintaining their own salvation and that salvation can be lost through unrighteous living. Salvation plus works is necessary to attain eternal life. This view is supported by even more scripture, both Old and New Testament. *Hebrews 10:26-7* is extremely direct!

“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

‘Not so hot’ a fate! Rather – too hot! The danger in this viewpoint however, is that works and legalism can become exaggerated and God’s grace forgotten.

Why is life so difficult! What is the truth?

The truth is found in the combination of the two. Faith and works are of equal importance. For our faith motivates us to do works, while our works display our faith. I really like James’ writings for he was a very practical person. He deals with this very subject in *James 2:14-26*. In my bible,

this section is entitled “Faith and Deeds.” Let’s look at 3 verses.

(v21-22) “Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. (v24) You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.”

Faith resulting in works. Pretty amazing faith in this instance! Fortunately God stepped in and stopped the works in time! Incidentally, it has been calculated that Isaac was 25-27 years old at the time, so his faith and obedience levels (passive work in this instance – allowing himself to be bound and laid on the alter, waiting for a knife to slit his throat) were extremely high too!

Yes, we need to walk in the way, for our journey is meant to be one of ever increasing levels of both faith and works. The whole point of this book is that there are so many amazing treasures that God has in store for us when we seek a deeper and still deeper and deeper still relationship with Him. When we walk in the way.

Let’s look at our natural life, for example. Before conception we don’t exist! Now there are a lot of people who go to church who don’t exist, in the sense of not being in God’s family. They are called “Religious” people, who believe that attendance at church, plus, maybe, doing of a few good deeds, is enough to buy them a ticket on the fast ferry to heaven. Or in these days, they leave out the going to church bit also, relying on their good deeds alone to pay their fare. Usually they believe that there are many ways of finding God. A “New Age Reincarnation” of age-old ideas. They will undoubtedly be highly critical of this book as being narrow and fanatical. Reminds me of a great definition of a “fanatic” – someone who loves God more than you do! That is the last time we will talk of these people, as

WHY WALK IN THE WAY?

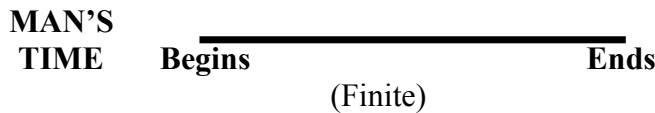
this book definitely is not for them, whether they religiously go to church or not.

When born we are, of course, *'children'*. In a loving home, children are cared for as they are unable to fend for themselves. They are fed, clothed, housed, loved and given gifts. This relates to the 'born again' experience. For we become a "child of Jesus". He loves us, feeds us and gives us gifts.

Then we grow into *'teenagers'*! We start pushing out into life, seeking to find our own niche. It can be very painful. Most people you ask would not like to go through those years again. Big highs, but often, even bigger lows. Can you relate to that? Spiritually, this relates to the charismatic/pentecostal experience. The blessings of the Holy Spirit's gifts, counterbalanced by the attacks of Satan. A time of finding out whom we are in God.

The trials of the teens lead into the maturity of *'adulthood'*. Not throwing away our youthful enthusiasm, but learning instead, to harness the highs and control the lows of our teenage years. This can be compared to coming into maturity in Christ, through the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Learning to be as Jesus was, in total submission to the will of God the Father. (The power of 3!)

But there is one big difference between the natural and the spiritual. That is in the completely different understanding and application, of time. In the natural, time starts



Our walk with Jesus then, is a process, like our journey through life. It is not dependent upon time like our natural walk, but upon spiritual growth, upon relationship with God. An individual may have been a Christian for many years, having accepted Jesus as Saviour, but still be a child in the Lord and quite happy staying there. No condemnation here for that. For God

when we are born, frustratingly continues at the same pace through life – seeming too slow when we are young, yet too fast as we get older! But for God in the spiritual realm, time has no beginning, no middle and no end. I struggled to understand this concept. So I asked the Lord about it. He showed me that for us, time is a line, (a "time-line") with a finite beginning and end from birth and death. But for God, time is a circle, infinite, because a circle has no beginning and is never ending. For we must start at one point, moving in one direction only (sorry no secret of eternal youth on earth here), while God can move round the circle, either way, at any time. My son, Nigel, suggested using the infinity symbol instead of the circle. That would be an equally good or even better illustration. More mathematical than his old man!

Interestingly, the concept of time needed only to be introduced by God after man sinned. If Adam and Eve hadn't sinned, the need for time would never have existed, for they wouldn't have aged, they would have lived forever. It is death that created the need for time. A concept of limitation. In eternity however, time in the sense we understand it is a non-issue, for it is endless, not finite as here on earth. Like the air we breathe. It assumes no importance until we are trapped in a sealed room and every breath is one nearer our final one. Very important then! Takes a bit of grasping, doesn't it. This may help our understanding of the creation week too. For there is so much we don't understand. But one day we will! Praise the Lord!

gives the choice. If it's you however, you're most unlikely to be interested in what follows. The positive though, is that we don't have to be old in years to become mature in Christ. Maturity in God is a function of relationship, not time.

Then there are those who are spiritual teenagers. Some remain so all their life, but generally the constant trials will result in them retreating back into spiritual childhood (being hurt and moving back into a less threatening spiritual situation) or giving away their walk with the Lord altogether. Many charismatic/pentecostal churches and people are typical of this teenage stage of life. Derek Prince, the noted bible teacher, has said that in his early days in the Pentecostal church (1950s & 60's I presume) there was a saying, "we have it all." Sound like a teenager to you? One day he looked back at John Wesley, and quickly realised that John Wesley had something more again!

So what did people like John Wesley, my Auntie Ina, and possibly someone you know, have, that most of us "normal Christians" don't? For we need to consider our personal growth before looking at the church as a whole, and the exciting things the Lord has for it. Why? Two reasons.

- 1. The church consists of individuals.** Pretty obvious, David! But the church cannot progress into new realms until the individuals in it are prepared and ready to move!
- 2. God works in individuals first.** God prepared His church for change through men (and women) such as Luther, Wesley, Calvin, Finney, Booth and many others. We need to be personally prepared so God can use us too, as He chooses.

For God doesn't just wave a magic wand. He prepares His people for change ahead of time. Yes, even before the dramatic, initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It didn't happen unexpectedly. Jesus told the disciples and Peter passed this information on to the remnant of 120 believers – to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come. Those who were obedient and waited were able to participate in the greatest single event in church history since the death and resurrection of Jesus. But that wasn't the end of God's plan. For there is still one even more exciting event to come, more exciting from our perspective because we can directly participate in it! That is what we will look at later. But first things first! To participate in the events to come we must,

each one, get right with God first. For we have to do the hard work first! We can't hope to win the match without doing 'the hard yacker' of training first, my Australian friends would say. And the Aussies are pretty good at sport! Even if I hate to admit it, being a "true blue Kiwi"! (New Zealander).

May I use just one picture out of scripture to reinforce this? *1 Kings 6:7* tells us, in building Solomon's temple, (a picture of the church), the stones or blocks used, (a picture of the individual Christian), were dressed at the quarry,

"and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built."

The stones (Christians) were fully prepared before use! That is what we are being called to at this time. To be prepared for the fascinating, exciting, challenging, intriguing, unbelievable, most amazing days in the history of the world, ahead! You get the picture!

So we are going to start by looking at Revelation 12:11, the simple summary of the steps of our ideal walk with Jesus in the bible. Best of all it's only 5 lines long in my bible! If only it was so quick and easy to apply!

To ensure a solid foundation is built, I will go over things that you probably know well already. Please bear with me if you know it all. For there are a couple of good testimonies amongst it and hopefully some humour, which may be of interest! While this chapter is long, it does need to be fully absorbed and lived out, for the rest of the book to have an impact on our life. Unless of course you are a 'couch potato', a spectator in the faith, always looking, always knowing better, never putting your theories to the test. Then you will have a field day here!

But rather, I hope you, like me, genuinely desire to walk on in God's will for your life. I am sure we will find something that helps us on our way. So let's read on.....

WALKING THE ROAD WITH JESUS – Revelation 12:11

What to write about this amazing verse! Where do I start? When the Lord first gave me the verse 8 years ago, I had only the 29 words it contains, meaning this would be a very short chapter! But I am happy, or sorry, to say, depending upon your perspective, that the problem I now have is what to leave out! For the Holy Spirit, over a period of 18 months, gave me a 12 tape, 3 booklet, 30-hour course all based on this one verse. You may well think that I am verbose. Believe me, I am generally a man of few words, so no one was more surprised than I was, with the end result. Fortunately, it can't have all been bad, as many thousands of people have had their understanding grow and life change through this course.

For our purposes here, I promise you I will try and confine myself to a brief summary. This verse is so exciting though, it is really hard to! Discipline yourself David! However, we do need to spend a bit of time building a foundation to carry us through the rest of the book. So please bear with me. Trying really hard to grasp the principles involved, will increase our ability to understand the really interesting and challenging stuff that follows.

WHAT IS REVELATION 12:11 TALKING ABOUT?

The key to understanding Revelation 12:11 is to recognise that our Christian walk is a journey, not an event. I am sorry to keep labouring this point – well I am not sorry really - for I am trying to get across the absolutely pivotal idea, the one upon which this whole book is based – maturity in God is a process, both for the individual and the church as a whole.

Not surprisingly, as we have established in the earlier table, our walk is a three-step process. Each step builds on the previous one/s, and at each step, one member of the godhead predominates. Now I appreciate that this may

differ from common understanding. But please, don't reject it out of hand, because as you will see if you persist, this truth explains the reasons for a lot of the seemingly inexplicable things that happen as we progress in our walk with the Lord. And amazingly, it is all summed up in this one short verse, Revelation 12:11.

For the verse is split into three parts each corresponding with a stage in our walk with Jesus. This is where the name "Walking With Jesus Ministries" came from, just in case you were interested. The verse starts off by telling us why we should walk, rather than stand still, and that is to overcome Satan. Otherwise Satan is likely to overcome us! "*They overcame him (Satan) by....*" The "him" concerned is definitely Satan as he is clearly identified 2 verses earlier. Please check me out! Don't take my word for anything! I have been known to be wrong before today! The only way to make this truly real to you, is to confirm for yourself, that what (I believe) the Lord is saying through me is scripturally and spiritually correct. My family will tell you that I have not attained perfection yet! Probably too, that I still have a long way to go to get there!

Revelation 12:11 tells us that Satan can be overcome through a three step process to be worked out in our lives, each step building upon the previous one and emphasising a different member of the godhead. I must emphasise the order in the building process as set out. Short cuts aren't possible! That is why it takes time as well as desire to come to maturity in Christ. So let's see how it is done!

“THEY OVERCAME HIM (Satan) BY.....

1. ...THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB” (emphasising Jesus)

This is the easiest part of the verse to interpret for all true Christians have experienced it, by definition. We all know, at least experientially, about the power of the “blood” and the “lamb”, even if we are not 100% sure what they really mean. ‘Christianese’ is so very easy to fall into isn’t it? When we don’t understand something properly, we use a good religious word and everyone thinks that we are really with it! But then it is probably only me who has done that! But the meanings of these two words are quite clear in scripture.

a. The Lamb

The very first public declaration of Jesus’ ministry by John the Baptist was prefaced with,

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

There are of course, many pictures throughout the Old Testament, of the coming of Jesus as a lamb. These things excite me, as they are ongoing proof of God’s intentions and plans for mankind, right from earliest times! Really helps build my faith. Yours too?

Take Abraham, for example. Abraham lived 2,000 thousand years before Jesus. He was on the way with his precious son Isaac, to the place where his faith was going to be put to the ultimate test. He was being asked by God to sacrifice the precious son he fathered miraculously when he was 100 years old and his wife a mere ninety (even more of a miracle!). One gets the feeling that Isaac had inkling of what was going on because he asked where the sacrifice was going to come from. Abraham replied,

“God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” (Genesis 22:8)

And much to the relief of Abraham, let alone Sarah and Isaac, the miraculous sacrifice was provided, right at the last minute. God’s impeccable sense of timing,

once again! I am pleased to see that “last minute” doesn’t only apply to me!

Then again, around 500 years later, at the first Passover, the Israelites were required to sacrifice a lamb, then put its blood around the door to avoid their firstborn sons being killed along with those of the Egyptians (*Exodus 12:1-30*).

Two pictures of the lamb to come, that is Jesus, 2,000 and 1,500 years before He was born!

b. And the blood

The Passover story combines the blood and the lamb perfectly – the lamb was sacrificed and the blood used to protect the Israelites houses from the final plague of the death of the firstborn sons. A beautiful picture of Jesus, who was to come 15 centuries later! Jesus, the lamb sacrificed for us, whose blood was poured out for the forgiveness of all sins, saving us from spiritual death.

For scriptural confirmation of the connection between Jesus and the blood we will go to the last book of the bible, written towards the end of the 1st century AD. *Revelation 1:5* explains the relationship between sin and the blood of Jesus;

“.....To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood”.

So I trust it is clear to you that “the blood of the lamb” does in fact refer to Jesus.

c. A personal meaning

As indicated above, a personal experience of “*the blood of the lamb*” is the one and only essential qualification for becoming a Christian. The only membership requirement for entering God’s kingdom. Spiritually speaking, the cleansing blood of Jesus becomes effective in our lives at the time we accept Him as our “Saviour”, as the one who “saves us” from our sin and re-establishes our relationship with God the Father for us. His blood is available to everyone, but only

becomes effective when we ‘avail’ (take advantage of) ourselves of it. These ‘religious’ words such as ‘avail’ can be difficult to understand at first but they do convey very precise meanings that other words don’t.

For example, I grew up in a Christian home and knew all about Jesus and ‘salvation through the blood’. But knowledge was not enough to ‘save’ me. It was not until I was ready to personally accept His offer (availed myself of it) that it had personal application to me. Like buying a product from the “Life” shop where only one product is traded, eternal life (the blood of Jesus) upon a trade-in of eternal death (sin). If only supermarket shopping was so simple!

When born, we all receive an inheritance gift from our parents, the gift of sin. Sounds harsh, but it is true. For it is the continuing gift of countless generations past. But on the bright side it is the only acceptable currency at the Life shop and we all have sufficient of it! No we don’t have to work at getting more! I was pretty good at that for many years! We can read the Life shop’s advertising, we can even pass the shop by as I did for 42 years, but unless we enter through the door (Jesus) and personally trade in our sin, we can’t receive eternal life. There is no other currency we can use, only sin, for money is no good! Good works don’t work either! Nor can we send our spouse, parents, pastor or priest to trade on our behalf. We have to present the identity card of our life to make the transaction.

I walked past that door on many occasions when I was younger, looking at the advertising in the window, but reluctant to give up what I had for what seemed to me to be such a long term promise. Later I decided that the promise wasn’t what I wanted, preferring to run as far away from the shop as possible. It wasn’t until I became bankrupt, both morally and financially, having tried to fight with all I had and lost the battle, that I came back running,

repentant, to the Life shop. I willingly entered through the door of Jesus, to trade in my, by then, considerable sack of sin, for the ultimate gift of eternal life. Now I kick myself for not doing it sooner, for it was so much easier than I imagined, nor was the cost great either. For the pleasure of my bag of sin paled against the joy of my new ‘eternal’ life!

FINDING GOD THROUGH THE BLOOD

Why blood? What is so special about blood?

I have had a special interest in blood over the years because it has provided food for our family! No, we are not blood-sucking vampires, but Kathy worked for over 5 years, as the full time nurse at our local Tauranga Hospital, Blood Donors unit. The blood that Kathy took from the donors literally provided “life” to patients undergoing operations in the hospital. Incidentally, Kathy then changed her job to become a theatre nurse, so she now uses the blood she used to collect!

My spiritual eyes opened wide, understanding why God attaches so much importance to blood, when I discovered this verse in the Old Testament book of the law, *Leviticus 17:11*.

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement (oneness with God) for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”

Yes, blood is the spiritual symbol of life. So if blood represents life, the shedding of blood represents death.

We have to add one further spiritual principle, to get a clear understanding of the real meaning and purpose of the “blood of Jesus”. This spiritual principle is one we often prefer to ignore in today’s world, that of capital punishment. “Old Testament, David”, I hear you cry. Yes, it is Old Testament law, I know, but the Old Testament

established the principles for the New. Let's look in *Leviticus 24:17-18*.

"If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death.life for life."

You may argue that Jesus replaced this law with grace and love, but the spiritual principle remains. Even though it may seem gory or even old fashioned to us, whether we like it or not, God has consistently, throughout all 6,000 years of recorded history, required 'sacrifices'. The giving up of a life is a compulsory condition for restoring the 'life' or spiritual relationship, taken away when Adam and Eve sinned.

Let's have a quick look at what Adam and Eve did. Effectively they committed spiritual suicide! They had a spiritual blood transfusion, replacing the blood of righteousness (right with God), with the blood of sin (separation from God). Not a great bargain as it was to turn out! We all make mistakes though, don't we? To get back in relationship with God, mankind (and womankind too!) needed to reverse this sad situation, with a further blood transfusion of righteousness.

In Old Testament times this reconciliation with God was achieved through the sacrifice of animals, the lifeblood of the individual animal being "exchanged" for the forgiveness of an individuals unintentional sins. The sacrifice applied only from the time of his or her previous sacrifice, until the time of that sacrifice. Sins committed after the sacrifice had to wait until the next one, to be forgiven. Now this was hard on the animal population as well as on those who desired to be continually right with God! Jesus told us that God the Father didn't regard this situation as satisfactory in *Hebrews 10:8* when He said,

"Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them." The writer went on to make the comment, *"(although the law required them to be made)"*

But God had on hold at that time a much better plan, one that was fulfilled in the person of

Jesus. Jesus put the spiritual Blood Donors Clinic out of business once and for all! For He took it upon himself to give all His precious lifeblood, to enable everyone from that time on who would accept it, to have a once and for all "spiritual blood transfusion of righteousness." To have all sins forgiven, and make possible a return to the relationship that Adam and Eve had with God before they sinned.

This process is much better explained than I can, in chapters 5 of the book of Romans. Here are two excerpts to confirm this to you.

(5:12) "therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned". (5:19) "For just as through the disobedience of one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous."

So at the time of Jesus death we moved from the 'Age of Law' to the 'Age of Grace' (unmerited favour from God). From there being 'numerous sacrifices for sins,' to a 'single sacrifice for all sin.' Worked wonders for the animal population too!

To summarise, blood is symbolic of life. Adam rebelled against God, sacrificing his spiritual life in order to gain knowledge. To be restored to God, God requires a life for a life. Jesus gave His life as a substitute for ours, in order that we might regain our spiritual relationship with God. Thank you so very much, Jesus. We can now overcome Satan *"by the blood of the lamb"*.

THE THEORY AND THE REALITY

Now we know that in reality, we aren't yet walking in this intimate relationship with God. I have always had a problem here, for by nature I am a realist rather than a theorist. You might have gathered that by now anyway! I love to have a theory, an explanation to base reality upon, but not a theory for theory's sake. So I do have

problems with the blood of Jesus purifying me when I know damned well (oops – that proves it!) that I am not yet white as white. In a spiritual sense that is, for I do like a suntan. I am an awful lot better than I was 10 years ago though for the Lord has changed even me.

This book is about putting theory into practice, about experiencing that which has been achieved by Jesus positionally, what He has opened up for us. We should be perfect. Jesus has made that possible by *'the blood of the lamb'*. But it is not a reality yet, in my life anyway. In yours too? Why? God showed me that day 8 years ago when He explained Revelation 12:11 to me, that there are two further steps to the process. They are found in the last 2 parts of the verse. For God is 'triune', 3 parts, and we must accept and implement the functions of all three members of the Godhead in order to attain the perfection that Jesus provided the means to attain. For Jesus saved us, the Holy Spirit teaches, guides and empowers us so that God the Father can use and perfect us as we submit to His will. For as there are 3 parts of God, so there are 3 parts to the verse, and 3 stages in life that we must all walk through in order to reach perfection. Two of these stages have been fully revealed in Jesus and the Holy Spirit, while the third is yet to be finally fulfilled. That is why we have not yet fully attained in reality, all that Jesus made possible for us positionally, when He sacrificed His life, shed the *"blood of the Lamb"* on the cross at Calvary, nearly 2,000 years ago. Makes sense? I am sure it will by the time we reach the last page and you will be as excited as I am about what the future holds for us.

So let's now move on to the second part of the verse.

2. "THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY" (emphasising the Holy Spirit)

- a. **The Power of The Spirit:** I can hear you asking, David how does the word of their testimony relate to the Holy Spirit? Well, that was my question of the Lord too, when he first stopped me at this verse. And as usual, He had an answer. He took me to

Matthew 12:34. "You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."

The book of James similarly tells us that *"no man can tame the tongue (3:7)"*. Yes, in the end, no matter how we try to cover things up, the words we speak reflect our heart attitude. And our heart, the symbolic seat of our emotions or feelings, is the realm of the Holy Spirit. That is why, when we are baptised in or released into the power of the Holy Spirit, our ability to express our emotions in our worship, in the adoration of our God, increases amazingly.

"so that with one heart and mouth (by the Holy Spirit) you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:6)

Yes, the 3 parts' of the godhead work together in perfect unity.

For someone I know personally quite well, one David Tait actually, used to sing so seriously and formally, with feet firmly anchored to the floor and hands glued to the hymnal. Now he is able to raise his hands in worship and even dance before the Lord, until he runs out of breath – in spite of the exercise regime he undertakes to kid himself that he is still 26 when he is actually twice that age! The dancing would be even shorter though, without the exercise! I can tell you, for that change to have taken place in me, a miracle needed to occur. The power of the Holy Spirit released in me was it! My life now, both vocal and physical, has been turned upside down, (right way up actually!), and is proof of the truth that *"the word of their testimony"*, the Holy Spirit, can

revolutionise your life. If He could do it to me He can do it to anyone! My pastor says amen to that!

This relationship of the Spirit to our testimony is again confirmed in *Revelation 19:10*.

“At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he (the angel) said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”” (i.e. a gift of the Holy Spirit)

Once again the 3 parts of the Trinity working in unison, Jesus, God (i.e. the Father) and the “spirit of prophecy”, the Holy Spirit. Our testimony of Jesus again comes through the working of the Holy Spirit.

b. Spiritual Gifts: Now for the controversy! If you cannot accept the contents of these 3 paragraphs, please do not bother to read any further, for you will be wasting your time. Sorry to be so blunt but that’s how it is. Without acceptance of the reality, for current times, of spiritual gifts, and their application to our life, we cannot enter the exciting and challenging realms that God has for us. These spiritual gifts were a natural part of the New Testament church and there is nowhere in scripture that says, or even infers, that they are not for God’s people today. We will look at the life, near death and restoration of the church later on. But for the individual, for you and I to participate in our personal restoration process with God the Father, we must understand and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our life. Well, that has got that off my chest! I feel a lot better now!

Let’s have a look at scripture to see what I am talking about. In *1 Corinthians 12:4-11*. This is not the only passage that refers to spiritual gifts and is not all-inclusive, but it illustrates well what I am saying. First of all, verses 7-10 list the gifts.

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.”

These choice gifts are still for each one of us today to experience, a generous present from a loving God through the Holy Spirit.

“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” (v11).

Just in the first century? My bible doesn’t say that! Isn’t this exciting. Birthday and Christmas all at once! Birthdays and Christmas didn’t stop in the first century! Sometimes I wouldn’t mind my birthdays slowing down a bit though!

c. Building our Faith: Now when I came to write this section I didn’t realise the amazing relevance of the three prior verses (*1 Corinthians 12:4-6*) to the message of this book. God often surprises us doesn’t he? Not so surprising though that the Holy Spirit should show me this at this time, as it is a ‘real time’ illustration of how He works!

Throughout this whole presentation we have been discussing the need to experience all three persons of the Godhead if we are to attain all that God has planned for us, in these amazing times in which we live. If I hadn’t managed to get that across earlier, I apologise and trust I have now! These 3 verses illustrate the point beautifully, far better than I could.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. (The Holy Spirit) There are different kinds of service but the same Lord.

(Jesus) There are different kinds of working but the same God (The Father) works all of them in all men."

Isn't that great? For these verses could have gone (have now been put in) our earlier table, illustrating the unity and function of the "Trinity" and the application of all three to our life. I didn't know about them initially! The bible is a bottomless source of the knowledge of God, and the Holy Spirit progressively reveals it to us. Please believe me, what I have written is true and not just a good story! I really was not aware of the application of these 3 verses until reading them again just a short time ago. God is good and I really do need His help. Thank you Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit builds our faith through our experience of His reality working in our life. This example has been another confirmation to me that I am working in God's will and gives me more confidence to keep going when things get tough, and they certainly do at times!

The bible also tells us directly, how to build our faith

"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit." (Jude 20)

Yes, the Holy Spirit builds us in our faith. He is there as our teacher, guide and friend, so it is logical that building our faith would be one of His prime roles.

d. Revealing the Word: You may be surprised to find a section on the revealing of the word amongst the section on the Holy Spirit. Wasn't that all done through Jesus? I know I was surprised when I first experienced it. But that is just what He did for me in the paragraph above! Many students of the word, including many theologians, feel they have an excellent understanding of the bible, having studied diligently for many years. Yet I made an important discovery when I came into the Spirit. For there were things that were revealed to me, that the 'experts' I had

read and heard, had not discovered in all their many years of study. I also found that this experience was not unique to me. There were many people who had these insights into God's word and the nature of Jesus that were missing from my previous experience. All of a sudden the bible took on a new interest, a new vitality for me. How? Who better to answer that question than Jesus himself in *John 16:13,15*

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. (v15) All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

Jesus is right! As always actually! I know it in my 'knower'! My personal testimony is that when the Holy Spirit, who lived in me from the time of my conversion, was released to do His work inside me, my understanding of the Word of God (the bible) and The Word (Jesus) increased dramatically. In spite of arguments to the contrary from those who feel that a Holy Spirit experience is unnecessary as a part of, or following conversion, I know this to be true. Let this book be my testimony, on which my case stands or falls. For we cannot move on towards the ultimate goal of intimacy with God the Father, without first experiencing both the salvation of Jesus (*the blood of the Lamb*) and the "in-filling" of the Holy Spirit (*the word of their testimony*). Please, before I am hung, drawn and quartered, I am not condemning academics, for they do a most valuable job in researching, revealing and teaching scripture that we ordinary people do not necessarily have the time nor the ability to do. But an academic, working hand in hand with the Holy Spirit, is far more effective than one relying solely on his or her own abilities.

e. Experiencing Spiritual Realities: Writing about the spiritual dimension of our lives and existence is both easier and harder than writing about the more defined area of salvation. Easier because it is based on

personal experience, how the Holy Spirit acts and reacts to our individual personalities. And we all like talking about ourselves don't we! Usually the hardest part is to get someone to listen! But more difficult because our experiences can be different, the Holy Spirit working personally in the unique situation of each life. So your experience will be different to mine. The Holy Spirit deals to you in a different way than to me. Therefore our perceptions of Him differ, depending upon our personal experience.

This is further complicated by Satan, who suddenly takes a much greater interest in us when we enter the spiritual world in a real and threatening (to him) way. For we see Christians who are walking only in the truth of salvation living good, relatively trouble free, if unexciting lives. When you move into the spirit and all hell breaks loose in your life! Sooner or later that will happen, for suddenly you are a threat to Satan, moving in the same realm as he is. It is obvious really, but so often misunderstood. And what does the Holy Spirit Do? Take us out of the battle zone? Wouldn't it be nice! But no! No! No! And again, no! He lets us fight! He uses the situation to train us, to rub off our rough edges, to make us more like Jesus. Of course we would prefer to be taken out of the situation, wouldn't we? But I know personally that that would be a copout and I would be the worse for it spiritually.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6:12) Yes, we are instructed to stand up and fight. “Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.....” (v14).

For the “real” world is in fact the spiritual world. I found this very difficult to both accept and understand at first. For I am a pragmatic, task orientated person who likes achieving visible goals. By definition the

spirit world is not visible! Therefore I had a problem! But although we cannot see the battle, like the wind, we can see its effects. So gradually, even I have come to understand more about this invisible world's affect on my life.

But Pentecost isn't all negative! Not at all! For we are on the winning team! Yes, we have Holy Spirit of God living in us!

“We have not received the spirit of the world but the spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:12-13)

As we develop our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit, so we understand more of what is going on in the spiritual world. The battle we fight is not just to defeat Satan but is also God's way of refining the dross out of the gold of our lives – moving on to the next step in our walk. Dross surfaces by heating gold without evaporating it. (i.e. not more pain than we can bare.) It sure can get pretty hot and uncomfortable in the process though! But all is not in vain! (Get the pun – vein of gold!) For God's aim is “to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good”. The spiritual battlefield is our training ground in the ways of God.

f. Summary: The baptism, release or ‘in-filling’ (different terms explaining the same experience - to satisfy man's various theological positions! God must wistfully shake His head in wonderment at us!) of the Holy Spirit brings a greater reality to our Christian experience. It's accompanying blessings of spiritual gifts, greater insight and understanding of God's Word (the Bible) and The Word (Jesus), build our faith and help strengthen us to fight spiritual battles in the unseen but very real spiritual world. For we fight a battle in which, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, combined with the

power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we have the victory!

3. “.....THEY DID NOT LOVE THEIR LIVES SO MUCH AS TO SHRINK FROM DEATH.” (emphasising God the Father)

Congratulations for getting this far! For you to keep reading this far you must surely

- a. be a glutton for punishment,
- b. understand and accept the necessity to experience both the power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and
- c. **DESIRE EVEN MORE OF GOD.** Join the club! For my hearts desire is to experience as much of Him as I can too!

While it has been important to establish a firm foundation of where we are coming from, what follows is the real heart of the word that God is starting to open up to us in these amazing days in which we live. I believe that by the time you finish this book you will be convinced that we live at an amazingly exciting time, the approaching end of this spiritual age. Unlike nearly all other books that I know of dealing with end times', we are not going to approach them from a negative 'woe what is happening in the world (all bad, get me out!)' viewpoint. But rather a positive, 'what is God preparing for His people (in the end all good!)', perspective. A book about how we should live rather than one about how everyone else (except us hopefully!) deserves to suffer and die! For what is of most importance to God is our personal relationship with Him.

Let's get an overview of some of the key areas we will explore in greater detail throughout the pages ahead. Hopefully just enough to titillate your spiritual taste buds!

- a. **The Martyrs:** We can rely on God to look after us in all situations if we truly trust Him. Do you really believe this? Easily said I know! But, if we are very honest with ourselves, I suggest we would all have that wee bit of doubt as to whether we would

really be prepared to pay that ultimate earthly price of martyrdom if required to, until the situation arose. However over the past 20 centuries, and interestingly, in greater numbers in this century than in any other, it is probable that millions of martyrs have done just this, so literally fulfilling the third part of *Revelation 12:11* "..... they loved not their lives so much as to shrink from death." Our preparedness to pay this ultimate price (which of course Jesus did for us) is a condition of attaining maturity in Christ. Sorry about that! No, this is not a road to be travelled by the faint hearted of the faith. If this is not for you, do yourself a favour by stopping now until you come to that place. Please don't feel condemned or rejected though, as this walk is not for everyone, the reasons for which we shall see as we continue. Need to stress again that we are all at different places in our walk, because it is a journey and not an event. A journey we start at different times, proceed along at different speeds, and rest or even stop, at different points on the way. A walk that can be exciting and rewarding, both on earth and in heaven (that will upset the "spiritual democrats" who see all Christians as being equal in reward - I used to be one until I started reading my bible more and found out the truth!). Or we can limit our exposure, both as to commitment and blessings. A top sportsman requires both ability and commitment, a top Christian requires no special abilities (all God given) but 100% commitment (submission to God's will, even unto death) to attain what God has promised.

- b. **Is There a Spiritual Meaning Too?** Is this verse talking only of literal death? We are still alive aren't we! I think I am anyway! I suspect there might be some who wish I wasn't though! And you probably, are alive too! I hope so anyway. For I don't think spirit beings would need to read this book. They should know it all already. Not too certain of my theology here though! Someone is bound to tell me, however.

So we don't actually wash ourselves in lamb's blood do we? No, at least I hope not, as it would now be a satanic ritual if we did. Be messy too! Sometimes in dark moments of deep penance, I have imaginings of being swirled about in an automatic washing machine full of blood to clean me out! Then comes the spin cycle! Ever known what being "wrung out" feels like? Sorry – I will move on.

For most of us then, the real meaning of these words is spiritual. And it is a meaning we generally prefer to ignore! That is why the third part of the verse is so often left out when the rest is quoted. If you inhabit charismatic circles, I wouldn't be at all surprised if you thought the verse ended at the word "testimony", for almost invariably, that is where quotations of it stop. Why? Let's be honest. Just as we don't want to die in the natural, (while we have our health anyway), so we are equally unwilling to set aside our own desires for those of God, which is death in the spiritual. For you like doing your own thing, don't you? I certainly do! You may ask, what is wrong with that? Well even if you didn't want to ask, I am still going to give an answer, because someone, somewhere will want to know, I hope!

c. Moving in God's Will: Our nature is contrary to God's nature. Full stop. To re-establish the best relationship with God, the one Adam had, before his foray into the tempting delights of the forbidden fruit, we have to discard our own inherently sinful human desires. We must submit (what a horrible 's' word!) to God's perfect desires (His – not what we see them as being!) for our life. Unnecessary? Too Hard? Let's see what Paul had to say in his letter to the *Romans* 8:6-8,16.

"The mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. (v16) Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to

obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness?"

Jesus himself confirmed this in *John* 8:34....

"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

But Jesus set us free from our sins on the cross, didn't He? So we don't sin then? Oh, well.....! So what is happening? I wondered about this until I was shown that we have two natures battling against each other inside us. Paul realised this and his submission to God is well documented – literally unto death! We can see it by reading *Romans* 7:7-25. The last sentence summarises.

"So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin."

And what a battle it is sometimes too! For our new, perfect nature in Jesus, still battles the remains of the old sinful nature that continues to rear its ugly head within us. Far too often in me for my liking! Dealing with the remnants of this old sinful nature is what dying to self is ultimately all about.

d. What is Sin? What a stupid question, David! Everyone knows what sin is. The 10 commandments and all that! You should have dealt with it under "the blood of the Lamb" anyway, for Jesus dealt with our sin on the cross. Well, I am going to make a radical suggestion to you. It isn't as simple as that! For there are 2 types of sin that stop us entering into the deepest possible relationship with God. You see my practical definition of "sin" is "separation from God". Short and sweet! You may argue that separation from God is really the consequence of sin. Technically you are probably correct. But my argument is that anything that separates us from God is sin. So there are 2 types of sin.

- i. Sins of Commission:** Things we do that are wrong. These are identified in the laws of the Old Testament. “Thou shalt not.....”, to use the classic King James idiom. Plus a few “Thou *shalts*” for good measure to balance things up a bit. Interestingly the focus of the Sin Offering in the Old Testament was on unintentional sins. Unpremeditated sin. Even back there, it was assumed that genuine followers of God would not sin deliberately. This runs very much against the ‘be saved and do what you like’ theology, so prevalent in certain circles.

Also, as we grow spiritually, the Lord shows us things in our life that we have not previously recognised as being sin. Things we now, with an increased level of understanding, need to repent of. This is a positive step, showing we are making spiritual progress, part of the cleansing of sin from within us, not something to feel condemned about. For we didn’t realise it was sin at the time we did it!

- ii. Sins of Omission:** Things we don’t do that we should do! For God’s positive requirements are identified in the single New Testament commandment of Jesus, as set out in *Mark 12:30-31*.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

Yes! Yes! That was the difference with my Auntie Ina! She loved the Lord with all her being. Her bible was always at her side. My favourite memory is of her sitting at her kitchen bench on a high stool. She couldn’t stand there because of the pain of the arthritis. She would make what we in New Zealand call ‘cheese cakes’. Not American style ones, which

is really confusing! Instead, they are round, open cases of puff pastry with a dollop of raspberry jam in the bottom, filled with a sponge type mixture, topped with a small squiggle of puff pastry. Cooked in the oven for a few minutes, they smelled, looked and tasted delicious! Love my food! And of course, she was always so interested in everyone and so encouraging of what we were doing, much rather talking about us than the obvious pain she was in. Through her beloved God, she rose above her circumstances. Can you now see what I am getting at? Of course Auntie Ina wasn’t perfect, but her relationship with the Lord was so close because she was living out the New Testament commandment, rather than merely the Old. Most of us Christians are content to live by the Old Testament ‘thou shalt *nots*’, with a few of the New “affirmative actions” thrown in when it suits us. But that is not God’s heart for us. For that is what Revelation 12:11 is really saying. God wants all of us. And the more of ourselves we give Him, the more of Himself He gives us!

- e. Knowing God Better:** So how do I get to know my master better? By trust, acquired through experience. In Christian language, that is through faith.

“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17)

Sometimes bible translators add words to make a passage clearer. In this case the words ‘hearing’ and ‘heard’ have been added to make the passage read better. However I would suggest that their additions limit the meaning of the verse too much. For the bible is a living experience. To be understood, it needs to be both heard and experienced. Academic understanding is not enough. We need to apply its words to experience the results, to build up our faith. The literal translation is actually better in

expressing this meaning. “Consequently, faith comes from the message and the message through the word of Christ.” Or the ‘David’ translation! ‘Consequently faith comes from hearing and experiencing the message and the message is understood and absorbed through the word of Christ.’

f. The Example of Jesus: The reality and challenge of this process for you and me, is to put the interests of God the Father above our own. In fact, to be like Jesus. The example He set in His amazing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was recorded in *Matthew 26:42*, when He prayed for Himself before submitting to death on the cross. It is indelibly etched on my mind. “... .. *My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.*” Jesus had the option to say no to his Father but He chose to be obedient, even though it was going to cost Him his life and worse still, temporarily separate Him for the first time, from his Father. Remember those agonising last words on the cross. Were they about the physical pain He was in? No. Translated into English He cried out, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (*Matthew 27:46*). This ultimate submission required of Jesus, is what the Father is calling all of us to, in the spirit. Don’t let’s kid ourselves - Jesus didn’t want to go through this ultimate, horrendous experience. But He did it because of His commitment to the Father.

g. The Fire of Testing: Why Lord? Why, whyyyyyyyy! Once we have recovered from yet another challenge (to a positivist), problem (to a negativist), or test (to a well worn, mature Christian realist) we generally have to, sometimes grudgingly though, admit that we have learned something and are a better person because of our experience. A favourite question of mine is “Am I Jonah or Job?” If you don’t know these stories, look them up in your bible. Jonah was punished for disobedience, Job was tested to prove the

strength of his relationship with God. Both ended up the better for their testing.

The best physical description I can relate to, to show what happens, is actually taken from the bible. As it is taken from 3 places that aren’t really connected, please don’t quote me as saying this came straight from the bible – or we might both be tested! For in *Isaiah 64:8* the inspiration for famous “potters” song is drawn.

If you take a lump of clay (us – should have thought of a better word for “lump” shouldn’t I!), have it moulded into the desired container shape by the potter (God), the container will not hold water for more than a short time before collapsing. Why? For the pot needs to be fired (tested) before becoming watertight. For when we overcome trials and testings, our faith is strengthened and we become more useful to God and others. Does that help?

While walking through Pentecost, we are targets of Satan’s wiles and our old human nature, but as we move towards maturity, our testings come more and more from God himself. It is comforting to know this, as it helps explain otherwise seemingly inexplicable situations, often softening the pain a little. Anything for that! Thus Job’s trials weren’t just a game God wasn’t playing with him, or the result of Job doing something wrong, but God’s means of preparing him to cope with the additional blessings that He had for him in the future. I am afraid that the ups and downs of life don’t disappear with maturity but our means of coping with them improve. Therefore my Auntie Ina was able to cope with her pain through the unswerving faith, experience, relationship and trust she had in her God. Job too, did not lose faith, in spite of all that happened to him.

h. The Fruit of the Spirit: “... ..*But the greatest of these is love.*” (*1 Corinthians 13:1-13*) The love chapter. One of the best known portions of the bible, probably

because it is read at so many funerals! A bit late then, in so many cases! For that brings us right back to the New Testament commandment of Jesus. David's paraphrase – 'Love God totally and your neighbour as yourself.' For love is the first and most important fruit of the Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)

They are the standards of Jesus we are to aim for. When we have attained all these, we will have come to perfection, which none of us have as yet – particularly me! But I am giving it my best and God and I together are becoming a great team! By myself – a disaster! But we have to have a goal to aim at, don't we. For no one ever won a race by determining to run second! The beauty of God's spiritual race is that everyone who has sufficient commitment to Him can be the winner – a "multi-million way tie" for first place! That's the sort of race I like, particularly in a race with Australians, who in 1999 have won just about everything!

- i. **A Male Problem:** It saddens me to write this but I must face reality. In the natural, girls generally relate to fathers more easily than boys, whose natural affiliation is to their mothers. When it comes to man expressing love to a man, a father to a son, a son to a father, there are many problems. Unfortunately this seems to be the case in the spiritual also. Not that God has any difficulty in relating to men. But we, as men, generally have much more difficulty in fully understanding His love and returning it to Him. For we view "God" as being a man,

even though He in fact is a spirit without bodily form.

".....God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see....."
(1 Timothy 6:16-17).

This inability of man to relate to a god perceived of as being "masculine" exists in most cultures throughout the world. This has resulted in there being more women than men in the church and, in turn, generally more women than men seeking a deeper relationship with God. Yes, I know from personal experience, it is harder for us men to break down these natural and cultural barriers. Yet it is possible, for most of God's breakthrough revelations over the centuries have been given to His church through men. Perhaps this is because we do have to try harder, to allow God to take us and change us, even if it is through the fiery furnace that we all love so much!

OUR COMMITMENT: Throughout the ages the full re-establishment of Adam and Eve's "pre-sin" depth of relationship, has been God the Father's ultimate desire for His followers. We will have a look later at the special place accorded to those who have died for their beliefs over the years. But the call to die to self, as proclaimed in Revelation 12:11 is stronger today than at any time in history. We will see how this is all part of God's amazing plan for His people and His church at this special time in history.

Now that we have established a firm foundation I promise that the following chapters will be shorter, so please read on.....

THE AMAZING TABERNACLE OF MOSES – 1

‘A DAY IN THE LIFE OF.....’

MOSE’S TABERNACLE INTRODUCED

Brought up in an evangelical Baptist, I have to admit hardly hearing of, and certainly not understanding the amazing truths contained within, and patterns set by, the very first church building, Moses Tabernacle. Constructed in the Sinai Desert some 3,500 years ago, to very detailed plans and specifications prepared by the ultimate Architect, God himself, supernaturally transmitted to the Construction Manager, Moses, and built by those Israelites who were particularly devoted to their God.

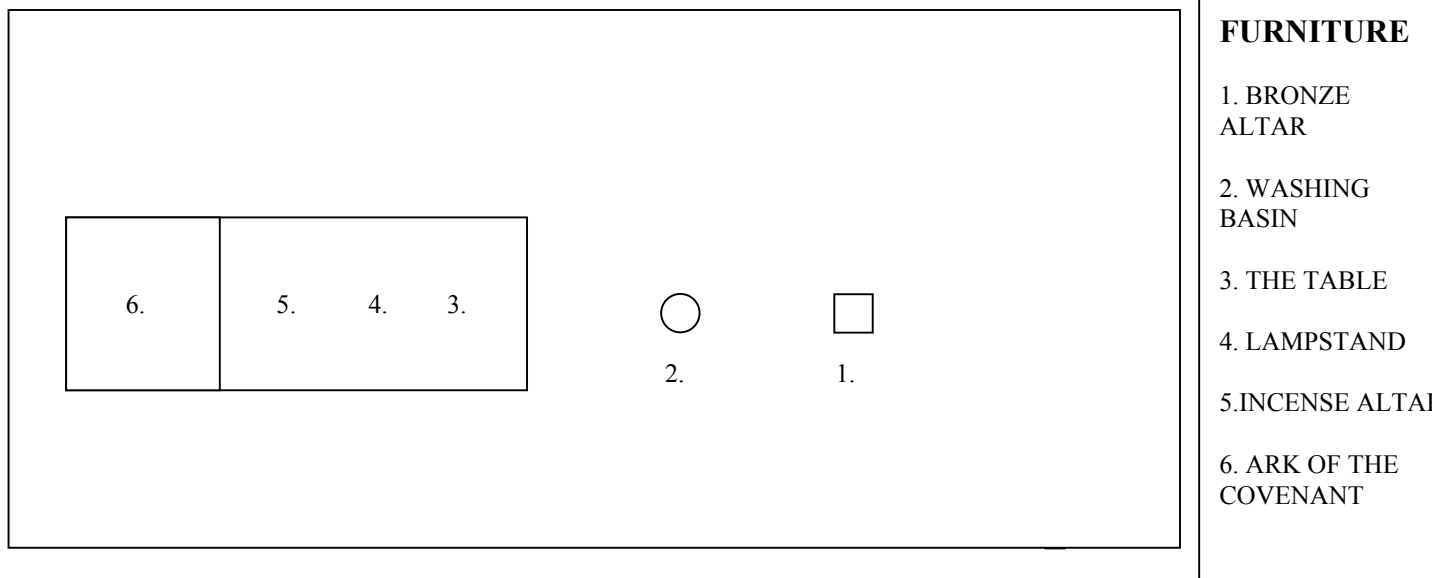
Ten years ago now, when introduced to the revelations of Pentecost, I was simply ‘blown away’ (amazed) that God, three and a half millenniums ago, revealed Himself, the pattern of Heaven, and what was to be His unchanging pattern for the Church both present and future. For the Tabernacle reveals both the nature and purpose of Jesus, and of the New Testament Church that Jesus was to establish through His

death and resurrection. Which we are part of today. And which sets out our future too!

As the detailed plans and drawings are perfectly preserved in the Bible, we still have an excellent picture of the physical form of the Tabernacle itself. In fact a replica has been built and is open to visit in Israel. One day I will get to see it. We also have God’s detailed instructions on the priesthood. These were the clergy who were to be responsible for looking after the Tabernacle in which God’s presence was to dwell for some 500 years or so, until Solomon’s Temple was built. Some of these exciting revelations will be investigated further in succeeding chapters.

However, before we do, I felt it would be a good idea to get in tune with the times, by paying a visit to the tabernacle for ourselves, from the perspective of an ordinary citizen, such as you or me. As details of this are sketchy, what follows is one man’s view of what it may have been like to visit.

LAYOUT OF MOSES TABERNACLE



Note: This illustration, indeed the whole presentation, isn’t designed to give a comprehensive picture of the amazing truths that Moses Tabernacle contains. It is limited to those facts which are important in understanding the form of worship God desires us to bring to Him.

The bible gives a comprehensive 16 chapter, detailed description of Moses Tabernacle in Exodus, through chapters 25 to 40. It describes most aspects of the physical design of the structure and the furniture it contains, in considerable detail, but is much less revealing about the way the Tabernacle functioned. Further information can be gleaned from the first 10 chapters of Leviticus, and snippets elsewhere. But nowhere is there a detailed description of the daily 'happenings' in this worship centre.

There are many writings on the spiritual meanings of the intricate Tabernacle design details that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. I would strongly recommend that you consider reading these for the still 'relevant revelations' they contain. What follows however is a story, based as closely as possible on the scriptures, hopefully giving a feeling for and understanding of, some of the amazing truths the Tabernacle contains. However it is only a story, so let's not base our theology on it! It has been both fun and a challenge to compile. I hope you find it helpful in bringing Moses Tabernacle to life for you too.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF.....

Let's wander back in time - a mere 3,500 years - to the days shortly after the children of Israel had entered the Promised Land, having spent 40 long years in the Sinai Desert. No trouble to us! We don't need a time machine, only an imagination. Much cheaper and less high tech! More likely to work too!

You are now a God fearing Israelite of average means, living with your family on a small farm. You wish to repent (Say sorry to God and undertake not to do it again) for offending your neighbour last week when talking to him, well - to be honest - gossiping really, about a mutual acquaintance. You didn't mean to be offensive at the time, but now realise you shouldn't have said the things you did. Having sinned, you really want to make a Sin Offering before your Lord. For the Pentateuch, traditionally known as 'the five-fifths of the law' (1st 5 books of the bible) has been read many times to you by the priests on the Day of Atonement, and during other

festivals over the years. So much so that you now know the main points off by heart!

Conveniently, the home of the Lord, His Tabernacle that Moses built some 50 years ago, is close by, only 5,000 paces or so (4km) down the road. A nice early morning walk before it gets too hot. That way you can beat the crowd, for it is not very big really and the priest gets very busy at times.

The next day, rising at the crack of dawn, you go out to your field, and select the choicest female lamb from your flock for the sacrifice. You do this gladly, full of joy to offer the very best to your God, in the very Tabernacle where His holy presence dwells. Taking the lamb in your arms, you set out as the sun peeks over the horizon, down the road leading to God's presence. The road is quite dusty, as there hasn't been much rain lately. For it comes mainly during the change of seasons.

Getting closer, the outside walls gradually materialise from within the early morning haze. With a sigh of relief you see that the majestic cloud of God's presence is stationary, billowing above the tent itself. You certainly didn't want to have to pack up and shift, today of all days. From the instructions given to Moses when your father was with him in the desert, you know the exact dimensions - 100x50 cubits. (1 cubit approximately equals _ metre or yard - 50x25 metres or yards) About a quarter the size of a football field, you automatically estimate. Yes, half the length by half the width seems pretty near. As you get closer, the construction of the walls comes more clearly into focus. No glasses to correct short or long sightedness in those days! You see that they are made of a strong linen material, just too tall to look over at 5 cubits high. (2_ metres or yards) Some kids are nearby who, kids being kids, peak underneath. They are quickly given the message, by one of the Levites on duty inside, to move away before getting into serious trouble.

The linen curtains, yellowing slightly now after years of battling the harsh desert elements, are

hung 1 cubit above the ground, between posts, pegged back on stays, much like a modern tent. Some things never change!

However, your eyes are strongly drawn to the curtains forming the doorway, just at this very moment being drawn back, ready for the day's activities. For they are different to the rest of the wall. While made of the same linen material, they are intricately embroidered in purple, red and blue. You can still clearly remember the air of excitement and anticipation, sitting at your mother's feet as a youngster, watching these glorious designs taking shape. For she and her friends diligently embroidered all the gateway curtains for the Tabernacle from designs supplied by that divinely inspired craftsman, Bezalel. As God had instructed, His chosen group of men, those who had a real passion for building the Tabernacle, closely supervised the ladies. Bless her heart! Great memories of those desert days. How sad that mum, dad and all the others died before we crossed the river into this fantastic, fertile land. I still miss them. A real lesson not to disobey God though!

As the curtains are drawn back you see your friend Eliasaph, the Levite on gate duty that day. And naturally, you pass a few words with him. For when has a good Jew ever been short of a few words! Ahead of you, you see the awesome, imposing, sacrificial *Brazen Alter*, the central feature of the open courtyard. Not as big as you would think though, but it appears so powerful and strong, to make one question its 5x5x3 cubits measurements. (2_ metres or yards square x 1_ high) Amazing how efficiently the sacrifices burn though! And durable too! For it is only made of common acacia wood, covered on both sides with copper. Amazingly, well not really, because God knows, this combination forms the most effective fire resistant material around!

The atmosphere suddenly changes when passing through the gate. For now you are in the courtyard of God's dwelling place. In the Outer Court, where the one and only almighty God demands the cleansing of sin through sacrifice, to come into His Holy presence. The lamb starts

squirming in your arms. For she can sense the smell of death that permeates the surroundings and is scared. Looking into her innocent, pleading eyes you turn quickly away, with tears in your eyes. You can't bear to look at her again. What had she done to deserve this untimely end? Absolutely nothing! Solely your responsibility! What a sudden reminder of the awfulness of sin and God's righteous judgement! Moving now towards the Brazen Altar, towards your meeting with God – feeling absolutely devastated. Oh God, that perfect, innocent lamb's life - the price for my sin, for my life. Your legal requirement, I know. Oh God, I am so sorry for my stupid words. I won't make that mistake again! A fear filled, "awe-full" moment!

The priest attracts your attention as he bounds towards you, speedily covering the few metres from the bronze *Washing Basin*, set on its sparkling, shiny brass stand. It is so lovingly polished by the Levites that you can see your face in it. He is ready to make your sacrifice, having washed both his hands and feet in the basin's water, holy water that the Levites had sprinkled with anointing oil and blood. With mixed emotions you hand over your struggling, squirming lamb to the priest, desperate as she senses her impending death. In one movement, the priest holds down her head and expertly slits her throat, avoiding the innocent, pleading look in her panic-stricken eyes. Her bright red lifeblood spurts out in an unforgettable stream through her severed artery, her body spasms confirming the grim finality of a gruesome death. A life for a life as God's law requires. The priest dips his finger in the blood, quickly placing a touch on each of the four horns of the altar while simultaneously holding the lamb up by its back legs, it's remaining lifeblood draining out in a grim red ooze at the base of the altar. An innocent life for your life – the price has been paid for your sin.

Quickly slitting open and gutting the lamb, the priest throws the putrid smelling offal to one side for later disposal. The foul smell almost causes you to throw up! After skinning the lamb, he carefully removes all the fat from the carcass in accordance with God's instructions to Moses.

The fat is placed upon the altar, producing, as it burns, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. The priest puts the carcass to one side for later cooking and consumption by himself and his sons. So overcome are you by the gruesomeness of the whole experience and the terrible price the innocent lamb had to pay for your stupidity, your unnecessary sin, that you unashamedly fall onto your knees, crying out to the Lord your God in repentance. “My God, please forgive me, please forgive me – I won’t do it again! Please God! Please God! Please God!” Surely there must be a better way!

The priest sees your distress and gently places his hand on your shoulder. “You have done well, my friend. The Lord is pleased with you. For you only see the horror of sin and sacrifice, but He shows me His glory too. Let me tell you about it.

See the tent over here. Not that big is it, only 30 cubits long by 10 wide and 10 high, (approx. 15x5x5 metres or yards) but inside the glory of God is revealed. Come with me. See these layers of covering on the outside of the tent? Like everything else in this place, each has a special meaning. There are actually 4 layers, but you can only see 2 from here. Here on the outside – you can touch that one if you like – the cover is made of sea cow skins. Note the ‘bluey’ colour. The oil in the skins keeps the tent dry when it rains. The oil and the blue colouring remind us of the Spirit of God (Later revealed as the Holy Spirit) who covers all our lives. Underneath is another cover of ram skins died red, a reminder of the blood sacrifice required for sin, which saddened you so much earlier. (Jesus – but He hadn’t been born yet!) Look up here. This black cover, protruding over the entrance, is woven from goats’ hair. That of course represents our sins of omission, of not doing the things God desires of us, rather than our known although unintentional sins, which are sacrificed on the Altar outside. You remember the sacrificial goat and scapegoat sacrificed for our sins on the Day of Atonement? Of course you do, for I have seen you there.

I am sorry that you can’t come inside the tent with me, for it is just so glorious in there. But we

believe that one day it will be possible for all to enter, although we don’t know how. (We do now! – through the death of Jesus on the cross) But it is only from the inside that you can see the fourth cover of glorious pure white linen, with cherubim signifying God’s presence emblazoned in purple, red and blue. (Colours of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). You may remember your mother and the other women embroidering them in the desert all those many years ago, when you were just a kid.

But I digress. You know, the strange thing about this cover is that you can only see part of it, the piece that crosses the roof. For at the sides of the tent are two glowing gold walls that both support and hide most of it. They are absolutely stupendous! Just has to be the glory of God. I have never quite been able to work out what all this means though.

See this magnificent curtain here that forms the entrance to the tent. Embroidered again in purple, red and blue. God is everywhere in this place! What you can’t see though, is the curtain inside. That one separates the back third, the Holy of Holies where God’s presence dwells, from the Holy Place in front, where we, the priests, attend to the daily duties the Lord has us do for Him.

For we have three jobs to do twice daily. But I am getting ahead of myself. For before I go in to the tent, into the Holy Place, I must first wash my feet in the washing basin, as I did before making the sacrifice for you. It will literally cost my life if I forget! But once I have been purified in God’s eyes, I can go in and carry out my tasks.

My first job is to attend to the *Table of Showbread*. This simple, yet exquisite oblong gold table, is adorned with gold mouldings, both around the edge and on the handbreadth wide gold rim that surrounds the top. Every Saturday, our Jewish Sabbath of course, I place on the table 12 loaves of bread, representing our 12 tribes, but more importantly symbolising the perfect, never ending word of God. You know, we get to eat this bread after we take it off the

table at the end of the week. Remarkably, it is as fresh then as the day we put it on!

Twice daily I have to burn frankincense, set out in lines beside the 2 rows of 6 loaves. What a sweet fragrance it has. Helps keep God's word of life at the forefront of my mind. I normally do this in the early morning and again at twilight while I am attending to the rest of my duties inside.

For I am required to light the *Golden Lampstand* each evening, having first filled the cups with oil and trimmed the wicks. Some people call it a golden candlestick because of its design, but it really is a lamp, not a candle, even though it may look like one. It is so important that the oil is pure. If there is any possibility that the lamp may malfunction because of poor oil or wicks, I have to stay here all night to make sure it doesn't go out! But fortunately our oil and wick makers are most diligent, working as they are for the Lord. In the morning, as the sun comes up, I have to get out of bed and come down here to snuff the flame out. I don't mind though, as it pleases God and gives me a good, early start to the day too!

Sorry, I have got ahead of myself and not told you what the Lampstand looks like. I don't know how I forgot, as the Lampstand is simply the most intricate, breathtaking, solid gold creation I have ever seen. I don't know how Bezalel did it - the work is so fine. The seven lamps are borne on 7 branches; each branch topped with a cup in the shape of an almond flower, delicately decorated with incredible, lifelike buds and blossoms down the stem. A grand total of 66 masterpieces in all, including the cups, beaten out of a single piece of pure gold. You should see the delightful dancing images of the flames' shimmering lights reflecting from the golden walls as darkness falls. Incredible! Yes, the light of the oil of the Spirit brings divine illumination on the bread of God's word. It certainly is an encouragement to research the scriptures more deeply.

Having set up or extinguished the lamps, depending on the time of day, I then move slowly to the *Incense Altar*. Placed as it is, near

the entrance of the Holy of Holies, so my mind increasingly focuses on the glory of the Lord. In some ways this altar looks like a miniature version of the Bronze Altar over here, on which your lamb was sacrificed. However it sits on a gold plated stand with a solid gold moulding around the top. The altar itself is coated with gold, not bronze, as indeed, is all the furniture in the tent.

Fortunately the temperatures required for burning incense are not as great either, so the fire can be smaller too. When I come in to the Holy Place, I bring some hot coals from the Bronze Altar, which I then use to burn the special incense the Lord has provided us with the recipe for. We aren't allowed to use this incense for anything else. It is a real pity because the fragrance is simply 'heavenly', the only word I can find to adequately describe the spiritual effect it has on me. As the fragrance permeates the air, I just have to pray out loud to my God and worship Him with all my being. It is an amazing experience to feel so close to God. I just look forward to it so much all day. It would be just wonderful if everyone could share my experience! (Now we can!)

But great though the Incense Altar experience is, it is surpassed by the sheer awesomeness of the Day of Atonement, the day I truly meet with God. This is the one day of the year that I, as High Priest, can visit Him in His Holy of Holies. I do wish I could do it more often, for there is nothing else in life to compare with it! The presence of God just envelops me. It is impossible to explain really. His awesomeness, power and majesty is overwhelming, yet you can sense His love and caring at the same time. There is just nothing else like it. I break down and cry, yet worship Him at the same time! Inexplicable!

But I had better start at the beginning. For God has set up a system that must be followed when entering into His presence. Remember my uncles, Nadab and Abihu? They broke the rules and paid for it with their lives. You will no doubt recall that day. It doubled the workload on my dad Eleazar, and Uncle Ithimar, as for a long

time they were the only priests left. But it is a bit easier now as my generation comes of age and is able to shoulder the workload. Making sacrifices is heavy, hard work, you know. But again I digress!

The main thing I have to be sure of is to follow the Lord's instructions precisely, so I don't meet my uncles' fate! I need to be personally pure, as do the people I am representing, for purity is essential to live in His presence. So firstly, He requires me to take off all my clothes – a bit embarrassing really – and wash myself in the basin before going into the Tent. There I put on the sparkling white linen clothes, to be worn only on this special day. For they speak of purity and holiness. Then I come back out into the courtyard to make a Sin Offering for myself, just as you did earlier. Yes, I need to be 100% right with God too. Taking some of the blood from my sacrifice, I fill my censer (bowl with a handle) with hot coals and select two handfuls of the special fragrant incense I talked of earlier. Now I am prepared to enter the Holy of Holies.

The sense of anticipation builds inside me as I pass through the Holy Place towards the Holy of Holies. I particularly notice that the curtain separating the areas has 2 giant cherubim woven into it, again in God's colours, purple, red and blue. Your mother's handiwork as well, I recollect. My mind ponders upon what I am going to experience inside. For God's presence lives between the 2 cherubim on the *Ark of the Covenant*. Opening the curtain, I quickly throw incense onto the burning coals, forming a cloud in the room, particularly over the Atonement Cover, so protecting me from the full glory of God. That heavenly fragrance fills the room and permeates every pore in my body. Even Moses, great as he was, couldn't look God in the face and live. So I need to be doubly careful!

I had better describe the Ark before I go on. It is an oblong box, (2_x1_x1_ cubits) made of Acacia wood, plated inside and out with gold. Around the top it has a pure gold moulding. The lid, the Atonement Cover, with its accompanying cherubim's, forms the boundaries within which God dwells. Of course I know He is everywhere,

but this is the specific place He meets with us. The Atonement Cover has to be perfect, for it to be God's dwelling place amongst us, and it is. Bezalel, the master craftsman, made it himself. It was fashioned out of a single piece of gold, shaped into a smooth, flat lid. Two large, delicately sculptured, solid gold Cherubim with outstretched wings face each other, gracefully rising up, one from each end of the cover. I only get a glimpse of it of course, because it is quickly enveloped in the dense cloud of smoke resulting from burning the incense.

The Ark contains 3 different items. The two stone tablets with the 10 commandments written on them, my grandfather Aaron's budding, almond tree staff, and a jar of the manna we lived on during those 40 long years in the desert. I haven't seen them of course, as they were placed in there well before my time. You remember the desert too of course, when you were a lad. The manna tasted great, but sometimes we can have too much of a good thing! Never grateful for what we have, are we! But getting back to the Holy of Holies. Walls of solid gold surround the room, while the roof is a continuation of the pure white, linen cover, embroidered with Cherubim's, that covers the Holy Place too. The glow of gold - the glow of God. Unbelievable!

But now, on with the action. Now where did I get too? Yes. The heavenly cloud formed by the burning incense. Immersed in the cloud, literally and spiritually, I dip my finger in the bull's blood I have brought in from my sacrifice, and sprinkle it on the Atonement Cover. Seven times more I sprinkle it on the floor in front of the Cover. "Oh Lord, how unworthy I am to come into your presence. Through this blood, I thank you that I am forgiven and can be one with you again. Thank you Father. How humble I feel, that you, Almighty God will forgive me and still accept me, even after the life I have lived." His strength and grace overcome me, and I break down and cry out in His awesome presence. "My God! My God! My God!....." I take my leave and walk back out to the Courtyard, a new man, cleansed by the grace of God, ready now to do the same thing for His, for my, people.

You know the rest, for you have been at the ceremony, my friend. How the sacrificial goat and scapegoat are chosen by lot. The sacrifice of the one, the sprinkling of the blood, once again, on and in front of the Atonement Cover. This time though, on behalf of all of us Jews. What an honour this is for me. Then followed by the release of the scapegoat into the wilderness to die rejected, carrying away all our sins.

Of course I have to again change my clothes, following the same procedure as earlier, but in reverse. For I have discovered that God is a God of order, not of chaos, and He requires His patterns to be fulfilled exactly as He sets them down.

Well, I had better get going now, for there is a quite a queue building up, waiting for me to attend to their sacrifices too. See you next time. The Lord bless you.”

The sun's now high in the sky. Not looking forward to the 5,000 pace journey home just yet, you see down the road a shaded, inviting olive grove. A great place to sit down and ponder all that has been experienced and learned. The Spirit of God settles upon you, opening up new realms of understanding of your God and His glory. At peace with yourself. At peace with God. The sun rises to its peak as you drift off into a restful, contented sleep. After all, it is siesta time!

TODAY'S REVELATION OF MOSES TABERNACLE

Of course, we all know that when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the Temple (the successor of the Tabernacle) was torn in two, from top to bottom. This was of God, as man would have only been able to rip from the bottom, for the curtain was taller than we are. Hence the way was opened for us to enter into the Holy of Holies. No longer is entry to the Holy Place restricted to the Priests, and the Holy of Holies to the High Priest but once a year. For we are now all 'priests' through the cross;

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. (Revelation 1:5-6)

and through Jesus, are able to enter into the very presence of God.

Many of us, knowing this truth, now try to get into God's presence but are disappointed when we fail. Why is this? Primarily because we try to enter the Holy of Holies directly, without understanding the need to proceed, as the High Priest had to, by purification in the Outer Court at the Brazen Altar (now through Jesus). We must put on the priestly robes of righteousness and holiness at the Washing Basin, before proceeding towards the Holy of Holies through the Holy Place (now the Holy Spirit). On the way through we must participate in the Table of Showbread of the revelatory Word of God, the Golden Lampstand of the Spirit's giftings and anointing, and the praise, worship and prayer of the Incense Altar.

The primary concern of the High Priest when entering the Holy of Holies was that he not be 'zapped', instantly obliterated, through the impurity of sin. He first sprinkled blood for his own sin. While Jesus has 'positionally' obtained righteousness for us on the cross, we need to live out this righteousness 'experientially' if we wish to walk in the presence of God. This is beautifully expressed as follows.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) (Revelation 19:7-8)

Purity, holiness and righteousness are the keys for us to enter into God's presence. The cleansing of sacrifice of Jesus and the Holy Spirit's revelation of the Bible, His gifts and anointing, plus prayer, praise and worship prepare us to enter. Let's go in, shall we?

THE AMAZING TABERNACLE OF MOSES - 2

ESTABLISHING GOD'S PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH

A PATTERN OF PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

Fear the new and untried? Love new challenges? Enjoy taking risks? No, no, and again no! Creatures of habit, aren't we. Slipping into our routine provides a comfort zone. No need to make new decisions. Leaving things the way they are, the way we know they work. As we get older particularly, we place more value on experience than innovation. Let's face it, we get lazy! That which was right, that which worked yesterday, is just fine for today too, thank you very much. And on, and on, and on, and on! How boring and comfortably predictable we become!

But God is not like us! He is a God of change! The single thing that displeases God the most amongst true Christians is not our obvious sin, our reluctance to evangelise or read the bible or even to pray! Rather it is our unwillingness to listen to what He desires to tell us and then do something about it, both individually and as 'the Church'. Thinking about it, that is what this book is all about – hearing and implementing the word of God. While God is never changing, being the same yesterday, today and forever, we are not to be, until we have reached His realm of perfection, that is! Once we've arrived we can have a rest! I know I won't be lying on my laurels for quite some time yet! Never - without God's help! Good to have a goal though!

A CASE STUDY: AN OBSERVATION OF CHANGE

We (and I include myself here) are comfortable amongst those we know, alongside those who think along similar lines to us. With those who worship in the same way as we do, those who sit in the same seats around us in church, week by week. Legendary stories abound of people sitting in other peoples "pews". Most of us laugh at

them but we shouldn't, for the same patterns abound in our lives too.

It was interesting to observe what happened when our church shifted into a new building. It was a special time for us, having met in rented premises for the previous 14 years. I must explain that ours is a radical, non-traditional Pentecostal fellowship, where long term seat reservation isn't a custom that fits easily within our church culture! We were all really excited on the first Sunday, entering our new church that we had worked so hard to prepare for this occasion. Until it came to decision time of where to sit, that is. For decisions had to be made! Pastors and elders to the front - of course! Least committed to the back? Best to get lost in the middle? And the 'biggie'! Left or right hand side?

We did sort it out and had a marvellous service of celebration for God's goodness to us. By the next week, the precedent having already been set, seating decisions were a lot easier. By the third week we were settled, comfortable in our general positions within the auditorium. For we're all creatures of habit, aren't we? But habit quickly becomes tradition and tradition in turn, breeds intolerance towards those whose traditions are not the same as our own.

CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

As Revelation 12:11 sets out the way of salvation, the walk for the individual, so the Tabernacle of Moses clearly illustrates God's pattern for the church. It is a pattern starting at the entrance to the Outer Court, progressing through the Holy Place, to finally enter the Holy of Holies. I am sure that by now, you will be able to relate Revelation 12:11 to this pattern. Entry into the Outer Court through the blood of the Lamb, to the Holy Place by the word of their testimony (given by The Holy Spirit) and finally to the Holy of Holies through total submission to

THE AMAZING TABERNACLE OF MOSES - 2

God the Father. For there is but one pathway leading to God. As Jesus himself said,

“No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

If Jesus lied in this, can we believe anything He said? If He is telling the truth, shouldn't we believe Him! Good people, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, people who have never heard of Jesus, as well as those who have heard and not

believed, will not go to heaven. Seems unfair to our human understanding, but God is God! What a motivation to evangelise! To give these people a chance of heaven! For there is only one way to reach God, and that is through Jesus.

Before we look at the pattern in more detail, let's have a brief look at how the “Church” has developed over the 1970 odd years since it was founded.

“POTTED” HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

THE EARLY CHURCH:

- 30AD April:** Death of Jesus on the cross. (The day of the Feast of Passover)
April: Resurrection and appearance to Mary Magdalene. (The day of the Feast of Firstfruits)
May: Ascension to heaven. Believers reduced from 500 to 120 at Pentecost.
May: Pentecost. Holy Spirit arrival. 3,000 added to the Church. (The day of the Feast of Weeks, that is Pentecost) Symbolic restoration of the 3,000 killed for making the infamous golden calf while the law was being given to Moses on Mt Sinai, at Pentecost, approximately 1,500 years before. Chance? No way!
- 33AD** Church still confined to Jerusalem. Many miracles occurred as they moved in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, contrary to popular belief, the very early church was not keen to “*go and make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:19). They had a siege mentality. They did not want to see the Church taken over by gentiles as their nation had been by the Romans and others, in the past. Jesus preached to the Jews, so they also carried on in the same way, in the same tradition or ‘comfort zone’. They were disobedient to His new command, which may well have had important implications for all Church history, as we will see later. Conversions occurred and the Church spread, but mainly through people visiting Jerusalem and taking ‘the way’ home with them.
- 37AD** The conversion of Paul, aged 29. After a period of seclusion, Paul started his ministry at age 30, the same age as Jesus. Significant, in that it was the age the Levites and priests started work in the Tabernacle, the accepted age of spiritual maturity. Paul, a Jew born in Tarsus in Greece, a Roman citizen, trained as a Pharisee from a young age in Jerusalem. An internationalist, he was called to do the work the Apostles and early church had neglected to do. Not God's first choice but the ideal backup – right age, right birth, right training and fully committed to all he did, whether it was persecuting the Christians or leading them to Christ! Initially the churches were set up with unity of doctrine and church government but gradually, as Paul's letters show, divisions began to appear.
- 48AD** Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to sort out a crucial problem within the early church that was causing a division between Jewish and gentile believers. The argument concerned the necessity for gentile believers to follow Jewish law and tradition, in particular the need for male circumcision. A ‘painful process’ for an adult male, but a requirement for entry into Judaism. After lengthy debate it was agreed that under ‘grace’, this previous legal requirement was no longer necessary. Much to the relief of gentile male converts, I'm sure! Tradition dies hard though! Legalism of a different sort didn't take too long to return, particularly once the state got involved with the church. For the survival of the state effectively depends upon the rule of law.

- 68AD May or June:** Paul executed in Rome. He had succeeded in establishing toehold churches throughout much of the known world, using his normal method of first preaching to the Jews in the local synagogue. When the Jews threw him out, which they invariably did, he turned to the local gentiles. The city authorities then usually ejected him, usually at the request of the Jews! The churches of this time were small, mostly house churches, initially at least. No giant cathedrals yet!
- 70AD 5th August:** The burning of the temple, as prophesied by Jesus. Still hasn't yet been physically replaced although there are Jews wishing to do so. As Christians, Jesus is our 'spiritual temple', so the rebuilding of a physical temple is unnecessary.
- 2nd September:** The final destruction of the upper part of Jerusalem. Led to the Christians of the area being scattered throughout the known world, taking their faith and beliefs with them. Yes, a tragedy for the Jewish nation. But a positive step for the spreading of the gospel. God's ways are certainly different to ours!
- c.100** Death of the last of the Apostles, John. Authority and unity of '*apostleship*' disappeared.

THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH:

- 130** Laying on of hands becomes a formal ritual.
- 140** Ministry of the prophets vanishes.
- 150** Gifts of the Spirit are disappearing entirely.
- 160** Plurality of eldership fades away.
- 180** Local church autonomy diminishes as churches start to come under the control of Rome.
- 187** First infant baptism and sprinkling. Form over substance.
- 200** Ritual becoming the norm as the church had form but had lost its power. Water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ denied, largely through Pope Stephen.
- 210** Doctrine of the priesthood of all believers rejected as a class of clerics developed.
- 225** Church membership became based on a creed rather than salvation.
- 240** Holiness disappeared and worldliness infiltrated the church.
- 350** Roman Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion. Salvation by faith not required for membership, with many 'heathen' being forced to accept Christianity by the sword.
- 380** Rome became the final authority in church matters.

THE DARK AGES: An ongoing decline that lasted for over 1100 years until the Reformation.

1300's Bible translated into easy English by John Wycliffe, and by others into the major European languages, enabling the spreading of the word amongst ordinary people, so setting the scene for the Reformation. Wycliffe's theme was the interpretation of scripture, by scripture, not by man.

RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH:

Traditional Church

1517 Martin Luther started the Reformation with his revelation; "The just shall live by faith."

Evangelical Church

1524 Water Baptism restored through the Anabaptists.

1559 John Calvin's book "Institution of the Christian Religion" focused on "salvation by grace through faith."

1600's Emphasis on the restoration of spiritual life.

1738 Holiness emphasised by Wesley.

1792 William Carey founded the first missionary society, the BMS, to evangelise internationally.

1800's Emphasis on social reform based on Christian principles e.g. Lord Shaftesbury in (factory and mining reform) and W E Gladstone (political reforms) in Britain and Charles Finney (abolition of slavery) in the USA.

Pentecostal Church

- 1901** The birth of the Pentecostal Movement in the USA saw the reintroduction of the gifts of the Spirit in a major way, to the church.
- 1904** The Welsh Revival was a practical example of the amazing affects that revival can have on society.
- 1920's** Introduced decades of the ministry of Evangelism to the church. e.g. D. L. Moody, Smith Wigglesworth, Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and many others majoring on the truths of water baptism and often, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The gifts that were restored as a result of this were primarily vocal - speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy.

Charismatic Church

- 1948** First return of the prophetic ministry to the Pentecostal Church through the Latter Rain Movement.
- 1960's** The Charismatic Movement commenced, taking the gifts of the Spirit into many mainstream churches.
- 1970's** Prophets fully accepted in the church, bringing with them the truth of the laying on of hands. The revelation gifts that returned were word of knowledge, discernment of spirits and the word of wisdom.

What is apparent from this timeline is the parallel between the decline of the mainline church over the first 4 centuries and its ongoing restoration over the last 5, since the Reformation. The gospel truths and movement of the Holy Spirit however, were not entirely lost during the Dark Ages, being retained in Independent Church movements throughout the world. Considering the close parallels, it is not unreasonable to project into the future, the final restoration of the church, to its initial, early church position before decline occurred.

RESTORATIONS COMPLETION:

Tabernacle Church

- 2000's** In natural progression, the Apostolic ministry will soon be restored with its associated truths of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement. The gifts that will accompany this apostolic ministry will be miracles, healings and faith. While healings and miracles have accompanied the ministries of others throughout the century, one of particular note being Smith Wigglesworth, their full release is yet to come. Then too, the governmental authority and unity of the true church, lost when the Apostle John died 1900 years ago, will be restored.

Impossible? In our own power, yes. In God's power, no!

Let's now have a look and see if this pattern of church history reflects God's pattern for the church as expressed in Moses' Tabernacle.

NOTES...

THE AMAZING TABERNACLE OF MOSES – 3

APPLICATION TO TODAY’S CHURCH

An earlier chapter showed us how the Tabernacle applied to the individual, as we took a walk through it. But the pattern of the Tabernacle applies equally well to the development of the church and its ministries. Let’s have a look. For our purposes here, we will take a more conventional approach to the Tabernacle, concentrating on the furniture it contains, comparing the furniture to the truths revealed through the various churches.

Sadly, truth has to be revealed through many different churches because of us! Our human nature grasps hold of a revelatory truth, gets comfortable in it, thinks it is the ultimate, and refuses to move on the next truth God desires to reveal. Hence the truism that the people at the forefront of the last revival are so often the biggest opponents of the next. This has also caused the growth in denominations, for each denomination tends to stop at the new truth revealed to it, forcing God to seek another group for His next revelation. He must really love us, to put up with us!

As the decline of the church took place progressively over a period of centuries, so the restoration of the church too, is a process rather than an event. As moving further into the Tabernacle brings a greater and greater revelation and insight into the glory of our God, so being open to the God’s progressive revelations as a church bring us closer to Him. It is so sad to see how comfort and pride work in tandem to limit our walk, causing divisions and denominations to multiply. However, let’s see the outworking of this, by comparing the Church’s restoration to the progression of furniture in the Tabernacle.

THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH – Centred on the Brazen Alter.

The truth revealed to Martin Luther started the Reformation. The restoration of the church was based on the principle that God could not be

“bought” through works, which generally meant paying money to the church! His revelation of “the just shall live by faith” (in Jesus) was centred on the hugely different principle of access to God being available through the final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for all sin. Not through the dictates of a man centred church.

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

Yes, Jesus gloriously was the sacrificial lamb slaughtered on the ‘altar’ of Calvary. And shown in type 2,000 years earlier, when Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac on the altar at Mount Moriah, the site of Solomon’s Temple and very close to Calvary itself. Of course a ram was provided as a substitute at the last minute. Again a coincidence? No way!

So the traditional church was given this truth. But they stopped there, retaining many of the practices of the man centred church out of which they had come, such as hierarchy, ceremonials, infant baptism, etc. As do many churches, to this very day. The key truth that distinguishes the true church from the false church however - that the only way to God is through Jesus - was recognised, so the restoration of the church could proceed. The Brazen Altar was just inside the entrance to the Tabernacle. The only way to God is via the Altar, the blood sacrifice. The pattern was established. So the Reformation, the restoration of the church, could now commence.

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH – Added the Washing Basin

The main additional revelation that sets the Evangelical Church apart from the Traditional Church is the truth of “believers baptism”. Through believers baptism the new Christian is symbolically cleansed and separated from the world, being set apart to God. This was the function of the Washing Basin in the Tabernacle,

the place where the priest washed his hands and feet, before making a sacrifice or entering the Holy Place.

“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his heart to an idol or swear by what is false.” (Psalm 24:3-4)

The Washing Basin was made out of mirrors, reflecting the mirror of the Word of God.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard – he will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:22-25)

Hence there is a greater emphasis on the Word, the bible, and on living a good clean life in Evangelical Churches than in the Traditional Church, where the Sacraments, creeds, etc. form the focal point. This has been illustrated several times in a very practical way to me. For when a Traditional Church starts to become more evangelical, the first major problem that normally arises between reformers and traditionalists is over believers' baptism. It can and does split churches.

THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH – Added the Furniture from the Holy Place

Entry to the Tent: The ‘Baptism’ or ‘Release’ of The Holy Spirit

As described in the previous chapter, entry into the tent containing both the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was restricted to the Priests in the case of the Holy Place, and the High Priest, then just once a year, in respect of the Holy of Holies. The tent was covered with sea cow skins, tinged blue and oily, a type or picture of the Holy Spirit. So to enter the Holy Place, the realm in which the Pentecostal Church operates, it is

necessary for one to become the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament priest.

How do we do this? That is the great debate between the non-charismatic evangelical church who say that we receive all of God at conversion and those of charismatic/pentecostal persuasion, who believe that a second baptism or release is required in order to enter into the Holy Spirit or Holy Place experience. This is not the place to debate the arguments (the book isn't long enough!) but I would suggest that both theologically and from practical observation and experience, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the New Testament equivalent to the priesthood of the Old. This baptism or release enables us to participate in the revelations contained within the Holy Place.

It's a lot like buying a ticket to see a movie. To understand the movie, you must see it. To get in, you have to buy a ticket (the baptism of the Holy Spirit). Otherwise you only receive a second hand account from others, with the inevitable misunderstandings that that involves. Been there, done that! That is why I urge you to buy the ticket and enter new realms of spiritual experience, if you haven't done so already.

Holy Place Furniture

There are 3 items of furniture in the Holy Place, each reflecting an aspect of the beliefs and practices of Pentecostal Churches. In fact, Pentecostal Churches can be divided into 3 types, as individual churches tend to major on one of the three items of furniture.

a. Table of Showbread – The Revelatory Word of God (*Word - Inwards*)

The word of God can be read on different levels. The bible tells us that it won't make sense at all to an unbeliever and I can relate to that. Before becoming a Christian the bible was the most boring book around. After finding Jesus it started to make more sense as I sought to find out more about my Lord and Saviour. I really appreciated the Evangelical exposition of the Word. But eventually I wanted even more. As I came into the Spirit I started to gain a small level of understanding

of the revelatory or underlying meaning of God's word.

"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The depth of understanding available is infinite, yes it's inexhaustible. This work therefore, is based on my limited understanding of the revelatory word of God. My understanding will grow as I grow in the Lord. So as I have mentioned previously, it is not the final word. Only God has that!

"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

The Pentecostal movement has brought with it new insights and understanding into the word of God, to those who are in the spiritual place to understand them. So for one group of Pentecostal Churches, the intricacies of the word are all-important, their major emphasis being on teaching programmes and the preaching of the Word.

b. The Golden Lampstand – Speaking of the Gifts of The Spirit (Works - Outwards)

The Lampstand, you will remember, burned oil, signifying among other things, the oil of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. With this anointing comes spiritual gifts.

"To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one,

just as he determines." (1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

Yes, the access to spiritual giftings is an integral part of the Pentecostal Church, one that identifies and separates them from Traditional and Evangelical churches. So we find within the Pentecostal movement, churches that major on spiritual gifts. A service is not complete if it doesn't involve tongues, interpretation, prophecy, words of knowledge, and sometimes healings. Praise and worship and the preaching of the word are likely included but the real success or failure of the meeting is judged by how well the gifts flowed.

c. The Incense Altar – Speaking of Praise and Worship, and Prayer (Worship - Upwards)

An altar of course speaks of sacrifice. Since Jesus was the final sacrifice for all sin, our sacrifice must be something different. Our sacrifice is praise and worship.

"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name." (Hebrews 13:15)

The incense that was offered on this altar speaks of prayer.

"Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne." (Revelation 8:3)

So, a further differentiation, a further truth revealed to the Pentecostal Church, is the power of praise, worship and prayer. I have commented earlier on my own experiences and difficulties, coming from an Evangelical background into a fellowship where praise, worship and prayer are full on. There is a major difference to older style churches here, a newer revelation. But some Pentecostal fellowships overly major on praise and worship and/or prayer, so lacking in balance.

These truths are the prime reason for their existence. Always seeking to break through into the “third heaven”, to the very presence of God, through these activities, relegating the gifts and the Word to minor roles.

The key for all those in the Pentecostal Church desiring to move on in God is to attain a balance between the three. To build inwardly through a deeper understanding of the Word, to build outwardly through works inspired by the Holy Spirit, and to build a deeper relationship upwardly with God, through praise and worship and prayer.

THE CHARISMATIC CHURCH – *The Revelations of the Holy Place into the Evangelical Church*

Overall, there is little difference of revelation between the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. There are differences in application however, because of the differing backgrounds of the people, and the situations in which they are applied. The Charismatic movement grew

out of the desires of those in the Evangelical Church who hungered for more of God, yet did not want to lose the traditions of their own heritage. As the truths of Pentecost have permeated Charismatic Churches, differences of application have become less and less noticeable, the essential truths of the Holy Place being the same for all.

THE RESTORATION OF MINISTRY FUNCTIONS IN THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

It is most interesting to compare the unusual order of the furniture first listed in Exodus, not being the order they actually appear in the Tabernacle, with the 5 fold ministries (specific types of leadership or ministries within the church) listed in Ephesians 4:11. This illustration gives a practical observation of the biblical order of restoration of leadership ministries to the church in these days. The dates given are approximate times of general acceptance rather than of first appearance.

Tabernacle Furniture – Exodus Chaps. 25-30	5 Fold Ministry Gifts – Ephesians 4:11
Ark of the Covenant	Jesus or God (Jesus’ Return?)
Table of Showbread	Apostles (1990’s on?)
Golden Lampstand	Prophets (1960’s on)
Brazen Altar	Evangelists (1920’s on)
Incense Altar	Pastors (1900’s on)
Washing Basin	Teachers (1900’s on)

1. Ark of the Covenant: Represents the Godhead. *Jesus* was, and still is, the “Mercy Seat” through whom all our sins can be forgiven. His return will be the ultimate fulfilment of God’s plan of restoration for mankind. He gave these 5 ministry leadership gifts to the church through the Holy Spirit, to prepare the people for His return. They existed in the early church, were lost in mainstream churches as the anointing of the Holy Spirit was rejected, and are

progressively being re-established in those churches that have accepted the move of the Spirit.

2. Table of Showbread: The first ministry to be lost and the last to be restored is that of the *apostle*. We know that the Table of Showbread represents the Word. I, in my ignorance, always thought that the job of the apostle was to set up new churches, probably because that is what the Apostle Paul did. But when you think about it, the enduring contribution that Paul made to the church was the formalising of the major principles and doctrines of the faith. For the true job of the apostle is to pioneer and bring out the truths of God’s word. We can therefore look forward to new

understandings of the Word as the ministry of the apostle returns to the church.

3. **Golden Lampstand:** The *prophet* is the illuminator of the Word through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Illumination was of course, the function of the Lampstand in the Holy Place. A prophet prophesies in revelation, correction, confirmation and foretelling. While the apostle brings out principles relating to the whole church, the prophet interprets and applies these principles to specific situations – to a country, to a church, to an individual.
4. **Brazen Alter:** The Brazen Alter represents the sacrifice, the blood of Jesus. The job of the *evangelist* is to present this message of God's saving grace through the blood of Jesus, to the people. The evangelist encourages believers as well as challenging the lost.
5. **Incense Altar:** The Golden Alter as it is often called, was the final place of preparation for the priest before entering into God's presence. It represents praise, worship and prayer. This Altar typifies the *pastor*, whose job it is to prepare his people to enter into God's presence. To co-ordinate all the ministries for his congregation.
6. **Washing Basin:** The washing of the water of the Word. The *teachers'* job is to explain the apostles' principles to the people. The teacher explains the scriptures, showing people how to cleanse and live their lives through their application.

All these roles are essential to the church, just as each item of furniture was to the Tabernacle. Each is a essential link in the full chain of God. It is interesting how God has gradually been lengthening his chain, adding links as His church is restored. The ministry of Apostleship is the last link to be forged before Jesus completes the chain by returning to rule and reign on the earth for a thousand years, as promised in *Revelation 20*. For there is no Darwinian 'missing link' in God!

THE TABERNACLE CHURCH – *Moving into the Holy of Holies*

“When Christ came as the high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by the means of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:11-12)

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (v36) “You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” (Hebrews 10:19-23,36)

Entering the Holy of Holies, being in the presence of God, being at one with God, is the ultimate objective for both the individual and the church. We can see from the scriptures above that entering the Holy of Holies is a supernatural experience, and was even for Jesus. Through His entry, He has opened the way for us to join Him there also.

So here arises a problem. If Jesus has made the way for us to join Him in the Holy of Holies, to be in the very presence of God, how is that we haven't joined Him there yet? Let's look at the **Ark of the Covenant** to find out where we are heading. The Ark, where the presence of God dwelt between the Cherubim was only able to be approached once a year by the High Priest and then only after he had gone through a comprehensive purification procedure. When he finally entered, he had to quickly burn incense to form a cloud that would hide him

from the full glory of God Almighty, in whose majestic holy presence he could not hope to survive. For even though he was forgiven of his sins, he still lived in a corrupted human body that would continue to deteriorate with age and eventually die. Yes, he had been forgiven, but still suffered from the consequences of sin, just as we do today. Forgiven but not perfect, just like you and me, well me anyway! My body tells me so, after a run particularly!

The Ark contained 3 items, which in turn relate to the three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place. First of all, the *Gold Jar of Manna*. The ‘gold’ (speaking of God) jar contained manna, which God had supernaturally provided, 6 days a week, for the Israelites to eat during the forty years they were wandering in the desert. In the Holy Place, this relates to the *Table of Showbread* where God kept the 12 loaves of bread fresh for 7 days, the priests eating and replacing them after this time. The bread represents the Word of God, which we need to keep digesting on a regular basis by reading and studying our bibles. The manna however was supplied continually by God. Spiritual manna is the revelation of God. (see page xx of the study on the promises to the 7 churches of Revelation for confirmation) This golden jar of manna is symbolic of God’s full revelation of Himself, available only upon attaining perfection.

The second item in the Ark was *Aaron’s Budded Staff*. When placed in the presence of God it miraculously produced buds, blossoms and almonds. The staff represented God’s authority, the authority of His priesthood, of which Aaron was the first representative. It relates to *The Lampstand* in the Holy Place with its branches, flowers, buds and blossoms. The lamp, symbolic of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, had to be attended to twice daily. So we need to continually top up on the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. Our ‘wicks’ also need to be trimmed daily, which speaks of ongoing daily repentance. The budded staff however tells us that upon perfection, we will walk in God’s authority in the full power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil the words of Jesus,

“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even

greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12)

The final item in the Ark was the *2 Stone Tablets of the Covenant*. These were, of course, not the original tablets brought down the mountain by Moses. The originals were the personal work of God.

“The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.” (Exodus 32:16)

They were ‘pure God’. But the ‘impure people’, had made a golden calf to worship because Moses had been away for so long.

“When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hand, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.” (Exodus 32:19)

God as represented by the tablets, could not live with sin. Moses was walking in the glory of the Lord so smashing them was an automatic reaction, for God’s glory would not coexist with sin. The people would certainly have been wiped out in an instant.

The second set of tablets (two copies of the same thing, not half on each. A copy each for the two covenant partners, God and man) were made by Moses but written on by God.

“The Lord said to Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.” (Exodus 34:1)

This second set of tablets then, represented man (the stones) being made perfect by God. (the words). Moses made and God wrote upon the tablets. So, in the Holy of Holies we had the presence of the perfect God dwelling between the cherubim above the Mercy Seat, (Jesus) covering the Ark containing the stones, representing sinful man perfected by the

fulfilled covenant. Everything fits together perfectly.

But back now to our comparisons of the present with the promise. *The Incense Altar* symbolises the way we are able to enter into God's very presence, through prayer, praise and worship. The tablets in turn, symbolise perfected mankind. Once again we are able to walk with God

"in the garden in the cool of the day." (Genesis 3:8),

returning to the ongoing relationship Adam and Eve had with God before they sinned. Only this time it will be both better and eternal, as our faith will have been proven whereas theirs was not.

Sound impossible? Well, it is in our own strength, but fortunately God is on our side! How? Well, there is a very interesting verse in Hebrews that at first glance looks like the writer has made a mistake, but its truth can now be seen in the light of the above.

"A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant." (Hebrews 9:2-3)

Now, we know that *The Incense Altar* was actually in the Holy Place, not the Holy of Holies, although it was near the entrance. So what is going on? A significant change occurred between the Old and the New Testaments, happening at the time Jesus died.

"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom....." (Matthew 27:51)

Now the incense from the Incense Altar can reach the Ark. So we have the opportunity to approach God's dwelling place in the Spirit, to come before His throne through praise, worship and prayer, being protected by the cloud of incense, even though we have not yet fully attained perfection.

This is the wonderful symbolic meaning of the Incense Altar. Jesus has prepared the way for us to enter to dwell in the Holy of Holies permanently by removing the curtain that restricted the access to one representative of the people, on but one day of the year. The stones in the Ark then, represent the people we will become when we permanently attain the perfection that Jesus has spiritually opened up to us.

To summarise, the 3 natural items of furniture in the Holy Place (where we are now) can be linked to the 3 supernatural contents of the Ark of the Covenant (what we are to become upon attaining perfection).

1. Our present revelation of God through His word is symbolised by the *Table of Showbread* and will be replaced by God's full revelation of Himself as represented by the *Gold Jar of Manna* upon attaining perfection.
2. The spiritual giftings and authority we walk in, like *The Lampstand*, need to be regularly topped up. But upon perfection we will walk in the full power and authority of God as symbolised by *Aaron's supernatural Budded Staff*.
3. Through prayer, praise and worship, as symbolised by *The Incense Altar*, we can enter into God's presence for a limited time. When we are perfected we will be able to dwell in God's presence permanently, as illustrated by the *Stone Tablets of the Covenant* (man perfected by God) dwelling in the Ark of the Covenant. Jesus has made this possible through His death on our behalf.

The application of the spiritual principles represented by these three items to our lives brings us to maturity – Christian, not age, that is!

I trust it has become readily apparent, that a single condition needs to be fulfilled for us to enter the reality of the promises of the Holy of Holies - that is, to attain perfection. Now we know we can't do that in our own strength, for many have tried, but not one has yet

succeeded. Some have got closer than have others. I remember again my Auntie Ina. But it is obvious that there is yet another experience we have yet to go through before, in reality (experientially), we embrace what Jesus has already done for us positionally (judicially). This is best illustrated through the Feasts of the Lord, which we will look at next and which themselves were centred on the Tabernacle.

We have spent much of this book looking at how God operates in “threes”. We know that we have experienced Passover, (the death of Jesus – The Outer Court - Salvation) and Pentecost, (the coming of the Holy Spirit – The Holy Place - Spirit). But we have yet to experience the third, final and most glorious element in God’s perfect plan, that is Tabernacles (purification before the Father – The Holy of Holies - Submission).

The vital question is, can this be a “pre death” experience or do we have to wait until we die to

participate? We know that until now, this has been and still is a “post death” experience. But will it necessarily always be so? The answer is no! If the church is to attain the promise of being the bride of Christ, dressed in pure white linen, something radical has yet to occur. For we certainly all need an extended cycle in the ‘washing machine of righteousness’ before our dirty linen becomes white! Something to change dramatically before we can consistently do the things that Jesus did, in greater numbers than He did, as promised! Yes, for the church to attain perfection, a radical change has yet to occur. There is still an exciting third experience in God, the coming of His Tabernacle Church awaiting us.

So let’s now seek a greater insight into these exciting future developments as revealed through the amazing Feasts of the Lord.....

NOTES...

THE PROPHETIC FEASTS OF THE LORD

GOD'S PAST PATTERN AND FUTURE PLAN

The Feasts of Israel were the Feasts of the Lord, for He graciously gave them to His people as the pattern around which they were to base their spiritual lives and their worship of God. The whole Jewish religious calendar was focused around the celebration of these feasts. So let's explore these exciting and revelatory festivals, by starting in the best place, quoting the Bible!

OLD TESTAMENT PATTERN

God's Instruction to His People

"Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the Lord empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you." (Deuteronomy 16:16-17)

God's Blessing to be Upon Those Who Attend

"Blessed – happy, fortunate (to be envied) – are the people who know the joyful sound (who understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolised by the Feasts); they walk O Lord, in the light and favour of your countenance. (Psalm 89:15 Amplified Version)

To be Celebrated, Even in Captivity

"What will you do on the day of your appointed feasts, on the festival days of the Lord? (Hosea 9:5)

NEW TESTAMENT CONCLUSIONS

The Festivals Point towards a Fulfilment in Christ

"These (Religious Festivals) are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality however is found in Jesus Christ." (Colossians 2:17)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish

them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18)

They Establish Heavenly Patterns of Things on Earth

"This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper." (Hebrews 9: 9)

They are Part of the Present Truth

"Jesus answered, 'It is written: man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

A QUESTION OF RELEVANCE?

What on earth (or in heaven!) can be the relevance of these ancient Feasts to us today? Surely they have been fulfilled by Jesus, and replaced by the New Covenant of Jesus? The answer is both yes and no!

1. FULFILLMENT IN THE NATURAL:
Let's be perfectly clear right at the outset. In the natural, Jesus came as the final fulfilment of all three groups of Feasts, the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the Feast of Tabernacles. There is no way that any of these feasts can, need to be or will be re-established in a physical form. For Jesus was the final natural fulfilment for them all.
2. FULLFILLMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL:
Remember how we have discussed earlier that the New Testament interprets and fulfils the Old? Quoted the well-known saying, 'The New is in the Old concealed, while the Old is in the New revealed.' To really understand the New, we must first understand the Old. This may be a

revolutionary thought to some, but it is valid.

We hear our Parliament or Congress, our government, by listening to the radio. However to fully understand the institution and its procedures we need to know the history of its formation and growth. With that understanding, we can appreciate, (although not necessarily like!) what is going on a lot more. So it is with our Christian walk. We read the New Testament, and interpret it a way determined by our historical and cultural perceptions, which obviously vary from country to country. We know what it says, but not necessarily why it is said. However, if we take the time and make the considerable effort required to also become familiar with the Old Testament, we will begin to understand the ‘why’ as well as the ‘what’. In that way our understanding and appreciation of the Lord, who He is, what He is, and what He has done, will increase dramatically, enhancing and enriching our faith. The two work in tandem. For instance, *1 Corinthians 15:46* states a principle that has actually applied right through the Bible.

“The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.”

Nowhere is this more valid than in the Feasts of the Lord. Looking at the church as a whole, Jesus fulfilled all seven feasts in the natural, but only one group in the spiritual. This was the first, the Feast of Passover with His death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit literally spiritually fulfilled the Feast of Pentecost in power, on the Day of Pentecost. The Feast of Tabernacles however, has yet to be fulfilled in the Spiritual. For there are many promises in the Bible about healings, miracles and signs and wonders that have not yet occurred in their fullness. So either the Bible is exaggerating, or the fulfilment of these promises is still to come, after a third supernatural event, yet to occur. By

following our progressive logic pattern, the pattern of threes that has permeated this book, the final fulfilment of God’s promises to the Church will be centred around the pattern of the Feast of Tabernacles, being overseen by God the Father himself!

Does that excite you? It certainly does me. Indeed it represents the fulfilment of the teaching of this book. And a thousand times more importantly, it also signals the ushering in of the End Time Age, to which all Christians are looking towards with eager anticipation. Or we should be! Some may argue that this will only happen with the return of Jesus, but that flies in the face of history and experience to date, the promises the Bible makes about the fulfilment of the Church and, most importantly, in the face of the pattern of the Feast of Tabernacles. But that is just a morsel to tantalisingly tempt our taste buds! The main course follows later! For first of all, we must start at the beginning, building on the solid foundation of the Feasts that have already been fulfilled.

SPRING AND AUTUMN FEASTS

As there are three prime colours plus another four shades, making up a rainbow, so there are three divisions of feasts which include four others, making up the full complement of the Lords Feasts. Another illustration of God’s perfect pattern – or maybe just co-incidence, once again! The number of co-incidences we are finding is reaching the level of improbability!

In the first set of feasts, summarised as Passover, there are three feasts. Pentecost stands alone. Then there is a further grouping of three under the broad heading of Tabernacles. The first four feasts, those of Passover and Pentecost, take place in the spring, while the final three, in the Tabernacle grouping, are celebrated during the autumn.

So, as we have already seen, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, fulfilled the spring feasts, both naturally and spiritually, The autumn feasts too, have been

fulfilled in the natural by Jesus, but are still awaiting spiritual fulfilment. (I must stop using fulfilled and fulfilment as I continually have to correct their spellings, when prompted by my computer's spellchecker! Then again, I could take time out to learn the correct spellings, couldn't I! Lots like life really! So easy to put things in the too hard basket!) Once again, I suspect that co-incidence is being stretched to believe that this clear seasonal division is by mere chance.

In the chapters ahead, we are going to look at the fully completed spring feasts. Thereby laying the foundation for our discussion on the amazing experiences that await us in the spiritual fulfilment (That word again – got it right this time!) of the three autumn, Tabernacle Feasts, still to come.

There are two vitally important local Jewish factors to understand before proceeding further. The weather patterns and monthly calendars of Israel. For their climate is basically dry, as you would expect. But there is a 4-5 month rainy season, commencing, and wettest, in the autumn, followed by irregular showers during the winter with another smaller peak, prior to spring. So unlike those of us who are used to living in colder climates, the most suitable time for growing annual crops is over the cooler winter period with its accompanying rainfall, not through the heat and dryness of summer. Therefore annual crops, such as wheat and barley are planted to benefit from the autumn rains, to grow through the winter, be brought towards maturity in the spring rainfall, before being harvested in early summer. The permanent crops however such as grapes and olives, follow traditional growing patterns the world over. Growing over the spring and summer, coming to

maturity in late summer/autumn and being harvested prior to the autumn rains. Understanding this will enable us to better see the pattern of the Feasts, for they are intricately interwoven into the seasonal agricultural cycles.

Confusing things further, for nothing seems to be simple in Israel, either then or now, they had and still have, two calendars! The first is the Religious Calendar, based upon the agricultural cycle. Hence the start of the religious year was in the spring, around March or April in our calendar, the time of hope and promise to all those on the land, the world over. The barley and wheat harvests followed a month later.

Jewish calendars vary with the cycles of the moon. Passover, for instance, is celebrated in the middle of the first month of a New Year, at roughly the same time we celebrate Easter. We 'weekend' it but they don't. For Jesus died at Passover. Another co-incidence? Definitely not, as we shall see shortly.

The Civil Calendar on the other hand, is as different as it is possible to be - out by six months! The first month of the civil calendar was the seventh month of the religious one. Clear as mud? Clear as crystal, I hope! So you have to be very careful with verses that say something like, 'in the first month', to know which calendar they are based upon. For that understanding may be crucial to pick up the full meaning of a whole passage of scripture!

It is probably a good time now to give an overview of the feasts themselves and the purpose for which each was instituted, in order to keep our later, more detailed, considerations in perspective. So here we go. More practice at making tables on the computer!

SUMMARY OF THE LORD'S FEASTS

Feast	Religious Month	Today	Scripture	Purpose	Tabernacle
SPRING FEASTS					
Passover	Twilight 14 th 1 st	Mar-Apr	Ex 12: 1-14	Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Eat lamb with bitter herbs & unleavened bread.	Outer Court
Unleavened Bread	15 th -21 st 1 st	Mar-Apr	Ex 12: 15-20	Out of Egypt in haste. Unleavened bread, several assemblies, specified offerings.	Outer Court
First Fruits	17 th or 18 th 1 st	Mar-Apr	Lev 23: 9-14	Recognising the Lord's bounty in the land. Wave offering of first barley sheaf.	Outer Court
Pentecost	6 th 3 rd	May-Jun	Lev 23: 15-21	A joyous thanks for the Lord's blessing of harvest. Offerings include wheat.	Holy Place
AUTUMN FEASTS					
Trumpets	1 st 7 th	Sep-Oct	Lev 23: 23-25	Asking for the Lord's favour with trumpet blasts and sacrifices.	Holy of Holies
Atonement	10 th 7 th	Sep-Oct	Lev 16: 1-24	Cleansing priests & people from their sins. Solemn day of fasting & sacrifice.	Holy of Holies
Tabernacles	15 th -21 st 7 th	Sep-Oct	Lev 23: 33-43	Thanks for journey into & productivity of Canaan. Celebration in booths, sacrifices.	Holy of Holies

That was a bit of a battle but I got there! Practice makes perfect!

We will now take a look at the individual spring feasts, identify their meanings, seeing how Jesus fulfilled them both naturally and spiritually, and their application to our lives today.

NOTES...

SPRING FEASTS

THE PATTERN OF THINGS PAST

“The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.” (Leviticus 23:1-2)

FEAST OF PASSOVER

“These are the Lords appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times. The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.” (Leviticus 23:4-5)

“Sacrifice as the Passover to the Lord your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the Lord will choose as a dwelling for his Name. Do not eat it with bread made with yeast,Do not let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until morning.” (Deuteronomy 16:1-4)

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

“ On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to the Lord by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.” (Leviticus 23:6-8)

FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

“The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheath, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the Lord a lamb a year old without defect, together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil – an offering made to the Lord by fire, a pleasing aroma – and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.” (Leviticus 23:9-14)

FEAST OF WEEKS (Pentecost)

“From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the Lord. Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the Lord, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings – an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. The priest is to wave the two lambs before the Lord as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the Lord for the priest. On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.” (Leviticus 23:15-21)

FEAST OF PASSOVER

This is the most important feast of all. For without a beginning there cannot be an end. Without the death of Jesus on that terrible yet glorious cross, there would be no way to be reconciled to God, other than through the Law, which we all know through practical experience, is impossible to keep, 100% of the time. (Let's stop and give Him thanks)

The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread can be considered to be but one feast as Passover commences the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread. Passover though, does have some special characteristics, warranting its separation. For example, in regard to the furniture of the Outer Court of Moses Tabernacle where Passover pictures the Brazen Altar and Unleavened Bread the Washing Basin.

THE STORY OF PASSOVER

The story of the Feasts parallels both the promise and conquest of the 'Promised Land' by the people of Israel, and also the history of the Church since its formation nearly 2000 years ago.

We have already looked at an outline of Church history down the ages. As we continue, we will start to see parallels between the progression of the feasts and the development of the Church.

We will see too, how Jewish history as described in the Bible, also parallels the feasts. For each Feast relates to a period of the Jewish journey towards the fulfilment of the promises of God. But please, this is only a brief, potted account by a non-historian for illustrative purposes, so don't base your theology on it! Should be enlightening though. It certainly was to write!

Around 1900BC there was a famine in Israel and Jacob (Israel) sent his remaining 11 sons to Egypt (for Joseph had been sold into slavery earlier) to secure some food. To cut a long story short, they found to their surprise and initial dismay, that their brother Joseph was now in Egypt as Minister of Food, or perhaps even

Prime Minister. Joseph made his peace and sent his brothers' back to Canaan to pick up their father. And so the extended family of Jacob (Israel) settled in for a long stay, 430 years in fact! At first it was a mutually satisfactory arrangement but later the Israelites, as they were now known, were oppressed and effectively treated as slaves by the Egyptians. This didn't seem to effect their reproductive capabilities however! For in 430 years their numbers had grown to perhaps 2,000,000 people! (600,000 men plus women and children) An Old World population explosion!

As the people became more and more desperate under the oppression of the Egyptians, they called out to God for help to get them out of there. Another thing that never changes – calling out to God when we are in trouble! So God in His goodness sent Moses to arrange it. Moses, quite naturally, thought that leading two million Jewish people would not be easy, particularly when the Egyptians did not want them to go! So God delegated his brother Aaron to lend a helping hand.

The Pharaoh was going to take some convincing to release them however, but God was up to the task. He softened Pharaoh up with nine serious plagues, before delivering the knockout blow with the tenth. It is this tenth plague that is at the heart of Passover. For this one hit the Egyptians where it really hurts - the death of a family member - here, the firstborn son of all Egyptian families. Perhaps amounting to between 10 and 20% of the entire population. The accompanying death of the firstborn cattle would seem small by comparison, to the human tragedy that overwhelmed them.

The key element of the story though wasn't the Egyptians punishment, but rather God's protection of His obedient people from this catastrophic event. For most likely, there were some Israelites who took no notice of Moses either. Their families would have been in the

same position as their Egyptian oppressors. So what did God do?

He instructed, through Moses, the head of every household to take a lamb under one year old, on the tenth day of the first month of the Religious Calendar, and hold it four days. On the evening of the fourteenth day they were to kill the lamb and sprinkle some of its blood on the top and sides of their doorposts, to confirm they were following God's instructions. Then they were to barbecue the lamb, flavoured with bitter herbs, over a fire, eating it quickly with unleavened bread, so building up their energy for the journey to freedom, timed to start at midnight.

God, as always, was true to His word, for at this time of their escape, the Egyptians were in panic and terror over the untimely deaths in their families. And the rest, as they say, is history! A history we will espy in the chapters on Pentecost and the Tabernacle Feasts.

The word 'Passover' is our translation of the Hebrew word 'Pesach'. It has twin meanings. Firstly, reflecting its effect upon the Egyptians, it means, 'the passing over in judgement of the death angel'. For the Jews, the second meaning is 'hovering over', in Divine protection.

THE FEAST ITSELF

This feast was designed by God to memorialise forever His dramatic rescue of His people from the clutches of the apparently invincible Egyptians. It was to be an annual action replay of the events leading up to their deliverance, on that amazing night. For the Passover represents the starting point in the relationship of the Israelites with their God, just as the death of Jesus is the starting point in the Christian faith. It represents a new beginning. Therefore it is no mistake that it is celebrated in the first month of the Religious Year, in the spring, nature's time of promise and hope.

Not on the first day of the year though, but the tenth. In the Bible, the number ten stands for 'trial and testing'. That is certainly what the people had been through during their time in Egypt! So on the tenth day of the first month, in

remembrance of their great escape, a firstborn male lamb was put aside, ready to be slaughtered on the evening of the fourteenth day. It had to be perfect. None of its bones were to be broken during the killing process. As in Egypt, it was to be roasted with bitter herbs and eaten in haste with unleavened bread. Any that was not eaten had to be burned. All heads of households were required to meet together at House of God for this Feast, as representatives of their families. So the celebration was carried out symbolically for all Israel, firstly in the Tabernacle and later in Solomon's Temple built in Jerusalem. Representation by family heads avoided a major logistics problem.

Only Jews, as defined by circumcision, were allowed to participate in the feast. Interestingly, this feast was not celebrated during the forty years wandering in the wilderness. For the people who left Egypt were punished for their disobedience in the desert, all but two of the adults dying there. The feast was not effectively instituted until the people entered the Promised Land when, in their eyes, they really had something to celebrate. Like us today, wandering around in the desert was not seen as a desirable experience. A very necessary one though for their, and our own, spiritual development!

PASSOVER PARTICULARS and THEIR FULLFILLMENT IN JESUS

It is absolutely amazing how precisely Jesus was the fulfilment of the Feast of Passover. To prove this, we will look at the Passover elements individually, seeing how the ministry of Jesus paralleled them so precisely. (*in Italics*) I am particularly indebted to Kevin J. Connor and his illuminating book 'The Feasts of Israel' for so much of the information on all the feasts. His outstanding, detailed insight and analysis of the feasts is a must for all those who are interested in gaining a deeper understanding. I bear full responsibility for the presentation and interpretation however. Any errors are mine!

For there are an incredible 27 ways in which the Feast of Passover was fulfilled by Jesus. Just by chance? No way!

1. **Passover - A New Year:** (*Exodus 12:2*) Passover represents a new beginning, the promise of the harvest to come.
Accepting Jesus as the "Lamb of God" represents a new beginning for us too. But it is most important to realise that it is only the beginning of our journey and relationship. All the other feasts need to be experienced as well, to fulfil God's best plan for us. Unfortunately many Christians either don't understand or choose to ignore this absolutely foundational truth.
2. **Lamb Held For Four Days:** (*Exodus 12:3-6*) The lamb was taken on the 10th day of the new religious year and held until the 14th day, when it was put to death.
Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 10th day and was slaughtered on the 14th day!
3. **A Firstborn Lamb:** (*Exodus 12:5*) The firstborn lamb was regarded as the choicest of the flock. The firstborn has always had a special place in Jewish culture.
Jesus was the firstborn son of God, the firstborn son of Mary and the firstborn son of the new creation.
4. **A Male:** (*Exodus 12:5*) In this particular sacrifice, a male lamb was specified.
Adam, a male, was the seed bearer of the human race who fell. Jesus was the second Adam who restored the human race to God.
5. **Without Spot or Blemish:** (*Exodus 12:5*) The lamb had to be perfect.
Jesus was perfect.
6. **A Lamb per Household:** (*Exodus 12:3-5*) One lamb provided a covering for each family.
Jesus provides the only necessary covering for the household or family of God. That is, for all Christians.
7. **To be Killed "Between the Evenings":** (*Literal translation of Exodus 12:6*) The lamb was to be killed at a specific time. It was the blood arising from the death of the lamb that bought the protection, not its spotless life.
The hours between 9am and 6pm on the 14th day, when Jesus was crucified, precisely fulfilled this specified time criterion. Jesus died somewhere between 3pm and 6pm.
8. **All the People Killed Their Lambs at the Same Time:** (*Exodus 12:6*) Symbolic of the nation acting as with one accord.
The nation acted as one in the clamour to crucify Jesus. The entire Jewish nation was held responsible for His death.
9. **On the Sides and Top of the Doorframes:** (*Exodus 12:7*) The blood, symbolic of death, was sprinkled on 3 places on the doorframe using a hyssop branch, a symbol of humility.
Jesus shed His blood on the cross as a lamb, in the ultimate act of humility, while in His resurrection He became the door, the only way to God.
10. **Eat the Lamb's Body:** (*Exodus 12:8-10*) To be eaten roasted, with unleavened bread, (sinless) and bitter herbs.
Jesus experienced the fire of God's holiness at Calvary. He was of course sinless and the cross was a bitter experience for Him, taking on the sins of mankind.
11. **The Lamb was Eaten in Haste:** (*Exodus 12:11*) They were to be ready to leave; fully clothed, belt hitched, sandals on and staff at the ready.
Jesus provided our spiritual armour, ready for immediate action – belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel and the sword of truth in our hand. (Ephesians 6:13-17)
12. **The Lord's Passover:** (*Exodus 12:11-13*) The Lord (or the angel of death) 'passed over' the houses of the Israelites and the Egyptians where the blood was sprinkled.
The blood of Jesus saves those who accept Him, from God's eternal judgement.
13. **A day of Commemoration:** (*Exodus 12:14*) To be remembered as an annual observance.
Jesus replaced the Passover supper with Communion, to commemorate His sacrifice for us.

- 14. About Midnight:** (*Exodus 11:4-6*) The feast was celebrated just before midnight, the time of judgement and death.
Jesus, by His death, prepared the way for God's judgement at the end of the age – the final midnight hour.
- 15. At Sunset:** (*Deuteronomy 16:2,6*) The remembrance of the feast was to be celebrated in the evening, after sunset.
When Jesus died the sun went down, supernaturally. The natural sun and the spiritual son set in unity with one another.
- 16. No Bones were to be Broken:** (*Exodus 12:46*) The lamb was not to have bones broken during its preparation. God gave no reason for this at the time.
The soldiers broke the legs of the thieves, but Jesus had already died under the burden of our sins. None of His bones were broken in His sacrifice for us. The reason for the earlier instruction was now clear. (John 19:31-33)
- 17. Unleavened Bread to be Eaten for Seven Days:** (*Exodus 12:15-20*) All yeast, representative of sin, was to be removed from the house for a week.
Jesus was the sinless lamb until, and then again after, His death on the cross.
- 18. Safety Inside the Door of the House:** (*Exodus 22-24*) The Jews were instructed to stay inside during this time.
Jesus is the blood sprinkled door and the church, His house, in which we are to stay inside, for our safety.
- 19. Explanation of the Ceremony:** (*Exodus 12:25-28*) Parents were expected to explain and pass on the ceremony to their children.
Jesus was the fulfilment of the ceremony and we are to pass on and explain Him to our children.
- 20. A Distinction Between Egypt and Israel:** (*Exodus 11:7*) The Passover confirmed to the Jews the difference between themselves and the Egyptians.
Jesus death created a difference between believers and the 'world'. (symbolised by Egypt)
- 21. Plundering the Egyptians at the Exodus:** (*Exodus 12:31-36*) The Egyptians gave the Israelites all they asked for in terms of clothing to take on their journey and precious metals to help in the construction of the Tabernacle.
Jesus provides us with the physical and spiritual wealth we need for our journey in Christ.
- 22. A Male Must be Circumcised to Participate** (*Exodus 12:43-51*) No foreigner, temporary resident or hired hand, nor any uncircumcised male, Israelite or foreigner, was allowed to eat of the Passover lamb.
Jesus 'qualified' genuine believers to become 'circumcised' (of the heart) citizens of the New Covenant, able to participate in the Lord's Supper.
- 23. A Sacred Assembly** (*Exodus 12:16*) An extra Sabbath – a day of rest - on which no work was to be done.
Jesus, in becoming God's lamb, did the full work for us. We therefore, are to cease from our own works and rest in Him.
- 24. Taken Out of Egypt** (*Exodus 12:40-42*) After 430 years, quite possibly to the very day, the Lord kept vigil to enable His people to leave Egypt.
Jesus, through His death, enables His believers to leave the world, (symbolised by Egypt) and enter His heavenly kingdom.
- 25. Healing Power in the Lamb** (*Psalms 105:37*) God healed the sick amongst the people to enable them to complete their journey.
Jesus heals us to enable us to complete our spiritual journey.
- 26. The Song of Victory** (*Exodus 15:1-18*) The first song recorded in Scripture celebrates the might and majesty of the Lord for delivering the people from their oppressors.

Believers were, and are, able to sing a new song, for Jesus has removed us from the bondage of Satan. Hallelujah!

- 27. The Church of the Firstborn** (*Exodus 4:22-23, Hebrews 12:22-24*) After the Exodus, the church of the 'firstborn' was given by God to Israel, including hierarchy and ceremony. *Jesus set up His church with hierarchy (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) and ceremony. (Communion)*

Yes, Jesus completely and entirely fulfilled the Old Covenant (Testament) in these 27 ways (and likely more!), while at the same time setting up the New. The real tragedy of the situation is that His work was not recognised by the Jews themselves. For over the centuries, their worship had deteriorated from substance to form, until they were then unable to recognise the fulfilment of their dreams of 1500 years. Expecting an earthly type 'king' to deliver them from their undoubted distress, they sadly failed to understand that their Saviour was with them, offering Himself as a New Hope, the true fulfilment of 1500 years of ceremonials that had not worked. For

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship." (*Hebrews 10:1*)

That can only be done by Jesus, as

"he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them' (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, 'Here I am. I have come to do your will.' He set aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (*Hebrews 10:8-10*)

So, it is obvious, far beyond reasonable doubt, that the first of the feasts, the Feast of Passover itself, has been completely fulfilled. Fulfilled both in the natural and the spiritual, through the death of Jesus on the cross. So let's now move on to the next feast in the Passover grouping, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to see if the same applies here too.

NOTES...

FEASTS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD AND FIRSTFRUITS

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is an extension or continuation of Passover, being celebrated over the week following the Feast of Passover. Hence the two Feasts can be considered to be one. The names of Passover and Unleavened Bread are interchangeable. The Feast of Firstfruits is also celebrated in the same week. These three feasts then, are looked upon as being integral parts of the same unit.

The Feast of Firstfruits, as we shall see shortly, is a bit of an oddity, not seeming to easily fit into the pattern of the other feasts, or indeed, into the pattern of the Tabernacle of Moses. For it is the only one of the feasts that does not include a Sabbath or Sacred Assembly. But that's getting ahead of ourselves. So let's first have a look at the 'non-rising', unleavened bread.

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

This feast starts on the 15th day of the first month (Religious Calendar), the day after the Passover, a Feast day, and finishes on the 21st day, with another Feast day. (15th to 21st inclusive, totals 7 days) Now, the people of the Old Testament are most unlikely to have understood the full significance of this day, for that was not revealed until New Testament times. To them it was representative haste, of having to prepare the Passover Meal in a hurry, of not having had time to wait for the rising effect of adding yeast (sourdough) to the bread to take effect, so leaving it out altogether.

Had I been living then, I think I would have had many questions to ask the priests about this bread. And I would have been unlikely to get satisfactory answers, for they were not revealed until New Testament times. For example. Why eat this bread for seven whole days? In the natural, you would think it would be a quick, one meal or day remembrance, similar to that of Passover night. Why was this unleavened bread used in all the feasts except Pentecost? And again, why did the priests have to eat such a lot

of it? But I realise, I do ask too many questions! I also remember my Grandmother baking bread without yeast, for communion at our church when I was a boy. I have to admit that I am pleased that I wasn't a priest back then, as both its taste and texture didn't much appeal to me!

But when Jesus came, He revealed the true meaning of this tradition. Except for the one occasion, Jesus related yeast to sin. And what an apt metaphor it is too. For sin puffs up, as does yeast, and sin permeates and grows within our bodies from very small beginnings, if we let it. Just as a little yeast works its way through the bread to make it rise. Jesus used this simile to warn His listeners to beware of the leaven of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees for their extreme 'religious' behaviour, asking people to do as they said, not as they did. And the Sadducees, for their 'modern, liberal' approach to the Scriptures, denying the reality of the supernatural, including later, the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Nothing is new!

“ ‘Be careful,’ Jesus said to them. ‘Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ ” (Matthew 16:6)

So the real significance of Unleavened Bread relates to purity. Paul explained this to the Corinthians when seeking to convince them to expel the man who was 'living' with his stepmother, surprisingly without the church taking action, a lack of action which indirectly reflects approval in the eyes of the world.

“Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the

bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

We can now understand why it formed such a symbolically significant part of the diet of the priests. For they were to be set apart from sin, to be different, to be bread without yeast. To live pure and holy lives.

The real significance of the unleavened bread then, was to symbolically separate the Jewish nation from the world, through pure and righteous living.

Yeast free bread for seven days. Seven here, as in several hundred other places in the Bible, represents completion. Complete separation through complete holiness, to be achieved through keeping the law.

Now we know that we, just as the Jews in Old Testament times, are unable to keep the law. So we need help. And that help comes from Jesus. For Jesus declared,

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

Yes, Jesus is the fulfilment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Our completion is complete! Through belief in Him, we are separated from the world and have been granted eternal life.

We can now also relate these first two feasts to the furniture in the Outer Court of the Tabernacle. The Feast of Passover obviously relates to the Brazen Altar on which the blood sacrifices were made. Jesus was the Passover lamb, as we have already discussed. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the other hand, represents the Washing Basin, the bread of holiness relating to the water of purification.

So we can link the blood and the water that poured from the side of the crucified Jesus to the fulfilment of the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. The blood and the water of the cross perfectly match up with the blood and

the unleavened bread of the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Jesus was, and is, the final completion of these feasts, both in the natural and in the spiritual. Amazing isn't it, how the giant jigsaw of God's plan fits together so easily when we search out His truth, linking together the individual pieces found within His treasure trove, the Bible.

FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

As mentioned at the beginning, this feast is the odd man out, being the only one that does not contain a Sabbath Day. This fact too, seems to preclude it from fitting into the pattern set by the furniture of the Tabernacle of Moses. For the other six feasts clearly relate to the six items of furniture the Tabernacle contained. So, what place did this feast have, and what role does it fulfil in God's overall plan?

Its purpose was to give the people a foretaste of what was to come later in the year. In the natural, the less nutritious and tasty oat and barley harvests would be followed seven weeks later by the superior wheat harvest. In its turn, the wheat harvest would be followed 3-4 months later by the truly tasty and delicious fruit crops of figs, olives and grapes. Spiritually, the feast days too, follow this natural pattern. Pentecost was celebrated concurrent with the wheat harvest and the extra special Tabernacle feasts, during the fruit harvest season.

Not only was the offering selected from the first harvest, but it was to be the first of the first harvest. The full significance of this 'first of the first' is most easily understood to a crop farmer. For they know through experience, that the very best of a crop's fruits or flowers mature right at the beginning of the harvest.

I understand this from personal experience. For a number of years Kathy and I were commercial flower growers, our primary crop being freesia flowers, grown for the New Zealand fresh flower market. Interestingly, we grew the flowers mainly from seed, rather than the traditional corms, (bulbs) for that way we could get earlier flowers and better prices. Being grown from

seed, there was a much wider range of flowering times than for corm grown product.

Now this was all in the days before I had heard of the Feast of Firstfruits. But it was always obvious to me, from personal observation that the strongest freesias flowered first. The strongest growing colour was the yellows and these were always the first to flower. Within the yellows too, the longest, strongest blooms would flower first. We would regularly get flowers up towards a metre tall, but the best of the early yellow blooms would grow 30% longer than this. Considerably taller than in the home garden! We would normally pick 2-4 stems off a plant by leaving part of the main stem on the plant during the first pick, then picking the side shoots later. The first bunch of yellows picked would always be the best bunch of the season, irrespective of how many tens of thousands of other bunches followed.

So this first of the first, this special sheaf of barley, would have represented the very best of the crop. And who spiritually is the best of the crop? Why, Jesus of course! Paul obviously understood this and applied it to the resurrection of Jesus. By now, you will not be surprised to learn that this feast took place at the same time as His resurrection. For God had perfectly planned everything, before time began.

Let's see then, what Paul had to say about it.

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.” (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

So Christ, the perfect one, was raised (harvested) first, and we who believe in Him will follow in due time. The following bunches (us), although similar to the first one (perfect in Him), are still not of quite as high quality as the first. (Jesus)

That then is the real meaning of the Feast of Firstfruits. Jesus has completed His work by overcoming death and rising from the dead, the firstfruit of the general resurrection to come at the end of the age. The feast of the promise to come! And, as we are now coming to expect with the spiritual following the natural, it was celebrated on the day of His resurrection too.

Is it too much to expect for the same to apply to Pentecost and Tabernacles? Let's see.

NOTES...

FEAST OF WEEKS (Pentecost)

We naturally relate this feast to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, because of its New Testament name, the Feast of Pentecost.

The Feast of Weeks as it is known in the Old Testament, was celebrated 50 days after Firstfruits. The word '*pente*' means 50. The events of the New Testament Day of Pentecost represent a key element in the revelation of the New Testament. As a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, the church was formed and the 2 New Covenant commandments (Love both God and neighbour) were written not on stone tablets, but rather, on people's hearts and minds. Of course, this occurred 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus. What else would you expect! But that is getting ahead of ourselves.

For the Jews of the time, it was a celebration of God's provision for the wheat harvest. As such, it is closely linked to the Feast of Firstfruits, the celebration of the barley harvest. The two together were considered to be the 'Corn Harvest', so providing a very strong link between Passover and Pentecost.

The main cause of celebration however, was the birth of the nation. For 50 days after leaving Egypt God bestowed upon His people, at Mount Sinai, a system of law and of worship (Old Testament church), the very heart of nationhood.

Later we are going to see how the elements of this feast parallel precisely the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament but first, let's return to the saga of the Jewish journey from Egypt.

THE STORY OF PENTECOST

Once again, this is just a summary, so please don't base your theology on it! This story is told in more detail than the Passover summary, as it is not as well known or understood. It is a classic example of the ups and downs that were to characterise the nation of Israel throughout its history. It cannot be said that it got off to a good start! God's patience with His people, as it still is with us, is amazing.

After their miraculous escape from Egypt, the Israelites took an indirect route down the desert road towards the Red Sea, guided by the twin pillars of fire and cloud, in order to avoid Philistine country. Having confused their former captors with these tactics, the Israelites made their famous night crossing through the Red Sea, leaving the by now, angry Egyptians to drown in their attempt to follow. Moses then led the people through the Desert of Shur, where God supernaturally provided water to drink. But not until after some bitter complaints to Moses about the wisdom of their journey!

A month after leaving Egypt, God led the people to the Desert of Sin, where they ran out of food, once again complaining bitterly, but not unexpectedly, to Moses. God provided an initial feed of manna and quail, then manna on an ongoing basis. After another incident or two, including defeating the Amalekites in battle, the Israelites entered the Desert of Sinai, camping at the foot of Mount Sinai, a little over six weeks after having left Egypt.

The Pentecost story really starts from this time. Moses went up the mountain and called out to God, asking Him what His next plan was to be. God told Moses to go tell the people to prepare for His coming in a dense cloud in three days time. All except Moses were to stay away from the mountain. God, as always, turned up on time. His presence came in the cloud, accompanied by thunder, lightening, earthquakes, fire and smoke. He called Moses up the mountain. Next sent him back to collect Aaron, then gave the Ten Commandments and the law, including details of the Feasts. After writing down the law (Covenant), Moses and Aaron came back down the mountain.

The next day Moses built an altar, made sacrifices to God, and read the law to the people. He then took Aaron, his two eldest sons and seventy elders partway up the mountain, so that

God could confirm to them what He had told Moses.

Later, God commanded Moses back up to join Him. For six days Moses waited in the cloud. On the seventh day, God called Moses up to the summit to be with Him. Moses remained there for forty days and nights without food. During this time Moses was given the Tablets with the Ten Commandments inscribed on them plus details of the Tabernacle that bore his name, and of the priesthood.

While Moses was absent, the trouble really started! For the people quickly got fed up waiting for him to return, managing to convince the weak willed Aaron to make a golden calf to worship. Not a lot of staying power here! The day after its construction they started worshipping the calf in typical pagan fashion. Of course the Lord new what was going on. He told Moses to leave Him alone while He destroyed all the participants. Moses pleaded on their behalf and the Lord relented.

Taking the tablets down with him, Moses met Joshua, who had not been involved. They approached the camp to the sight and sound of the people worshipping the calf. Moses threw down in disgust, the Tablets God had made and they broke. (Remember that God's purity cannot co-exist with sin.) He immediately burned the calf in the fire, ground it into powder, scattered it on the water and made the people drink it! Certainly clearly showed his own and God's feelings about the matter!

After confronting Aaron, Moses rallied the Levites to him, getting each to tie a sword to his side and go back and forth through the camp killing those who got in their way. Three thousand people died that day! (Remember too, how three thousand were saved at the New Testament Pentecost, in the mirror image of this, so to speak.) Moses went back up the mountain again the next day to once again plead for the people, but the Lord refused to listen and sent a plague upon them.

Finally, God sent the off towards the Promised Land in disgrace, but He continued to meet with Moses in a Tent of Meeting, erected outside the camp.

For one last time God called Moses back up Mount Sinai, commanding him to bring new stone tablets upon which God would rewrite the Ten Commandments. While there, Moses received further instructions about the Feasts, in particular this one, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost). When he came down the mountain for this final time with the replacement tablets, his face was so radiant the people were not able to stand the glory, asking him to cover up. When talking to the Lord however, Moses removed his veil. So ends the glorious yet sad story of Pentecost. We certainly have a patient, but still righteous and just God.

THE FEAST ITSELF

The Feast of Pentecost was to be celebrated fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits. (*Leviticus 23:15-16*) Interestingly, the Feasts of Firstfruits and Pentecost were the only two that didn't fall on a Sabbath. The particular importance of Pentecost was recognised however, as God decreed this day a special Sabbath. For there were fifty days between the peoples' escape from Egypt and God providing them with the 'first edition' of the Ten Commandments on stone.

If you are curious like me, you will have figured out that the timing of the application of the fifty days was not from the Feast of Passover, (the time of the people leaving Egypt) as you would expect, but rather, from the Feast of Firstfruits. Looking back in hindsight, which is a wonderful thing to be able to do, we can see that the introduction of the Feasts revealed for the first time, in type form, the Resurrection of Jesus. For we now know that Firstfruits is symbolic of the Resurrection, and that the Holy Spirit came to form the New Testament church, fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus. A further piece of God's revelation jigsaw is in place!

The Feast was to be celebrated on the 6th day of the 3rd month, the month of Sivan. That places it

around May or June in our calendar. A number of very specific offerings were to be made to the Lord in the midst of this great joy and celebration of the harvest.

PENTECOST PARTICULARS ***THEIR FULFILLMENT IN BOTH JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT***

There is one very important difference between Pentecost and Passover. For Jesus fulfilled the Passover in both the natural and the spiritual. But

in Pentecost, Jesus only fulfilled the natural, leaving spiritual fulfilment to the Holy Spirit. In Pentecost, Jesus and the Holy Spirit work in tandem. This has important implications for us as we build up towards the ultimate in the feasts, the Feast of Tabernacles. But more of that later.

So, let's look now at some of the ways in which Jesus and the Holy Spirit fulfilled the Feast of Pentecost.

- 1. Passover to Pentecost:** Fifty days from when the people left Egypt until they were given the law.
Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who died and brought the New Covenant law. The Holy Spirit took the Law and imprinted it on the tablet of our heart.
- 2. Firstfruit to Weeks (Pentecost):** The Feast of Pentecost was to be celebrated fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits.
Jesus rose on the day of Firstfruits, followed fifty days later by the arrival of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. The Number Fifty:** In the Old Testament, fifty was the number of Jubilee. In a Jubilee year, slaves were freed, debts cancelled and land returned to its original owner. It was a time of celebration, proclaimed by the blowing of trumpets.
Jesus' resurrection, freeing mankind from the burden of Old Testament law, enabled the Holy Spirit, 50 days later, to imprint Jesus' New Testament law upon our hearts.
- 4. The Day After the Sabbath:** Both the Feasts of Firstfruit and Pentecost were celebrated on the day after the Sabbath.
As mentioned, Jesus rose on the first day of the week. The Holy Spirit came on the first day also. That is why we as Christians, celebrate the Lord's Day on a Sunday. The Old Testament, Jewish Sabbath, was commemorated on a Saturday. In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was a 'day of rest', while in the New, we are to have a 'Spirit of rest' in Jesus at all times. Sabbath or Holy days are to 'celebrated' inside us continually, not merely related to specific days. We are to live them all, every day of the year! This is a concept much of the church has lost sight of. The traditions of Easter and Christmas and other holy days are indeed just those – traditions. Not the reality of living a godly life.
- 5. The Manifestation of God:** On Mount Sinai God's presence was majestically manifested in cloud, thunder, lightening, earthquakes, fire and smoke.
Jesus made possible the coming of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire, rushing, mighty wind, shaking and conviction.
- 6. The Giving of the Law:** At Mount Sinai on tablets of stone, written with God's finger.
Jesus is the New Testament law, written on our hearts by the Spirit of the finger of God.
- 7. The Books of the Covenant:** The Old Testament law was written down by Moses and Aaron on Mount Sinai and kept in a book in the side of the Ark of the Covenant.
The New Testament of our Bible is the New Covenant equivalent. Inspired by the life of Jesus and written under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

- 8. Revelation of the Tabernacle Order:** Given subsequent to the revealing of the law, it set out the way in which worshippers were to approach God.

In the New Testament, we approach God through the perfection of Jesus, by the Spirit.

- 9. A Bread Offering Baked with Yeast:** This offering was unlikely to have been understood by the Jews, for in the Passover Feast, yeast was so strongly prohibited. Just having it in the home, was an offence resulting in excommunication. Similarly, in the daily Meal Offering, yeast and honey were prohibited ingredients. Both were of course symbolic of the sinless Jesus.

While Passover relates to the perfect Jesus, Pentecost relates to the, as yet, imperfect church. Each of us knows from personal observation and sad experience, that the Church has not yet attained sinless perfection! My personal experience since moving into the realm of Pentecost, has been of the Holy Spirit exposing more of the sin in my life! It is not that my, or our, sin is greater in Pentecost, rather, it is just more obvious. Of course, as the Holy Spirit deals with the root cause of our sin, so we move closer to perfection, towards the promises of the Feast of Tabernacles.

- 10. Two Loaves Offered:** The two loaves represent ‘witness’ the number two being frequently used to represent this in the religious system of the Tabernacle and the Feasts. Another example is the duplicate stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments.

These loaves may also be ‘twice used’ to symbolise the dual witness of Christ and His Church or the dual witness of Christ and the Holy Spirit to the Church. The two loaves made with two ephahs of fine flower and baked with yeast as a Wave Offering, also speak of the Jews and Gentiles coming together in a single unified church, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- 11. A Lasting Ordinance:** The Feast was to be celebrated annually for all future generations.

Jesus died that we might receive eternal life. The Holy Spirit lives within the believer forever.

- 12. Harvest Time:** The Day of Pentecost was a day of celebration, held at the end of the harvest. A Harvest Festival or Thanksgiving Day. However, as the feast was called the Feast of Weeks, it relates also to the gathering in of both the barley and the wheat harvests, jointly known as the Corn Harvest. The Corn Harvest, in its turn, points towards the exciting Fruit Harvest of the Feast of Tabernacles, which we will look at next.

Jesus, through His death and resurrection, enabled the Harvest to be prepared. With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the harvest commenced. The 3,000 saved on the Day of Pentecost balanced the 3,000 killed by the Levites on the day that Moses brought the first set of tablets down the mountain. This day could be considered the first ‘Pentecost’, the day the law was first given, with the New Testament Pentecost being the day the ‘law’ was first written on peoples hearts, through the sending of the Holy Spirit. It has been suggested by some too, that the earlier barley harvest was symbolic of the early church converts who were mainly Jews, and the wheat harvest, the Gentiles who followed later during the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit of early church times.

- 13. Harvest of Firstfruits:** The barley and wheat harvests were the first harvests, pointing the way to the extra special and much more tasty fruit harvest, to come later.

This is prophetic of the final, much better harvest at the end of the age. At that time the full anointing of the Holy Spirit will be poured out, followed by the return of Jesus to rule and reign for a thousand years. But more of that later.

To further consolidate our understanding of how the Old Testament Feast of Passover was

fulfilled in the New Testament outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the following table is helpful.

FEAST OF WEEKS

Another table challenge for David! Isn't it amazing though, just how incredibly closely the

Old and the New Covenants match?

COMPARISON OF PENTECOST IN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

<i>Old Testament Pentecost</i>	<i>New Testament Pentecost</i>
<i>On the 50th Day after the Feast of Firstfruits</i>	<i>On the 50th Day after the Resurrection of Jesus</i>
<i>Writing of the Ten Commandments on the 2 Stone Tablets (The Law)</i>	<i>Imprinting of the 2 Love Commandments on the Hearts and Minds of Believers (The Law's Fulfilment)</i>
<i>By the Finger of God</i>	<i>By the Spirit of God.</i>
<i>3,000 People Killed</i>	<i>3,000 People Saved</i>
<i>Judgement of Death</i>	<i>Restoration of Life</i>
<i>The Letter of the Law</i>	<i>The Spirit of Life</i>
<i>Glory on the Face of Moses</i>	<i>Glory on the Face of Jesus</i>
<i>Face Veiled to Cover the Glory</i>	<i>Face Unveiled to Change Us into His Glory</i>
<i>Glory that Faded</i>	<i>Glory that Remains</i>
<i>Servants of the Old Covenant</i>	<i>Servants of the New Covenant</i>
<i>On Mount Sinai</i>	<i>On Mount Zion</i>

Jesus was both natural and spiritual fulfilment of the Feast of Passover. The Feast of Pentecost however followed a different pattern. Yes, Jesus fulfilled it in the natural, as in Passover. But

spiritual fulfilment was of the Holy Spirit. This is a crucial difference to understand before going on to consider the glorious meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles.

NOTES...

AUTUMN FEASTS

THE PATTERN OF THINGS TO COME

“They (the High Priest) serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.”

(Hebrews 8:5-6)

“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” (John 7:37-8)

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

“The Lord said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the Lord by fire.’ ” (Leviticus 23:23-5)

DAY OF ATONEMENT

“The Lord said to Moses, The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the Lord by fire. Do not work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God. Anyone who does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people. I will destroy from among his people anyone who does work on that day. You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath. (Leviticus 23:26-32)

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

“The Lord said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord’s Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to the Lord by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to the Lord by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work..... On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the Lord for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’ ” (Leviticus 23:33-44)

ONWARDS INTO AUTUMN

In the natural, I have to admit that I am a 'summer man', preferring the sun of summer to the cold of winter. But in New Zealand it doesn't get really hot in summer, as a cooling sea completely surrounds us. Our climate tends to be a very pleasant, temperate one. Undoubtedly would have different preferences, living in warmer climes. Certainly are products of our environment, aren't we?

Spiritually however, there is no doubt that autumn is the time to live, irrespective of where we live! For those whose desire is to participate in the fullness of God's plan for his people, the 'spiritual autumn' is most definitely the time to be alive! As summer separates spring and autumn in the natural, so nearly 2,000 years separates the Spring and Autumn Feasts in the spiritual.

Earlier, we looked at the history of the church, seeing how it gradually declined when spring gave way to the long summer of the Dark Ages, some time after the feast of Pentecost. The 'autumn' Reformation saw the gradual restorative process commence. The truths and experiences of Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits and Pentecost were re-established from the 1500's to the 1900's. Their re-establishment has prepared the church for the exciting culmination of God's 'master plan'. For we are destined to return to the full glory Adam and Eve enjoyed before the terrible temptation of that fateful fruit became too exciting to resist.

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it"
(Genesis 2:15)

Man took care of the garden on God's behalf. One day, those who qualify for the first resurrection will rule and reign over the earth, with the Father's delegated representative, Jesus Christ at their helm, for a period of 1,000 years. Sound fanciful? Not at all! For it is the logical conclusion of past events and is confirmed by scripture itself.

".....They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4-6)

As we investigate the Autumn Feasts, we will see just who these people are.

Throughout these writings, the logical nature of God has been presented. His master plan for the human race from the beginning of time, a plan from which He has never deviated. Our problem though is one of perception. Because we live in such a minute portion of His time span, we cannot see the full extent of the perfect plan He has devised. It is only now, as His plan approaches its logical conclusion and the Lord is choosing to reveal more of it to us, that we can begin to comprehend a little more of its magnificence, but still, only in the broadest sense.

A certain observation in Scripture is that types, patterns and prophecies are generally best understood after they have happened! I am relieved that it is not just me, for many of the greatest characters in the Bible have failed to recognise God's hand until after the event too. God has a real sense of humour. I can just envisage Him chuckling to Himself, as He watches our puny attempts to predict, in the finest detail, what He is going to do with and to us! "I will show them", He likely laughs to Himself, "My ways are greater than their ways and my thoughts greater than their thoughts!"

So we won't attempt to outthink God in our considerations of the Autumn Feasts, but will look at the patterns they have established, and attempt to draw some apparently logical

ONWARDS INTO AUTUMN

conclusions from them. But no doubt, God will still have the last laugh!

TIMING OF THE FEASTS

Of the seven feasts, three involve the specific revelation of one of the three persons of the Godhead. The specific fulfilment of each of these three feasts relates to a single event, in which the character and majesty of the participant is revealed. The full nature of Jesus was revealed at Passover, on the cross and in His resurrection. The full nature of the Holy Spirit, in turn, was revealed on the Day of Pentecost. Logic therefore has it, that the full nature of God the Father will be revealed in the form of His

delegated servant, Jesus, at the time Jesus returns to rule and reign upon the earth in fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles. While we do not know the date and time of His return, for not even Jesus does Himself. Isn't it just possible however, that it may be during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast that reveals the nature of the Father?

Interestingly, these three 'Godhead' feasts have the other four logically placed between them. The feature of these remaining four is that all require action on our behalf, for their fulfilment. Let's look at the order in which the Feasts occur.

1. Feast of Passover	Revealing the character of Jesus
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread	Symbolic of removing sin from our lives
3. Feast of Firstfruits	Thanks for God's bountiful provision
4. Feast of Pentecost	Revealing the character of the Holy Spirit
5. Feast of Trumpets	Advising us to prepare for God's imminent return
6. Day of Atonement	A call to holiness prior to God's return
7. Feast of Tabernacles	Revealing the character of God the Father through Jesus Christ

While this all seems logical and straightforward when expressed in this way, it has not appeared so to us, because of the timing involved. For there has been a long gap between the Feasts of Pentecost and Trumpets, of over 1900 years, that has served to confuse the situation for us. We don't know why this occurred. Was it man's reaction to the revealing of the Holy Spirit that

prompted the delay, or was it God's plan all along? We don't have the answer. Maybe God planned all along that there would be a summer between the spring and the autumn, as there is in the natural. He certainly knew it would turn out that way. Must be careful not to degenerate into predestination arguments here though!

So let's add in the seasons and see how they manage to confuse the simple picture above!

SPRING FEASTS (All c. 30AD)

1. **Feast of Passover**
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread
3. Feast of Firstfruits
4. **Feast of Pentecost**

Church grew until c.100AD.

SUMMER (c.100 - 1900's AD)

Decline and rebuilding of the church from c.1500's on.

AUTUMN FEASTS (c. late 1900's - ?)

Until the Lord returns.

5. Feast of Trumpets
6. Day of Atonement
7. **Feast of Tabernacles**

ONWARDS INTO AUTUMN

While the summer break upsets the rhythm, as holidays seem to do, (everything shut down during the Dark Ages, just like NZ's shops used to do during the holidays!), the inevitability of God's supreme pattern will still be fulfilled.

We will now look at the individual Autumn Feasts in more detail to search out the truths they reveal and to discover their relevance for our lives today.

NOTES...

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

THE CALL TO ACTION!

As the first of the three feasts that go to make up the autumn Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Trumpets was and remains, a call to action for God's people. This feast came after a period of three months of relative spiritual inactivity, marking as it did the conclusion of the long, hot, dry summer period, a major feature of the climate of Israel. Before we go any further though, let's pick up on our story of the ups and downs of the people of Israel after they were sent away from Mt Sinai in disgrace, having participated in idol worship while Moses was away talking with God.

THE STORY OF TRUMPETS

A further reminder that these are potted stories not theological masterpieces!

Knowing that the Lord was highly displeased with them, the people stripped off their remaining ornaments at Mt. Horeb as an act of contrition for what they had done, before marching on into the Desert of Sinai. There they constructed the Tabernacle, according to the instructions the Lord had given Moses on the mountain. The Levitical priesthood too, was formed. The cloud and the fire then moved to cover the completed Tabernacle. On the 20th day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year since leaving Egypt, the cloud lifted off the Tabernacle and the people once more set off on their journey.

Once again, the people got fed up with the hardships of travel and the boring diet. The Lord as He is wont to do, heard the people complaining and in righteous anger, set fire to the outskirts of the camp. This served to quieten them temporarily, but soon they resumed their grizzling over a lack of meat. So God inundated the people with quail to a depth of three feet (a metre) above the ground, then hit them with a severe plague. Suitably chastened, the people buried their dead here at Kibroth Hattaavah before moving on to Hazeroth. There they stayed

long enough for Aaron and his wife Miriam to fall out with Moses, in a family dispute about his Cushite wife. The Lord gave Miriam leprosy, but after Moses pleaded her cause, the Lord recanted, healing her after seven days.

Leaving Hazeroth, they travelled on to the Desert of Paran, from where they were finally to set out to explore the Promised Land of Canaan. The much-anticipated moment of promise was upon them. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, they managed to mess this up too! For Moses sent 12 men into the land to spy it out. This they did for 40 days, before returning with depressing reports full of the difficulty of taking the land from the existing settlers, who appeared so much stronger than they were. All except Caleb, that is, who was all for the expedition, because he realised they could succeed with the Lord on their side. However the people took no notice of Caleb and again rebelled, this time against Moses and Aaron, wanting now to stone them. This big time act of disobedience meant they were now in really serious trouble with the Lord, for they had rejected the very promise the Lord had brought them out of Egypt to fulfil! So rather than the people killing their leaders, the Lord gave all the men over 20, except the loyal Caleb and Joshua, a slow death sentence, accompanied by up to 40 years, not of hard labour as they deserved, but of total provision. In some ways though, the no labour would have seemed like hard labour, just wandering in the desert, not being able to claim their inheritance. None, save two, of that generation, would enter the Promised Land. After learning of their punishment, some changed their minds and decided to try to conquer the Amalekites and Canaanites anyway, but the Lord was not with them and they were soundly defeated.

Various other misadventures befell the Israelites during their 40 years of desert wanderings, as they lived up to their now normal reputation of

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

grizzling, disobedience and rebellion. Out of frustration with his people, Moses too, inadvertently disobeyed a command of the Lord, which sadly, cost him the opportunity to enter the Promised Land. But other victories were won when the Lord's favour was with them, notably over the Amorites. Finally the Israelites ended up camped on the banks of the River Jordan. The Moabites, who lived across the river in Jericho, saw that the Israelites were growing in power. This frightened them. So they called in a notable prophet by the name of Balaam, who proceeded to beat up his faithful donkey three times before telling the Moabites that they were facing a lost cause.

So the Moabites and Midianites decided to get smart and use their women to seduce the Israeli men. The Jews, like many men everywhere, were receptive to these advances. The Lord again got pretty upset with this deception, sending a plague that killed 24,000 of those who had succumbed to the Moabite seducers' charms.

As Moses neared death, Joshua was appointed and anointed by Eleazar the priest as his successor. But he still had one last battle to fight against the Midianites. Once again his troops let him down by taking the woman and boys captive, instead of killing them all, as they had been instructed. Moses had them right the situation. Without the Lord as his friend, Moses would surely have been a broken man.

The two Transjordan tribes, the Reubenites and the Gadites, decided that they did not wish to cross the River Jordan, being quite happy with the lands they already had. Moses agreed to let them stay, provided they helped the rest of the tribes in their battles for territory.

Finally came the time for Moses to die. The Lord told both Moses and Joshua that the people would rebel and eventually lose the Promised Land. Joshua was about to start conquering. Quite depressing that must have been, if not entirely unexpected. Moses reminded the people of the Law, giving the Levites a copy to put beside the Ark of the Covenant, against the day they too would go astray. After blessing the

people, Moses climbed up Mount Nebo, as instructed by the Lord, to view the Promised Land, and to be comforted that his successors would inhabit it. Moses died there, at age 120, being buried in an unmarked grave.

Joshua immediately took over and with youthful enthusiasm, galvanised the people into action. He quickly sent two spies out to reconnoitre Jericho. There they met the prostitute Rahab, who helped them escape the king's clutches, in return for the sparing of her family in the coming conquest. The people then crossed the River Jordan behind the Ark of the Covenant. As the waters of the Red Sea had miraculously parted to facilitate their escape from Egypt, so the waters of the Jordan too, miraculously stopped flowing, allowing the people to cross into the Promised Land. The first step of the long and adventurous fulfilment process.

A memorial was erected on the bank of the Jordan to commemorate the event. Also to 'commemorate' the event, if that is the right word, Joshua was instructed to circumcise all the males, for circumcision had ceased when the people left Egypt. While camped at Gilgal, recovering from their surgery, the people celebrated Passover, and the next day eating some produce of the land. The manna then stopped for good. For now they were in the Promised Land.

But the land was not given to them on a plate! They had to take it, with the Lord's help and guidance. Jericho was the classic example, their first test of faith in the Lord. The army was instructed by the Lord to march round the city for six days behind the Ark of the Covenant and the priests. Seven priests were to walk in front of the Ark, blowing rams horn trumpets. On the seventh day they had to march round seven times, before sounding out a long blast on the trumpet, the signal for all the people to shout at the top of their voices. Then, and only then, would the walls fall down. The city becomes theirs. And it worked! To the surprise of many of the people too, I suspect, knowing their heritage! Rahab and her family were saved, the city conquered and razed to the ground. The people

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

were on their way towards fulfilling God's promise to them.

THE FEAST ITSELF

Not a great deal is recorded about this feast, so naturally there has been much speculation about it. Trumpets were used to herald the beginning of each new month throughout the year. But this, the seventh month of the religious year was also the first month of the civil year. So, it represented both an ending and a new beginning, as New Year does everywhere.

But it was a sacred Feast Day as well, a day on which no work was to be done. Thus our new beginning is to be obtained by ceasing from our own works and resting in the peace of God.

The immediate purpose of the Feast of Trumpets though, was to call the people to the sanctuary (initially the Tabernacle, later the Temple in Jerusalem) for the holiest day in the entire religious year, the Day of Atonement. Trumpet calls, calling people to prepare for the annual, spiritual cleansing of the nation. For the religious scene had been quiet over the three long, hot months over summer. But now the wakeup call. The time of the Autumn harvest was approaching, the time to make peace with God on the Day of Atonement, before thanking him for His bountiful provision during the Feast of Tabernacles itself.

The feast took place in the seventh month, seven in biblical terms being the number of completion and perfection. For these three Tabernacles feasts were the culmination of the spiritual year.

The year had started with Passover in the first month, symbolic of new beginnings or commencement, a picture of Jesus. In the third month was Pentecost. The number three signifies the unified Trinity or Godhead. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity, the one through whom the mystery of the Godhead is revealed to us. The completion and perfection of the number seven of course, speak of God the Father, the ultimate source of completion and perfection in our lives.

The call of the trumpets at this specific time was to be of particular importance to the people, so God instituted the Feast of Trumpets to differentiate this trumpet call from those at the beginning of every other month.

THE GAP

It is most interesting that there was a gap of three months over the hot, dry summer between Pentecost and Passover. We can compare that to a similarly long, spiritually dry gap during the Dark Ages of the church. Additionally, the Jewish nation too experienced a hot, dry period of forty years wandering in the desert, both literally and spiritually, after their 'Pentecost' experience at Mt. Sinai. Some commentators have concluded that the current 'dry' period between Pentecost and Trumpets is not 40 years but 40 Jubilees of 50 years each. (every 50th year was a Jubilee Year in Israel when slaves were freed and land returned to its original owners). This gives a total of $40 \times 50 = 2,000$ years, as being the time difference between Pentecost and Trumpets in today's world. There are other factors that add validity to this view, which we will not go into here. You be the judge. But whatever the exact timing may be, there is a consistent pattern of the elapse of considerable time between Pentecost and Trumpets that does help to explain the 'mystery' period of the Dark Ages.

It also tends to confirm that the remaining three feasts will not suffer the same time delays, all having occurred close to each other in the examples quoted. The church needs to be made aware of this, as for too long, it has rested under the premise that there is a lot of time left. These examples point to the contrary being the case, upon commencement of the Feast of Trumpets.

TWO TYPES OF TRUMPET

The Israelites used two different trumpets, ram's horn and silver.

1. **RAMS HORNS:** Fashioned from the horn of a sacrificed ram, this trumpet is known as a 'shophar.' (pronounced 'show-far') This was the trumpet blown at the Feast of Trumpets, significantly also used, during the

battle for Jericho. It's not surprising then, that the shophar is now being blown in many of our churches today.

2. **TWO SILVER TRUMPETS:** These two were used for various callings throughout Israel, such as a warning to the people by the prophets, for calling the people to the Lord, as a symbol of the voice of the Lord, and on special occasions. Today, their relevance is in the fact that there were two of them, two being the number of witness. They can be likened to ministries declaring God's word, of which the people are to take heed.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

1. **TO THE JEWS – ENTRY INTO THE PROMISED LAND:** It is no coincidence that the first conquest made by the Jews after crossing the River Jordan was achieved through the use of the shophar. As we have already mentioned, the walls of Jericho crumbled at the sound of the seventh trumpet. The trumpet signified the people's arrival in the Promised Land.

This first piece of the land of promise was given to them through their obedience to the directions of God. For the army circled the wall for seven days before blowing the final trumpet. The accompanying shout signified the obedience of the whole nation, adding to that of the army and priests. After this battle, further conquests were made, through obedience to God and in God's provision. These, as we will see later, are symbolic of Atonement and Tabernacles.

2. **TO BELIEVERS TODAY – THE CALL TO POSSESSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:** Accepting the hypothesis that the feasts provide a pattern of the development of the church, and that only the first four feasts have been fulfilled, the next question must be, "When will the Feast of Trumpets be fulfilled?" This is a huge question, because the immediacy or otherwise of all that follows, hinges upon our perception of whether the fulfilment of the Feast of

Trumpets has already occurred, is happening now, or is still to come.

The difficulty in coming to a simple conclusion relates to the fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets not being heralded by a supernatural event. For the death and resurrection of Jesus clearly heralded Passover, while the release of the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost obviously fulfilled that feast.

The Feast of Trumpets however, is like the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits. For all three require action on our behalf. And both individually and as churches, we act at different times, once we are ready to accept the truth revealed. So a specific time is far less capable of determination in these feasts..

There are two major viewpoints on the timing of Trumpets and a possible third one. That Trumpets is still to come, that we are in the time of Trumpets now, or more radically, that the time of Trumpets is about over.

1. **Trumpets are Future:** This view is held, on the one hand, by those who genuinely feel that the church has not yet been restored to true Pentecost levels. The arguments put forward throughout this book indicate that the truths and anointing of Pentecost have been restored to the church, even though we may generally not be fully living by, and in them.

The second group includes those who prefer to hold on to the status quo, or who have personal agendas at variance to the will of God. It is this, unfortunately large group of people, who will be the most vehement critics of both this work and the acceptance of the Tabernacle Church. Sadly, it will include many Charismatics and Pentecostals who were in the forefront of previous moves of God.

Those who think they have it all, that theirs is the ultimate revelation. This has been the same sad story throughout history, and the reason why so many denominations have arisen. In stopping at a revealed truth. Oh Lord please rid us of our spiritual pride and comfort zones! If there is any revelation here, it is by no means final or complete, and will not be so until the day of the return of Jesus. Only at that time will the fullness of the revelation of the Lord be known. I just pray for the grace, humility and desire not to stop along the way, on the road of revelation and application.

2. **Trumpets are Present:** Since the 1950's there have been many ministries proclaiming the truths of the church. Previously hidden truths concerning purity, perfection, holiness, preparation for harvest and the return of the Lord. These calls are those of the trumpet. They have come over the period of the final Pentecost truths being restored to the church. For they are truths we will see being revealed in Atonement and Tabernacles. Unfortunately the truths themselves have not necessarily been lived out in the lives of the messengers or in the church as a whole. This has sometimes given them an undeserved bad reputation.

For people have not understood that the revealing and application of these truths come under two different feasts, Trumpets and Atonement. While there is no justification for deliberate sin amongst ministers or people, the reality is that Trumpets is not yet the time when purity and holiness will predominate.

3. **Trumpets is Passing:** This, relatively new and more radical view as I understand it, is the one being expressed here, as we move into the

21st Century. Not that the specific date has anything to do with it, for it is wrong anyway, in relation to the time of the birth of Jesus.

Through observation and personal spiritual experience and desire, it is becoming apparent that within the church, the dawning of the Day of Atonement is upon us. The trumpets have sounded and people are starting to arrive in 'spiritual Jerusalem', seeking the fulfilment of the promises of the Day of Atonement in their own lives and in the life of the church. Don't get me wrong, the trumpets do not abruptly cease at the end of a particular day or time, just as it is impossible to fix a specific time to the start of the Day of Atonement.

For once the feasts are fulfilled they continue to live on as revealed truth in the church. So, we are still seeing people being saved, being filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the message of Trumpets. The important thing to recognise though, is that more is now becoming available, that God does not desire us to stop at the truths we know, but to diligently seek further truth and experience. As the restoration, as opposed to the original outpouring of Pentecost, has happened gradually, so will the installation of the truths of Atonement.

We won't all become perfect overnight at the waving of some magic wand. A pity really, but that would be too easy. Salvation is progressive, and has to be worked at, both by the individual and in the church. Salvation and the Spirit are gifts from God, while Atonement, although received by God's grace, must be given back to Him to be effective. For this is the fulfilment of *Revelation 12:11*.

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

“They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb (Jesus, our free gift) and by the word of their testimony; (through the anointing of the Holy Spirit) they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (the cost of obedience to God the Father)

We are all too often keen on the first two ingredients of the recipe, but the third, vital ingredient to overcome the devil, is less palatable. But obedience and submission is what Trumpets is calling us too and what Atonement desires of us.

NOTES...

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

THE CALL TO WHOLENESS

The Day of Atonement belies its name as a Feast of the Lord, really being a day of getting ones self right with God and in fasting! Still, it plays a key role in the pattern of the Feasts, and was regarded as the most important of all feasts during Old Testament times. It still is the most sacred day of the year to the Jews today. We have tended to lose sight of its significance through our intimate experience of the Passover sacrifice of Jesus and the Pentecost release of the Holy Spirit. But the time is coming and has indeed now come, when the principles of the Day of Atonement are to be re-established in God's, end time, Tabernacle Church. The embracing of these truths is vital, as we move towards the fulfilment of this age. Only by their application, will we be able to attain goals of holiness and purity in our lives, and so be qualified to participate in the total thanksgiving and joy of the ultimate, Feast of Tabernacles.

To experience Pentecost we must first embrace Passover. To experience the joy of Tabernacles, we must add to Passover and Pentecost, the experience of the Day of Atonement. In practical terms, we must take one step at a time along our Christian walk, logically embracing one milestone after another. Experiencing first the salvation of Jesus, then the baptism or release of the Holy Spirit into our life. After these, we must learn to submit our lives to the will of God the Father, by applying the principles of the Day of Atonement. Then, and only then, will we qualify to participate in the glorious Tabernacles Feast itself.

THE STORY OF ATONEMENT

Once again, we join our potted story of God's chosen people on their journey to possess the Promised Land. Of course, the Day of Atonement was literally that – one day annually on which all Israelites made peace with their God. However the 'principle of Atonement', of repentance and submission to the will of God, ideally applied then (and still does) every day of

the year. Hence the relevance of the story of the gradual conquest of the Promised Land to Atonement. For as the people were obedient to God so they succeeded on the battlefield. When they didn't follow instructions, they were defeated. So their journey was a very practical example of the necessity for the ongoing application of the principles of Atonement. Let's see what happened.

Having taken Jericho by the sound of the trumpet, the people, under Joshua's guidance, moved on to claim their promise. But not before having to deal with a thief named Achan. His misdemeanours resulted in an initial defeat for the Israelites at Ai, a defeat not reversed until Achan and his family were stoned to death. A salutary lesson to the people to live holy lives. Joshua emphasised this by renewing their covenant with the Lord at Mt Ebal, copying out the law and reading it out aloud to all the people, so that there could be no misunderstanding of the Lord's requirements. Not sure how he managed it without a huge sound system, for there were very many people!

The Israelites, including Joshua, did not completely learn the lesson of totally relying on God though. For they signed a treaty, under false pretences mind you, with the Gibeonites, who they were told were from far away, but in fact were close neighbours. Like us, they forgot to ask the Lord first! Because of this treaty Joshua spared the Gibeonites, but effectively made them slaves.

The nation experienced miracles in the defeat of the Amorites, when large hailstones killed the fleeing Amorite soldiers, with the sun supernaturally standing still for a day as a confirming sign of the Lord's power. Both northern and southern cities were conquered, a total of thirty-one in all.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

But as Joshua grew old there were still very large areas of land yet to be occupied. Joshua divided the land amongst the tribes, including an allocation to the Levites. The eastern tribes were now able to go back to their homes on the other side of the River Jordan.

The people then enjoyed a period of peace throughout Joshua's old age. As Moses had done before him, when it came to Joshua's turn to die, he farwelled the leaders and the people. He reminded them to keep the Lord's covenant if they wished to continue to live in prosperity, under the Lord's protection. Joshua duly died at age 110. Unlike Moses, he was buried in the Promised Land.

For the next 300 odd years, Israel was ruled, generally poorly, by a succession of Judges. They were seemingly expert at forgetting the Lord's requirements for the living of their lives, opening the way to defeat by outside forces. This would result in desperate pleas for the Lord's help, which the Lord generously gave. This cycle was repeated with almost monotonous regularity. An even bigger problem in the long term though, was the failure to displace the Canaanites and eliminate their pagan ways. Eventually the people foolishly adopted her ways as their own.

Finally getting tired of the Judges they decided, against God's wishes, that they would rather have a king to rule them. God used the prophet Samuel to arrange this. After the Ark was captured by and regained from the Philistines, the Lord arranged for Samuel, in a somewhat circuitous way, to anoint and appoint Saul as king. Saul was the ideal profile of what a king should be – tall, handsome and a fine warrior. Just perfect, so the people thought. But he did not have a heart for God, which was to prove his undoing. After initially accepting David when he helped him tremendously by slaying the Philistine giant Goliath, Saul turned against him and tried many times to kill him.

The Lord finally rejected Saul and asked Samuel to anoint David as king. David had to go into hiding, to save his own life. But when presented with the opportunity, he refused to kill Saul, for

he still regarded him as being the Lord's anointed one. Finally the situation got so bad that David went into voluntary exile, ironically amongst the Philistines. No doubt he didn't inform them that it was he who had killed Goliath! But, in a twist of fate, the Philistines, killed Saul in battle. David, after a series of fights with Saul's remaining family members, became king over Israel.

And what a warrior and leader he turned out to be - well most of the time anyway! What he lacked in the kingly stature and demeanour of Saul, he made up for in one crucial way. He truly and genuinely loved his Lord, and sought his guidance on most occasions.

David's life and exploits never lacked for interest and variety. He conquered Jerusalem, defeated the Philistines, and brought the Ark up to Jerusalem, offending his wife Michal, Saul's daughter, in the process. Dancing with all his might dressed only in his undergarments, in a most '*unkingly*' manner in front of the Ark, was just too much for her, as she had inherited her fathers lack of love for God. And that was just for starters!

David won many famous victories, but one year got a little tired and stayed behind in the comfort of his palace, instead of going out to battleground with his troops. His adultery with Bathsheba, her pregnancy and the subsequent murder of her husband were the result. However, after being rebuked by the prophet Nathan, David fell upon the Lord's mercy and was forgiven. Although that baby died, Bathsheba did go on to be the mother of Solomon, the Lord's chosen successor.

David also had considerable family problems, arising from being too lax in the discipline of his sons. This led to incest and retributive murder, then pride getting in the way of reconciliation with his oldest son Absalom. This finally resulted in an attempted coup by Absalom, during which David had to flee for his life. Never a dull moment in David's family! After Absalom's death, David returned to Jerusalem, sorely grieving for his son, no doubt blaming

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

himself for what had happened. That's the sort of person David was.

Other troubles arose within his kingdom, but throughout his life, he never failed to praise and glorify his God. A lesson for us all! Probably his biggest disappointment though, was not being allowed to build God's Temple. Because of David's warrior lifestyle, the Lord reserved that privilege for his son, Solomon.

David, even with his dying words, praised his God. For the Lord was the consuming passion of his life. He had lived by far the majority of his life in a righteous manner. We just remember the mistakes! Still happens today too! But the Lord blessed him and Israel throughout his reign, and he was able to leave Solomon a full, powerful and united kingdom as his inheritance.

THE FEAST ITSELF

The ceremonies of this, the most solemn and holy day in the Jewish religious year, are comprehensively covered in *Leviticus 16*, which is essential reading. A summary follows.

The High Priest, only on this day, stripped off his regular garments, washed himself in the Washing Basin found in the Outer Court of the Tabernacle, before going into the Holy Place to put on the simple, white linen garments, specially reserved for this day. Going back outside, he sacrificed a bull as a sin offering for his own and the priests' sins. Taking some blood from the bull and coals from the fire, he went for the first time into the Holy of Holies, where he placed incense on the burning coals, making a cloud to hide the Ark from his view. Protected now from the wrath of God, he sprinkled some of the bull's blood on, and seven times on the

ground before the front of the Atonement Cover (Mercy Seat) of the Ark.

Leaving the tent, the High Priest went back and cast lots for two kid goats, one to be sacrificed on the Altar as a sin offering for the people, the other to be banished to the desert as the scapegoat. After sacrificing the chosen goat, the High Priest returned to the Most Holy Place for a second and final time. There he sprinkled the goat's blood on the Atonement Cover of the Ark, then seven times in front of it. Moving back into the Holy Place, he sprinkled blood on the horns of the Incense Altar. On to the Outer Court, blood was sprinkled seven times more, on the horn of the Brazen Altar, this time using bulls blood for his own sins as well as goats blood for the sins of the people.

While in the courtyard, he laid both hands on the second goat, symbolising the transfer of Israel's sins and transgressions to the unfortunate goat. The goat was banished to the desert, there to die in agony from dehydration. The man who took the goat away had to wash both himself and his clothes outside the camp upon his return, before being allowed to re-enter the camp.

The ceremony was now approaching its conclusion, the High Priest going back into the Holy Place to change back into his regular priestly clothes. His final act of sacrifice was to offer a ram as a burnt offering for himself and another for the people. Another strong man took the remains of the carcasses outside the camp, where he burned them to cinders. This man too, had to purify himself through washing body and clothes, before returning to his home. The Atonement was now complete for another year.

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF ATONEMENT

Here we will establish the Old Testament principles relating to this holiest of days before looking in further chapter, at their application today in the Tabernacle church.

1. Special sacrifices on this Day: (*Leviticus 16:3, 5-11, 14-28, Numbers 29:7-11*)

These have been discussed in the section on the ceremony itself. This was no ordinary day in terms of sacrifice.

2. Atonement For Aaron and his Household: (*Leviticus 16:3-14*)

A bull was sacrificed for Aaron and his household. This included all the priests, as they were his relatives.

3. Atonement for the Nation: (*Leviticus 16:15*)

The Lord's goat was killed as a sin offering for the people of Israel. This blood was then sprinkled on the Mercy Seat of the Ark itself.

4. The High Priest Alone to Make the Atonement: (*Leviticus 16:17*)

No one else was allowed to help make the Atonement. All God's instructions were to be followed precisely, as two of Aaron's sons found out through the ultimate cost of their lives, soon after the Tabernacle was built.

5. Once a Year Entry Beyond the Veil into the Most Holy Place: (*Leviticus 16:2, 12, 15*)

The veil separated God from man and could only be bridged once a year, and then only through the work of Atonement.

6. Blood Sprinkled Seven Times: (*Leviticus 16:14*)

The sprinkling of the blood seven times before the Mercy Seat of the Ark symbolised a total offering by the people, the complete acceptance of the Atoning Sacrifice by God.

7. The Carcasses Burned Outside the Camp: (*Leviticus 16:23-26*)

In a final act of cleansing, the remaining carcasses from all the sacrifices were removed from the Tabernacle and burned outside the camp. Once again, the person who did the job had to be cleansed upon his return. The Day of Atonement had now drawn to its conclusion. The prepared, 'atoned' people could now look forward to the celebration and feasting of the Feast of Tabernacles.

8. The Anointed High Priest: (*Leviticus 16:29-34*)

The High Priesthood was instituted on a hereditary basis. An honoured but responsible position handed down from father to son. By the time of Jesus, this requirement had degenerated into an annual election or appointment. The anointed High Priest made the entire three-part atonement; for the priests, the people, and the Lord's Tabernacle itself.

9. An Everlasting Statute: (*Leviticus 16:29, 34*)

"*And this shall be a statute for ever unto you.....*" (*Leviticus 16:29 NKJV*). The Day of Atonement is still celebrated by believing Jews, right down to this day.

10. A 24 Hour Day: (*Leviticus 23:26-28, 25:29*)

A literal day, in which these specifically prescribed events, took place. Well summarised by the prophet Zechariah when saying on behalf of the Lord, under His anointing, "... *and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.*" (*Zechariah 3:9*)

11. A Day of Sacred Assembly: (*Leviticus 23:27-32, Numbers 29:7, Leviticus 16:31*)

To be a day of rest, such as was included in all but one of the other feasts. However in this case, God's command was to be taken so seriously, that anyone who disobeyed was to be banished from the nation.

12. A Day of Fasting: (*Leviticus 23:26-32, Numbers 29:7, Leviticus 16:31*)

The only feast that was really a fast! A fasting feast! Or, a feast of fasting!

13. A Day of Affliction: (*As above*)

A national day of humility before the Lord in prayer and fasting, a time where the people sought His will. Judging themselves, in order not to be judged by the Lord.

14. A Day of Sacred Assembly: (*Joel 2:15-17, Numbers 10:10*)

A very sacred, not a celebration time, unlike other festivals. Atonement was to be the sacred day of national and personal repentance.

15. The Tenth Day of the Seventh Month: (*Leviticus 23:27, Numbers 29:7*)

Seven, the number of completion, relates to the completion of the annual cycle of feasts in the seventh month.

Ten, the number of trial and testing, speaks of the ten days of preparation required, from the blowing of Trumpets on the first day of the month.

16. The Censer Ministry: (*Leviticus 16:1-2, 12-14*)

The censer was a dish into which coals for the burning of incense were put. A cloud of incense was required before the High Priest could approach God. Incense speaks of prayer and praise as being the way to approach God. See *Psalms 141:2*.

17. Washing With Water: (*Leviticus 16:4, 24*)

The High priest had to wash himself twice in the Washing Basin, at the beginning and end of the ceremony. Purification was most important.

18. The Linen Garments: (*Leviticus 16:4, 23*)

The normal priestly garments “.....*for glory and for beauty*” (*Exodus 28:2 NKJV*) or “.....*to give him dignity and honour*” (*same verse, NIV*) were set aside for simple linen robes, signifying righteousness.

19. The Atonement for Sins, Uncleaness, Rebellion and Wickedness: (*Leviticus 16:16, 21, Daniel*

9:24-27) In this ceremony, all sins, all uncleanness, all rebellion and all wickedness were atoned for. Forgiveness was complete. The people were again pure in the sight of the Lord, until they again sinned that is. Of course, this cleansing had to be individually accepted by each person to be effective. For all have a free will to accept or reject God’s gracious mercy.

19. Atonement for the Tabernacle: (*Leviticus 16:16-20, 23*)

The High Priest cleansed the three part Tabernacle, sprinkling blood on the Atonement Cover and floor of the Most Holy Place, and on the horns of the Incense and Brazen Altars in the Holy Place and Outer Court respectively.

20. The Scapegoat: (*Leviticus 16:8, 10, 20-22, 26*)

The High Priest confessed all the sins and uncleanness of Israel over the scapegoat, before sending the goat out into the wilderness, a place of separation. Separation from sin here, of course. The man who released the goat had to cleanse himself, before being accepted back into the camp.

CONCLUSION

The Day of Atonement provided the way for the people to return into right relationship with God. Of course, each individual had to personally take advantage of this opportunity. We of course understand that under the New Covenant, Jesus fulfilled this function. He opened the way, removing the veil, enabling us to enter into the very presence of God. But, as with the Jews, we have to personally embrace what He has done into our life.

Throughout history, a relative few individuals have shown what is possible. For some have entered the Holy of Holies, usually for limited times, then mainly through worship or prayer. People such as Smith Wigglesworth have lived for extended periods, inside the veil. Another, more personal example to me, was my Auntie Ina. The opportunity is there. We just have to take advantage of it. But generally, we are not yet living in God's presence, as Jesus made His Atoning sacrifice for us to do.

So for the full glory of the sacrifice of Jesus to be seen in us, we must individually and as a church, apply the principles of the Day of Atonement to our lives. This is the call of the Trumpet to us today. The fruits will be seen by, and in those who obey the call. In those whose desire is to be part of the end time, Tabernacle church.

That 'the secrets of the Old are revealed in the New', is a favourite saying about the Bible. This is true of the Day of Atonement particularly, the book of Hebrews primarily being devoted to explaining it. Well known too, is that Hebrews is the least understood book in the New Testament, next to Revelation, which incidentally contains a lot about the Day of Atonement too. It is only now that Passover and Pentecost have been restored, the Trumpet sounded to herald the Day of Atonement, that the Lord is desiring, challenging and indeed requiring us, to apply these principles to our lives, should we wish to attain fullness in Him. Now it is up to us!

NOTES...

BEYOND THE VEIL – 1

INTRODUCING THE OVERCOMING TABERNACLE CHURCH

REVELATION FROM THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Before we start, it must be made clear that Jesus was the fulfilment of all the Tabernacle Feasts. When He died on the cross the veil was parted forever.

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:50-51)

Jesus, through His death made it possible for us to enter the very throne room of God. Praise the Lord! Yet we all know that we have not yet occupied the throne room, at least not for more than short periods of time. Why is that? We have been saved; many have been filled with the Holy Spirit, yet these twin experiences have not been sufficient to live in the throne room of God’s presence. There has to be something more. The Feast of Passover has been fulfilled, both positionally by Jesus and experientially by the believer. Otherwise we could not be a born again Christian, for Passover is our ‘born again’ experience. Similarly, those of us whose lives have been empowered and enriched by the baptism or ‘infilling’ of the Holy Spirit have also

experienced the fulfilment of the Feast of Pentecost. But to encompass all that God has for us, a participation in the provision and glory of the Father himself, we must first personally participate in the truths of the Day of Atonement. Through them attaining entry into the full glory of the climactic Feast of Tabernacles itself.

In simple terms, the one thing stopping us experiencing everything God has for us, is sin remaining in our life. Are you perfect? I am not! Therefore I must have imperfections, that is sin, left in me. For many of us, it is not the wrong things we do, although all of us still do things we ought not, but rather a lack of submission to the will of God in our lives. This requirement for total submission is clearly set out in a single verse in Revelation, which lists the three progressive steps to be taken to attain fulfilment in God. Talking about overcoming Satan, it says:

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” (Revelation 12:11)

STEP 1: ***The blood of the Lamb***

- Jesus, the Lamb of God. (*1 Corinthians 5:7*)
- Our PASSOVER experience.

STEP 2: ***the word of their testimony***

- The Holy Spirit enables the testimony of our heart to be spoken out of our mouth. (*Matthew 12:34, Romans 5:5, Galatians 4:6*)
- Our PENTECOST experience.

STEP 3: ***they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.***

- Obedience to God the Father. (*John 14:23, 15:10, 2 John 1:6*)
- Our TABERNACLES experience.

Martyrs are accorded the highest position of honour in the Bible, for they have literally died for their love of Jesus. In so doing, they have been granted the highest place in God. Now, not

many, if any, really desire to be martyrs, unless we have to be! But to enter the highest place in God, we have to show a similar level of commitment to Him that the martyrs have

displayed throughout the centuries. In reality, pursuing obedience on an ongoing basis may well be as difficult as a single, albeit very final, act of martyrdom.

While this walk is not easy, it is possible, for the Lord has revealed how it can be done. God's principles haven't changed, although the method of delivery has. Applying the truths of the Day of Atonement, modified for New Testament

fulfilment by Jesus, is essential if mankind is to become holy before God.

Applying the New Covenant (Testament) truths of the Day of Atonement, in order to might experience the glorious Feast of Tabernacles, is the underlying foundation of God's end time, Tabernacle church. Let's now see what these truths are.

REVELATION FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES OF ATONEMENT

This section lines up precisely with the 21 points covered under the Chapter 'Day of Atonement'. They can be referred to for further clarification.

A. ATONEMENT PRINCIPLES TOTALLY FULFILLED BY JESUS

(Fulfilled both Positionally and Experientially.)

These first ten principles have all been totally fulfilled by Jesus, as explained in *Hebrews, Chapters 9 & 10*.

1. Special Sacrifices on this Day: (Leviticus 16:3, 5-11, 14-28, Numbers 29:7-11)

The numerous and varied sacrifices pointed towards the single, all encompassing sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf at Calvary. No further sacrifice is required, our sacrifice being complete in Him. (*Hebrews 7:26-7, 9:11-28, 10:1-18(v10)*)

2. Atonement for Aaron and his Household: (Leviticus 16:3-14)

Christ made the all-sufficient atonement on the cross for all those who believe in Him. (*Hebrews 9:12-15, 24, 28, 10:10, 15-17, John 3:16*)

3. Atonement for the Nation: (Leviticus 16:15)

Since Calvary, the Church, now consisting of all believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, has become the Nation of God. Jesus made full atonement for the church, His precious bride, on the cross. (*Romans 3:9, 28-9, 1 Corinthians 10:32, 12:12-13 Revelation 19:7*)

4. Atonement for the Heavenly Tabernacle: (Leviticus 16:16-20, 23)

Aaron had to cleanse all three parts of the earthly Tabernacle with blood, including the Holy of Holies. By implication therefore, the earthly Tabernacle being an exact representation of the heavenly one, each of the three levels of heaven have been infected with sin. Job confirmed this. (*Job 15:15, 4:18, 25:5*) While the scriptures are not completely clear concerning the method of cleansing of the heavens, it would seem most likely that the blood of Jesus has been and is sufficient to do this. (*Hebrews 8:1-5, 9:1-28*) Possibly the 'Highest Heaven', was cleansed when Jesus ascended to the Father. Not worth getting into an argument about though! But the remaining two, the atmosphere and the earth itself, will be cleansed in the last days. For Satan and his angels are to be cast down to earth, here to be defeated by the overcomers of our key verse, Revelation 12:11. (*Revelation 12:1-12*).

5. The High Priest Alone to Make the Atonement: (*Leviticus 16:17*)

Christ alone made the once only, all sufficient Atonement in order to reconcile man to God. There is no way we can seek to help Him or earn our own atonement, whether through good works or by any other means. (*Hebrews 4:14-16, 8:1-2, 9:14-15, 10:8-10, 17-18*)

6. Once a Year Entry beyond the Veil into the Most Holy Place. (*Leviticus 16:2, 12, 15*)

The death of Jesus provided both literal and spiritual atonement. For the Veil was ripped into two at the moment of His death, opening the way for believers to enter into the very presence of God, 365 days a year (366 in Leap Years!). In applying the revelations of the Day of Atonement, the individual and the Church are able to 'experience' this wonderful provision Jesus has made for us. (*Matthew 27:51, Luke 23:45, Hebrews 6:19-20, 9:12-14, 10:20-23*)

7. Blood Sprinkled Seven Times: (*Leviticus 16:14*)

The blood of Jesus was sprinkled for us, not only on the Altar of Salvation and in the Holy Place of the baptism of the Spirit, but also in the very Throne Room of God the Father Himself. As we enter into the throne Room through the blood of Jesus in the anointing of the Spirit, so the church will be brought to perfection. All sins, uncleanness, rebellion and wickedness will disappear. Not just an impossible dream, but reality for the days ahead. (*Hebrews 9:11-15, 23-28, 10:10, 22, 12:22-24*)

8. The Carcasses Burned Outside the Camp: (*Leviticus 16:23-26*)

Jesus was indeed crucified outside the camp, at Golgotha, beyond the walls of Jerusalem. Of course he was not literally burned, for His body was imperishable, rising from the grave in resurrection glory. But he did suffer the 'fire' of God's holiness and righteousness, by taking all our sin upon Himself. (*1 Corinthians 15:42, 50-7, Hebrews 12:29, 13:10-13*)

9. The Anointed High Priest: (*Leviticus 16:29-34*)

Aaron, the High Priest, offered sacrifices for the people. Jesus, our High Priest, is both priest and sacrifice. It could perhaps be considered that in His Divine nature He is the Priest, and in His human nature, the sacrifice. He certainly was both. The Lord Jesus is our great High Priest, appointed in His Father's place, to make reconciliation for the Church, the New Testament priestly body. Everything slots together in God. (*Hebrews 2:17, 3:1, 9:28*)

10. An Everlasting Statute: (*Leviticus 16:29, 34*)

The everlasting nature of Atonement has been fulfilled in the person of Jesus, the everlasting being, who made a once only, ever-lasting atonement on our behalf. Jesus fulfilled the Day of Atonement forever. (*Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:1-2, 4:10*)

B. ATONEMENT PRINCIPLES 'POSITIONALLY' FULFILLED BY JESUS

(To be Experientially fulfilled, that is Embraced, by the Church)

The exciting realisation for today is that Jesus has left opportunities, for those who desire to grasp them, to assist Him in fulfilling God's mighty plan for mankind. For there are 12 promises Jesus 'positionally' fulfilled on the cross, but which are waiting to be embraced by His church in 'experiential' fulfilment. This is the privilege and pleasure that has been delegated to His Tabernacle church.

11. A 24 Hour Day: (*Leviticus 23:26-28, 25:29*)

Formerly a literal day, to be solemnly celebrated as a national day of repentance by all members of the Jewish nation. This Atonement experience is now available on a continuing basis, to each one who is prepared to accept and apply these ongoing repentance truths. For God has revealed His principles, making them available for our acceptance at the time we are

prepared to commit to them. As Passover and Pentecost are ongoing experiences, available to those who choose to believe, so Atonement is similarly available on an ongoing basis. Salvation is the act of cleansing sin from our lives, Atonement the process of cleansing our lives from sin. At Salvation we commit our life to Christ, by Atonement we live our life for Christ, through the enabling of the Holy Spirit released within us. True atonement amongst believers will in turn bring true Church unity (now God's nation, including all believers, both Jew and Gentile) in fulfilment of the unity symbolised by the gathering of the whole nation for the Day of Atonement, during Old Testament times. (*Hebrews 10:19-39, Ephesians 4:30-32, Romans 12:9-21, 1 Corinthians 10:9-10, John 17:22-23, Romans 15:5-6, Ephesians 4:1-16, Colossians 3:14*)

12. A Day of Sacred Assembly: (*Leviticus 23:27-32, Numbers 29:7, Leviticus 16:31*)

A Sabbath, or day of rest. For the believer, true rest is not in a day but in Christ's finished work. It cannot be earned through good works or the setting aside one day of the week. We are to rest in Christ all seven days, confident in the knowledge of the atoning work He has done for us on the cross. (*Ephesians 2:5-10, Romans 3:27-28, Romans 9:30-33, Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 4:1-11*)

13. A Day of Fasting: (*Leviticus 23:26-32, Numbers 29:7, Leviticus 16:31*)

Fasting is the temporary giving over to God of our most basic human instincts of food and sex. All it takes to make a man happy, many women say! God generally acknowledges our commitment by more clearly opening up the communication channels of mind and spirit with Him. Hence I am writing this while I fast, in order that the will of the Lord may be more clearly reflected in it. It is an integral part of loving our life to the death, for it shows God in a very practical way that we are prepared to forgo our most basic pleasures in order to honour Him. As the Day of Atonement truths are implanted in our lives, so the desire to fast increases, for the Day of Atonement was a fast day. Unfortunately fasting does not seem to result in long-term weight loss though! (*Matthew 4:1-2, Luke 2:37, Matthew 9:14-15, Acts 13:1-3, 14:23*)

14. A Day of Affliction: (*As above*)

True fasting is to be accompanied by deep soul-searching and commitment to prayer. To seek the things that are wrong in our life and put them right, before God judges us. As we truly humble ourselves before God, so He discloses these areas to us. Prayer and fasting ride in tandem. As we get to know God better, the clarity of our communications improves, until we get to the stage where, no matter what we are doing, we are open to hearing His voice. (*As above, 1 Corinthians 11:28-32*)

15. A Day of Solemn Assembly: (*Joel 2:15-1, Numbers 10:10*)

A time of humbling ourselves before the Lord, seeking forgiveness and guidance. In the church there will be increased frequency and intensity of intercession, prayer and fasting, in order to seek his will for His church. (*As in 3. above, Luke 18:7, Romans 8:26-7, 34, 1 Timothy 2:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12*)

16. The Tenth Day of the Seventh Month: (*Leviticus 23:27, Numbers 29:7*)

The Atonement experience is one of trial and testing (reflecting the number 10) in order that our lives may be cleaned up through our experiences. However, at the same time we are able to rest in the Lord, knowing that our afflictions are but temporary, bringing us nearer to the place of the completion of His work in us. (7 being the number of rest and completion) At

times we have to remind ourselves that He will not test us more than we can bear, even if it is hard to accept at the time! (*Revelation 2:10, Matthew 18:21-2*)

17. The Censer Ministry: (*Leviticus 16:1-2, 12-14*)

Prayer and supplication, praise and worship are types of the cloud of incense the High Priest used to approach the Ark in the Holy of Holies. As we come into Atonement, so our application of prayer, supplication, praise and worship, will increase in intensity, enabling us to enter more fully into the presence of God. (*Hebrews 9:4, 13:15, Revelation 8:1-5*)

18. Washing with Water: (*Leviticus 16:4, 24*)

As highlighted throughout this book, there is a new revelation of, and requirement for purity in the individual and the Church through Atonement. Water is the symbol of purity, which we are to acquire through the washing of the word. A new emphasis is arising. To put ourselves right before God so that we don't sin. Rather having to seek forgiveness through the blood of Jesus for sin we would not have committed in the first place, had our lives been right with God. Prevention is far better than a cure! (*Ephesians 5:26-7, Titus 3:5, John 3:1-5, 15:3, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Hebrews 10:22*)

19. The Linen Garments: (*Leviticus 16:4, 23*)

Linen stands for righteousness. In the natural we are to put aside our desires for excess possessions, pride of position and physical desires. Spiritually we are to clean up our lives, living in righteousness towards God. King David, dancing in front of the Ark with all his might, dressed only in a linen ephod instead of his Royal robes, is the classic example of both the natural and spiritual application of this principle. (*1 Samuel 6:14-15, Revelation 3:4-5, 15:6, 19:7-8, John 17:1-5*)

20. The Scapegoat: (*Leviticus 16:8, 10, 20-22, 26*)

There is some debate over the exact meaning of the Scapegoat in relation to Christ. However it is certain that the twin goat testimony reflected the work that Christ did for us on the cross. While Jesus did the full work of taking away our individual sin and so completed the work of the scapegoat, the church still has a role in the ministry of the Scapegoat in four areas. These are:

- a. **Presented Without Blemish:** The church is to be presented with Christ before the Father without spot or blemish. Some way to go yet! (*1 Peter 1:18-20, Ephesians 5:26-7*)
- b. **Ministry of Reconciliation to the Father:** The job of achieving the above. Delegated both to Christ and the church. (*Hebrews 2:17, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*)
- c. **Ministry of Forgiveness:** As the Scapegoat symbolised the sending away of sin, so Christ and the Church are involved in the ministry of forgiveness of sins. (*James 5:15-17, Acts 7:60, Mark 16:19-20, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Luke 24:49, John 20: 22-23*)
- d. **Bearing the Insults of the World on Behalf of Christ:** As Christ's representatives in the world. (*Hebrews 13:10-13, Romans 15:3, Hebrews 11:27, Luke 6:22, 1 Peter 4:14*)

21. Atonement for the Church: (*Leviticus 16:16-20, 23*)

The Church is God's earthly sanctuary, which he inhabits by his Spirit. We know that if the promises of the Bible are true, which they are, we haven't as yet entered into the full experiential power of the positional Atoning work for which Christ died on the cross. For we are neither perfect, nor are we living in the power and presence of God's glory. As the church has already experienced both the truths of Passover and Pentecost, so it is beginning to experience the power of the truths of the Tabernacle Feasts. (*1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:20-22, 1 Peter 2:5-9, John 14:12*)

22.The Atonement for Sins Uncleaness, Rebellion and Wickedness: (*Leviticus 16:16, 21. Daniel 9:24-27*) The ultimate fulfilment of the Day of Atonement will be seen in a sinless, pure, unified, perfect church, made so through the atoning blood of Jesus. Final fulfilment of this promise will be attained when Jesus returns, as we meet Him in the air to receive our everlasting immortal bodies. However, in this current age, as the Tabernacle church applies the truths of the Day of Atonement, so the glory of God will shine through it and us in greater and greater measure. Perfection is the goal, but the nature of Atonement is progressive, a process of development, as each individual grasps hold of and applies the principles of Atonement to their own life. The only ‘magic fix’ is found in the level of the submission of our wills to God the Father, which is not magic at all, but a conscious decision each of us makes. The final revelation of God, in line with the Cross, and Pentecost, will happen during the Feast of Tabernacles with the return of Jesus. The timing of that climactic event may well be dependent upon the time it takes us to enter into the truths of the Day of Atonement. (*1 John 2:1-6, 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, 13:10, Philippians 3:12-16, Revelation 12:11, Matthew 28:20, Matthew 24:30-31, Hebrews 10:37-39, Revelation 19:7, Revelation 20:1-6*)

Jesus fulfilled all twenty-two Spiritual Principles of the Day of Atonement. However the final twelve have yet to be fully embraced by the church. That is the role of the end-time Tabernacle church.

So let’s now see what additional enlightenment can be obtained from the Letter to the Hebrews, the book that interprets this Feast from a New Testament perspective.

NOTES...

BEYOND THE VEIL – 2

NEW TESTAMENT REVELATION ON ATONEMENT

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The interpretation of the Day of Atonement is an underlying theme of a good part of the New Testament, particularly the book of Hebrews which is largely devoted to this theme. It is both interesting and highly significant that the two least understood books of the New Testament are Hebrews and Revelation. For these two books have at their very heart, the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles respectively.

As we participate in the Feast of Trumpets God reveals the deeper truths of the book of Hebrews, for they must be understood in order to experience Atonement. As we absorb the truths of Atonement a greater understanding of the book of Revelation will evolve. For the ‘revelation of Revelation’ will introduce us to the exciting realms of the Feast of Tabernacles. Each new truth revealed to the Church is but a stepping stone to the next, no matter how wonderful and glorious a revelation it may appear at the time. It is only with the return of Christ that all truth will be finally revealed. For death, the final frontier, is the final truth to be

understood, and the final barrier to be overcome. It is ironic that death, so inevitable for all of us, is to be the last stronghold to be defeated. Doctors can delay, but never stop the inevitable. It would be fantastic to get our resurrection bodies right now, wouldn't it? My back would say amen to that today!

But let's stop the wishful thinking and get back to reality! i.e. the intriguing reality of the book of Hebrews. See what it has to tell us about the post resurrection application of the principles of the Day of Atonement. We will of necessity, take a brief, simple, yet hopefully revealing walk through this book. Seeing how the Atonement of Jesus both fulfilled the Old Testament pattern and set the scene for the role of the Tabernacle church in experientially entering into the positionally completed work of Jesus. Sorry to use these theological words, but it is important to clearly define the position. In simpler terms, Jesus has done it all, but we are yet to experience all of it, that is to fully embrace it in our lives.

Hebrews is split into three major sections; a meaty filling, sandwiched between the prologue and the conclusion. Let's take a bite!

1. The Superiority of God's New Revelation: (Hebrews 1:1-4)

“The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” (Hebrews 1:3)

Jesus is supreme, a mirror of the Father, and far superior to the angels.

2. Christ is Superior to Old Covenant Leadership: (Hebrews 1:5-7:28)

a. Superior to the Angels: (1:5-2:18)

“To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (1:13-14)

Jesus had to be made like us, his brothers, in order to successfully make atonement for us.

“For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” (2:17)

b. Superior to Moses: (3:1-4:13)

Made like us but superior to us.

“Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.” (3:3)

We are warned not to become like the Jews, who constantly disobeyed Moses,

“We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first.” (3:14)

and invited to enter our Sabbath-rest,

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God, for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.” (4:9-10)

for God knows us better than we know ourselves!

“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (4:12)

c. Superior to the Aaronic Priesthood: (4:14-7:28)

Jesus is our Great High Priest to whom we can turn to find grace, mercy and help in our time of need because,

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.” (5:8-10)

We are warned not to fall away, but to grow up in Christ and seek more of Him.

“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement. And God permitting we will do so.” (6:1-3)

for there is more to be found in God than these Passover and Pentecost truths. Rather, we are to aim towards attainment of perfection, to be like Jesus.

“For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.” (7:28)

3. The Sacrificial Work of our High Priest is Superior: (Hebrews 8:1-10:39)

a. A Superior Covenant: (8:1-13)

The New Covenant is immeasurably superior to the Old,

“But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.” (8:6)

for it is internally based, of the heart, not external, as was the law.

“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put the laws in their minds and write them on their hearts, I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (8:10)

Sins are to be forgiven and forgotten.

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (8:12)

b. A Better Sanctuary: (9:1-12)

In a deliberate New Testament interpretation, the Golden Altar of Incense was placed in the Most Holy Place, whereas in the tabernacle itself it was in the Holy Place.

“Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant.” (9:3-4)

The first Tabernacle was limited in its effectiveness.

“But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first Tabernacle was still standing.” (9:7-8)

but Jesus opened the Holy of Holies up to us.

“He did not enter by the means of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.” (9:12)

c. A Better Sacrifice: (9:13-10:18)

God’s absolute principle of requiring a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin remains the same,

“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (9:22)

but the means of achieving the required sacrifice has changed.

“so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” (9:28)

Hallelujah! Jesus, through His obedience made us (positionally) holy.

“Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will. He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (10:9-10)

In order to personally experience holiness in our lives we have to follow the example of Jesus and set aside our will for His.

“because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” (10:14)

Yes, personal holiness comes through the submission of our will to that of God the Father, as the example of Jesus testifies.

d. A Call to Persevere: (10:19-38)

We are to be purified by the water.

“let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” (10:22)

There are dire consequences awaiting us if we don't,

“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.” (10:26-27)

for God will avenge those who abuse His grace.

“How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “the Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (10:29-31)

But we will be rewarded for our perseverance.

“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” (10:35-36)

4. A Final Plea for Perseverance in the Faith: (Hebrews 11:1-12:29)

a. Perseverance by Faith: (11:1-40)

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.” (11:1-2)

Numerous examples of the forefathers' faith from Abel to Rahab are testified to. Yet their well-earned reward will only be received along with ours.

“These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.” (11:40)

b. God Disciplines His Sons: (12:1-13)

Following the example of the ancient believers we are to persevere in our race,

“Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (12:2)

enduring the hardship of God's disciplining of us as sons.

“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (12:10-11)

c. Warning Against Refusing God: (12:14-28)

Peacefulness and holiness is required of us.

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy;

without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (12:14)

We are to receive a heavenly kingdom, but that comes with responsibilities.

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.” (12:28-29)

5. Concluding Exhortations: (Hebrews 13:1-25)

a. Practical rules for Christian Living: (13:1-17)

A list of practical guidelines relating to hospitality, prisoners, marriage, love of money, leadership, strange doctrines, food, and submission, remembering that

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (13:8)

b. Personal Matters: (13:18-25)

Even here, an exhortation to go on to maturity and not fall away, the twin themes of this letter.

“Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.” (13:22)

A NOTABLE DIFERENCE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW

The Placing of the Golden Altar of Incense in the Most Holy Place: (9:3-4)

This repositioning of the Golden Altar points to the supreme place of intercession, prayer, praise and worship as being the way to enter into the presence of God. This obvious difference and its interpretation are well recognised by most commentators. However it is only now starting to be seriously recognised and embraced by the church. The Tabernacle church movement will fully embrace it.

STILL TODAY’S TWIN THEMES

1. ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

God’s heart cry is the same today as it has always been – for His people to move on towards maturity, to become one with Jesus, to do the will of the Father through the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit. Not just to hang on to our salvation by the skin of our teeth!

2. ELIMINATING THE NEGATIVE

The dire consequences of deliberately turning our backs on God are no less applicable today than they were in early New Testament times. While there is provision for the backslider to return to the Lord upon seeking the Lord’s forgiveness, there is only the certainty of terrible judgement upon the one who

continually rejects the Lord, having once known Him. The correct theological term for such an action is ‘apostasy’.

3. EXAMPLES IN THE NATURAL

King David had a heart after God even though his family was a mess and he committed both adultery and murder. But by throwing himself upon God’s mercy for his mistakes, he was forgiven, growing in maturity to be rewarded with the occupation of the Promised Land. His predecessor King Saul, on the other hand, continued to deliberately disobey God until he was finally condemned and rejected. These then, are natural examples of the spiritual principles so heavily emphasised in Hebrews. The same principles still apply today.

THE HEART OF THE QUESTION IS OUR HEART!

Trying to avoid a theological discussion, but still no doubt getting myself into hot water, there are primarily two schools of thought regarding the relationship between our sin, and God’s grace in the forgiveness of it. Both are justified with supporting scriptures, but only one, in my opinion, reflects the true intent of scripture as a whole.

We have mentioned previously the important principle of the New Testament fulfilling the

SIN IS DEATHLY SERIOUS

truths contained in the Old. Therefore to correctly interpret the New, an understanding of the Old is vital. The lack of such an

understanding has led to the New being misinterpreted by many in the modern church.

The two differing approaches taken towards the forgiveness of sin are:

- 1. Easy Christianity:** Or the ‘fairy godfather’ approach! (Obviously the one I disagree with!) In this school of thought you can become a Christian by basically living how you like, provided you repent of your wrongdoings at regular intervals. God’s grace is all sufficient and unconditionally ever available. Once saved, always saved. The Doctrine of Grace through the death of Jesus overrides all else. No matter what you do, once having been ‘saved’, you are okay now and for eternity, no matter how you live. Now I know this is stating the case in its extreme form, but sadly, these principles form the basis of much of the teaching of the church. Sin is tolerated, often even acceptable. How sad it is to see so many good people misled.
- 2. Walking With Jesus:** The overriding theme of the Bible is one of mankind’s ongoing walk with his Creator. Sometimes we walk in obedience resulting in victory, at other times, in disobedience, resulting in failure. Success was, is, and always will be restored by true repentance. True repentance involves not only seeking forgiveness for a wrongdoing, but also, and most importantly, undertaking to the best of our ability, not to make the same mistake again. Can you see the difference? The last sentence does not end at ‘seeking forgiveness for wrongdoing’, but includes a commitment to pick ourselves up and to start walking again on the path of righteousness. To walk with Jesus. To walk as He walked. Of course, it can be a slippery path, one from which we often fall off, but He is there to lift us back on, if our desire is firmly resolved to walk on again with Him. For the reality is that we have been saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved, as we continue to walk along life’s path with our Saviour and Lord. Constantly being changed from glory unto glory.

Walking in deliberate disobedience, to be easily repented of at our convenience, is not the true teaching of the Bible.

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF ATONEMENT (CLEANSING) TO TODAY’S CHURCH

The ultimate key to entering into the presence of God is found through repentance. For darkness cannot co-exist with the light. Sin and God are simply incompatible. Every revival, from the Book of Acts right through into the 21st Century, has been based upon the foundation of repentance to bring about cleansing.

The Day of Atonement was “The annual day of humiliation and expiation (i.e. making amends) for the sins of the nation.” (Davis Dictionary of the Bible, page 65) While this was done by the High Priest through sacrifices on behalf of the people, the people themselves were to be committed to this cleansing process in the only compulsory fast of the year.

Jesus, of course was and is the one time New Testament atonement or sacrifice for us today. In turn we are to be committed to a cleansing process in our lives too. This feast of cleansing preceded the glorious Feast of Tabernacles, and was a prerequisite for it. Similarly, without cleansing of lives today, there will be no fulfilment of the promised glory of the Church in end times, as has been foretold in the pattern of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is of no use praying for the power to perform miracles and healings, without first being prepared to humble oneself in repentance before our God. To submit to the changes He desires to make in our life, however painful they may be.

We are expected to act out what we believe. Words without actions are meaningless. That is the simple message of the Old Testament Day of

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Atonement, endorsed and confirmed in the New.
God cannot live with sin. We cannot enter into

His presence with sin in our lives. The choice is
simple. God or sin! The choice is ours.

NOTES...

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

THE HARVEST OF LIFE

The Feast of Tabernacles was the most joyous time of the year, celebrating as it did the autumn harvest of grapes, olives and figs, tantalising the taste buds, both then and now. Yet as well as being celebratory, it was also sacred, for its eight-day cycle started and concluded with Sabbath days. Logic also tells us that, in six years out of seven, the Feast would also include a third Sabbath day, the normal weekly one. So the Feast of Tabernacles could be described as being holy and joyous or even joyously holy! The time to be looked forward to in both the religious and gastronomic years!

THE STORY OF TABERNACLES

Now for the final instalment of our story about the journey of God's people to possess the Promised Land.

With the ascension of King Solomon to the throne of Israel, came the period of prosperity and influence that Moses and the people who escaped from the tyrannies of the Egyptians dreamed about, and could well have experienced earlier, had they not been disobedient. Instead, the Israelites had to wait from c.1446BC until the reign of Solomon, from 970 – 930BC, to fully realise God's promise.

As was usual for the times, Solomon's succession to the throne was not simple. His half brother Adonijah set himself up as king before King David died, but David put a stop to that. Solomon treated Adonijah leniently that time, but not so later when he tried to take his throne away by subterfuge. Solomon also prematurely ended the lives of Joab, David's Commander-in-Chief, and Shimei for siding with Adonijah. Another traitor, Abiathar, was defrocked from the priesthood, his life spared only because of his close relationship with Solomon's father, King David, and because he had carried the Ark.

Through this bloody 'sorting out' the kingdom was made secure.

After making a peace treaty with Egypt, Solomon married the Pharaoh's daughter, in so doing developing a taste for foreign women. He also worshipped at the high places in Gibeon. These two areas of sin later led to his downfall.

While at Gibeon, Solomon asked the Lord for wisdom, which greatly pleased the Lord. He became renowned for his wisdom in the known world. However the two sides of Solomon's character were soon to be illustrated again. He built God's temple in seven years but took thirteen years over building his palace. The Temple was absolutely magnificent, the inside being covered with pure gold, a building like no other, before or since. The building work was probably completed late, in the eighth month of the religious year, but most significantly, the Ark of the Covenant, which contained God's presence, was not placed in the Sanctuary until eleven months later, during the Feast of Tabernacles. The Lord's glory filled the Tabernacle after the priests withdrew. Solomon prayers of dedication were followed by the sacrifice of 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats!

The Lord though, was still not happy with Solomon. For after he had completed building both the Temple and his palace, the Lord spoke again in a dream to him, warning him of the consequences of worshipping other Gods. Solomon's major projects were built with conscripted, forced labour, for Israel was the strongest power in the area.

The kingdom prospered for a time, Solomon's splendour being world-renowned. The visiting Queen of Sheba was indeed overwhelmed by it all. This period saw the height of the glory of the

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Promised Land. The natural type of the Feast of Tabernacles was fulfilled.

Unfortunately, as so often in the past, the Israelites journey did not have a “lived happily ever after” ending. But that is another story.....

THE FEAST ITSELF

The feast was celebrated with rejoicing over a seven-day period from the 15th to the 21st days of

the seventh month. During this period the people lived in temporary booths made of tree branches, often built on the roofs of their houses. The Feast began with a special Sabbath day, ending eight days later on the 22nd day with a further special Sabbath. Six essential characteristics can be garnered from the specifics of the Feast. .

1. **Autumn Rains:** A time of looking forward to the autumn rains soon to come, at the end of three long, hot, dry months of summer.
2. **Fruit Harvest Time:** Of grapes, dates, summer figs, and olives.
3. **Living in Booths:** The booths, or huts made of entwined boughs of trees such as palm, willow, olive, pine and myrtle were to be lived in for seven days to celebrate;
 - a. **Completion of the Harvest:** The year’s labours were complete.
 - b. **The Memory of their Release from Egypt:** The Israelites had lived in booths during their escape from Egypt. This remembrance linked Tabernacles with Passover. The beginning with the end.
4. **Feast of the Seventh Month:** Speaking of perfection, fullness and completion.
5. **Many Sacrifices:** Far more sacrifices than in any other feast including;
 - a. **Seventy Bulls over 7 Days:** Starting with 13 the first day, then reducing by 1 per day. One further bull on the 8th day.
 - b. **Fourteen Rams over 7 Days:** 2 per day with 2 more on the 8th day.
 - c. **Ninety-eight Lambs over 7 days:** 14 per day plus a further 14 on the 8th day.
 - d. **Accompanying Meal and Drink Offerings:** Of fine flour and wine.
 - e. **Offerings of Goats:** One goat per day for 7 days plus another on the 8th day.
 - f. **Daily Sacrifices:** Of 2 lambs per day plus two more on the 8th day plus daily meal and drink offerings.The priest’s work had obviously not yet finished for the year, even if the peoples had!
6. **The Eighth Day:** The final, 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the 22nd day of the 7th month consisted of a sacred, closing assembly that concluded the Feast.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TABERNACLES

Throughout scripture, the three-part Feast of Tabernacles is referred to more frequently than either Passover or Pentecost. The Tabernacle Feasts have always been the focal point during periods of restoration, right throughout history. In particular, the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah, dealing with the rebuilding of Zerubbabel’s Temple from 536-516BC, and the rest of the city over the following 75 years, focus particularly strongly upon the Tabernacle Feasts. This temple replaced Solomon’s Temple, destroyed in

586BC, when the defeated Israelites were exiled to Persia.

At the completion of the total restoration of Jerusalem in 445BC, it is significant that the book of the Law was read out to the people, not during the Feast of Passover as we would naturally expect, but rather, during the Feast of Tabernacles. (*Nehemiah 8:1-18*) For this was the pattern established throughout the Old Testament. (*2 Chronicles 17:7-9, Malachi 2:1-10*) Jesus himself illuminated the word at the Temple in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. (*John 7:1-52*) It is therefore logical to expect that the full and final illumination of

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Scripture will occur during the period of the end-time Tabernacle church.

Of significance too, is the timing of God's 'launchings' of His church. The Old Testament church, founded with the building of the Tabernacle of Moses, was dedicated at the Feast

of Passover, (*Exodus 40:2*) while the New Testament church was birthed on the Day of Pentecost. (*Acts 2:1-47*) Understanding that God works in patterns of three, it is again logical that God's perfect church, the Bride of Christ, will be established during the Feast of Tabernacles.

INTERPRETATION OF THE FEAST

The Feast of Tabernacles is just so rich in meaning and revelation to us today. Together with the Day of Atonement, it reveals the potential future direction of our individual Christian walk and of the church as a whole. This is exciting and of crucial importance, for as the Feast of Tabernacles was the pinnacle of the Jewish religious year, so its spiritual fulfilment represents the glorious culmination of God's plan of reconciliation between Himself and mankind. As the Feast of Tabernacles concluded the main Jewish religious festivities of the year, so it prophetically laid down the principles for God's end-time Tabernacle church. As Passover set the pattern for the Traditional/Evangelical Church tradition and Pentecost the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition, so Tabernacles establishes the pattern for the Tabernacle church promise to come. Let's take a peek, and see what the future holds.

- 1. The Rains:** In scripture, both The Word and the Holy Spirit are represented by rain. We know that rain speaks of cleansing, purification, revival, refreshing and restoration. These are to be the features experienced by the Tabernacle church, in far greater measure than has been seen in the past. Why? Because the prophet Joel prophesied that in end times there would be an abundance of rain, leading to the very best of harvests.

“Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.” (Joel 2:23-24)

The first month spoken of here is based on the civil calendar. This relates to the seventh month of the religious one, the only time at which the vats would be full of wine and oil, the oil speaking of anointing. So, at the end of the age God is going to pour out an extra anointing on His people. How do we know this outpouring is to be in the last days? For Joel tells us so a few verses later.

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (Joel 2:28-31)

Isn't this amazing? Yes, in the days of Tabernacles, that seemingly impossible promise of Jesus that we have not yet experienced will be fulfilled.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12)

Signs, wonders, healings and miracles will be a natural part of the Tabernacle church.

2. **The Harvest:** In much current teaching, there is an emphasis on the rain, which of course represents the work of the Holy Spirit. In large measure, this has been because the Church for the last hundred odd years has been experiencing the marvellous days of Pentecost. In the natural Jewish agricultural cycle, rain is necessary to get the growing seasons underway. For the early rain prepared the way for the germination and growth of the crops of barley and wheat, while the late rain enabled the fruit harvest to form and grow. The purpose of rain is to produce the harvest. It is the harvest, which is to be the focus of Tabernacles. For with the early and late rains coming at the right times, there is to be an end-time harvest of far greater proportions than the church has ever previously experienced. Joel continues,

“And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.....” (Joel 2:32)

While this prophecy is widely accepted, it is not really being prepared for. What would you or your church do if your numbers doubled or tripled with new believers almost overnight? It is most important too, to understand the nature of this coming harvest. For not all the new ‘salvation’s’ will be the same. Not any more so, than in the church now. There will be those harvested as barley and those as wheat, maturing together with the tares or weeds, depending on your preferred translation. When asked by his workers whether to pull out the weeds sown amongst the wheat the farmer replied,

“ ‘No’, he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’ ” (Matthew 13:29-30)

The order is interesting. The weeds are to be disposed of before the harvest commences! After burning the weeds, there will be three crops harvested.

- a. **Barley:** Symbolic of Passover and the Traditional/Evangelical Church. Many people will be saved into these churches.
- b. **Wheat:** Symbolic of Pentecost and the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church. Many people will be saved into these churches too.
- c. **Fruit:** The traditional way of looking at the more varied fruit harvest has been as a representation of people from all different races and nations being saved. While it is true that many different people will be saved, is not the true meaning of the ‘Fruit Harvest.’ For the real fruit harvest consists of those mature Christians whose lives display the full fruit of the Spirit. Those who have been prepared to submit to the will of the Father in the living of their lives. Whose lives exhibit the traits of holiness and purity. Those seeking to fulfil the will of the Father, thereby being unified as one in the Spirit. Those who live a life of Atonement. Those who together form the basis of the Tabernacle church. Not another denomination, but a group of people united in fulfilling the Lord’s prayer.

“.....Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:9-10)

A people dedicated to fulfilling the Father’s will. While some have embodied these principles in the past, it is only now, as the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacle principles are being fully revealed to the Church in an experiential way, that large numbers of Christians are recognising and starting to apply these truths. Only now is the true, end-time, ‘Fruit Harvest’ beginning to mature and ripen.

3. Living in Booths: Booths were temporary dwellings made of tree branches. Spiritually speaking, different trees have their own symbolic meanings. For instance, the palm is symbolic of victory, the willow, naturally enough of weeping, the myrtle of joy and the olive of anointing. Each booth was unique, being created from a combination of the branches available, utilising the construction skills of the occupiers. Yet in a way they were all the same, for the motivation behind their construction was to glorify God. To give him thanks for his faithful provision throughout the year and to remember their deliverance from Egypt. (*Leviticus 23:39-43*)

So it is with the Tabernacle church.

- a. Temporary Dwellings:** Not a denomination but a group of people within existing churches, awaiting their heavenly bodies, dedicated to fulfilling the will of the Father. (*2 Corinthians 5:1-5*)
- b. Uniqueness:** Each individual is a unique example of God’s handiwork. (*Matthew 16:27*)
- c. Unity of Purpose:** Each person is heading in the one direction, using his or her individual skills and abilities in the furtherance of the single will of the Father. (*Matthew 7:21-3*)
- d. A Worshipful People:** Continually giving thanks and glory to the Father for His faithful provision. (*John 4:23*)
- e. Centred in Jesus:** As Passover was the pathway to freedom for the Jews, so the death of Jesus is our pathway to the Father. The beginning and the end are intricately intertwined. (*John 14:6*) This special relationship between Passover and Tabernacles can be seen too in their respective times of celebration. Passover is celebrated in the 1st month of the Religious Year, that is the 7th month of the Civil Year. Tabernacles, on the other hand, is celebrated during the 7th month of the Religious year, the 1st month of the Civil Year. The relationship however, runs much deeper than this.

<i>PASSOVER</i>	<i>TABERNACLES</i>
Beginning	Ending
First – Seventh Month	Seventh – First Month
The First day of Passover. Beginning of first month.	The first day – Feast of Trumpets. Beginning of the seventh month.
The Tenth Day. Lamb set aside to die.	The Tenth Day – Day of Atonement. The Lord’s Goat dies.
The Fourteenth Day. Lamb slain in the evening making it then the fifteenth day.	The Fifteenth Day. The Feast of Tabernacles
Unleavened Bread kept for seven days. 15 th – 21 st	Feast of Tabernacles kept for seven days. 15 th – 21 st
The Sheaf of Firstfruits. Waved on the eighth day.	Closing Assembly – Feast of Tabernacles Held on the eighth day.

Yes, Jesus is right there at the heart of both Passover and Tabernacles.

4. Perfection, Fullness and Completion: As represented by the number seven, the Feast being of the seventh month. So the Tabernacle church movement will be one moving towards individual and corporate perfection and life in the fullness of Jesus Christ, our example and Saviour. The attainment of these goals will result in the completion of God’s plan, as Jesus is able to present His Church, His perfect bride, before the throne of the Father. (*2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Ephesians 5:25-7, 1 Peter 1:18-20, Revelation 19:7*)

5. **Total Sacrifice:** One of the features of the Feast of Tabernacles was the large number of sacrifices offered. (*Numbers 29:12-34*) This was no accident, being symbolic of the full sacrifice of self, required of mature Christians, even to the point of death!

“.....*they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*” (*Revelation 12:11*)

That is simply the commitment the Father requires of us in these end times, in response to the ultimate sacrifice he made on our behalf. (*John 3:16, Hebrews 9:11-28*)

6. **New Beginnings:** The number eight in scripture speaks of resurrection and new beginnings. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Leviticus 23:36*) looked forward to the beginning of a new year. After winter, the spring season of hope would again commence. Symbolically, this day represents the return of Jesus to rule and reign upon the earth for 1000 years. (*Revelation 20:1-6*) Whether Jesus actually returns on this day in some future year, is purely a matter of speculation, to which we don't presently have the answer. However it would be logical, in step with the pattern of the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost, should the Father decide to send Jesus on this particular day. We will just have to wait and see, but never forgetting to be prepared for His return on each of the other 364 days also! (365 in Leap years!) This 8th day was the culmination of the Feast of Tabernacles. Spiritually, the return of Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of the Tabernacle church, and the purpose and goal towards which it's whole existence and philosophy is oriented. To be a pure, unified church, prepared as the Bride of Christ. (*Revelation 19:7-8*) What an amazing future to look forward to!

NOTES...

‘TO BE OR NOT TO BE’ an ‘OVERCOMER’

HEALTH WARNING!

This chapter may burn out some long held prejudices and inspire new life goals. Please persist with the treatment, seeking full immersion in the Word, until new understanding is fully assimilated. The treatment may take some time and requires dedication and personal commitment to be effective. Success is assured if the Maker’s instructions are followed.

The concept of progressive spiritual growth is implicit in the Old Testament Feasts of the Lord and confirmed throughout the New Testament. Finally, it is appropriately and succinctly summarised in the Book of Revelation. For in a ‘revelation of Revelation,’ the Lord showed me that as there are seven primary feasts, so there are seven steps or stages in our walk with Him, with a special reward given by God as we reach each level. These promises are given at the end of each of the letters to the seven churches, recorded in Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3. They are generally prefaced by the words,

“To him who overcomes I will give.....”

While being given the revelation of the seven steps 2-3 years ago, it is not until now that I have been shown that these promises are to be fulfilled by the overcoming people of His Tabernacle church. Just makes so much more sense. Inspirational too!

1. To The Church in Ephesus:

“To him who overcomes I will give the right to eat from the tree of life.” (Revelation 2:7)

Talking here about re-establishing the relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the Garden of Eden before their “4F” exercise! (forbidden fruit feasting fiasco) Today we know that Jesus has re-established that relationship with the Father on our behalf, but only what is called ‘positionally’, (done but not yet fully lived out by us), when he died on the cross. Yet we have not yet fully experienced it, as we have not yet fully overcome (that word seems to keep coming up!) our old, natural sinful nature.

As we overcome that nature, through the complete submission of our lives to God’s will, the promise says we will be restored to the closeness of relationship that Adam and Eve initially had with their Father God. Wouldn’t that be amazing! Some individuals have gone a long way towards attaining this promise during their lives but now all of God’s church is being called to live it, not just talk about it. The first reward. Do you want to participate?

“But wait, there is more”, to use the words of all the most successful direct marketing adverts we see on the telly!

2. To The Church in Smyrna:

(Revelation 2:11) “He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.”

Two deaths? That is what it says. Death one. When we die. Easy! But death two? When all the dead, who have been raised for the final judgement, are judged.

“.....The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown in the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:12,14,15)

The final judgement determines our eternal future – eternal “life” with Jesus, or eternal “death” of torment in the lake of burning sulphur. If you know the ferocity with which sulphur burns, it is not an experience to be recommended!

Death then, is linked with judgement. The interesting concept here, not understood by many Christians, is that everyone, Christians as well as non-Christians will be judged.

“For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Now this was a new thought for me! I need to check this one out! How is this possible? I thought that because Jesus had died for my sins I, as a Christian, would not be judged. Well that is obviously not correct. You are wrong again David! So what are the facts?

a.Non-Christians: Will be judged on Judgement Day, which happens at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth.

“(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.)” (Revelation 20:5)

b.Christians: Are divided into 2 categories.
i.Ordinary Christians: On Judgement Day along with the non-Christians.
ii.Those Who Will Reign With Christ (i.e. Overcomers and Martyrs)

“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given the authority to judge. (Overcomers) And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. (Martyrs).....They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4)

The form of judgement is quite different here. For they are those who are prepared to let God work in them, to change them, during their lifetime. This is generally described as becoming mature sons in Christ. This concept of letting God work in us now, judging us now to avoid later judgement, is expressed in *1 Corinthians 11:31-32*.

“But if we judged ourselves we would not come under judgement. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.”

To be an overcomer we are required to subject ourselves to God’s judgement in our lives now, to fix up all those areas that God progressively shows us are not as He desires them to be. By applying God’s judgement to our life now, we will not have to face the second death, the final judgement.

Sounds great to me. Do you wish to participate?

3. To The Church in Pergamum:

To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.” (Revelation 2:17)

Now Jesus is starting to reveal more details of the future for this group of Overcomers. For it is as if there will be a grand graduation banquet. The “white stone with a new name written on it”, is a personalised invitation from Jesus to participate in His 1,000 year reign governing team.

“The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that your Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.” (Isaiah 62:2-3)

The new name is the name given by the victor, who is Jesus. The new name signifies a new life for us, in the purposes and anointing of God. Such was the case for Jacob when he wrestled with God’s angel. (possibly Jesus)

“Then the man said, ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you

have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.’ ” (Genesis 32:28)

Funny how that word “overcome” should appear here too, back in the first book of the Old Testament! Must be a coincidence!

Then on to one of my favourite subjects food! The hidden manna. Hidden until this time and only available to those invited to the feast. The only natural insight we currently have into this is the manna provided to the children of Israel during their forty years in the desert. The spiritual fulfilment will be much greater!

“he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat.” (Psalm 78:24-25)

Now, that is my kind of banquet – unlimited food! Only problem is that it has more effect on my girth than it used to! Still I expect that God’s manna will be both delicious and non-fattening! A description of the Feast of Tabernacles itself. It will be the greatest time of celebration in all history to those who qualify to participate in it.

However, this verse is really talking about ‘hidden’, that is spiritual manna. Hidden manna is the spiritual revelation that is contained in God’s word, the Bible, but isn’t obvious without God revealing it to us.

“All scripture is God-breathed.....” (2 Timothy 3:16)

And God’s nature is revealed through it. Just as we get to know our spouse better than we know other people (hopefully!) because we are committed to him or her, so as we become more committed to God, He reveals more of himself to us. If we are prepared to make the commitment to Him of being an overcomer, He promises to reveal more of Himself to us than He does to others.

For example, some Christians may read this book not comprehending what is being said, while others may well have a greater understanding than is being revealed here. The more we seek, the more we will find. Do you want to participate?

4. To The Church in Thyatira:

“To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – ‘He will rule them with an iron sceptre; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’ – just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star.” (Revelation 2:26-28)

- a. **Rule With an Iron Sceptre:** The first part (sentence) of this 2-part promise reiterates a prophetic declaration in Psalm 2, speaking of Jesus, and written approximately 1000 years before his birth!

“I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”” (Psalm 2:7-9)

Isn’t it interesting and unbelievable really, that Jesus has in turn, delegated this function “to him who overcomes and does my will to the end.” It is not just me making this up! That is what it really says!

And confirmation? Love confirmation, particularly in controversial areas! You may already have guessed by now where this confirmation is going to come from. *Revelation, chapter 12*, no less, and verse 5.

“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre.”

It is quite clear that Jesus is delegating His authority to rule the nations to a group of individuals, those who overcome Satan in their own lives first.

- b. The Morning Star:** The second part of the promise confirms the first, which is most encouraging! The “morning star” is of course Jesus. He says so in *Revelation 22:16*.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

But it relates to a specific aspect of the makeup of Jesus. This is revealed in *Numbers 24:17-19*. In Balaam’s 4th Oracle, Baalam prophesies

“I see him, but not now; I behold him but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will rise out of Israel.....A ruler will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city.”

Both the star and the sceptre! Amazing how such, seemingly unrelated, prophecies dovetail so perfectly. But then we shouldn’t be amazed, should we? God’s perfect plan was conceived before our understanding of time began, and has been progressively revealed through the millenniums.

This passage again confirms the authority of Jesus. And the authority of the morning star is to be given to His overcoming people. Thus the 2 promises of the verse are effectively the same, one as confirmation of the another. Do you want to participate?

5. The Church in Sardis:

“He who overcomes will like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He who has an

ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:5)

A 3 part promise.

- a. Dressed in White:** Confirming that the overcomers will take their place alongside the martyrs, the “them” being referred to here.

“Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.” (Revelation 6:11)

This firstly acknowledges the special place of the martyrs in God’s order. It is not saying however that all overcomers literally have to be martyred, for which I am very grateful! But it does say that all overcomers have to do the spiritual equivalent of being martyred, that is, to die to ones self. Can’t win them all! For my experience, is that there is no easy ride in God, for those who want the best He has to offer. Salvation is free, but obedience costs everything. But as we see here, the rewards far outweigh the cost, for those who are sold out to their God.

- b. Book of Life:** A controversial statement to Calvinists, who believe that once you are saved, you cannot fall out of God’s grace. A reassuring one though to the overcomer, that God is on your side and looking after you.

- c. Before My Father:** This is the most exciting promise to date! Yes, the overcomer, by ‘virtue!’ (get the pun!) of their white robe, will be pure enough to enter the very presence of God and His angels! Don’t believe me (I trust you will check me out anyway), but do believe God! Your white robe is your admission ticket into the throne room of God and His angels. Let’s look at some highlights from *Revelation 7:9-15*.

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could

count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne(v13) Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes – who are they and where did they come from?" And he said, these are those who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, " they are before the throne of God....."

So, let's look at what these verses reveal about the overcomers.

- 1. Who?** Yes, many people (for overcomers are not to be an exclusive few) from all over the world, and yes, from all churches too! That will upset some who "know" they are the only ones with the truth! Know the sort? Not you or me – of course!
- 2. Where are they?** In the presence of God and his angels, as in the promise.
- 3. Where do they come from?** Out of the great tribulation promised for end times.
- 4. Sinless?** The overcomer is sinless because of the full cleansing of the blood of Jesus in their life. Impossible? Positionally no, but experientially, yes. But we are to prepare for the day when we can fully live out the reality of the work Jesus has done for us.

See how it all fits together. I didn't realise it until now either! Seemed like the Holy Spirit pressed down the computer keys through my fingers! I must have had a little to do with it though, as I have had to correct my typing errors! I have got so excited about all this that I have temporarily swapped my snails pace touch typing, for my, still the faster, "look at the keys" method! My touch-typing will improve one day, just as I trust my spiritual walk will

too! But back to the point. Do you want to participate?

6. The Church in Philadelphia:

"Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name." (Revelation 3:12)

There is a saying "that 'Joe Bloggs' is a pillar of society." For a pillar is a sign of strength. The same Greek word for pillars, "stylos", that was used here, was also used by Paul to describe "*Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars.....*" of the church, in *Galatians 2:9*. But in God's scheme of things, a pillar has even more significance. For pillars of cloud by day and fire by night led and guided the people of Israel during their 40 years of wandering in the desert. The Holy Spirit was their guide.

In Moses Tabernacle there were 5 pillars, or posts, (hence our saying, from pillar to post), at the entrance to each section – the Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. In Solomon's Temple there were 2 pillars at the entrance to the temple itself, to the Holy Place. One was called Boaz (symbolic of Jesus, as we will see later – please believe me for now!), the other Jakin, meaning 'he will establish in resurrection life.' A prediction of what Jesus would do many centuries later.

Pillars therefore, represented not only support and stability, but also guidance, example and entry. For pillars showed people the entranceway to the dwelling place of God in both Moses Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. The pillars of fire and cloud led the Jews towards their inheritance in God, towards the Promised Land of Israel.

Moses Tabernacle was of course temporary, taken from place to place, designed to last only until the temple was built. This

represents then, the life of Christ in our mortal human bodies (my body felt very temporary this morning, but has improved during the day!). Solomon’s Temple (God’s really!) was truly magnificent, and was a symbol of the permanence and fullness of moving into the eternal realm, where the life of Christ will live in our eternal bodies. Won’t that be wonderful!

Are you starting to see a pattern in this? I am as I write! It is scary, typing away not knowing what is going to come out next! The slowness of the typing does give me more time to think though! Every cloud has a silver lining! (Bad pun – think about it!) For the overcomers are to be examples whose lives will attract others, showing people the way to salvation and fulfilment in the Lord. To be living examples of Jesus. My Auntie Ina was like that in many ways. Maybe someone you know too?

But even more exciting is that the overcomer will herald, will be a living ‘movie trailer’ for the biggest, most spectacular blockbuster of all time, (no special effects needed!), the New Jerusalem that will accompany Jesus upon His return. A hard film to preview! How do you get that glory across before it happens? But the promise is that the overcomers will be able to do it! For they will be living temples of the light of the glory of God. Since the death of Jesus, God’s earthly presence is not confined to a building but lives in, and should, and will in the case of the overcomers, shine out, of each one. *Revelation 21:22-23* tells us about it.

“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”

The overcomers are not the full glory, but a tempting morsel to titillate the palate for the feast to come.

Now I do appreciate that some of this may be difficult to grasp initially. But please stick with it. As we proceed, the jigsaw pieces will start to fall into place. For that is the way things are in God. Not all is revealed at once, but only as we develop the ability to comprehend. Takes a long time sometimes. I can assure you – we are both learning together! Do you still want to participate.

7. The Church in Laodicea:

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:21)

This has to be the greatest promise for a Christian to aspire to. And do you know to whom it was given? The church in Laodicea. The only one of the 7 churches that Jesus had nothing good to say about! Do you recognise this church? Neither hot, nor cold? Rich, having acquired wealth, and not needing a thing? Sounds like the modern Western church to me! Yet this church was promised the greatest of all God’s blessings if it mended its ungodly ways. Prophetic? You need to decide.

How to go about this mending? The answers are right there in *verses 18-20*. *“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, (trial and testing, typical of Pentecost) so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, (this couldn’t, by any amazing coincidence, be referring to Tabernacles, could it?) so you can cover your shameful nakedness; (wouldn’t be talking about the restoration of mankind’s relationship with God lost when Adam and Eve sinned and realised they were naked, would it?) and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. (the very glory of your God) Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. (I thought I was the only one! Surely it doesn’t happen to you too!) So be earnest and repent. (made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus, the “Passover Lamb”) Here I am! (Jesus) I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears*

my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. This last verse is spoken to Christians, not non-Christians to whom it is normally quoted!

“I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK” is the message of Jesus to TODAY’S BELIEVERS! Are we going to heed it! For that is what entering Tabernacles is all about! Fully opening the door, fully committing our lives to Him. Being 100% sold out to God!

And where will it take us? Right into the very throne room of God! As Jesus overcame and sat down with His Father, so the ultimate promise is, if we overcome, we can become fully fledged brothers (genderless) of Jesus. Be fully reconciled to God the Father through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Can you accept that? Surely it is not possible, David! Yes it is. Once again, don’t believe me, believe the word of God!

“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the one family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”
(Hebrews 2:11)

The qualification is “holiness”. And who is holy? Those who qualify to put on the “white clothes or robes”, that have featured so frequently throughout these promises. Those who are prepared to love not

“their lives so much as to shrink from death.”
(Revelation 12:11)

Isn’t it amazing how everything fits together so neatly. Even I didn’t know until we got here! Isn’t God amazing? Do you still want to participate?

Has Anyone Become an Overcomer Yet? Well there is both good and bad news here! The good news is “yes”, but it is rapidly followed by the bad! For to have

attained this complete oneness on earth with God up to the present time, it has been necessary to become a “martyr” for our Christian beliefs. To put it bluntly, to be killed for them! But as we will see as we proceed, this is not always going to be the case.

Of course this oneness cannot be attained purely by our natural efforts, because we all still have, at least a little of our human nature left in us. But what we can do, is prepare ourselves for the day when the Lord is going to choose those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. Not just in theory but in reality. Turning them into the overcomers in whom His promises may be fulfilled. Yes, the believer who is living the overcoming life now can be called an Overcomer. This is the call of the Tabernacle church movement.

It would be wonderful to inherit all these promises to the seven churches, wouldn’t it? Impossible? If that were the case, the God I know would not have given them to us. For He does not lie, nor does He make promises that he will not keep. I trust that your experience of Him is the same too! So there has to be a time of fulfilment of these promises in the natural. In His Tabernacle church.

As we have discussed earlier, God will not move in the ‘church’, His ‘world wide’ body of believers, until individual ‘Christians’ are prepared. That is how it has been throughout the ages, and there is no reason to believe that God will change His pattern now. So the answer lies not in the soil, not in hope, but in each one of us. The sooner we are ready, the sooner God will move to fulfil the glorious destiny of His church. It couldn’t be simpler in theory! A little more difficult in practice though! But it can and will be done! Praise the Lord!

THE BOOK OF RUTH

On 2 August 1999, the Lord gave me these, the first words for this book. Now placed last in this teaching section! God's order – the first shall be last!

INTRODUCTION:

The Lord has sent me to the Book of Ruth many times over the past year, as a guide to my future work for him, to the point that it has become the book that I know best in the bible on a "know the words" basis. However this has not reflected until today in specific inspiration of interpretation. Now I have been shown that Boaz is a symbol of Jesus and Ruth, a symbol of the gentile church and an example of holiness. Jesus (Boaz) looks after (marries) the church and brings in the harvest. However, because the Lord has referred me there so many times, continually stressing its importance in relation to the job he has for me, I have persisted through the frustration of not being able to gain a deeper understanding of it. I have resisted the temptation to read what has been revealed to others, preferring to wait for the Lord's time to reveal the meaning that is of direct relevance to me, and to what He wants to show me in and through it.

Today, Monday 2 August 1999, is the first weekday that I have been free of Kaydees Gardens. I was intending to catch up this week on other outstanding matters (such as tidying up my filing system!) but the Lord prompted me again for the umpteenth time to go back into Ruth and have another look at the words I know so well. What follows is the result of today's revelation - and the filing is still in a mess! But never mind! Some things never change!

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS:

BOAZ: A type of Jesus.

NAOMI: Type of the Jewish people or "Jewish church"

RUTH: Type of the gentile church.

THEME:

A. TO THE JEWS: The transformation of Naomi from despair to happiness and cultural fulfilment through the selfless acts of Boaz and Ruth.

B. TO CHRISTIANS: A picture of Jesus (Boaz) and His care for His (gentile) church as represented by Ruth.

UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL MEANING: PICTURE OF THE END TIME CHURCH

1:1-1:5 The family (representing Israel) deserted God by leaving Israel for Moab, then compounded their disobedience by intermarrying. The men paid the price for their disobedience - dying premature deaths. The women suffered too, in that they had no surviving offspring - a matter of cultural shame to the Jews and probably the Moabites too.
Symbolic of rejecting Jesus.

1:6-1:7 The Lord rescued His people, so Naomi (Israel) ran back home.
Symbolic of the Jews returning to Israel.

1:8-1:15 Orpah and Ruth (together the gentile church) were given the opportunity to return to their people. Orpah decided to return, thus avoiding the shame of having no husband, being disliked by the Jews, having to rely on charity, etc., etc.
Symbolic of the falling away of the church as end times approach and things get tough.

1:16-1:19 Ruth stuck with it and went with Naomi.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Symbolic of the remaining (end time) church's full commitment, putting the world (Moab) aside and going on in God's will.

- 1:20-1:22 Contrast between a desperate Naomi (Israel) and a faithful Ruth (end time church).
The end time church sets the example to Israel and has an impact upon her.
- 2:1-2:3 Ruth desires to gather grain. Naomi allows her to do so and Ruth finds herself in Boaz's field.
Symbolic of a desire in the end time church to gather a harvest of people to Jesus. Jesus puts us in the right field under His protection and allows us to first gather the "gleanings", a foretaste of things to come.
- 2:4 Boaz comes to supervise the harvest.
A symbol of a most powerful move of the Holy Spirit as the harvest time comes.
- 2:5-2:7 Boaz receives a report on Ruth's hard work in gleaning.
Symbolic of the commitment required to gather the harvest.
- 2:8-2:9 Boaz instructs Ruth to stay in his field and he will look after her generously.
Symbolic of our remaining under the cover of His church to receive His generous protection.
- 2:10-2:13 Ruth asks why she has received such favour and is told it is because of what she has done for Naomi (Israel). She submits to him in deep gratitude.
Symbolic of how Jesus rewards us when we come to Him, even though we don't deserve it. Also speaks of His desired attitude for us towards Israel.
- 2:14-2:16 Boaz's generosity towards Ruth illustrated in both personal provision and by making her work easier.
If we are fully committed to Jesus He will look after us personally and enable us to do His work effectively.
- 2:17 Ruth collected an unexpectedly large harvest.
Our harvest will be greater than we imagine when we walk in His ways.
- 2:18-2:23 Naomi was surprised how much grain Ruth had gathered. Ruth explained Boaz's generosity and protection. Naomi understood that Boaz was looking after her too, getting Ruth to stay under his protection until the end of the harvest.
The works of the end time church will impress Israel, as they will see the source of them. Also we need to stay under God's covering within His church.
- 3:1-3:9 Ruth is persuaded by Naomi to step out, taking a risk to assure her future by approaching Boaz at the "male only" threshing floor.
Speaks of our need to be bold in Christ, to step out in faith, breaking tradition and comfort zones to obtain the rewards He offers. Also that the harvest is not complete until the "threshing" or "training in God's ways" of converts is completed.
- 3:10-3:14 Boaz is honoured by Ruth's approach and subject to satisfying the custom of the time, agreed to marry her, recognising her status as a "woman of noble character."
Jesus rewards those who step out in Him with a closer "tabernacle" relationship with Him. As we step out in holiness, so our relationship with Jesus deepens.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

- 3:15 Boaz poured six measures of barley into her shawl as a gift.
A gift of souls through the example she had set, as illustrated by her shawl, symbolising a covering of righteousness - and an example to others. The shawl (or cloak) symbolises that which is within.
- 3:16-3:18 Naomi received the gift and acknowledged the righteousness of the giver.
Harvest is the reward for righteousness and obedience. Gentile end time church created first (Boaz and Ruth) and the Jewish church (Naomi) is then added, as the Gentile church reflects God's glory to the Jews.
- 4:1-4:10 Boaz offers Ruth to another kinsmen-redeemer who decides that it is not in his self interest to accept her. Boaz undertakes, with the elders as witnesses, to take Ruth as his wife, restoring Mahlon's (Ruth's first husband) family name amongst the town records.
Symbolically this reveals the freewill choice that Jesus made to die for our sins in order to re-establish our relationship with God the Father.
- 4:11-4:12 The elders give their blessing to the marriage, accepting Boaz and Ruth as members of their Jewish family, in the line of their "royal" inheritance.
Spiritually symbolic again of the acceptance of Jesus (Boaz) and the end time church (Ruth) as being the fulfilment of the Jewish inheritance.
- 4:13-4:17 The Lord enabled Ruth to conceive producing a son, and in doing so fully restoring Naomi to happiness and cultural fulfilment.
Symbolically illustrates the creation of a universal Jewish/Gentile church awaiting the return of Jesus.
- 4:18-4:22 The establishment of the ancestry of Boaz and Ruth as being in the line of David. In turn this was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, who was of the same line.
Symbolically speaking of the return of Jesus to rule and reign as one with his perfect, unified (in Him) church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles who are totally sold out to Him.

NOTES...

GOD'S OVERCOMING TABERNACLE CHURCH

RESTING IN THE RIVER OF GOD

A CHURCH OF DESTINY!

..... DELIVERY!

..... VICTORY!

SYMBOLICALLY DEPICTED AS 'THE RIVER OF GOD'

As Jesus is symbolically pictured by the Passover 'Cross', the Holy Spirit by the Pentecost 'Dove', God the Father is in turn depicted by the 'River of God' in Tabernacles.

The River of God symbolism represents

1. **The Reconciliation** of God with His purified church, washed clean, sanctified by the water of the Word.
2. **The Anointing** power of God acquired from resting in the River of Life, now to be used to reveal the glory of God to all the earth
3. **Access** to the very throne room of God, via the River of Life.

A CHURCH OF DESTINY of Final Reconciliation between Man and God.

To present to Jesus upon His return, a holy, blameless and radiant church, without stain, wrinkle or any other blemish, in a final act of reconciliation between God and Man.

A CHURCH OF DELIVERY of a People Willing and Able to Fulfil God's Purposes Upon the Earth.

A vibrant church, experiencing the truths of Atonement (Reconciliation with God) first fulfilled by Jesus upon the cross, now being lived out in His followers. These realities are:

1. **Atonement as an Ongoing Experience:**
 - a. **Being Worked Out in our Lives:** A process, not an event. Holiness, the practical application of Atonement, is obtained in greater measure the more we submit ourselves to the will of the Father. The greater the sacrifice of our own nature for the nature of Christ, the holier our lives will become.
 - b. **Available to All Who Desire It:** As with the experiences of Passover and

Pentecost, the truths of the Tabernacle Feasts are available on an ongoing basis, to all those desiring to participate.

2. **A Time of Rest:**

Our rest, our reliance, is founded upon the Lord, seven days a week. Seven represents completeness, a finished work. So we are able to rest in the completed work of Jesus at all times. Rest cannot be earned by setting aside one day or through good works. Jesus has done it all.
3. **A Time of Fasting:**

Fasting is a very practical acknowledgement of our heart attitude to the Lord, shown

through the temporary gift to Him of our most basic human instincts, food and sex. Fasting opens two way communication channels of both mind and spirit. Fasting is a regular, integral part of submission to God. Fasting is to become a pleasure, not an obligation.

4. A Time of Prayer:

Prayer is the very essence of our communication with God. To be a time of seeking a greater understanding of God's will. Our ultimate aim is to establish a two-way, 24 hour communication channel of prayer, so enabling us to react automatically to the Father's will in every situation. To be as one with Christ.

5. A Time of Humility:

a. Individual: An ongoing time of humility before the Lord, seeking His guidance and forgiveness.

b. Corporate: An increasing frequency and intensity in intercession, prayer and fasting in order to seek His will for His people.

6. A Time of Testing:

The Atonement experience is inevitably one of trial and testing. The cleansing and purifying of our soul; (defined as mind, emotions and will), our personality, our motivator, is at the very heart of Atonement. It is promised, He will not test us beyond what we can bear.

7. A Time of Worship:

Worship, along with prayer and intercession, is our entry ticket into the very presence of God. The Tabernacle church will see worship raised to new levels of intensity, as God's people become more and more desirous of entering into the Lord's glory.

8. A Time of Purity:

God's revelation and urgent requirement for the Tabernacle church, is personal and collective purity. Rather than merely seeking forgiveness for our sins through the blood, the very source of sin in our lives is to be

washed clean by the water of purification. Placing a new emphasis on the prevention of sin in our lives.

9. A Time of Righteousness:

Putting aside personal desires for excess possessions, pride of position, physical comfort and pleasure, in order to live righteous lives before God. God and His desires are to predominate in our lives.

10. New Ministry Roles For the Church:

The Tabernacle church is to fulfil new roles as part of its end-time assignment.

A. Present Roles:

a. Reconciliation to the Father: Through an emphasis on both individual and corporate repentance.

b. To Subdue Satan: To be proactive in Spiritual Warfare, in order that Satan's kingdom might be defeated.

c. Ministry of Forgiveness: That sins might be forgiven on earth, rather than being judged by God later.

d. Bearing the World's Insults of Christ: As Christ's representatives in the world.

e. Disseminating the Power of the Tabernacle Truths: To the rest of the Church and to the world, primarily by example, but also in teaching.

B. Future Roles:

a. To Subdue Satan and His Angels: When they are cast down to earth in the last days.

b. The final Separation of Church and World: To separate the church from the world in the final days.

c. The Ultimate Goal: To be presented with Christ before the Father, a perfect bride without spot or blemish.

11. A Unified Church:

A unified church, to be presented with Christ before the Father's throne. This unity is one of purpose, not of yet another denomination. The Tabernacle church is a movement of people within God's various churches,

seeking to apply the greater truths the Tabernacle Feasts reveal. It is a movement that will grow, indeed is already growing, from the ground up, as individuals are convicted by the Holy Spirit to apply these truths to their lives. It cannot be imposed upon people from the top down - either individually or as a group - for a personal, 100% commitment is required to participate.

12. A Call to Perseverance:

The attainment of these goals seems impossible to the human mind. This is but an ungodly human mindset that we have to work through. For nothing is impossible in God. The writer of the book of Hebrews recognised this, constantly emphasising the need to persevere in our faith. While we will fail from time to time, these principles are being established within us on a progressive basis. We do not attain holiness or perfection in the twinkling of an eye. It is a process in which we must persevere, for the desired results to be attained.

13. A Call to Godly Living:

Tabernacle Principles are not merely another good Christian Doctrine, but a call to the individual, and the church, to godly living. Our life is a witness to the truth. Tabernacle truths can only be fully understood and entered into, through participation. Those who don't desire to participate will dismiss them as foolishness. Such has been the way of the Church throughout the ages.

14. A Hatred of Sin:

The Tabernacle church will illuminate the difference between right and wrong. 'Near enough is no longer good enough'. Believers are to live a life of righteousness. Sin is to be hated, firstly in us, then in other believers. Sin's awful nature will cause the Tabernacle Church to become more proactive in leading others to Christ. For the consequences of unforgiven sin are frightening. As we become more conscious of doing God's will, so the incidence of sin in our life reduces.

15. A Fear of God:

As we get closer to the Lord, a greater awareness of His awesome majesty, might, power and presence fills our lives. We become more aware of the dreadful consequences of falling under the judgement of the living God, so developing a 'Holy Fear' within us.

**A CHURCH OF VICTORY
Reflecting God's Glory upon the Earth.**

The Tabernacle church is to become the victorious church, reflecting the glory of God upon the earth, as prophetically illustrated in the joyous Feast of Tabernacles itself. These victorious reflections include:

16. An Outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

Such as has never been experienced in history! As the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the earth in abundance for a short time at the end of the age, signs, wonders, miracles and healings will form a natural part of the Tabernacle church. Christ however, will make these supernatural abilities available only to those who have proven themselves trustworthy, through obedience to the will of the Father. Otherwise chaos would reign!

17. The Time of Final Harvest:

The final and greatest harvest, as promised throughout the Bible and looked forward to by most believers. The Holy Spirit will do a quick work in people's lives. Churches will overflow with new believers, each one needing to be discipled and trained in the ways of the Lord. All Bible Believing churches will experience rapid growth. For some will be saved into the truths of Passover, others into those of Pentecost, while still others will proceed rapidly into Tabernacles. There will also be a great movement amongst present believers, as the Holy Spirit convicts many to seek further truths, to increase their level of commitment to their Saviour and Lord. However, there are many that resist change. Sadly, they will be highly resentful of the new 'spiritual

upstarts', those prepared to make the required sacrifices to move into a deeper relationship with God. Deeper levels than they are prepared to commit to. Much opposition will come from this group.

18. A New Concept of Church:

The Tabernacle church will not regard itself as a 'church' of the type we know today. It will not be just another denomination meeting in a building, separated from others, celebrating the truths that have been revealed to it. For Tabernacle church followers will regard their bodies as temporary dwellings, to be lived in but for a time, while eagerly awaiting the receipt of their eternal, heavenly bodies. This concept of 'temporaryness', with its focus on what is ahead, will result in a distinct lack of interest in permanent church organisational structures and buildings. For they know that the return of Christ is near. 'Tabernaclers' will be motivated to work within existing churches, seeking to lead others into the Tabernacle experience, while promoting unity in God's will amongst all churches. Barriers between churches will lessen as groups of like-minded people develop and mature within the various denominations. Denominational barriers will become of increasingly less significance as more and more attention is focused upon preparing for and eagerly awaiting, the Lord's return.

19. Aspiring to Perfection in Christ:

A church focused upon and fully committed to its ultimate destiny – to be the perfect Bride of Christ. This is not possible by human effort, attainable only through the complete submission of our wills to that of the Father. To become like Christ - for His will was totally submitted to His Father. An 'idealistic impossibility' when considered from the viewpoint of current experience, but attainable in the future through absorbing the principles of Atonement, in being healed by the power of the anointing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It simply has to be possible, in order that the word of God may be finally fulfilled.

20. Total Sacrifice:

A people totally committed to seeking and living by the will of the Father, as reflected in the example of Jesus; even unto death, if required; washed clean by the water of the Word as well as saved by the blood of the Lamb; to be pure, as well as forgiven.

21. Eagerly Awaiting the Return of Christ:

The major motivation in life will be to be personally prepared, and to help others prepare, for the triumphant return of Christ, in total victory over the final barrier separating man from God – death. Hallelujah!

A MATTER OF TIME

As emphasised throughout, the attainment of these objectives is a process, not an event. For as the Holy Spirit convicts us, in new areas in our lives, so He guides us closer and closer to the scriptural ideal. We are not to be discouraged when we fail. We all fail, for not one of us has yet been made perfect. But if we diligently apply these principles to our lives, through the saving grace of Jesus, in the full power of the Holy Spirit, and in submission to the will of the Father, to the very best of our ability, changes will occur. For the Lord sees and honours our true heart. As we surrender to Him, so He teaches trains and encourages us in the application of His ways to our lives.

For the sacrifice of Atonement must be built into the heart of our very beings. Then we will be able to celebrate the victory, power and wonder of the Feast of Tabernacles. As individuals and the church, we will not experience the glory of the promise of Tabernacles until we have built God's Tabernacle within us. Glory follows, not precedes sacrifice! "My people, prepare yourselves," is the Lords heart cry.

Each one of us can make a start today. Final revival, the end –time harvest, the glory of God being manifested in the church, is dependent upon the sacrifice of our lives to Him, not upon an 'easy miracle' from the heavenlies. For God's Tabernacle is being built in each of us. His

collective glory will shine forth as His Tabernacle builds within each one. For Tabernacles is an individual, not a corporate experience. But God's glory will be greatly magnified by the collective witness of His Tabernacle church movement.

Let us then, get ready today for the victorious return of the Lord Jesus to collect his perfect bride, in accordance with the pattern established in the Tabernacle Feasts.

NOT THE FINAL WORD

Revelation, like the development of Christ in us, is an ongoing process, not a single event. It is the perfectly natural desire of every person with an apostolic or prophetic gifting, to receive brand new, supernatural, life and church changing revelation from God. Unfortunately when such revelation comes, it frequently leads to spiritual pride, accompanied by the belief that 'their word' (God's really!) is the final and ultimate word of God. God's next revelation has then to be given to someone else!

Naturally, being human, I would like to believe that there is some element of revelation in what has been written here concerning the development of God's end-time Tabernacle church movement. However it is neither all new revelation, nor the final word. The teaching on which these premises are based has been progressively revealed to many within the church over the past 50 years or so. While this has not yet all become mainstream Christian theology, bit by bit, piece by piece, these truths are gradually being absorbed into the wider church. For change and revelation in God's order, as in the exploration of a new country, is first carried out by a few pioneers, before being settled by the mass of its inhabitants.

As individuals, God takes our natural talents and breaks them down, before rebuilding them in His will, rather than our own. He does not make us 'Christian Clones', according to the human ideals of any one person or group. For we all have individual, God given personalities, each uniquely incorporating differing strengths and weaknesses. God will use our strengths, once they are submitted to him, while at the same time strengthening us in our areas of weakness, to making us better all-round people in Him. My three natural talents happen to be in the areas of envisioning the future, putting things into perspective, and explaining complex issues in a simple way. These are likely to be reflected here. I have many weaknesses. He is still working upon these!

Because we are human, every revelation contains elements of both God and the writer. This is no exception! I have tried my very hardest to ensure that as much as possible is of God, and as little as possible of David. This picture of the Tabernacle church movement has been carefully composed scripture upon scripture, word upon word, to line up, to the best of my ability, with God's word as developed in 'The First and Last Word.' You need to be the judge of my success or failure in this regard.

Finally, this is not the final word! (I can see David in that!) It is an attempt to provide a framework which others, more spiritual and knowledgeable than I, will be able to amend, expand and enhance. As time marches on, God continues to reveal more and more of his nature to us. But it won't be until the glorious day of His return that all will be revealed. Then He will have the final word! For the final 'Word' is indeed Jesus. To Him be all the honour and glory. Amen.

THE 'POWER OF THREE' REVEALED

3.
We have progressively seen the wonder of God's plan for us as individuals and corporately as the Church, revealed in His Word. Throughout this study, the 'Power of Three' in the plan of God has become increasingly obvious.

We will conclude with a Table that sets out and brings together in a tabulated form the different areas that we have reviewed. But before we do, just in case you still you still are not fully convinced, we will consider two further 'threes' that confirm and enhance the conclusions drawn.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

The triad of 'faith, hope and love' appears 11 times in the New Testament, the best known being 1 Corinthians 13:13.

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

So how do these three fit in with our pattern of the Trinity?

1. The 'Hope' of 'Jesus': Not human 'hopefulness' but a real confidence of our salvation through Jesus and His inevitable return. Therefore we are to put on...

"the hope of salvation (of Jesus) as a helmet."
(1 Thessalonians 5:8)

2. 'Faith' Through The 'Holy Spirit': The building of faith in our lives is a function (at the unction!) of the Holy Spirit.

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:6)

Faith in Christ is both facilitated and developed through the Holy Spirit.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." (Ephesians 3:16-17)

'Love' of God the Father: The ultimate fulfillment of our Christian walk. This is the first requirement of our walk also, as stated in both the Old Testament and the New.

In the Old, the First Commandment tells us;

"And he said: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." (Deuteronomy 5:6-7)

This requirement to love God the Father was reinforced in the next chapter;

"Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Not surprisingly, the New Testament prescribes an almost identical message in the 'Greatest Commandment.'

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"
(Mark 12:29-31)

And as we have previously considered, we are to follow the example of Jesus – love of His Father expressed through and proven by, obedience.

"I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me." (John 14:30-31)

And beautifully confirmed as;

"... But the greatest of these is love."
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

The committed disciples God is calling today.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Fully described in Matthew and Mark and summarized in Luke, this parable of Jesus is normally understood to be revealing the reactions of different types of people who hear the message of the Gospel.

“Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil.

It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.”

(Matthew 13:3-7)

These people all heard the message of Jesus but for one reason or another fell away. These are simplistically recognised as the “badies”! Those who hear ‘receive, then fall by the wayside.

Then there are the “goodies”!

“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear.” ” (Matthew 13:8-9)

We celebrate the first part of verse 8, the production of the crop, the genuine salvation of ‘lost souls’ while quickly skipping over the highly revealing, last 9 words.

For the output, the ‘fruits’, to put it spiritually, of all Christians is not the same. Some produce ‘30 fold’ crops – and the Lord is happy with these. Other ‘seed’ multiplies 60 times – and the Lord is happy with this seed too.

But finally, there are those who produce 100 fold crops! In the first two cases the increase in productivity was by a factor of 30. From zero to 30, then 30 to 60. Yet differently and significantly, the third and final level of harvest exceeds the second by the greater factor of 40.

Contrary to commonly held beliefs, largely influenced by the principles of democracy and equality upon which so many societies are theoretically based, all Christians are not the same. While we all receive the same salvation, for all believers have the promised reward of eternal life, a Christian’s ‘fruit’ and ultimate heavenly rewards vary, according to the level of commitment in our walk. Ultimately, our degree of submission to the will of God the Father in our lives reveals the effectiveness of our journey and dictates the volume and quality of the fruit we produce.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate lesson we all need to learn is that the success of our ‘walk with Jesus’ is not determined by effort or energy in the Lord’s cause, but through the principles so clearly revealed in Revelation 12:11. For satan can only be overcome through the application of

1. Repentance by the blood of Jesus.
2. Releasing the full power of the Holy Spirit to work in us and
3. Submitting our will to that of God the Father.

As we apply these principles to our lives, so the crop of ‘fruit’ we produce will increase from 30 fold to 60 fold, to the ultimate 100 fold harvest that our God desires of each one of us.

In these final days in which we live, God is calling out a people who are 100% sold out to Him and to His will. Yes, we can remain 30% committed and productive or operate at the 60% level, but we will not be able to overcome satan. The ultimate victory and the ultimate rewards are reserved for those precious people, that committed church, that is fully ‘sold out’ to their God.

I desire to be a part of it. Do you?

**SUMMARY OF ‘THE POWER OF THREE’
IN GOD AND HIS CHURCH**

<i>GODHEAD</i> REVELATION 12:11	MOSES TABER- NACLE	FEASTS OF THE LORD	PART OF SOUL	THE TRIAD (1 Cor. 13:13)	PARABLE OF THE SOWER (Matthew 13:1-9)	CHURCH TYPE
<i>JESUS</i> BLOOD OF THE LAMB	OUTER COURT (Brazen Altar, Washing Basin)	PASSOVER (Passover, Unleavened Bread First Fruits)	MIND	HOPE	30 FOLD HARVEST	TRADITIONAL/ EVANGELICAL (Onwards from the Reformation)
<i>HOLY SPIRIT</i> WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY	HOLY PLACE (Table of Showbread, Golden Lampstand, Incense Altar)	PENTECOST (Feast of Weeks)	E M O T I O N S	FAITH	60 FOLD HARVEST	PENTECOSTAL (Full Gospel) and CHARISMATIC (From the 1900’s onwards)
<i>GOD THE FATHER</i> OBEDIENCE EVEN UNTO DEATH	HOLY OF HOLIES (Ark of the Covenant)	TABERNACLES (Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles)	WILL	LOVE	100 FOLD HARVEST	TABERNACLE/ APOSTOLIC (To Come – Now beginning)

A GLIMPSE AT ONE MAN'S VISION FOR THE TABERNACLE CHURCH MOVEMENT

WALKING WITH JESUS

Before considering the vision, a brief understanding of the historical background of God's dealings with His people would be useful.

THE TABERNACLE CHURCH MOVEMENT BACKGROUND

Our God is a triune (three-part) being whose overriding desire has always been to restore relationship with His disobedient creation, mankind. He has approached this task in a logical, consistent way, the pattern of which is revealed throughout scripture. A pattern initially revealed when he set up His first church on earth, when the Israelites miraculously escaped from Egypt in c.1446BC, nearly three and a half thousand years ago. As the heavenly architect, God provided Moses with highly detailed plans for the first church building (Tabernacle of Moses). At the same time Moses received instructions for its operation (the Law). God's earthly representatives were appointed (the Priesthood), and the annual religious celebrations to be observed by His people were detailed. (The Feasts of the Lord - Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.). God's plan of reconciliation is disclosed in all four, but is most clearly seen in the layout and furniture of Moses Tabernacle (an earthly type of Heaven), and through the religious festivals, the Feasts of the Lord, that the Israelites were to observe. This was the Old Covenant (Testament) church.

Nearly 1500 years later, this Old Covenant, based on the Law, was replaced by the superior New Covenant (Testament), based on grace. It was and is made available through the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. Through his death, Jesus fulfilled the pattern of the Feast of Passover. The 'new' New Testament Church was established on the Day of Pentecost, fulfilling the pattern of the Feast of Pentecost. That left only the three-part Feast of Tabernacles as the remaining Feast to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of

the Tabernacle Feasts, in accordance with God's pattern, is the honour, privilege and responsibility of the end-time church, for these feasts represented the final celebration and high point of the Jewish religious calendar. This task is the responsibility of the Tabernacle church movement, soon to culminate in the final reconciliation of man with God when Jesus returns to rule and reign upon the earth for 1000 years.

The development of the New Testament Church, a church now including all believers in Jesus, Jew and non-Jew, has many similarities to that of the Old Testament Church. As illustrated through the Israelites' journey to claim the Promised Land. The peoples' release from Egypt (Passover) was quickly followed by the giving of God's Covenant at Mount Sinai (Pentecost). Following this, through general disobedience, provision of the Promised Land was delayed for forty years, time for a generation to die in the desert. Possession of the Promised Land itself took more than 400 years, from crossing the River Jordan under Joshua, until final fulfilment under King Solomon (Tabernacles).

Similarly the New Testament pattern saw the crucifixion of Jesus (Passover) followed 50 days later, by the release of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). After a time of growth the church went into a long period of decline during the aptly named Dark Ages. Since the Reformation of the 16th Century, the Church has gradually been restored.

The Traditional/Evangelical Churches first embraced again the Passover truth, that of salvation through the blood of Jesus. In the 20th century the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church embraced the Holy Spirit truth of Pentecost.

Now, the pattern of Tabernacles is starting to emerge within the Church. Since the 1950's, there has been a 'Trumpet Call' to action, during which time the Lord has revealed many more truths from His Word, including revelation of the importance of Moses Tabernacle and the Feasts of the Lord. This call is right now gradually being heeded as people, around the world, are beginning to apply 'Day of Atonement' principles of repentance, holiness and submission of personal goals and ambitions to the will of the Father Himself to their lives. The outworking of this is to be the promised, glorious end-time Tabernacle church movement, in fulfilment of the 'Feast of Tabernacles' itself.

Detailed scriptural principles upon which this is founded are contained in 'The First and Last Word'. This vision or dream, (confused as to whether I am a young or old man!), is an attempt to bring the facts to life. Adding flesh to the bones, putting forward one man's view of the development of God's plan of reconciliation, to be fulfilled through the Tabernacle church movement. It is a vision, it is a dream, but one firmly based up on the reality of the Word.

A CHURCH OF DESTINY.... Of Final Reconciliation between Man and God.

To present to Jesus upon His return, a holy, blameless and radiant church, without stain, wrinkle or any other blemish, in a final act of reconciliation between God and Man.

SHARING THE VISION

The clock ticks irresistibly on towards midnight on 31 December 1999. There is, particularly in New Zealand, the first to experience the awakening of the new millennium, a sense of keen anticipation of the future, muted by the fear of possible consequences of the Y2K computer bug. The clock strikes 12! The lights stay on! The fearsome Y2K bug has forgotten to hatch. The hours on the time clock of life tick relentlessly onwards.....8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, ... The new day, the New Year, the New Century, the New Millennium. No miracle hangover cure – for the head from the party the night before, or for the ongoing challenges of living. One century blends smoothly into the next. Or does it?

For the world so it seems. The pace of life continues to accelerate, people striving ever harder, reaching out to grasp those worldly ways of satisfaction that always remain, tantalisingly, just out of reach.

For most of the church too, there has been little change. Billboards outside the churches have cleverly adjusted their traditional salvation message by two words, from "Last Chance of Salvation in the Old Millennium" to "First Chance of Salvation in the New Millennium." Inside of people's hearts, the change has been even less dramatic. For the Christian life cycle grinds on, some enthusiastic, most content to go with the flow, always a few unfortunates departing, dejected, rejected.

During the past few months, while travelling around the country, I have listened to lots of cassette tapes, many now 20-30 years old, sounding out the 'trumpet call' of awakening to the church. Maybe you have heard them too. Calls to put our lives in order. Calls to prepare for the greatest revival of all times. And what have we done about it? Generally nothing! How disillusioned many of the 'trumpeters' must be, as the people have said, "That's nice," before carrying on with life as normal. Some have heard the call in their minds, others have even believed it in their hearts, but very few have been prepared to do something about it, to submit their wills and desires to those of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Until recently, that is. For there is now a gentle stirring amongst a few of God's people. As the first puff of wind causes a gentle ripple to run upon a mirror-like sea, so the Spirit of God is starting to move in people's hearts. In ever increasing numbers, Christians are being convicted of the sin that remains in our lives, sin that separates us from the full love of God. Sin that surely as night follows day, prevents us from fully walking in His ways. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is convicting you as He is convicting me. Convicting us both to do something about it. Yes, a hatred of the sin in our lives is building within. Compromise is becoming less of an

option than in the past. Black is black, grey is black however light the shade of grey might be. Only white is white. A greater desire to please the Father is being instilled within by the Holy Spirit; a desire to become more like Jesus, to do the perfect will of the Father as He did. "Lord, I am available. Please, please, use me!" is the increasingly harmonised cry of more and more hearts, a cry reaching out into the heavens. The chorus the Lord has been waiting for, the cry that so gladdens His heart. Reverberating chords of worship greet our King of Kings, followed by the soft sound of surrender to our Lord of Lords.

For a new sound is being heard amongst God's people. Whispers here, heart cries there. Cries of repentance. Cries of passion! Cries of a people awakened by the gentle puffs of Holy Spirit wind. Cries of desire for more of God. Cries of intercession. Cries of worship. Cries of intimacy. Cries of submission. Cries of commitment. Promises of obedience to the will of the Lord.

For a new generation is stirring amongst God's people. An impassioned, committed generation, desperately hungry for God. A new generation totally committed to righteous living. A new generation committed to the growth of the whole body of Christ. Dedicated to spreading God's word amongst all people. Committed to defeating the forces of evil upon the earth. Earnestly desiring to fulfil God's will. A new generation committed to becoming the perfect bride of Christ. A new generation, now eagerly waiting upon Jesus' return. A new generation is arising, of both young and old. One called by the Spirit of the Great High God. A new, overcoming generation who will "*not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*" (*Revelation 12:11*) A new generation, one willing to pay the price of total commitment.

A new generation is arising within the body, convicted by the Holy Spirit to be the start of the final end-time move of God. Not all are so called. But it is the highest calling God has for this generation. Salvation and the empowering of the Holy Spirit are free gifts from God. Obedience on the other hand, is our gift back to God, through which He empowers us to fulfil

His purposes. By its very nature, obedience has to be an individual commitment of our individual will. It comes from within. The Spirit of God initiates it. It is not of man, nor of preacher, evangelist or pastor. It is our personal response to all that our God has done for us. It is a God inspired, personal response.

The Tabernacle church movement will not separate itself from the body to become just another denomination. For unity in God is at its very core. Units of God's Tabernacle Army will grow within existing churches, dedicated to doing God's will within the Body of Christ. For as individuals within churches grow in commitment to the Lord's will, so will unity permeate the Body. The 'unified end-time church' is neither a single world church nor a 'superior' denomination. Rather a unity of purpose amongst people in churches fulfilling the will of God. For as individuals get closer to God, so His will inevitably will be better expressed through His Body, the Church. Denominational walls are starting to crumble, as we become more in tune with our Master and Lord.

Inevitably, there will be opposition amongst some, indeed many, to this new move of God's Spirit. For there have always been individuals and churches content to remain at differing levels of truth. 'Tabernaclers' will recognise this, choosing to love those who criticise, for all form part of the one Body of Christ. The poisoned barbs thrown by those who have been at the forefront of previous moves of God, but who reject this one, will hurt the most. On the other hand, criticism from the 'worldly religious church' will be easily recognisable and dealt with for what it is.

There will be a 'quick work' too, amongst those the Holy Spirit convicts. People will rapidly rise to new levels of understanding and capacity through commitment, to the envy of those older Christians who have placed limitations upon their faith. For these believers will rapidly absorb the eternal truths of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Receiving the blood of forgiveness of Jesus, submitting to the fire of

purification and testing of the Spirit, being perfected by the washing of the water of obedience to the Father's Will, in a way not previously experienced.

A commitment founded upon repentance. A hunger to get right with our God. An intensely personal repentance, an ongoing process of 'Atonement', a thorough cleansing providing the foundation upon which Christ can rebuild us into His image.

For repentance is an ongoing process, as the Lord reveals, layer upon layer, areas in our lives that need to be changed in order to fulfil his will. Yes, sin is present in attitudes as well as actions. Dealing with ingrained attitudes, firmly entrenched at the very core of our personality, is required of the 'Tabernacler.' Often so much a part of us that we cannot see them! So we must be prepared to let the Holy Spirit reveal them, allowing Him to change us as He turns up the heat in our life until we finally let go of our once 'sacred cows.' This process, normally so painful and time consuming is speeding up, as 'Atonement' impresses itself more deeply upon us. As we desire to be 'at one' with our God.

Change through repentance, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, is at the heart of this final Tabernacle experience of worldwide revival. We are now experiencing the 'latter rains'. Less than the 'early rains' of early New Testament times, but so welcome after the centuries long drought of the Dark Ages. Now we're eagerly sensing the imminent arrival of the final harvest, the fulfilment of the joyous Feast of Tabernacles, the time of God's glory being powerfully reflected throughout the earth.

Before this though, we must put aside our half-hearted ways, the greyness of our past. Meeting with our God in Atonement, in whole-hearted (and bodied!) praise and worship, prayer, fasting and intercession. Enduring the fire of testing in humility and righteousness, living pure and holy lives. Letting His awesome majesty, might, power and presence fill our whole beings. This is our entry ticket to the Feast itself.

Yes, Tabernacles is first and foremost a joyous celebration of the fruit harvest. The sweetest to the taste buds. Celebrating the harvest of the choicest crops. Far more rejoicing than there was for the basic but necessary commodity crops of barley and wheat. For now has come the tantalising taste sensation of the fruit of the land. Yes, the glory of the Lord will shine through those prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to join His Tabernacle Army, the final glorious, mouth watering fruit harvest of those who have fully submitted their wills to Him.

The signs, wonders and miracles of Jesus, as experienced in the early church will again flow through those who have paid the entry price to the overcoming Tabernacles company, only in much greater number. For God only gives power to those He can truly trust, those fully submitted to His will. Otherwise there would be chaos! To be trusted with miracles we have first to pay the price of obedience. The glory of the Lord shines through those prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to join His Tabernacle Army, the final magnificent fruit harvest, those who have fully submitted their will to Him.

Tabernacle's also celebrates the final harvest of mankind, when multitudes upon multitudes come to Christ right across the world. For as Tabernaclers reflect the glory of the Lord in their lives, many others will be attracted to their light. Some will come in as barley, some as wheat, while others will hunger for the delights of the fruit of Tabernacles. The much awaited end time harvest will happen when individual Christians and the Church radiate the light and purity of Jesus. God's plan is perfect. He will not move before His church is ready to gather the harvest. For if the storehouse leaks and is infested with rats, the harvest will be spoiled, as it has been so often in the past.

The pattern of Tabernacles cannot and will not be fulfilled until His people and Church are fully prepared. Are we ready?

THE VISION STOPPED!

How I would love to move on further – to be able to see right into the future, to have God

reveal the full glory of the Feast of Tabernacles that is to be experienced by His people. To be the prophet of prophets, to have all the answers about what the future holds. In my human nature, that is! To be honest, when I started writing, that is what in my heart of hearts, I hoped for. But it is not to be for I will not make it up in my imagination.

But wait, the Lord is clearly showing me as I write that that knowledge is not for now. We need have no concern for the future if we fully follow His ways today. To the extent we are prepared to submit to His purposes, He guarantees to guide us through the promised trials and tribulations of the days ahead. We are not to concern ourselves with things we cannot affect or influence. For God's will, will be done.

“Listen my people,” says the Lord. “My judgement is coming soon. For my will, my perfect will is being done on earth as it is in heaven. Prepare yourselves my people, gird your loins for the battle. Put on the armour I have provided for you. For the days of this age are drawing to a close. Prepare yourselves for the battle my people. For, to the extent you have prepared yourselves through submission to my will for you, so I will in turn protect you. Prepare yourselves now my people and I will give you a white stone, the admission ticket to my Glorious Feast. Do not delay, for as you can see my Spirit is already moving to separate the wheat from the chaff, the tares from the wheat. Do not worry about the troubles of the world my people, for they will receive my justice if they do not repent of their wicked ways. Do not neglect your salvation, for I am a righteous God and I am seeking a righteous people. Repent. Make your way right with me, with your brothers and all those you have offended. For I require it of you. Prepare yourselves the way of the Lord, for I am soon coming in might, power and majesty, as I have promised in my Word. There is nothing to fear for those who are fully submitted to me. But beware of *lukewarmness*, for I will spit you out of my mouth as surely as the night follows the day.

Listen to me my people, while there is still time. For I your God am a righteous God, slow to anger and just in my ways. But the day of the wrath of my judgement is very near. Come to me my people, come to me and I will protect you from my righteous fury against an unrepentant, self-centred people.

For I love my own and will see that you come to no harm. Rest in me; bathe yourselves in my love and tender care, for I am your Father who cares for you. I have marvellous things for you, things that you cannot even envisage, as my plans unfold for the end of the age.’

“For I am returning for my perfect bride, clothed in white linen, to dwell with me forever. Be part of my bride, my people, for although the cost is great, the rewards are unsurpassable. I Jesus, will be with you soon.”

Well, what more can I say! The Lord works in ways that man cannot comprehend. He leads us. We merely need to be available.

For we are living in days of ‘Atonement’. Days when we desperately need to get ourselves right with God, our Christian brothers and sisters, and all others we have offended during our lives. It's not easy. I know that! You know that too! But it is necessary if we are to enter into all that God has for us. Yes, the message for this time is to submit to the will of the Father for our lives. To be 100% sold out to our God. To be a part of His overcoming Tabernacle Army. To be as one with Jesus.

As mentioned above, before receiving the word from the Lord, I don't know precisely how the Lord will outwork His Tabernacle church movement. However He has graciously given me some words in prophetic, allegorical and poetic form, along with some practical application of His Word and observations on the direction of prayer and intercession. Not included here, they are available from the author. They are helpful in gaining an insight into the exciting future that awaits all those obedient to His will.