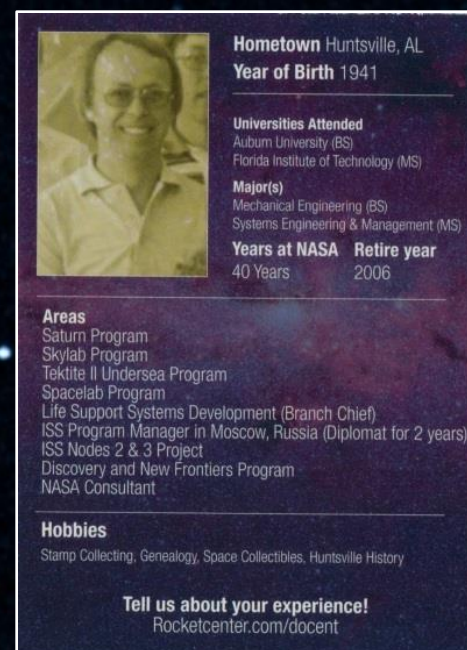
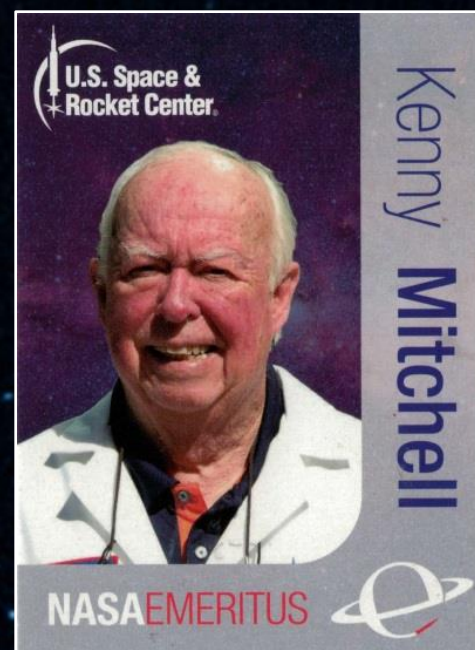


The Revolution is in progress! The Kingdom of God is being established on the earth as it is in heaven by the Church. The 21st century Church is beginning to be more productive (fruitful) than the 20th century Church in manifesting the kingdom of God upon the earth. Hopefully our children and our children's children will be participating in this glorious manifestation.

Kenny Mitchell hopes the message in this book sparks a flame in the hearts of those who read it. Kenny fully believes there is so much more the LORD wants His Church to understand regarding the entire precept of the fullness of the Kingdom of God coming to earth and the will of God being done in the earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom of God on earth includes the full spectrum of the marketplace in: government, business, education, media, healthcare, church, and law enforcement. These seven "gates of the city" are discussed in detail and compared with the seven Spirits of God mentioned in Scripture: *"The Spirit of the LORD, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD."* (Isaiah 11:2)

The gates of hell will not overcome the Church founded in the 7 Spirits!



The Kingdom of God on Earth

Kenny Mitchell

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of God
on Earth*



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Nov. 2020

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Table of Contents	Page
Introduction	3
Chapter 1 - Relationships / Revelations / Revolution	6
Chapter 2 - What is the Marketplace?	10
Chapter 3 - The Kingdom of God On the Earth	15
Chapter 4 - The Church's Role & Responsibilities in the Earth	26
The Servant	27
The Gates of a City	29
The Church Gate	35
The Gate of Government and Politics	37
The Gate of Business and Finances	39
The Gate of Media and Entertainment	42
The Gate of Education	45
The Gate of Healthcare	51
The Gate of Law Enforcement	55
Chapter 5 - Christian Strategy for Obtaining Gates of Righteousness	65
Chapter 6 - Overcoming Temptations of Evil	72
Chapter 7 - The Mind of God	75
What is Humility?	80
What is Reverence?	81
What is Inspiration?	83
What is a Deep Purpose Attitude?	87
What is an Attitude of Joy?	88
Chapter 8 - Heaven and Earth Shaken (Spiritual Warfare)	90
The Lion of Judah	101
Appendix A -- Thoughts	102
Appendix B -- The 7-fold Spirit of God in the Bible	110
Appendix C -- Scriptures on the Gates	113

This book can be requested, read on-line, or downloaded at: sonstoglory.com/kennymitchell.htm

Introduction

As they age, a person often reflects on what they have experienced in life. These experiences often create a sense of knowledge, a sense of understanding, and a sense of wisdom regarding the world in which they have lived. As a Christian it could be of value to leave a record for their family and descendants on matters which they may have gleaned from the Word of God (Bible) and the work of the Holy Spirit in their lifetime. This is such a record.

The record of unseen spiritual forces at work in our human world is a Biblical theme from Genesis to Revelation. The reality of unseen spiritual forces “in conflict” in both the heavenly dimensions and here upon the earth is depicted often in the Bible. This spiritual war is often referred to in the Bible as the “kingdom of darkness” versus “the kingdom of light.” When God came to earth in human form through His Son Jesus this war became more evident and dramatic. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of the one who ruled the kingdom of darkness.

“..how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” Acts 10:38

To all who are called by God’s Holy Spirit to receive forgiveness for their sins through the shed blood of Jesus they are delivered from the power of the devil. These believers receive the same Holy Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead. They are then commissioned by Jesus to continue to destroy the works of the devil here on earth. They were told to daily pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. For over 2000 years Christians have continued to resist the devil. The kingdom of light has penetrated the lives of people all over the earth and will continue to grow while awaiting the return again of Jesus Himself to rule with us upon the earth.

Individual believers cannot grasp what is their role in the kingdom of God here on earth without heavenly wisdom and understanding being given to them to fulfill their purpose of being “born again.” The entire body of believers in the earth (the Church) also must collectively grasp what our heavenly Father is doing in the earth while they are still here and do those things with Him. They must “see” as the Lord Jesus could see what His Father was doing in the earth while he was here.

During Jesus’ public ministry he was often criticized by religious leadership about the things he said and did. However, He told them, “**I am only doing what I see my heavenly Father doing**”

(John 5:16-21). Jesus also said in these verses “**My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too, am working.**” This is called “walking in the Holy Spirit.” It is a way of life that every Christian is called to embrace.

“Heavenly wisdom” is seeing things from God’s perspective and “heavenly understanding” knows what to do about what you are shown. The book of Proverbs emphasizes that in all of our getting of wisdom, you should also have understanding. The book of Proverbs also declares that life without God is senseless. All of life’s work (building a home, establishing a career, and raising a family, etc.) must have God as the foundation. Psalm 127 below was written by King Solomon.

*“Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted.
Unless the Lord protects the city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. It is useless
for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, Anxiously working for
food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.
Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him. Children born to a young
man are like arrows in a warrior’s hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of
them!
He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.”*

Many Christians today (especially many young people) are learning that when they hear the name of Jesus they think of “creativity, beauty, imagination, wonder” instead of “rules, laws, conformity, and judgment.” These are definitely people of God who are part of the revolution taking place in the Church.

They are learning that the Holy Spirit is like a car’s GPS and wants to direct you to specific place you need to go but have never been there before. The GPS knows all the traffic patterns, and all the issues behind the scenes are being considered to get you to your destination and makes decisions for us that we don’t know are for our benefit. They are learning this is how they need to interact with God. He tells them where to go and they get excited about the journey. They know they will take unexpected turns to get there. They understand the ways of God and trust Him. The journey is authentic and relevant to the culture in which they live. They relate to being a 21st century Christian revolutionary who knows what it means to be salt and light to the community.

The reader needs to recognize the use of words in this document. Hence the author has given below his definition of key words used in discussing the kingdom of God on the earth:

God = Father = Son = Holy Spirit

Kingdom of God = Kingdom of Heaven = Kingdom of light **Church** Big “C” = the entire body of Christ (in the world/nation/city) **church** little “c” = diverse congregations of believers in a city

Relationships = involvement with God & others (body, mind, soul and spirit)

Wisdom = seeing things (people/events/etc.) from God's perspective

Understanding = Revelation = knowing what you are to do when you have God's perspective

Gates = seats of authority = strongholds = jurisdictional arenas

Revolution = An overthrow or repudiation and thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed. Or -- A radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure.

The devil = **Satan** = ruler of the kingdom of darkness

The revolution is in progress. The kingdom of God is being established on the earth as it is in heaven by the Church. The 21st Church is beginning to be more productive (fruitful) than the 20th century Church in manifesting the kingdom of God upon the earth. Hopefully our children and our children's children will be participating in this glorious manifestation.

The author hopes the message in this manuscript sparks a flame in the hearts of those who read it. He fully believes there is so much more the Lord wants His Church to understand regarding the entire precept of the kingdom of God coming to earth and the will of God being done in the earth as it is in heaven.

All scriptures in this dissertation are taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless marked otherwise. The author's email address is **kennymitchell1 at hotmail dot com** if anyone wants to forward comments to him. The author has no sense of copyright on this material. It can be used as any reader wishes to further expand our understanding of what is the will of God to expand His kingdom here upon the earth before He returns.

CHAPTER 1

Relationships / Revelations / Revolution

God has designed us to have relationships both with Him and others. *Relationships will bring wisdom into our life. Heavenly wisdom is seeing things (events, people, circumstances, etc.) from God's perspective.* The Bible states that God wants our entire being (body, soul, mind and spirit) to love the Lord. Jesus said this type of relationship will fulfill everything written in the Bible (the Law and the Prophets). He also says that another relationship is like unto this one. He says "love others as you love yourself." It cannot be over emphasized that such relationships will bring the wisdom of heaven into our life.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure: then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness." James 3:13-18

This heavenly wisdom described by the Lord's brother James is related to what Jesus said in the following verses in Matthew's gospel.

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."** Matthew 5:3-10

"You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."
Matthew 5:15-16

One of the most wonderful Biblical messages presented to believers is found in Ephesians 3:21-22:

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

It is with these messages that we should embrace every relationship that God wants with us. Below are some of the Biblical metaphors used in describing the “relationships” our heavenly Father wants with us.

Relationships to God	
(Some Biblical Metaphors)	
GOD	Christian
Potter	Clay
Shepherd	Sheep
Master	Servant
Friend	Friend
Teacher	Disciple
Father	Child
Lover	Beloved
Bridegroom	Bride

The potter can do what he wants with the clay. We should submit to that relationship with God. Sheep know their shepherd’s voice and follow only him. God wants His sheep to know His voice. A faithful servant is expected to be obedient to his master’s requests. God expects obedience.

Having God call us His friend is a great honor. The longer the friendship, the deeper a relationship can be developed.

A true disciple loves learning from his teacher (Holy Spirit). There’s much to learn in this life (it’s called maturing).

All of the children of God need to recognize God as “our Father” and that He truly cares for us. His care will include “discipline” (as needed) of His children.

The Song of Solomon conveys the love and adoration between the beloved (us) and our lover (God). This is the same theme of the bridegroom (Jesus) and His bride (the Church).

The Bible (particularly Proverbs) wants believers to see the relationship between heavenly wisdom and heavenly understanding. The Lord says that in getting His wisdom make sure you also get His understanding. *Heavenly understanding knows what to do about the heavenly wisdom shown to you.* It will be very frustrating to a believer to receive heavenly wisdom and not have any understanding on what to do about what God has shown them. Heavenly understanding will be a “revelation” to our mind and spirit. It will give the believer a sense of direction, a sense of action to be taken, a sense of what God wants you to do with what He shows you about life and your role in it.

Revelations (understanding) will spring from the relationships we develop with God (first) and with others. It is very easy to have “our will” active rather than the “will of the Father” when we receive wisdom from above. That is why Jesus prayed to his Father at critical moments in His life “**not my will but your will be done**” (Luke 22:42). The Bible makes it clear that God wants the believer to have understanding regarding everything that His wisdom shows us about life. However, we must crucify our own desires (the Bible calls it our “flesh” or fallen human nature) and hear what the Holy Spirit tells you about the “mind of God” (His will). More will be said later on having the mind of God.

As we grow in God’s wisdom and understanding He will give us favor with others. Why would He give us favor with others? Because He wants us to do what He did when He came in the form of His Son (Jesus the Christ = God in human form). He wants us to manifest the kingdom of heaven on earth. We did not choose Him. He chose us to become the sons of God. He wants us to be filled with His Holy Spirit even as Jesus was. Bringing the will of God to earth as it is in heaven will truly result in revolutionary events to mankind here on earth.

Revolution will be the inevitable result of our having both Godly wisdom and understanding about the will of God regarding His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

What is the definition of “revolution”? Webster’s dictionary defines revolution in these terms:

“An overthrow or repudiation and thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed.”

“...a radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure.”

Spiritual revolution is changing the existing state of things. Righteous, spiritual revolution brings renewal and restoration to things on earth as they are in heaven.

Believers are on a progressive path of revelation that increases with a hunger for deepening our relationship with God. It is unimaginable what kind of revolutionary we can become when our appetite for intimacy with God reaches the “lover stage!

The mindset of a revolutionary Christian is simple: ***Do whatever it takes to allow God to do whatever He wants in our life and to help others do the same.***

There is a revolution underway in our nation and in its cities in the 21st century. The revolution is designed to advance the primary role of the CHURCH in the earth (bringing the will of God to earth as it is done in heaven) and redefine the church activities in the cities of our nation.

Why do we need a revolution in the Church residing in America? Because the current Church does not occupy the dominant sphere of influence God wants in our culture.

Below are the things that a 21st century survey showed ranked the highest in people’s priorities in America. Priorities mean they take a lot of people’s time, energy and material resources.

- Tier #1:** Movies/Television/Music/Books/Internet/Family/Law (highest priorities)
- Tier #2:** School/Peers/Newspapers/Radio/Business/Medicine (2nd highest priorities)
- Tier #3:** local church activities + anything else (lowest ranking priority)

This survey was taken in the early 2000’s. Another poll was taken in 2005 by George Barna (Christian theologian and author) to define Christians’ primary means of spiritual experience and expression. The result is shown below:

Survey Taken	Local Church	Alternative Faith-based Community	Family	Arts / Media / Culture
Year 2000	70%	5%	5%	20%
Year 2005	30-35%	30-35%	5%	30-35%

The 2000 survey showed 70% of the believers found primary spiritual experiences and expression in their local churches and the 2nd largest area was in the Arts/Media culture. Only 5% found spiritual expression and experiences in their family and another 5% in alternative faith-based community activities.

He updated this poll in 2005 and the results were dramatically different. Christians were finding other means for spiritual significance and expression than their local church. In 2005 only 30-35% of the believers were finding the local church as their primary location for meaningful spiritual expression or experiences. The **marketplace** was now about 70% (evenly split between faith-based community activities and arts/media culture). He wrote the book “REVOLUTION” after analyzing this Christian shift to the marketplace. What can be considered the marketplace?

CHAPTER 2

What is the Marketplace?

It is not unrealistic to call the marketplace “the world in which we live outside of our Church and family fellowship.” Any endeavor outside the Church’s sphere of jurisdiction (authority) is considered the marketplace in this dissertation. Of course this is a very broad and diverse concept. Therefore, let’s identify seven reasonable spheres of jurisdiction associated with the function of any city or for that matter a nation.

Marketplace (Spheres of Jurisdiction)	
1.	Government and Politics
2.	Business and Finance
3.	Education
4.	Media and Entertainment
5.	Healthcare
6.	Church
7.	Law Enforcement

These seven arenas will be called the “**gates of the city**” in this book.

The rationale for calling them gates is related to the symbolism given to gates in the Bible (see Appendix C). In the Bible, the gates of a city were where the elders (those in authority) of the city congregated and made decisions which impacted the destiny of the city. Every gate has “gatekeepers.” A gatekeeper is someone who has the authority to carry out the functions of the responsibilities associated with the gate.

For centuries the Holy Spirit has worked to enlighten God’s people to recognize these gates of a city and to bring the spirit of the kingdom of God to their operation. Many have followed the Holy Spirit’s leading without fully realizing at the time they were challenging the “gates of hell.”

The Lord has always desired to have His servants serve and lead the way in each sphere of jurisdiction in the city. However, much of the Church's history has had a dualistic mindset. It basically puts Christians in either a "clergy" or "laity" category. The clergy category says serve God in a "full time" church position (pastor, missionary, church staff, etc.) and be financially supported by the institution. The laity category puts Christians who are not clergy or church institutional staff in this "laity institution" category. The Christian laity is seen working in the marketplace to support those in the clergy and serve the Lord in the world of darkness the best they can.

This is terrible theology!

It reduces the majority of Christians to an apparent "lesser role" in the kingdom of God when in fact they are to be the major force bringing the kingdom of God to earth. Clergy and laity are never terms used to describe the Church in the Bible. I Corinthians 12 states we are "one body" with many separate functions (gifts) in the body of Christ (hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc.).

What are other lies, deceptions and false scenarios that Satan has the Church believing regarding the marketplace? Below are some of the lies and deception that evil spiritual forces have sown into many Christian lives. The Holy Spirit is bringing the Church revolutionary understanding to cast off these lies and deception of Satan and enter the marketplace to take the gates of the city from Satan's influence.

Lie # 1. The Marketplace is material and not spiritual.

However, the marketplace is very spiritual and has been controlled by the wrong spiritual forces. Satan's empire is entrenched there. We are commanded to set the captives free. Jesus' ministry was primarily in the marketplace. Jesus influenced men and women with backgrounds in every one of the gatekeeper jurisdictions listed above. He very much wants us to be in "the game" of life, and be advancing the kingdom of God here on earth rather than sitting on a bench.

Lie # 2. The Marketplace is "Off Limits" to the fullness of the kingdom of God.

The Spirit of God is not geographic and can influence and pull down Satan's strongholds in every arena, in every context and in every dimension. There are kingdoms in every realm and God wants His heavenly kingdom to rule on earth and to set captives free. The captives are in the world and so must we be, to bring them truth to set them free.

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him." Psalm 24:1

Lie # 3. I am not qualified to minister unless I am ordained (a clergy).

We are all called and we are all qualified by Jesus to do the work of the ministry. Ecclesiastical ministry is only one sphere of ministry. More scriptures will be shown later on our qualifications to minister.

“...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 1:5-7

Lie # 4. Real ministry takes place in the Church.

Christians are called to be a counter culture and not a subculture. We are not called to do “church” in the marketplace, but to bring the kingdom of God to every phase of life, which includes all the gates of a city and a nation. We are to be in the world, but not of it. Jesus said this. He prayed to the Father for us to be in the world (see below).

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” John 17:13-15

Lie # 5. Success in the marketplace is not as important in advancing the kingdom of God as success in the church.

This is the dualistic mindset that we need to rid ourselves. In whatever context God calls you it is important to Him. He desires that we be obedient to share the gospel by how we engage with others in the Church and outside of it. Advancing the kingdom of God must be outside the four walls of any church organization. God wants us (His people) to lead the way. This principle is illustrated in the life of Joseph when he was sold as a slave and taken to Egypt where God equipped him to become a great leader of the nation.

“You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” Genesis 41:40-41

Lie # 6. The Marketplace or business aspect of our calling is “part time” ministry.

We are all in *full-time ministry* to the Lord first and then to the people he enjoins us. The mistake many have made when they get fuller revelation of Christ is that they may need to quit their vocation (divine calling) and go into “full-time ministry” (clergy). We must understand that our consecration as sons & daughters of the living God is eternal and crosses beyond any boundaries of what we do. It is who we are. The Bible speaks of us as ambassadors for Christ and full time in any jurisdiction God places us.

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” John 17:16-18

What is the definition of an “ambassador?” is “an official agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of their government.” Do you see how the Christian is the ambassador for Christ and represents “God’s kingdom (government)” wherever they are sent into the world as His representative?

Lie #7. The anointing as ministers for the marketplace is less than the anointing for ministry in the church.

All but one miracle in Acts was in the marketplace. The Lord has anointed His beloved to serve Him and others in a variety of ways and with a variety of gifts. A person can be a janitor who is serving God with his heart and soul and making a kingdom difference, while another person can be serving behind a pulpit preaching the good news. To the measure they are both obedient to what God has called them to do, God is well pleased with both. Their faithfulness awaits their reward.

“His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” Matthew 25:23

Lie #8. Profit and Success motives are evil

It is the Lord that has given us gifts and abilities for success. He does not want us to seek after riches, but after Him. If owning things were a sin, that would make God the biggest sinner of all, because He owns everything. Obtaining material wealth has many conditions as ambassadors for Christ, and the power can cause us to fall into sin if we are not continually in Christ and being led by Him. With humility and fear of the Lord we can be a good steward of the things that the Lord gives us.

“The reward of humility and the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord are riches and honor life.” Proverbs 22:4

Lie #9. I am not like the Apostles

The 12 apostles were all marketplace people when Jesus called them to follow him. The kingdom of God is to advance in the marketplace. We must seek first the kingdom of God, and then the Lord will provide all that we need for service, including participation with Him for miracles.

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Mark 16:17-18

We are seeing many of these lies and deceptions becoming exposed as God’s children are growing in wisdom and understanding. The following scriptures are but a few of the Biblical truths about God’s people possessing the gates of a city or nation. One of the most important is Jesus’ declaration to the apostle Peter.

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock (Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the ruler of the kingdom of God) ***I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*”** Matthew 16:18

“And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, “Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies.” Genesis 24:60

God wants his people to possess the gates of their city. The Church needs to take its place as “counselor” to the nations and cities for implementing righteousness at all the seats of authority.

“Lift up your heads ye gates so the Lord of glory may come in.” Psalms 24

CHAPTER 3

The Kingdom of God On the Earth

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.” Isaiah 9:6-7

“...with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:9b-10

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray He gave them insight to God's will regarding the kingdom of God. This is what he told them to pray:

“This is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed is your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Jesus' prayer instructions regarding the kingdom of God coming to earth and God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven is not associated with a futuristic, far away event but is as present tense as us forgiving others who sin against us and the request for God to deliver us from the evil one.

In the four gospels of the New Testament, Jesus is recorded speaking the most about the kingdom of God. He had God's perspective of things (wisdom) and he emphasized that in his preaching and teaching. His emphasis was God's priority.

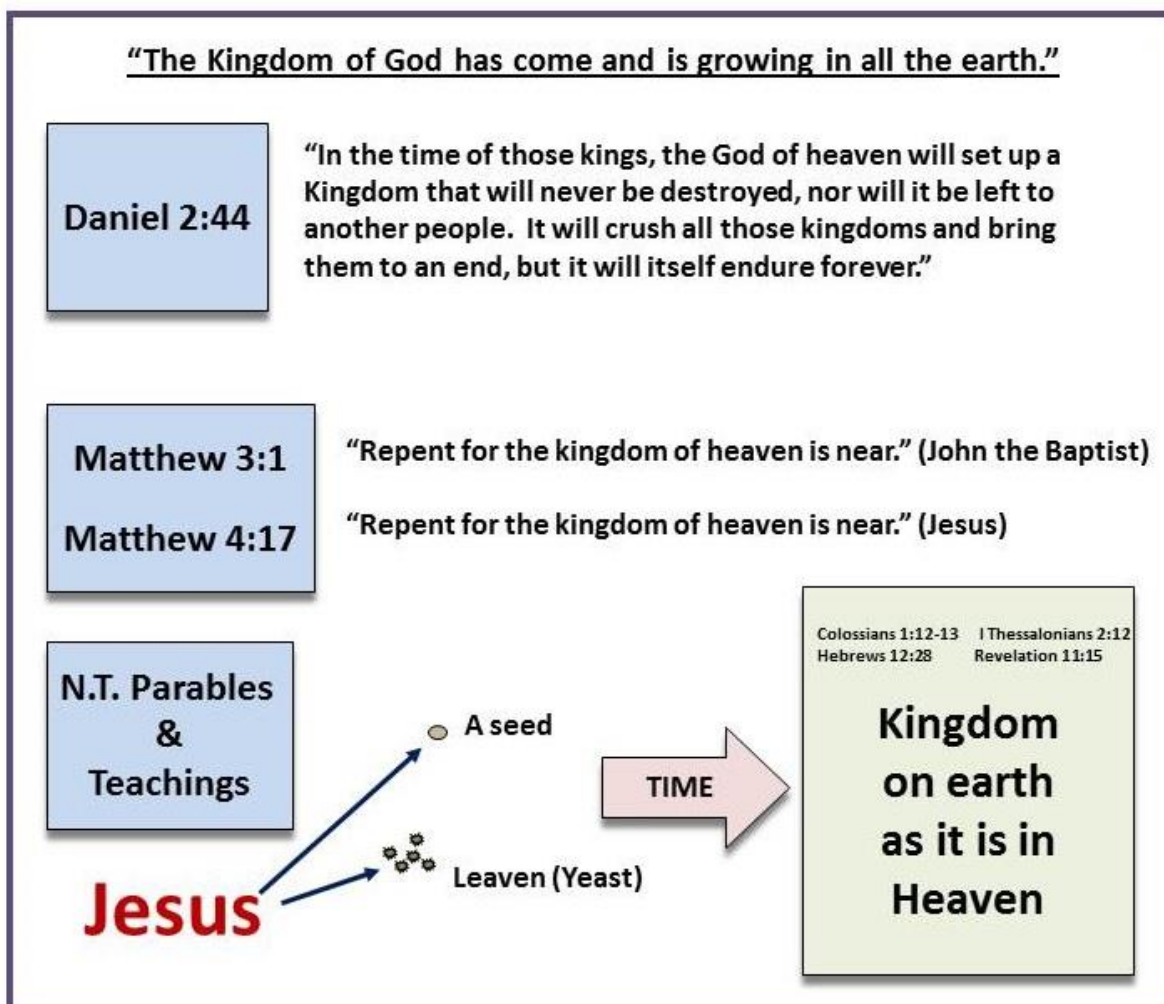
Words and phrases mentioned in the Scriptures	
Word or Phrase	Number of Times mentioned
Kingdom of God	111 times
Eternal Life	46 times
Forgiveness	24 times
Prayer	15 times

Salvation

15 times

Jesus had a “kingdom mentality.” It was the primary thing He spoke on during his public ministry and the last thing He spoke about before He ascended to His Father (Acts 1:3). He knew the kingdom of God was “NOT” the Church. The Church would be part of the kingdom of God here on earth. All of the topics above are important gospel messages of the Church to the world. However, the Church needs to keep the “main message” (the gospel of the kingdom of God) the main emphasis.

The prophet Daniel was given a vision of the kingdom of God coming upon the earth and dominating all other kingdoms (Daniel 2:44). When God appeared in human form (Jesus the Christ), He and John the Baptist declared this kingdom had now come and fulfilled Daniel’s prophetic word. Jesus’ life, death and resurrection from the grave provided the opportunity for “whosoever” to participate in this kingdom. This kingdom has been growing ever since Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to His body of believers (the Church) on the day of Pentecost.



While Jesus was with his disciples he constantly was teaching them about the kingdom of God and how it would come to earth as it existed in heaven. Since His ascension back to God after His resurrection He rules this kingdom from heaven. However, He told them that one day He would return to earth again and rule together with all those faithful servants who believed in Him. He instructed His disciples to tell the “good news” to the entire earth and prepare themselves to rule with Him.

While Jesus continued to teach about the kingdom of God in parables to the public, the disciples came to him and asked, “*Why do you speak to the people in parables?*” (Matthew 13:10)

He replied,

“The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah,

‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’” (Isaiah 6:9-10)

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.” (Matthew 13:11-17)

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: **I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.**” Psalms 78:2

It is important to see how Jesus’ parables of the kingdom of God apply to the church and its influence in the earth. A key word used throughout these scriptures is “understand”. Jesus said that many would hear but not understand what He was saying. Understanding is essential for the Church to be effective in “counseling” the ways of God to others.

Jesus knew the Church’s role in the earth would begin small but would grow. He used the parable of a “mustard seed” to illustrate this point. This parable is found in Matthew 13:31-32.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.”

The mustard seed is “His life” which He puts into our life (his field) when we are born again. It is “*Christ in us, the hope of glory.*”

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied,

“The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is’, or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20-21

We have the kingdom of God within us. Our field or garden is the city in which we find God has placed us. The body of Christ (the Church) becomes a “tree of life” in the city as it grows in time.

Jesus followed this parable with the parable of the leaven (yeast) put into dough to illustrate the principle of the impact the Church (leaven) can have upon the dough (city or the world).

“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast (leaven) that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.” Matthew 13:33

The Church’s leaven is “Christ in us.” It is the gifts and callings that Jesus has brought into the life of the body of Christ when He sent His Holy Spirit to abide in us. The Church can influence not only the city but the entire world when it is mixed thoroughly in the dough. However, it takes “heat” to make the dough rise. For those who cannot take the heat, they will not want to be placed in the dough. For those who know the heat (fire) is part of the process of bringing life to the world they will gladly endure the heat. We are to go into the world! We were not called to spend the majority of time having a “holy huddle” inside the walls of a church building ministering to church people.

Jesus used other parables of “seed” to teach His disciples about the dynamics of the kingdom of God on earth and the interaction of believers with His “word” (instructions, commands, etc.) and the spiritual forces at work to resist the will of God on earth.

Jesus spoke the parable of “sowing seed” to the people but even the disciples didn’t grasp what he was trying to communicate so Jesus explained it to them. These scriptures are found in Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23. These scriptures state the “seed” is the “word of God” and the state of the ground where the seed is sown is the heart of the hearer. There were four analogies used in comparing the ground with the heart of the person hearing the word of God. These are shown below.

Can all of those who hear the word of God be classified as a Christian? Yes, probably because the focus seems to be on the fruitfulness (productivity) of a believer’s life in the kingdom of God here on earth. There is a parallel message in the parable of “talents” spoken by Jesus (discussed later). Clearly there will be challenges to a believer to “hear”, to “understand”, to “persevere” and to maintain a “pure heart” to “see the kingdom of God” on the earth as it is in heaven. John the apostle wrote to the 7 churches in Revelation and said “*blessed are those that overcome.*”

Parable of the Sower of the Seed

Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23, Luke 8:15

<u>Along the Path</u>	<u>Rocky Places</u>	<u>Among Thorns</u>	<u>In Good Soil</u>
Hears but <u>doesn't</u> understand the message about the kingdom.	Hears and with joy receives The message.	Hears the message but too much "competition" from other things which choke out the seed of the kingdom:	Hears the message and <u>understands</u> it.
Evil one (Satan) comes and snatches away what was sown in the heart.	No root (not much soil)	- worries - pursuit of wealth (deceitfulness of riches)	Perseverance results in productivity.
	Can't take the heat (opposition, trials, etc.)	Unfruitful, do not mature.	Different levels of productivity (talents) 30, 60, and 100-fold
	Falls away (gives up)		Noble, good heart

The gospel of Matthew had another "seed" parable related to the parable above. It is found in Matthew 13:24-43. It is the parable of the "wheat and tares" which addresses what Jesus (the Son of man) sows in the earth (the field) and what Satan sows in the same field. This parable can clearly be correlated to whether a gate in a city (the field) can contain both what God sows and what the devil sows. God's people are cautioned in this parable to allow the angels of God to do the harvesting of the field and separate the weeds (tares) from the wheat.

Jesus told them another parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

'An enemy did this', he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

'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 bundle to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He answered,

"The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the

harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

This parable illustrates that both good and evil will exist in the world until Jesus commissions his angels to remove the sons of the devil. Hence, it is not to be unexpected that evil could have some occupancy in a field (gate in a city) even though the field might be primarily occupied by the children of God. God’s children might be tempted to uproot the evil (intruders) but are cautioned they will probably do more harm to the body of Christ than waiting on the Lord and his angels to remove the evil from the field. The parable of the mustard seed noted that “birds” were perched in the mustard tree when it was grown. It’s probable these birds are a depiction of evil in the kingdom of God until the end of this age and the return of the King to rule on earth.

Another parable Jesus related to the wheat/tares parable is called the parable of the net. (Matthew 13:47-52)

“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. That is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked. “Yes” they replied. He said to them,

“Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

When a person discovers the importance of the kingdom of God they will sacrifice everything they have to possess it in their life. Two parables of Jesus illustrate this principle. They are found in Matthew 13:44-46.

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

There is another parable applicable to Christians being accountable to the Lord regarding how they handle their gifts and calling (stewardship) while here on earth. This parable is found in Matthew 25. In chapter 24 Jesus was asked by his disciples what are the signs of “the end of the age” and of his return to earth. Jesus gave quite a dissertation on topics regarding this question in both chapters 24 and 25.

One of the things he said was:

“No one knows about what day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

He then gave many situations which would happen before he would return and some situations which would be in existence at his return. The gospel of Luke has a very similar parable spoken by Jesus in chapter 21:11-27. In each gospel accounts the disciples were expecting to learn when the kingdom of God would be manifested on the earth (associated with Jesus bodily presence on earth again).

It is clear in both gospels that all believers will be accountable to the Lord (when he returns to rule on earth) on their stewardship of what the Lord gives them. Those who were productive in what they were given not only received the Lord’s praise but rewards for being a faithful servant. The parable in Luke 19:11-27 is given below because it gives us insight to one of the “rewards” a person could receive from the Lord because of their faithfulness.

“While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

He said:

"A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

"But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

"Well done, my good servant!' his master replied: 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth.

I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

“His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?’”

Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

“Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten.'

“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.

But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them--bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

This parable is repeated again in a different manner in Luke 19:

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

"Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth.

I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

"His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?

Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

"Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten.'

"He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.

But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them--bring them here and kill them in front of me.' "

Knowing how each of us can best serve Him in His kingdom, God gives us spiritual gifts to enable us to achieve our destiny in eternity. Being “born again” allows a person to fulfill the reason they were born. God not only gives spiritual gifts to the members of His Church but provides His Holy Spirit to abide in our lives to fulfill His will here on the earth. The prophet Zechariah had prophesied what the Lord told him: **“that it is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty”** (Zechariah 4:6) to accomplish what God desires in the earth. Zechariah was looking at a lampstand (menorah or 7- fold candlestick) which symbolizes the Church (a light to others) and the “olive trees” providing the “oil” (Holy Spirit) to burn in the lampstand. A Christian’s “rewards” for faithful service is a topic for future dissertations.



Menorah (Candlestick)

Ironically in today’s world the American Church’s priorities seem to be exactly the reverse of Jesus’ priority of teaching those who choose to follow him. Today many Christians assemble in a building each week and preach salvation to people already born again. When this emphasis doesn’t result in the local church’s growth the assembly is encouraged to pray more for a harvest of souls. As frustration grows in a stale church the leaders will encourage its members to forgive one another when they offend one another. Then the church begins to yearn to be “raptured” out of this world to the eternal life promised every believer in Jesus Christ. They tend to overlook the principle that eternal life began when they accepted Christ into their life here on earth.

Too little emphasis is made by the Church on the kingdom of God being manifested on the earth as it is in heaven. Many Christians don’t understand how that is accomplished now. They have been conditioned to wait until the Lord returns to rule on earth. That’s when they believe the

kingdom will be established. They could be compared to the person who was given “one talent” and he buried it. When his master returned to find out what he had done with what he was given, the servant found his master was extremely disappointed with the servant’s attitude of doing nothing. The early Church did not think like today’s Church. Many scriptures below highlight “the kingdom of God on earth NOW” to the Church.

The greatest manifestation (revelation) of this truth will occur when the King of Kings leaves His throne in heaven and comes to earth and rule. Will we be recognized as good and faithful servants by our Master when Jesus comes to rule with us in the earth? The scriptures say “the bride makes herself ready for the bridegroom.”

The kingdom of God will encompass the entire earth! All of society (individuals, families, the church, governments, and marketplaces) and nature are to come under the authority of the king. This current life is a “rehearsal” of things to come. All things in today’s world are on track for a one world government. Not a conspiracy but a prophetic fulfillment. The ruler will be the son of God.

“For He (God) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves...” Paul’s letter to the Colossians 1:13

“For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.” Paul’s 1st Letter to the Thessalonians 2:11-12

“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.” Hebrews 12:28

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.” Revelation 11:15

***“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful ones laid hold of it. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear.”** Matthew 11:12-15*

***“If I (Jesus) drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”** Matthew 12:28*

***“I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”** Matthew 16:18-19*

***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”** Matthew 6:33*

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples:

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Matthew 9:35-38

This revolution is taking place because many believers are discovering a much more intimate relationship with Jesus and He is revealing to them secrets of the kingdom of God in which they can participate as He anoints them with His gifts and calling on their lives. These are people who don't need the constant attention of babies (Christians who won't grow up or become mature). Below are characteristics of a baby.

- can't leave them unsupervised
- must give them something every time they cry
- trying to keep them from hurting themselves
- keeping them on milk and pabulum (not meat)
- refusing to mature with time and "grow up"

It's exciting to witness reformation taking place in the gates of the earth. God is fulfilling the scripture in Isaiah 32:5-8 which says:

“No longer will the fool be called noble nor the scoundrel be highly respected. For the fool speaks folly, his mind is busy with evil; He practices ungodliness and spreads error concerning the Lord; the hungry he leaves empty and from the thirsty he withholds water. The scoundrel's methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just. But the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands.” Isaiah 32:5-8

“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-2

CHAPTER 4

The Church's Role & Responsibilities in the Earth

The word “Church” with a capital “C” means all believers (the entire body of Christ in the world). Of course the Church is scattered throughout the earth (in nations and in the cities of these nations).

The Lord Jesus stated the Church is to be the “salt” and the “light” of the earth. Jesus said,

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, it is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16

In Matthew 13:33 the Lord used a parable of “leaven in dough” to illustrate the influence the Church (leaven) is to have in the world (dough) in bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth.

“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast (leaven) that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

It is important that we recognize that Jesus takes His disciples “out of the world of darkness” but does not remove them from the earth (John 15:19). Jesus prayed to His Father not to take the Church taken out of the world but to be protected from the evil one (Satan).

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” John 17:15

The Church's purpose is to influence those gates of authority outside the jurisdiction of the church authority such that these gatekeepers and the decisions they make are consistent with the righteous ways of God and His kingdom in heaven.

As the Church members begin to implement the renewal and restoration that God wants to bring to the earth, they will be viewed as revolutionaries by some and called rebels by others. When the Church has the “fear of the Lord” at work in its members, it will not be deterred by anyone's view of them. When the Church provides its members as ambassadors for God to the gates of the

city (the gatekeepers) the earth will experience a greater dimension of the kingdom of God upon the earth as it is in heaven.

Again, the mindset of a Christian revolutionary is simple: ***Do whatever it takes to allow God to do whatever He wants in your life and to help others do the same.*** Revolution will integrate the Church more into the world (society) and in so doing it will redefine many of the churches organizations and activities (ministries) in a city.

The diverse local church assemblies in a city are often created from disagreements within an existing body of believers and the resolution is to start another church. Often it did not begin with a clear mission or purpose except to not be part of the existing church structure any longer. However, many churches are started because they had a vision or purpose that no longer fit in the mold of the existing church. Hence, they had to be released, kicked out, or just leave to fulfill the vision. Often fresh truth is the catalyst for such new beginnings.

When the Church body in a city (the many diverse church assemblies) begins to experience the “unity” prayed for by Jesus before his crucifixion (see John 17) it will receive a greater anointing of the Holy Spirit to declare the gospel of the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

God wants his Church to “counsel” the gates of the city and by the work of the Holy Spirit (7 Spirits of God) bring righteousness to every gate. The Church should not be deceived by the devil’s lies, deceit, and temptations regarding how God wants to bring this revolution to the gates of the city. The Church needs the spirit of understanding to provide proper counseling to the gates of the city.

Matthew chapter 4 and Luke Chapter 4 describe the temptations that Jesus faced in taking the kingdoms of this world from Satan and delivering them up to God. Satan had “his way” but Jesus knew “God’s way.” Here is wisdom and understanding. First, you can see that Satan believes the kingdom of darkness has all authority over the world. This completely contradicts Psalm 24 and many other similar scriptures that declare that God and His Christ are the rulers over all that was made in the earth as well as the heavens. The unseen spiritual forces of darkness confessed this when Jesus began His public ministry upon the earth and began to set people free from their chains of darkness and declare that the kingdom of God was being manifested upon the earth as it was in heaven.

The Servant of the LORD (Isaiah 42)

Every Christian should embrace the prophetic word in Isaiah chapter 42 regarding the “servant of the Lord” description. This is the mission of every “son of God.” It is “Christ in us.”

*“Here is **my servant**, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be*

discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."

"This is what God the LORD says-- he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

"I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."

Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands.

The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.

"For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our god's, will be turned back in utter shame.

"Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the LORD? You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing."

It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious. But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, "Send them back."

Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come? Who handed Jacob over to become loot, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways; they did not obey his law.

So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war. It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand; it consumed them, but they did not take it to heart."

It is clear that Isaiah was speaking of the Messiah that all Jews hoped would come and rule the earth from holy Jerusalem. Jesus was their hope fulfilled but as a nation they did not embrace him. However, his gospel of the kingdom of God went into all the earth and those who believed received His Holy Spirit (Christ in them) and were enabled to be part of the prophetic word

spoken by Isaiah. It is imperative that the “called out ones” (the Church) do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church! The Church needs to cry out to the Lord and say “increase our faith.”

The scripture in Isaiah 42 gives us great insight into what the commission of a servant of the Lord is in the earth and what the Church can accomplish in the earth as well as in a city. The degree of the Church’s influence (salt, light, leaven) will greatly depend upon the intimacy of the relationship the Church (and the church) has with God; and the degree of favor God gives his body of believers with others.

The Gates of a City

The Bible clearly illustrates that cities are important to God. His prophetic plans are tied to cities. For examples:

- Jesus the Messiah was predestined to be born in Bethlehem (not Nazareth)
- Jesus was predestined to be called a Nazarene (he lived in Nazareth)
- Jesus was predestined to die in Jerusalem
- Jerusalem (the city of David) has always had a special place in God’s plans
- The Church is called the “city of God = Holy Jerusalem” and comes down from heaven
- Jesus prophesied woe on unrepentant cities (Capernaum, Korazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon)
- Cities of refuge (sanctuary)
- Nineveh specifically identified by God for Jonah to go there and preach repentance
- Sinful Sodom and Gomorrah specifically singled out for complete destruction
- Faithful stewards will receive rulership over cities
- Apostle Paul was directed to cities where Jesus wanted the gospel preached

“When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy. Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.” Proverbs 11:10-11

This dissertation will go no further in proving the importance of cities to God although there is more Biblical proof.

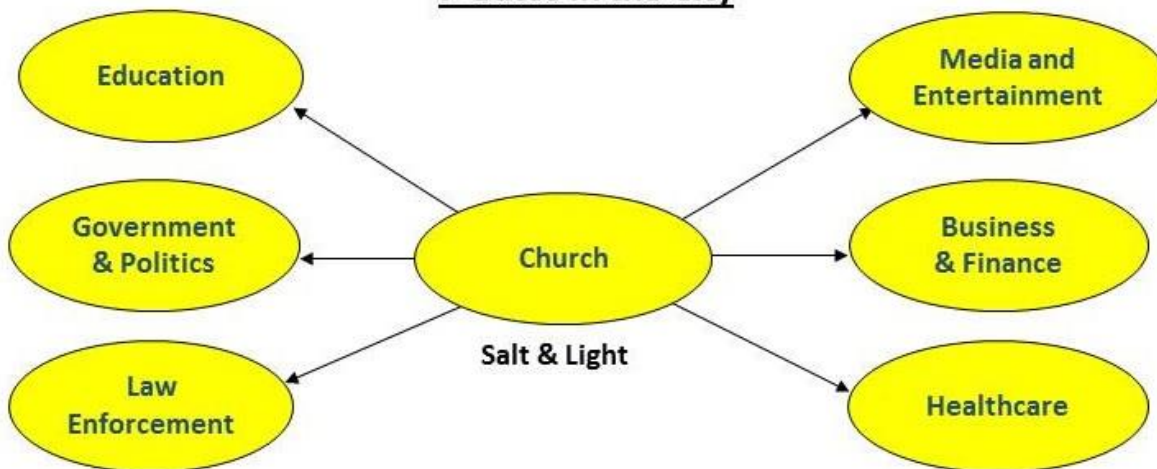
What are the “gates” of a city? In the Bible, “gates” are a symbol of “authority.” The gates of a city were where the elders (those in authority) of the city congregated and did the city’s business. Decisions were made which impacted the destiny of the city at the “gates.” It is very imperative the concept of “jurisdiction” be recognized by each gate in the city. Jurisdiction is not exceeding the boundary of authority designated for that particular sphere of authority.

The Church should envision a city is composed of seven (7) spheres of authority or jurisdictional arenas. These will be called the “gates of the city.” These jurisdictional gates are discussed in the following pages:

Roles and Responsibilities of the Church in the City



7 Gates in the City



It is important that the authorities associated with each of the gates embrace “the will of God” to properly minister to the city. These are all places the Lord desires to influence with His presence. It should not be a surprise to see His people to become “leaven” and influence the decision making in these various jurisdictions. Each one of these areas has gatekeeper(s) for the community. The seven (7) Spirits of the Lord mentioned in Isaiah 11:1-2 and the book of Revelation can be correlated to all seven gates listed above to convey what is the **proper dominant spirit to minister at each gate**. This correlation is listed below. The purpose of the Church in the city is to “have a Spirit of Counsel” in reaching the other spheres of authority and explaining to the gate keepers the proper dominant spirit to exercise in carrying out their responsibilities at their respective gates.

Where is the Biblical precept of the “7 Spirits of God?” It’s in the New Testament explicitly and in the Old Testament implicitly. (See Appendix B)

The genesis of the premise that there are “seven spirits of God” is declared multiple times in the book of Revelation (of Jesus Christ). The first declaration is in the greeting that the apostle John gives the seven churches to which he is writing. He says:

“Grace and peace to you from his who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” Revelation 1:4

This seems to be a clear declaration of God the Eternal Father (who sets on the throne), God the Spirit (before the throne), and God the Son (who sets on the throne with His Father).

The second declaration comes in the message to the angel of the church in Sardis.

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.” Revelation 3:1

The seven stars are defined as the seven angels (messengers) of the seven churches in Revelation chapter one (verses 4, 11, 16, and 20).

The third declaration comes in the vision John has of the Lamb of God standing before the throne of God (who is holding a scroll with writings on both sides and sealed with seven seals). John began to weep because no one (in heaven or earth) was worthy to break the seals and declare what was in the scroll. Then one of the twenty-four elders said to him the “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures, and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”
Revelation 5:6

Horns normally are symbolic of “authority” in the Bible. The reference to the “Root of David” carries the student of the Bible back to the book of the prophet Isaiah, the eleventh chapter where we find another indication of a sevenfold Spirit of God.

Isaiah 11:1-2 (NIV)

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

- 1. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him (Love)***
- 2. the Spirit of wisdom (perfection or maturity)***
- 3. and of understanding (revelation)***
- 4. the Spirit of counsel (remembrance)***
- 5. and of power (preservation or might)***
- 6. the Spirit of knowledge (publishing)***
- 7. and of the fear of the Lord” (restoration or renewal)***

The rest of this section continues to declare the characteristics of this Branch (Jesus) from the Root of Jesse (hence the Root of David).

It is important each sphere of authority (gate) in the city exhibits a dominant aspect of one of the 7 Spirits of the Lord to fulfill its role in society. This dominant spirit is to be exhibited in the life

of those gatekeepers who are called to a specific gate. The correlation of this dominant Spirit to a specific gate of the city is illustrated below.

It is important to learn two things regarding the 7 spheres of jurisdiction (gates) in a city. First is to recognize the “dominant Spirit” God wants to be active in the exercising of the particular gates authority (shown above). Second we should recognize the “dominant spirit of darkness” (stronghold) which opposes the Spirit of God and does not want to be displaced in ruling at the gate of the city (shown below). It is important to address the scriptural rationale used in assigning the various dominant Spirit to each gate in the city and the rationale for the spirit of darkness opposing God’s Spirit at the gate. That rationale will be presented in the following seven sub-sections:

Seven “Gates” or Spheres of Authority in a City

GATE of a City	Gatekeeper Area of Jurisdiction Spirit of the Lord (Isaiah 11:1-2)
1. Government & Politics	→ 1. The Spirit of Love (LORD)
2. Business & Finance	→ 2. The Spirit of Wisdom
3. Media & Entertainment	→ 3. The Spirit of Understanding
4. Church Organizations	→ 4. The Spirit of Counsel
5. Healthcare	→ 5. The Spirit of Power
6. Education	→ 6. The Spirit of Knowledge
7. Law Enforcement	→ 7. The Spirit of Fear of the LORD

Seven Spirits of God in Warfare (Rev. 2-3)

Seven	Churches	Isaiah 11:1	Spirits of Light	Spirits of Darkness	Scripture
1	Ephesus	Spirit of the LORD	Love	Spirit of Fear	I John 4:18
2	Smyrna	Spirit of Power	Preservation	Spirit of Affliction (Infirmity)	Acts 10:38
3	Pergamos	Spirit of Counsel	Remembrance	Spirit of Compromise	Acts 15
4	Thyratira	Spirit of Understanding	Revelation (Teaching)	Spirit of Judgment	I Samuel 16:7 Galatians 2:6
5	Sardis	Spirit of Wisdom	Perfection (Maturity)	Spirit of Death (Slumber)	Rom 13:11-12
6	Philadelphia	Spirit of Knowledge	Publishing (Declaration)	Spirit of Lying	Acts 5:1-10
7	Laodicea	Spirit of the Fear of the LORD	Restoration (Renewal)	Spirit of Greed	Matt 6:22-24

Psalms 24 is a wonderful declaration of the kingdom of God coming to all the gates of a city.

*“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.
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 soul to an idol or swear by
what is false. He will receive the blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his savior.
Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.
Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors that the King of Glory may come
in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors that the King of Glory may come
in. Who is he, this King of Glory?
The Lord Almighty—He is the King of Glory. (Psalms 24)*

The primary task of the Church “gate” and all its affiliations in a city is to provide “counsel” (salt, light, leaven) to all of the other gates on the “ways of God” to be fulfilled in their respective areas of jurisdiction. The Spirit of Counsel is what allows the Church to be the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” The Church becomes the “leaven” in the dough (gate) and

allows the other gates to fulfill its purpose in the earth. Jesus taught these principles when he spoke to the people in parables and later explained these parables to his disciples. He was clearly speaking to the world that it was “time for the kingdom of God to come on earth as it was in heaven.”

It is clear in the Bible that when the kingdom of God is preached in the earth there will be significant conflict with the kingdom of darkness. Christians should be under no illusion about this being a real war. Revelation 12:7-12 says:

“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. 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. Therefore rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

Most of the apostolic letters to the early church (which have been preserved for us in the New Testament scriptures) remind us that the conflicts the Church has here on earth are not with “flesh and blood” (people) but with spirits of one kingdom versus another. The Biblical phrases “kingdom of light” and “kingdom of darkness” are more than *metaphors*. They are an expression of reality!! The Revelation of Jesus Christ documented in John’s letter to believers in the first century A.D. gives insight to not only the conflict between two kingdoms but the final outcome: *The kingdom of light prevails!*

The four New Testament gospels of the life of Jesus Christ are basically summarized in this statement of the apostle Peter to the household of Cornelius:

“This is the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news (gospel) of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ... we are witnesses...he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ...All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”
Acts 10:36-43

Spiritual conflict is part of our training in the kingdom of God. Exercising our spiritual “muscles” is a prerequisite for participating in what God has destined for His people. We are being trained now on how to “rule nations” (not just cities) when Jesus returns to earth.

“To him that overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.” Revelation 2:26

While Jesus was here, he was teaching his disciples how to rule nations. The signs, wonders, and miracles did not prepare them for ruling nations. They only confirmed the message of the kingdom of God.

Too much of the Church’s time here on earth is spent “doing for God” rather than discovering what “God is doing and doing it with Him.” The believers here on earth are usually not doing what Jesus would be doing if he were here. And yet, He sent God’s Holy Spirit to be at work in us doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven.

The Church must learn the word of God so that it is not outwitted by Satan. It cannot be ignorant (unaware) of Satan’s schemes which result in traps, snares, stumbling blocks, impediments, enticements, distrust, abandoning our posts (apostasy), and rebellion (disavowing authority).

“...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” II Corinthians 2:11

There is a great simplicity in being Christ-like! Again in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians the apostle Paul noted:

“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”
II Corinthians 11:3 (NIV) (*KJV says “from the simplicity in Christ”*)

Let’s look at the 7 spirits of darkness which confront our walk with Christ in doing the will of God on Earth. If we don’t recognize these cunning spirits and how they undermine the spirits of the children of light then we are not “exercising our spiritual muscles” and preparing ourselves for revelation from God regarding our destiny.

The Church Gate

(Spirit of Counsel versus Spirit of Compromise)

In examining the various gates of a city, it is important to start with the Church gate which is responsible for influencing all the other gates. Jesus’ great commission in Matthew 28 was to His Church.

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

This section will address the importance of the Church implementing its proper jurisdiction in the earth to have the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. It is imperative that the Spirit of Counsel rests upon the Church for it to properly minister to the other gates of the city. It is also imperative that the Church not compromise its message of the gospel of the kingdom of God. One of the first steps needed for the Church representation in each city is to develop more unity (love for one another) among the Christians in the city.

Acts 15 is a great example of the battle within the Church between the Spirit of Counsel and the spirit of compromise. Also, it is a good example of the Spirit of Understanding doing battle with the spirit of judgment in the Church body worldwide.

The issue: circumcision requirements for the Gentile believers, as well as what should the Gentiles comply with in the law of Moses.

The Understanding: Peter had it revealed to him at the house of Cornelius that the Holy Spirit of God was given to people who were not circumcised because “God knows the heart” and that their hearts were purified by faith and not by rites of circumcision.

Paul and Barnabas also reported to the assembly the miracles and wonders that God did among the Gentiles who hadn’t been circumcised.

The apostle James then recounted to the assembly the Scriptures which would confirm what they were hearing about the Gentiles being taken as a people for God.

Through the Spirit of Counsel the Church leaders became aware of what was reasonable guidance to give to Gentile believers regarding compliance with the law of Moses.

The spirit of compromise will try to deceive believers regarding true “compassion” and true “convictions.” This spirit will intimidate us with condemnation that we aren’t compassionate. Just think of the major issues our country is faced with right now and the divisiveness these issues have brought to families, to the church, to the community and to the nation. These issues include abortion, humanistic education, homosexuality, helping the poor, national security, morality, situational ethics, aliens/immigration, national debt, lack of truth in politicians and the media, and the ineptness of the Church.

The spirit of judgment and the spirit of compromise work together to bring confusion to God’s people. But the Lord does not want the Church to have a spirit of confusion.

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” I Corinthians 14:33

The Lord wants the Church to understand His will and have the Spirit of Counsel to be at work in the marketplace.

Society sees what is called the Church tremendously divided on important issues. There is no clarion voice saying to society “this is the Way walk in it.” When the Church embraces the

wisdom and understanding of God then a Spirit of Counsel will be poured out on it to counsel the gates of the cities and what to do regarding the righteous ways of God to be implemented on earth.

On many issues fundamental to our faith, Christians are called “right-wing fundamentalist.” The spirit of compromise wants this term applied to us to have others believe we are dogmatic, insensitive people, who love “thumping the Bible” and that we are really spiritually incorrect on matters. Until the Church has ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying and eyes to see what the Lord is doing in the earth and doing it with Him, we will have little victories in taking the gates of the city for God. It’s when wise Church leaders, full of understanding and the love of God, get together and receive the Spirit of Counsel from God that it will have answers for society’s needs and not doctrines of bondage. It appears this is happening outside of the prideful religious leadership in our nation.

“Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and there proclaim this message: 'Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD.'”

Standing for truth will always bring conflict with the kingdom of darkness. But the Church is commanded to enter the conflict and bring the kingdom of God (kingdom of light) to earth as it is in heaven.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

Ephesians 6:10-18

The Gate of Government and Politics

(Spirit of Love versus Spirit of Fear)

Why should the Lord’s Spirit of Love be the dominant spirit at the gate of government and politics? The concept of “government” is associated with those in authority to lead and rule over the citizens of their domain. The domain could be a city or a nation or the entire world. Politics

consists of the “policies” to be implemented by the government leaders. In heaven the supreme ruler or leader over all of creation is God. In the Bible this God is called “our Father” or “Jesus the Christ” or “God’s Holy Spirit.” The prophet Isaiah said “the government shall be upon His shoulders.” (Isaiah 9:6)

*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the **government** shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

The Bible also makes it clear that Jesus (the son of God) is the slain Lamb of God for the sins of mankind because God “so loved the world.” God’s past, current and future rulership over all of the creation (including the earth) is grounded in His Spirit of Love. All of His policies for the kingdom of God are righteous. Righteousness is simply doing what is God’s will. Government and its policies are supposed to embrace the will of God on earth as it is embraced in heaven. Any government on earth should be “governed” by the Spirit of Love. Any policies proposed by governments on earth should be motivated by the government’s love of its citizens. When such government exists upon the earth then there will truly be “peace on earth and good will toward men!”

What is the most dominant spirit of darkness that resists the Spirit of Love at the gate of government/politics in the earth? It is the “spirit of fear!” Why fear? Because the fallen nature of man (his flesh) will resist (war against) the fruit of the Spirit called love. So often after being appointed to serve, those in government and politics begin to fear their loss of power and control over the lives of those they govern. Also, they can be corrupted by the deceitfulness of riches and greed will accompany their lust for maintaining their position in government/politics.

Rarely does a citizen ever ask a politician “do you love me?” before they cast their vote for someone wanting to serve in a government position. Every Christian knows that they are loved by the one who rules over their life. If every Christian would begin to “test the spirit” of those seeking to rule over them on earth they would begin to bring “peace on earth and good will toward men” in their choice of leadership.

Below are a few of the reasons a person is attacked or dominated by a spirit of fear. These are spiritual forces at work in the earth to resist the will of God.

1. Fear of rejection (not accepted; not loved; not worthy; not “politically correct”)
2. Fear of people (“fear of man will prove to be a snare,” Proverbs 29:25)
3. Fear of change
4. Fear of the future
5. Fear of the devil
6. Fear of harm (particularly themselves or their loved ones)
7. Fear of loss (power, wealth, control, etc.)
8. Fear of being alone
9. No Fear of God (atheist, agnostic, rebel)

When a Christian believes their gifts and calling is to serve at the gates of government in their city or their nation, they have a great responsibility to have the Spirit of Love as the dominant motivation to receive such authority in their life. Below are scriptures to remind those believers who want to serve in government or politics of God's will on earth.

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love." I John 4:18

"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, a spirit of love and a spirit of self-control (sound mind)." II Timothy 1:7

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship (adoption). And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Romans 8:15

Every Christian involved in the jurisdiction of government and politics (policy making) should remember God's word on such matters as "bribes," "giving preference to the rich to receive future favors," "greed," "dishonesty," "a lying tongue," and "abusing the poor." There is certain judgment awaiting such a person (both on earth and after death). Can a Christian be faithful to the Lord and serve in the gates of government and politics? The answer is YES!

A better question is this: "What kind of city or nation will we live in if a Christian doesn't seek this arena of service and serve with noble character?"

The Gate of Business and Finances

(Spirit of Wisdom versus Spirit of Death)

Throughout the book of Proverbs, we are told how wisdom gives us life and delivers us from things which lead to death. Wisdom is "seeing and responding to life situations from God's frame of reference (perspective)."

"For the Lord gives wisdom... wisdom will save you from wicked men... It will save you also from the adulteress... for her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life." Proverbs 2:6, 12, 16, 18-19

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom... Long life is in her right hand... She is a tree of life to those who embrace her." Proverbs 3:13, 16, 18

"Does not Wisdom call out... To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind... Listen for I have worthy things to say; ... blessed are those who keep my ways... For whoever finds me finds life... and all who hate me love death."
Proverbs 8:1, 4, 6, 32, 35, 36.

Death has been an issue since the “beginning of man’s creation.” So has wisdom. The Lord tells us in His wisdom, “do this and you will live... disobey and you will die...” The devil says, “you will not surely die.” God’s will (what He says) is always under attack by the devil to deceive us and lead us down a path of destruction.

Remember “we overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony, and a spirit of sacrifice” (Revelation 12:11). Jesus tells John in Revelation **“I hold the keys of death and Hell.”** Both are real and should be recognized by everyone upon the earth. Jesus tells the apostle Paul to give a similar message to the church in Corinth: *“The last enemy to be destroyed is death... For he (Jesus) has put everything under his feet... and death has been swallowed up in victory.”* I Cor 15:26, 27, 54

Now why should the Spirit of Wisdom be the dominant spirit in the gates of Business and Finances? There is a very simple reason: God wants us to prosper and be successful in all we put our hand and our heart. However, it takes wisdom to have these end results.

In his sermon on the mount, Jesus addressed many normal concerns and worries of mankind. God knows that resources (a measure of wealth) are required in life to care for ourselves, our family and others (food, clothing, shelter, and other material things). Jesus told the people, **“For the pagans (unbelievers) run after these things and your heavenly Father knows you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and all his righteousness and all these things shall be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”** (Matthew 6:32-34)

The book of wisdom (Proverbs) not only addresses life and death issues, it addresses business and finance issues and helps define “His righteousness” mentioned by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. It is imperative that the Spirit of Wisdom be the dominant motivating spirit in the life of a Christian seeking a career in the gates of business and finances. There are ways which might seem right to a person having authority in the business or finance world but they could easily lead to death (Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25). Below are only a few nuggets of wisdom regarding God’s will for those in the gates of business and finance. It would be wise for the gatekeepers of business and finance to read Proverbs often (perhaps a chapter a day every month).

“My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths (or direct your paths) straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father (he punishes) the son he delights in. Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than

rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed." Proverbs 3:1-18

"Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth and turmoil." Proverbs 15:1

"Wisdom teaches a man the fear of the Lord and humility comes before honor." Proverbs 15:33

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed." Proverbs 15:22

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Proverbs 16:3

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails." Proverbs 19:21

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." Proverbs 16:9

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit, as surely as haste leads to poverty." Proverbs 21:5

"Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the assembly at the gate he has nothing to say." Proverbs 24:7

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he (God) will reward him for what he has done." Proverbs 19:17

"He who pursues righteousness and love finds life prosperity and honor. A wise man attacks the city of the mighty and pulls down the stronghold in which they trust." Proverbs 21:21-22

"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all. A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it. Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life." Proverbs 22:1-4

"Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint." Proverbs 23:4

Proverbs not only addresses the pursuit of wisdom but also gives warnings to business and financial folly that leads to death and destruction (both spiritually and physically). When those in authority at the gates of business and finances don't have God's righteous ways as a path of light they will descend deeper and deeper into darkness and futility of life. Here are but a few of the scriptures which a wise person should take to heart and not be snared by the ways of the kingdom of darkness.

“A greedy man brings trouble to his family.” Proverbs 15:27

“Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom?”
Proverbs 17:16

“A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.” Proverbs 21:6

“There is no wisdom, no insight, and no plan that can succeed against the LORD.”
Proverbs 21:30

*“He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich--
both come to poverty.” Proverbs 22:16*

*“He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be
kind to the poor.” Proverbs 28:8*

“A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.”
Proverbs 28:22

Many Christians are called into the marketplace of business and finance by the Lord and are equipped to bring the gospel of the kingdom of God to the world in which they live. Often the book of Acts identifies several prominent people (i.e., the Ethiopian treasurer for the Queen) who didn't know the Lord. These people became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and began to also manifest the kingdom of God in their world of business and finance.

The Gate of Media and Entertainment

(Spirit of Understanding versus Spirit of Judgment)

Once there was a little boy who went to a pet shop to purchase himself a puppy from a new litter of puppies being advertised at the shop. He told the owner what he wanted and the owner showed him the puppies. The little boy saw just the puppy he wanted. However, the owner told him he shouldn't pick that puppy because the dog had been born with a slightly deformed hind leg and it caused him to limp. The little boy insisted he still wanted the puppy. The shop keeper was concerned the boy's parents might think the pet store had taken advantage of the child by selling him the handicapped puppy.

Then the little boy showed the owner why he wanted the puppy. He raised the right leg of his britches and revealed a brace on his leg to help him walk. The little boy understood the puppy's situation. Now the owner had his own “revelation” or “understanding” of the boy's insistence on taking the selected puppy. Imagine yourself as the pet store owner. Imagine the little boy as the Spirit of Understanding. The Spirit of Understanding is sent from the Lord to us because we all are so quick to wrongly judge life situations and others. The Word of God cries out to us to have “understanding” as much as it does wisdom.

“...The Lord does not look at the things that man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” I Samuel 16:7

“...God does not judge by external appearances.” Galatians 2:6

The church at Thyatira was told by Jesus in the book of Revelation:

“...I am he who searches the hearts and minds...” Revelation 2:23

What so strongly opposes the Spirit of Understanding? It is the spirit of judgment. The spirit of judgment, which comes from the kingdom of darkness, is determined to have us *misunderstand* life situations and others. This spirit of judgment will take good people’s hatred of evil and wicked deeds and have them hating the people who commit such things.

The spirit of judgment will often have people “miss living a full life.” This spirit of judgment will have us “too serious about everything” (Gnostic spirit) and be working to assure we have very little enjoyment in life. This spirit of judgment will get us “too spiritual for our own good” because it will have us becoming “self-righteous.” Think of those in the gospels who presented themselves to Jesus in this “spirit.” Repentance will be overlooked in their own life. They will believe they must examine everyone else for “spiritual correctness” in doctrine and behavior.

Dogmatic doctrines will become more important than people. This spirit of judgment will work on us to believe we are compromising God’s Word if we become more forgiving of others. The spirit of judgment does not want us to *understand* that we don’t lower our Godly standards by loving others no matter what they do or what they believe. It takes both the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of understanding to “judge righteously” and know when not to judge someone or something (as so often the scriptures caution us).

In speaking of jurisdiction principles (domains of authority) we should always remember that God has “never” delegated anyone to be someone else’s conscience. That is God’s domain not humans. The Bible is clear on this matter. The spirit of judgment ignores this vital principle.

Why does the Spirit of Understanding need to be the dominant spirit for the gatekeepers of Media and Entertainment? Before that question is answered a definition of the field of Media and Entertainment should be made. Although not exhaustive, a list of items that can be included in the sphere of media and entertainment in today’s world is given below:

Books, television, radio, cassettes, videos, DVD’s, CD’s, newspapers, mail, billboards, pamphlets, conferences, seminars, meetings, classrooms, computers, the Internet, chat rooms, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, email, blogs, conversations, faxes, telephones, game boys, play stations, bulletin boards, business cards, movies, theatre (plays, operas, etc.), letters, demonstrations, museums, etc., etc., etc.

Everybody and everything are trying to get our attention, our time, our energy and our money. In the 20th century many futurists and historians were saying it was the “age of information.” The explosion of knowledge and the world-wide access to it was the primary basis of making these

declarations. They were declaring that the world had learned more in the 20th century than all previous time combined. This was “new” knowledge and not just more people having the opportunity to learn things that others already knew. At the same time, the futurists were prophesying that the 21st century knowledge would be increasing at a rate greater than what was experienced in the 20th century.

There may not be a better opportunity than now for the “earth to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord” as spoken by the prophets of old. However, the world seems to be “*always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth*” (II Timothy 3:7).

Life truths should be the crux of the media/entertainment message. It is certainly clear that a considerable number of “news” media gatekeepers fail in giving people “understanding regarding the truth.” Freedom of the press in our country has so misused its liberty that it has created a horrible spirit of judgment in the lives of most Americans (including Christians).

Biased viewpoints on politics, morality, justice, etc. are presented every day in many media and entertainment forums. These viewpoints are often presented in a judgmental spirit. Truth is not the goal! The goal is maintaining your viewpoint. Rarely is the truth spoken in love. Having people “understand eternal truth” will be a revolutionary experience for all involved. When Jesus was before Pilate being tried, this government leader said “What is truth?” He didn’t understand that “Truth” was standing before him.

Imagine the change in our society when the Media and Entertainment world are anointed with the Spirit of Understanding and give truth an untarnished voice! As noted in the 21st century surveys, more and more Christians are expending tremendous time, energy and resources in the marketplace of media/entertainment. Hopefully they will become “proclaimers of truth” and cast down Satan’s lies/half-truths being manifested in this domain of people’s lives.

This will not be an easy task for Christians if they don’t spend time reading God’s Word and praying about having the gift of “discerning of spirits” manifested in their lives to discern the truth. A good analogy to use is the ability to recognize “counterfeit money.” People who must recognize counterfeit money don’t study all the various types of counterfeiting used to pass off worthless money to others. They study only the “real money” and all of its characteristics. They then immediately recognize the counterfeit when they see it. The Bible cautions the Christian not to study evil in the hopes you can discern it better. The Lord wants us to study His Word and it will educate you to “see” that which is counterfeit. This is the theme of the following instructions in the Bible:

“I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.” Romans 16:19

“from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:15-17

“For the word of God is alive 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.” Hebrews 4:12

Although every Christian is not called (have a vocation and become a gatekeeper) into the world of media and entertainment, they cannot avoid the influence the world of media/entertainment attempts to have upon their lives (particularly their “thinking”). Entertain a thought three times and it will normally result in some kind of an action. Performing a specific action more than three times and it can become a habit. Satan is continuously using the world of media and entertainment to have the people develop a habitual judgmental spirit.

God wants to use the world of media and entertainment to give people understanding regarding eternal truth. For example, many of the books that were written hundreds of years ago are today called “classics” because they were inspired truth. Many of the “classic movies” of the 20th century also contained eternal truths and many were based upon classic books. The greatest theatre plays over the centuries are those that contained eternal truths in their message. When majestic scenes are captured in a photo or an artist's canvas, our spirits are stirred by the creative genius of the author. Everything in the world of media and entertainment has a spirit behind the product. It is imperative that godly gatekeepers, filled with the Spirit of God, remain in the arena of media/entertainment.

In all of the current clamor and chaos in our nation's world of media and entertainment there is a discernable spirit of a godly revolution occurring. Gatekeepers with an attitude of God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven (a kingdom of God mentality) are being called and gifted to have dominion in the world of media and entertainment. God is telling His Church to study the scriptures and allow God's Holy Spirit to reveal eternal truth to them. The exhortations the apostle Paul wrote in his letters to Timothy are excellent guidance to all believers regarding how to live in the world, recognize error (counterfeit) and declare the truth.

When Christians learn more about the “mind of God” and having “His thoughts,” “His truths,” “His ways,” “His wisdom/understanding,” “His knowledge,” etc., they will effectively deal with the error being spread in the world of media/entertainment and judge things in a righteous manner. More on the mind of God is coming.

The Gate of Education

(Spirit of Knowledge versus Spirit of Lying)

In the beginning (Genesis) it was forsaking the “tree of life” for a “tree of knowledge” that caused mankind's downfall. The tree of life (Jesus the Christ) provides mankind with the right kind of knowledge. The Bible declares that “the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth” (Isaiah 11:9). This is a wonderful declaration! It would be good for Christians to read the multitude of Biblical references on knowledge so they might discern what true knowledge is and be able to avoid evil knowledge.

Since knowledge is gained through education, who will be God's primary gatekeepers for education?

THEY WILL BE CHRISTIAN FAMILIES!

This is one of the most important gates of a nation or a city. Families which "hear the voice of the Holy Spirit" will overcome the gates of hell and become the declarers of truth. Families committed to knowing God's will on earth regarding education (the Spirit of Knowledge) can be the only reliable gatekeepers of education. However, our nation has moved so far away from God's ways for education and the gaining of knowledge that it will be a major spiritual battle for Christian families to cast down everything which exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. These strongholds of Satan must be retaken in our nation.

Let's start with the Church itself. Acts 5:1-10 is a classic example of the clash between the spirit of knowledge and the spirit of lying in the church itself.

"Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events."

Ananias and Sapphira (husband and wife) were Christians but both had their hearts filled with "Satan" (kingdom of darkness) and were lying "to the Holy Spirit" (not to Peter) about their activities. Their lying actions were motivated by "greed." Their lying led to their instant deaths. Each just fell over dead when they lied about their deeds. It is interesting that the events of their deaths got "*published*" in the Church. It is because the spirit of knowledge is the spirit of publication. The Spirit of Knowledge could also be referred to as the spirit of declaration. If such judgment occurs within the Church what awaits a world filled with the "father of lies."

Remember, the Spirit of Knowledge is the spirit of truth! Jesus had his own challenges from Satan to “believe a lie” when he was being tempted in the desert. He rightly understood when the scriptures were being misquoted by Satan to try and deceive him. He had grown in wisdom on the scriptures and knew the “mind of God” regarding the truth. All education should be producing truth in people.

The spirit of lying totally works against the truth. Jesus, the Truth, told his disciples that “**Satan was a liar** (from the beginning) **and the father of lies.**” Read John 8:39-45.

Often the spirit of lying distorts truth. It works together with other spirits to bring falseness to people’s lives. The Bible says we overcome the devil by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony. The *word of our testimony* is important here! **OUR TESTIMONY MUST BE THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH!**

Any nation’s future is based upon the next generation’s education. We are a nation at risk today, but not because we do not place a high priority on the education of children. We are so efficiency minded today that there is little time left for things that *take time*—things like relationships or like disciplining our own children. Our failure in the educational world exists today because we have failed to understand the importance of Biblical relationships—relationships with God, relationships in the family, and relationships within the local church and community.

From a Biblical perspective, perhaps the underlining reason parents are examining and embracing the home education approach is due to a *spirit of restoration* found in the closing verses of the Old Testament scriptures spoken by the prophet Malachi.

*“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And **he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers**, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*
Malachi 4:5-6

The first advent of Jesus Christ was directly associated with this Old Testament prophetic word and the prophetic ministry of John the Baptist fulfilling this scripture (Luke 1:17). John the Baptist was the prophet with the spirit of Elijah at the time of Jesus’ life on earth.

Since the first advent, we have seen a continual struggle between two basic/conflicting philosophies. One is the Greco-Roman ideals represented by *individualism and the democratic state*. The other is the Judeo-Christian ideals represented by *the family and the Church*. Close examination of the conflicts will reveal it is a spiritual battle over the wealth and loyalty of the next generation.

The individual looks after his own wealth and opportunities. The state develops its long-range plans to control the wealth and loyalty of the next generation. The individual and the state both speak loudly for themselves. The Church speaks for its interest but who speaks for the family?

It is the family that supports the Church and passes on the Christian heritage from generation to generation. Are Church leaders thinking further ahead than the state? Passing along a heritage is

an educational function. When fathers relinquish family responsibilities, the Christian faith loses ground as well. Church leaders can no longer remain quiet concerning the family's role in education. It is time for Church leaders to send the prophetic message of this age to fathers. It is imperative that both families and Church leaders need to know the facts about home education in America.

It is clear that the majority of Christians in our nation are NOT home schooling their children. It is also clear that most Church leaders have taken no leadership role in helping those they pastor to understand the powerful influence that human secularism has in "government-controlled schools" (public education).

Some nationally known spiritual leaders are promoting parents take action to remove their children from the secular public education environment. Sadly some leaders are resisting such a move and saying it has no Biblical basis. Our nation's founding fathers would never have believed its citizens would allow or desire to have their government educate their children. Only God's Holy Spirit can bring revelation and persuade parents to take full responsibility for their children's education and training.

Although home schooling is beginning to flourish within the United States (estimated that 2-3 million children are being home schooled), society at large knows little about home schoolers, their backgrounds, their achievements and their other activities. There are major misunderstandings associated with the current home-schooling movement. A study conducted by Dr. Brian D. Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute, provides some answers to the key questions being asked about home education. This study, *Strengths of Their Own: Home Schoolers Across America*, collected data on 5,402 home school students from 1,657 families for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 academic years. It was the largest and most comprehensive study on home schooling ever undertaken at the time. It not only confirms many studies on similar investigations into aspects of home schooling, it addresses all the common questions and concerns expressed about home education. Often these questions are based upon a false premise fostered by the culture in which we live. This study dispelled the myths and can be used to convey to community leaders as well as church leaders the value of home education. It should be noted that many later, similar studies have continued to verify the findings of Dr. Ray's study.

Jesus was as much "human" as he was "God in the flesh." As a human, just like us, the scriptures record "he grew" in wisdom and stature. When we are "born again" and Christ is "in us" we can embrace the knowledge of the Lord and His will for us on the earth just as the Christ child did.

Jesus was home schooled! When he reached the age of 12 years he was astounding both his parents and his elders at his knowledge of the scriptures. Oh that the Church families would embrace such an educational approach for their children. There is no doubt that those children home schooled in the 20th century are going to impact their nation in the 21st century. They will also be home schooling their own children and teaching them the scriptures for the Lord to equip them in doing the will of the Father on earth as it is done in heaven.

"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him." Luke 2:40

The verse above describes from the time he was a baby until he reached the age of 12 years. The next verses demonstrate what knowledge he had gained regarding the Lord at home with his family. When the 12-year old Jesus entered the temple at Jerusalem and met with the elders and teachers of the scriptures he confounded them with what he had learned at home (Luke 2:41-52):

“Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

*“**Why were you searching for me?**” he asked. “**Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?**” But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

This Spirit of Knowledge needs to be released in our society in a profound manner. Publication of the “truth” regarding public education (government-controlled school programs) would easily portray the complete failure of the public education system and its adherence to humanistic principles. Christians don’t need prayer back in public schools. They need to declare a complete “exodus” of Christian families from public schools. Education in America needs to be returned back to the private sector where parents make the decisions and not the government on when, where, and how their children should be educated. With today’s educational tools available to parents there can be a revolution in equipping children for fulfilling their gifts and calling from above.

Christian parents need to re-examine their family’s priorities. There are many dysfunctional homes because evil spiritual forces are at work to deceive parents in their responsibilities for their children’s education. The Church in America has failed to understand Biblical principles of education. The Holy Spirit needs to anoint Christian parent’s minds and give them the wisdom and understanding on releasing the Spirit of Knowledge in their family’s life.

With college costs rising such that our nation now has a one trillion-dollar student loan debt, families need to re-examine their children’s vocation (divine calling) and determine what level of education is needed for them to succeed in their spiritual gifts and vocation. Major financial

investments for college are becoming more and more irrelevant to many families. They are finding better ways for their children to obtain the skills needed to accomplish goals in their lives without going into burdensome debt.

The institutions of higher education in America have abandoned American families in assisting students desiring more training. These institutions have a common character flaw exhibited in their operation. It is “greed.” Their entire motivation is getting more money to flow into their institutions. They have tremendous lobbying of their elected officials in state governments to “send more money” each year.

The colleges in the state of Alabama have “doubled” their tuition costs over the past 10 years (2005- 2015) for a student to attend their institution. The tuition costs do not include housing/food/book costs which have also continued to rise. They are forcing students/families to take out easily available, government-backed loans from banks. It will take years for the student and families to repay these loans after the student graduates. It is a sick situation and can only result in a future economic collapse of our nation’s current higher education system. When students start defaulting on their loan repayments it will result in our federal government reimbursing the banks (with tax payer funds) and creating more federal debt. As if our country isn’t in enough federal government debt, there are continued attempts to have “free” college for students. Of course nothing is “free.” Again the tax payer would be footing the bill for such a program. This borrowing violates scriptural principles and commands.

The federal and state governments of our nation have “addicted” its citizens to its government-controlled education programs. They have too many families believing that their children have no economic future without their brand of education. The truth is most graduates (secondary education or college) in our nation cannot find meaningful employment once they graduate and the business world complains that students being graduated cannot perform basic skills such as correct spelling, writing coherently, mathematics, etc. There is a “lying spirit” associated with America’s educational system.

It is recognized throughout our higher education systems that the administrators and professors (teachers) at most of these institutions have a “social agenda” to undermine the historical truths of our nation. Many are agnostics or outright atheists and have completely different moral values and their ultimate goal is to get their students to “think” and “act” like they think and act. When parents and other citizens “revolt” against participating in such an evil and destructive system, it will collapse.

When such institutions lack the desire to have Godly leadership and employ people who don’t teach true knowledge and are deceived by spirit of darkness (including lying spirits), they will come to an end.

The Gate of Healthcare

(Spirit of Power versus Spirit of Infirmary)

The book of Acts, chapter 10 verses 36-43, adequately summarizes God's purposes in Jesus Christ.

"This is the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news (gospel) of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him... we are witnesses... he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead... All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."
Acts 10:36-43

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but power." I Corinthians 4:20

"He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases." Matthew 8:17

"Come out of this man you evil spirit." Mark 5:8

"You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." Mark 9:17-27

We constantly see in the gospels, Jesus versus Beelzebub (the prince of devils). It isn't clear if the Bible is referring to Beelzebub as an "underling in Satan's kingdom" or Satan himself.

Two kingdoms are at war. Jesus knew what God was doing in people's lives. God wants us to know what He is doing and do it with him here on Earth. Healing the sick (the afflicted or infirm) is part of His activities. Having the Spirit of Power rest upon us is essential to our success. Knowing how God wants to preserve our life and the life of others is a pre-requisite for dealing effectively with the spirit of infirmity.

In America the healthcare industry accounts for one-sixth (1/6) of our total economy. Insurance companies, doctors and nurses, drug industry, and hospitals are all associated with our healthcare. In many ways they have extended our life expectancy (we are living longer) and eliminated many threats to our health (polio, typhoid fever, small pox, tuberculosis, etc.). However, the battle still rages with the spirits of infirmity (i.e., cancers, Alzheimer's disease, mental health, drug addiction, etc.). No matter how advanced our medical services become, the heavenly gift of the Spirit of Power, will always be an integral part of God's activity to preserve our lives here on earth until our appointed time to die.

It is an honorable vocation to be involved as a gatekeeper in healthcare. Of course there are the wicked and evil aspects of the healthcare industry (greed, snake oil promises, abortion of

children, etc.). These aspects are even more reason for the Lord to raise up godly gatekeepers in the healthcare industry.

Medical ethics will always be an important aspect of the healthcare industry. Having the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven will be invaluable in caring for people's health and life/death decisions. Heavenly wisdom and understanding are imperatives for doctors and nurses as they minister to the multitudes each day of their lives. Having insight to the *individual needs* will always be the proper aspect of good medical care.

Jesus' ministry of healing and deliverance was very individual oriented. When the entire healthcare is filled with knowledge of the Lord there will be an entirely different world we live in. Throughout the Bible there is a message of "choosing life versus choosing death." This message includes a person's body, mind, soul and spirit. The Bible recognizes that people's infirmities are often directly related to one or more aspects of the person's total being.

There was a woman with a spirit of infirmity that was directly related to an evil spirit that had her body bound for 18 years. This event is found in the gospel of Luke. Luke was a doctor (physician) and tells how Satan can be the source of the health problem and must be discerned as such.

*"On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, **"Woman, you are set free from your infirmity."** Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.*

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

*The Lord answered him, **"You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"***

When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing." Luke 13:10-17

This infirmity was entirely the result of an evil spirit. There is another event where a woman had spent years hoping doctors could heal her from an issue of blood (probably the reproductive area of her body) but nothing had resulted in her being healed. When she heard about Jesus healing so many people she had faith to believe that this was the Messiah and Jewish tradition said if you just touched the hem of his garment you would be healed of any infirmity. This event is also told by Luke the physician as well as in the gospels of Matthew and Mark.

“As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

*"Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But Jesus said, "**Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.**"*

Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed.

*Then he said to her, "**Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.**"* Luke 8:42-48

Here is the same event described in Mark's gospel. Notice that Luke is more restrained than Mark in his commentary on the doctors' care for the woman.

"And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

*At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "**Who touched my clothes?**"*

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "

*But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "**Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.**"* Mark 5:25-34

This is not the only person who has desperately sought help for years from the medical profession for their healing. Also, this is not a story of “when all else fails call seek Jesus.” It is a story which conveys a person's faith can touch God and be instantaneously healed. Jesus had just delivered a man from demonic possession and was on his way to the home of Jairus (a synagogue ruler) whose daughter was close to death, when this woman sought to touch him for her healing. The Spirit of Power flowed from Jesus into this woman's body and she was made well.

Jesus then assured Jairus that his faith would bring his daughter back to him.

*“While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, **“Don’t be afraid; just believe.”***

Mark 5:35-36

It would not be possible to put all the scriptures in this book that is associated with the Spirit of Power. Of course, it is clear that the Spirit of Power is associated with more than “healthcare.” The miraculous, the signs and wonders, and the supernatural events recorded in scriptures include more than healthcare. However, this is the dominant spirit needed in the gates of Healthcare to combat the spirits of infirmity.

Jesus healed people who were blind, deaf, mute, dumb, demon possessed, had leprosy, dropsy, shriveled hand, crippled, people with fever, and all kinds of other infirmities. The Biblical record is clear. The Spirit of Power is available to free people from their infirmities (even death) when it is for the glory of God.

Proverbs addresses many infirmities which can impact our bodies through our mind and our emotions (our soul arena). Stress, worry, anxiety, depression, insomnia, a sense of loneliness, and fears are just a few of the things which can overwhelm a person and lead to serious mental and physical problems. These infirmities might be imposed by an evil spirit. However, they can also be self-induced. Having our spirit renewed by the Spirit of Power and having it produce faith in our lives gives a person greater opportunity to be healed from any spirit of infirmity (including deliverance from evil spirits). Below are scriptures which should encourage us to embrace the ways and acts of God to be delivered from the spirits of infirmity:

“...whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”

Proverbs 1:33

*My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight (or direct your paths). Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. **This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.**”* Proverbs 3:1-8

“My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.” Proverbs 3:21-26

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life." Proverbs 9:10-11

"An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up." Proverbs 12:25

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."
Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."
Proverbs 17:22

"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." Proverbs 14:30

Bones are where blood is produced. The Bible declares that "life is in the blood." If the bones are not producing healthy blood then we can conclude the person is on a path to death.

"A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit... All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast."
Proverbs 15:13, 15

"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 16:24-25

The Gate of Law Enforcement

(Spirit of the Fear of the Lord versus the Spirit of Greed)

The gate of Government and Politics is closely related to the gate of Law Enforcement. Why separate them into different gates? The primary reason is for the Church to recognize the different "dominant" spirits at work in each area of jurisdiction.

In Government/Politics the dominant spirit the Lord wants manifested is the Spirit of Love. It will combat the spirit of fear which tries to maintain a stronghold on this gate. In Law Enforcement the dominant evil spirit trying to maintain a stronghold on this gate is "greed" and the dominant spirit the Lord wants manifested is the "Fear of the Lord" when justice and mercy are to be ministered.

Law Enforcement includes anything from personal guards at homes and businesses; to local police forces; to militaries for entire countries. If a law created by government authorities cannot be enforced, then it really has no power other than a suggestion. However, when the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord has free reign in a region, then people will follow the laws of the land automatically because they will fear God and not man. People will "enforce" the law in their own hearts and abide by God's law out of love for Him and not the fear of man. Until then, the

righteous gatekeepers of law enforcement are constant reminders that justice and mercy in God's kingdom always have the last word in conflicting situations. This is why it is important these gatekeepers do not take bribes out of greed for money and power or influence, but enforce the law out of a humble heart for restoration and renewal in their community or region.

When the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, Rome was the center of world power and authority. At the time, the Roman government was a lingering threat to both Jews and Christians. Paul's insight to both human government authority (jurisdiction) and law enforcement were needed by the Church. He knew that the ultimate governing authority upon the earth was the Lord Jesus Christ. He also knew that the existing authorities on earth were established by God. He knew that they were established to do good for its citizens and that the laws of such governments were to be obeyed as long as they didn't conflict with God's law. The Bible is clear that society's which embrace unrighteous rules and governments will perish for their iniquities.

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

*Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." **Romans 13:1-7***

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then

warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned." **Titus 3:1-11**

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." **I Peter 2:13-25***

History is clear that eventually the early Church suffered greatly under Rome's rulership. Paul and Peter as well as many other Christians were executed by Rome for their faith.

In 1776 the colonists in America declared their independence from the oppressive British government. It wasn't the Church but collected individuals (Christians and non-Christians) who were persuaded that people had unalienable rights that no government could deny them. These basic rights were life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This declaration led to war between the colonists and the British government. The colonists won the war and created a new nation (United States of America). They established a constitution (laws of government) that delineated basic rights of individuals that their government couldn't deny. They also recognized that both "federal" and "state" governments had so much potential for evil that some restraints must be imposed upon them to protect our life, our liberties, and our pursuit of happiness. The people instituted constitutions to protect these God-given rights.

There is a time coming when justice and mercy will completely rule the entire earth. That time is when Jesus returns again to earth and rules His kingdom here upon the earth. His "holy Jerusalem" (the city not built with human hands) shall descend with Him when he returns. He has commissioned His Church on earth to go and prepare the way. Hence the Church needs to understand the ways of the Lord regarding justice and mercy and counsel the gate of Law Enforcement on the ways of heaven. The prophets of old spoke often of the Lord's desire for justice and mercy upon the earth.

“Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” **Jeremiah 23:5** (KJV)

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” **Isaiah 9:7** (NIV)

“Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.” **Isaiah 56:1** (KJV)

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness.” **Isaiah 1:26-27**

“And the word of the LORD came again to Zechariah: Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” **Zechariah 7:9** (KJV)

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” **Micah 4:1-2** (KJV)

“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” **Micah 6:6-8** (KJV)

“This is what the LORD Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’ But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry. ‘When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,’ says the LORD Almighty.” **Micah 7:8-13** (NIV)

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before your face.” **Psalms 89:14**

“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”

Proverbs 21:13

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.” **Isaiah 11:1-5**

Why is the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord the dominant spirit at the gate of Law Enforcement? Here is the rationale: The “fear of the Lord” is more than a concept of “being afraid of God,” and that you are accountable to God for your actions. The fear of the Lord encompasses those realities but it is more.

Every believer should have a real concern (fear?) of never fulfilling the will of God for their life when they are “born again.” They should realize that they are to be a participant in the renewal and restoration of things on earth as they are in heaven.

Ever since mankind sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, the Lord has been implementing his redemption plans. He spoke of this redemptive process to Adam and Eve. God’s Holy Spirit is working in mankind the spirit of renewal and restoration of all things on earth patterned after things in heaven.

Therefore, the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord is associated with a spirit of renewal and restoration in the earth. Heaven’s justice and mercy are essential characteristics of the law of God being restored to societies on earth. The gate of Law Enforcement needs the spirit of renewal and restoration to fall upon its gatekeepers because there is a great lack of justice and mercy in its courts declares the Lord.

What is the cause of so much injustice and the lack of mercy in the land? What is the dominant spirit of darkness that resists the Fear of the Lord? **It is the spirit of greed!** The passage in Matthew 6:19-24 is tremendous insight to the control the spirit of greed will have over us if we don’t have the spirit of the fear of the Lord at work in us.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy then your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy then your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be

devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”
Matthew 6:19-24

The greatest manifestation in a person's life that the fear of the Lord is at work is the person's generosity. The Jewish "idiom" in verses 22-23 (the eye being the light of the body) is about generosity. It is saying generosity is the one trait that gives evidence your life is full of light (God). Greed is the one trait that gives evidence that your life is full of darkness (Satan). Giving is the key to combating the spirit of greed. Giving justice and mercy in the gate of Law Enforcement is critical to any society.

The love of money/wealth/things versus an allegiance or love for God is the bottom line of this struggle or conflict. Greed will corrupt justice and make us merciless.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” **I Timothy 6:10**

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” **Hebrews 13:5**

A gatekeeper in the arena of Law Enforcement must be a person filled with the light of God. I don't want to dilute the meaning of scripture and reduce giving to "your time," "your energy," or some other resource. The Bible is very explicit on what it means with regard to giving. It is our wealth! A gatekeeper of Law Enforcement needs to be a person with a generous heart.

The Lord is interested in our heart regarding giving. The primary spiritual measurement used by God in assessing our hearts regarding our giving is the "tithe." This is a "percent" of everyone's income. It's only 10% but as we all know, it's like God were asking for it all.

Is it easy to give a tithe? The answer to that question is "yes" if you are giving more than a tithe back to God. The answer is less clear when we have worked out an elaborate scheme in our own minds and hearts about what is a tithe and how it is given to God.

It should be very clear that GOD DOES NOT NEED OUR WEALTH!!! However, He knows that it is the one thing that will separate us from Him (Matthew 6). Therefore, He knew that if we would embrace the "Spirit of the Fear of the Lord," we would embrace the spirit of generosity because above all else, GOD IS GIVING! It is amazing what the Lord can do in a person's life when they realize that all the money they have is the Lord's. When a Christian reaches this maturity level they are prepared for being a gatekeeper in Law Enforcement.

The Bible declares that the love of riches is very corrupting of justice and mercy. Just read Proverbs to begin to understand this principle. It can invade every area of a person's life and not just the gate of Law Enforcement. The Church is also cautioned in scripture about not treating one another differently if they are rich or poor.

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes,

and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.

*Mercy triumphs over judgment." **James 2:1-13***

"If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time --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. To him be honor and might forever. Command those who are rich in

this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

I Timothy 6:11-19

Why is the spirit of greed such a dominant spiritual force in the gate of Law Enforcement? Because the hope of riches can so tempt and corrupt those who hold these authorities in a city or a nation.

*"Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "**Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs. I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him...***

Then he said to them, *"**Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.'* Luke 12:1-5; 15-21

"Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." **Romans 1:28-32**

"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one

deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." **Ephesians 5:3-17**

"If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?"

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another--and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already.

Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

I Corinthians 6:1-11

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips Do not lie to each other, since you

have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Colossians 3:1-10

Church leaders are particularly urged to avoid greed when serving the flock of God. The apostle Peter addressed the Church on these matters in his two letters.

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." I Peter 5:2-3

"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping." ...They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood! They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness." II Peter 1:1-3; 13-15

"A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live."
Proverbs 15:27

CHAPTER 5

Christian Strategy for Obtaining Gates of Righteousness

God has His own plan for bringing forth the kingdom of God upon the earth as it is in heaven. While living on earth, His son Jesus Christ was shown what God was doing to implement His plan and began to do and say only what His Father was saying and doing. Each Christian needs to have the same ability to see what God is doing on earth and learn to individually participate in what He is doing.

The Christian strategy for obtaining gates of righteousness must be to do it God's way. The Christian who wants to fulfill God's desire to have the kingdom of God come upon the earth and have God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven must embrace the life of Jesus the Christ.

The word "Christ" is the Greek word for the Hebrew word "Messiah." For ages the Jews were longing for their Messiah (the ruler of the kingdom of God on earth) to be manifested. When the Messiah finally came, the nation of Israel's leaders didn't recognize him. They did not understand the time in which they lived and they did not recognize that Jesus was "God in the flesh." They believed it was blasphemous for Jesus to declare that God Almighty was His Father. When Jesus called himself "the son of Man," Jewish leaders knew he was declaring himself the Messiah and that they should listen to him. They were not persuaded to believe even though they saw the many signs, wonders and miracles Jesus performed.

Many of the Jewish people responded to Jesus' message and received him as not only their "master" but their "savior." However, it even took these Jewish believers time to better understand God's plan. God so loved the world that he sent his son to "whosoever" would believe in him would be saved from their sin and receive newness of life here upon the earth. It was 10 years after Jesus had ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to the early Church that the apostle Peter had it revealed to him that the "Gentiles" were to be part of the gospel of the kingdom of God. How did he gain this understanding? The *mind of God* was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit when he was praying. God was already working to orchestrate Peter to go to the house of Cornelius (Roman centurion living in Caesarea). God made it clear to Peter that he should go to this Gentile man's home and declare the gospel of Jesus Christ to him and his household.

Saul of Tarsus (Apostle Paul) had already been converted and was told by Jesus that he would be “a light to the Gentiles”. However, the Holy Spirit had not yet sent him to the Gentile nations. It was the apostle Peter that God wanted to use to convey to the Jewish Church that Gentiles were to be part of the Church. God had a strategy on the expansion of the Church in the earth and the people of God had to grasp both his plan and his timing to move in the power of His Holy Spirit.

There were “*hints*” of God’s strategic plan to reach the nations prior to Peter’s visit to Cornelius’ home. Two of these events were the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Philip the evangelist. First, Philip went to Samaria (Acts 8) and preached the gospel to people the Jews despised. Most Jews believed the Samaritans were as “outside the Jewish faith” as any Gentile. Interestingly, Philip had left Jerusalem due to the great persecution of the Church at the time. It seemed to be part of God’s strategy to scatter the Church to reach more people. Jesus anointed Philip to do many miraculous signs to confirm what he was saying was true and many believed and were baptized in water.

The apostles in Jerusalem heard the Samaritans had received the word of God through Philip’s preaching. Peter and John went to Samaria and followed up Philip’s preaching by praying for the new believers to be baptized with the Holy Spirit as they had been baptized on the day of Pentecost. Later this is exactly what happened to the household of Cornelius.

Philip was then led by the Holy Spirit from Samaria to the desert where he encountered an Ethiopian official on the road to Gaza. He was obviously a convert to Judaism because the Bible records he had been worshipping in Jerusalem and was now returning to Ethiopia. This was not just any official. This person was in charge of the treasury of the queen of Ethiopia. He was definitely a “gatekeeper” in the nation of Ethiopia. Again God was at work to have this divine encounter occur.

The official was in his chariot reading from the book of Isaiah about the Messiah. Philip was urged by the Holy Spirit to go closer to hear what he was reading. When Philip heard the official was reading about the suffering of Jesus (Acts 8:32-33) he asked him if he understood what he was reading. The official asked Philip to explain to him what the prophet Isaiah was talking about. It was the perfect opportunity to lead the official to a saving knowledge of Jesus the Christ. When they came to some water along the road they were traveling the official asked Philip to baptize him. Then the official continued on his way back to Ethiopia. This was truly an encounter by Philip with a “gatekeeper of a nation.” It was all orchestrated by the Holy Spirit to expand the kingdom of God upon the earth.

The New Testament scriptures record other conversions of important gatekeepers of the cities impacted by the gospel of Jesus the Christ and the kingdom of God. It started with Jesus witnessing to many prominent people (gatekeepers) about the kingdom of God and that he was appointed “king of the Jews.” Many of these people believed: Some before his crucifixion and resurrection, and many afterward. Many of these prominent people used their influence (positions of authority) and wealth to support the ministry of Jesus upon the earth.

“One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.” **Luke 14:1**

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." **John 3:1-2**

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household (this was Herod Agrippa the king of Galilee) Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means." **Luke 8:1-3**

There are 13 separate references to Herod in the Gospel of Luke, and only four of which can also be found in the other gospels. This means that there are nine references to Herod in the Gospel of Luke for which Luke had to have a source independent of another gospel. Some Bible scholars suggest that Joanna may have been one of the eyewitnesses available to Luke as a source for his Herodian material as well as Jesus' ministry.

Joanna is among a group of women who are the first resurrection witnesses, along with Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and other women (Luke 24:10). These women went to the apostles who thought their testimony about the risen Lord was nonsense, though Peter and some others decided to look at the tomb for themselves. Joanna is therefore to be included in the "ones with them" that Jesus calls "witnesses" (Luke 24:48).

"Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body." **Mark 15:43**

"Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb." **Matthew 27:55-61**

When the apostle Paul was sent out by the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13) we learn of prominent people receiving the Word of God and it having a significant effect on the life of the city. It is probable these prominent people were "gatekeepers" in specific spheres of jurisdiction in the city. They could now manifest the kingdom of God to earth and have the will of the Father done here as it is in heaven.

"Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women." **Acts 17:4**

“Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.” **Acts 17:12**

It was “revolutionary” in many cities the apostle Paul visited. Satan is always upset with righteous leadership at the gates of a city or nation. Satan will often incite the people still living in the kingdom of darkness to go to “war” with those who had led these prominent people to believe in the gospel of Jesus the Christ and his kingdom upon the earth. Satan still had his own prominent people he could incite against the kingdom of God.

“The word of the Lord spread through the whole region But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.”
Acts 13:49-50

“At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the good news.” **Acts 14:1-7**

“They preached the good news in that city (Derbe) and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.” **Acts 14:21-26**

It should be noted that Paul and Barnabas were often driven out of a city because they upset the kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of darkness wouldn’t have been upset if there weren’t a significant number of people coming into the kingdom of God. When gatekeepers in a city embrace the gospel of Jesus the Christ, the non-believers in the city (both Jews and Gentiles) think getting rid of those who preached the word of God would make things return to “normal.” Scriptures show that when God’s “seed” was planted in the hearts of many people in the city that this new life still existed when the apostles revisited the city later. The early church recognized that some “tares” would exist along with the “wheat.” They also knew the kingdom of God was expanding upon the earth and would overcome the kingdom of darkness.

The above scriptures were from Paul's first missionary journey. Later his second missionary journey would have the same results. Influential and prominent people of a city would hear the gospel and embrace it. God's Holy Spirit would guide Paul to the places where He had people awaiting the presentation of the gospel of the kingdom of God (just like Peter and Cornelius).

"Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

*"From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us." **Acts 16:7-15***

It was in Philippi that the Holy Spirit began to reach out to the people of Macedonia. Paul and Silas next went to Thessalonica.

*"When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go." **Acts 17:1-9***

Paul and Silas' message was impacting the "marketplace" in the city. People were learning of the kingdom of God and its ruler "Jesus the Messiah." Again many in the city were entering into the

kingdom of God and they included prominent women (probably more gatekeepers). Such a response normally incites the displaced ones to be jealous.

Paul and Silas next went to Berea and preached the gospel of the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit continued to work in the lives of the people of Berea like was done in the previous cities.

“As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.” Acts 17:10-15

Athens worshipped all kinds of gods. They even had an idol for the “unknown god.” Paul preached to them about this god. Although Paul preached in Athens only a few accepted his message. Paul then left Athens and traveled to Corinth. It was there the Lord appeared to him and told him **“I have many people in this city.”** This illustrates how God has a strategic plan for certain cities.

“After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.”

*“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: **“Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.”***

So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

“While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.” Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime,

it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law--settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” So he had them ejected from the court. Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.” **Acts18:1-17**

It was probably encouraging to Paul that the Lord told him that no harm would come to him as he ministered in Corinth. This didn't mean the kingdom of God message didn't face opposition as it continued to expand in the earth. It was in Corinth that Paul met two people (Priscilla and Aquila) who would become close associates in preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God in the first century of the Church.

Acts chapter 19 describes the ministry of the apostles in the city of Ephesus and the surrounding region of what was called at the time “Asia.” One particular verse describes the effective ministry of Paul in freeing this area from the power of evil spirits.

“Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.” **Acts19:8**

The chapter describes the how the people of the city of Ephesus came to understand the power of the kingdom of God to overcome the power of the kingdom of darkness by the signs, wonders and miracles manifested through the life of Paul by the Holy Spirit. They not only repented of their sins and became followers of Jesus Christ the Messiah but gathered up all their expensive occult material and burned it. The gates of hell were being defeated in a significant manner. The Church led Ephesus to become a city of light for the kingdom of God in the earth.

Of course there was continued satanic opposition to the message of the kingdom of God in the city. People's *greed in the marketplace* was one device used by Satan to incite this opposition. The Church should never be caught off guard about this sinful nature exploited by Satan. More will be spoken on this matter later in this book.

CHAPTER 6

Overcoming Temptations of Evil

The Church must resist the devil in the same manner that Jesus overcame the temptations of evil. The Church must use the “sword of the Spirit” which is the “word of God.” It was “kingdom against kingdom” in the desert when Jesus was challenged by the devil to listen to him and not to God.

“Again, the devil took him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory (splendor) of them;

And said to him, “All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

*Then Jesus said to him, “**Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shall thou serve.**”*

Then the devil left him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

Matthew 4:8-11

The same temptation event was also written about in the gospel of Luke:

“And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, “All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”

And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”

Luke 4:5-7, 13

Our Father will give us insight on how to defeat (overcome) the devil with His word. He will have his angels nurture us when we are tested. God wants us to realize that the devil will come again to tempt us. He tells us to “be alert and resist the devil.”

The various letters written to the Church by the apostolic leadership gave specific instructions on how to do battle with the kingdom of darkness.

*“Finally, be **strong in the Lord** and in **his mighty power**. Put on the **full armor of God**, so that you can take your **stand against the devil’s schemes**. For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

Stand firm** then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the **gospel of peace**. In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one**. Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**. And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, **be alert** and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” **Ephesians 6:10-18

What are some of the temptations used by the devil to draw Christians away from God’s plan for their lives? The following areas are where Christians often find great temptations and struggles in their lives:

- Use of our time (Satan says “tomorrow” and robs God’s people of “today”)
- Our companions (can drain us rather than build us up)
- Lack of proper food (both physical and spiritual)
- Lack of rest (both physical and spiritual)
- Lack of meditation (quiet time without falling asleep)
- Lack of faith (Oh ye of little faith!)
- Lack of skills (we forget it is no longer we that live but Christ that lives in us)

The Greek classic about the mighty warrior Ulysses has a story in it that illustrates the power of temptations to not let us complete our mission and will work toward actually destroying our lives. Ulysses and his men were on a mission to return home but their voyage would take them past an island where “muses” lived. Ulysses was not ignorant of the muse’s power to lure them to the island where they lived and have their ship and their lives destroyed on the unseen reefs in the water. He prepared himself and his men to resist the temptations and they successfully overcame the temptations of the muses and completed their mission home.

The Church is like Ulysses. Together the people of God are on a specified mission. They are not to be ignorant of their enemy’s devices to tempt them to failure and not complete their mission and/or possibly destroy their lives. The Church must prepare itself to resist every temptation (no matter how alluring) which would divert it from completing its mission.

Christians must put on the full armor of God to reach all nations and the gates of their cities with godly principles of life. It is imperative that they firmly grasp the “sword of the Spirit” which is the Word of God. The following confessions must be in their hearts.

“...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”
II Corinthians 2:11

“Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” **I John 4:4**

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” **Philippians 4:13**

“I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” **Jeremiah 29:11**

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but power.” **I Corinthians 4:20**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” **Matthew 5:3**

“Listen my dear brothers; has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised to those who love Him.”
James 2:5

CHAPTER 7

The Mind of God

“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” -- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 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.

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. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

*For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? “But we have the mind of Christ.” **I Corinthians 2: 9-16***

The major Christian strategy for taking the gates of a nation or a city is to have the mind of God. This doesn't mean to know everything that God knows. It is to have God “personalize” His plans for your life and have Him reveal to you how to become a gatekeeper in the jurisdiction he has placed you. Every believer should have a sense of “destiny” in their life when they become a follower of Jesus Christ. God has purpose in taking your life here on earth and transforming it to declare not only the Lordship of Jesus Christ, but His kingdom here upon the earth as it is in heaven.

Many Christians have little teaching on the “warfare that goes on in their thought life.” The apostle Paul was telling the Corinthian church that they needed to understand how the Holy Spirit would reveal to them the thoughts of God. This section examines many scriptures which highlight thoughts and having our minds renewed to think like God.

What are thoughts? Where do they come from? Are they controllable?

Webster's dictionary says thoughts are “the act or process of thinking” or “a product of thinking.” The Bible puts thoughts and imaginations into the category of spiritual warfare!

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (the anointed one).” II Corinthians 10:5

Who are we in warfare with? Anything or anyone that isn't Christ (the Anointed One)!!

Thoughts are certainly part of the invisible world and cannot be seen because **“thoughts are spirit!”** They are your spirit, someone else's spirit, a spirit of darkness, or God's Spirit (which include his angelic messengers). Thoughts are reflected in our emotions, our words, and our deeds. Since thoughts are spirit, they can be discerned by others that we are thinking certain things.

Jesus often discerned the thoughts of others. Sometimes he would ask his disciples, **“What do you think?”**

Anxious or fearful thoughts can keep us from sleeping and can trouble us to the point of having definite physical and emotional problems (ulcers, arthritis, insomnia, headaches, vomiting, skin rashes, phobias, paranoia, anger, bitterness, etc.).

However, thoughts can also bring us the mind of God which can sow His righteousness into our life and reveal to us His will for us as we “walk in His Spirit here on earth.”

There are three (3) categories of thoughts that enter a person's mind:

- Human thoughts (which come from the heart)
- Thoughts brought to us by evil spirits
- Thoughts of God

How can a person determine which is which and cast down any thought which exalts itself against the knowledge we have of Christ? The Christian should be clear from scripture that God wants us to have the same mind as His. It would be best to address this declaration before addressing the warfare in the mind regarding “self” and “Satan” which oppose the things of God.

Mind of God and His Thoughts in the Christian

Having the mind of God is not just a New Testament theme. Prophets have declared this theme since the beginning of time.

“He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns down to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth -- the LORD God Almighty is his name.” Amos 4:13

“But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor.” Micah 4:12

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” **Isaiah 55:8-9**

“How great are your works, O LORD, how profound are your thoughts!” **Psalms 92:5**

“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”
Psalms 139:17

“Let this mind (attitude) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross...” **Philippians 2:5-6**

Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy meditate (think) on these things.” **Philippians 4:8**

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” **Hebrews 3:1**

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God... which is your spiritual worship (reasonable service). Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is... his good, pleasing and perfect will.” **Romans 12:1-3**

After his resurrection Jesus was instructing his disciples out of the Scriptures so they would understand that it was imperative that they receive power from on high as promised by His Father. Jesus had already told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and teach them (John chapter 16). He had to remind them that without the Holy Spirit they would never be able to accomplish their mission for God.

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”
John 24:45-49

The scriptures tell us there is conflict between a person’s sinful nature and the work of the Holy Spirit to mature them in the ways of their new savior. The first seven chapters of the book of Romans address man’s sinful nature and how we struggle in our bodies (and all its members) to be instruments of righteousness. The themes of these first 7 chapters are:

- God's wrath and righteous judgment against mankind
- Law of God written in stone to the Jew and in Gentiles' hearts judging them as "unrighteous"
- God's faithfulness to impart righteousness to people who will have faith in Him through Jesus Christ (*justification by faith*)
- Our struggle with sin and our refusal to be mindful of God

When we do not think it is worthwhile to be mindful of God (think like God thinks) and retain the knowledge of God in our life, then *He gives us over to a depraved mind* (Romans 1:28). Too often we think this scripture applies only to unbelievers. If we were to consider it applies to anyone who isn't "in the Spirit knowing the mind of God" then we might understand the scriptures better that make the following points:

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." **Romans 1:21**

"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking." **Ephesians 4:17**

The scriptures cry out to us to know the thoughts of God (HIS MIND).

"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but 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.

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you... because they who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ... to share in both his sufferings and his glory... creation awaits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed... that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God... the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but... he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit... and if God is for us... will He not graciously give us all things?" **Romans 8:5-11**

Verses below are from **Philippians chapters 3 and 4** on God's will for us:

"It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life... Brethren, I do not

count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. For many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ, who set their minds on earthly things, for our citizenship is in heaven. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God: and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church he also wrote to believers to have the mind of God for their life via the Holy Spirit imparted to them.

*“I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought (with God). For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” **1 Corinthians 2:10-11***

*“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.” **1 Corinthians 13:11***

*“Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.” **1 Corinthians 14:20***

*“Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.” **2 Peter 3:1***

Jesus asked his disciples many times, “**What do you think?**” Their answers gave him insight to their relationship with his Father (HIS thoughts). See Matt 17:25; 18:12; 21:28; 22:42; Luke 10:36.

Chapter 8 of Romans begins with “life in the Spirit.” The apostle Paul tells us that we “are not controlled by our sinful nature any longer but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you” and this Spirit of Christ “will give life to our mortal bodies.”

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts (Jesus), knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, (or we know that all things work together for good to those who love God) who are called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, ... those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” **Romans 8:26-30***

When we start having our communications with God and are able to receive HIS WORD for ourselves and others, the glory of the Lord will come upon us. Our countenance *will* change.

Thoughts of Our Heart

The “heart” is used widely in the scriptures as our being (our spirit, our feelings, our will, our intellect) as well as the center of all things. The scriptures say that “thoughts” come from the heart and that God weighs the motivation of the heart. Is the motivation from “self” or from God? It is clear from scripture that God can “sow” His thoughts into our lives (our heart and our mind, our will and our words, our deeds and ways).

Paul’s letter to the Philippians wanted these believers to understand that *Christ is the sum and substance of life*. His chief desire was that they might *have the mind of Christ*. He stresses both the *deity and humanity of Christ*. He stresses the *Spirit of God’s work in us to accomplish the purposes of God through us in the same manner God did through Christ*.

There are several key “attitudes” the Holy Spirit brings to our hearts with the thoughts of God. These are:

- Humility
- Reverence
- Inspiration
- Deep Purpose
- Joy

These “attitudes” must reside in our hearts to readily receive and act upon the thoughts of God. When we spend time alone with God, meditating upon Him as the source of our life, the whisperings of the Spirit will bring messages to our heart, actual revelations, telling us and guiding us on how to receive the thoughts of God for our lives. These thoughts will usher us back into the created world (seen world) with a greater awareness of how to express a fullness of God in our life (both by what we say and what we do). Anything we achieve is done by Him finding expression in us.

What is Humility?

Bill Gothard defined humility as “Recognizing that God and others are actually responsible for the achievements in my life.”

Benjamin Franklin said, “To be humble to superiors is duty. To be humble to equals is courtesy, but to be humble to inferiors is nobleness!”

Jonathan Edwards said, “Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil’s reach as humility.”

Williams Jennings Bryan said, “The humblest citizen of all the land, when clad in the armor of righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error.”

Henry Jacobsen said, “Humility is the ability to see ourselves as God describes us.”

John Ruskin said, “I believe that the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean humility as doubt of his own power. But really great people have the curious feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them. And they see something divine in every other person and are endlessly, foolish - incredibly merciful.”

Another word for humility is meekness. Someone has said, “It’s too bad that the meek haven’t already inherited the earth, for the unmeek are making a real mess of it.”

What is the greatest enemy of humility? It is pride! Pride is the exact opposite of humility.

“Do you think the Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us longs to be expressed... for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

James 4:5-6

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind (humility) let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross...”

Therefore, my beloved, ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.” **Philippians 2:3-8**

Until one learns to lose one’s self (metaphor is to put self to death or crucify the flesh) he cannot find himself.

What is Reverence?

Another attitude that God wants in every believer’s life is reverence.

Reverence is both a noun (something you have) and a verb (something you show). As a noun it is a reverent spirit or character trait inherent in your being conveying deep respect for God. As a verb reverence is when you regard or treat someone (including God) with deep respect. The greatest enemy of a reverent spirit is a spirit of disrespect. Our reverence must start with God.

*“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his **reverent** submission (to God and His will for Jesus).” Hebrews 5:7*

*“Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in **reverent** fear.” I Peter 1:7*

*“Likewise, teach the older women to be **reverent** in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.” Titus 2:3*

*“Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are **reverent** before him.” Ecclesiastes 8:12*

*“Observe my Sabbaths and have **reverence** for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.” Leviticus 19:30 and Leviticus 26:2*

*“Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in **reverence**, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” Joshua 5:14*

*“But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of **reverence** for God I did not act like that.” Nehemiah 5:15*

*“To this day they have not humbled themselves or shown **reverence**, nor have they followed my law and the decrees I set before you and your ancestors.” Jeremiah 44:10*

*“I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and **reverence** the God of Daniel. “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.” Daniel 6:26*

*“My covenant was with him (Levi; priesthood), is a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for **reverence** and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.” Malachi 2:5*

*“Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of **reverence** for God.” II Corinthians 7:1*

*“Submit to one another out of **reverence** for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21*

*“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and **reverence** for the Lord.” Colossians 3:22*

*“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with **reverence** and awe,” Hebrews 12:28*

Bill Gothard said reverence is, “Awareness of how God is working through the people and events in my life to produce the character of Christ in me.”

What is Inspiration?

One of the most exciting experiences in a Christian’s life is to receive “inspiration” from God.

When you are alone with God, you will find He talks to you in flashes of inspiration. You will find that you will suddenly know things which you never knew before. All knowledge exists in God’s mind and is extended to us. Knowledge is ours for the asking.

Do you know the story of George Washington Carver and his conversations with God? He was a professor of agriculture at Tuskegee University in Alabama. He was a black man, born of slave parents in 1859. From a young age, plants were of great interest to him.

He earned his way through college in Iowa by cooking, by taking in laundry, and by working as a janitor. In 1894 he graduated from college and went on staff at Iowa State College as an assistant botanist. He took charge of the greenhouse and started the fungus collection that later grew to about 20,000 species and brought him professional fame. He remained on staff here until 1896 when he joined the staff at Tuskegee Institute at the invitation of Booker T. Washington where he worked until the end of life in 1943.

He revolutionized the agriculture of the South (the bastion of slavery and racial discrimination). He was a believer who never let bitterness into his life. He was a man who spent much time with God understanding how he should live.

Early in his life, he asked God all the “tough, mysterious theological questions” which God told him he was not wise enough to understand. God told him to ask Him something he could understand. He then asked God what all could you do with a “peanut” and the Lord opened his mind to understand things he had never known before. He made more than 300 products from the peanut. They ranged from instant coffee to soap and ink.

Next he asked God about the sweet potato and learned how to make 118 products from the sweet potato, including flour, shoe blacking and candy.

He produced 75 products from the pecan.

He made synthetic marble from wood shavings; dyes from clay; and starch, gum and wallboard from cotton stalks.

On Sundays, he would have a special time of prayer for those who came to him, anointing them with oil while he prayed for them.

The concept of inspiration is immense to civilization. God does not bestow favors upon a few whom seek it out. It is just the reverse. He gives to those who ask without favor! "Ask and you shall receive." You must do the asking. You must "plug-in" to the source of all Knowledge.

How do you think civilization advances? Not a bit of what is written in books ever got there until after the thought of it happened in man's mind. The book is but a record of what has already happened. It is bringing others up to date by informing them. It is a means of thought transference only, and not a creative process until you have made it so by the transformation within you.

The mind of Christ (or God) is where the unity or one accord is located. It's not that we are all thinking the same thing at the same time, but it's that we all are thinking like God.

"Therefore, if there is any consolation (encouragement) in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." **Philippians 2:1-3**

"For by the grace given me I say unto every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." **Romans 12:3**

Our ability to manifest our unity with God is directly related to our REALIZATION OF HIS UNITY WITH US. The more Christians realize that they are nothing more than an extension of HIM, then the more our works will be an extension of HIS. Such realization keeps one exalted with inspiration that we can be insulated from the thousands of distractions which lead one away from His own design of life and protects us from petty temptation, from disease, and from those harms which constantly come to those who are not one with God.

Such a constant realization ennobles one automatically. One's stature is greater, one's step more elastic, one's aura more powerful; and it makes other people see the light in your life and which attracts people to you and have them ask about the hope that is in you. The greater the exaltation and ecstasy of our thinking, the greater the standards of all man's thinking will be. Each person is thus empowered to uplift all.

Examples of this are found in the thinking of great scientists, inventors, composers, authors and artist who uplift the entirety of civilization to higher standards of culture by the extension of their thinking into the consciousness of others. The heights to which civilization will rise are the responsibility of all, even the lowliest of people. Each person must be inspired to be in union with God and become His expression of life and in so doing brings life to others. When the

Church is filled with the thoughts of God it will be easy to provide the counsel to those in authority at the gates of the city or the nation on the righteous ways of God.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God... which is your spiritual worship (reasonable service). Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is... his good, pleasing and perfect will.” **Romans 12:1-2**

It is important for Christians to believe God’s eternal promise of unlimited help in guiding us in all things. We have to “desire and trust” the Lord and learn to walk in His Spirit.

The scriptures below are reminders to believers that God wants His thoughts to be our thoughts so that we might fulfill our divine purpose (the reason we were created).

Restoration prophets: Amos 4:13; Micah 4:12; Isaiah 55:6-8; Psalm 92:5, 139:17.

New Testament Apostles/Prophets: I Cor. 1:10, 2:11, 13:11, 14:20; II Cor. 10:5, Romans 8:5-32, 12:1-3; Heb. 3:1; 2 Pet 3:1.

It is important we examine our heart’s condition because it is here that the thoughts of God are received. If we have the wrong “condition” (attitude) then we will fail to acknowledge God’s thoughts and act upon them.

Below is a true story of a young man who was learning this kind of walk with God from an early age. He was born in Boston, Mass. in 1871 and he attended the village school until he was nearly 10 years old and then, because of family needs, was put to work.

He got a job in a dry goods store, drawing a salary of \$2.50 week and walking 6 miles to and from work each day. Down deep in his heart, he told his biographer, he knew that we all have the same promise of unlimited help from God Almighty who guides us in all things. He loved music from infancy, and when he was 13 years old he secured a church organist’s position and entered art school. When he was taken out of school and put to work again it did not make him bitter. In fact, he considered it one of the most fortunate things that ever happened to him. For thus, he escaped the encyclopedical educational systems of information-cramming, and memory-testing which filled other children’s lives until they were 25 years. He (like Jesus) used his precious youth to find out the secrets of walking with God.

When he was 15 years old and working his way through art school by means of a job that brought him \$12/week, the girl he was going with announced that the opera company was coming to the city to present a series of grand operas. “I want you to take me to the opera,” she said.

“That is exactly what I planned to do,” the young man replied. He meant that he was planning to take her to one performance, but she thought he was going to take her to all the performances

(cost of \$79.60) which as a sum of money he had not anticipated seeing for several years! “The entire series!” he exclaimed. “That’s impossible!”

“Did you say impossible?” she replied. “You are the last person in the world that I would ever expect to hear say that word.”

He took her words to heart. When the time came for the opera series to begin he found himself standing at the end of a long line of people waiting to purchase tickets with \$6.00 in his pocket but with *absolute faith in his heart that before he reached the window, he would have the \$79.60 necessary to purchase the entire series.*”

He stood in line all night in order to get a good place. In the morning a man said to him, “Sonny, would you like to make \$5.00?”

“Yes sir, how?” he replied.

“By selling me your place in the line so I can get to my office by nine,” the man replied.

Quick as a flash he replied, “I’ll do better for you than that. Give me your money and I will deliver the tickets to you.”

Without even asking his name, the man gave him the money and his address, and he put it down in a notebook. Holding the money between his fingers and with notebook and pencil in hand, looking like a bookmaker at the races, he became a magnet drawing scores of people to him. By the time he reached the box office, he had the amount necessary for the entire series for his sweetheart and himself, and \$110 in excess, enough to carry him through months of school. The strange thing was no one even asked his name or address! When one trusts the power of God, it automatically draws forth the trust of the people one deals with.

A second story about this young man that vividly illustrates what he learned about receiving the thoughts of God and acting upon them.

One summer he took a job as a bellboy in one of the hotels. The salary was only about \$8/month, but he was told that the tips that bellboys received amounted to \$100 in a season. However, when the first tip was offered to him, something deep down within him would not let him take it. Stammeringly he said, “No thank you, sir,” and fled. He went down to his retreat in the cellar and tried to ponder why that inner voice had spoken to him in this manner. Then suddenly he had a great inspiration.

“I’ll be the only bellboy in existence who never took a tip!” he exclaimed. “And I’ll be the *best* bellboy the world ever knew. I’ll pledge myself to give the most joyful and cheerful service that ever a bellboy gave!”

From that moment he responded to every request with cheerful willingness, eagerness, and speed that surprised all the guests. He ran his legs off for everybody. He got up at five o’clock in the morning to get cow’s milk for a baby that needed special care, and then went back to bed again.

When asked why he did not take tips he replied, “I receive a salary, and I love my work.” The guests were simply over-whelmed by it. They invited him to dinner parties and yachting trips and when the hotel management explained that it was against the rules for servants to have social relations with guests, these people of influence said they would never go back again to that hotel if they didn’t break a rule for him. So he had a wonderful summer.

During his spare time he did sketching and painting. The guests became deeply interested in his work and at the end of the season instead of the \$100 from tips he had received checks amounting to \$850 for his pictures and five offers of legal adoption in wealthy families. The people to whom he had brought ice water became his life-long friends, and from them and friends of theirs he received many commissions for painting after he became famous in that field. And he went to the wedding of the baby that he brought the milk for!

His motto was “I have absolute faith that anything can come to one who trusts in the unlimited help of God and works within His law and always gives more to others than they expect, and does it cheerfully and courteously.”

Although he became wealthy, he discovered early in life that wealth may be more of a handicap than a help because the comforts and luxuries it can give sidetrack one’s desire for a successful life and develop instead a desire for ease.

What’s a Deep Purpose Attitude?

Every Christian should believe that God has a “deep purpose” for every life born and that when that person is “born again” they receive the Holy Spirit to guide them in fulfilling their purpose in life. **Psalms 139** is a classic declaration of God having a specific purpose for everyone. They were birthed (created) with a purpose in mind by their creator:

“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to

be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

A similar theme of a predetermined plan before he was born is written about the prophet Jeremiah:

“The word of the LORD came to me (Jeremiah) saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

“Ah, Sovereign LORD” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.”

*But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.” **Jeremiah 1:4-10***

The same theme is seen in the life of Abraham, the life of Moses and many other Biblical characters which should also be used to convince a person that God has “deep” purpose for every life.

No one can recall the name of the man who led Billy Graham to receive Christ as his savior. However, think of the thousands upon thousands of people that Dr. Graham has led to the Lord since his conversion. Certainly this unknown saint has his reward in heaven. A Christian must believe that “little things are much if God is in them.” Too often Christians believe that their lives are not making a difference in the kingdom of God here on earth. A change in “attitude” is needed. When that happens we can really identify with Psalm 139 above and know that the Lord has written down what he wants in our life and He is ready to convey them in our thoughts.

What is an Attitude of Joy?

Often the letter of Paul to the Philippians is called the “letter of joy.” Paul told them that whenever he prayed for them it was with “joy” because of their deep commitment to the gospel

of Jesus Christ. Ironically Paul was under house arrest in Rome when he wrote this letter but he never let his circumstances control his joy:

“but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.” **Philippians 1:24-26**

When Paul first came to Philippi and preached the gospel he was beaten and put into prison. He and his companions began to joyfully sing praises to God in prison. Paul knew he was where he was supposed to be because he had received the vision from Jesus to go to Macedonia and preach the gospel. When the earthquake hit Philippi while they were in jail immediately their chains fell off but they didn't leave the prison. When the prison guard realized that the prisoners stayed in their cells he was so overwhelmed that he received Paul's message with his household and they were all “filled with joy.”

Real joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. God's joy is more than a human emotion.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness”
Galatians 5:22

“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.” **I Peter 1:8**

Throughout his earthly ministry Jesus was filled with joy to fulfill God's plan for his life. He reassured his disciples that their joy would return after their disappointment that he was crucified. The women were the first to learn “he was raised from the dead” and ran with “joy” to tell others.

What is the Christmas song sung every year about Christ's birth? JOY to the World! When Mary visited Elizabeth (pregnant with John the Baptist) she was told by Elizabeth: “As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.” Imagine the spiritual dynamics of this statement. John the Baptist, in his mother's womb, hears the voice of the mother of Jesus Christ and jumps for joy!

CHAPTER 8

Heaven and Earth Shaken (Spiritual Warfare)

Christians are to be emboldened to believe that God's heavenly spiritual forces are at work in the world to assist them in bringing the kingdom of God to earth as it is in heaven. Every Christian should be thrilled at such an assignment. This seems to have always been God's desire when earth was created and mankind was placed upon it. The Christian should always be aware that activities associated with doing God's will on earth are challenged by the kingdom of darkness. However we have this great promise from God's Word:

"Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." **I John 4:4**

The Bible records Satan and a third of the angels in heaven rebelled against the authority of God. Mankind cannot fully understand the circumstances of such a rebellion but the reality of such a conflict is addressed in the Bible. This started a battle of unseen spiritual forces which began in heaven and according to God's plan has also come to earth and involves mankind.

For many unbelievers this is a mythical story recorded in the Judeo-Christian literature. Of course this is what Satan would have mankind to believe so he can have his way here upon the earth. However, he and all his angelic followers know that their judgment is settled and they will be thrown into an eternal lake of fire where they will be tormented forever for their rebellion against God. Their goal is to take as many human lives on earth as they can with them. The warfare is for the souls of mankind.

There are multiple places in the Bible which give glimpses into this spiritual warfare (both in heaven and on the earth). Mankind became involved in this spiritual war in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were deceived by the devil to disobey God's plans for their lives (Genesis 3). However, God had a plan for His creation (including mankind) that Satan could not disrupt. God himself would come as the "second" Adam and redeem mankind from his rebellion (I Corinthians 15), and destroy the power of death itself which resulted from the sin (disobedience) of Adam and Eve.

God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to overcome the kingdom of darkness on earth as He has done in heaven. Satan and his fallen angels recognized this act of God. From the time Jesus was born until his crucifixion, Satan attempted to have this human killed (thinking this would put an end to God's plan to defeat the kingdom of darkness). At his birth, God's angels constantly communicated with Jesus' parents to escape from those the devil hoped to use to kill baby Jesus. When the magi came to worship this new born "king of the Jews" they were also warned not to tell Herod where they found the child.

The satanic attempts to use humans to kill the son of God persisted throughout Jesus' earthly life. Even when Satan had finally achieved this goal (Jesus' crucifixion), he had no idea that he was fulfilling God's will for His Son. The early apostles had this revealed to them when Jesus arose from the grave and commissioned them to preach the gospel to the entire world. The apostle Paul communicated this message in his letter to the Corinthian church:

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 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.

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. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

*"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ." **I Corinthians 2: 1-16***

The early Church came to experience many supernatural events to convince them "God was with them." Reading "the book of Acts" reveals the "acts" of disciples and the "acts" of the unseen world assisting the Church. His Holy Spirit would direct individuals to carry out His will in spreading the gospel as can be seen in the life of Philip the evangelist, the life of Ananias sent to Saul of Tarsus by Jesus himself, the life of apostle Peter to share the gospel with the household of Cornelius, etc., etc.

Throughout the book of Acts the activity of evil unseen forces resisting the ministry of the Church is also evident. The New Testament letters to the church constantly reminded the Church that believers should not be ignorant of these unseen evil forces utilizing unbelievers to resist the will of God on earth. All who would enter the kingdom of God would suffer persecution. These letters also reminded the Church that its warfare was not with flesh and blood (humans) but with the unseen spiritual forces of evil. When the four gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke

and John they fully revealed the life of Jesus Christ confronting and destroying the works of the devil. Jesus never submitted himself to the devil. He submitted himself to the will of God. If God wanted Jesus to be crucified Jesus was willing to lay His life down to fulfill God's will on earth.

Jesus clearly tells his disciples that the same fate which awaited him (to lay down their life for God) would await many of them. The gospel of John, chapters 14 through 17, goes into great detail about the world's hate for his disciples and the kingdom of God. This hatred is instigated by the kingdom of darkness. However, Jesus has assured His disciples that the Holy Spirit of God would come and equip them to overcome the forces of evil on the earth. Jesus told us not only to pray for the will of God to be done on earth as was in heaven but he told us to ask God to "deliver us from the evil one."

Can we depend upon God to deliver us from the evil one in every situation? The answer is no. However, the Bible gives us many examples of the servants of God who were delivered from the evil one. Below are some of the examples which should encourage us and increase our faith in God's word.

Often as we serve those in authority (like Elisha did with the king of Israel) we must realize they have enemies as we have enemies. Their enemies have tremendous forces which will seek to destroy us as well as those we serve. A great example in scripture is the story of the prophet Elisha serving an ungodly king of Israel and assisting him in his battles with his enemies. The story is found in II Kings chapter 6.

"Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, 'I will set up my camp in such and such a place.'"

The man of God (Elisha) sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

"Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

*When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. **"Don't be afraid,"** the prophet answered. **"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."***

*And Elisha prayed, **"O LORD, open his eyes so he may see."** Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all*

around Elisha. As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike these people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked. Elisha told them, "This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria.

After they entered the city, Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then the LORD opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria. When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?"

"Do not kill them," he answered. "Would you kill men you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master." So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory." **II Kings 6:8-23**

The prophet Elisha knew the ways of God as well as the acts of God. That is an important principle when we deal with people who are controlled by evil. God knew how to bring peace to Israel without killing the armies of the king of Aram. Elisha's instructions to the king of Israel on how to deal with the army of his enemy brings to mind the scripture in Romans 12:17-21.

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." Deuteronomy 32:35

"On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'" Proverbs 25:20-21

"Do not be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:17-21

Two other specific examples of God's presence protecting his saints are found in the book of Daniel. The first example is how God delivers Daniel's three Hebrew friends from death when they are thrown into a fire for not worshipping an idol of the king of Babylon:

"King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, 'This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.'"

Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon--Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego--who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.

So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king."

He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them.

They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."

Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon."
Daniel 3:1-30

The second example in the book of Daniel is when God delivers Daniel from being killed by lions when he also defied a king's edict. Daniel was a loyal gatekeeper in the arena of government and politics during the reign of multiple rulers (Babylonians or Persian empires). However, this didn't stop forces of evil to want to have him killed.

"It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree

stands--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.

Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

Then the men went as a group to king Darius and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "O king, live forever. My God sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.

The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly! "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel." For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. **Daniel 6:1-28**

An important principle besides the Spirit of Preservation is also communicated in these two examples. We must obey God's word when it conflicts with the edicts of government rulers and their authority. History has proven many times that Satan will try and get those in authority to persecute God's people and have them killed to destroy their testimony on earth. Christians may not always be delivered from the evil one in all circumstances but it is certainly in the power of God to do so if He wills it.

An example of this is found in the book of Acts when the Jewish Sanhedrin began to persecute the Church and its leaders. The disciple Stephen was stoned to death for his testimony. Then the apostle James was imprisoned by Herod the king and later executed. This act so pleased the people, Herod had Peter put in prison and planned to do the same thing to him. However, God in His sovereign ways allowed Stephen and James to be killed and used an angel to deliver Peter from death:

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating." When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter." Acts 12:1-19

When Jesus gave his great commission to the disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel he told them **"I will be with you."** Christians should never forget these words. Not only did we receive the Holy Spirit of God when we were "born again" but we have assigned angels to assist

us in our mission here on the earth. The Bible is full of stories where angels both minister to God's chosen and do battle for God's people here against their enemies.

An angel ministered to Hagar and her son Ishmael at various times of desperation in their lives. Angels ministered to Abraham at various times in his life including helping his servant find a wife for his son Isaac. Jacob experienced several encounters with angels in his lifetime and prayed that angels would be with his descendants.

Moses had his own encounters with an angel of the Lord to guide him to deliver the Hebrew people from the bondage of Egypt. An angel of God led the Israelite army as they left Egypt. The Lord promised such angelic support to Moses not only as they traveled to their promise land but in overcoming the enemies they would have when they entered the promise land.

The book of Judges is full of Israel's leaders encountering angels to communicate God's will and assist them in carrying out the will of God. At times God's people would experience the wrath of God because of their sin and the wrath was administered by an angel of God.

Many of the prophets of God (Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, etc.) in the Old Testament had encounters with angels to understand what God wanted them to know or what he wanted to do. Similar events occurred in the New Testament with Philip the Evangelist, Peter, Paul, and John.

"The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."
Psalms 34:7

However, God's angels are also depicted doing battle with the angels associated with the kingdom of darkness. These battles in the unseen world (invisible to mankind) are real and often involve nations and God's will to be exerted upon the earth and being resisted by Satan and his hierarchy of spirits.

Sometimes these spiritual conflicts are revealed to people on earth. Below are several Biblical examples of such events. One of the most classic is the events happening in the heavens which would affect world history and was revealed to the prophet Daniel (Daniel chapters 10-12). These type events are fully revealed in John's Revelation of Jesus Christ book. It is kingdom against kingdom! Spiritual forces are shown actively at work in both the heavens and on earth. God's people are actively engaged in these spiritual conflicts.

"Earthquakes" are often mentioned in the descriptions of these spiritual conflicts. In reading the gospels of Jesus' life here on earth, earthquakes are associated with both Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave:

When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" Matthew 27:54

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. Matthew 28:2

These events imply that the earthquake is a sign of Christ's victory over Satan and his forces of evil. His sacrificial death freed us from the sin that Satan had Adam (hence mankind) commit. His resurrection freed us from death and the grave. God was speaking in the earthquake.

There are many references to earthquakes in the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ. They all appear to be related to a spiritual event:

"I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red."

Revelation 6:12

"Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake." **Revelation 8:5**

"Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake." **Revelation 11:13**

"Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm." **Revelation 11:19**

"Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake." **Revelation 16:18**

Jesus spoke of earthquakes being signs associated with spiritual events happening before he returns to earth and rules the kingdom of God on earth.

"Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places." Matthew 24:7

"Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains." Mark 13:8

"There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven." Luke 21:11

Sometimes the Lord is speaking in an earthquake and sometimes He is not. This is illustrated in the Old Testament with the prophet Elijah and spoken of by the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Zechariah.

*"The LORD said, "**Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.**" Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper." I Kings 19:11-12*

*"...the LORD Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. **Isaiah 29:6***

*"In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel." **Ezekiel 38:19***

*"The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa--what he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel." **Amos 1:1***

*"You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him." **Zechariah 14:5***

The prophets seemed to be speaking of earthquakes in the same manner Jesus was speaking of them regarding His coming to earth. Jerusalem is spoken of the most regarding an earthquake such as never happened before hitting the city. Many do not know that Jerusalem sits atop one of the largest earthquake fault lines on earth (See picture below).



Although the Bible records multiple Jerusalem earthquake events, it is clear the one mentioned in Revelation 16:18 has not happened. It will be the largest earthquake since mankind has been on the earth.

The Lion of Judah

His testimony is our testimony!



APPENDIX A

Thoughts

This appendix has many scriptures in the Bible on thoughts and thinking that occur in the “mind.” They address not only human minds but the “mind of God.” We received the Holy Spirit and the opportunity to have the “mind of God” for our life when we accepted Jesus Christ into our life. These scriptures reveal that thoughts come from the “heart” into the mind. Evil thoughts can come from a person’s evil heart as much as from Satan and his messengers of evil. Both are stirring our sinful nature to disobey God.

“Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, **“Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?” Matthew 9:4**

“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.” Matthew 15:19

“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery.” Mark 7:21

The word “thought” can be both a “noun” and a “verb.” It is used as a verb when it is like “I thought.” When it’s a verb we use other synonyms for thought such as “thinking” or “thinks.” Notice that Jesus equates evil thoughts as a “deed” as much as sexual immorality, theft, murder and adultery. Rarely do humans rank evil thoughts with such sins of our fallen nature. It is when we realize there is spiritual warfare in our minds as well as our bodies that we begin to understand how to “cast down every thought that exalts itself against our knowledge of God.”

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5

The apostle Paul wrote we need to put on “the helmet of salvation” (not only to protect our head but our minds) because we are in a spiritual battle with the kingdom of darkness.

Inventions that transform civilizations, great art/music which loses none of its greatness with time, great literature which teaches us eternal lessons of life, all began with “thoughts” in the mind of a person and then the thoughts found expression:

*“He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and **reveals his thoughts to man**, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth-- **the LORD God Almighty is his name.**” Amos 4:13*

Spiritual reformation in Europe was also the time of the Renaissance where scientific discoveries were being made which changed our understanding of the universe, where the art of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and others were manifested, where great literature once again abounded and inspires people even to this day.

The “dark ages” were dispelled. The age of Light was ignited. Many have called this time, a time of humanism. There is a link between the spiritual revolution taking place in the life of people regarding the “book” and God’s ability to get people to “know His mind” and express it in their gifts and calling.

All of civilization is uplifted by the thinking of great composers, authors, artists, etc. who have extended their thinking into the consciousness of others. The exploration of space is expanding our awareness of the universe in which we live and at the same time bringing inspiration to us to rethink how we live together on earth in peace and good will toward all. All the scriptures below are quotes from the New International Version (NIV) Bible unless stated otherwise.

“The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.” **Genesis 6:5**

“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.” **1 Chronicles 28:9**

“In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.” **Psalms 10:4**

“How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?” **Psalms 13:2**

“Hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught.” **Psalms 55:2**

“How great are your works, O LORD, how profound your thoughts!” **Psalms 92:5**

“The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.” **Psalms 94:11**

“You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.”

Psalms 139:2

“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”

Psalms 139:17

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”

Psalms 139:23

“If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you.” **Proverbs 1:23**

“The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him.” **Proverbs 15:26**

“Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done?” **Ecclesiastes 10:20**

"Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say."
Eccl. 2:12

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon." **Isaiah 55:7**
"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." **Isaiah 55:8-9**

"Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways." **Isaiah 59:7**

"O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbor wicked thoughts?" **Jeremiah 4:14**

"Yet you know me, O LORD; you see me and test my thoughts about you. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter!" **Jeremiah 12:3**

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme." **Ezekiel 38:10**

"Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you." Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!" **Daniel 4:19**

"This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself." **Daniel 7:28**

"But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor." **Micah 4:12**

*"Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, **"Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?"*** **Matthew 9:4**

*"Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, **"Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand."***

Matthew 12:25

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." **Matthew 15:19**

"For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery..." **Mark 7:21**

"He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts." **Luke 1:51**

"...so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." **Luke 2:35**

"Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him."

Luke 9:47

*"Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: **"Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall."*** **Luke 11:17**

"....since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them." **Romans 2:15**

"For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11**

"....and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." **1 Cor. 3:20**

"All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath." **Ephesians 2:3**

"Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess." **Hebrews 3:1**

"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." **Hebrews 4:12**

"....have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" **James 2:4**

The next series of scriptures uses "thought" as a verb (action) and not a noun. A brief comment is made by several of the verses to illustrate when the person thought of something good or bad. Did the person allow themselves to be thinking of something contrary to the will of God?

"Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me-- even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons" **Ruth 1:12**

At the time, Naomi's (Ruth's mother-in-law) thinking was too narrow for her and Ruth's future and she did not think about other ways God may bring her hope for her daughter-in-law.

"I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." *"I will redeem it," he said.* **Ruth 4:4**

Although Boaz had a great love for Ruth and according to God's law he was a "kinsman-redeemer" and could claim Ruth for himself only if another relative gave up his right to be the kinsman-redeemer before Boaz. Boaz took all the right actions based on his thinking and received the right to claim Ruth for himself from the elders at the gates of the city.

"Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk." **1 Samuel 1:13**

The prophet Eli was judging Hannah by outward appearances and not by the Spirit of the Lord. Hence, he had the wrong thoughts.

"I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." **1 Samuel 13:12**

Saul, the king of Israel, allowed the wrong thinking to enter his mind and take authority to perform a service to the Lord (burnt offering sacrifice) which only the prophet Samuel should perform. His poor thinking was part of the great problems he had in leading the nation of Israel.

"Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" **1 Samuel 18:8**

"I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law." **1 Samuel 18:21**

The prophet Samuel was told by the Lord to go to the home of Jesse and anoint one of his sons to be the next king of Israel after Saul's reign came to an end. Samuel at first began to judge who he should anoint by "appearance" but being the spiritual leader he was he could hear the voice of God in his mind (his thinking was in tune with God's will) and was guided not to pick the wrong son.

"When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD." **1 Samuel 16:6**

After Jesse's son David was anointed to be next king of Israel he did not take it upon himself to dethrone Saul but serve him faithfully. However, Saul was tormented with jealous thoughts by evil spirits and constantly attempted to kill his loyal servant David. However, David had such a heart for the Lord that he thought about what he should do to avoid Saul's wrath.

"But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand." **1 Samuel 27:1**

David had a heart for God but was not a perfect king. His adultery with Bathsheba resulted in a child being born. But the child became ill and had a sickness unto death. When the child died David's servants didn't know what they should do about telling the king. However, David noted their distressed look and knew the child had died without them telling him. He also had some thoughts about this situation which provided him with some comfort.

"On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate." **2 Samuel 12:18**

*"He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.'" **2 Samuel 12:22***

Naaman had predetermined events with his thoughts on how he might be healed from leprosy by the prophet Elisha (see scripture below). When Elisha told him he would be healed if he went and dipped himself in the Jordan River he was insulted. False thoughts about the future can often make us angry when events don't work out like we "thought" they would.

"But Naaman went away angry and said, 'I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.'" **II Kings 5:11**

The Bible reminds God's people how often they forget about the miraculous ways in which the Lord had worked in their lives and the kindness He had shown to them. When we don't allow our minds to think about all the Lord has done for us we aren't grateful and a spirit of rebellion will come into our life. In the Psalms king David often referred to this attitude and encouraged us to meditate on the goodness of God in our life.

"When our fathers were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea."
Psalms 106:7

When our minds are not occupied with the ways of God then our hearts become corrupt and our life stays on the path of wickedness...

"For he never thought of doing a kindness, but hounded to death the poor and the needy and the brokenhearted." **Psalms 109:16**

"She (adulteress) gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not." **Proverbs 5:6**

"The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception." **Proverbs 14:8**

"A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps."
Proverbs 14:15

"A wicked man puts up a bold front, but an upright man gives thought to his ways."
Proverbs 21:29

Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways."
Haggai 1:5

This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways." **Haggai 1:7**
"Now give careful thought to this from this day on-- consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD's temple." **Haggai 2:15**

"From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. Give careful thought:"
Haggai 2:18

Our thoughts can lead to having the will of God done in our life, or they can conclude the wrong thing about the truth.

"...because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.'" Mark 5:28

"....but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out," Mark 6:49

"Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli..." **Luke 3:23**

"While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once." **Luke 19:11**

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." **John 8:56**

"Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep." **John 11:13**

"Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor." **John 13:29**

"Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not." **Acts 7:25**

Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ... Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord.

Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart." **Acts 8:20, 22**

"Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision." **Acts 12:9**

"The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped." **Acts 16:27**

*"Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? **What made you think of doing such a thing?** You have not lied to men but to God."* **Acts 5:4**

*"So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, **who was I to think that I could oppose God?**"* **Acts 11:17**

The Apostle Paul's letters to the Church addressed their thought life and thinking the thoughts of God.

*"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and **that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.**"* **1 Corinthians 1:10**

*"**When I was a child**, I talked like a child; **I thought like a child**, I reasoned like a child. **When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.**"* **1 Corinthians 13:11**

"So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given." **2 Corinthians 9:5**

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." **2 Cor. 10:5**

By no means has this appendix captured all the scriptures associated with a person's thought life. All the people who read this book should seriously consider doing their own personal study of learning to have the mind of God and using their thoughts to help guide their life on fulfilling God's will for their life and allowing the Holy Spirit to help you walk in the Spirit and overcome the kingdom of darkness.

A special study would be to examine the four gospels in the New Testament and see how often Jesus would ask his disciples and others **"What do you think?"** This question should become part of our ministry to others as well as answering it to the Lord when he asks us to share our thoughts with Him. A few examples are given below:

"When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. **"What do you think, Simon?"** he asked. **"From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes-- from their own sons or from others?"**

"What do you think?" If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?"

"What do you think?" There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

"Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

"Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division."

Jesus answered, **"Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?....Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them-- do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?"**

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set."

APPENDIX B

The 7-fold Spirit of God in the Bible

Isaiah 11:1-2 (NIV)

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

1. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him (Love)
2. the Spirit of Wisdom (perfection or maturity)
3. and of Understanding (revelation)
4. the Spirit of Counsel (remembrance)
5. and of Power (preservation or might)
6. the Spirit of Knowledge (publishing)
7. and of the Fear of the Lord” (restoration or renewal)”

Rationale for believing in the concept of a sevenfold Spirit is found in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:4; 5:6) and in chapter 11 of Isaiah. They seem to be dimensions of God’s Holy Spirit at work in the earth. This doesn’t mean the Holy Spirit is divided up into 7 different spirits. It seems the prophet Isaiah had some prophetic understanding of how God manifests Himself in the earth.

The 66 books of the Bible often mention these sevenfold spirits. The Old Testament and New Testament matrixes in the next two charts illustrate this observation:

Old Testament	(Love)	(Might)	(Revelation)	(Maturity)	(Publishing)	(Remembrance)	(Renewal/ Restoration)
<u>Book of Bible</u>	Spirit of the Lord	of Power	of Understanding	of Wisdom	of Knowledge	of Counsel	the Fear of the Lord
Genesis							
Exodus							
Leviticus							
Numbers							
Deuteronomy							
Joshua							
Judges							
Ruth							
I Samuel							
II Samuel							
I Kings							
II Kings							
I Chronicles							
II Chronicles							
Ezra							
Nehemiah							
Esther							
Job							
Psalms							
Proverbs							
Ecclesiastes							
Song of Songs							
Isaiah							
Jeremiah							
Lamentations							
Ezekiel							
Daniel							
Hosea							
Joel							
Amos							
Obadiah							
Jonah							
Micah							
Nahum							
Habakkuk							
Zephaniah							
Haggai							
Zechariah							
Malachi							

New Covenant	(Love)	(Might)	(Revelation)	(Maturity)	(Publishing)	(Remembrance)	(Renewal/ Restoration)
<u>Book of Bible</u>	Spirit of the Lord	of Power	of Understanding	of Wisdom	of Knowledge	of Counsel	the Fear of the Lord
Matthew							
Mark							
Luke							
John							
Acts							
Romans							
I Corinthians							
II Corinthians							
Galatians							
Ephesians							
Philippians							
Colossians							
I Thessalonians							
II Thessalonians							
I Timothy							
II Timothy							
Titus							
Philemon							
Hebrews							
James							
I Peter							
II Peter							
I John							
II John							
III John							
Jude							
Revelation							

APPENDIX C

Scriptures on the Gates

The following scriptures are but a few of the Biblical truths about God's people possessing the gates of a city or nation. We will start with Jesus' declaration to the apostle Peter and then carry you through the Bible on God's people being the gatekeepers.

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Matthew 16:18

"And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies." Genesis 24:60

"Write them (words of God) on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."
Deuteronomy 6:9

Gatekeepers in the Bible were an important part of describing the order for worshiping God.

"They and their descendants were in charge of guarding the gates of the house of the LORD-the house called the Tent." 1 Chronicles 9:23

"In keeping with the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the priests according to each day's requirement. He also appointed the gatekeepers by divisions for the various gates, because this was what David the man of God had ordered."

2 Chronicles 8:14

"He also stationed doorkeepers at the gates of the LORD's temple so that no one who was in any way unclean might enter." 2 Chronicles 23:19

"Hezekiah assigned the priests and Levites to divisions-each of them according to their duties as priests or Levites-to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, to minister, to give thanks and to sing praises at the gates of the LORD's dwelling."

2 Chronicles 31:2

The story of Nehemiah is symbolic of God's desire to build a city's (Jerusalem) walls and gates against the forces of evil. The life of Nehemiah is symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit. There

are 10 specific gates identified in the walls surrounding Jerusalem that Nehemiah had to rebuild. They were the Valley Gate, Dung Gate, Fountain Gate, Sheep Gate, Fish Gate, Jeshanah (Old) Gate, Water Gate, Horse Gate, East Gate, and Inspection Gate.

“They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire” **Nehemiah 1:3**

“But I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” **Nehemiah 2:3**

“And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy? And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.” **Nehemiah 2:8**

“By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire.” **Nehemiah 2:13**

“Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” **Nehemiah 2:17**

“When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it-though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates.” **Nehemiah 6:1**

“I said to them, “The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses.” **Nehemiah 7:3**

“Mattaniah, Bakkukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms at the gates.” **Nehemiah 12:25**

“When the priests and Levites had purified themselves ceremonially, they purified the people, the gates and the wall.” **Nehemiah 12:30**

“When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day.” **Nehemiah 13:19**

"Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love." **Nehemiah 13:22**

"O LORD, see how my enemies persecute me! Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death, that I may declare your praises in the gates of the Daughter of Zion and there rejoice in your salvation." **Psalms 9:13-14**

"Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors that the King of glory may come in." **Psalms 24:7, 9**

"The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." **Psalms 87:2**

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." **Psalms 100:4**

"for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron." **Psalms 107:16**

"Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD." **Psalms 118:19**

"Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem." **Psalms 122:2**

"for he strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within you." **Psalms 147:13**

"beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she (wisdom) cries aloud:" **Proverbs 8:3**

"Evil men will bow down in the presence of the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous." **Proverbs 14:19**

This is a call to God's people to establish "noble" gates:

"Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles." **Isaiah 13:2**

"Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith." **Isaiah 26:2**

"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut." **Isaiah 45:1**

"I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron." **Isaiah 45:2**

*"I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones." **Isaiah 54:12***

*"Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations--their kings led in triumphal procession."
Isaiah 60:11*

*"No longer will violence be heard in your land nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise." **Isaiah 60:18***

*"Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations." **Isaiah 62:10***

When God's people reject the ways of righteousness, evil forces come and establish their thrones in the gates of the city. These are areas that Jesus referred to as "strongholds" we can defeat.

*"I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the LORD. "Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah."
Jeremiah 1:15*

*"Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and there proclaim this message: 'Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD." **Jeremiah 7:2***

*"I will winnow them with a winnowing fork at the city gates of the land. I will bring bereavement and destruction on my people, for they have not changed their ways."
Jeremiah 15:7*

*"This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem. Say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem who come through these gates. This is what the LORD says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem." **Jeremiah 17:19-21***

*"But if you are careful to obey me, declares the LORD, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. But if you do not obey me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying any load as you come through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem that will consume her fortresses."
Jeremiah 17:24-27*

“Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne--you, your officials and your people who come through these gates.” **Jeremiah 22:2**

“For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people.” **Jeremiah 22:4**

“Arise and attack a nation at ease, which lives in confidence,” declares the LORD, “a nation that has neither gates nor bars; its people live alone.” **Jeremiah 49:31**

“Her gates have sunk into the ground; their bars he has broken and destroyed. Her king and her princes are exiled among the nations, the law is no more, and her prophets no longer find visions from the LORD.” **Lamentations 2:9**

“They may serve in my sanctuary, having charge of the gates of the temple and serving in it; they may slaughter the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people and stand before the people and serve them.” **Ezekiel 44:11**

“When they enter the gates of the inner court, they are to wear linen clothes; they must not wear any woolen garment while ministering at the gates of the inner court or inside the temple.” **Ezekiel 44:17**

“The gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi. Three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi. On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan. On the south side, which measures 4,500 cubits, will be three gates: the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun. On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali.” **Ezekiel 48:31-34**

“Swords will flash in their cities, will destroy the bars of their gates and put an end to their plans.” **Hosea 11:6**

“On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.” **Obadiah 11**

“You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster.” **Obadiah 13**

“Look at your troops- they are all women! The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has consumed their bars.” **Nahum 3:13**

“The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.” **Acts 14:13**

“The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.”
Acts 21:30

There is commonality in the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the “new Jerusalem” and its gates; and that seen by the apostle John as revealed by Jesus in the book of Revelation. Notice that an angel is at each gate.

“It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.” **Revelation 21:12**

“There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.” **Revelation 21:13**

“The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls.” **Revelation 21:15**

“The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.” **Revelation 21:21**

“On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.”
Revelation 21:25

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” **Revelation 22:14**

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