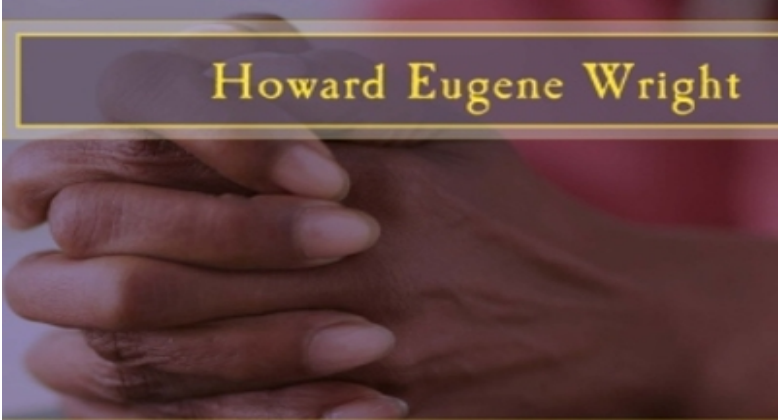


Fourteen Facets of Jesus' True Church
Preparing Humanity for God's Eternal Kingdom



Howard Eugene Wright

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by

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all of you who are looking for a loving, personal relationship and meaningful fellowship with God and His “household of the faithful” in the very presence of their Creator-Redeemer God. May He bless you with great success as you become part of His loving family!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to thank my wife, Arlene, for the hours she has spent proofreading this book.

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INTRODUCTION

This book shows the true nature of the Christian warrior's identity! Its gemstone, from "God's Treasure Chest Of Biblical Truth," is a diamond. This gemstone cuts through all others. It is the prized gemstone of the ages. This book portrays the true church of Jesus Christ in all its beauty! It shows you where Jesus, your Solid Foundation, wants you to be.

This book covers the full scope of Jesus' true Church. You will find a wealth of information that is not found anywhere else. This information will enable you to understand much about how Jesus brings freedom to people who put their total self into the hands of the true and living God. It first shows you how to become a love slave of this loving, caring, gracious, eternal, all powerful, all knowing, all seeing God of the universe through its first two facets. Facet III shows what is meant by true holiness. The other facets show your relationship to Jesus Christ, your Lord and Saviour, as you walk with Him in the land of the living.

There are guidelines throughout this book for God appointed under-shepherds who have been entrusted with the advancement of Jesus' true church.

Each facet in this book has a Bible background, a text Scripture, a purpose, an introduction, some comments and a conclusion.

I trust you will be greatly blessed by its contents!

Howard Eugene Wright
October 2011

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Facet I

A Love Slave of Your Heavenly Father

Bible Background: Exodus 20:1-7; Deuteronomy 5:1-11; Joshua 24:15; Jeremiah 18:1-10; Joel 2:28, 29 with Acts 2:16-18; Matthew 6:33; 7:21-27; 10:24, 25; John 8:34-36; Acts 4:27-30; Romans 1:1; 6:15-22; 1 Corinthians 7:20-24; 2 Corinthians 4:5, 6; Galatians 1:10; 4:7-9; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2 Peter 2:19, 20; Revelation 22:3, 6.

Text Scripture: “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

Purpose: To show that by being God's love slave, through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, you experience real freedom.

Introduction: When you become a love slave of God you are free to be every good thing God has planned for your life. In other words, to be a love slave in God's kingdom gives you glorious freedom in Christ Jesus, your wonderful Lord. Jesus put it this way! He said in John 8:32, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” In John 8:36 he said, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” Thus, when you are God's love slave, you are set free from the bondage of sin and death. You really start living to the full when you “humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.” The next facet will show you how. Nevertheless, this facet of

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“Jesus' True Church” will establish the fact that the only way to have real freedom is to yield everything to God's loving care. He alone has your best interests in mind. He wants you to have “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” peace the world cannot take away or give, and a heartfelt love you can only experience when you are at peace with your Creator-Redeemer God.

You are probably asking, “How can a slave be free?” This is a good question that demands a logical answer. The answer to this question is threefold:

1. Every “self-made” person is a slave to some kind of obsession that continually drags him/her down into all kinds of destructive behaviors. This addiction or obsession could be drugs, sex, resentments, hating God, perversions, peer pressure, or a bad habit. You get the idea!

These people are not free to do as they please. They are full of guilt and shame. They have no peace. They are self-centered and self-destructive at the same time. They have no clear purpose in life.

2. Then there are people who have chosen to allow God to be their Lord. They order their lives according to God's will. They love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. They love their neighbor as themselves.

These people enjoy the really good things of life: they have a peace that is out of this world, a joy unspeakable and full of glory, and they know where they came from as well as where they are going. Their purpose is to bring glory and honor to their loving Heavenly Father God, proclaim the good news of God's redeeming love and to bring no harm to others. They even love their enemies.

3. The bondage people are in is determined by the god

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they choose to serve. If that god is Satan, they will enter into a contract of eternal ruin. If that God is the true and living Creator-Redeemer God as revealed through nature and The Holy Bible, they will enter into a contract with the One who loved them and gave Himself for their eternal well-being.

Conclusion: The bottom line is this—Which god are you going to be a slave to? You have to choose!

Yourself? If so, be prepared for a lot of disappointments along life's way. Your sinful nature will continually be robbing you of the “good life” you are searching for in all the wrong places. The people you gather around you will be constantly “letting you down.” Then, when you come to your last hours, you will look back with remorse as you find no hope beyond the grave.

Satan? If you do this, you will have a hard taskmaster to contend with. He will promise you power, fame, and money with no intention of fulfilling his promise. When and if you gain all this world Satan offers you, the inner emptiness will not go away. You see, if you gain the whole world and lose your soul, you really gained nothing.

The **God** who created you and gave Himself a living sacrifice for your eternal well-being? This is by far your best choice! When you become a slave to the True and Living God, He sets you free to reach the heights of His redeeming love and grace. The next facet shows you how He does this.

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Facet II

Called into Glorious Freedom

Bible Background: Leviticus 25; Psalm 51:12; Isaiah 58:3-6; 61:1-3 with Luke 4:18, 19; John 1:29; 8:32, 36; Romans 5; 5:5, 15, 16, 18; 6; 6:6, 18, 20, 22; 8:1-3, 20-23; 1 Corinthians 7:22; 9:19-23; Galatians 2:20; 4:21-31; 5:1, 13, 16, 22-26; James 1:25; 1 Peter 2:15-17; 2 Peter 2:19.

Text Scripture: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

Purpose: To show that through the Lord Jesus Christ you can experience glorious liberty.

Introduction: There is something inside of every human being on the face of the earth that cries out to be free. This longing carries them into many paths that seem to hold promise of the freedom they so desperately long for. They get involved in various religions to find this freedom. They join groups that are promising them this freedom.

Actually, there is only one group of people who find it. These people have found that freedom is not in a thing or organization, but in a person Who came to set them free. That person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Comments: The place you get to know the Lord Jesus Christ is in the pages of the Judeo-Christian Bible. In Leviticus 25:8-55, God gave the Israelites guidelines to follow after they entered the Promised Land for the year of Jubilee. This took place every 50 years. This means a

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person would only have one or two jubilees in a lifetime. This Celebration of Jubilee set the stage for what would follow, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 61:1-3 shows how He was going to do this.

A walk through Romans will show you how Jesus brings the whole human race His offer of glorious freedom. Romans 1:1-17 is the introduction to the powerful gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord. Before you can find this glorious freedom, the reason for your bondage must be revealed. This is done in Romans 1:18-3:20. After the reason for the bondage is revealed, the cure is offered. The cure is found in Romans 3:21-7:6. The Apostle Paul then shows you in Romans 7:7-25 in a dynamic display of his struggle with the “law of sin,” that the law of God does not take away the root of sin at the time of our justification in Christ Jesus. He shows in Romans 8 how this struggle is overcome: “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 9-11 shows the relationship of the Jewish “children of the promise” to the Christian faith. Romans 12 picks up where chapter 8 leaves off, with more instructions on how to receive and maintain a life of true holiness before God and others. Chapters 13-15 give guidelines on how this new life in Christ is to be lived in an ongoing relationship with other people. Chapter 16 has some closing remarks.

A walk through Hebrews will show you the better things we have in Christ Jesus far surpass many of the dead-end roads that have been tried to gain freedom in the past. These are as follows: The superiority of Christ Jesus' person is outlined in Hebrews 1:1-4:13. The superiority of Jesus Christ's work is shown in Hebrews 4:14-10:18. The

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superiority of the Christian's walk of faith is shown in Hebrews 10:19-13:25.

Conclusion: Now that Jesus has come to set us free from sin and disgrace through His love and grace, everyone in the whole wide world can experience a wealth of blessings that could never have been realized in the past.

The steps to this glorious freedom are revealed through the Bible background scriptures and the walks through Romans and Hebrews. They are simple. The first thing you need to know is, you are helpless to gain this freedom through self-improvement endeavors or religious observances. The second thing to know is that the Lord Jesus has provided a way for you to have the freedom your whole being is crying out for. The third thing is to admit your fallen condition that makes it impossible for you to gain this freedom outside of what Jesus has accomplished for you, as outlined in Romans 5. You must also realize the way to this glorious freedom is a two-stage process. First, your personal sins are forgiven and you are given new life in Christ Jesus as stated in 2 Corinthians 5:17. Then, your sin nature must be destroyed as stated in Romans 6:6. Facet III addresses this aspect of your walk with God your Heavenly Father through God His Son as administered by God the Holy Spirit. To have this freedom remain as it gets bigger and better, you must love God first, others second and yourself last.

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Facet III

Called-Out Ones to a Life of Holiness

Bible Background: Luke 1:74, 75; Romans 1:3-7; Romans 6:19, 22; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:20-24; 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13; 4:3-8; 1 Timothy 1:5-7; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:10, 14-16.

Text Scripture: “For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:7 KJV).

Purpose: To show through the above Scriptures that holiness is not an add-on.

Introduction: We have many ideas about holiness. Some “theologians” tell us it is impossible to live a holy life in this world of sin. Others tell us there is a higher life of holiness that is reserved for those who are called saints. These well-meaning people tell us that the ordinary person could never live this way. To them, you must be separated from a worldly environment to be holy. There are non-Christian religions that talk about their holy people. Others prove by the Scriptures that we must live a holy life in this present life to get to heaven.

God is the One Who has set the standard for holy living! When God tells us to be holy as He is holy, He does not take a poll to find out what that means. He makes it plain in His Word exactly what all is involved in living a holy life in this life. Let us forget about our ideas of holiness and let God tell us through the above scriptures what He requires of us.

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What Christian Holiness is not! When proclaiming Christian holiness, it may be helpful to tell what is not being advanced.

1. We are not talking about God's Holiness. Only God is absolutely holy. We will never reach this level of holiness in this life or the next.

2. We are not talking about the holiness of God's angels. Angels have never been influenced by a world full of sin. They live in the presence of God.

3. Christian Holiness is not the holiness of saints who have gone to be with Jesus. Their holiness is like that of the angels of God. The Bible never tells human beings to obtain this degree of holiness in this life. We will have to wait until we get to heaven to have holiness like this.

Nevertheless, this does not exclude us from living a holy lifestyle here and now. When we look at the original Greek word for holiness, we find that it can be translated "purity, sanctification, holiness, purification." Sanctification means "separation or moral purity." Thus, when we talk about Christian holiness, we are also talking about Christian perfection. We are set aside for a holy purpose. Christian holiness is yours when God graciously sets you apart for Himself. He makes you holy by purifying your inner being through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in you. When the Holy Spirit dwells in you, sin is thrown out.

What the Word of God tells us about holiness of heart and life! Now let us look at the above Scriptures to see if this is a true interpretation or not. Luke 1:74, 75 is Zechariah's prophecy. Zechariah is the father of John the Baptist. This passage in God's Word tells us we will be delivered from our enemies and will serve God "without

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fear in holiness and righteousness all the days” of our life. This would show that this is something we do because of God’s deliverance from our enemies all the days of our life. Romans 1:3-7 shows us our holiness is accomplished through what Jesus has done for us. His grace enables us to live a life of faithful obedience to Him so we can fulfill the ministry He has called us to do. Romans 6:19 tells us to “yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” and verse 22 says “having become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Our fruit is unto holiness. This leads to everlasting life. The fruit of holiness is the fruit of the Spirit as explained in Galatians 5:22- 25. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, we find the expression “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” This is the idea of being pure in all areas of our being so we can perfect “holiness in the fear of” (or respect for) God. You are made pure when you yield yourself to God’s cleansing as explained in 1 John 1:7. When we “walk in the light,” that is, walk in obedience to God’s leading through His Word and His Holy Spirit, we can perfect holiness in our present daily life. When we look at Ephesians 4:20-25 we realize holiness is bound up in a personal relationship with Jesus. You first put off the old lifestyle so you can partake of the new one. This brings you into a life of “righteousness and true holiness.” True Christian holiness is God’s creation within us. In 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13 we find the expression, “establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God.” Unblamable means “irreproachable, blameless, faultless.” This kind of lifestyle is to be “before God” now. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 we have holiness equated with

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sanctification with the explanation that “God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” in verse 7 and it tells us in verse 8 “He therefore that despises, despises not man, but God, who has also given unto us His Holy Spirit.” To live a wicked lifestyle and reject God’s call to holiness is to despise God. Now 1 Timothy 1:5 tells us about a self-sacrificing love that produces a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. This is the natural result of the holiness God has created in us. Titus 2:3-5 tell us aged women are to live “as becomes holiness.” After this, Paul lists what kind of a life this is to be. Titus 2:11-14 tells us the grace of God teaches us that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” This Scripture plainly teaches us that this life of holiness is for this present world. Our last reference is Hebrews 12:10, 14-16. It tells us that without holiness “no man (or woman) will see the Lord.” Matthew 5:8 says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” God corrects us so we can be “partakers of His holiness.” This requires that we live a life of steadfast faith and obedience.

Conclusion: I have shown you what Christian holiness is and what it is not by the plain teaching of the Word of God. If you are not experiencing this in your life, you need to read Romans 12 and follow the directions that will bring you into this loving relationship with the True and Living God. Romans 6 and 8 give you the results of God’s holy presence in you.

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Facet IV

A Building of Lively Stones

Bible Background: Genesis 1, 2; Exodus 25; 40:34-38; Leviticus 8:10-12; Leviticus 26; 1 Kings 5; 2 Kings 12:10-15; 1 Chronicles 17:3-15; 2 Chronicles 34; Esra 3; Nehemiah 4; Job 11:13-20; Psalm 15; 27:3-6; 46; 61; Psalm 118:19-29; Proverbs 14:11; Isaiah 4; Matthew 7:24-27; 21:40-44; Mark 12:9-11; Luke 20:15-18; Acts 4:8-12; 1 Corinthians 3:9-23; Hebrew 8:1-6; 11:8-10; 13:10-17; 1 Peter 2:1-8; Job 5:17-27; Revelation 21:3-8.

Text Scripture: “You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5 ET).

Purpose: To show what it means to be a part of God’s “lively” building.

Introduction: God has been in a building program for generations. He started with building the universe in six “creative days.” As you can see, God is very orderly and complete in His work of creation. All was created with His pronouncing it “very good.” After man sinned against God by breaking His commandment not to eat of the fruit of “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” God started working on a plan to bring them back in fellowship with Him. From Abel, who was murdered by his brother Cain, to Enoch, who was taken into heaven on to Noah, God was working His plan to raise man up into His wonderful presence. Things got so bad God sent a

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flood to destroy all land life on the earth except Noah and his family. After the flood, man again fell into apostasy and totally rebelled against God's commands. Then God called Abram, later named Abraham, to start building a nation that would bless the world. Hundreds of years later God called David from the sheepfold to be a king under His command. David was a man after God's heart. As time went on, David's sons got farther and farther away from God. Each step in God's building program becomes closer to the finished product. Just at the right time, God sent His Son into the world to be the Savior for the world. Man could not be trusted to do the will of God without first being saved from his sins.

Let us consider the building God is building with "lively stones" with Jesus as the foundation and chief cornerstone.

The Foundation: The foundation is the most important part of the building. The foundation must be strong enough to hold up the structure that is laid on it. Without a good foundation, the building will collapse. God's building is to last forever and must be made of the best material. Humanity could not provide the foundation then or now. The angels could not bring into being the foundation that would withstand the winds of time. Only One can give the building a strong enough foundation to endure the storms of life. God made His Son, The Lord Jesus Christ, the foundation for our eternal salvation.

To lay the foundation properly you must dig down to the solid rock. Jesus is the solid rock. He "humbled Himself" and died on an old rugged cross. Then He arose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit down at the right hand of God the Father to intercede for us

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(Philippians 2:5-11).

Building a building is hard and dangerous work! Jesus paid the price we could not, and would not if we could, to make it possible for us to be “lively stones” in His super-structure of God’s redeeming grace. It must be big enough to include all humanity, because God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance” (1 Peter 3:9). It must be strong enough to withstand all the trials and temptations of life (Romans 8:28). It must bring everyone to God (John 1:7-14). This was all done through what Jesus did for us as explained above.

The stones for the structure must be “lively stones!” This is done by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As we repent of our sins (Proverbs 28:13), we receive forgiveness of our sins, are adopted into God’s family and given an inheritance. Then comes a time in our life when we realize there is a fight going on in the inside (Romans 7). God comes to our rescue in a wonderful way as we commit every area of our life to Him to use any way He pleases (Romans 8). This operation of God, as He chisels away at us to make us a vessel unto honor, makes us “lively stones” for His eternal building.

Holding the building together! God holds the building together in an incredible way. He sheds His love abroad in our hearts by His Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). This is a perfect love that “casts out fear (1 John 4:13-19). This love enables us to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. The love of God is what holds this lively building together. Therefore, we have a church as explained in Ephesians 5:25-27—“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ

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also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” ET).

Conclusion: God has been building His “glorious church” from the very beginning of time. We see it with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as they follow God’s call on their lives. Then we see it in the prophets and kings of Israel as a nation is first formed as God led Moses to bring the Israelite people out of Egypt. This church was finally given a homeland after it walked through the desert for forty years. It came to full bloom on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. We have seen it go through one assault after another right down to the present. The gates of hell will never prevail against it. It is beautiful. It is what the world needs to see today. Are you a part of this “Glorious Church?” If not, why not?

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Facet V

A Good Vine in a Wild Vineyard

Bible Background: Isaiah 5:1-7; Malachi 4:2; Matthew 7:16-23; 13:3-9; 13:18-23; 15:13-28; Mark 12:1-11; John 15; Romans 11:17-33; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 1:19-29; 2:6, 7.

Text Scripture: “I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5 ET).

Purpose: To show how the Church is joined to Jesus as a branch is to a vine to bring forth fruit unto holiness.

Introduction: A plant must have good soil, sunshine, water and the right temperature to grow and bring forth fruit. The health of the plant must be maintained by a cooperative operation of the root and leaves of the plant. You can graft one plant into another one if they are of the same nature. Plants need to go through regular times of pruning. Pruning requires a plan that will remove detrimental branches from the plant. The fruit is produced on the branches. The fruit is used for food. The seeds are in the fruit and are used to produce new plants. The fruit must be removed before the seed is exposed for proper planting. The seed has life within it. The seed brings forth the same kind of a plant that it comes from. Only one plant is produced per seed. A plant can be damaged by disease-causing agents. Pests must be removed from a plant for it to produce properly. A branch cannot produce

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unless it is joined to the rest of the plant. If it does not produce, it is burned. A plant must store up food for its dormant stage. All grapevines go through normal annual stages. Old cells and new cells are in the same plant. The old cells provide a framework to hold up the new cells. The vine can survive without the leaves. The leaves cannot survive without the vine. The Church that Jesus built is much the same as a grapevine.

Consider the following analogies of the Church of Jesus Christ and the vine.

1. A Church of Jesus Christ must have good soil, sunshine, water and the right temperature to grow and bring forth fruit unto holiness.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

The Church of Jesus is “rooted and grounded in love.” This love for Jesus brings sin to the cross and brings His saints to love God and people out of a heart of gratitude for what Jesus did for them. We draw from this soil. Then Jesus is “the Sun of Righteousness with healing” for His church. This enables them to live a life of perfect spiritual health. Jesus also invites you to “come to the water of life freely.” His gentle Spirit keeps the temperature in the Church perfect all the time. In this kind of an environment, the Church of Jesus Christ can produce fruit unto holiness.

2. The membership of the Church cannot survive without Jesus Christ.

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“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Jesus, as the “author and finisher of our faith,” has complete authority over our spiritual life. In John 14:6 Jesus tells us “no man comes to the Father but by Me.” Without Jesus, there is no salvation. There are many places in the Bible that bear this out. As good as we may be, without Jesus, we can do nothing of lasting value. The beautiful thing is, with Jesus, “I can do all things” (Philippians 4:13).

3. The health of the Church of Jesus Christ must be maintained by a cooperative action of Jesus Christ and His saints in this world.

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1).

When we are “connected” to Jesus in a new birth, we are given the wonderful privilege of working with Him in His vineyard. This is a delightful experience as you feel Him near you every day. It is so great to be a worker with Him.

4. A Church must store up spiritual food for times when it must walk by faith and obedience even when it does not “feel” like doing so.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a

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house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed on with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed on, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (2 Corinthians 5:1-11 ET).

Sometimes you have things that come into your life that make you question whether God is with you. You wonder if He has forsaken you. When the battle gets hard, hang on to God's promises. This is the reason it is so important to have a daily quiet time with the Lord. This will help you get through the hard times when they come. Whatever we have to go through, it will be worth it all to be with Jesus in His eternal kingdom. Hold on! Keep in there! “Sing unto the Lord, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. For His anger endures but a moment; in His favor is life: weeping may

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endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:4, 5 ET).

5. A member of the Church cannot produce fruit unto holiness without being joined to the rest of the Church of Jesus Christ.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:23-27 ET).

You are not a “one man show.” You need other believers. The Church is a fellowship of believers. It is supportive of each of its members, especially those who cannot help themselves and are not able to return the favors we give them. See 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5 for some advice on how we support one another. This is very important for the Church as it produces fruit unto holiness.

6. You can graft a born-again Gentile into God's original Jewish Church if they are of the same spiritual nature.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall

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the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if you boast, you bear not the root, but the root you. You will say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not you. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness: otherwise you also shall be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again” (Romans 11:13-23 ET).

As you can see in the above Scripture, God has opened the door for everyone to be saved from their sins and to be a part of the family of God. God does not have any favorites. If a person turns from sins and is grafted into the vine, that person will be saved regardless of his nationality or color of skin.

7. Old Saints of God and new Babes of Christ are necessary to have in the same Church.

We need mature Christians in our Churches to disciple the new ones. It is good for the young Christians to learn from the Old Saints who have the experience and faithfulness that serve as an example to them. This also helps the Old Saints, who feel they cannot do much, to realize how important they are in God's Family.

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8. The old Saints of God provide a framework to hold up the new Babes in Christ.

“But speak you the things which become sound doctrine: that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:1-10 ET).

Seeing the Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth,” it is absolutely necessary we have these dear saints to help us stay on track. It is getting to the place where the old standards of holiness are being scoffed at, and those upholding them are labeled, or should I say branded, as people who are holding up progress. They are called “legalists, trouble-makers, old fogies,” and other such things. The best interest of our churches would be for them to learn from these dear people. Let them help you!

9. A Church can be eternally damaged by its carnal

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members.

“And I, brothers, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able. For you are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men? For while one says, “I am of Paul;” and another, “I am of Apollos;” are you not carnal?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-4 ET).

We need baby Christians. We do not discard babies when they cause messes we have to clean up. However, we expect the babies to grow up; to become mature; to make progress as the years go by. If they do not, we refer to them as being retarded or maladjusted. The same is true in the Church. We want and need the babies. The trouble comes when we have fifty-year-old babies—people who have never gone “on unto holiness” and are still making messes for the rest of us to clean up. These people need to be disciplined sharply by the Church. We cannot allow them to continue to tear down everything God is building up.

10. Ungodliness must be removed from the Church membership for it to produce fruit unto holiness properly.

“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were

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present, concerning him that has so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must you needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not you judge them that are within? But them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Corinthians 5:1-13 ET).

“And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle has made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to

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repentance: for you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world works death. For behold this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yes, what clearing of yourselves, yes, what indignation, yes, what fear, yes, what vehement desire, yes, what zeal, yes, what revenge! In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yes, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things” (2 Corinthians 7:7-16 ET).

“But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that makes me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the

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love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he has not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise you ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether you be obedient in all things. To whom you forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:1-11 ET).

Anyone who thinks they have problems in their church should read 1st and 2nd Corinthians. They seemed to have every kind of spiritual problem that could be found. The Scripture above shows how they handled a problem of gross fornication in their church. Here are some things that may help in dealing with gross sin in your church.

1. Make sure of what sin you are dealing with. This is very important, because the Church is to be a redemptive fellowship. We do not want to destroy the wicked one. We want the person to repent of the sin and to be restored to fellowship.

2. Let the person or persons know why the discipline is being executed. We want people to understand that the reason we are giving discipline is out of a spirit of love for them and God.

3. Ask God to forgive you for allowing this wickedness in your fellowship. In doing this, you will show the

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person you are sharing in the blame for his sins.

4. Break fellowship with the person with a way to come back into fellowship. Let him know that when real repentance is shown fellowship will be restored.

5. Everyone in the fellowship must carry through on this. Anyone who takes sides with the offender will also be disciplined along with the wicked one.

6. Fast and pray for the one who has or is doing the wicked deed that is being disciplined.

7. When the person repents, bring him/her back into the fellowship. Throw a party and completely forgive the wicked person. All people who were involved should publicly express their love and forgiveness to one another. In addition, the whole church should express their forgiveness and willingness to be a support so that this sin will not be a stumbling block in the future.

11. The Church of Jesus Christ needs to go through regular times of pruning out ungodly members to have a good witness to the world.

We cannot be too careful. It is very important that we do not allow ungodly people to get into our Christian fellowship. Sure, we want ungodly people to attend our church services. However, we cannot allow them to be governing members. Only people who are living a holy life are to be leaders in our churches. The church is not a worldly organization. It is a living organism. It is the fellowship of the redeemed. Be alert! Keep the church clean. Preach the Word. Encourage your friends and neighbors to join you so you can help them get saved and sanctified. Do not allow them to “take over the church.” If such has happened, have a “house cleaning” as prescribed in point 10 above.

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12. Church Pruning requires a plan that will remove detrimental members from it.

“Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:15-18 ET).

1. Before an issue gets to the church, the offended party should try to work out the problem with the offender. This should be done in secret. It should not be blabbed all over the neighborhood.

2. If this fails to resolve the problem, then you should get one or two people to go with you to try to help you get things worked out between you. These people should not blab it all over the neighborhood. It is only between them.

3. If this fails to work out a proper solution, then it is to be taken to the church. Then the church can pray about it. They can enter the process of bringing forth a solution. At this point, the church should follow the steps listed in point 10 above.

4. If the person refuses to listen to the church after it has carefully attempted a solution, they treat the person like a heathen. You do not need to pray for the person any more. He has chosen the path of an apostate. Spend your time

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working with people who want to follow God. Do not waste your time wearing yourself out on a few people who are determined to follow the Devil, regardless of how much God has worked with them to repent and do the right thing.

13. The Church can survive without dried-up, ungodly church members even if they have been the “backbone” of the church in its organizational and financial support.

“But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8 ET).

“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? See you to that.’ And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, ‘It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.’ And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, ‘The field of blood, unto this day.’ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me” (Matthew 27:3-10 ET).

The Church has always had those who come into it with a motive to corrupt it. The Devil always has done

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everything he can to get into the Church and bring disgrace to it. Judas was one of the twelve apostles, with the same opportunity as the other disciples, yet he still went the way of the Devil. This did not stop the Church. They replaced him and went on to Pentecost. (Acts 1:16 to 2:4) What the Church needs today is a “house cleaning” that will help us to get in one accord in one place so we can have the glory of God back in our churches.

14. The fruit of holiness is produced in the dedicated church membership through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Galatians 5:22- 26 ET).

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Romans 5:3-5 ET).

The Holy Spirit gives us God’s love that enables us to bring forth fruit unto holiness. The crying need of the Church today is to have its own personal Pentecost. Without the fruit of holiness, the Church will be powerless to combat the evils of our day or bring people to the Lord.

15. The fruit of holiness is used for “food” to edify

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the body of Christ and to attract would-be members.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Romans 14:19 KJV).

“Even so you, forasmuch as you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12 ET).

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:12-16 ET).

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29 KJV).

“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do” (1 Timothy 1:4 KJV).

“Let no man despise your youth; but be you an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12 ET).

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The Church is to be a lighthouse in this dark world. We can only do this as we edify one another in the Lord. When the world sees the Church displaying God's love to one another it will be drawn to our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, it is Jesus Who is building His Church. If you love Him, you will also love everyone else.

16. The fruit of holiness must be manifested in our lives before the Word of God is exposed for proper planting into the world.

The seed is in the fruit. When the fruit is eaten then the seed is exposed for planting. People will not be attracted to God through His Holy Word until the Church leaves a good taste in people's spiritual mouth. A good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith will draw people to the Lord. "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24 ET).

17. Only one Church is produced by the Word of God.

Jesus did not say, "Upon this rock I will build my churches." Everywhere the Church is talked about in the Bible it is always in the singular. God has only one Church. This Church is not a denomination. As you will see in "The Church That Satan's Slaves Built," denominations have been used of the Devil to divide the body of Christ. The real Church is made up of those who are on the Solid Rock, Christ Jesus, as the Son of God. Jesus is the Rock, not Peter or anyone else. Any church built on a man is part of "The Church That Satan's Slaves Built." It may start out good, but sooner or later, it is going to fall if it is not built on Jesus Christ. If the church denies the deity of Jesus, it is not Jesus' Church.

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18. The Word of God (seed) brings forth the same kind of Church of Jesus Christ it came from.

Only life can bring life into this world. It is the same way with the Church. If it is not alive in Christ Jesus Who is our life, it can only bring forth a dead church. Jesus is the Word (John 1:1-3). That Word is our God. He most certainly is not the brother of Satan as the Mormon Church tells us. He is more than a man. This Word “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). When we become Christians, we become a “new creation” in Christ Jesus.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God. For He has made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21ET).

19. The Word of God (seed) is the regenerative life of the Church of Jesus Christ.

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the

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Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:12,-14 ET).

The only spiritual life that we have is the life we receive through Jesus. (Read John 3:16, 17.)

20. If a church member backslides, stops producing fruit unto holiness and refuses to come back to God before dying, that member will burn in the fires of hell forever.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: but that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned” (Hebrews 6:4-8).

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that has said, ‘Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord shall judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the

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hands of the Living God” (Hebrews 10:26-31 ET).

Anyone who tells you that once you are saved you can never be lost and go to hell has never read these Scriptures and several others that say you can. It does not make any difference how many Greek and Hebrew words he can impress you with. God has no pets. If you backslide and do not repent and get back to God and His ways, you will go to hell and be there forever. It is best to be safe and live a holy life in this life. Love God and others now. Do not look back. Look unto Jesus. He is able to keep us from falling. No one can take you out of Jesus' hand except you. If you are lost, at the last, you have no one to blame except yourself.

Conclusion: Jesus tells us in John 15 that He is the vine and His disciples are the branches. We have shown in detail what this relationship involves. If a disciple stops producing fruit unto holiness, he is cut off from the vine and is burned. Therefore, if a branch stops producing, it stands to reason it was producing at one time. What do you think? Being a child of God is dependent on being attached to the vine (Jesus), seeing without Him we can do nothing. If we get unattached, we are in danger of being eternally lost. God's grace is able to keep you attached to Jesus! It is wonderful to be attached to Jesus! He supplies all our needs. Read John 15 again!

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Facet VI

A Flock of Sheep with the Good Shepherd

Bible Background: Numbers 27:15-17; Psalm 23; Isaiah 40; Jeremiah 50:6, 7; Ezekiel 34; Zechariah 10; 13:6, 7; Matthew 9:35-38; John 10:1-18; Hebrews 13:20, 21; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 5:1-11.

Text Scripture: “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11 ET).

Purpose: To show that when we are in the hands of Jesus, Our Good Shepherd, we are in good hands!

Introduction: When we put our lives in the hands of man, we are not sure how things are going to turn out. We put our savings in the stock market and lose our wealth. We put our trust in the medical profession and many times we end up maimed for life. The politician's hands are a poor place in which to place our lives. The educational system's hands are not a safe place in which to place our lives. In many instances, it is not safe to place our lives in the hands of church leaders. We see more and more that our lives are not safe in the hands of our judicial system. I could give an endless list of the people and systems of sinful mankind, which, if we placed our lives in their hands, it would be very dangerous for

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us.

This is not so with your Lord Jesus Christ. Your life is very safe in His hands. Allow me the privilege to show you how superior your Good Shepherd's hands are to man's.

The sheep: By nature, sheep are stupid, filthy and defenseless. They must have someone to care for them. Without proper care they will die. A sheep must be led, not driven. They only drink by still waters. Sometimes sheep like to chase butterflies. When they do this, they can stray from the flock. This will put them in danger's way. Sometimes a sheep has to be hurt so it will depend on its shepherd more. Sheep can be easily misled.

The Good Shepherd: He will care for all the needs of His sheep. He will protect His sheep with His life. He prepares the pasture for His sheep before He takes them to pasture. He keeps His sheep in the fold for their protection and care. He carries the little lambs when need be. He delights in His sheep. He faces many hardships to care for His sheep.

Spiritually speaking, Jesus is the Good Shepherd: The first thing we need to understand, Jesus is God in the Flesh. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1-17). Read Isaiah 40 to see how great is our God. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-caring. He is there to help us all the time. He is our Good Shepherd, Who cares for His sheep with His life. He knows what we need and leads us in good paths. He is willing to take the dumb, dirty,

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defenseless sheep and lead them. We are the sheep that went astray. Jesus is the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for His sheep. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep that they might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

A look at Psalm 23: **The Lord** “And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6, 7 KJV). **is my Shepherd** (This makes it personal.) **I shall not want** (because God “supplies our every need according to His riches in glory” Philippians 4:19). **He makes me lie down in green pastures:** (without fear or hunger pains) **He leads me beside the still waters.** (He gives us rest – Matthew 11:28-30 and living water – Psalm 1:3). **He restores my soul:** (transforms – Romans 12:1, 2). **He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.** (He always leads us in the right way to bring glory and honor to Him – 1 Corinthians 10:31). **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:** (We are safe in the arms of Jesus.) **Your rod** (to fight off the enemies) and **Your staff** (to keep you in the fold) **they comfort me.** (It is comforting to know Jesus is looking out for you.)

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You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: (Jesus inspects the pasture to make sure it is safe.) **You anoint my head with oil:** (to make sure no false doctrine gets in your mind) **My cup runs over.** (unspeakable joy – 1 Peter 1:8, 9) **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:** That the communication of your faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus (Philemon 1:6). **and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.** (Jesus is our Shepherd in His house forever.)

God calls some sheep to be His under-shepherds: If you have been called by the Lord to shepherd His sheep, you are under a great obligation to be an example to the flock He has given you. You are to live a life your sheep can safely follow. Do not be the kind of a pastor that says, “Do as I say, not as I do.” You are not to “lord it over” your flock, but rather follow Jesus in all He leads you to do. You are to serve, not be served. You are to give of yourself for your flock. You do not go around looking for all the benefits of being a pastor. You are willing to spend and be spent for your flock. You are willing to “preach the Word” even when it is not popular to do so. You are to “speak the truth in love.” Your model is not the latest “fad” that comes your way. You are to be a model in devotion to God, in prayer, in speech, in faith and faithfulness, in sacrifice or self-denial, in love, in hope, in living a holy life, in

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handling your finances, in paying your bills, in loving your family, in seeking the salvation of the lost and the sanctification of believers, in caring for those who cannot help themselves, in encouraging your flock to grow in the “grace and knowledge” of Jesus, in forgiving your enemies, in keeping the commandments of God, in upholding the teachings of the Bible to obey God rather than man, and to glory in God your Savior, Sanctifier, and Keeper. Above all, you are to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus show you how to conduct yourself in God’s household of faith!

Conclusion: People are much like sheep. Without our Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, we are totally lost. It is not in us to live a holy life, seeing we are all lost in sin’s dark night. We are prone to stray into all kinds of hurtful and deceitful lusts that prove to be our downfall. Without Jesus, we do not know the way, the truth or real life. Jesus is the only One Who cares for the sheep. All other voices are only crying in the night.

It is a real temptation for our spiritual leaders (under-shepherds) to follow the latest “fad” for church growth or theological teaching. Too many times, it turns out we have the blind leading the blind. Only a person called by God to minister who is anointed by God’s Holy Spirit is worthy to pastor in Jesus’ Church!

If you are not a minister called of the Lord to

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shepherd His sheep, get out of the Church of Jesus Christ. You have scattered the sheep long enough. You have let the devil devour the flock of God long enough. Quit promoting man's church in Jesus' Church right now.

If you are a godly under-shepherd, then take courage. May the Lord bless you in a most gracious way. May everything you do prosper. Keep the faith. Be faithful. Do not get discouraged. Keep close to your Good Shepherd.

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Facet VII

Jesus as the Head of a United Body

Bible Background: Romans 12:4-21; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 12; Ephesians 1:13-23; Ephesians 4:11-25; 5:23, 24; Colossians 1:18; 2:9-22.

Text Scripture: “And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:22, 23 ET).

Purpose: To compare the body of “The Church That Satan’s Slaves Built” with the body of “The Church That Christ Built.”

Introduction: You have never seen this done before. This is new to me also. Each opposing church has a body. Let us compare the image in the Book of Daniel with the Body of Christ. This contrast should make you appreciate what God is doing in this world through Christ Jesus our Gracious Lord.

The golden head of Daniel’s image can be compared to Jesus as the Head of the Church! As Satan’s church had been forming from the beginning of time, so Christ’s church was doing the same. Man’s church started with the tower of Babel. Christ’s church started with Abraham being called out of Ur in the area of Babylon. Man’s church officially started with the Kingdom of Babylon. Christ officially started His Jewish church when Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt into the Promised Land. Christ’s worldwide church started when He came

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into the world, finished the work His Father sent Him to do, went back to Heaven and sent His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. As Satan has masterminded man's church, so Christ has masterminded His Church. Christ is pure in that He did not sin. Satan's church that man built is fool's gold. As Satan is the one who controls man's church, so Christ controls His Church.

As the Medeo-Persian Empire gave man's church a heart and soul, so the Church Fathers did for Christ's church. Many of the false religions were originated at the time of the Medeo-Persian Empire. Christ's church had a hard time keeping itself polished during the time of the Church Fathers, as many enemies of the cross of Christ were seeking to tarnish the pure Word and work of Christ. They had to formulate creeds and doctrines to turn away many floodgates of wickedness.

As the Greek Empire further advanced Satan's slaves' church in the areas of philosophy and science, so the Gnostics and the Stoics did to Christ's church. When this happened, Christ's church was placed in the wilderness. It was there for centuries. We still have this today. We call it the liberal or "emerging" church. All the while Jesus has had His pure church that is without "spot or wrinkle." We call these the Born-again, Spirit-filled believers.

As the Roman Empire put legs and feet on Satan's slaves' church, so the Catholic Church put legs and feet on Christ's Church. As the Roman Kingdom made man's church universal, so the Catholic Church made Christ's church universal. As the Roman Empire ruled the whole world, so did the Catholic Church. As the Roman Empire fell from within, so did the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church divided into East and West. All the time this was

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going on within the Catholic Church, Jesus had His pure Church in His underground Church. You see, the Catholic Church was not Christ's Church anymore. It was overcome from within. Christ's true church was in hiding again. Then there was a flood of church denominations. Some were pure, while some were filled with false doctrines and false prophets.

We are told in Daniel, when iniquity has reached its limit at the time of the Roman Empire, a stone made without hands (Christ's Church) will smash man's church and fill the earth. The gates of hell will not prevail against Christ's Church. Any day now, we may hear the trumpet sound, the dead in Christ will rise, the true Christians will be given new bodies, and Jesus' Kingdom will be established on a New Earth wherein righteousness and true holiness dwells.

Conclusion: From all outward appearances, man's church has prevailed over Christ's Church. It appears that at every turn in the path of life, Christ's Church has suffered loss at the hands of the devil and his crowd. Where is Christ's Church today? What has Christ's Church gained down through the ages? Maybe the answer to these questions is that Christ's Church is alive and well in the habitation of His people. His crowd has never been the majority. He has a little flock. He has a glorious church that is a precious stone. The time will come when this will all change. This precious stone will become a great mountain (kingdom of God) and rule the world. Are you a member of the body of Christ or a member of the body of Satan? Big is not always better. Read the last chapters in the Bible—Revelation 19-22.

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Facet VIII

A Fellowship of the Faithful

Bible Background: Numbers 6:1-7; Psalm 94; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 1:4-10; 10:20-24; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; 8:1-5; Ephesians 3:1-12; 5:11-14; Philippians 1:3-7; 2:1-8; 3:7-15; 1 John 1:1-7.

Text Scripture: “God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9 ET).

Purpose: Christian fellowship leads to a loving, caring attitude toward their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Introduction: Christians have a communication with God and their fellow believers that is above the world's system. Their fellowship is based on a self-sacrificing, self-giving type love that treats others with respect. To keep themselves pure, they limit their close friends to those who love God and others. This gives the impression to others that they feel they are better than others. Such is not the case. They only want to “keep themselves unspotted from the world” so they can glorify God and help others.

1. They abhor works of wickedness. They will not participate in ungodly practices. They do not seek out or follow with those who are doing such works of darkness as shown in the above list of Scriptures.

2. They reprove such works of darkness. This is done so others will take note of these practices as being sinful. This separates the good from the bad in our society.

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3. They do not have communion with ungodly people. The communion (Lord's Supper) is for those who love God and others.

4. They will suffer loss for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, rather than enjoying "the pleasures of sin for a season." Some people, who have nothing to lose, think Christians should eat, drink and be merry with them. The Christian's song is, "Take This World, But Give Me Jesus." When Christians refuse to follow the crowd, they will be berated, in some instances misused, and misrepresented.

5. They will make lasting relationships within the Christian community. Their love for God and others is lasting. They will pray for the sick, visit the lonely, take care of the social rejects, and be zealous of all other good works of love.

6. They spend time with God every day. They love to talk to God in prayer and show devotion to Him. There is something about having fellowship with the God of the universe that cannot be put into words. You have to do it to understand it. God is the most wonderful being in the whole universe.

7. They have a peace and a hope in their lives that the world knows nothing about. They have no fear. Perfect love has cast out fear. They have no anxieties. They have cast their cares on the Lord Who cares for them. They do not worry about tomorrow. They know God will take care of them. They are not restless. They are resting in Jesus, the best anchor of their soul.

Conclusion: The Christian life is not just so many do's and don'ts. The real Christian is grounded in a complete, covenanted, loving relationship with God and others of

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like-minded faith. This makes them love everyone. They would do anything in the world to be a blessing to friend and foe alike. They want everyone to enjoy what they have found through their Christian fellowship. This is the reason they are always talking about Jesus and His people. This is the reason they invite people to come to church with them. They are in love with Jesus!

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Facet IX

**A Chosen Generation of
Born-again Spirit-filled Christians**

Bible Background: Exodus 15:2, 13; Deuteronomy 7; 14; Psalm 33:12; 89; 105:42-45; 145; Isaiah 32:15-20; Matthew 5:9; 12:18-21; 20:16; John 3:3; 15:16, 19; Acts 9:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 1:1-14; 2:19-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; James 2:5; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 2:4, 5.

Text Scripture: “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: in Whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:18-22 ET).

Purpose: To show that Christians are a part of a generation of faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Introduction: When you think of a generation, the thing that comes to mind is a person's genealogy. You want to look up the family tree. You want to find out all you can about your ancestors. With God, there are no grandchildren. We are all children. God's generation is all His children that have been adopted into His family. We are talking about people who have experienced a new

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birth. Old things have passed away and all life takes on a new meaning with new relationships. Our text scripture sums it up very well.

1. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18). Now Jews and Gentiles have the same privileges. There is a chain of command in this verse from Jesus to the Holy Spirit to the Father. Jesus bought our redemption, the Holy Spirit applies the redemption to us and the Father planned it. Therefore, we have access to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit.

2. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:19). Through this operation of God, we become fellow citizens with the saints in the household of God. You are a full member in God's household with all its privileges and responsibilities.

3. And are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). Our relationship with God is on solid footing. Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone. The apostles and prophets laid down the foundation, which we have found to be Jesus Christ. Jesus is the whole story in the Christian's journey. It is not about a particular Christian regardless of how mightily he is being used of God. It is all about Christ Jesus and Him crucified. It is about Jesus rising from the dead. It is about Jesus ascending into heaven and now interceding for you and me.

4. In Whom, all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord: (Ephesians 2:21

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ET). The Bible teaches us that we are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). When you abide in God and His Word abides in you, you are in perfect harmony with the household of God. We are in one accord. This enables us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

5. In Whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). People do better when they have others to encourage them in their walk with the Lord. Sure, you can worship God anywhere, but you also need fellow Christians to associate within your faithful walk with your God. The more fire you have the warmer you are. We are living in a cold world. We need all the “fire” we can get. Without the warmth of other Christians, we will cool off and die. We really do need one another!

6. Jesus chose us to be conformed into His image. When we were lost sheep going astray and could not help ourselves Jesus came to bring us back out of harm's way (Romans 5). When we wanted to do the right thing, we could not break the chains of sin from us. We were lost in a forest of evil monsters that only mocked our cry for help. Then Jesus came to us, broke the chains of sin, and brought us into His gracious family. He gave us a song and a peace that the world could never take away. Thus, we are a chosen generation.

7. Israel is God's example of His chosen generation. I have several Scripture references above that will help you see how to conduct yourself in the household of God. In God's household, everyone serves. Jesus is the “boss!” If we love Him, we keep His commandments, including the 10 from which wicked people, in their twisted sense of

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reality, are trying to turn us away from. Read the references above to get a picture of the real world of the Christian life.

Conclusion: Other households have proved to be dead-end roads. Our world is under the curse of sin. Only Jesus can give us life and give it to us more abundantly. We desperately need to go to Jesus for our every need. The air is fresh and the sunshine is bright in our Father's House. If you will humbly come to God through Jesus, He will lift you into heavenly places today.

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Facet X

**A Peculiar People
Looking for an Eternal City**

Bible Background: Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18, 19; Psalms 135:3-6; Matthew 5:13-16; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 11:8-10; 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

Text Scripture: “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14 ET).

Purpose: To show the thing that makes God’s people different (peculiar) is their purified life that produces fruit unto holiness.

Introduction: A pure heart and life is not automatic. Something must be done to make us holy. God did something. Let us see how God takes a dirty sheep and cleans it up to “win a blue ribbon” at His great Judgment Day.

Who (This is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the second person of the triune God. He is perfect God/perfect man. He is both the Son of Man and Son of God. He is the great I AM. He is the Lover of your soul. He is the Rose of Sharon, the Bright and Morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Ancient of Days, the Living Word. He is everything that is beautiful to behold.)

gave Himself (Love always gives, hate always takes. Jesus gave Himself for us because He loves us with an

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eternal love. He does not want anyone to be lost in an eternal hellfire and brimstone. He gave us His all so we could have it all.)

for us (Lost sheep, haters of God, sinful, helpless to help ourselves, proud, unholy, outcasts, rebels. However, His love for us would not let Him sit and watch us destroy ourselves and others.)

that He might redeem us (Set us free from the hopeless condition we are in. He did not send someone else to redeem us. He came to do this Himself. He was the only One Who could.)

from all iniquity (Violation of the law, lawlessness. He came to save us from a runaway lifestyle that is destroying everything that is good and right for us and our fellow human beings. He calls us to forsake our selfish ways to receive the true riches of life (Proverbs 28:13). He wants to redeem us from all lawlessness. He wants us to be totally free. He wants us not to have any “monkeys on our back.” He does not want us to have any “hang-ups.” He wants to set us completely free so we can enjoy life to the fullest extent. The only drawback is our unwillingness to let Him be our Lord and Savior. Titus 2:12, 13 show us how.)

and purify {To cleanse from all defilement of the flesh and spirit so we can perfect holiness in the respect of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). This is the crying need of the Church today. We need to walk in the light as He is in the light so we can be cleansed from all sin (1 John 1:7). To get this done we must present our redeemed life to God. (Romans 12:1, 2) Then we will be free to serve Jesus (Romans 8:1-3).}

unto Himself (For Jesus and His Kingdom. Whatever is

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for Jesus is going to be a blessing for everyone else. Jesus does not ask us to do anything that is going to harm us or anyone in our presence. We will love God with all our whole being and our neighbor as ourselves.)

a peculiar people (People that do not conform to the standards of the world, the flesh or the devil. These people are not like everyone else. They have the attitude of “in honor preferring one another.” They are honest. They are truthful. They are faithful to their promises. They will go out of their way to help others.)

zealous (On fire for God. They are unwilling to give up the good fight of faith. They will be quick to tell you the truth as it is revealed to them. These good people are ready to “give an answer of the hope that is in them.”)

of good works. (Things that build up rather than tear down. Good Works are God's works. They are Holy Spirit-directed works. You can tell people by their fruit. These people are producing much “fruit unto righteousness and true holiness.” Their greatest joy is to know they are pleasing to God. When you love Jesus, you become like Him. These people love Jesus.)

Conclusion: Jesus is looking for people who are looking for Him. They are looking for a Holy City, whose builder and maker is their God. They are preparing for that city. They are different from the normal run of people. They know some day their Lord will be coming back to this world to bring in His kingdom. This enables them to walk humbly with their God. The world, the flesh and the devil hate them. God and His people love them. Would you like to be one of them? Today could be the best day of your life. Come to Jesus just now!

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Facet XI

A Marriage into a Royal Family

Bible Background: Genesis 24; Isaiah 61:8-11; 62; Jeremiah 2:32; Joel 2:12-32; Matthew 19:9; 25:1-13; John 2:1-11; 3:29-36; Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-22:7; 22:11-17.

Text Scripture: “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, ‘Come hither, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife’ ” (Revelation 21:9 ET).

Purpose: To show the nature of the Bride of Christ as shown in the book of Revelation as the New Jerusalem.

Introduction: Paul refers to the bride of Christ as the Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Daniel refers to a little stone made without hands, which hits the image of Satan’s slaves’ church, grinds it to powder, fills and rules the earth. Revelation 21:9 refers to the New Jerusalem as the Lamb’s wife. Let us compare the New Jerusalem with the Bride of Christ, His Holy Church in Revelation 21:10-22:7. Then we will compare the Bride of Christ to Abraham sending his servant to find a bride for his son, Isaac.

The Bride of Christ
Compared to the New Jerusalem

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God”

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(Revelation 21:10). As the Holy Jerusalem is a great city from God, so the Bride of Christ, the Church, is a gift to the world from God.

“Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even a jasper stone, clear as crystal;” (Revelation 21:11). The true Church of Christ is a very beautiful bride. She is a pure virgin. There is no “spot or blemish” on her.

“And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:12-14). The wall separates the sacred from the secular. The Bride of Christ is a called-out people. The pearly gates in the wall are three on each of the four sides with a name of a tribe of Israel on each, so regardless of what direction you come from, you must enter the Church of Jesus Christ via the Old Testament prophetic Word of God brought down to us by the tribes of Israel and fulfilled in the New Testament. The foundations of the wall of the City are the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The foundation of the church was laid down by the apostles. Jesus Christ is that foundation. Each apostle is a unique Jewel in Jesus' foundation.

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lies foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs (1500 miles). The length,

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the breadth, and the height of it are equal" (Revelation 21:15. 16). The length, breadth and height of the city are each 1500 miles. This is 3,375,000,000 cubic miles for a cube or 1,125,000,000 for an equal lateral pyramid. Either way, this is a very large area. God is "not willing that any perish" so there is enough room in the church for anyone who will come into the city on God's terms. All must repent and accept Jesus as their own personal Savior (2 Peter 3:9).

"And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits (216 feet), according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Revelation 21:17-21). Not only is the Church laid on a firm foundation, it is also pure gold. It is like transparent glass. There is nothing like this on earth. The beauty of the Bride of Christ is beyond our wildest imagination. The wall of the Church is 12 times 12. It is erected on the pure Word of God brought to us by "holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Twelve is 7 plus 5. Seven is God's perfect number and five is the number for law. The wall of the Church, is a gift to the world from God. The Church is God's perfect

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law in both the Old and New Testaments.

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” As Jesus is the Light of world, so He is the Glorious Light in the Church. The light of the true Church cannot be hidden. “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it” (Revelation 21:22-24). Thus, the Church is a Holy Family, which is to become a great nation. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there” (Revelation 21:25). No darkness is in the True Church of Jesus Christ. It is filled with God's Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God.

“And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.” (This is repeated here for emphasis. We will reign under Jesus' command in the Church of Christ with glory and honor.)

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life” (Revelation 21:26, 27). As heaven is a prepared place for prepared people, so is the Church. Nothing that would defile it will be allowed to be a member of it. All abominable things must be forsaken if you are ever going to be Christ's bride. Jesus will not take second place in your devotions. You must commit yourself completely to Him and His kingdom work.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear

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as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1). No one can survive without water. This water proceeds from the “throne of God and of the Lamb.” Only God has the water of life. It is refreshing to those who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2). Then there is the “tree of life” on either side of the “pure river of life.” This is for the healing of the nations who are the tribes of the True and Living God. The fruit of God’s holiness brings complete healing to His Church. Oh, how we need to be healed today! God’s fruit is not seasonal. You will not jump in and out of God’s grace. You will be established in His holiness by the fiery cleansing of His Holy Spirit. The fruit is year round.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve Him:” (Revelation 22:3). If we are ever going to get out from under the curse of sin, we are going to have to serve God. The real Church of Christ has been delivered from sin. When we get saved, we are freed from the penalty of sin. At sanctification, we are freed from the power of sin. When we go to heaven in our glorified bodies, we will be free from the presence of sin.

“And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads” (Revelation 22:4). “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” We are to be “transformed by the renewing of our mind.” The Church

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is to bring people to a loving relationship with God right now.

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 22:5). The family of God is destined to reign with the Lord God forever. The greatest among us will be the one who serves God and others. We reign through service to God. When we do this there is no night, for God is our light.

And he said unto me, “These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:6, 7). Some day Jesus is coming to claim His bride. Church, keep faith in God and wait patiently for your wonderful Lord! His coming is near at hand.

Abraham Sends His Servant to Find a Bride for Isaac

In Genesis 24 Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac. So God the Father sent His Holy Spirit into the world to find a bride for Jesus, God the Father's Son. This bride is Jesus' true church, that is all the born-again, Spirit-filled children of God.

Conclusion: God the Father has sent His Holy Spirit into the world to gather out of it a spotless bride for His Son. The New Jerusalem is a good example of what this bride is going to be like and the relationship with God she is going to enjoy throughout eternity.

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Facet XII

A Royal Priesthood of the Faithful

Bible Background: Exodus 40:13-15; Numbers 16-18; Joshua 18:7; Ezra 2:61-63; Nehemiah 7:63-65; 13:22-31; Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:9-16; 5:1-10; 6:16-20; 7-10; 13:8-17; 1 Peter 2:1-10; Revelation 1:5, 6; 5:9, 10; 20:6.

Text Scripture: “And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10 ET).

Purpose: To show that the Church of Jesus Christ is a holy, royal priesthood of believers.

Introduction: There is a close connection between Jesus, our High Priest, and all believers being priests. It is the same as the relationship between the high priest and the Levitical priesthood.

1. In the Levitical priesthood, God called them to do service for the people. In the priesthood of believers, God calls people out of darkness into His marvelous light to minister for Him.

2. In the Levitical priesthood, Moses was the high priest. Jesus is the High Priest for the priesthood of believers.

3. The High Priest approached God in the most holy place. In addition, the Levites approached the High Priest for the people. Jesus goes into heaven for us to intercede for us and the children of God go to Jesus for the people.

4. In the Levitical priesthood, sin could not be taken away. In Jesus' priesthood, sin is taken away.

5. In the Levitical priesthood, mortal men were the

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priests. In Jesus' priesthood, the eternal Son of God is the High Priest and the redeemed are His co-priests.

6. The priesthood of Moses was based on the law. Jesus' priesthood is based on grace and truth.

7. Material gifts and sacrifices were presented to God by the Levitical priesthood. Spiritual gifts and sacrifices are presented to God by Jesus' priesthood.

8. People were obedient to God out of the fear of God's wrath in Moses' priesthood. People are obedient to God out of a spirit of love and gratitude in Jesus' priesthood.

9. In the priesthood of Moses, the blood of others was brought to God. Jesus brought His own blood to present to God.

10. Moses' priesthood provided stability to a nation of people redeemed from physical bondage. Jesus provides stability to a church of people redeemed from spiritual bondage.

11. Moses had an elect group that interceded for the people to God. Jesus has the whole church of believers who are His co-priests interceding to God through Himself.

12. In Moses' priesthood, being a priest was a duty. With Jesus, being a co-priest is a gracious privilege.

13. Moses' covenant was an impersonal distant obedience to the laws of God. Jesus' new covenant is a loving relational experience as we are brought near to God through the blood of Jesus.

14. Moses attempted to force sinful people to do God's will through a covenant of curses and blessings. Jesus takes care of the sin problem by delivering His people from all sin—actual and inbred.

Conclusion: The priesthood of believers consists of a

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loving, caring, sharing relationship with God. It is given to us as a free gift through the death, burial, resurrection and intercession of Jesus Christ, our wonderful Lord and Savior. We preach and teach the Word. We reach out in love to all people. We pray for those who are lost in sin's dark night. We encourage our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord. We love God and others more every day. Getting to know Jesus and sharing His love with others is truly a wonderful privilege.

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Facet XIII

A Holy Nation of God's Kingdom

Bible Background: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:13-16; 18:18; 35:10-12; 46:1-4; Exodus 19:5, 6; Leviticus 18:20-30; 20; Deuteronomy 4:1-10; Proverbs 14:34; Isaiah 1; Jeremiah 7:28; 18:1-10; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Matthew 21:42-44; Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 10:18-21; 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

Scripture Text: “Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:10).

Purpose: To show what it is meant to be a Kingdom Church.

Introduction: The business of the Church of Jesus Christ is to make the world God's kingdom. We are to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” We are to pray “Your kingdom come, your will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” We are the kings of the King and lords of the Lord. We should “obey God rather than man.”

1. Jesus is the King of the kingdom. We owe our allegiance to Him. He has the first and last word. His will is to be sought and obeyed always.

2. Jesus rules His kingdom in righteousness and true holiness. We are to be a holy people in His kingdom.

3. The Church is the “little stone” that becomes a great mountain (nation), fills, and rules the earth as expressed in Daniel 2:44, 45.

4. Jesus is establishing His kingdom on this earth through His Church. This can only be done as we follow

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the King in total faith and obedience.

5. Jesus' kingdom is ruled by the love of God being "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." We love God and others completely.

6. In Jesus' kingdom, everyone serves everyone else. We look out for the needs of our fellow believers. We are especially careful to take care of the needs of those who cannot help themselves.

7. Jesus' kingdom will not be fully realized until Jesus comes back to set up His kingdom on this earth. Until He comes, we are to "occupy" for Him as the "salt" and "light" of this earth.

Conclusion: When Jesus comes back, He will set up His kingdom on the new earth. Heaven and earth will be one. The prayers of His people will be answered. Now we are preparing for His kingdom. Get ready to meet the King.

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Facet XIV

An Army Fully Mobilized

Bible Background: 1 Samuel 17; Luke 11:20-26; Romans 13:12-14; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10; 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:1-10.

Text Scripture: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6 ET).

Purpose: To show the nature of God’s Army.

Introduction: The battle is not physical. It is spiritual. We are fighting for the minds and hearts of the whole human race. We are fighting a battle that is too big for us. God has fully equipped His army to fight His battle for Him. Jesus is our Commanding Officer in this battle. While we follow Jesus’ commands, we are assured of total victory. Some day we will fight our last battle and live in a land of perfect rest and peace forever.

Follow David’s example, as recorded in 1 Samuel 17:17-58, to kill the giants that rise up to defy the True and Living God where you are enlisted today.

1. Go to the battlefield under the command of your heavenly Father to refresh your fellow warriors in your

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family.

2. Find out what you will receive for killing the giant.
3. Realize there is a cause that will glorify God.
4. Do not let others, who have no vision, dampen your zeal for God.
5. Follow the regular order of command.
6. Do not try to wear someone else's armor.
7. Use the talents God has given to you to "fight the good fight of faith."
8. Let the whole world know you trust God for the victory.
9. Get a good perspective of the enemy. Realize the battle is against God.
10. Claim victory in the face of the enemy.
11. Use the enemy's own weapon to finish the victory.
12. Hit the enemy at his weakest point.
13. Never give up. The victory is yours – claim it.
14. Give God the glory when He gives you the victory. Keep humble when God allows you to have great success in His kingdom work. Remember this is not about you. This is about bringing glory and honor to the Lord God of glory.

Write out your plan of attack against a giant in your life or within your church fellowship.

You can get a hard copy of the full version of this book from www.International-Lighthouse-Ministries.com/gtcobt.html.