

A REVELATION OF.....

REVELATION 12:11

WALKING WITH JESUS

REVELATION 12:11

"They overcame him (ie 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."

ONE OF A SERIES OF REVELATIONS ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SCRIPTURE, AS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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A NOTE FROM DAVID.....

What to write about this amazing verse! Where do I start? When the Lord first gave me the verse to start this ministry, I had only the 29 words it contains. A very limited ministry in prospect!

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 the 12 tape, 3 booklet, 30-hour 'Walking With Jesus 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! But by grasping the basic principles of this amazing verse we will better understand what the Bible is all about. For its purpose is effectively summed up in these brief, 29 words!

Let's find out how!

May God bless you, and you bless God.

His servant and yours,

David Tait

PART 1: THE BACKGROUND

DEFINITION OF TERMS

BLOOD — (1.) As food, prohibited in Gen. 9:4, where the use of animal food is first allowed. Comp. Deut. 12:23; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10–14. The injunction to abstain from blood is renewed in the decree of the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:29). It has been held by some, and we think correctly, that this law of prohibition was only ceremonial and temporary; while others regard it as still binding on all. Blood was eaten by the Israelites after the battle of Gilboa (1 Sam. 14:32–34).

(2.) The blood of sacrifices was caught by the priest in a basin, and then sprinkled seven times on the altar; that of the passover on the doorposts and lintels of the houses (Ex. 12; Lev. 4:5–7; 16:14–19). At the giving of the law (Ex. 24:8) the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled on the people as well as on the altar, and thus the people were consecrated to God, or entered into covenant with him, hence the blood of the covenant (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:19, 20; 10:29; 13:20).

(3.) Human blood. The murderer was to be punished (Gen. 9:5). The blood of the murdered “crieth for vengeance” (Gen. 4:10). The “avenger of blood” was the nearest relative of the murdered, and he was required to avenge his death (Num. 35:24, 27). No satisfaction could be made for the guilt of murder (Num. 35:31).

(4.) Blood used metaphorically to denote race (Acts 17:26), and as a symbol of slaughter (Isa. 34:3). To “wash the feet in blood” means to gain a great victory (Ps. 58:10). Wine, from its red colour, is called “the blood of the grape” (Gen. 49:11). Blood and water issued from our Saviour’s side when it was pierced by the Roman soldier (John 19:34). This has led pathologists to the conclusion that the proper cause of Christ’s death was rupture of the heart. (Comp. Ps. 69:20.) 1

BLOOD. The point chiefly to be determined is whether ‘blood’ in biblical usage points basically to life or to death. There are those who hold that in the sacrificial system of the OT ‘blood’ represents life liberated from the limitations of the body and set free for other purposes. The ceremonial manipulation of blood on this view represents the solemn presentation to God of life, life surrendered, dedicated, transformed. The death occupies a subordinate place or even no place at all. On this view ‘the blood of Christ’ would mean little more than ‘the life of Christ’. The evidence, however, does not seem to support it. In the first place there is the statistical evidence. Of the 362 passages in which the Hebrew word *dam* occurs in the OT, 203 refer to death with violence. Only six passages connect life and blood (17 refer to the eating of meat with blood). From this it is clear enough that death is the association most likely to be conjured up by the use of the term. Then there is the lack of evidence adduced in support of the life theory. Exponents of this view regard it as self-evident from passages such as Lv. 17:11, ‘the life of the flesh is in

the blood'. But the scriptural passages can just as well be interpreted of life yielded up in death, as of life set free.

It is undeniable that in some places atonement is said to have been secured by death, e.g. Nu. 35:33, 'for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land (lit. for the land it will not be atoned) for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it'. See also Ex. 29:33; Lv. 10:17.

The OT, then, affords no grounds for the far-reaching statements that are sometimes made. *Atonement is secured by the death of a victim rather than by its life. This carries over into the NT. There, as in the OT, blood is more often used in the sense of death by violence than in any other sense. When we come to the blood of Christ there are some passages which indicate in the plainest possible fashion that death is meant. Such are the references to being 'justified by his blood' (Rom. 5:9; parallel to 'reconciled . . . by the death of his Son' in v. 10), 'the blood of his cross' (Col. 1:20), the reference to coming 'by water and blood' (1 Jn. 5:6), and others.

Sometimes the death of Christ is thought of as a sacrifice (e.g. the blood of the covenant). But a close examination of all these passages indicates that the term is used in the same way as in the OT. That is to say, the sacrifices are still understood to be efficacious by virtue of the death of the victim. 'The blood of Christ' accordingly is to be understood of the atoning death of the Saviour.

Bibliography. TDNT 1, pp. 172-177; S. C. Gayford, *Sacrifice and Priesthood*², L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*², 1965; F. J. Taylor, in TWBR; H. C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, 1887; A. M. Stibbs, *The Meaning of the Word 'Blood' in Scripture*, 1947. 2

LAMB — (1.) Heb. kebes, a male lamb from the first to the third year. Offered daily at the morning and the evening sacrifice (Ex. 29:38–42), on the Sabbath day (Num. 28:9), at the feast of the New Moon (28:11), of Trumpets (29:2), of Tabernacles (13–40), of Pentecost (Lev. 23:18–20), and of the Passover (Ex. 12:5), and on many other occasions (1 Chr. 29:21; 2 Chr. 29:21; Lev. 9:3; 14:10–25).

(2.) Heb. taleh, a young sucking lamb (1 Sam. 7:9; Isa. 65:25). In the symbolical language of Scripture the lamb is the type of meekness and innocence (Isa. 11:6; 65:25; Luke 10:3; John 21:15).

The lamb was a symbol of Christ (Gen. 4:4; Ex. 12:3; 29:38; Isa. 16:1; 53:7; John 1:36; Rev. 13:8).

Christ is called the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36), as the great sacrifice of which the former sacrifices were only types (Num. 6:12; Lev. 14:12–17; Isa. 53:7; 1 Cor. 5:7). 1

LAMB OF GOD. This expression occurs twice only in the NT (Jn. 1:29, 36). The word *amnos* is also found in Acts 8:32 and 1 Pet. 1:19, *arnos* occurs in Lk. 10:3, and *arnion* is found once in Jn. 21:15 and twenty-eight times in Revelation. The words 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (Jn. 1:29) are attributed to John the Baptist when acclaiming Jesus. Many possible interpretations of the word 'lamb' have been canvassed.

Some suggest that it refers to the lamb of the sin-offering, and the phrase ‘who takes away the sin of the world’ lends support to this. The fact that propitiatory ideas do not seem to be found elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel is not a sufficient reason for rejecting this. Others believe there is a reference to the paschal lamb. The Jewish festivals have great significance in John, and Jn. 19:36 may well be alluding to the lamb of the Passover. But this would not explain the whole phrase, as the paschal lamb did not take away sins. Some maintain that we have here a reference to the suffering servant of Is. 53. The word *amos* occurs in the LXX of Is. 53:7. The Baptist quoted from Is. 40 the day before and he may have been meditating on those chapters. The sin-bearing function is clear in Is. 53. The suggestion that *amos* is a mistranslation of the Aramaic *ʿalyaṣū* meaning ‘servant’ is ingenious, but it has not been proved.

Another possible reference is to the horned ram who led the flock. The ‘lamb of God’ would thus be the same as the ‘king of Israel’. This view is acceptable only if it is claimed that *ho airoṓn teṓn hamartian* has no propitiatory meaning.

It seems likely that, whatever the Baptist intended, the Evangelist intended his readers to think of the lamb offered in the Temple, the paschal lamb, and the suffering servant. The ‘Lamb of God’ also reminds us of God’s provision of a lamb for Abraham to sacrifice (Gn. 22:8, 13-14).

Bibliography. Arndt; J. Jeremias, TDNT 1, pp. 338-340; R. Tuente, NIDNTT 2, pp. 410-414; standard commentaries on John’s Gospel; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 1953, pp. 230-238; L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 1965, pp. 129ff. 2

WORD, THE — (Gr. *Logos*), one of the titles of our Lord, found only in the writings of John (John 1:1–14; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). As such, Christ is the revealer of God. His office is to make God known. ‘No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him’ (John 1:18). This title designates the divine nature of Christ. As the Word, he ‘was in the beginning’ and ‘became flesh.’ ‘The Word was with God’ and ‘was God,’ and was the Creator of all things (comp. Ps. 33:6; 107:20; 119:89; 147:18; Isa. 40:8). 1

WORD. In the OT ‘the word (*daṓb_ṓr*) of God’ is used 394 times of a divine communication which comes from God to men in the form of commandment, prophecy, warning or encouragement. The usual formula is ‘the word of Yahweh came (lit. was) to . . .’ but sometimes the word is ‘seen’ as a vision (Is. 2:1; Je. 2:31; 38:21). Yahweh’s word is an extension of the divine personality, invested with divine authority, and is to be heeded by angels and men (Ps. 103:20; Dt. 12:32); it stands for ever (Is. 40:8), and once uttered it cannot return unfulfilled (Is. 55:11). It is used as a synonym for the law (to *ÆraÆ*) of God in Ps. 119, where alone its reference is to a written rather than a spoken message.

In the NT it translates two terms, **logos* and *rheṓmaa*, the former being supremely used of the message of the Christian gospel (Mk. 2:2; Acts 6:2; Gal. 6:6), though the latter also bears the same meaning (Rom. 10:8; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 6:5; etc.). Our Lord spoke of the

word of God (in the parable of the sower, Lk. 8:11; see also Mk. 7:13; Lk. 11:28), but in the Synoptic Gospels he always used the plural of his own message ('my words', Mt. 24:35 and parallels; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 24:44). In the Fourth Gospel, however, the singular is often found. To the early church the word was a message revealed from God in Christ, which was to be preached, ministered and obeyed. It was the word of life (Phil. 2:16), of truth (Eph. 1:13), of salvation (Acts 13:26), of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19), of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18).

Bibliography. H. Haarbeck et al., in NIDNTT 3, pp. 1078-1146; A. Debrunner et al., in TDNT 4, pp. 69-143. 2

TESTIMONY — (1.) Witness or evidence (2 Thess. 1:10).

(2.) The Scriptures, as the revelation of God's will (2 Kings 11:12; Ps. 19:7; 119:88; Isa. 8:16, 20).

(3.) The altar raised by the Gadites and Reubenites (Josh. 22:10).1

TESTIMONY, TABERNACLE OF — the tabernacle, the great glory of which was that it contained "the testimony", i.e., the "two tables" (Ex. 38:21). The ark in which these tables were deposited was called the "ark of the testimony" (40:3), and also simply the "testimony" (27:21 ; 30:6). 1

MARTYR — one who bears witness of the truth, and suffers death in the cause of Christ (Acts 22:20; Rev. 2:13; 17:6). In this sense Stephen was the first martyr. The Greek word so rendered in all other cases is translated 'witness.'" (1.) In a court of justice (Matt. 18:16; 26:65; Acts 6:13; 7:58; Heb. 10:28; 1 Tim. 5:19). (2.) As of one bearing testimony to the truth of what he has seen or known (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 22; Rom. 1:9; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10; 1 John 1:2).1

DEATH — may be simply defined as the termination of life. It is represented under a variety of aspects in Scripture: (1.) "The dust shall return to the earth as it was" (Eccl. 12:7).

(2.) "Thou takest away their breath, they die" (Ps. 104:29).

(3.) It is the dissolution of "our earthly house of this tabernacle" (2 Cor. 5:1); the "putting off this tabernacle" (2 Pet. 1:13, 14).

(4.) Being "unclothed" (2 Cor. 5:3, 4).

(5.) "Falling on sleep" (Ps. 76:5; Jer. 51:39; Acts 13:36; 2 Pet. 3:9).

(6.) "I go whence I shall not return" (Job 10:21); "Make me to know mine end" (Ps. 39:4); "to depart" (Phil. 1:23).

The grave is represented as "the gates of death" (Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18). The gloomy silence of the grave is spoken of under the figure of the "shadow of death" (Jer. 2:6).

Death is the effect of sin (Heb. 2:14), and not a 'debt of nature.'" It is but once (9:27), universal (Gen. 3:19), necessary (Luke 2:28–30). Jesus has by his own death taken away its sting for all his followers (1 Cor. 15:55–57).

There is a spiritual death in trespasses and sins, i.e., the death of the soul under the power of sin (Rom. 8:6; Eph. 2:1, 3; Col. 2:13).

The “second death” (Rev. 2:11) is the everlasting perdition of the wicked (Rev. 21:8), and “second” in respect to natural or temporal death.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST is the procuring cause incidentally of all the blessings men enjoy on earth. But specially it is the procuring cause of the actual salvation of all his people, together with all the means that lead thereto. It does not make their salvation merely possible, but certain (Matt. 18:11; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 2:16; Rom. 8:32–35).¹

DEATH. From one point of view death is the most natural of things: ‘it is appointed for men to die once’ (Heb. 9:27). It may be accepted without rebellion: ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him’ (Jn. 11:16). From another, it is the most unnatural of things. It is the penalty for sin (Rom. 6:23), and it is to be feared as such. Both points of view are to be found in the Bible, and neither should be overlooked. Death is a biological necessity, but men do not die simply as the animals die.

I. Physical death

Death seems to be necessary for bodies constituted as ours are. Physical decay and ultimate dissolution are inescapable. Yet the Bible speaks of death as the result of sin. God said to Adam, ‘in the day that you eat of it you will die’ (Gn. 2:17). Paul tells us that ‘sin came into the world through one man and death through sin’ (Rom. 5:12), and again that ‘the wages of sin is death’ (Rom. 6:23). Yet when we look more closely into the matter we see that Adam did not die physically on the day that he disobeyed God. And in Rom. 5 and 6 Paul is contrasting the death that came about through Adam’s sin with the life that Christ brings men. Now the possession of eternal life does not cancel out physical death. It is opposed to a spiritual state, not to a physical event. The inference that we draw from all this is that that death which is the result of sin is more than bodily death.

But with this we must take the other thought that the scriptural passages which connect sin and death do not qualify death. We would not understand from them that something other than the usual meaning attached to the word. Perhaps we should understand that mortality was the result of Adam’s sin, and that the penalty includes both physical and spiritual aspects. But we do not know enough about Adam’s pre-fallen condition to say anything about it. If his body was like ours, then it was mortal. If it was not, we have no means of knowing what it was like, and whether it was mortal or not.

It seems better to understand death as something that involves the whole man. Man does not die as a body. He dies as a man, in the totality of his being. He dies as a spiritual and physical being. And the Bible does not put a sharp line of demarcation between the two aspects. Physical death, then, is a fit symbol of, and expression of, and unity with, the deeper death that sin inevitably brings.

II. Spiritual death

That death is a divine penalty. We have already noticed that Rom. 6:23 regards death as 'the wages' of sin, i.e. as the due reward for sin. Paul can speak of certain sinners who know 'God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die' (Rom. 1:32). It is the thought of God's decree that underlies John's reference to the 'mortal sin' (1 Jn. 5:16). This is a very important truth. It enables us to see the full horror of death. And at the same time, paradoxically, it gives us hope. Men are not caught up in a web woven by blind fate, so that, once having sinned, nothing can ever be done about it. God is over the whole process, and if he has decreed that death is the penalty of sin, he has also determined to give life eternal to sinful men.

Sometimes the NT emphasizes the serious consequences of sin by referring to 'the second death' (Jude 12; Rev. 2:11, etc.). This is a rabbinic expression which signifies eternal perdition. It is to be understood along with passages wherein our Lord spoke of 'eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' (Mt. 25:41), 'eternal punishment' (set in contrast to 'eternal life', Mt. 25:46), and the like. The final state of impenitent man is variously described as death, punishment, being lost, etc. Obviously it would be unwise to equate it with any one of them. But equally obviously on the Bible view it is a state to be regarded with horror.

Sometimes the objection is made that this is inconsistent with the view of God as a loving God. There is a profound mystery here, but at least it can be said that the objection, as commonly stated, overlooks the fact that death is a state as well as an event. 'To set the mind on the flesh is death,' writes Paul (Rom. 8:6). He does not say that the mind of the flesh will cause death. He says that it is death. He adds that it 'is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot'. The same truth is put in a different way when John says, 'He who does not love abides in death' (1 Jn. 3:14). When we have grasped the truth that death is a state, we see the impossibility of the impenitent being saved. Salvation for such is a contradiction in terms. For salvation a man must pass from death into life (Jn. 5:24).

III. Victory over death

An interesting feature of NT teaching on death is that the emphasis is on life. If we look up a concordance we find that in most places nekros ('dead') is used of resurrection from the dead or the like. The Scripture faces death, as it faces all reality. But its interest is in life, and death is treated more or less incidentally as that from which men are saved.

Christ took upon him our nature, 'that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil' (Heb. 2:14). The devil's power is always regarded as subject to God's overruling (Jb. 2:6; Lk. 12:5, etc.). He is no absolute disposer of death. Nevertheless death, the negation of life, is his proper sphere. And Christ came to put an end to death. It was through death, as the Hebrews passage indicates, that he defeated Satan. It was through death that he put away our sin. 'The death he died he died to sin, once for all' (Rom. 6:10). Apart from Christ, death is the supreme enemy, the symbol of our alienation from God, the ultimate horror. But Christ has used death to deliver men

from death. He died that men may live. It is significant that the NT can speak of believers as 'sleeping' rather than as 'dying' (e.g. 1 Thes. 4:14). Jesus bore the full horror of death. Therefore for those who are 'in Christ' death has been transformed so that it is no more than sleep.

The extent of the victory over death that Christ won is indicated by his resurrection. 'Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him' (Rom. 6:9). The resurrection is the great triumphal event, and the whole of the NT note of victory originates here. Christ is 'the Author of life' (Acts 3:15), 'Lord both of the dead and of the living' (Rom. 14:9), 'the Word of life' (1 Jn. 1:1). His victory over death is complete. And his victory is made available to his people. Death's destruction is certain (1 Cor. 15:26, 54ff.; Rev. 21:4). The second death has no power over the believer (Rev. 2:11; 20:6). In keeping with this the NT understands eternal life not as the immortality of the soul, but in terms of the resurrection of the body. Nothing could more graphically illustrate the finality and the completeness of death's defeat.

Not only is there a glorious future, there is a glorious present. The believer has already passed out of death and into life (Jn. 5:24; 1 Jn. 3:14). He is 'free from the law of sin and death' (Rom. 8:2). Death cannot separate him from God (Rom. 8:38f.). Jesus said, 'If any one keeps my word, he will never see death' (Jn. 8:51). Such words do not deny the reality of biological death. Rather they point us to the truth that the death of Jesus means that the believer has passed altogether out of the state which is death. He is brought into a new state, which is aptly characterized as life. He will in due course pass through the gateway we call death. But the sting has been drawn. The death of Jesus means victory over death for his followers.

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PART 2: A REVELATION OF..... ***REVELATION 12:11***

REVELATION 12:11

"They overcame him (ie 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."

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. Yes, maturity in God is a process, both for the individual and the church as a whole.

Not surprisingly, as we have established in the study of ‘The Power of ‘3’, (see A Revelation of... The Power of 3 in God & the Church) 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 how, 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. ‘Christian-ese’ 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.

⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. (Exodus 12:7)

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.

²¹ Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. ²³ When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. (Exodus 12:21-3)

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”.
(Revelation 1:5)

So I trust it is clear to you that “the blood of the Lamb” does in fact refer to Jesus. That is of course, why the word 'Lamb' starts with a capital - a proper noun.

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, or at least, the irresistible tendency to sin, depending upon your

theology. 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! 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, at the time, 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 key 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 the restoration of ‘life’ or our spiritual relationship with God, 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 individual’s 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 well know 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 15 years ago though, for the Lord has changed even me.

Our studies are 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 always a reality yet, in my life anyway. In yours too? Why? God showed me that day 13 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 or 3 manifestations of the one, depending upon your theology, and we must accept and implement the functions of all three 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 finish our study and you will be as excited as I am about what the future holds for us.

SEVEN TIMES SHED FOR ME

Now for something completely different!

Here we are not going to directly study Scripture, but experience it. It will provide a wonderful link between what Jesus did for us on the cross at Calvary and making our faith personal and real through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I ask you to read this poem the Lord gave me a number of years ago and to thank the Lord for what He has done for you, personally.

I have read this poem around the world. It doesn't even matter whether the hearers have understood English or not, for the Holy Spirit always makes it real, irrespective of language barriers.

My prayer is that He will do that for you too, today.

SEVEN TIMES SHED FOR ME

“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaacthani” He cried,
My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? *(1)*
On the stroke of the ninth hour he died
Rejected, cruelly nailed to the God deserted tree.
My Jesus, shedding his blood for me.

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. *(2)*
For I'll ever be obedient, until you set me free.

Being in anguish he prayed more earnestly,
His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. *(3)*
The disciples exhausted, slept on peacefully.
Returning from his prayers, by Jesus they were found.
My Jesus, he shed his blood for me.

While he was still speaking a crowd came up, (4)
Included traitor Judas, with whom he did sup.
The chief priests, officers, soldiers and all,
They arrested him, for that was their call.

At the chief priests house they questioned him,
Spit in his face and struck him with their fists. (5)
The cup of his blood now overflowing its rim,
Grieving eyes closing, seeing through mists.
My Jesus, again he shed his blood for me.

So Jesus, my Saviour, to Pilate was now taken,
His determination to do God's will, never shaken.
"Are you the king of the Jews?" (6) Pilate demanded,
"Yes it is as you say". (6) My Saviour then remanded.

"What crime has he committed?" (7) The people, they were consulted.
"Crucify him! Crucify him!" (7) The rabble cried out loud.
Then he released Barabbas to them, (8) Pilate's feelings most insulted,
While he had Jesus flogged, (8) simply to please the crowd.
A third time, my Jesus shed his blood for me.

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", (9)
To happen to Jesus, God's son, was not befitting.

"I offered my back to those who beat me,
My cheeks to those who pulled out my beard." (10)
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.

Then the Governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium. (11)
No peace for him there, no place to rest, was no sanatorium,
They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, (12)
Preparing my Jesus to die, out on that awful limb.

They twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head, (13)
They put a staff in his right hand, (13) for truly he was the righteous king.
They used the staff to beat the thorns in deeper and deeper instead,
Struck him on the head again and again, (14) making worse his suffering.
Five times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.

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", (15)
Step by step weakening, as he headed south.

Hung on to the cross, "they pierced my hands and my feet." (16)
At The Place of the Skull. There they offered Jesus wine to drink. (17)
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.

Darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, (18)
An 'awe-full', fearsome display of God's fury and power!
With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last, (19)
His worldly pain, now a thing of the past.

The soldiers came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, (20)
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.

David Tait: 20 January 2000

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

- (1) *Matthew 27:46*
- (2) *Luke 22:42*
- (3) *Luke 22:44*
- (4) *Luke 22:47*
- (5) *Matthew 26:67*
- (6) *Matthew 27:11*
- (7) *Matthew 27:22-23*
- (8) *Matthew 27:26*
- (9) *Isaiah 50:6*
- (10) *Isaiah 50:6*
- (11) *Matthew 27:27*
- (12) *Matthew 27:28*
- (13) *Matthew 27:29*
- (14) *Matthew 27:30*
- (15) *Psalms 22:15*
- (16) *Psalms 22:16*
- (17) *Matthew 27:33-4*
- (18) *Mark 15:33*
- (19) *Mark 15:37*
- (20) *John 9:33*

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 (James 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)

It's true! The 3 parts of the godhead working 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 - plus! 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!

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 areas of the godhead 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.” (v.11).

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.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)*

Isn't that great? They illustrate the unity and function of the godhead 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 at the time of first writing this. 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. 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 find 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. Then 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. 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 and feel 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”.(Titus 2:14) 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!

'THE WORD' and 'THE TESTIMONY'

Those who regularly read these teachings may have noticed that the style is different to most of them. The reason for this is that this revelation was given and written a number of years ago as part of my first book, *'Eagles Fly High!'*. We all mature as we grow in Him. Hopefully not just grow older!

Revelation too, is an ongoing process. Through the continued teaching of the Holy Spirit. Many make the mistake of receiving a revelation and stopping there. Believing they have the 'final word'! This is how divisions arise in the body of Christ. For none of us will have the final word until Jesus returns and finally reveals all to us.

So, as I have been updating this revelation, the Holy Spirit has continued to open up this verse to me, as follows. Thank you Lord.

The Word

"the word of their testimony" is also a play on words, by the writer, the apostle whom Jesus loved, John.

For if we go back to the first verse of John's Epistle we see, in reference to Jesus,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Therefore the role of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the person of Jesus, not just the word, but 'The Word' to us. A word play, if you get the pun! I still enjoy punning!

The Testimony

The 'testimony' also has a double meaning. I love it! For in Scripture testimony refers not only to the words we speak but also to the Ark of the Covenant itself.

Let me quote from a far more authoritative source than myself!

TESTIMONY, TABERNACLE OF — the tabernacle, the great glory of which was that it contained “the testimony”, i.e., the “two tables” (Ex. 38:21). The ark in which these tables were deposited was called the “ark of the testimony” (40:3), and also simply the “testimony” (27:21; 30:6). Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., Easton’s Bible Dictionary, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996

And the Scriptures.

*21 These are the amounts of the materials used for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses’ command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.
(Exodus 38:21)*

The Ark of the Covenant, as we shall see in following pages on the third part of the verse, represents the perfection we are called to aspire to, through the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit therefore teaches us all about Jesus and points the way towards becoming like Him as we apply the principles of the contents of the Ark of the Covenant, where the presence of God dwelled above the Atonement Cover, to our lives. Amazing, isn't it! Thank you Lord for ongoing revelation.

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

Congratulations for sticking with us this far! For you to keep reading this far you must surely

- a. be a tiger 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 world that God is starting to open up to us in these amazing days in which we live. We live in a hugely exciting time, the approaching end of this spiritual age. 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. For what is of most importance to God is our personal relationship with Him.

For this third part of Revelation 12:11 is of particular relevance to us in these end times in which we live.

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 given the option, until the situation arose. However over the

past 20 centuries, and interestingly, in greater numbers in the 20th century than in any other, millions of martyrs have done just this, 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, that is okay. Please don't feel condemned or rejected. 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, as 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 differing 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 to what God has promised.

b. Is There a Spiritual Meaning Too?

Is this verse talking only of literal death? We're still alive, aren't we! Well, I think I am anyway! May be those 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 teaching. 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 considered a satanic ritual if we did. Be messy too! Sometimes in dark moments of deep penance, I imagine 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 pentecostal/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.

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 shalt” 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 in those times, it was assumed that genuine followers of God would not sin deliberately.

”But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. 31 Because he has despised the LORD’s word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him.” (Numbers 15:30-31)

This runs very much against the ‘be saved and do what you like’ theology, so prevalent in certain circles.

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, 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! My Auntie Ina was a great example of this. 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! Making these for me - and others.

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 Christians are content to live by the Old Testament 'thou shalt not's', 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, whyyyyyyyyy! 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.

⁷ No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins. ⁸ Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people. (Isaiah 64:7-9)

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? 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 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)

These 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!

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 little!

RELATIONSHIP TO THE FEASTS OF THE LORD AND THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

FEASTS OF THE LORD

This verse, Revelation 12:11, dovetails in beautifully with the Feasts of the Lord. The pattern of the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New.

The **BLOOD OF THE LAMB** was spilled at Passover and on the Cross.

The **WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY** was set out in type at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus.

SUBMISSION UNTO DEATH is a picture of the Feast of Tabernacles, whose final fulfilment will come upon the return of Jesus. But we must first go through the Day of Atonement. Then it will be the party time of the Feast of Tabernacles itself!

TABERNACLE OF MOSES

A similar pattern is reflected through Moses Tabernacle.

The **OUTER COURT** of sacrifice and cleansing is a picture of the coming '**BLOOD OF THE LAMB**.'

The **HOLY PLACE** of revelation and worship pictures the Holy Spirit's affect on our life as shown by the **WORD OF TESTIMONY**.

And finally, to complete the perfect picture the **HOLY OF HOLIES**, where the presence of the Father dwelled above the Ark of the Covenant, reflects the total submission to His will **EVEN UNTO DEATH**

Incredible, isn't it! All planned from the beginning of time!

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. The call to die to self, as proclaimed in Revelation 12:11 is stronger today than at any time in history.

Satan, you are a defeated foe!

REVELATION 12:11

"They overcame him (ie 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."