

Current Messages

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Despina's Funeral

Despina's Funeral – July 27, 2000

Scripture reading:

2 Corinth 5:1-8

2 Tim 4:6-8

1 Cor 15:51-57

For those who do not know Christ as Savior, death is a tragedy. What will it profit a man, etc. We are like water, etc.

For the believer in Christ, it is a triumph, a promotion to glory. Read 2 Corinth 5:8.

In the Scriptures we have read we can see Paul's confidence and hope as he considers the end of the temporal and the beginning of the eternal.

Paul, the greatest of all teachers, believed strongly in a future life in heaven. Believers only.

"We know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Ch 5:1

Jesus said in John 14 "let not your heart"

Job said: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, etc. And after my body has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God."

Death for the believer is not the end, it is the beginning of a new and eternal life. Exodus Death for the child of God is victory, not defeat. Death is the portal through which we pass into the realms of glory.

“Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory after death, hell, and the grave, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

On the other hand, death for the unbeliever, is to exit the world through the door of death and plunge into eternal darkness, where the fire is not quenched. Read Luke 16.

Paul’s confidence in eternal life never wavered during the course of his life.

“For I know whom I have believed”, etc.

As his death approached, he was ready to leave the temporary and embrace the eternal.

“I am now ready to be offered up” etc.

He had no fear of death he wrote:

“At home in the body... absent from the Lord. Absent from the body ... at home with the Lord.”

To the Philippian church he wrote:

“I am in a dilemma, it is needful that I stay with you; but I have a burning and yearning desire to be free of the shackles of this world, and to be with Christ which is far better. Rev 21 and 22. “Eye hath not seen or ear heard”, etc.

Last Saturday evening at approximately 8:30 p.m. something precious took place.

Our beloved sister in Christ was welcomed by the Lord into His glorious presence.

Despite the mourning, sorrow, and tears on earth, as the Lord stooped down and plucked that beautiful flower

from His earthly garden and transplanted it in His heavenly garden, it was a precious moment for Him.

“Precious in His sight is the death of His saints.” Heaven is the richer – earth the poorer.

If we could ask Dispina if she would like to return to earth, despite her tender ties here, I’m sure her answer would be an emphatic NO! For her it is far better – she is at home with the Lord.

As a young girl Despina took Christ as her Savior. With her husband, Ed, was raising a large family. During the last months she was with us it was obvious that she was walking close to the Lord.

Then tragedy struck, but despite the intensive therapy over a prolonged period, which called on all her natural and spiritual resources.

She displayed unusual courage and fortitude and despite overwhelming odds she fought a good fight and kept the faith.

By her own confession she was closer to the Lord than at any time in her life.

When the news came that the cancer was cured, we rejoiced with her, believing that God has answered our prayers.

Unfortunately, the euphoria was short lived.

The cancer had returned.

Her debilitated body could not tolerate further treatment and last Saturday evening with her hand clasped in the hand of her dear husband, Ed, and surrounded by her family, she passed peacefully into the presence of her Savior.

Thomas Kelly contemplating such an occasion wrote:

“He makes the coward spirit brave,
And nerves the feeble arm for fight;
He takes its terror from the grave,
And guild’s the bed of death with light.”

Story of the young missionary in China

Smiling ... “I’m going to meet Jesus.”

As the Lord’s servant, I ask each of you,

Are you prepared to die?

Have you made adequate preparation to meet God?

Have you ever accepted Christ as your Savior?

Death sometimes comes as a thief in the night

No warning – no time to prepare.

I urge you to accept Christ now as your Savior and be prepared when He calls.

To you, brother Ed, and your dear family, with Dad and Mom, brothers and sisters, we extend our deepest sympathy.

Be assured that you will be supported by our continued prayers.

Your loved one will be sorely missed, her chair will be empty ... the voice will be silent.

May it comfort you to know that as you pass through the deep waters, that the Lord has promised to be with you; and as you walk through the dark, sunless valley of the shadow of death, the Great Shepherd of the sheep will take your hand and lead you through.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Amen.

Ephesians 4

v. 7 “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

From v. 7 thru 16 we have the divine program for the proper functioning of the Body of Christ.

Each born-again believer has been given a gift from the Lord, and with it the grace or ability to use it.

Some gifts are of a public character other gifts are not.

But whatever the nature of the gift it is important to realize that every believer has something he can contribute to the blessing of the Body of Christ.

In the Body of Christ “every believer” has his place, given to him by Christ or the Holy Spirit. The ideal assembly is one on which each believer has found out, from the risen Lord, his gift and place in the body, and functions accordingly. We should remember that whatever the gift, public or hidden, important or menial, God provides the spiritual ability—strength to operate it. Wisdom.

v. 8

This is a difficult verse.

The traditional view is as follows (describe)

This view is arrived at because of the interpretation put on the words “captivity captive.” = a “multitude of captives.”

The phrase “captivity captive” is found in Judges 5:12.

“Awake, awake, Deborah: awake and utter a song: Arise, Barak, and lead captivity captive.”

This could only mean one thing “lead him captive who held you captive.”

The meaning of our present passage seems clear in the light of this. Our blessed Lord in His triumph over death lead captive him who had the power of death up to that time.

The lesson is this, our mighty enemy, Satan, is now a conquered foe. He has been led captive at the chariot wheels of Christ. See Col 2:15.

This triumphant Christ sat down on His glorious throne and from there he gives gifts to His Church for their edification and blessing.

v. 9-10

The Lord who ascended in triumph, is the same One who descended into the lower parts of the earth.

There is the question as to where His was. Earth or Sheol?

At any rate the descent implied was fulfilled in the incarnation, death and burial of the Lord Jesus.

The One who descended from heaven is the same One who conquered sin, Satan, demons and death and ascended above the atmosphere and stellar heavens that He might fill all things. Chapter 1:20-23.

“There is not a place between the death of the cross and the height of glory which He has not occupied.” F. W. Grant.

The central thought of these two verses is that the ascended, triumphant Christ is the Giver of gifts to the Church.

v. 11 The names of the gifts are now given.

These gifts are men:

“He gave some to be apostles, sand some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers.

Apostles: These were men who were directly commissioned by God to preach the Word and plant churches.

Disciples: They had power to perform miracles, 2 Corinth 12:12 as a means of confirming the message they preached (Heb 2:4). With the prophets this ministry was primarily concerned with laying the foundation of the church, Eph 2:20. The apostles referred to here mean those who were appointed apostles after the ascension of Christ.

Prophets: These were the spokesman or mouthpiece of God. They received direct revelations from God and passed them on to the church. In the primary sense we no longer have apostles and prophets. There ministry was ended when the foundation of the Church was laid, and when the N.T. canon was completed.

Evangelists: There were men who preached the good news of salvation. They are divinely equipped to win the lost to Christ. They have a special ability to diagnose the sinner’s condition, probe the conscience, answer problems, and encourage decisions for Christ.

Evangelists should go from the church into the world, preaching the Gospel, then lead the converts into a

church where they will be fed and encouraged in Christ. By the Pastors and Teachers.

Pastors (shepherds); These are the men who serve as under-shepherds of the flock. They guide and feed the flock. Their ministry is one of wise counsel, correction, encouragement and consolation. The work of a pastor is closely related to that of an elder in the local church. The principal difference being that a pastor is a gift whereas the elder is not. The N.T. pictures several pastors in a local church (See: Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1-2)

Teachers: They are men who are divinely empowered to explain what the Bible says. Gift of knowledge ... Wisdom. They interpret its meaning and apply it to the hearts and consciences of the believers. A teacher may not be a pastor. Neither a pastor a teacher but obviously a pastor must have a good working knowledge of the Word.

The Pastor or Shepherd

He is a brother whom the ascended Lord has gifted with a shepherd's heart, and given to the church.

A true pastor is a shepherd who has a heart for the sheep and the lambs. He has a deep compassion for the saints.

Note one of the qualifications of Peter. John 21, "Feed My sheep and lambs." Peter's (Timothy) commission to shepherd the flock.

The evangelist finds the lost sheep, then brings them into the church. Then the pastor seeks to lead them into green pastures and beside the still waters (Psalm 23.)

As they grow in grace he ministers to them when they are sick. Physically-Spiritually. Onslaughts of Satan. He sustains them in their sorrows and struggles.

He stands by their sides when they are passing through the fire of adversity.

He holds them close when they are passing through the deep waters of affliction. "Valley of the shadow."

He points them to the Cross in the hour when faith is weak. "It makes the coward spirit brave."

No theological seminary, no college or university can make a Biblical pastor.

It is the ascended Christ who gives the pastors heart and fills him with an unquenchable love and yearning for the people of God. Sheep and lambs.

Isaiah 40:11

"They shall feed the flock like a shepherd, they shall gather the lambs with their arms and carry them in their bosom, and gently lead those that are with young."

Some characteristics of a true Shepherd. John 10.

He calls the sheep by name.

The sheep hear his voice.

He leads them out. "The good shepherd gives them life."

He goes before them. "He knows the sheep."

The sheep knows his voice.

The Teacher

The teacher has an unbridled desire to teach the pure, uncluttered, unadulterated principles of the Word.

The difference between a Teacher and Pastor.

1 Cor 12:8

For to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit.

The pastor in a unique way has the Word of Wisdom. The teacher has the Word of Knowledge.

The teacher has been given the spiritual ability by the ascended Lord to open up the truth of God's Word in such a way that those who hear profit by it.

Then it is the responsibility of the pastor to press home the truth in a practical way in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let me illustrate this difference.

Have you ever had the experience of carrying a heavy burden, then going to a meeting with a heavy heart, hoping to hear something to lift the weight.

Someone expounded the Word, it was enlightening. It was a clear presentation, accurately presented. To a degree you were blessed and glad you had attended the meeting, but your burden was still there.

On another occasion you attended a meeting with the same concerns and perplexities. Then as the Word was expounded and applied, you thought he knows exactly how I feel, how does he know about my problems! As you listened, your soul was stirred, and your heart was blessed. You were refreshed, relieved and restored.

In the first place you were listening to the teacher, so valuable, steady, so trustworthy, so accurate in his exegesis. He is a pillar and ground of truth.

In the second instance you were listening to the caring shepherd. The patient, understanding, loving-kind one. The one who is always there. (1) Teacher-knowledge; (2) Pastor-wisdom.

Ephesians 4:7-16

v. 7

“But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

From v. 7 through v. 16 we have the divine program for the distinctive (unique) purpose of the body of Christ.

Each born again believer has been given a gift from the Lord and with the gifts the power or ability to use it.

In this connection we must be careful to distinguish between spiritual gifts and natural talents.

No unregenerate person, however talented can be an evangelist-pastor-or teaching in the N.T. sense.

Neither can any believer, unless he has received that particular gift from the ascended Lord.

The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural. Natural. Spiritual.

They make a man to do what is humanly impossible to Him.

v. 12

This verse shows us the purpose for which the gifts are given.

They are for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry unto the building up of the Body of Christ.

The divine process seems to be:

The gifted men prepare the saints, equip the saints for service. The saints then serve one another – minister to one another. The body is then built up spiritually and numerically.

This verse teaches us that (?) should be in the ministry in one way or another. No exceptions.

v. 13

As the various gifts build up and strengthen each other we will all attain oneness of faith. A full and accurate knowledge of Jesus our Lord.

We will attain mature spiritual manhood.

We will be filled with Christ.

These spiritual exercises will produce:

Unity ... maturity ... and conformity.

This ongoing development will continue until the RAPTURE v. 14

When the gifts given to each believer operates in their God-appointed manner, and the saints are active in the service of the Lord, two dangers are avoided.

1. Immaturity—Children “tossed to and fro”, etc. Babes in Christ – Fed with milk. 1 Cor 3:1-2. Spiritual activity enables us to emerge from spiritual childhood.

2. Instability. Quote the verse here.

Unspiritual believers ... shallow and unproductive ones usually fall prey to the trickery and subtlety of carnal and unprincipled men.

v. 15

The past two verses in the paragraph describe the growth of the body of Christ.

First of all, there is the importance of adherence to sound doctrine.

Speaking or holding the truth.

There can be no compromising the fundamentals of “the faith”. Describe.

Secondly, the truth must be ministered “in love”.

Truth and love must be welded together.

If we do this we will up into Christ.

We will become like the Lord Jesus.

Ministering in love.

Love is patient and kind. Lover never fails.

Love in our ministry never fails, nor become obsolete.

v. 16

The phrase “fitly joined together” is interesting.

Every believer in the local church is exactly designed for his or her place in the local church.

We are closely joined and firmly knit together.

Have you found your place in the body!

The assembly like the natural body is self-developing.

The indispensability of every member is next indicated. “Compacted together by that which “every joint supplies.”

No one in fellowship is of no consequence—the most humble believer is necessary. When we work together in

prayer, worship and witnessing the assembly will grow spiritually and numerically.

Finally in this connection we must be careful to distinguish between spiritual gifts and natural talents.

No unsaved person, however talented, can be an evangelist, pastor or teacher in the N.T. sense.

For that matter neither can any believer, unless he has received that particular gift.

The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural, spiritual.

They enable a man to do what is humanly impossible for him.

v. 12

This verse shows us the function and purpose of the gifts.

They are for the “perfecting of the saints” unto the work of the ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ”.

The process seems to be:

1. The gifts equip the saints
2. The saints then serve.
3. The body is then built up.

This verse teaches that every believer should be “in the ministry” in some form or another. No exceptions.

The divine method for the expansion and growth of the church seems to be:

The gifted men gather faithful men around them, and commits to them the fundamentals of the faith. 2 Tim 2:2

Then they in turn go forth and minister to others, according to the gifts God has given them.

In this way the church grows and expands, both numerically and spiritually.

v. 13

This verse tells us how long their growing process will continue.

Until we all come to unity - maturity - and conformity

This will take place at the Rapture. "RAPTURE"

v. 14

When the gifts operate in this God-appointed manner, and the saints are active in the service of the Lord these dangers are avoided.

Immaturity—instability—and gullibility.

Immaturity - Believers who never become involved in aggressive services for Christ never emerge from spiritual childhood.

Spiritual exercise of ones gifts is the sore means of spiritual development.

Instability - undeveloped or unspiritual believers - unconcerned or uncommitted ones, usually fall prey to false teachers with false doctrine. These are shallow and unproductive.

Gullibility - Most serious of all is the danger of deception. Weak believers, untaught and unskilled in the Word are easily impressed by a false cultist's zeal and apparent sincerity.

Their lack of knowledge of the Word leaves them easy prey to the trickery and subtlety of unprincipled men.

v. 15

The last two verses in the paragraph describe the proper growth in the body of Christ.

There can be no compromise as to the fundamentals of the faith.

Secondly, there must be a right spirit. "Holding the truth in love".

Truth and love must be inseparably welded together.

As we do this we grow up into Christ, He is our objective.

Our sphere of growth is "in all things".

Thirdly, in every sphere of our lives we become more like Him and will readily submit to His will.

v. 16

The Lord Jesus is not only the "goal of growth".

He is the "source of growth" as well.

The phrase "fitly joined together" is interesting.

It shows the marvelous integration of the members of the body.

Every member is exactly designed for his own place and function.

He is perfectly joined to every other member so as to make a complete living organism. The Church, like the body, is self-developing.

Then secondly, the indispensability of every member is next indicated, "compact by that which every joint supplieth".

The human body consists primarily of bones, organs and flesh.

The bones are bound together by joints and ligaments.

The organs are also attached by ligaments.

Each joint, ligament and organ fulfills a role in the growth and development of the body.

So it is in the body of Christ.

No member is of no consequence even the most humble believer is necessary.

When each member functions in the God appointed place, when prayer, worship, and witnessing is practiced, the body grows, not only numerically, but spiritually and builds itself up in love and unity.

Do the work of an evangelist.

The evangelist is a man of prayer. Power-Spirit filled.

He realizes that the work is all of God, and that methods are of little worth.

He is a man of faith.

He relies unreservedly on the living God.

He is a student of Scripture.

So that he may present the way of salvation in all its fullness.

He is a man of courage.

Not fearing bonds nor imprisonments that may await him.

He is a man of energy.

Instant in season, out of season – always available.

He is a man of perseverance.

Not easily discouraged if he fails to see immediate results.

He is a man of humility.

He says, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

"On to the lost, who never have heard:

On with the life-giving, soul saving Word."

Do the work on an evangelist

We should not be mere theorists of a system, however true.

We should not only be the mere guardians and celebrators of ordinances, however sacred.

We should be evangelists - the message bearers (torch bearers) because of the blessed Christ to the living, yet dying souls of those around us.

Beloved, the assembly should be among other things, a tributary into society with the life-giving message of the Gospel, rather than a refuge from it.

Conversions in the homes in Sat Beach.

Soulwinning

J. G. Bellett, author of the "Moral Glories of Christ", as he neared the end of his life said, "If I had my life to live over again, I would spend it in a Sychar ministry."

E. H. Spurgeon, the "Prince of Preachers", said, If I had a choice, I would choose, under God to be a Soul-winner. I never experienced such joy as when I led a soul to Christ.

R. A. Torrey testified that he knew little of the joy of salvation until he had led his first soul to Christ.

The Christian Race

A-ta-lan-ta, a beautiful Arcadian girl vowed never to marry. She had many suitors, so to free herself from them she challenged them to a race. In the race she carried a small knife in her hand, while they carried nothing. Being very swift of foot she felt she could out-strip all her competitors.

The suitors started first and the agreement was that if she overtook them she would kill them. SHE PROMISED TO MARRY THE SUCCESSFUL SUITOR.

A young man wanted to marry her and ran the race with three golden apples in his hand, and as soon as she gained on him, he dropped one of the apples. He dropped all three, one after another. She was fascinated by the glittering gold so easy to obtain and stopped to pick each one up, and lost the race.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO EZEKIEL. Ezekiel 3:17-19

Son of man I have appointed you a watchman. Whenever you hear a word from Me, warn the people. When I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die" and you do not warn them, or speak out to warn them of their wicked ways, that they might live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand.

If you warn a wicked person and he does not turn from his wickedness he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.

Events Surrounding the Lord's Coming

Read 1 Cor 15:49-58

The mystery revealed.

Describe the theme of the chapter. Resurrection.

Tremendous changes will take place at the resurrection.
v. 49.

“As we have borne the characteristics of Adam in our natural body, we shall also bear the image of Christ in our resurrected body.” v. 50

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

Paul now addresses the subject or the change of transformation or the change that will take place in the bodies of believers, living and dead at the time of the resurrection.

First of all, our present body, subject to disease, decay, and decomposition is not suited for the eternal kingdom of God. Quote.

It must be changed.

Note the phrase, “flesh and blood.”

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

The natural body, “flesh and blood”, cannot enter an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Peter 1:4. Natural bodies in the Millenium.

Lev 17:11 testifies that, “the life of the flesh is in the blood.”

The blood is the life give, and life sustainer of the body. The blood absorbs the food, and carries it to every part of the body for nourishment and growth. Then the blood carries away the unwanted parts of the growth process, thus purifying the body.

When the blood stops flowing, the body dies. A corruptible body like this cannot enter into the incorruptible kingdom of God. 1 Peter 1:4

In contrast to this, note the words of the Lord in resurrection. Luke 24:39. "A spirit that not "flesh and blood" as you see Me have." "Flesh and blood" "The Lord took His life again, but not His blood."

Every drop of the Lord's blood had been poured out at Calvary. The absence of blood speaks of redemption accomplished. His resurrected, imperishable, bloodless body was fitted for the eternal kingdom of God. Never again will that blood be required.

Our natural bodies, sustained by blood are not suited for heaven, therefore, we too must be CHANGED.

At the Rapture, we will be given a body like the Lord's glorious body. Phil 3:21.

In v. 51 Paul reveals a mystery which had been hidden in the heart of God from eternity.

"Take notice, I am about to tell you one of God's great secrets."

This secret was hidden from the saints in previous dispensations.

"We shall not all sleep."

"But we shall all be CHANGED."

The mystery Paul reveals was not the fact of the resurrection. Job. "Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold."

It is rather the fact that there will be a generation of believers who will not die, and that all believers, dead or alive, will be changed.

We shall not all sleep. It is the body that sleeps. The value of the body.

The real person, the spirit and the soul, live on forever. "Absent from the body present with the Lord, which is far better."

The bodies of our deceased loved ones are sleeping, waiting to be awakened, but the real person, the spirit and the soul, are at home with the Lord.

Paul gives us some idea of their blissful state when he was caught up into the "third heaven." 2 Cor 12:2

"I know a man in Christ, who, fourteen years ago, had the experience of being caught up into the third heaven. I do not know whether it was an actual physical experience; only God knows. While in this enraptured state he heard sacred secrets, which no human lips can repeat."

Quote 1 Cor 2:9 "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard."

Describe Paul's experience outside Lystra. Acts 14.

The mystery here is not the Rapture. See 1 Thess 4.

Neither is it the Resurrection. Some O.T. saints knew of it. Job?

The mystery was "We shall not all sleep." "We shall all be changed."

Millions of believers will be alive when the Lord returns.
These will not experience death or corruption.

But whether we die or are still alive.

Terrestrial ... Celestial

Imperishable ... immortal

This change will be dramatic.

It will take place in an instant – microsecond. “In a moment” – “in the twinkling of an eye.”

Illustration.

In the downward blink of the eyelid, dead saints will be raised, and living ones changed. In the upward movement of the eye-lid we will all be transported to the realm of glory. “The heaven will glow with splendor”, etc.

Suffering saints, enduring excruciating pain, in a moment will be changed – made differently – and raptured into the Lord’s presence.

At the blowing of the last trumpet there will arise from the depth of the world’s oceans the dust of saints lost at sea.

From solitary graves on the far flung battle-fields of the world.

From the mass graves in the jungles of Thailand from cemeteries (sleeping place) throughout the world, graves old and new will yield the bodies of the saints who have died in Christ.

What a gathering of the ransomed that will be.

Unborn children in the womb of unbelieving mother’s will be snatched into heaven.

How long will this take?

Between one heart beat and another, every saint will be changed and raptured into the Lord's presence.

When will all this take place? Today!

"It may be morn when the day is awaking.

It may be mid-day, or it maybe at twilight.

It may be perchance, that the blackness of

Midnight will burst into light, in the blaze of His

Glory, when Jesus receives His own."

"Even so come Lord Jesus."

Now let us look at the remaining verses in the chapter.

v. 53

For this corruptible must put on incorruption

This mortal must put on immortality.

These who are mentioned here, the "corruptible" and the "mortal" are two different groups of people. This corruptible refers to those bodies which had returned to dust.

In resurrection they will put on incorruption. On the other hand, refers to those who are still alive. When the Lord comes both groups must put on immortality.

v. 54

When the dead in Christ are raised and the living are changed. Then shall be brought to pass Isaiah's prophecy. "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"Death is utterly vanquished forever."

"Death will be triumphantly destroyed."

v. 55

This verse may well be the victory song of the believers as they rise to meet the Lord.

“O death where is thy sting?”

“O grave where is thy victory?”

The power of sin, the grave, and death will be completely broken and annulled. Millions of believers whose bodies have returned to dust will spring up into immortal life and eternal glory in the twinkling of an eye.

Well may we thank Him for giving us absolute victory over sin, death, hell and the grave.

The King of Terrors is at last robbed of its terror.

In our glorified bodies we are immortal, imperishable, incorruptible, indestructible, deathless. We will have bodies like unto our Lord’s glorious body.

v. 58

The practical applications of all these overwhelming events and great spiritual truths is that we should be:

Steadfast in the day of declension and departure.

Inflexible ... uncompromising ... unyielding ... standing our ground for the truth.

Unmovable, when many are being tossed about with every wave of teaching. Heb 2:1

We must remain firm ... unwavering ... unshaken.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord. Excelling in service for the Master in the day of lukewarmness and apathy.

“Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

The Divine promise.

Your labor for the Lord is not futile ... lost ... it is never wasted.

See also Isaiah 55:10, 11; Eccl 11:1

“Cast thy bread upon the water.”

“Be not weary in well-doing, for we shall reap if we faint not.” Gal 6:9

Quote: 1 John 3:1-2 “Behold what manner of love.”

Every man who has this hope, pure faith, himself, etc.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead.

The body that is sown is perishable and decays.

The body that is resurrected is imperishable, and is immortal.

It is sown in humiliation, it is raised in honor and glory.

It is sown in infirmity and weakness; it is resurrected in strength and power.

It is sown a physical body; it is raised a supernatural, spiritual body.

As surely as there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

How Can Revival Come to an Assembly

2 Chronicles 7

What do we mean by revival?

Webster says that:

Revival means to live again.

To become active and flourishing again.

To be restored from a depressed, inactive state.

To be renewed in mind and spirit.

From earliest times godly men have longed for revival.

Habakkuk 3:1-2

“O Lord revive your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make Yourself known.”

In my lifetime.

The sons of Korah prayed: Psalm 85:4-6

“Restore us, O God of our salvation, Will you not ‘revive’ us again, that your people may ‘rejoice’ in you.”

Consider Ezekiel 37. The valley of dry bones.

The bones are very dry. v. 2

Hear the Word of the Lord. v. 4

The bones came together. v.7

There was no life in them. v. 8

The Spirit of God came into each one of them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great host. v. 10

The Holy Spirit's power.

Application

We are like a sleeping giant. Gulliver's giant.

We need a fresh touch from God.

We need a convicting (quickenings) movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

Like Lazarus, we need to be loosed from the grave-clothes binding us. "Loose him and let him go."

We need to strip ourselves of every encumbrance and every sin that clings to us and entangles us (earthbound). Heb 12.

David asks (Psalm 24):

Who shall go up into the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in His Holy Place?

He that has clean hands and a pure heart. He who hath not lifted up himself unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. Four traits of character.

Hands ... heart ... soul ... lips.

Before revival can come we must be free from all contamination and defilement ... we must be cleansed within and without.

Step two on the way to revival is paved with stringent, but clear spiritual laws.

These laws are found in verse of Scripture written in 500 B. C.

These laws have never been changed or modified.

Quote 2 Chronicles 7:14

“If My people who are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.”

The first step to revival and blessing is that we humble ourselves. Note the divine order. First humbling then prayer The meaning of being humble.

Showing a consciousness of our defects and shortcomings. The complete absence of pride. This work is too heavy for me. Ex 18:18.

The Spirit of submission. Submitting-yielding-surrender. Submission to God’s will and God’s Word. Bending the knee.

Examples:

Paul ... the Lord Phil 2 ... Isaiah 6.

Submission leads to sanctification and finally to consecration.

In this pristine state we bow crushed and broken before the Lord.

God can only we broken things.

Mary’s alabaster box ... little boy’s lunch ... Lord’s body.

Potter and the marred vessel. Jeremiah 18:18.

To humble one’s self before our brethren and before God is one of the most difficult things to do.

But it is one of the most effective means to reach the heart of God and draw forth His blessing.

Humbling one’s self ... submission ... obedience ... blessing.

There is power in humbling one's self.

Hezekiah, "humbled himself" from the pride of his heart.
2 Chron 32:26.

Manasseh in his affliction "humbled himself" greatly
before the Lord. 2 Chron 33:12

Josiah, God blessed Josiah because his heart was tender
and he humbled himself before the Lord. 2 Ch 24:27.

These three men were leaders in three of the greatest
revivals in Israel's history Isaiah 51:15

"For thus says the high and lofty one - He who inhabits
eternity, Whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and
holy place, but with him also who is of a thoroughly
penitent and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the
humble and to revive the heart that is thoroughly
bruised with sorrow for sin."

Example:

The mighty power of God swept through the remote
Hebredian islands as the simple crafters and fisherman
called a fast, and an assembly, in deep humility of soul.

They cried to God, they implored, they entreated Him, to
come and save their families and friends.

They prayed with humble broken hearts, and tear-
stained faces.

Despite physical fatigue, they continued in long and
painful travail of soul, beseeching God to save souls.

These humble believers had a burning passion for lost
souls.

Finally, God answered with a mighty revival and many
were swept into the kingdom.

Humbling ourselves before God is the first of four steps to become active and flourishing again.

To be restored from a depressed inactive state.

To be revived in mind and spirit.

"I will revive those who are thoroughly penitent and of a humble spirit." Isa 57:15.

To see revival, we must know what utter dependence upon God is humility, we must know how to pray effectually and fervently, we must also seek the Lord's face. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

In the O.T. context it was unlawful for anyone to burst into the king's presence uninvited.

There was a tremendous risk involved. Life or death.

At her uncle Mordecai's insistence Esther, the Queen, resolved to break through every barrier, overcome all obstacles put her life on the line, and enter the immediate presence of King Ahasuerus.

"If I perish I perish." Esther 4:16 Give the reason for this. Haman's plot.

Preparation

She called on the Jews to fast and pray for three days. Then she broke through protocol, diplomatic and social codes, and conventional customs. She was a determined lady. Because of her faith in God and the intense preparations of fasting and prayer she was received by the King and made her request for the deliverance of her people, and the Jewish nation was saved from extinction. She sought the King ... she saw the King ... she involved the heart of the King and saved her people.

Eccl 9:4 "Where the word of the king is, there is power.

Moses - John the Baptist - The Lord - Paul POWER

There is unlimited-unsurpassed-and immeasurable power in being able to break through the barriers, the principalities, the powers, and spiritual wickednesses that hinder us and enter into the Lord's presence and see His face.

Elijah in the cave - the shut door.

Acts 4:12 Filled with Spirit - man's figuration

Men who met the Master ... hear Him.

Moody - the world is to see ... by the Grace of God I will be that man."

Peniel, Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face."

"He spent a whole night with God." Israel—A prince with God.

Then began the most fruitful part of Jacob's life. Gen 32

"Glorious holiness - fearful in praises - Omnipotent in power."

Moses entered the tabernacle and "God spoke to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." His shining face. Moses was equipped, empowered and strengthened with the assurance that God's presence would go with Him.

Ex 33 - Moses and the burning bush.

Ch 5 - Joshua - the siege of Jericho - he met the Captain of the Lord's hosts face to face. Theophany.

From this point Joshua was equipped and empowered to conquer all his enemies.

Those who saw the Lord were the most effective for Him.

Paul saw the Lord several times.

The apostle John saw Him. Mary. Thomas - "My Lord, etc."

Isaiah saw the Lord (Isa 60). Watch the sequence.

Revelation. "Saw the Lord high and lifted up."

Prostration.

Confession. Confessed his unworthiness - uncleanness - the people's sinfulness. "Woe is me I am undone."

Sanctification. Live-cool-touched lips-iniquity taken away and his sin purged.

Consecration. Who will go for us? "Here I am. Send me."

The Command. "Go tell this people."

McCheyne. St. Mary's Dundee.

In each of these instances where the Lord was seen face to face there was a release of divine power. Revival.

From Pentecost until now there has not been a spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in fervent, effectual prayer.

No movement has continued to prosper after the intensity of prayer has declined.

Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscles of Omnipotence.

Consider Elijah's agonizing before God.

From the dried up brook Elijah was commanded to go to Zarephath. 1 Kings 17.

There a widow sustained him—Death claimed the widow's son.

Describe the cries of the prophet. Alone with God. Shut the door.

"Elijah cried to the Lord." Twice.

In his crying he implored-pleaded-entreated-appealed to God as he assailed the throne.

He cried out in desperation—he struggled and wrestled with God. He asked for the impossible.

No one prior to this had ever been raised from the dead.

Almighty God heard the urgent and compelling cry of His servant, and the child was raised to life. Revived.

Elijah was not a superman.

He was a man jut like us—he was weak—stubborn—head strong—impatient—impetuous—impulsive—nervous—short fused—and on occasions faithless.

There is one outstanding difference - his prayer life.

Our prayers are not as earnest, passionate, intense, nor as full of faith. Many of God's servants communed intimately with God in seclusion - Moses, Joseph, David, Jeremiah - honed and polished.

Elijah said to Ahab.

"There is a sound of abundance of rain." Ch 18:41.

There is a gap between the sound of abundance of rain and the sight of abundance of rain. Ahab fed the flesh in the palace. Elijah bridged this gap on his face prostrate before God. V. 42 "He cast himself down on the earth and put his head between his knees."

He lay on his face before God in agony of spirit.
Describe James 5:17-18.

Elisha at Dothan. 2 Kings 6

“Open the eyes of this young man.” Our assembly at
prayer, Peter released. Acts 12

The sin of unbelief – Capernaum. No might works.

Effectual prayer

Like Elijah we must agonize before God.

We must pray effectually.

We must pray fervently.

His whole being was boiling and burning with a blazing
zeal as he prayed to God.

The fourth essential for revival is that we turn from our
sinful ways.

What are some of the sinful ways we should turn from?

God hates pride Prov 8:13.

Pride. Sardis had a name but it was dead.

Pretending – play acting. Cold-legalistic-loveless.

Form of godliness ... but no power.

Chief dangers of the 20th century. Gen. Booth

Religion without the Spirit ... Christianity without
Christ... Forgiveness without regeneration ... morality
without God ... heaven without hell.

The Spirit Jn. 3, Jn. 4, Jn. 7.

1. Acts 5—Hypocrisy ... Annanias ... Sophira. Sincere.
Phil 1:10. Lying. Sins in the early Church.

2. Acts 6—Sin was dealt with. Word of God increased, disciples multiplied greatly. Ponder, Great company of priests were saved.

Murmuring-Criticism. Michal, David's wife-daughter of Saul. Describe. "She was barren until the day of her death."

Lukewarmness – Laodicea

We have left our first love. Ephesian church.

"I know your works, labor of love and your endurance."

Ephesus was standing up for the truth. It was a busy church. It was full of good works – it had an active program – but there was no blessing.

It was standing for the truth.

"I know you cannot bear them that are evil."

The things that went on in Corinth would not have been tolerated in Ephesus.

A very high standard of Christian living was expected of those in fellowship.

Despite this high standard there was no power.

They guarded their platform.

"They tried those who claimed to be apostles, and exposed them as liars."

Paul would have needed a letter of commendation to fellowship there.

There was no false doctrine in Ephesus. But there was no blessing.

Ephesus was standing the test.

“You have endured and for My name’s sake you have labored and have not fainted.”

It was not easy going to Ephesus – Diana’s stronghold.

They were criticized and opposed by the world, but they never gave up.

They kept on year after year despite lack of fruit and poor results.

They may not have been fruitful, but they were faithful.

They struggled on, and God commended them for it.

The cause of no power and no blessing, they had lost their first love.

But God condemned them for losing their first love.

The second condition for revival is prayer.

Humility is first ... prayer is second.

The power of prayer

Andrew Bonar – John Welch – Spurgeon – Daniel

See Luke Ch 11 “Lord, teach us to pray.”

No believer is greater than his prayer life.

No assembly is greater than its prayer life.

The church has many organizers – but few agonizers.

There are many who are enterprising – but few who are interceding.

Tithes may build a church – tears will give it life. The Lord shed tears in His ministry.

Strong crying and tears – grave of Lazarus – Jerusalem.

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Psalm 126:5-6

“He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again rejoicing-bringing his sheaves with him.” General Booth of the Salvation Army, “Try Tears”

In many modern churches the emphasis is on paying. In the early church the emphasis was on praying. Acts 1.

When they have prayed the place is taken.

When the early church prayed the shaken. Acts 6:31.

When the infant church prayed, Peter was liberated.

The POWER of PRAYER. Archimedes – British 7 Foreign Bible.

Why are there still untold millions who have never heard the Gospel of Christ. Assembly area.

Why are there so many impatient believers ... dumb priests – spiritual dwarfs?

Why is there such a restlessness among? Them-Us.

It is because prayer closets are empty.

Family altars are broken down.

It is because so any are worshipping at the world's string.

John wrote, “Little children keep yourselves from idols”
1 John 5:21

Beloved, the spiritual attitudes of humility and prayer will move the hand of Him who moves the Universe.

When God's people are right with Him.

When His servants are right with Him, the Word will flow irresistibly toward men and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Considering these truths, we must conclude that our prayers are ineffective because of our carnal condition.

There is sin in the Camp ... death in the pot.

Unconfessed sin. See Heb 12. The sin of unbelief.

Examples of humility and prayer.

Leah had four laughing children around her.

Barren Rachel was despised.

Describes Rachel coming to Jacob. "Give me children or I die."

Describe Jacob's feelings.

God heard that disconsolate and desperate cry and opened Rachel's womb and gave her Joseph, through whom God saved the nation.

John Knox, the great Scottish reformer prayed and agonized before God. He cried from the depth of a humble and believing heart, "Give me Scotland or I die."

Consider sobbing Hannah in the sanctuary.

Greatly disturbed in her soul, she prayed and wept bitterly before the Lord.

Her rival had children... she had none.

She poured out her heart to the Lord.

God answered her prayer, her sincerity, her faith and humility and gave her Samuel who became the greatest prophet in Israel. Spiritual children. Ezek 3:17-18

God answered true believing prayer.

If God answers prayers, why is it that so many of our prayers go unanswered. Revival never comes!

One reason is that even though we go through the rituals and motions expected of us, we have not heeded the exhortation of Hebrews 12.

Lay aside every weight - and the sin that entangles us
Demas, 2 Tim 4 - Paul castaway.

Please note the seriousness of sin. Miriam's criticism.

Num 12, Num 20 - Miriam fades out of the scene - she also lost her song (Exodus 15)

Consider also Michael, David's wife (2 Sam 6). She was barren.

The sin of Achan was covetousness. Joshua 7.

Bar of gold ... 200 shekels of silver ... garment.

Watch the sifting process. The defeat at Ai. Josh 7.

The tribe of Judah was set aside. Family of Judah.

The family of the Zerahites was separated. Man by man past them. Zabdi was taken and he brought his household man by man. Achan was found out.

Psalm 66:18

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Apply.

Our lives must be clean before divine blessing and divine powers can flow and revival can come.

God's conditions for revival are:

1. Get rid of our pride
2. Get rid of our prayerlessness. Unbelief
3. Get rid of our inability to break through God's holy presence.

4. We must confess and forsake our sins.

If we do these things God has promised to do three things:

1. I will hear from heaven

2. I will forgive confessed sins

3. I will heal the land. God never breaks a promise.

“O, Lord, revive renew, your work in our day, in our day make yourself known.” Hab. 3:2.

Revival will not come by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.

Watch how this worked in Elijah’s life. 1 Kings 17

Death of the widow’s son.

It is recorded twice that Elijah cried to the Lord.

In his crying he implored—he pleaded—he entreated—he appealed to God.

As he assailed God’s throne he cried out in desperation, he struggled and wrestled with God.

He asked for the impossible.

No one had ever been raised from the dead prior to this. God answered, and the young lad was brought back to life.

James 5:16

The earnest, heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man, makes tremendous power available, dynamic in its working.

Revival can come and will come when we meet God’s unalterable conditions.

Let me close with this story. The Hebrideem Revival.

Looking Unto Jesus

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”
Heb12:2

Look back and praise Him

Praise Him for His Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Describe what the resurrection is not. 1 Cor 15

Describe what it means to us.

Then there is the ascension.

Now we have New Power ... A New Leader ... and a New
Object of Worship.

Look Up and Trust Him

Describe the glories that are His presently.

Head of creation ... mankind ... angelic beings ... the
Spirit World ... Principalities ... Powers ... Might ...
Dominion.

He is far above all these things, ruling in Solitary
Splendor ... Unequalled Magnificence. ... and
Unparalleled Grandeur.

Psalm 121, “Shall I to the hills lift my eyes? From where
comes my help? My help comes from the Lord.” Trust
Him.

Look around and Serve Him.

The Great Commission “Go”. “The fields are white, eb.

Promise, “I will go with you”, etc. Precious Souls

John Wesley said, “The world is my parish”

J. E. Bellet said, "If I had my life to live over again I would devote it to a Sychar Ministry.

Look Onward and Expect Him.

Jesus said, "If I go I will come again." General McArthur, "I will return."

Soon we will hear The Shout ... The Voice ... The Trumpet.

The dead in Christ will rise first

Then we which are alive will be changed and caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"Wherefore, comfort, encourage, or exhort one another with these words."

Signs and Sounds of the Last Days

Luke 21:23-33; James 5:8

Never in any period of human history has the stage been set so perfectly for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The cultists, the Tabloid's self-styled pagan, and self proclaimed psychics join in a prophetic frenzy about Armageddon, the end of the world and the extinction of the human race.

If you watch current trends you cannot help but be convinced that we are in the last days. The frenzied interest in Eastern religions - extrasensory perception - astrology - witchcraft - Satanism. 1 Tim 4:1

In two years Western Europe will be unified. Antichrist.

Consider the moral chaos in the world which is destroying the fabric of our society. "World lies in the lap of the wicked one", 1 John 5:19.

In epidemic proportions drug addiction, chemical and alcohol, crime, poverty, illegitimacy, illiteracy, unrest, abortion, euthanasia, are sweeping the world with devastating results.

Rev 9 tells us of the sins that will rampage our society just before the Lord comes. Idolatry - murder - immorality - sorceries - give the meaning: Pharmacy; self- money - pleasure These are some of the secular signs that remind us that the Lord's coming is near. 2 Thess 1:7, 9 Quote.

Let us now consider some of the signs in physical. Luke 21:9-11

There will be wars and rumors of wars as nations rise against nation. When you see great earthquakes in different places. Famines ... pestilences ... Aids ... cancer. "All these are the beginning of sorrows." Matt 24:8.

Let us now look at some of the natural signs.

Luke 21:29-33

The parable of the fig tree, and all the trees.

When they bud and blossom you know that summer is near.

The spiritual lesson from this is that when you see the Jewish nation and third world nations gaining their independence ... in other words budding and blossoming... know that My coming is near. Explain new developing countries. British Empire.

When did Israel begin to bud and blossom?

In 1948 Israel was born. Describe. See v. 31 and 32

They recaptured Jerusalem in 1967. "This generation".

Most Biblical scholars agree that a biblical generation is around 40 years. Psalm 95:10.

You don't need to be a mathematical genius to figure out that there is not much time left before the Lord comes.

Jesus "promised" that the generation that witnessed the return of the Jews to Jerusalem will not pass away until He returns to the earth to "set up his kingdom."

Note the strength of this promise, "Heaven and earth will pass away" but My words will not pass away." v. 33. "The coming of the Lord draws near." Are you ready?

Seven years before this great event, there will occur the greatest phenomenon the world has ever seen.

Millions of people, including children, will go to heaven without dying. The reason ... Christ returned for His own. Rapture. Quote 1 Cor 15:51-52. "Behold I show you a mystery." Suddenly... silently... secretly. In a moment, etc. 1/50 of sec, No signs here ... just sounds. Shout ... Voice ... Trumpet.

Dead raised ... living changed ... loved ones united together shall rise to meet the Lord in the air.

Dad - Mom - little Anne. Communal graves in Thailand. Rise higher than any man made missile.

Are you ready for His coming?

Two in a bed ... two working together

Family experience. Describe. Own experience.

The coming of the Lord draweth nigh, therefore be ye also ready."

Notes on the Coming of the Lord.

Jerusalem says that the Lord is coming. Luke 21:24

The Lord said that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Israel now controls all of the city except a small portion known as the Temple Mount. Militarily it would be easy for Israel to occupy it.

The rise of nationalism tells us that the Coming is near. Luke 21:29.

"Look at the fig tree (Israel) and all the trees (other nations). When they bud we know that the kingdom of God is near." (Millennium)

In 1940 there were 58 members of the United Nations. By July 1993 there were 184. The nations are budding. The Europe Economic Community is another sign. The Revived Roman Empire.

The Apostasy of Christendom is another sign. Luke 18:7,8; 2 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 4:1, 2; 2 Tim 3:1-13.

The rise of false messiah's ... Matt 24:5, 23-24.

David Karesh ... Jim Jones ... Rev. Moon claims to be the new messiah.

Paul Henri-Spook, one of the organizers of the Common Market, said, "Send us such a man and be he God or devil, we will follow him."

The increase of persecution against Christians. Luke 21:11.

It is estimated that 160,000 Christians have been martyred this past year. More Christians have died for their faith during the 20th century than in all the previous centuries combined.

In contrast to all of this there have been more Jews saved in the past 19 years than in the last 1900 years.

Is God calling out those who will be part of the 144,000 who will be witnesses to Christ during the Tribulation period. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

2 Peter 3:10

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are in it, shall be burned up."

The Bible warns us against date setting. However, Jesus taught us that “we would know when this return was near, even at the door” ... though we would not know the day nor the hour. Matt 24:33-36.

Signs of the Coming of the Lord

Luke 21:25-28

The world has little or no concept of the Rapture of the Church.

Mainline churches ignore it. "It is appointed", etc.

Heb 9:27; Act 17:21 "He has appointed a day"

Some people have heard of the Judgment Day.

Many more talk freely of Armageddon and equate it with global war.

Others talk about the end of the world, expecting it to end in famine ... pollution ... nuclear war ... or an alien invasion.

As Bible believing Christians we expect none of these things.

We are looking for the coming of our blessed Savior.

Titus 2:13 "Looking for the blessed hope", etc.

The disciples asked the Lord in Luke 21:70, "Master, when shall these things be?"

"And what sign will there be when these things come to pass."

The scoffers today as in Peter's day say "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the Father's fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 2 Peter 3:4 v. 9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering, not willing

that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

John 14 – “Let not your heart be troubled”, etc.

He is coming! “If I go I will come again.”

Consider some of the signs of His coming.

Luke 21:29

“Look at the fig tree (Israel) and all the trees (the nations). When they shoot forth you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is near.” Millennium.
Israel is shooting forth.

The Lord Himself gave certain signs that would indicate the nearness of the return.

False Christs

In 1940 there were 58 members of the United Nations, by 1993 there were 184. All the trees are shooting.

The Common Market of Europe is almost welded together. Paul Henri Spaak, one of the organizers said in a recent speech, “Send us a man, be he God or devil, we will follow him.”

The Antichrist will emerge from this union.

The Lord said that False Christs would arise.

Jim John ... David Karesh ... Rev. Moon claims to be a new Messiah.

Wars and commotions.

Nations rising against nation. Kingdoms against kingdom. Great earthquakes. Pestilences. Famines.

The Lord also mentioned that in the last days persecution against Christians would increase.

It is estimated that 160,000 believers have been martyred this past year 1998.

More Christians have died for their faith during the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined.

In contrast to this there have been more Jews saved in the last 19 years, than in the last 1,900 years.

Is God calling out those who will be part of the 144,000 who will be witnesses to Christ during the seven years of Tribulation?

“Behold I come quickly.” Even so, come, Lord Jesus. He could come momentarily.

Knowledge shall increase. Daniel 12:4

See following page.

The Rapture Secretly - suddenly - silently - no signs - just sounds.

The coming is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the N.T. Mentioned once in every 25 verses.

Knowledge shall increase. Daniel 12:4; Matt 24:36-41

“But you Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Sir Isaac Newton, in the eighteenth century, read this passage and said: “I believe that these words refer to the end times. Men will travel from country to country in an unprecedented manner.

There may be some inventions that will enable us to travel at 50 miles per hour.

Eight years later the French atheist, Voltaire, read Newton's words and retorted, "See what a fool Christianity makes of a brilliant scientist, to believe that men may travel at 50 miles per hour, because travel at this rate would suffocate a man, his heart would stand still."

Two centuries later Edward White, an American astronaut, stepped out of a space ship and walked across continental America in less than fifteen minutes strolling along at 17,000 miles per hour.

Daniel said that during the end times "men would run to and fro." Describe travel today.

Daniel also predicted that in the last days there would be an explosion of knowledge.

From the Garden of Eden until the beginning of the 20th century, men walked or rode donkeys. In the span of a few years mankind invented the automobile - airplanes - space shuttle.

We earthbound earthlings can fly from London to New York in three hours.

Medical science has exploded.

We have put men on the moon. We can keep a corpse breathing for months on life support. Tiny babies less than one pound can survive outside the womb.

Unborn babies can undergo surgery before birth.

Clone - sheep - cattle - humans? Men acting as God's computers.

Surely we are living in the end times.

While it is true that we do not know the day nor the hour of His coming for His Bride Christ can come momentarily.

There are unmistakable signs that show the nearness of His coming to the earth to end the Time of the Gentiles, and to establish His kingdom.

Matt 24:37-39

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man.”

How was it in the days of Noah?

Gen 6

It was a prosperous no. The economy was good. They ate, they drank – they married – and women were given in marriage.

Life was good. They lived it up. No thought of God. They lived thoughtlessly and carelessly.

“Every thought and imagination (desire) of their heart was only evil continually.” v.5

The wickedness of the human race was so great, that he decided to destroy mankind. v. 7

“My spirit shall not plead”, etc. Sodom – Jerusalem – Businessman Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

The way of escape. When God pronounces judgment, He always provides a way of escape.

Make 120 years yourself an ark – cover it with bitumen within and without. Eternal Security Make it 450 feet long. 1 ½ times the length of a football field.

Seventy-five feet high – forty five feet broad.

The capacity of the Ark would equal that of 800 railway cars.

There was one door. Jesus said, "I am the door. I am the way." Shepherd. Beam.

When God's spirit stopped striving with man.

Ch 7:1

God said to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

Eight souls went in.

The door was left open for another seven days but no one responded. Note the long-suffering of God. 2 Peter 3:9.

Then God closed the door and shut them in. Foolish virgins. Matt 25. See Matt 7:21-23.

Then judgment fell.

For 40 days torrential rain fell from heaven, water gushed forth from the bowels of the earth. The water covered the highest mountain by 22 ½ feet.

Every living person outside of the Ark perished in the flood.

"Sad, sad, the bitter wail", etc. "The harvest is past."

Some Thoughts on the Lord's Coming

1 Thess 4

These verses contain one of the most important prophetic portions in the Scriptures.

They teach the imminent and impending coming of the Lord for His blood-bought Church.

The Coming of the Lord for His Church is the next event on the agenda of God's programs.

Notice how important the truth of the Coming of the Lord was to Paul. He mentions it in every chapter in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians.

A subject that is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the N.T. or once in every 25 verses surely demands our attention.

One thousand years before His birth Jesus said, "Lo, I come." Psalm 40:7. He kept that promise.

Near the end of His life, He said, "O, Father, I come to Thee. He kept that promise." John 17:11

All heaven welcomed Him home. Psalm 24.

As He was about to leave His own He said, "If I go I will come again." John 14:3.

He has gone ... and He has promised, "If I go I will come again." He is coming ...soon.

In the well-known type, Isaac was last seen on the way to the altar. Gen 22:6.

The next mention of him is when he came to "meet his bride." Gen 24:62-65.

The problem at Thessalonica was that Paul had taught the young church about the imminence of the Lord's coming. He said, that the Lord could come in his life-time, but never said that He would come.

Some misinterpreted his teaching and believed that the Lord was coming in their life-time and stopped working.

The Lord did not come ... some of the saints had died... had they missed the RAPTURE!

To allay their fears Paul now describes the order of events of the time of the Lord's coming.

"I do not want you to be uninformed about those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, so that you may not grieve for them in the same way "as those who have no hope, (beyond the grave)."

We are introduced to a new concept here.

Believers who have passed on are sleeping. Three times.

Our word "cemetery" means "sleeping place."

Paul is speaking of the body sleeping: Not the soul.

There is a similarity between sleep and death.

A person sleeping does not cease to exist.

A believer's body, which is sleeping in Jesus, has liberated the soul and spirit to be present with the Lord, which is "GAIN" and "FAR BETTER". Phil 1:21

Sleep is temporary. Death is temporary.

Sleep has its waking. Death has its resurrection.

These are comforting words, therefore, Paul wrote that we should not sorrow as those who have no hope.

We do mourn when a loved one is taken home.

We sorrow not for them, for with them “it is for better”.
We shed tears for ourselves. Loneliness. Companionship.
The empty chair ... the silent voice ... the absence of the intimate touch, etc.

But we have hope, we shall see them again, our sorrow is not like those who have no hope. Experiences.

v. 14.

“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”

The basis for the believers hope is the resurrection of Christ. But now is Christ risen. 1 Cor 15.

The second part of the verse is difficult to understand.

The introduction of God into the text at this time is confusing.

When the Lord comes for His Bride

Scholars believe that this verse refers to the time when the Lord returns to the earth in great glory and power, God will bring with Christ, those who have died in Christ. In faith.

Paul is saying to the questioning believers: “Don’t worry about those who have died. They will not miss out in the glory of the coming kingdom. God will bring them back with Jesus when He returns to set up His Kingdom.”

This interpretation raises another question. How can this be, for their bodies now lie in the grave?

The answer is given in verses 15 thru 17.

Before Christ comes to set up His kingdom, He will return in the air to take His blood-bought people home with Him to heaven.

Then seven years later He will come back with them.

v. 15

“This we say to you by the Word of the Lord,” A.D. 51

Paul has received a new direct revelation from God. This revelation and its contents was not known to men up to this time. Cp. 1 Cor 15 with 1 Thess 4.

“That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (precede) them who are asleep.”

Note two things worthy of note here.

Paul believed that the Lord could have come in his lifetime.

Secondly, he emphatically declares that those who are alive shall not precede or have an advantage over those who have previously fallen asleep.

These truths were comforting and encouraging to the disturbed believers in Thessalonica.

v. 16 – Quote

In verses 16 and 17 the exact order of events at Christ’s coming for His saints is now given.

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The shout is the voice of the Lord Jesus Himself, which raises the dead. John 5:25

And changes the living.

The voice like an archangel, summons the angels as a military escort to accompany the Lord and His people through enemy territory, back to heaven.

See Luke 16:11. Lazarus

The trumpet of God is the last trumpet of 1 Corinth 15.

It calls the saints to eternal blessing.

“The dead” in Christ “will rise first”.

Every believer who has died since Pentecost will be raised at this time, i.e. Those “in Christ.” Not a (?) left behind. Unborn children.

v. 17

“Then the living will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

“IN THE AIR” This is Satan’s domain.

This is the prince of the power of the air. Eph 2;2.

He is the Ruler of the Powers of the Air.

He is the commander of the spiritual powers of the air.

Beloved, in the center of Satan’s knowledge the triumphant Christ will display the transcendent riches and the incomparable wealth of His grace.

The Lord will proudly present to His embarrassed enemies the fruit and travail of His Cross-work.

Thus the victorious Christ will display the harvest of His atoning work in open defiance of the devil in his own fortress.

Let us pause to consider all that is involved at this time.

The earth and the sea yielding up the dust of those who have died in Christ.

Then consider the great miracle of that dust being formed into glorified bodies.

Free forever from the effects of the curse. Rev 21 and 22.

No sickness ... pain ... sorrowed or tears ... death.

Then there will be the space - flight to heaven.

It takes light nine minutes to come from the sun to the earth 92 million miles away.

All the afore-mentioned will take place in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. 1 Cor 15:52

Good news ... Bad news

One has said, in connection with the Lord's coming ... there is a sound to hear ... a sight to see ... a miracle to feel ... a meeting to enjoy ... and a comfort to experience.

Please note the frequent use of the word Lord in these verses.

The word of the Lord - v. 15

The coming of the Lord - v. 15

The Lord Himself - v. 16

To meet the Lord - v. 17

Always be with the Lord - v. 17 v. 18

Therefore comfort and encourage one another with these words.

Revelation 1:10 – “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,
and heard behind me a great voice, as a trumpet.”

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-14

The first Christmas was the greatest and most profound event in the annals of human history.

Emmanuel, God, had come to live among men.

First message from God in 400 years.

At the Lord's birth, the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest."

The heavens were aglow with the celestial light, the glory of God. At the Lord's birth heaven and earth was moved. Lonely shepherds came to Bethlehem and saw the Lord, and left the stable worshipping.

Unfortunately, the world has turned Christ's birthday into a meaningless holiday. Business has commercialized it. Generally speaking, the Savior has been replaced by the myth of Santa Claus. The forgotten Christ.

The church has tried to make Christmas beautiful.

Lavish decorations - symbols - nativity scenes - Christmas Cards - trees - tinsel - lights- toys.

With all these additions we have obscured Emmanuel, the Christ Child, the Savior of the world.

Need I remind you that the miraculous birth of the Lord Jesus is one of the foundation stones of our Christian faith.

The Cradle - The Cross - The Crown.

The prophet Micah prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, in the district of Ephratah, in Judea.

There were several Bethlehem's in Palestine. But Micah prophesied that Christ would be born in Bethlehem in the district of Ephratah.

This was one of the smaller villages bearing this name, but in now way was it the least, for out of it would come the Ruler of Israel.

Mary was living in NAZARETH in Galilee, expecting almost daily the birth of her wonderful Baby. But prophetically He must be born in BETHLEHEM in Judah.

How can we get Mary and Joseph to BETHLEHEM?

Caesar Augustus decided to tax his subjects and ordered that they return to the place of their birth. In so doing he flaunted his sovereignty and power. He did not realize that he really was a puppet in the hand of God to further the divine program.

The decree brought Mary and Joseph approximately 60 miles to Bethlehem at exactly the right time, the fullness of time.

Bethlehem was crowded.

There was no room anywhere, not even in the inn. The only place they could find was a stable where the animals were kept.

In this foul-smelling stable Mary brought forth her first-born son, She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.

She laid Him in an animal's feeding trough.

"No beautiful chamber

No soft cradle bed,

No place but a manger

No-where for His head

No glory, but sadness

No room in the inn.”

Thus did God visit our planet in the form of a helpless Baby, in the poverty of an ill-smelling stable. Blazing Planets – Brilliant Galaxies – through the starry heavens.

“Jesus my Savior to Bethlehem came – Born in a manger in sorrow and shame – Oh, it was wonderful, blest be His name – seeking for me, for me.”

The Lord’s life began in a manger, and ended on a cross, and between these two events He had nowhere to lay His head.” The birds of the air, etc.

The first announcement of the Savior’s birth was not given to the religious leaders. Nor the elite. It was given to despised shepherds on a lonely hillside. Note the message.

Quote: “Unto you is born this day. A Savior who is Christ the Lord.” “Call His name Jesus.”

A SAVIOR which is expressed in the name Jesus.

The Christ, the anointed One, the Messiah, the Savior of the World.

The Lord, God manifest in the flesh. Quote Phil 2: “Who being in the form of God.”

One angel announced this birth.

But the heavens pent up ecstasy could no longer be restrained.

Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of angels praising God and saying, “Glory [Give great honor, worship, adoration, and praise] to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

There's a tumult of joy - O'er the wonderful birth - for
the Virgin's sweet Boy is the Lord of the earth. Ay! The
star rains its fire - While the beautiful sing - for the
manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

The first Christmas was God's message to a despairing
world.

Gabriel said: "You shall call His name Jesus."

Isaiah said: "Unto us a child is born, Unto us a son is
given", etc.

Jesus said: "For God so loved the world that He gave His
only Son", etc.

As the years rolled on the Babe of Bethlehem became
the Man of Sychur's Well, the Stranger of Galilee, and
who finally became the Man of Calvary.

At His birth there was no room for Him in the inn.
Thirty-three years later there was no room for Him in
the world ... they crucified Him. There is still little room
for Him in our world today.

"He is despised and rejected of men", etc.

Have you any room in your heart for Him?

Have you any room for Jesus?, etc.

Room for pleasure, room for business, etc.

Room for Jesus King of glory

Hasten now His word obey

Swing the heart's door widely open

Bid Him enter while you may.

Holmain Hunt: Behold I stand at the door and knock"
Rev 3:20. The Light of the World.

The Eternal Christ

Proverbs 8:22-31

The Lord brought me forth as the first of His works.

I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning,
before the world began.

When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when
these were no springs abounding with water.

Before the mountains were set in space, before the hills,
I was given birth.

Before He made the earth or its fields or any of the dust
of the earth.

I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He
marked out the horizon on the face of the deep.

When He established the clouds above, and fixed
securely the fountains of the deep.

When He gave the sea its boundary, so the waters would
not overstep His command, and when He marked out
the foundations of the earth.

Then I was the craftsman at His side, I was filled with
delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence.

Rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind.

Introductory matter for the subject, "Life's Greatest
Person"

He is incomparable - incomprehensible - inexplicable -
immeasurable - indescribable There are seven peak
events in the Lord's life in the Synoptic Gospels.

The supernatural birth.

His baptism – virgin birth – virtuous life

His temptation – vicarious death – victorious

His transfiguration – resurrection – glorious ascension

His crucifixion – His present advocacy

His resurrection – His coming again

His ascension

In all of these events we understand “what” Christ is rather than “who” He is.

John’s Gospel supplies the evidence of “Who He is.”

The synoptics are a presentation of Jesus

John is an interpretation.

The synoptics show us Jesus outwardly.

John interprets Him inwardly

Matthew, Mark and Luke emphasis His human aspects, as King-man-servant John unveils the Divine One

Matthew and Luke begin with human genealogy and a fulfillment of Jewish prophecy.

John’s Gospel begins with a direct revelation of that which is eternal.

In verse one

The Lord bursts into full revelation in a blaze of glory and mystery. Quote “In the beginning was the Word.”

Ecco Deus. “Behold your God.” “The Word was God.”

In this phrase we are home back into the infinite and unfathomable reaches of the immeasurable.

The mystery deepens and becomes impossible to comprehend or explain when we read in v. 14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

This is John's description of the incarnation.

Paul gives us a little more insight into this immeasurable truth.

Who existing in the form of God counted not the being on equality with God a prize to be snatched, and held for His own enrichment but emptied Himself of His outward glory, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men.

"The Word became flesh." Ecco Homo-Behold the man. See over Birth.

At this point we are lost in holy wonder when we consider, that perfect man, and perfect God, dwelt together in this Hypostatic union.

The ground on which we stand is holy - we should take our shoes off and worship like Thomas, before Life's Greatest Person, and say, "My Lord and my God."

"The Word became flesh" - See v. 10-13

This statement is overwhelming. Our Lord came out of the infinite distances into finite nearness. From the unknowable, to the knowable. A child is born - a Son is given.

"My pail I'm often dropping

Deep down into this well,

I never touched the bottom.

However deep it fell;

And though I keep on dipping

By study, faith and prayer,
I have no power to measure
The living waters there.”

“Great is the mystery of godliness, God has manifest in
the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached
unto the nations, Believed on in the world, received up
into glory.”

Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Fathers only Son,
God manifestly seen and heard,
And heaven’s beloved One.
In the most perfectly expressed,
The Father’s glory shine,
Of the full Deity, possessed,
Eternally divine.

True image of the Infinite,
Whose essence is concealed;
Brightness of uncreated light,
The heart of God revealed.
Worth O Lamb of God, ask Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow!

Names and offices of the Lord in Matt 12

Son of man - Lord of the Sabbath - My servant - My
Beloved - Son of David - Greater than the temple -
Jonah - Solomon.

Life’s greatest Person - Jesus Christ. John 1:1-5

Ecco Homo. Ecco Deos. Hypostatic union.

Jesus Christ as Eternal God

He is God. John 1:1. He is the Son – the Life and the Light.

He possesses all the attributes of God some of them are Self existence – Immutability – Truth – Love – Holiness – Eternal – Omnipresent – Omniscient – Omnipotent.

The N. T. writers are eloquent in their attestations of the Deity of the Lord.

John 20:28 – John records Thomas as saying “My Lord and my God.”

Rom 9:5 – Paul says that He is “God over all blessed forever.”

Titus 2:13 – “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

The O. T. collaborates with the N. T. in advancing the thought of the Lord’s preincarnate and eternal existence. Isaiah – Child born – son given.

Describe some of the Theophanies. The man who wrestled with Jacob. Hos 12:1 Night with God.

Isaiah baffles our intellect by describing the immensity and limitless power of God. Chapter 40. Describe Christ in Rev.

He holds the oceans in His hands.

He measures the heavens with His ruler.

He knows the weight of the earth.

The peoples of the world are but a drop in the bucket or dust on the scales.

The nations of the world are as nothing to Him – in His eyes they are less than nothing.

This same One sits above the earth sphere and the people below seem to Him like grasshoppers.

David also described the grandeur and majesty of God where he said “The Lord is great and greatly to be praised. He is a great God, and a great King over all the earth.”

Luke says, “He shall be great”. Chapter 1:32-33.

He shall be called the Son of the Highest.

God should give Him the throne of His father David

He shall reign over Israel forever.

Of His kingdom there shall be no end. “Hegemony”

Quote at this point “The incomparable of S. Ch 5

1 Peter 2:22. 2 Cor

1. His life- Sinless “He did no sin”. He knew, etc. “In Him was no sin.” The opened heart.

During His life His contemporaries were dwarfed by the magnificence of His (?). He was perplexing – baffling – and inexplicable life. An enigma.

His critics readily conceded “Never a man spoke like this Man” John 7:46.

Others said, “We have seen strange things today.” Luke 5:26

“He does all things well” Mark 7:37 Matt 16:16

Demons said “Thou art the Holy One of God” “Peter’s description”.

The faces have holes - "Show me a penny" - "Give me a drink"

For One so unpretentious He made startling claims for Himself.

"A greater than Jonah is here." "A greater than Solomon is here." Matt 12:41-42

I and My Father are one." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

He towered above His fellows when He dealt with the adulterous woman. John 8.

He superceded the boundaries of prejudice when He went home with Zacchaeus. Luke 19

He shattered the powers of forces of hell when He raised Lazarus from the dead. John 11

"I am the resurrection and the life."

2. His death was unique. "Crucify Him."

It was not the mode of His death, disgraceful, despicable and demeaning, but His actual death that was unique.

His death affected earth, heaven and hell. Sinless - death had no claim on Him.

On earth there was an earthquake. It seemed that nature convulsed when Christ died. The very rocks were split.

There was darkness at noon day. Meridian noon day.

The veil of the Temple was split from top to bottom. Heb 10:19-20

Graves were opened at the death of the Lord but the dead bodies were not raised until after the Lord's resurrection. V. 53.

The value of Christ's death is inestimable. Christ's death has affected more people than any other. Matt 27.

In the old economy immense fortunes were spent to placate God Countless numbers of animals were slain.

Rivers of animal blood flowed to gain God's favor, but in vain.

Heb 10:4 "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Heb 10:12 But this man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God"

God accepted Christ's sacrifice as the price He demanded for sin. Blessed Jesus, Wondrous Cross, etc. 1 Peter 1:18-19.

3. "His Burial"

Christ's resurrection made Him conqueror over death, hell, sin, and the grave.

No other man in the history of mankind had ever "destroyed the devil who had the power of death." Heb 2:14. The bruised heel and head. See only Rev 1:18.

Then after 40 days of manifestation He ascended to God's right hand. "Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph 1:20-21. See also Phil 2 and Heb 5.

4. This unique person, this greatest of all person will return. First to rapture His Church – then to judge the nations and establish His Kingdom.

And finally will judge the lost at the Great White Throne.

Life's greatest Person – the Lord Jesus Christ is “the great God and Savior”.

He is able to save to the uttermost, etc. The incorrigible
- Heb 7:25

Whosoever calleth on His name, shall be saved. Acts
2:21

There is no other name, given among men whereby we can be saved - Acts 4:12

Quote John 1:11-13

Life's Greatest Person – Jesus Christ

Life's Greatest Offer – Eternal Life

These verses contain one of the most important prophetic portions in the Scriptures.

They teach the imminent and impending coming of the Lord for His blood-bought Church.

The Coming of the Lord for His Church is the next event on the agenda of God's programs.

Notice how important the truth of the Coming of the Lord was to Paul, he mentioned it in every chapter in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians.

A subject that is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the N. T. or once in every 25 verses, surely demands our attention.

One thousand years before His birth Jesus said, "Lo, I come." Psalm 40:7 He kept that promise.

Near the end of His life, He said, "O Father, I come to Thee. He kept that promise. John 17:11. All heaven welcomed Him home. Psalm 24.

As He was about to leave His own He said, "If I go I will come again. John 14:3.

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The History of the Brethren Movement

In the early 18th century many important events were making history in Europe.

Napoleon had plunged Europe into a devastating war.

This war was not only against kings and constituted authority, but it was against God and against religion.

The Christian religion on the continent was absolutely discredited.

Britain was greatly affected by these events.

There was the fear of a French invasion.

Men's hearts were failing them because of fear.

Waterloo 1815.

The result of all this was that Britain became more God conscious and the study of the Scriptures was stimulated.

The spiritual life of the nation was stirred as the Holy Spirit moved with great force.

1820-30 Wilberforce - Slave trade abolished.

During this period Robert Raikes started the first Sunday School.

The London Missionary Society was founded.

The Church Missionary Society and the Religious Tract Society came into being.

Also during this period the British and Foreign Bible Society was established.

Wesley's II in Believers. Prayer meetings.

There was no doubt that the Spirit of God was working in a special way at this critical time.

It was during this period and in this God conscious atmosphere, that another manifestation of the Spirit's working was seen in the birth of what has become known as the "Brethren Movement."

In the 16th century God used a Roman Catholic monk named Martin Luther to restore to the Church the forgotten truth of "justification by faith."

This truth scattered the blackness of the "Dark Ages."

Two centuries later God used another Roman Catholic to help restore to His people forgotten truths concerning the Church, its Scriptural fellowship and worship.

Dr. Connin was a young converted Roman Catholic.

Dr. Connin was worshipping out in the country under some tree's because of his convictions.

Another brother named Wilson who was Secretary of the Bible Society met him there and worshipped with him. Finally, they met in Dr. Cronin's little apartment to break bread [Apostle's doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers]. They were joined by others. Describe the circumstances. From these small beginnings our movement began. The year was 1828.

Around this same time there was a movement of the Spirit in British Guiana. Leonard Strong, a Church of England clergyman who had been sent out to British Guiana to work among slaves. His work was greatly blessed by God.

Through an independent and in-depth study of the Scriptures he was led by God to renounce his position and salary of \$800 per year.

Then he began to meet with his converts for worship and breaking of bread on the same Scriptural lines he afterwards found were being practiced elsewhere in Rangoon, India, South America.

There is also evidence that the Spirit was not only working in Dublin, Plymouth, but also in London, Bristol, and Barnstaple. There was also a moving of the Spirit in Italy, 250 assemblies today. Germany, Switzerland.

As time passed and information was gathered from various parts of the world, it was found that around this period there had been a mighty movement of the Spirit in the various continents and islands of the sea.

Some historians believe that during this period there occurred the greatest outpouring of the Spirit since Pentecost.

The final 15 or 20 years which followed the beginning of the little meeting in Dublin were years of expansion and prosperity. The Holy Spirit was in control. The brethren rejoiced in their deliverance from religious systems, questionable practices and the fruit of the Spirit was evident. They loved the Lord Jesus with a new genuine and fervent love (first love, agape). That love spilled over as they loved each other enthusiastically.

The Spirit's work was so great that several clergymen with their entire congregations accepted the re-discovered truths and renounced all sectarian connections and began meeting and worshiping in the Scriptural way.

From this small and unostentatious beginning the movement spread to Dublin to Plymouth – Bristol – London.

Then up into the midlands and north of England – over the border to Scotland – into Northern Ireland, over into Europe, and since has spread into every continent and many of the islands of the Sea.

Note the numerical progress in Acts.

Who were these men whom God anointed?

By in large they were professionals.

They were highly educated; each one was moved by the new inner force of the Holy Spirit.

These were godly young men, the oldest was 31 years of age (the average age was 25 years). In later years some of them and others who joined them became theologians, others were gifted to discover vital truths then write about them. Gospel.

George Mueller – By prayer and implicit faith in God, sheltered 10,000 orphans (the gift of FAITH).

Received over \$3,000,000 in gifts.

Gave back to the Lord \$170,000 received for his personal use. When this great servant, this Man of Faith, passed on to be with the Lord, his bank account was \$120.00. His name is known throughout the world as a man of faith. (The gift of being a PASTOR).

Robert Chapman. Eight included in Believers. Bishop.

Wrote several worship hymns ... Jesus is at the door. See Sheet.

(Teachers)

J. N. Darby – New Translation, Thomas Newberry
George Wigrans

Englishman's Greek and Hebrew Lexicon.

William Kelly – noted as a Greek theologian.

A. N. Groves (The gift of being an EVANGELIST)

To Bagdad ... went out in faith, depending on God alone.

Since that time, thousands of young men and women
have gone out to the mission field, following Groves'
example, depending on God to meet their needs.

These men were moved by the Spirit. (New experience)

These men were spiritual giants, among the most godly
in the nation at that time.

With deep exercise of soul they searched the Word.

The result of this was a spiritual awakening and the
recovery of much truth which had been hidden for
centuries in the dust of ecclesiastical tradition.

Quote some of the precious truths recovered.

The true nature of the New Testament Church.

The Place of His Name

God gave instructions to Moses as to where Israel
should worship Him. Joshua 18:1

They were to worship Him in Shiloh. They set up the
Tabernacle. See other sheet.

Shiloh. Notice four things. Importance.

1. This place was chosen by God Himself.
2. This place was to be Israel's gathering place.

3. God placed His name there.

4. God's assured presence was there.

God promised Israel to be in Shiloh, and to dwell in their midst in the Tabernacle.

This was the only place where God promised to meet them.

Transferring this truth to the N. T. we have a similar picture. Matt 18:20

1. The place—where two or three

2. The gathering center—Gathered together

3. The Name—In my Name

4. The presence of the Lord (promise)—There am I in the midst
The early brethren believed that they were a "called out company." Not called out from other believers, but from the world's religious systems.

Since that discovery Mr. Newberry with his intimate knowledge of the original language, has interpreted the verse like this: Matt 18:20 - "Where two or three "having been gathered together by the Holy Spirit and meeting in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.
Definition of an assembly.

This small company believed that they were "gathered out" by the Holy Spirit.

Second generation.

This truth thrilled them ... they were God's called out people, The Ekklesia.

1. They realized that a Scriptural assembly is composed of believers, elders and deacons. Philippians 1:7.

2. They practiced the apostle's doctrine, fellowship with one another, they broke bread in memory of the Lord, and they gathered for prayer. Acts 2. They also realized that one of the purposes of the local church as God's representative was to carry the Gospel to the nations. Matt 28.

The Basis for the New Testament Assembly

The components - Phil 1

The activities - Acts 2

The purpose - Matt 28

The rediscovery of New Testament principles.

About 150 years ago there was a movement of the Holy Spirit in various places.

The working of the Spirit was seen specially in Dublin, Ireland, Plymouth and London, England ... also in Europe.

At this time godly men moved by the Spirit (these men were spiritual giants) became deeply concerned about the low spiritual state of the professing church.

They also were unhappy with the unscriptural practices in the churches with which they were affiliated. Some of these men were ordained preachers. This exercise of soul led to a prayerful searching of the Word.

The result of this searching was a spiritual awakening and the recovery of much truth which for centuries had been hidden under ecclesiastical tradition.

Among the precious truths recovered were:

1. The true nature of the New Testament church

2. The position of the believer as being “in Christ”.

Eternal security

3. The priesthood of all believers. See sheet. They rejected clerisy

4. The sufficiency of the Name of Christ. They gathered to Christ alone

5. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the (?)

6. The rapture of the church. Pre-tribulation resurrection of Church-age saints.

7. The pre-millennial coming of the Lord to the earth.
Rev 19

8. The millennial reign of Christ on earth for 1,000 years. Rev 20

9. The keeping of the Lord’s Supper on a weekly basis. Baptism When these truths were rediscovered, this led to an exercise of heart to practice them, to their mode of gathering and in their preaching and teaching.

Consequently, companies of believers began to gather in a simple way, in the Name of the Lord Jesus. The rapid spread of the movement; many left the denominations.

These companies recognized the precious truth of the one Body. Godly in life, sound in doctrines.

The Lordship and Headship of Christ. Supreme in authority.

The Leadership of the Holy Spirit

They owned allegiance to no denomination. Separation

They took no sectarian name. Christians – believers – disciples – brethren They recognized no human head. Elders.

They sought to return to the N. T. pattern for the church.

These godly believers strove for collective unity and purity. Absolute unity – Apostolic purity.

During the years since then much of the simplicity (spirituality and power) has been lost.

Some have sought to introduce a sectarian spirit -- church without walls.

Some have developed an organizational unity, rather than the unity of the Spirit. Be careful brethren that we do not program the Spirit out of our gatherings. But we thank God for those who stand fast, who strengthen the things that remain, and who seek to maintain the scriptural simplicity of the early church.

Let us look now at some of the precious and unique truths that these early brethren discovered.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the gathering center. The early disciples were held together by devotion to a Person ... by membership to an organization.

Their life revolved around the Lord ... they (1) learned, (2) loved, and (3) obeyed Him.

Their relationship revealed itself in some fanatical ways.

They gathered together in His Name. Matt 18:20.

They preached in His Name. Acts 4:12. Neither John 14:13, 14. Goliath/David Matt 21:22/John 15.

They baptized in His Name. Acts 10:48.

They did miracles in His Name. Acts 3:61; All authority is given, All nations unto me; All things always.

They defied opposition in His Name. Acts 4:18-20 (Opposition from within, Acts 20.) Prayer.

They suffered willingly in His Name. Acts 5:4-0-42.

“Daily in the temple and in every home”, etc.

When a local assembly is working scripturally Christ is central, supreme, He is Lord.

The N. T. speaks of assemblies composed of believers in many localities.

To name a few – Jerusalem, Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, Seven Churches in Asia.

These churches were independent, undenominational, autonomous, indigenous, self-governing, self-producing. They were composed of Believers, Bishops, Deacons.

Nowhere in the N. T. did they find a confederation of assemblies... no bishop over a diocese ... no superintendent over a group of churches.

Each assembly was a sovereign unit. They were ruled by elders.

Each was independent of the other. Their risen Head was in heaven. Each one was in subjection to Christ alone. Headship of Christ. Each one was in fellowship with the others.

They expressed this fellowship in a practical way.

1. They received all those whom Christ had received.
Rom 15:7

2. They accepted and supported gifted servants of Christ. 1 Cor 16:9-12

3. They gave letters of recommendation to those who traveled. Rom 6:1-2

4. They gave financial assistance among brethren and to the needy in other assemblies. Rom 15:25-27

The Lord's Supper. The first century church.

Broke bread in memory of the Lord Jesus. Acts 2:42

At times in their fervency they may have remembered the Lord daily. Acts 2:46.

Later the church adopted the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. Acts 20:7. Explain: continually devoting The breaking of the bread was the highest point in their scheduled meetings.

It was time of intense adoration and worship... followed by the breaking of bread and drinking the wine finishing with ministry from the Word. See 1 Cor 11.

At this type of meeting the believers rekindled their devotion to Christ.

Note the simplicity ... not actual transubstantiation nor Consubstantiation.

The assemblies reject outright the erroneous fabrications.

We practice what the early church practiced ... a simple table on which is placed a loaf of bread and a cup of wine which represents the body and blood. Around this simply spread table believers gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus to praise, worship and to break bread in loving memory of their crucified, risen, ascended and soon-coming Lord.

The Lord's return. The Rapture. 1 Thess 4 New Revelation

As the believers left the Remembrance Feast they were filled with love for one another. They were concerned for the lost ... they evangelized wherever they went.

They were little colonies waiting for the King. There were also marked as men who were waiting for the Lord's return. This was the blessed hope that lifted their hearts and caused them to sing Maranatha.

Simplicity... spirituality ... and power were the hallmarks of the early church.

Thanks God for the group of assemblies that seek to maintain the simplicity of the first century church as they wait for His return.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Not only did the Lord give the church a Book.

He also gave them the Holy Spirit to guide them privately and corporately.

When the first missionaries left the little house churches behind them they did so confidently, knowing that the Holy Spirit would lead them, empower, and equip them.

1. They believed that He would raise up spiritual gifts for their growth. Eph 4:11

2. Each believer was taught that he had a function to fulfill in the body. 1 Cor 17:12

3. Each believer was taught that he was the temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor 6:19

4. They were taught that there was no such thing as clerical and laity. Most of the meetings were informal, they were unstructured. In mixed meetings the men took the leadership. 1 Cor 14:24. Some led in a hymn - teaching - or exhortation - prayer.

In this way gifts began to develop ... in time some were known as teachers. Others become strong in the Gospel

and became evangelists. Some with shepherd's hearts became pastors.

This was the concept of the body working together ... a truth enlarged by Paul at a later time. 1 Corinth 12.

Each assembly should function as a body.

Then we have the unique position of the assemblies with regards to the sisters. The winds of change are blowing. Following the example of the early church we believe in the silence of the sisters in public meetings. 1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11-12. While adhering to this principle, we also admit that there are many spheres in which sisters can serve, in many instances more acceptably than the brothers.

Head coverings

Scriptural and spiritual assemblies believe and accept the teachings of 1 Cor 11. The whole chapter.

Not only do they believe in the Lord's Suppers; they also believe in the Head-covering. Godly sisters usually have no problem with this. They are content to preach the greatest of all sermons to all the saints and before the angels of the Headship of man – Christ – and God. In these days of feminist movements this position with that of the silence of sisters is being challenged.

No ordained preachers.

The assemblies hold the position that there is no distinction of clerisy and laity among the Lord's people as practiced in some segments of the professing church. We believe that this is foreign distinction to N. T. teaching Paul left each church established in charged of local elders. These men had the rule over the local

assembly. They were the “guides” and “leaders”. There was no high authority – this was God’s order.

Our way of financing the Lord’s work is unique and based on N. T. example. (M. S. C. Gifts)

There are four basic principles:

1. No offering from the unsaved. 3 John 7 “Taking nothing of the Gentiles”
2. No public appeal for funds. Matt 6:3 “Let not their right now, etc.
3. Instruction for giving is found in the Word. 1 Corinth 16:2 “Upon the first day”, etc.
4. Give is an act of worship. Heb 13:15-16 “As a priest we give our substance.

The way our missionaries at home and abroad are supported. Consider Acts 13

These dear servants go forth as sent by God not by a missionary society.

They are not controlled by any missionary board ... they are responsible to God.

They have no guarantee of any financial support.

They have gone forth in simple dependence upon God.

These scriptural principles recovered from the dust of ecclesiastical antiquity 150 years ago, and which were practiced at great loss by the early brethren should be given our earnest considerations and should not be lightly laid aside for the unstable whims of modern thought.

These principles are the Basis for the New Testament Church.

Elders. 1 Tim³ Titus 1

An elder is an overseer. Acts 20:28. See also v. 17.

In v. 17 Paul called for the elders of Ephesus.

In v. 28 we discover that these elders had been made overseers by the Holy Spirit.

The elder of Titus 1:5 is the bishop or overseer of v. 7.

In 1 Peter 5 the elder of v. 1 takes the oversight of the assembly in v. 2.

The distinction between the two terms seem to be

1. The term elder refers to the person. An elder usually is an older man ... a mature man.

2. The word “overseer” refers to the work he does. He “oversees” or “takes care” of the welfare of the assembly.

Elder is the title ... overseer is the work that he does.

Qualifications of an Elder ... “If a man desires”, etc.

There are several areas in which an elder must qualify.

First there is the personal sphere. In this sphere there are five positive moral qualifications. There are also five negative moral qualifications.

Positive qualifications:

1. An elder must be “blameless” – In 1 Tim 3, the word means irreproachable = no charge can be proven against him. Above reproach ... above suspicion ... unmarred ... unblemished.

2. The word blameless in Titus 1:6,7 means “unaccused”. This means that no charge has ever been laid against him.

3. The qualified elder must be temperate. Cool headed ... balanced ... self-controlled ... self-disciplined ... self-restrained.

4. Sober-minded ... reasonable ... well-grounded ... level-headed ... logical ... impartial.

5. Of good behavior ... good in morals ... ethics ... principles.

6. Patient ... long suffering ... unswerving ... unshakeable

Negative qualifications

1. not give to wine

2. Not a fighter ... not violent ... but gentle

3. Not pursuing dishonest gain ... not covetous of money

4. Not quarrelsome, nor self-willed, firm but flexible

5. Not soon angry ... does not lose his temper

Qualifications in the Social sphere

The husband of one wife ... manages his own house well ... his children are under control with dignity ... given to hospitality ... has a good report within and without the assembly.

Qualifications in the Spiritual sphere.

A lover of good men and good things.

He must be a mature believer.

He must be godly—just—and holy.

He must have a good working knowledge of the Scripture.

He must be skillful in teaching.

The Elders' duties

To feed the flock of God. Acts 20. See also 1 Peter 5:1-4

To guide and lead the flock ... teaching them to walk in godly ways. Heb 13

They are to lead the flock as shepherds and to examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:3

They have to take care of the flock. 1 Tim 3:15

The duty of the assembly toward qualified elders.

Remember them who have the rule over you, i.e. Pray for them. Heb 13

Obey them who have the rule over you. Heb 13

Give honor or respect them who rule over you. Heb. 13

We should acknowledge them as our guide and leaders. 1 Peter 5:5

Then there is the question of deacons.

A deacon's work falls into two spheres.

The physical and spiritual.

Building responsibilities ... Sunday school... youth work ... caring for the needy ... visitation ... looking after the finances.

There are unlimited spheres in which a godly deacon can operate.

Preaching ... teaching ... caring ... encouraging ... counseling, etc.

The qualifications for a deacon are very high.

They are similar to those of the elder. 1 Tim 3:8-13

Deacons' wives must conform to divine standards. 1 Tim 3:11

Some believe that deaconesses are being referred to here.

Elders should be:

Pastors to feed the flock,

Sentinels to protect the flock,

Pillars to support the flock,

Rulers to guide the flock,

Examples to encourage the flock.