Alister Lowe

Reinforcing the Element of Struggle

Are There Few That be Saved?

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Why I Wrote This Book

The Bible is different from every other book in the world.

When energized by the Holy Spirit, it becomes living and active.

Jesus said, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.*

The Bible is food for man's spirit.

Throughout the teaching, you will observe that many Scriptures from the Bible are used. They are written out in full with the appropriate references given.

The great benefit of this is that the Word of God is being assimilated into the reader's spirit. And it obviously does away with the need of looking up references in the Bible simultaneously. It is not for a moment inferred that the Bible should not be consulted. Indeed, the greatest compliment you could pay any teacher is to check up on him. I most assuredly invite this. Please pay me the greatest compliment possible. Check up on me.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

This book should not be treated in a manner whereby it is read as quickly as possible and then discarded. *Are There Few That Be Saved?* 3

In several areas you will find Scriptures repeated. This is to reinforce a particular point.

The only method I am aware of sowing the seed of the Word of God into your life, of allowing the Holy Spirit to fuse it into your spirit, is by meditation and prayerful reflection. By meditation, I do not mean that you allow your mind to become blank, that you become vacant and stare off without purpose into outer space. Rather, meditation is simply thinking, reflecting, pawing over the word, musing.

Psalm 39:3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned;

then spake I with my tongue,

By this means the Word is transferred from your mind to your spirit.

It becomes part of you. From this database, the Holy Spirit can bring it to your remembrance.

Keep this principle embedded in your mind as you explore this material. You will receive the greatest possible assistance from God by doing this.

WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

This book will help you understand the Bible.

The Bible is a highly complex book, though its teachings can be clearly understood and completely mastered.

This book probes the depths of the human spirit as is evidenced by the word, DEEP.

The Spirit searches all things, yea, the DEEP things of God.

The word DRAW is used in connection with worship. The vital principle of, worship DRAWS God is explored here.

The Bible is like a diamond. It has many aspects and shades of meaning. This is important to under]stand in the correlation with the overall teaching of its contents.

We are told that, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by EVERY word that proceeds from the mouth of God

It is essential, therefore, that every word be embraced and clearly understood.

The teaching of the three, earthly, physical, temporary dwelling places of God is a vital aspect in the presentation of this book.

It is with great joy that ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED is presented. It is anticipated that a great hunger for the Bible will emerge in every reader that digests these words.

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ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

Luke 13:23-30 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, STRIVE to enter in at the STRAIT gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath SHUT TO THE DOOR, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I KNOW NOT WHENCE YE ARE: Then shall ye begin to say, We have EATEN and DRUNK IN THY PRESENCE, and thou hast TAUGHT IN OUR STREETS. But he shall say, I tell you, I KNOW NOT WHENCE YE ARE; depart from me, all ye workers of INIQUITY. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are FIRST WHICH SHALL BE LAST.

Many ELITIST GROUPS and CULTS exist which claim to have an exclusive hold on God. They are not slow to list their requirements necessary for salvation in their separatist societies. Any person failing to subscribe completely with their tenets of faith is automatically excluded. In their opinion, yes, there will only be a few saved, and they claim to be SALVATION'S ONLY SOURCE!

Ask the question to the JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, Are There Few That Be Saved?" and the answer comes immediately, YES: It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The little flock is emphasised. There are further requirements for entering heaven; the 144,000 are singled out. There is no doubt in the minds of any of this elitist group and their adherents, yes, we are saved. Yes, we are the elect of God.

On the other hand, ask the five million, eight hundred thousand MORMONS, Are There Few That Be Saved? In not one moment of hesitation the followers of Joseph Smith thunder, YES!

An immediate problem presents itself. How can two exclusive groups claim to

have an EXCLUSlVE CLAIM ON GOD? Further, ONLY ONE of these two groups can be correct. Besides, where does this place the born again members of the Salvation Army? What about the Baptists? Where do the

Pentecostals appear? They would appear to have no hope.

Now is God that bigoted? From the Bible perspective, what does it mean to be saved? Which church is right? What denomination is true? Has God made it clear in the labyrinth of apparent confusion? YES, HE HAS!

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I AM THE WAY, the truth, and the life: NO MAN cometh unto the Father, but by ME.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

I Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man CHRlST JESUS;

Romans 4:24, 25 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (MERCY SEAT, ATONING SACRIFICE) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

I Corinthians 15:17 And if CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

To any person claiming belief in the Bible, there can be only one answer: Salvation is NOT found in any one organisation or group - it is found in a PERSON - that person is the Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST.

You see, a Christian is NOT a person who DOES SOMETHING, but is a person who RECEIVES SOMEONE! That Someone is Jesus Christ. The person receives Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord. It is not enough to know that Jesus died for the sins of the world in a universal manner only, but that He died for each person on an individual basis. Each individual must have a personal encounter with Christ. He must receive the person of Jesus Christ into his life. ONLY THEN can he be born again. Only then can his sins be remitted. Only then can he be SAVED.

There are THREE DISTINCTIVE MARKS of a DECEIVED person, a person enmeshed in an exclusive cult. If a deceived person thinks he's right, he thinks he

and his cult have an exclusive corner on God. He is sincere. Sincerity alone however, is not enough. He is sincere, but he is SINCERELY WRONG!

FIRSTLY, a deceived person is EXCLUSIVE. He believes that his organisation together with its members, is the ONLY BODY that can be saved.

His is the correct and only true society. There is salvation in none other.

SECONDLY, a deceived person is TRANSFIXED with the beliefs of his fellowship. Get him off his indoctrinated programming and he cannot reason intelligently with you. The reason for this is made very clear by the apostle John.

I John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.

Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the SPIRIT OF ERROR. Error is a spirit. It is difficult to reason with a spirit.

THIRDLY, a deceived person has NO JOY. When a person is saved, the great characteristic of joy marks him.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and JOY, in the Holy Ghost.

Indeed, it was the lack of joy that exposed the church to the vicious onslaught of the attack locusts.

Joel 1:12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field: because JOY is withered away from the sons of men.

We are further told that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry: for the JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH.

The mistaken concept is often held that when a person comes to know God, he will become dour, never smile, wear only black clothes and become very

religious. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt show me the path of life: lN THY PRESENCE IS FULNESS OF JOY; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

When a person's heart grows cold to the Lord and he commences the downward spiral and finally backslides, the first thing to disappear is his JOY.

The CLOSER he is to God the MORE ABUNDANT JOY!

The Lord, in answer to the question, Are there few that be saved? neither answers in the affirmative, yes, nor the negative, no.

It must be pointed out that there are SOME QUESTIONS THAT CANNOT BE ANSWERED in this manner. For example, should I ask the question, "Have you ceased beating your wife?", and you answer in the affirmative, "Yes!", I would respond by saying, "He is such a terrible man, he used to beat his wife." If, however, you should reply in the negative, I am shocked, "This man is still beating his wife", I reason.

This expresses the logic of the human mind. Further, when I make the statement, "I haven't had a cigarette this year, yet" The mind reasons, he smokes! No I don't. I didn't have a cigarette this year, last year, nor the year before that. In fact, I haven't had a cigarette for thirty-six years! I have no intention of smoking in the future. All types of smoking nauseate me.

Yes, it would appear at just a cursory glance at this section of Scripture, our Lord appears to evade the question. On the contrary, as we delve into this passage, perhaps the MOST PROFOUND REASON OF ALL emerges in the evidence of salvation.

Jesus' answer is a CLASSIC!

There are several reasons a person can know he's saved.

FIRSTLY, when a person receives Christ as personal Saviour he becomes what is known in the Bible as, "in Christ."

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE: old things have passed away: behold, all things are become new.

When a person is saved he becomes a new person, a new species. Things he once loved, he now hates, and things he once hated, he now loves. Everything

has become new.

SECONDLY, a person is saved when that person opens his life to Christ, and takes Him at His WORD. Jesus will come into that person's life and save him. An inquirer can pin his faith in the absolute integrity of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, and sup with him, and he with me. The door alluded to here is the door to one's heart, or life. Sup means to fellowship, as over supper, the evening meal.

John 1:12 But as many as RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Receive Him, and He gives you the right to become a son of God! When you become a son of God, you are saved.

THIRDLY, a person is saved (passed from death to life: from the nature of the devil, to the nature of God) when he LOVES OTHERS of like precious faith.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

When a person loves others who have passed from death to life: been born again, and associates with them, and loves and wants to do so, he is saved. No unsaved person would desire to join himself to people who love Christ. There is nothing in him that would lead him to do so.

FOURTHLY, when a sinner believes in his HEART and confesses with his MOUTH, (these, the heart and mouth, comprise the two components of faith) the Lord Jesus as his own personal Saviour, he is saved.

Romans 10:9,10 That if thou shalt CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE IN THINE HEART that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

This is the same principle as seen in the following verse.

Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall SAY unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in

his HEART, but shall believe that those things which he SAITH shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he SAITH.

FIFTHLY, a person is saved when the SPIRIT OF GOD touches him with the resultant regeneration of his spirit.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself BEARETH WITNESS with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

SIXTHLY, a person is saved when he has the desire, and gives expression to that desire, in FELLOWSHIPPING with the people of God. When the body assembles, that person longs to be present.

Hebrews 10:25 NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much more, as ye see the day approaching.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and FELLOWSHIP, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Psalm 68:6 God setteth the SOLITARY IN FAMILIES: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

It is a SICK SHEEP that wanders from the fold, seeking and dwelling in isolation.

Isaiah 65:8 Thus saith the Lord, As the NEW WINE is found in the CLUSTER, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I might not destroy them all.

The blessing is not found in the solitary grape, but in the cluster, the groups of grapes. No man can fulfill his social obligations by being a law unto himself.

Neither can he dwell a hermit in the wide open spaces.

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, IT IS NOT GOOD that the MAN SHOULD BE ALONE; I will make him an help meet for him.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is

not quickly broken.

Deuteronomy 32:30 How should ONE CHASE A THOUSAND, and TWO PUT TEN THOUSAND TO FLIGHT, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?

There is a great and very beneficial strength in fellowship.

SEVENTHLY, a person can know he is saved when he has a desire to READ and ABSORB THE BIBLE. The Bible is the Christian's SPIRITUAL FOOD.

There is nothing in the heart of man that naturally draws him to the Bible. Sin will keep a person from the Bible. The Bible will keep a person from sin.

Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the WORDS OF HIS MOUTH more than my necessary food.

Psalm 119:103 How sweet are thy WORDS unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth.

John 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

EIGHTHLY, a person knows he is saved when he has a desire to SHARE his NEW FOUND FAITH in Christ with others.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be WITNESSES unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

Matthew 28:19, 20 Go ye therefore, and TEACH ALL NATIONS, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

NINTHLY, a person knows he is saved when he has a desire to talk (PRAY) to

his new-found Father in heaven.

Matthew 6:6-9 But thou, when thou PRAYEST, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

The first word of Jesus' classic answer is very That word is STRIVE. In Greek, this word means to STRUGGLE. It literally means to COMPETE FOR

A PRIZE. It figuratively means, TO CONTEND WITH AN ADVERSARY. In the general sense it means to ENDEAVOUR TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING. It is translated in the King James Version of the Bible FIGHT, LABOUR FERVENTLY, strive. It is derived from the word from which the English word AGONY comes. This means a CONTEST, EFFORT or anxiety and itself is translated CONFLICT, CONTENTION, FIGHT, RACE.

Now what does all this mean? Are we to infer that Christianity is composed of struggles. Is agony involved. This surely cannot be. And yet, all these words together with their various applications are PRECISELY THE REQUIREMENT FOR SALVATION IN THIS CLASSIC ANSWER.

A friend of mine explains, "Jesus satisfies us with a dissatisfying satisfaction." Yes, Jesus satisfies, He meets the longing of the human heart, yet in so doing there is a measure of the Christian that is never met. The reason for this is that each Christian, in an endeavour to remain saved will STRETCH, REACH OUT, GO BEYOND his existing growth level, yes, STRUGGLE!

The NATURAL HAND of each and every human being has been designed with its reach beyond its grasp. As this illustration quickly shows, when a person becomes self-satisfied and happy with the current station in their Christian experience, they are in grave danger. However, when a person REACHES OUT and does so continually, this causes a SPIRITUAL GROWTH within him.

Determine to NEVER SETTLE FOR THAT WITHIN YOUR GRASP: GO BEYOND, REACH OUT, PRESS FORWARD, GO ON, in an endeavour to grown in the Lord.

Indeed, this is a CLASSIC MARK of a person that is saved. It is not whether we have been saved five, ten, fifteen, thirty or fifty years that should be of interest. That which should attract our attention is whether we are saved, NOW! - whether we are REACHING OUT, NOW! Whether we are STRUGGLING with EVERYTHING WITHIN, to GO BEYOND, NOW!

Several years ago a fisherman was enjoying a pleasant afternoon on the side of a lake. In the stillness that surrounded him he became attracted to a moth STRUGGLING TO EMERGE FROM A COCOON, evidence of a FORMER STAGE of life. Feeling sorry for this helpless creature, he removed his sharp knife and in one masterful stroke, slit the cocoon. "I have done my good deed for the day," he thought. The little moth crawled free and sat on a nearby branch struggling to open its wings, and realise the fullness of the potential of its creation. The fisherman's attention was again attracted. This time to a DEFORMITY in the creature's wings. As the wings dried in the warm sun they compacted together. What had caused this? Why didn't this moth attain the ultimate development intended for it by its Creator? Oh, how like many Christians this little moth is.

You see, what in essence the fisherman did, was not a good deed, but was in fact a VERY HARMFUL ACT. He had REMOVED THE ELEMENT OF STRUGGLE. Without the necessary struggle in its life to emerge into a beautiful moth, this creature became a DEFORMED REPLICA of what God had intended for it!

For the church to reach its ultimate destiny, it must never seek to eliminate the element of struggle. For a Christian to be saved, this quality, (struggle) must be present. Today, however, it is sadly lacking in many lives. Many are seeking the easy way out.

Did you know that the Bible speaks of these very people?

Philippians 3:18, 19 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the CROSS of Christ:

Whose end is their destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

They are not the enemies of Christ. No! They affirm their love of the Lord. They are however, the enemies of the cross of Christ. THEY CONTINUALLY SEEK

TO ELIMINATE STRUGGLE. Don't become alarmed that there exists a struggle in your Christian life. Embrace it. Welcome it. Take it as from the Lord, for it is. Let it have its perfect work in your life namely, EXPANDING, ENLARGING, bringing you into a fruitful place in God.

Understand ELIMINATING THE ELEMENT OF STRUGGLE, OPTING FOR AN EASY WAY OUT CRIPPLES, STIFLES AND DESTROYS THE WORKING OF GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE. Know that without it you will never attain the fullness of Cod's plan for your life. Know that it is an EVIDENCE of your being saved.

My philosophy of life is very simple. It is stated in just two words - OVERCOMING OBSTACLES! How can a person be an OVERCOMER if there is nothing for him to overcome?

To all the seven churches in **Revelation chapters 2** and **3**, the Lord Jesus gave promises to OVERCOMERS. These people constitute a

CHURCH WITHIN A CHURCH. There were specific conditions that had to be FACED in each church. Each condition must be OVERCOME.

The greatest promise to any church was made to the church of Laodicea, the end-time lethargic, indifferent, lukewarm church. That is the church of this day.

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

In these matters, determine not to take NO for an answer. STRUGGLE, PERSIST, ENDURE, FIGHT, CONTEND, even AGONIZE if the need be, to overcome. Allow God to build His life in you. Allow Him to strengthen you. Allow Him to enlarge and prepare you for His design for your life. I couldn't face going through life just DRIFTING: NO

CHALLENGE CONFRONTING ME. The humdrum, mediocre, life of the status-quo Christian is NOT FOR ME. I have always believed that when things come too easy, without a price tag of some description attached, SOMETHING IS WRONG! Yes it is hard, it is a contention, it is a struggle: yet I would not want it any other way.

Consider Hannah. Even though she was the woman of the DOUBLE PORTION,

she was initially barren. The Bible is very clear. It records that GOD shut up her womb. As a result of this, the other woman living in the same house became her adversary, continually PROVOKING Hannah. She (Hannah) began to fret. She wept. She did not eat. She was in bitterness of soul. This was all in the plan of the Lord for Hannah's life. She vowed a vow. "God if you will give me a son, I'll give him to you." She continued praying. Her lips quivered. The ministry accused her of drunkenness. Hannah explained, "I am a woman of sorrowful spirit." The birth of SAMUEL RESULTED. Perhaps he was the greatest prophet of them all.

Yes, there are times when grief can overtake you. There are times when you can't verbalise the feeling inside you. Here you must PERSIST, HOLD ON, DON'T QUIT.

The SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN was rebuffed four times: three times by the Lord and once by the disciples, but she struggled back. The end result – her desire came to pass- her daughter was loosed from a vexing spirit.

The WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD had to STRUGGLE through the press, the obstacles, that stood in her way. And so, the examples continue to mount.

Yes, there are trials, testings, provings, storms in life. But remember, A SMOOTH SEA NEVER MADE A GOOD SAILOR. It takes the negative opposition and resistance to bring out the best in us.

1 Peter 1:7 That the TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, being much MORE PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ .

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not STRANGE concerning the FIREY TRIAL WHICH IS TO TRY YOU, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore whosoever HEARETH these sayings of mine, AND DOETH THEM, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a ROCK: And the RAIN descended, and the FLOODS came, and the WINDS blew, and BEAT upon that house; and it FELL NOT: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;

and it FELL: and GREAT was the fall of it.

When you feel hemmed in, restricted, contracted, closed down, CRY! That cry is the means by which God will ultimately EXPAND you. This is a paradox.

Psalm 42:7 DEEP calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Allow the DEEP IN YOU TO CRY to the deep in God.

Genesis 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all THE FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP BROKEN UP, and the windows of heaven were opened.

John 4:11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is DEEP: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Psalm 105:17-22 He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: UNTIL THE TIME THAT HIS WORD CAME: THE WORD OF THE LORD TRIED HIM. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and reign righteousness upon you.

This is not “being negative”. It is Scriptural. It is God's method of GROWTH AND EXPANSION for His people. Understand that each child of His is in school - that this whole life on earth is a SCHOOLING, in preparation for that which lies beyond. Don't drop out, don't fail in this school of life. Endeavour, struggle with everything within you to graduate! Allow God to process you in His SCHOOL OF THE HOLY GHOST.

This is precisely what the Lord Jesus did. (There is only one path to maturity.)

Hebrews 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation PERFECT through SUFFERINGS.

Jesus became MATURE by ALLOWING God to work in His life that which was deemed necessary. Allow God to work in your life also.

Joseph was restricted until the time appointed of the Lord. When that time came there wasn't a power in earth or hell that could hold him back. God released him into the fullness of the potential He had prepared for his life. If life is too easy, something is wrong somewhere.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and LOOKING BACK, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Jude 3 Beloved, I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation. It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth VIOLENCE, and the VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE.

Luke 18:1-8 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to FAINT; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, AVENGE ME OF MINE ADVERSARY. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow TROUBLETH me, I will avenge her, lest by her CONTINUAL COMING she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which CRY day and night unto him, though he BEAR LONG WITH THEM? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find FAITH ON THE EARTH?

The no hopers are quick to answer, NO! Things are going from bad to worse, things are getting darker, there's a great falling away, NO, we can not expect there to be faith on the earth at the Second Coming of Christ. How wrong could they be. This entire parable is unveiled to reveal the fact that God will avenge his elect that CRY day and night unto him.

Oh, YES! There will be a DYNAMIC, POSITIVE, AGGRESSIVE FAITH in the earth when Jesus returns. There will be those who will STRUGGLE, FIGHT, CONTEND for God's purpose to be established.

The second major word in Jesus' classic answer to the question "are there few that be saved?", is the word STRAIT.

This word in the Greek means NARROW because of the OBSTACLES STANDING CLOSE ABOUT.

It is derived from the word which means to STAND. This has the connotation of CONTINUE, ESTABLISH, SET. This is the same Greek word that is used in the attitude that is to be found in every Christian soldier.

Ephesians 6:11,13,14 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to STAND against the wiles of the devil. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to WITHSTAND in the evil day, and having done all, to STAND. STAND therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

Perhaps the devil places some obstacles in your path in an endeavour to trip you up and cause you to stumble. Understand this - the devil can do nothing to you unless God allows it. Therefore, in a very real sense, GOD places the obstacles in your path! He puts them there to see what you will do. Will you crumble and fall in a downward spiral? Will you quit, give up in despair and discouragement? Or will you FIGHT, CONTEND, STAND, and be established in God, irrespective of what stands in your path.

God will lead people to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and NO FURTHER! From that point, metaphorically, He will stand back, fold his arms

and ponder, "What will this child do?" Will he PRESS ON, in spite of hardships and difficulties, or, will he buckle, groan and collapse, finally turning from the path of challenge, expansion and fulfillment that lies before him?"

INITIATIVE from this point, lies with each individual Christian.

Perhaps the greatest way to illustrate this is to consult the DIVINE PATTERN, the pattern spread before every Christian in the Tabernacle of Moses. (See page 31 for the PLAN of CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT)

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ENSAMPLES: and they are written for our ADMONITION, upon whom the ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME.

Hebrews 8:2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the TRUE TABERNACLE, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

A working knowledge of the Tabernacle of Moses is mandatory for every

Christian seeking advancement from the rudimentary principles of Christianity. It is mandatory for every Christian who finds himself in the end time generation, the generation upon whom the ends of the world are come. This structure portrays the SALVATION of each person, (the BRAZEN ALTAR located in the outer court, the place of blood sacrifice, and is the first piece of furniture to greet a person entering the court gate) to the requirements for translation, PERFECTION, maturity, completeness (typified by the ARK OF THE COVENANT, the piece of furniture that housed the presence of God). Each intermediate stage of development is clearly revealed. Remember, THERE IS ONLY ONE PATTERN. It applies to both the corporate church, and the individual Christian. Not one child of God is exempt.

Approaching from east to west, admittance into the Outer Court is by means of the COURT GATE. This gate measured twenty cubits across by five cubits.

DIAGRAM

HUNDRED SQUARE CUBITS. This is the ONLY MEANS OF ACCESS to the presence of God. There is no other. How reminiscent this is of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 10:9 I AM THE DOOR: by me if any man enter in, he shall be SAVED, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. Proceeding from the Altar, the next article of furniture to greet us is the BRAZEN

LAVER. This speaks of water baptism and the believer's sanctification.

The new born Christian, upon receiving the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour is required to be baptized in water. This is NOT an optional extra. It is compulsory to fulfill all righteousness.

Matthew 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS. Then he suffered him.

The word suffer here means ALLOW. Jesus became perfect through suffering. Jesus said of the little children, Suffer them to come unto me. Jesus became perfect by the things He allowed God to work in his life. The little children were allowed to come to Jesus. Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptise him.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and BE BAPTISED EVERY ONE

OF YOU in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is BAPTISED SHALL BE SAVED.

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and DO NOT the things which I say?

To gain admittance into the Tabernacle Proper, access is made by passing through a SECOND DOOR (GATE). This entrance measured ten cubits high, by ten cubits wide. The area of this door is the SAME as the previous one, namely ONE HUNDRED CUBITS. It therefore speaks of the same person, the Lord Jesus. There is no other method of entry into the Holy Place.

Jesus is still the door. Though notice, the door has been COMPRESSED to TWICE AS NARROW, and has been EXPANDED to TWICE THE HEIGHT! Once passing the initial door (salvation) any further advancement must come from the Christian. He must be prepared to face CONFINEMENT, HEMMING IN, and the HIGH calling of God in Christ. THIS DOOR SYMBOLISES THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. These three experiences, salvation, water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are all FUNDAMENTAL to the Christian's birth and growth. Peter shows this in the verse quoted above.

The question is often asked, "What if a person receives the Holy Spirit baptism before being immersed in water. Is he now exempt from water baptism?" The answer is emphatic, NO! WATER BAPTISM IS MANDATORY. It is possible to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit prior to water baptism. Precedent is found for this in the Book of Acts, in the life of the early church.

Acts 10:44-48 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, CAN ANY MAN FORBID WATER, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he COMMANDED them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

This second door is the NARROW DOOR, the STRAIT GATE. It is through this entry that initiative, struggle, contending and fighting are required. It is also at

this door (God allows) a SCARECROW is placed. A scarecrow is an awesome looking object: it is very fearful (to birds.) Hence its name. However, to a person who KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS, and is determined to PAY THE PRICE irrespective of the cost, it provides no threat. These people see it for what it is. Straw, a hat, a coat on a pole. See your enemy for what it is. LIFELESS, MOTIONLESS, STATIONARY. No threat whatsoever. And yet there are many Christians that are held in bondage by this opposition from the devil. Why would the devil place such an object here - at this strategic point? To throw Christians off the target of GOING FURTHER IN GOD. He desires hopefully that they will be satisfied with the concept - "You're saved. You can die and go to heaven now. But there's no point in getting fanatical is there? After all, if you go too far, two men dressed in white coats will call on you giving you a one-way ride in their van that has a red flashing light on top of it. Sit down. Take it easy. There's no point in getting stirred up about all this. After all you are SAVED. That's enough!" This is the same devil that doesn't like TOO MUCH attention placed on Jesus. He doesn't mind a little. But excess? NO WAY!

John 12:1-8 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, VERY COSTLY, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with odour of the ointment. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, WHY WAS NOT THIS OlNTMENT SOLD FOR THREE HUNDRED PENCE, AND GIVEN TO THE POOR? This he said, NOT that he cared for the poor; but because he was a THIEF, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, LET HER ALONE: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Some people, even disciples of the Lord, become most upset when they see MONEY being spent, EFFORT being spent, PRAISE being spent on JESUS ! The reason a farmer places a scarecrow in the field is to scare away birds. WHY? Because he has REAL, genuine SEED sown in that field!

Let the devil know in no uncertain terms that you know what he is up to, that you are very AWARE OF HIS GAME PLAN. Determine to press through, OVERCOME EVERY OBSTACLE that stands in your path.

This gate (door) is NARROW because of the obstacles that stand in its path. Each and every obstacle is to be OVERCOME. Each and every obstacle requires a DIFFERENT METHOD OF APPROACH.

For example, some obstacles may be overcome with PRAYER. But this is not true in every case. Some, you may pray about for years and nothing will ever happen. It will remain up to you to FORCE THEM OUT of the way. Again, this is not the only method of dealing with obstacles. What if, (and there are), some obstacles made of RUBBER. You determine to hit them hard, to charge with all your might in an endeavour to remove them - you'll only bounce right back off them and possibly hurt yourself in theprocess! Some obstacles have to be overcome by CLIMBING OVER them. Some will be removed by FASTING. Some by FAITH. Some by PRAISE. Some by SPEAKING TO THEM. These are all LESSONS IN THE SCHOOL OF LIFE, the school of the Holy Ghost.

Further, some obstacles you encounter could be CHRISTIANS, (they are saved), camped at the Brazen Altar! That is, Christians who have received the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, but not as their Lord. When received as Lord, disciples will DO what He says. People camped here are saved, but they won't advance any further. You can't get them baptized in water, they don't believe in it. There are groups of Christians today who are like this. Their lethargic attitude must be overcome. They OBJECT about going further, pressing on. After all, they hasten to point out, who ever wants to be associated with a HEAP OF BADGER SKINS, (junk), referring to the Holy and Most Holy Places of the Tabernacle. Granted, FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE, all that lies ahead is a pile of badger skins. Why get excited about that! But there are Christians, who present themselves as obstacles to those, who like JOSHUA and CALEB, have another spirit and desire to WHOLLY follow the Lord. These Christians (camped, settled, and established at the Brazen Laver), are saved, no doubt about that. They have followed their Lord through the waters of baptism, but alas, here they sit down. They become dropouts on this level in the University of the Holy Ghost. What a disappointment. They're saved, baptized in water, but they'll FIGHT THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST WITH EVERYTHING WITHIN THEM. NO, don't go any further, they warn with all good intentions. But GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH. There are multitudes in hell right now who intended to get saved, but never did so. THEIR RESISTANCE IS TO BE OVERCOME! There are groups of Christians today, exactly like this.

Then there are those who will receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but like their former brothers and sisters, will STAND IN THE GATE (door) and do everything in their power to RESTRAIN ANY ONE FROM GOING FURTHER. They will NOT go on themselves, and will at the same time, prevent any one else from doing so.

I am reminded of a statement of the Lord Jesus; and another of the prophet Hosea.

Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye SHUT UP THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AGAINST MEN: for ye NEITHER GO IN YOURSELVES, neither suffer ye them that are ENTERING TO GO IN.

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE: YE ENTERED NOT IN YOURSELVES, and them that were ENTERING IN YE HINDERED.

John 3:3, 5 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not ENTER into the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Hosea 4:6 My people are DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: BECAUSE THOU HAST REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I WILL ALSO REJECT THEE, THAT THOU SHALT BE NO PRIEST TO ME: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Come with me, if you will, through the narrow, strait, restricted gate. Our destination? That heap of badger skins. Let us not camp at the altar (salvation), the laver (water baptism, sanctification), or the door itself (baptism of the Holy Ghost). NO! Let us GO ON. Let us go BEYOND.

Philippians 3:13-15 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK for the prize of the HIGH calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be PERFECT be thus minded: and if in anything ye be

otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

There! Do you see it? On the south side of the tabernacle proper - nothing but GOLD. On the north side, again nothing greets our gaze but GOLD. Indeed, the entire length of the Holy Place, (some thirty five feet) is GOLD. What marked contrast with the outer court! Not one speck of gold can be found in the outer court. No wonder the devil does not want God's people to RISE UP, PASS THROUGH, and GO ON to attain the ULTIMATE OF THE POTENTIAL of why each believer is saved.

Furthermore, the glimmering light from the golden lampstand illumines the table of showbread and the altar of incense. Again, ALL GOLD! The lampstand has been fashioned from one hundred and twenty-five pounds of pure gold. The table of showbread supports the bread and wine, (Communion). The altar of incense speaks of prayer and praise. Immediately before us lies the veil with its inwrought cherubim and overhead cherubim can be seen over the full extent of the ceiling.

And beyond? The Most Holy, separated by the veil. This section of the Tabernacle of Moses contains the Ark of the Covenant which houses the presence of God. You see, from the outer court there appears to be nothing more (You got it all when you were saved.) However, as we have seen, if we possess the initiative and inclination, we may pass through EVERY OBSTACLE that stands in our way and gain entry into the multi-million dollar tabernacle proper.

Overcome the devil and HALF-HEARTED CHRISTIANS. The devil is a liar, don't listen to him. Half-hearted Christians will do nothing for you. Break free from them. Persist against lukewarmness. Overcome, and sit with the Lord Jesus on His throne.

John 8:44 You are of the father the devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for HE IS A LIAR, AND THE FATHER OF IT.

Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall NOT surely die:

The Laodicean Church is the Church of the end time. The area to be overcome is that of LETHARGICNESS, LUKEWARMNESS AND INDIFFERENCE.

Revelation 3:14-22 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write:

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither COLD nor HOT: I would that thou wert COLD or HOT. So then because thou art LUKEWARM, and neither COLD nor HOT, I will SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me GOLD tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and WHITE RAIMENT, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with EYESALVE, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and he with me. To him that OVERCOMETH will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Consider the promises made to OVERCOMERS in the other six:

Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that OVERCOMETH will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that OVERCOMETH shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that OVERCOMETH will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Revelation 2:26-28 And he that OVERCOMETH, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.

Revelation 3:5 He that OVERCOMETH, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 3:12 Him that OVERCOMETH will I make a pillar in the temple of

my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Some Christians have enough of God to make themselves miserable. They are ever walking the tight rope between one world and the other. They are neither one thing nor the other. This is like receiving an inoculation. They become infected with a minor dose of the real thing which builds resistance against the real disease! When the real thing comes along they have built up such a

resistance against it, that they never get it! Think of it. What a tragedy.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he IS, and that he is a REWARDER of them that DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

Luke 11:5-10 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and l have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, TROUBLE ME NOT: THE DOOR IS NOW SHUT, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his IMPORTUNITY HE WILL RISE AND GIVE HIM AS MANY AS HE NEEDETH. And I say unto you, ASK, and it shall be GIVEN YOU, SEEK, and ye shall FIND; KNOCK, and it shall be OPENED UNTO YOU. For everyone that ASKETH RECEIVETH; and he that SEEKETH FINDETH; and to him that KNOCKETH it shall be OPENED. Know also that faith by itself is INSUFFICIENT to receive the promise of God.

Hebrews 6:11, 12 And we desire that every one of you do show the same DILIGENCE to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and PATIENCE inherit the promises.

Hebrews 10:35-39 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of PATIENCE, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man DRAW BACK, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that BELIEVE to the saving

of the soul.

There it is !

The word patience here may be better translated ENDURANCE. Endurance is the quality required to hold on when all circumstances are contrary and stand arrayed against you. Endurance will cause you to hold on when others around you fall apart, become discouraged and quit. This then, is the characteristic necessary if we are to OVERCOME, to PUSH THROUGH, to CONQUER all obstacles standing in our paths, to surge past every lukewarm Christian camping by the wayside, stopping short, (sinning), of the full-orbed purpose of God.

In order to succeed, YOU MUST KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, then PURSUE your quest with everything within you, OVERCOMING every obstacle, passing every self-satisfied Christian.

PRESS ON. GO ON. STRUGGLE. STRIVE. OVERCOME. Perhaps this is the GREATEST EVIDENCE of knowing if a person is saved.

Hebrews 6:1-6 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. How can you be an OVERCOMER, if you have nothing to overcome?

The greatest condition in the entire history of the Christian Church to be overcome, is the one facing every believer in THIS age. This is the condition of LETHARGICNESS, INDIFFERENCE, and LUKEWARMNESS.

Irrespective of the hurts, failures and disappointments of the past, you have only one choice - go on, press forward, start again. Forget the past. Like Paul, let it be the ONE THING you do. Struggle, with everything within you to press toward the mark of the prize of the HIGH calling! Go for it!

Many will seek to enter in. They shall NOT be able. Why? When the master of the house has shut the door, it is TOO LATE!

A door in the Bible speaks of OPPORTUNITY.

There are three things that never return.

The spent arrow. The spoken word. The NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY.

If we do not seek to enter in NOW, we never shall, at a future point in time, be able. It is now or never. It will be of no avail to try to gain admittance when the door is SHUT.

When the door is shut, the opportunity has gone, FOREVER.

Matthew 25:1-13 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and THEY THAT WERE READY went in with him to the marriage: AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, OPEN TO US. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I KNOW YOU NOT. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh.

The parable points out the absolute futility of hoping to struggle, strive, fight and contend LATER. It must be NOW! Indeed, one of the marks of a person who is saved is this very quality - not who is going to be saved, but who is saved NOW!

At this present moment in time, the door is OPEN. Now is the time to press in.

When the master shuts the door, no amount of importunity, asking, seeking, knocking, struggling, striving or contending will open it.

It is like Noah's day. When that door was shut, the opportunity to be saved became history. And notice, it was not Noah who closed the door. It was God! Even when Noah and his family boarded the ark, it remained open for a further seven days.

Genesis 7:16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and THE LORD SHUT HIM IN.

Matthew 7:21-23 Not every one that SAITH unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not PROPHESIED in thy name? and in thy name have CAST OUT DEVILS? and in thy name done many WONDERFUL WORKS? And then I will profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Luke 13:26, 27 Then shall ye begin to say, We have EATEN AND DRUNK IN THY PRESENCE, and thou hast TAUGHT in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye WORKERS OF INIQUITY.

The word iniquity means LAWLESSNESS.

The Amplified New Testament explains, I do not know where (what HOUSEHOLD, certainly not Mine) you come from. What household? Certainly not Mine!

A household is indicative of a LOCAL CHURCH with its Master. (pastor) The people referred to in the above texts did not BELONG to any local household. The master knew every member of that household. These people were lawless, non local church oriented, pastor rejectors.

That they were SAVED and had ability to work in the SUPER-NATURAL realm there can be no doubt. You cannot prophesy without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. (Valid prophecy, that is). You cannot cast out devils in the name of Jesus without the authority the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You cannot do wonderful works without God.

John 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES that thou doest, except GOD BE WITH HIM.

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing ALL that were oppressed of the devil; for GOD WAS WITH HIM.

Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man

APPROVED OF GOD among you by MIRACLES and WONDERS and SIGNS, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Mark 16:15-20 And he said unto the, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be SAVED; but he that believeth not shall be damned. AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE, In my name shall they CAST OUT DEVILS; they shall SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; They shall take up SERPENTS; and if they DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, it shall not hurt them; they shall LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, and THEY SHALL RECOVER. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM, and CONFIRMING the word with SIGNS FOLLOWING. Amen.

These people were saved and anointed with the Holy Ghost. Where they went astray, however, was not being identified with a LOCAL CHURCH. The church IS his body. These were lawless, using the anointing of God to PROMOTE THEMSELVES.

This does not present an opportunity for those who fight the anointing and project the view that the AGE OF MIRACLES IS PAST, to declare that any who WORK MIRACLES are therefore of the devil. This view is on very shaky, if not dangerous ground, indeed. In fact, it borders on blasphemy. There is no ground for a person trying to establish unbelief in the supernatural.

Not only did these people referred to here by our Lord work the supernatural, they also went so far as to say they had eaten and drunken in thy presence - that is COMMUNION! Yet they were not identified with an expression of the local church. They even claimed that the Lord had taught in their streets. This was undeniably true. However, the point is, they had never ever been commissioned by the Lord to do these things.

Jesus says it is not he that SAITH, but him that DOETH the will of God.

There is no reason, from a Biblical perspective, to put down the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The caution is - never use them for the exaltation of yourself. After all, God is more concerned with what He does IN you than what He does THROUGH you. The church needs the Gifts of the Spirit.

Because a person operates a gift or gifts of the Holy Spirit, this is NO GUARANTEE OF HIS SPIRITUALITY. It is even possible for a BACKSLIDDEN CHRISTIAN to operate the Gifts of the Holy Spirit! The gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

The point is by all means operate the Gifts of the Spirit. Allow God to work in your life the character of His Son. WATCH THE SOURCE OF MOTIVATION for the operation of the Gifts. If you are not already, become COMPLETELY IDENTIFIED WITH A LOCAL CHURCH – a household. Have a Master over you to whom you are accountable- a pastor. Work with everything within you for the body that you are involved with, to become a healthy, vibrant expression of the Lord Jesus Christ. What tragic words to fall from the lips of the Master - I NEVER KNEW YOU: depart from me, ye that work INIQUITY. Seek to be approved by God.

Perhaps it is not even opportunities that should attract our attention so much as the courage to accept, embrace and take advantage of the opportunities that surround us!

Matthew 25:14-30 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his GOODS. And unto one he gave FIVE TALENTS, to another TWO, and to another ONE; to every man according to his SEVERAL ABILITY; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he had that received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew

thee that thou art an HARD man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was AFRAID, and went and HID THY TALENT IN THE EARTH: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou WICKED and SLOTHFUL servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it to him which hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the UNPROFITABLE SERVANT unto outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What a contrast. Well done, thou good and faithful servant. I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. God gives the talents of raw material. Each Christian must work with what he is given. To be lazy, to do nothing, to not respond, is to incur the

wrath of the Lord. God will not accept FEAR, or any other NEGATIVE MOTIVATION as an excuse. There is only one way to develop and multiply the ability we are given, that is to TRADE, to BUY AND SELL. God is looking for people with initiative, people who know what they want, people who will force their way through that narrow obstacle ridden gate, people who will never quit, people who will never give up. This is not going to happen by waiting for some more convenient time. What is to be done, must be done NOW, for the door of opportunity is fast swinging closed.

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, WHILE IT IS DAY: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Are there few that be saved? It is not the few that should attract our attention, but rather the CONDITIONS and QUALIFICATIONS of salvation. Many of the well-known reasons for a person being saved have been given. However, perhaps THIS explanation given by the Lord Jesus is the greatest of all. I believe it to be a CLASSIC reason. Strive, struggle with everything within you to enter the strait (obstacle strewn) gate. The time will come when entry will be forbidden, the Master of the house will have risen up and closed the door - the opportunity for salvation gone forever.

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About The Author



ALISTER LOWE is a Christian Minister with 52 years experience. He lives in Brisbane, Australia.. His major ministry is teaching the Word of God – all of it! He loves seeing Christians grow to a higher level of maturity in Jesus Christ. For more information about Alister, go to lowelegacy.com/bio.

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The Bible *Author Unknown*
This teaching was communicated via audio cassette as a required lecture for my Th.D. degree. The author was known to the College Principal who died prior to this work being published. It was delivered at a camp meeting somewhere in the U.S.A. Appropriate recognition and credit for this excellent preaching cannot therefore be given. Should the author come into contact with this booklet due acknowledgement will be given. Should it never be known, due reward will soon be given by the One who sees, knows, understands and records all things.

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