

Jesus Now Ministries

SURE FOUNDATION

Mike Maloney

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to an outrageous hero and Father in the faith, Apostle Kelley Varner, who this year was promoted to the “Cloud of Witnesses”.

Thank you, Lord, for sending Pastor Kelley into our lives, we will never be the same.

INTRODUCTION

This was a series of studies that I put together to help me get my thoughts in some kind of order after the Lord had begun to move in a fresh way in my life. Since then, I have been able to use it several times to share these truths with groups of people; to see some of them come into a fresh encounter with the Lord.

Facts come and go but truth is eternal. These are not new truths, but more in the manner of the Lord continuing to open up our understanding to this salvation that He has provided for us. It is without doubt and controversy the greatest message on the planet, the best news that there is.

Eph 1:15-18 Therefore I also, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayer, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

The Amplified Bible talks about the ‘eyes of our heart being flooded with light’. I like that. May God flood your heart with revelation knowledge of Him as you read these words and contemplate the scriptures. The purpose of these studies is not to inform, so much as to facilitate an encounter with Him. He is still the answer to every question.

Mike Maloney C.T.L.

2009

WHAT TIME IS IT?

Eph 5:14-16

Therefore, He says; "Awake, sleeping ones! And arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

When I first was taught this scripture, it was nearly always in the practical sense of making the most of your time - hours, days, weeks etc. This is not a bad thing in itself, but a simple word study of the word 'time' used here lifts the game a bit.

The word for 'time' used here is Kairos as opposed to Chronos time. Chronos simply means a space of time, seconds, hours, years, etc. But Kairos means occasion, set or proper time, opportunity, due season. The word 'redeem' means to buy up and rescue from loss. So, we need to understand the opportune seasons of God that we find ourselves in, and make sure we don't miss them but make the most of them. His desire is that we get the full value out of the occasion or opportunity. The word for 'evil' in this scripture means hurtful. So, to simply not understand the season of God you are in can hurt you.

Zec 10:1

Ask rain from Jehovah in the time of the latter rain. Jehovah shall make storm clouds; and He gives them showers of rain, grass to everyone in the field.

So, what season (kairos) are we presently in? Let's start with the big picture and then narrow it down.

2 Pe 3:8

But, beloved, let not this one thing be hidden from you, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

I remember as a new believer thinking this was a strange scripture, but let's look at how it helps us. When the calendar changed and we moved into the year 2000, we moved out of the sixth day from Adam and began to move into the seventh day on God's time clock. Six thousand years of human history has passed since creation. Now this scripture helps us as it reveals this present time in history as the seventh day. This is exciting because it speaks of the Sabbath, the day of the Lord, and also a day of rest.

It has also been two thousand years since Jesus walked the earth, so we are now entering the third day from Jesus. Jesus also said if this natural temple is destroyed (the one in Jerusalem) that He would rebuild it in three days - He rose on the third day. He, Himself is the real temple. There are many more references to the Third Day and the seventh day in scripture but you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that there has never been a day like this day in human history.

Now that doesn't help us a whole lot, but it begins to give us a sense of occasion.

Now let us look at another key scripture that the Lord has given us to unlock the seasons of God.

Pro 22:20-21

Have I not written to you excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make you know the sureness of the words of truth; to return the words of truth to those who send to you?

The word 'excellent' in this verse means triple, three-fold measure. I learnt this first from Apostle Kelley Varner, who opened many of these truths to us.

We could make a long list of three-fold things in scripture but some are: the three major feasts of Israel, the three parts to Moses' tabernacle - the Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, the triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Man also is made in three parts - body, soul and spirit. The Kingdom of God is described as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life; etc. I read one book that had over forty examples of three-fold things.

Deu 16:16

“Three times in a year shall all your males appear before Jehovah your God in the place which He shall choose: in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before Jehovah empty,

Now, what has this got to do with us New Testament saints? These three Feasts point to three major encounters or experiences for the New Testament saint.

In the first Feast, which we call Passover (Unleavened Bread), we meet Him as Saviour and we have our sins forgiven, which is beyond great. But there is more!

The next Feast we call the Feast of Pentecost (Weeks). Here we meet Him as the baptizer in the Holy Ghost, which the New Testament describes as the ‘earnest of our inheritance’ (Eph 1:14).

G728 EARNEST

Of Hebrew origin [H6162]; a pledge, that is, part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest: - earnest.

For a lot of us, when we came into the experience of the baptism in the Holy Ghost we thought that was it. But there is a third Feast to be experienced, the Feast of Tabernacles. In the early 1950's George Warnock wrote a classic book called “The Feast of Tabernacles, the Hope of the Church”. Even back then, during the move of the Spirit which was called “Latter Rain”, men of God knew that more was to come to the church.

Getting back to what time is it, it is time for the church globally to begin to move out of the Feast of Pentecost (as awesome as that was and is) and begin to move into the experience of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Each Feast and experience is unique and special. What does the Feast of Tabernacles look like?

In these few studies, the plan is to give you some keys that will unlock the experience for you. The cool thing is, it's the right time to be asking.

The furniture in the Tabernacle Moses built, gives us insight into what to expect in each Feast and is also a picture of church history. As we move through the experiences that are represented by the furniture, etc. in the Tabernacle, we see God's plan of restoration for the Church.

In the Outer Court were the brazen altar and the brazen laver, which speak to us of salvation – as in Christ died for us, the truth of water baptism and the removal of sin. In the Outer Court we were saved, forgiven and cleansed. Not bad!

In the next realm of the Holy Place, there was a Golden Altar of Incense, Table of Shewbread, and the Golden Candlestick. These symbolize Holy Ghost prayer and worship, the Word revealed and the gifts and fruit of the Spirit. Well, that should be enough! But no, there is more!

In the Most Holy Place was a Mercy Seat; the Ark of the Covenant, the very presence of God. In the Most Holy Place is the very life of God.

Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”. In the first Feast He is the Way to God. In the second Feast He is the Truth of God. In the last encounter He is the very life of God that is available to us. Use your imagination!

In modern church history there was a great reformation bringing us out of the dark ages, when Luther and others began to preach the truths of the Outer Court; salvation by faith. It started wars! Later, the truth of believer's baptism was restored. People died! At the turn of the century, there was a second reformation when the Pentecostal movement was birthed at Azusa Street and other places, and men began to speak in tongues. Great controversy! Now we are entering the third reformation, as God begins to reveal the truths and experiences of the Most Holy Place to His Church; the Feast of Tabernacles. As one preacher put it, “what a day to be alive”.

What does it mean? Massive change for the church globally and us individually. Positions and stances that we have cherished need to be replaced by a fresh revelation and encounter. You see, this is the “Day of The Lord”, this is the day when He gets it His way!

But there's a problem.

Heb 9:8

the Holy Spirit signifying by this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

Luke 5:37-39

“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskin will perish. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved together. Also no one having drunk old wine, immediately desires new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’”

Our past experiences of God are precious and familiar to us, but they are not places to camp forever. We are a people of migration and change. The principle in Hebrews 9:8 is that to enter into the next thing or something new, you first have to dismantle previous positions. This can be very hard for us for a variety of reasons. The ‘old wine is better’; I like the way we do it; I'm comfortable and familiar with it. Many people I meet are very wary of change and are scared to embrace it in case they move into error. They believe it is safer to stay with the tried and true.

When Jesus turned up on the scene there was a well-established religious order and routine that had stood for hundreds of years. But it was time to change. Things that had been ‘the way to do it’ were now redundant. Most denominations, networks or streams of churches that we see around us were birthed out of a fresh move of the Spirit at a certain time. All were current and cutting edge in their day. The trick is to stay current and not be so rooted in what has been that we become inflexible and unable to embrace fresh moves and initiatives of the Spirit.

We all have comfort zones and a certain way we like things done, but to grow is to change.

One of the other major reasons people resist change is that they believe “there is nothing new under the sun”, a scripture from the book of Ecclesiastes. I have been told this many times by people, but if you look this scripture up, it’s in a chapter talking about the futility of life without God - it also says the crooked ways cannot be made straight. It’s not a verse designed to be embraced as a pattern of life! God is always doing something new.

The truth is that a lot of saints don’t want to be disappointed, so they develop mindsets that allow them to live without stretching out for fresh and new encounters with God because of past disappointments. I have been there and done that. If you don’t put yourself out there, you won’t get disappointed or hurt. It is a lie from the adversary. Jesus has saved the best wine till last. Let God stir you up again! There has never been a day like this day. This is definitely a time to be awake and not asleep.

ORIGIN

We need a new wineskin for the new wine that the Lord is releasing. What is it?

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: [13] who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

One of things I do a lot when first talking to a new group of Christians is to get them to quickly write down for me where they were born and where they are from. I don't give them much time - I just want their immediate response. In nearly every setting and occasion people will write down a town, city or country. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Now I don't write this to be clever or mean, but to make a point. It's the wrong answer! But it is what we believe, our reality.

In this one small test we discover the fundamental flaw in our thinking. We still think we are a natural people, trying to have a spiritual experience. You can't put this current move of the Spirit in that wineskin. It won't work.

As I was driving to a meeting to teach this one night, the Lord said, "Tell them they started with a natural origin, parents, a certain town, etc., and then they got saved and their origin became mixed." It became the spiritual confronting the natural, battling for supremacy. This is where many of us have spent a lot of time. But He said to me tell them this, "their real origin is Spirit". Not only is it superior; it even pre-dates our natural birth.

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Now everyone can agree with verse 12 but verse 13 kicks it into another realm. It talks about a birth that has got nothing at all to do with flesh and blood and natural things, but is entirely spiritual in origin.

The Lord is coming by His Spirit in this season to make this a revelation and reality to His saints, not just a theory. This is one of the fundamental building blocks of the new wine skin. If we don't get this by revelation, we are going to struggle.

Ephes. 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, [4] just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, [5] having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Whichever way you want to cut it, you really were in Him first. He really is your Father; you really were His idea. When I got saved at the age of 21, one of the first things that I felt strongly was that I had come home. I couldn't explain it then; I can now!

John 3:3-7

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

G509 AGAIN

anōthen

From G507; from above; by analogy from the first; by implication anew: - from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top.

The primary meaning of the word 'again' in these scriptures is "from above; from a higher order". Your starting point in this Christian experience is another realm. It has got nothing much to do at all with natural things. It would have helped a lot if they had used the words 'from above' rather than 'again' in the different Bibles that we have.

2 Cor. 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

This is one of the most misunderstood and frustrating scriptures for a lot of saints. We experience the new birth and the baptism in the Holy Spirit and a lot of things change. But we find not all the old things have passed away and everything hasn't become totally new. I remember reading this scripture just after the Lord had been beginning to make these things real to me. I had read this scripture countless times over the years. But that day as I was reading, it leaped off the page at me and gripped me in a way it never had before. I was reading it in the old King James Version and instead of the word 'creation' it used the word 'creature'. And it struck me, 'Oh my God, I am not what or who I thought I was! I am actually a whole new kind of creature!

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

My wife asked me one day, "In James 1:17, what do you think the good and perfect gift is?" Now, we used to sing this as a chorus. So my first thought was family, holidays, friends, blessings etc., - you know, all the good things He gives us. But I knew this was going to be the wrong answer; otherwise, she wouldn't have asked me. So I said, "What do you think it is?"

She said, "We are!"

Now the very next verse, which we never used to quote in context, says that very thing.

James 1:18

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

You are a good and perfect gift sent from above from your real Father. He really is your Father.

apokueo, Greek 616, Strong's: Forth

apokueo, ap-ok-oo-eh'o; from Greek 575 (apo) and the base of Greek 2949 (kuma); to breed forth, i.e. (by transfer) to generate (figurative) :- beget, produce.

ktisma, Greek 2938, Strong's: Creatures

ktisma, ktis'-mah; from Greek 2936 (ktizo); an original formation (concrete), i.e. product (created thing) :- creature.

1 Peter 1:23

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of Spirit is Spirit.

We have spent a lot of time in church, trying to fix Adam (our old nature), teaching him to behave, etc. He is just supposed to die! The emphasis of the New Testament is the new Creation man.

Col. 3:10

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Galatians 6:15

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Quote from Ryan Lawson: "When you are born again, you are not simply a forgiven you! You are literally a new creation!"

People weren't having a huge problem with Jesus until he began to announce that He was really from above and that His father was God. You try it; you will get the same response. The problem was they knew His mum and dad, the town where He lived and worked and his brothers and sisters. It was true of Him: He was actually from above! So are you!

John 8:23

And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

This is the starting point for the Christian experience; we are a word out of His mouth. Now origin is an important part of the wineskin and leads us into the need for an adjusted identity.

IDENTITY

The Problem

Just like many of us were unclear on our true origin, a lot of us also have a case of mistaken identity. Origin can begin to shape you but other powerful forces are environment and circumstances. People and events have had major impacts on us and often define us in a very fundamental way. These circumstances have left us with a warped view of who we really are.

Simply put, we have believed a lie about ourselves. Its strength was that it was based on repeated experiences, often over many years. That's why we believed it.

Jam 1:6-8

But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For do not let that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, not dependable in all his ways.

G1374

Dipsuchos

From G1364 and G5590; two spirited, that is, vacillating (in opinion or purpose): - double minded.

The double-minded man is subject to circumstance and behaviour. Sinner or saint; you cannot be both. The Lord says one thing and your behaviour often says another. The reality is that a lot of us have been living with a mistaken identity, one marred by life and circumstance.

We have lived out of and believed in a wrong but powerful image of ourselves. It is a lie! One preacher put it this way...

“An image is another you, a mask which we hide behind; it's a fake, a lousy imitation, it's another you, it's an anti-Christ.”

When I first heard this teaching, I was just in a room on my own listening to a teaching tape. As the message ended, I was thinking, 'Have I got a false image of myself?' Now I had already been a Christian for over 20 years and been in ministry, but I had never really had this question put to me this way. So I asked the Lord if I had a false image about myself and then began to run some ideas through my mind of what it could be.

Then a phrase seemed to come up out of my spirit and it simply said “not good enough”. It was one of those God moments, and I knew that was it. That was what I really thought about myself deep down. It explained what sort of Christian, husband, father, friend, worker, etc, I was. It was a recurring pattern that had dogged me all my life; I had just never put it into words. I thought, 'man, that's so true'. Then the Holy Ghost said, “It's a lie”.

But I said, 'it's the most truthful thing I've ever heard.'

Now this is where the solution begins.

The Answer

Normally, you would get counsel or prayer but the Lord just said “repent”! Repent from what? From believing the lie. At this stage I still thought it was truth but I went through the motions and said, “Lord, forgive me for believing that I am not good enough”.

It was so simple. There had been a strong presence of the Lord during this time and as I repented, a flood of thoughts came to me and I quickly wrote them all down in a small note book. I knew something was happening to me, but at that stage I didn’t realize it was going to be a life-changing encounter.

As I finished writing and closed the book, I thought, 'I’ll have to read these things a number of times to remember them.' I put the book down and the heavens opened. It was like He stood up inside me in a way He never had before and I remember saying, 'Wow, you really are here!' He then said a number of other things to me so clearly, some of which form the basis for the other studies we will look at in the next pages.

But the absolute key is to have the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Truth, reveal and unmask any false image you have about yourself, and then help you repent from it. So simple, yet so powerful; and only the Holy Spirit can reveal the lie, and then the truth, to you.

I don’t believe the false image any more. The Lord has used other things to shape my life, namely what He has said and is saying about me. If the lie has been so powerful in our lives, just imagine how impacting the truth is going to be.

The key question is “WHO ARE YOU”?

This happened to me in October 2000 and since then I have had the privilege to share with folk and walk them through this. To date I have not met one person who had an accurate, God-given picture or image of themselves.

A lot of folk have been broken by trying to fix their perceived shortcomings. Most folk, when you pray for them, weep or have trouble even vocalizing the wrong image. Once the false image has been shattered and walked away from, God can begin to move us into prophetic purpose, destiny and a growing intimacy with Him and others. All the walls or masks can come down!

Song 4:12

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed

Time to open up the garden, release the spring and unseal the fountain.

James 1:23-25

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

G2657 BEHOLDING

katanoēō

From G2596 and G3539; to observe fully: - behold, consider, discover, perceive.

G1078 NATURAL

genesis

From the same as G1074; nativity; figuratively nature: - generation, nature (-ral).

When we look into a mirror, we are supposed to see who we are in Him and who He is in us, not our sin and shortcomings, our humanness. The face we see is our 'genesis' face, the face of our new birth. Observe fully, behold, consider, discover and perceive that, and then have a time in the Holy Ghost.

We need the Holy Ghost to help us pull down the old image so that we can move into our right mind. Our first understanding or awareness must be pulled down before God can release the new.

Your walk in the Lord is nothing more than a growing awareness of who you already are in Him on the basis of what He has already done. (Kelley Varner)

Accurate personalized Identity and Origin form the basis of the wine skin that can contain the New Wine that God is pouring out in these days. Holy Ghost wine needs a Holy Ghost-crafted container. New wine is for the new man.

This teaching has saved my life.

ENTERING REST

Rest from what? What about from the battle against sin, from working for Jesus, and from trying to earn God's favor. We need to come to the place where we cease from our own works: our attempts to be righteous, our attempts to do the works of God, and our attempts to win His favor.

Heb 4:10

For he who has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from His.

G2041 WORKS

ergon

From ἐργῶν ergō (a primary but obsolete word; to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication an act: - deed, doing, labour, work.

Hebrews Chapter Four is full of this theme of rest. As Christians, we have often found ourselves in the place of wearing ourselves out trying to live the Christian life, which is not hard to live; it's impossible! The result is usually condemnation when we fail or fall short, or pride if we get something right - both are horrible states for us to be in and not great for those around us either.

Mat 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

G372 REST

Anapausis

From G373; intermission; by implication recreation: - rest.

Jesus here talks about two kinds of rest. One that He gives to us and one that we find. One preacher put it this way, 'The first rest is the rest of salvation; peace with God, but the second rest is something we have to enter into experientially.'

In the previous study we talked about origin and identity. When the Lord made these truths real to me, one of the very next things He spoke so clearly to me about was rest. Once you begin to have a revelation of origin and identity, you immediately become a candidate for entering into rest.

It sort of went like this; "Mike, you have been helping Me for twenty years", and I said, "Yes Lord". He replied, "Stop it!" I knew exactly what He was talking to me about. The pressure just lifted; the pressure to be spiritual, fruitful, to win favour, to hear that "Well done" sometime in the future - it just lifted. Then the truth of the verse, "it's not by might or by power but by My Spirit says the Lord", became real to me.

You see, God had just lifted me up and released me into a place in God which I had been trying to get to, through effort, for twenty years. And He did in about two minutes! At the same time, I realized that I actually could do "all things through Christ who strengthens me".

This current move of the Spirit is marked by people entering into rest. There can be no sweat of human effort in this day. You see, it's the 'Day of Lord'! It is the seventh day from Adam, a Day of Sabbath rest.

Sin Consciousness

Have you ever been conscious of sin in your life? Have you ever tried to do something about it? How successful were you? If you haven't been too successful, this scripture may make it worse.

1 John 3:9

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

I used to read this at times and wonder if I was really saved. So, we try to fight the sin in our lives. Some folk have been left devastated and defeated by this battle, not realizing that we have been fighting the wrong way. We have been trying as natural men to repeat what Jesus did; live a sinless life. Good luck with that! You see, that's why He came - because we couldn't do it.

It goes back to the revelation of origin and identity. If you don't really understand that you have been born of God and are a new creature, you are in for a long struggle. Much of the time in church we have been trying to get Adam, the old nature, to behave. That is not the Gospel! He needs to die and a new man needs to arise. Adam cannot be fixed; God's answer is an entirely new creation.

1 Co15:45-50

And so, it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul," the last Adam was a life-giving Spirit. But not the spiritual first, but the natural; afterward the spiritual. The first man was out of earth, earthy; the second Man was the Lord from Heaven. Such the earthy man, such also the earthy ones. And such the heavenly Man, such also the heavenly ones. And according as we bore the image of the earthy man, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. And I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

Jesus was the last Adam! As one preacher said, "He is not the second Adam but the last, and He came to put a lasting end to the first Adam".

Galatians 5:16

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

You can sometimes get Adam to behave a bit, but it is always a battle. Quit trying! God wants to cleanse us from even a consciousness of sin.

Hebrews 9:14

(CEV) But Christ was sinless, and He offered himself as an eternal and spiritual sacrifice to God. That's why His blood is much more powerful and makes our consciences clear. Now we can serve the living God and no longer do things that lead to death.

Works (Heb 9:9) can never cleanse our conscience. Are you focused on your sin, or are you focused on the fact that you are a new creature in Christ? This is important, because you will never beat sin by focusing on it. The more you try, the worse it will get.

The flesh wants to have justification based on works or effort. It can't be had that way! There are two elements in sanctification, blood and water. The blood declares us to be holy and the washing of water of the word cleanses us in an ongoing fashion. The starting point for our process is 'you are holy'. What a starting point.

Galatians 2:16

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

This is a massive subject and there is much more that we could say and many more scriptures that we could look at. I don't want to wear you out, so let's look at something practical.

Has the Holy Ghost convicted you of your righteousness yet? A righteousness that is apart from your works - but is because of the blood of Jesus and because of what He has provided; a righteousness that comes solely from faith.

Proverbs 17:15

He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.

If He who was without sin could become sin for us, then we who were darkness can become light (Eph 5:8). If He has said you are righteous and you are running around condemning yourself, what are you hoping to achieve? You will never earn your salvation; it's a free gift. He's made you right! We don't need a devil to be the accuser of the brethren; we have taken that job onboard ourselves. We have put the cart before the horse. We have been trying by works to be His sons, rather than realizing we are His sons and living out of that.

How many songs have we sung and sermons have we heard preached about us being sinners? Newsflash! You are not a sinner; you are a saint! He said so! Paul never writes to the sinners at this or that church, but to the saints. You don't become a saint when you die or do something amazing. You are a saint now!

Now, from this foundation of the revelation that we really are new creatures in Him, that God really is our Father and that He really has justified us; on this foundation we begin to live differently.

Galatians 3:1-4

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? [2] This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [3] Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? [4] Have you suffered so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain?

baskaino, Greek 940, Strong's bewitched

baskaino, bas-kah'ee-no; akin to Greek 5335 (phasko); to malign, i.e. (by extension) to fascinate (by false representations): - bewitch.

Philip. 3:9

and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

I never really experienced any real lasting freedom from sin until I realized who I was in Him. We are not supposed to spend all our time and energy fighting sin, but actually get on with living in Him.

So, we have briefly looked at resting from being justified by works. Now let us quickly look at resting from doing works for Him.

Resting from Works

Now, this is an interesting one. The Lord told me that this was going to be a huge sticking point for many people. We have built much of our walk, churches and ministries on the foundation of working hard for Jesus, in the hope that one day we would hear the words “well done thou good and faithful servant”.

Religion is the flesh’s attempt to be justified by works and then to do works for God. The trouble is - that is not Christianity! Now, I am not trying to be mean or facetious. We have all done these things with good intentions. It’s just that now it is time to move into a fresh awareness of rest as the seasons of God unfold. “Stop helping Me” was God’s subtle way of communicating this truth to me.

1 Cor. 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Col. 1:29

To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Galatians 2:8

(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

The early Apostles had a powerful awareness that it was actually the Lord working in them and through them. There was no sense of separation. They did not think that He was watching from afar. Below is a wonderful quote from the book “the Normal Christian Life” by Watchman Nee

Watchmen Nee

“The Son of God died instead of us for our forgiveness,
He lives instead of us for our deliverance,
A Substitute on the cross who secures our forgiveness,
A Substitute within who secures our victory.

He also said that Paul’s cry of, 'it’s no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me', was meant to be the normal Christian experience, rather than an exclusive exalted state for a few super-saints.

A powerful awareness of His indwelling presence is the key. I heard one lady preacher put it this way, “it is not enough for Him to be present in us but to be powerfully present”. We have heard a lot of teaching and encouragement to be mighty men and women for God. I submit to you that while there were many mighty men and women in the Old Testament, in the New Testament there is really only one, and His name is Jesus. He just happens to live in a many-membered body. Sort of fixes a lot of things right there. We are a company of people filled with the “Mighty Man”. Now that is rest.

I used to try so hard to be spiritual and to move in the gifts and power. I don't bother anymore. He is here and He knows what to do. Now we really are not limited to what we are good at, or some gifting profile, but we really can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. And if we limit ourselves to being led, rather than initiating a lot of things, we will find ourselves being more effective. I have been learning to respond to Him rather than to do for Him, and have seen more and moved in more of the Spirit than ever before. Don't tell anybody but I call it cheating! I don't have to be clever, smart or gifted. He is and He actually lives in me! Some people are scared that if we preach rest, people will stop doing, giving and serving etc, I think they will do more, and it won't wear them out! Rest is directed activity.

Rom 8:14-15

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father!

Rest From Placement

When we normally begin to look at the subject of rest, we go into the story of the ‘Prodigal Son’ in Luke chapter 15. Everyone knows this story well. It is a powerful picture of the three states the believer can find themselves in. Now, remember that they are sons in this story, but they are living beneath their inheritance. The first one becomes totally conscious of his sins and returns to his father in a defeated state. The second one is in just as bad a condition but doesn't know it. He is totally caught up in works, working hard for his father, trying to get favour. One caught in works and the other in sin; just like so many of Gods people today. But at the end of the story, we see an accurate state of Sonship portrayed; not achieved through works but by favour.

The father goes crazy and throws a party. He places a ring and a robe and sandals on him, kills a fatted calf and throws a party for the returning son. Favour apart from works; he just came home. The other son is furious and complains that the father had never done these things for him, to which the father replied, 'all that I have is yours.'

It's time to move from being eaten up by sin, or by being lost in a works mentality, and actually become mature sons of our Father.

Gal 4:1-6

But I say, over so long a time the heir is an infant, he does not differ from a slave, though being lord of all; [2] but he is under guardians and housemasters until the term appointed before by the father. [3] Even so we, when we were infants, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, [4] that He might redeem those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. [2] And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"

There is a time appointed by the Father for the church globally and for us individually to move into the place of Sonship. It's that time in the earth now. In the life of Jesus, when He was thirty years old, He was baptized by John in the Jordan. As He came up out of the waters, the Father said in Matthew 3:17 "this is My son in whom I am well pleased". At this stage He hadn't fulfilled His purpose on the earth; He started with a "this is My Son in whom I am well pleased". In Jewish custom thirty years old was the mark of maturity, when the father would give his son signing rights in his father's name; a public declaration.

God is coming by His Spirit to His church in these days to affirm and declare His sons. We have been under tutors and guardians and have learnt many things. Now I believe we are candidates for a fresh encounter with Him. We have learnt our true origin and identity; we have turned our backs on working to be justified or doing things for Him. Now we are ready to move into maturity and placement as sons.

Have you heard in your spirit the Father say "this is my Son in whom I am well pleased"? When you do, everything will begin to change! Rest will come and your inheritance will be released. To get things, usually you have to do something. But to receive an inheritance you have to be somebody!

Once you have heard this you realize that your starting point is incredible favour; not favour earned but favour given. Our starting point is a place of favour, is a place of strength and is a place of glory. What security! We have already heard His judgment of us.

Rom 8:28-32

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers. But whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, those He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Please don't hear this wrong, but I believe that one of the purposes of the last move of the Spirit was to reveal to us that we couldn't, by good intentions, effort or gifting, bring about the prophetic purposes of God in our lives. Most of us hit a wall; others have, but are in denial. It's almost like the Lord had to let us get all our efforts and enthusiasm out of our system so He could bring us to the end of ourselves and into a place of rest. I had got to the point of barrenness; unable to bring about what I thought was supposed to happen, or to live the kind of life that I felt was required.

Then God turns up and says, 'Now, this is actually how it works', which would have been handy information twenty years ago. The Lord is moving us onto a Sure Foundation; His plan predates time. You really were in Him before the foundation of the world, and now He really is in you. He does not live on a planet called heaven out beyond the Milky Way. We really are His tabernacle! He is our inheritance and we are His. Selah.

PRAYING FROM HEAVEN DOWN

Let us now have a fresh look at prayer. We have been looking at: what time it is, origin, identity, sin consciousness, works mentalities, rest and being placed or set as mature sons. All this is going to have a major effect on the way we pray. We are going to pray differently.

Our self-image and our prayer life are linked. How we pray gives insight and a picture as to where we are at spiritually. What do our prayers sound like? What do our words release? As we change, the way we pray changes.

I've called this 'praying from Heaven down', because one of the first things we need to do is to change where we pray from. We have often been like Old Testament saints, firmly rooted on the earth, praying up through the clouds, circumstances, devils and the heavens, to a God who is far away. We are not in the Old Testament, but the New. Everything has changed.

Col 3:1-3

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Be mindful of things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

Eph 2:4-6

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

We are to pray from heaven down. We need our minds renewed from old ways of thinking and praying. What about praying from the presence of God, praying from above the circumstances and devils, and not from beneath? This sounds stronger to me. Let's pray the answer and not the question, Selah. Let's pray from a place of victory and strength. Our God still calls the end from the beginning.

Our assignment in prayer is still the same.

Mat 6:10

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

We find out what He wants and then release it into the earth through prayer; the will, decrees and purposes of God from Heaven.

Let's look at the ingredients used in Exodus 30 in the making of the incense that symbolizes prayer. From a quick study of these, we can gain some insights into what God says prayer is.

Exo 30:7-8

And Aaron shall burn sweet incense on it every morning; when he dresses the lamps, he shall burn it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at evening, he shall burn it, perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations.

Exo 30:34-37

And Jehovah said to Moses, "Take to yourself sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; sweet spices with pure frankincense, a part of each one. And you shall make it a perfume, an incense according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure and holy. And you shall beat some of it very small, and put it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. And the perfume which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves according to the way it is made. It shall be holy to you for Jehovah.

H5198 STACTE

nataph: From H5197; a drop; specifically, an aromatic gum (probably stacte): - drop, stacte.

This doesn't help us much until we look at the root word for 5198

H5197 nataph: A primitive root; to ooze, that is, distil gradually; by implication to fall in drops; figuratively to speak by inspiration: - drop (-ping), prophesy (-et).

Now that's more interesting. What a beautiful picture. The first ingredient for making the prayer incense speaks of the prophetic, to speak by inspiration. To me, it speaks of hearing. The first ingredient to prayer is to discern or hear His thoughts, a clear steady distillation of His will.

H7827 ONYCHA

shecheleth: Apparently from the same as H7826 through some obscure idea, perhaps that of peeling off by concussion of sound; a scale or shell, that is, the aromatic mussel: - onycha.

H7826

shachal: From an unused root probably meaning to roar; a lion (from his characteristic roar): - (fierce) lion.

Now I really am beginning to like this; the roaring of a fierce lion. Sounds to me like the power and passion and fearlessness of the Lord - His irresistible will and passion.

So far, we have prayer being made up of His thoughts and now His passion. Prayer is a place of strong emotion - His.

H2464

chelbenah: From H2459; galbanam, an odorous gum (as if fatty): - galbanum.

H2459

cheleb cheleb: From an unused root meaning to be fat; fat, whether literally or figuratively; hence the richest or choice part: - X best, fat (-ness), X finest, grease, marrow.

Jesus said my house shall be a house of prayer, a definitive statement. Could Holy Ghost prayer really be the most important thing that we engage in? Do we give it top priority, and the choicest of our time and energy?

H3828 FRANKINCENSE

lebonah lebonah: From H3826; frankincense (from its whiteness or perhaps that of its smoke): - (frank-) incense.

H3826

libbah: Feminine of H3820; the heart: - heart.

This speaks to me of the call for pure motives and also knowing that you are clean because of what He has done. Praying with a sense of being unworthy or unclean will not be effective or powerful. If we feel like that, we often don't even find ourselves praying.

I believe God wants to revolutionize the way we pray. When the Lord began to move in a fresh way on our lives, intercessory prayer was one of the first things He led us into. For a lot of us, it was a new experience. We had spent years singing, but prayer was an area of weakness. He told me to put away my guitar because He wanted to begin to teach me to pray.

This prayer ministry is for everyone. He wants to take us inside His heart and mind. It's not just about getting us to pray accurately, but is to reveal His heart and emotions to us and through us. We need to be free so that He can express Himself through us in prayer.

Out with the old prayer lists and fear-based, self-centered prayers, and into a realm of His heart, mind and authority. We will get to know Him better as we allow Him to intercede through us.

One preacher said it like this, "Our words are containers of faith, and powerful speaking in prayer is the natural outcome of an inner explosive faith". What do your words release?

Rev 8:4-5

And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God from the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast it into the earth. And voices and thundering's and lightnings and an earthquake occurred.

Isa 42:13-14

Jehovah goes out as a warrior, He stirs up zeal like a man of wars; He shouts, yea, roars; He overcomes His enemies. I have kept silence from forever; I have been still and refrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in pangs of labor, I will pant and gasp at once.

There is a misconception among some saints that if there is strong emotion involved, then it is automatically soulish and therefore wrong. You don't have to shout because God's not deaf. But what about when He is shouting? I don't believe in stirring up prayer by human emotion, but I do believe that we need to be free enough so that a passionate God can express Himself through our emotions when He wants to. I believe in times of stillness and quiet, and also in times of 'roaring' - whatever is appropriate for the occasion.

Prayer is intimacy and intercession. As priests, we minister to God and as kings, we release His governmental decrees into the earth. Prayer is the place to bind ourselves powerfully to God's image of who we are individually and corporately. Prayer is not a place for being shut down or passive. It'll help you and it will help others. Let the Lion of Judah who lives within you be loosed!

This is an extract from a book called "Governmental Prayer", by Apostle Noel Woodroffe.

"Governmental prayer is the clearest expression of the warfare of the Apostolic move of God. It expresses the mentality and irresistible position of people committed to reformation.

Governmental prayer is breakthrough prayer. It is authoritative because it is based on prophetic discernment of His will. It is filled with prophetic utterance and Apostolic decrees. It is the spoken word of Gods power filling the earth. It has momentum and spiritual force. It will be content with nothing less than the absolute finish of all Gods purposes on the earth.

The activity of governmental prayer breaks the mental imprisonment of a religious church and breathes back into the body of Christ the unlimited expectation and sense of dramatic destiny of the apostolic church.

James 5:16 in the Amplified Bible says "the heartfelt prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous dynamic in its working".

I am no expert on prayer. I have listened to stories and testimonies from people about prayer that stagger my mind, and at the same time inspire me. No matter where we are at in our prayer

experience, there's more. Try picturing yourself with Him in Heaven as you pray. Look down at those mountains in your life and begin to decree the answers!

Holy Ghost, please teach us how to pray.

'END TIMES' - A FRESH LOOK

I would imagine that I am like a lot of people, in that my view on End Times was gleaned from the few experts on the subject that were around when I was first saved. This became part of what shaped some of my thoughts and attitudes, but I never investigated it for myself. I read a couple of books on the subject when I was first saved and sort of left it at that. You meet some people who are right into the subject and others who don't really have any strong views on how things will work at the end of the age.

I am not an expert on the subject by any means but I have been hearing a fresh sound surrounding the subject which I really like; that stirs me in my spirit. This is a vast subject, but let's look at a few of the basic principles and allow the Holy Ghost to begin to give us a fresh perspective and framework for looking at 'End Time' events.

2 Ti 1:7

For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

God hasn't given us a spirit of timidity or dread. I believe that any system of teaching that causes the saints of God to fear inordinately is wrong; it is of the wrong spirit. Any theology based on fear must be immediately suspect. The Spirit that we have been given is one of miraculous power, a love feast and of self-control. We have produced systems of teaching and doctrine that have caused the saints of God to fear the devil. We are supposed to fear God!

For years, I pictured God and Satan as two rival powers fighting for control of the earth. The fruit produced in my mind by much of the end time teaching was that the devil was almost as powerful as God, and that it was going to be a close-run thing – the best thing we could do was escape.

Listen. God has no enemies; He is God! He has no rivals! I like what one preacher said, "We have been taught what to do if Satan comes knocking at our door, but who are you going to call if God ever came after you?" Come on people. We need to deliver ourselves and the people from an over-inflated fear of the enemy. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; this fear of the enemy is not wise. We are supposed to bruise Satan's head, not hide from him in fear. The worst that we are supposed to do is bruise our heel.

Rom 16:20

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

I remember speaking to a teenager one morning who had been listening to end time stuff on a radio show every night. I asked her how it left her feeling - afraid was the answer. Fear produces shut down, paralyses vision, gives us a warped view of God and leads to wrong decision making. It is not helpful. The devil loves it, it glorifies him.

But what about the anti-christ?

For years, we waited for this evil world ruler to appear and reign in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

2 Th 2:1-4

Now we beseech you, my brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you should not be soon shaken in mind or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word or letter, as through us, as if the Day of Christ is at hand. Let not anyone deceive you by any means. For that Day shall not come unless there first comes a falling away, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself forth, that he is God.

If you want to deceive people, you misdirect their attention, eg. looking for a future anti-christ. Now, while everybody's attention is on looking for that event to occur, back at the ranch in the real temple of God (whom we are) we have the old man or old nature sitting on the throne of our hearts opposing the reign of Christ in our lives. It is also a picture of Godless systems within the church that lock people in the realm of manifestations, but keep them from pressing through to a love of the truth. It's still the truth that makes you free.

2 Th 2:5-10

Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? And now you know what holds back, for him to be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he is now holding back until it comes out of the midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved.

Let's focus on allowing the Holy Ghost to rid us of the anti-christ thoughts and systems in our hearts and churches, rather than focusing on an event that may happen in the future in a land far away. This focus on another place and a future anti-christ is not helpful.

What about the Jews? Many Christians see themselves as second class citizens, and believe that the Jews are the people God really loves. There is the small matter of the cross to consider.

Rom 2:28-29

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart; in spirit and not in letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.

Did you realize Abraham, who is called the father of the faith was not a Jew? This thing has always been bigger than one people. The dealings and covenants of God with the Jews are a picture to us of God's plan to have a people for Himself. The coming of Jesus exploded it back out to include the world.

Eph 2:11-16

Therefore, remember that you, the nations, in time past were in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; and that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once afar off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, He making us both one, and He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, making peace between them; and so that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity in Himself.

We get fascinated with natural things: Israel, Jerusalem the Jewish people, rebuilt temples. I heard this word of wisdom from a preacher, "the mistake we make is that we interpret the New Testament in the light of the Old, rather than the Old in the light of the New". He starts at the end and works back. The Bible says all His works were finished before they began. Jesus was slain before the foundation of the world.

Isa 46:9-10

Remember former things from forever; for I am God, and no other is God, even none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past things which were not done, saying, My purpose shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure;

That's why we need a really small devil because we have a really big God. From everlasting to everlasting is our God; all powerful, all knowing, all present and we are the apple of His eye. We are His people. If God be for us who can be against us?

What about the Day of the Lord?

Isa 21:12

The watchman said, "The morning comes, and also the night; if you will inquire, inquire, and come again."

We need to make a decision. Is it the Day of the Lord, or is it satans day? Is it Gods finest hour or satans? Some people read the word and see night coming, darkness and gloom. But you can read the same scriptures and see the Day coming. Which do you want to see? The Day of the Lord holds no fears for us. It's the most exciting time to be alive, the culmination of Gods plans and purposes. What a time to be alive.

I personally am looking forward to all His enemies being made His footstool in this day. Jesus is seated in the Heavens waiting until everything is placed under His feet. The vehicle for achieving this is His body, His church. That's why we have to change our mindsets; this will never happen if we all want to run away. Sin, sickness, poverty and death - the church is supposed to put her feet on the necks of all these things, just like Jesus did.

Heb 2:8

You subjected all things under his feet." For in subjecting all things to Him, He did not leave anything not subjected to Him. But now we do not see all things having been subjected to him.

The earth is His footstool. The earth is where these things need to happen: they have already happened in Heaven. The Church needs to be that second witness, and through that witness, the full weight of what Jesus accomplished on the cross will become a reality on the earth. This is where our focus should be.

Rom 8:2

But the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

It has been against the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus for us to be under the curse of the law of sin and death and it's consequences for about the last two thousand years. The reality of the cross and the totality of His victory needs to be manifest in the earth through the church.

The great mistake is that, through lack of understanding, we have put off to a future time and a future place (Heaven), things that need to happen here and now.

Now, this is getting longer than I intended it to get. I said it is a vast subject and we have only been skimming the surface. But what I have been trying to do is to have us approach the subject with a fresh basis - God is Big, the devil is small, there is no need for us to be in a place of fear or dread. It's the Day of the Lord.

What about Daniel Chapter nine - the Rapture and the Mark of the Beast?

Just really quickly (I have resources in book and DVD form, that I can point you to or get to you for more in depth looks at these topics), Daniel nine was first taught to me as pointing to a future covenant that the anti-christ would make with the Jews in the middle of a seven-year period of tribulation that would be broken. It's not!

Dan 9:21-27

yes, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, touched me in my severe exhaustion, about the time of the evening sacrifice. And he enlightened me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you skill and understanding. At the beginning of your prayers the commandment came out, and I have come to explain. For you are greatly beloved; therefore, understand the matter, and attend to the vision: Seventy weeks are decreed as to your people and as to your holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going out of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem, to Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in times of affliction. And after sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the people of the ruler who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. And the end of it shall be with the flood, and ruins are determined, until the end shall be war. And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. And in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease, and on a corner of the altar desolating abominations, even until the end. And that which was decreed shall be poured on the desolator."

Gabriel appears to Daniel at the hour of the evening sacrifice, the same time Jesus would hang on a cross. This is the Angel that appeared to Mary years later to announce His birth, but now has come to describe His death. Awesome! Jesus dealt with sin at the cross; He finished the transgression, made an end to sins, made atonement for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, sealed the vision and prophecy and anointed the most Holy Place. The veil was rent in the temple and now we have access to God. What a prophecy! This passage is all about Jesus; it also goes into great detail about events of His life.

This passage is used as a basis for a lot of the seven-year tribulation teachings and rapture. It's really about our awesome Jesus. He was cut off for us, the natural temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in seventy AD. He finished the need for sacrifices and offerings to be made at the temple. The real offering had been made once and for all.

What about the rapture?

I don't know about you, but I waited for it for years! However, I don't want to go anymore. I liked the idea of it because it promised to release us from the need to suffer or to be in danger. A quick look at it reveals some interesting things. Do you know that it is the wicked who are taken in judgment and the righteous that remain? I'm staying! In Matthew 24, the context is as in the days of Noah; Noah stayed - the wicked were taken.

I believe in the Lord's bodily return to the earth. I don't worry about that or how it will look. It will be the way that He has planned it to be. But there is an appearing of the Lord that I am focused on. He really did come. The thing is, He really is here now and yes, He really will return again.

Rev 1:8 "I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Our focus needs to be on His current appearing; He is appearing in a people near you! He wants to manifest Himself in our lives now, by His Spirit.

Col 3:1-4

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Be mindful of things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our Life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

The word 'appear' means 'to render apparent, appear, manifestly declare and to show forth self'. Now, that is an appearing we can get excited about. We need to stop putting stuff off to a future event, today is the day!

As to the rapture, that actual word is not found in the Bible. There is a meeting in the air in Thessalonians 4, where Paul is writing to the saints who are grieving over folks who have died. He is saying, 'don't worry! They'll be back when the Lord physically returns.' There will be a meeting in the clouds. Now, I don't think that is going to be a meeting in some cumulus nimbus - it's more likely to be in a cloud of witnesses.

The Mark of the Beast

I remember being really scared by this one. Imagine not being able to shop! And they were going to sneak it into our bodies without us knowing, and we were going to be lost forever. Sort of makes you cringe a little when you think of some of the things that we have believed. God outsmarted by a supermarket bar code, a bar code that supersedes the cross!

Rev 13:16-18

And it causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand, or in their foreheads, even that not any might buy or sell except those having the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of its name. Here is the wisdom. Let him having reason count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. And its number is six hundred and sixty-six.

It's a picture of unregenerate man totally relying on his own strength and wisdom. What are we marked by? Have we been suckered into the spirit of this world, or are we marked by His mind and strength? Christians running scared, looking for a coming mark, when it is already here! Every time we do things with the world's strength and wisdom, we are operating in a wrong system and if we're not careful, it will mark us. We are a counter-culture; we are the antidote to the anti-christ.

Where is our focus?

I am looking to see the glorious church manifest in the earth, a 'Something Worth Seeing' church. I am looking for the Kingdoms of this world to become the Kingdoms of our Lord. I am looking for every knee to bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I am looking for the nations of the world to come to the church and say 'Teach us of your ways'. I am looking to see Babylon (religious confusion) fall. I am looking to see the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord cover the earth as waters cover the sea. I am looking to see the church place under her feet the total victory of Calvary. I am looking to see the stone that the builders rejected become a Kingdom that will break all other Kingdoms.

Dan 2:34-35

"You watched until a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image upon its feet which were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together. And they became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Dan 2:44-45

“And in the days of these kings, the God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the kingdom shall not be left to other peoples, but it shall crush and destroy all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Because you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it crushes the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what shall occur after this. And the dream is certain, and its meaning is sure.”

We are children of the Day and not the night. Let's get rid of all our night-time thoughts that are taking up too much space in our lives. We have no time to dwell on these things. The Day of the Lord has dawned; it is not to catch us unaware. Don't be side-tracked by pursuing lesser things that distract. Worry is still a sin; eradicate fear. When we get to the enemy camp, there will be no enemy there. Jesus has destroyed the devil, triumphed over him, dismantled him. Do what Paul says, “give no place for the devil” in your thoughts, lives or theology. There are better things for our minds to think into.

Phi 4:8

Finally, my brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are right, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things.