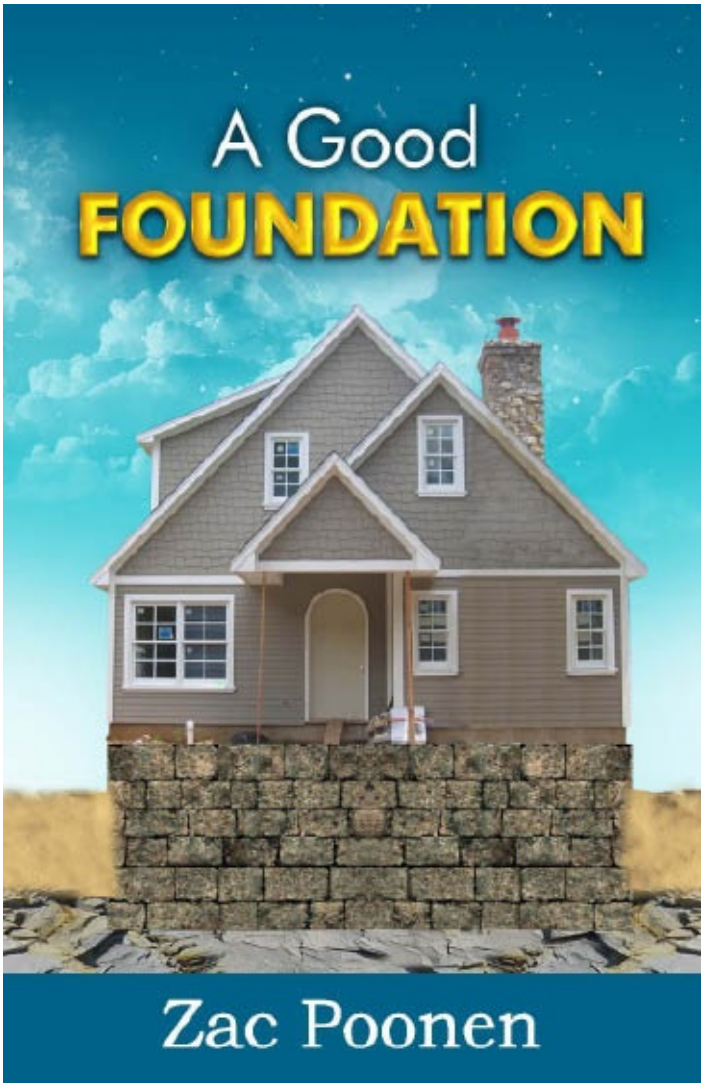

A Good
FOUNDATION
Zac Poonen

A Good Foundation

by

Zac Poonen

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About the Book

This Book and You…

The gospel is the good news that man can now live as God originally intended him to. The one who surrenders totally to the claims of Christ can live a life of constant triumph. Yet many who have accepted Christ as their Saviour do not enter into this glorious life that the gospel offers.

Why not? The reason very often is that a good foundation was not laid at the beginning of their Christian life.

Our life after we are born again can be compared to a house being built. We all know that the most important part of a house is its foundation.

If there is a crack on the third floor, the cause can usually be traced to a faulty foundation.

It is the same with our lives. Years after we have trusted in Christ, we can suffer the consequences of a faulty foundation laid at the beginning.

The New Testament promises us a life of triumph over sin.

See God's promise in *Romans 6:14*:

> *"Sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."*

It also commands us to live a life of continual joy, and one totally free from anxiety. See *Philippians 4:4, 6*

> *"Rejoice in the Lord always…. Be anxious for nothing…."*

Remember that God commands only what He will enable us to do.

So His commands are in a sense promises of what He can give us grace to

achieve! The above commands are therefore a promise that God can enable us to live a life of perpetual joy and one totally free from anxiety.

There are many more glorious promises like these in the New Testament. But the ones we've mentioned will suffice to show that the gospel is good news indeed.

Yet the sad truth is that most Christians who claim to have accepted the gospel do not live the type of life described in the above verses.

The purpose of this book is to enable you to lay a good foundation in your life, so that God's full purpose for your life can be accomplished.

Read on then and let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.

This could be the beginning of a new chapter in your life altogether….

Chapter One

Repentance

Jesus said that the right way to enter His sheepfold (His kingdom) was through the door. But He said that some would try to come in by climbing over the wall (*John 10:1*).

The way that God has laid down for man to be saved is by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only way. God can never accept a man who tries to climb in any other way.

John the Baptist who came to prepare the way of the Lord preached repentance. That was the only way that the nation of Israel could be prepared to receive Jesus as their Saviour. There is no other way for us either.

Repentance and Faith

Most of today's believers don't seem to have the depth or the dedication or the power that the early Christians had.

What do you think is the reason for this?

The primary reason is that they haven't repented properly.

They have believed in Christ all right. But they have believed without repenting first. And so their conversion has been shallow.

Just look at these words of a well-known hymn:

"The vilest offender who truly believes
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives."

Is that really true – that the vilest offender can receive a pardon merely by "truly believing?"

Doesn't he need to repent first?

You may say that true faith involves repentance too. But unless that is explained to the vilest offender, he can go away thinking that he is born again just because he believed. And he can go away deceived.

The message Jesus Himself preached was: "Repent and believe in the gospel" (*Mark 1:15*). He commanded His apostles to preach the same message (*Luke 24:47*). And that's exactly what they did (*Acts 20:21*).

The Word of God is very clear on this. Repentance and faith cannot be separated if you want to be well and truly converted. God has joined these two together. And what God has joined together no man should separate.

Repentance and faith are actually the first two elements of the foundation of the Christian life (*Hebrews 6:1*). If you haven't repented properly, then your foundation is bound to be faulty. And then, of course, the whole of your Christian life will be shaky.

The Bible says that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning (or the ABC) of wisdom" (*Proverbs 9:10*). And if we really fear the Lord, we'll "turn away from sin" (*Proverbs 3:7*).

So those who haven't repented and turned from sin, haven't learnt even the ABC of the Christian life.

False and True Repentance

If you have repented, you must ensure that you have repented genuinely. For Satan has his counterfeit repentance too, with which he deceives people.

Satan knows that most people live by just one commandment that says, "You shall not get caught!" And so he teaches them ways and means to sin without getting caught by anyone.

Even a thief will feel sorry if he is caught. But that's not repentance.

We see some examples in the Bible of those whose repentance was false.

When King Saul disobeyed God, he admitted to Samuel that he had sinned. But he didn't want the people to know that. He still sought man's honour. He hadn't really repented. He was just sorry that he was caught (*1 Samuel 15:24–30*). That was the difference between him and King David who openly acknowledged his sin when he fell (*Psalm 51*).

King Ahab was another like Saul. He felt really sorry for himself when Elijah warned him that God was going to judge him. He even put sackcloth on himself and mourned for his sins (*1 Kings 21:27–29*). But he didn't really repent. He was just afraid of God's judgment.

Judas Iscariot's case is a clear example of false repentance. When he saw that Jesus had been condemned to death he felt bad and said, "I have sinned" (*Matthew 27:3–5*). But he made his confession to the priests – just like some do even today! He didn't repent – even though he may have felt sad about what he had done. If he had truly repented, he would have gone to the Lord in brokenness and asked for forgiveness. But he didn't do that.

There's a lot that we can learn from these examples – as to what repentance is not!

True repentance is a "turning to God from idols" (*1 Thessalonians 1:9*).

Idols are not just those made of wood and stone found in heathen temples. There are equally dangerous idols that people worship that don't look so ugly. These are the idols of pleasure, comfort, money, one's reputation, wanting one's own way etc.

All of us have worshipped these for many years. To repent means to stop worshipping these idols, and to turn away from them to God.

True repentance will involve our whole personality – our mind, our emotions and our will.

First of all, repentance means that we change our mind about sin and the world. We realise that our sin has separated us from God. We also see that the

whole way of life of this world is anti-God. And we want to turn away from that God-dishonouring way of life.

Secondly, repentance involves our emotions. We feel sorrowful about the way we've lived (*2 Corinthians 7:10*). We hate ourselves for our past actions; and more than that, we detest the greater evil that we see within us that no one else can see (*Ezekiel 36:31*).

We weep and mourn that we have hurt God so much by the way we have lived. That was the reaction of many great men in the Bible when they became aware of their sins. David (*Psalm 51*), Job (*Job 42:6*) and Peter (*Matthew 26:75*) – all wept bitterly when they repented of their sins.

Both Jesus and the apostles have encouraged us to weep and mourn for our sins (*Matthew 5:4*; *James 4:9*). That is the way back to God.

Finally, repentance involves our will. We have to yield our stubborn self-will – 'wanting our own way' – and make Jesus Lord of our lives. That means that we are willing to do whatever God wants us to do from now on, whatever the cost and however humiliating it may be.

The prodigal son came back home to his father as a broken, yielded young man who was willing to do anything that his father told him to. That is true repentance (*Luke 15:11–24*).

We don't have to confess to God every single sin that we've ever committed. It would be impossible to remember all of them in any case. The prodigal son didn't do that. All that he said was, "Father, I have sinned." And that's all we need to say too.

But remember that Judas Iscariot also said, "I have sinned." There was a world of difference however, between his confession and the prodigal son's confession. God doesn't listen only to the words we say. He senses the spirit behind the words, and deals with us accordingly.

The Fruit of Repentance

John the Baptist told the Pharisees to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance

(*Matthew 3:8*). If we have truly repented, it will change our whole way of life.

One of the first things that we should do, after we have repented is to make restitution for the wrongs that we have done in our life.

We read of Zaccheus in the gospels, that he was convicted of his sins as soon as Jesus entered his house (*Luke 19:1–10*). Zaccheus was a man who loved money. But he understood what repentance involved. He knew that if he was going to be a disciple of Jesus he would have to make amends for all the wrongs that he had done in his life.

That meant a great loss of money to him, for he had cheated so many people. But he decided to be wholehearted in his repentance. And so he told the Lord that he would give away half his money to the poor and then give back four times what he had cheated others of.

It was only when Zaccheus said that he would make restitution, that Jesus said that salvation had come to that home. A willingness to make restitution is one of the evidences of true salvation (*Luke 19:1–10*).

The wise man, in the parable that Jesus spoke, dug deep and laid his foundation on the rock beneath the layers of sand (*Luke 6:48*). The foolish man also built his house in the same area. But he didn't dig deep enough. He laid his foundation superficially on the sand.

We could apply this parable to true and false repentance. Only when we take pains to make a thorough restitution in our life do we dig deep.

When we come to Christ, it is good to take time right at the beginning, to sort out all matters relating to our unconverted life that need to be settled. If we are superficial here, and gloss over some matters, we'll find that our foundation remains weak and our house collapses one day.

What Restitution Involves

What does restitution involve?

It means that if you have cheated the government of taxes etc., you must now repay those taxes. Sometimes it may not be possible to repay the amount to the

department concerned. But where there is a will, there will always be a way – if we want to obey God! We can buy Post Office stamps or railway tickets and destroy them, to ensure that the money we owe to the government does indeed go back to it.

If you've cheated people, you should also apologise to them while making the repayment. Tell them also how the change came in your life! If you find you don't have the courage to do this all by yourself, take a brother along with you, while making the restitution.

If you are not able to settle all your debts at once, never mind. Do it in instalments. But make a beginning – even if it be with only five rupees! God accepted Zaccheus the day he decided to pay back his debts – not after he had completed all his repayments!

If you have cheated someone and you don't know where he is living now, then you should return the money to God – the original Owner of all money. That was the rule that God laid down for the Israelites (*Numbers 5:6–8*).

We should in any case, never have any money with us that has been obtained unlawfully. God can never bless that sort of money.

If we have hurt or injured someone, in some way that doesn't involve money, then we should go and apologise to him and ask for his forgiveness.

I know of brothers who have saved money for months and then emptied out their bank accounts in order to make restitution to the government for taxes and customs duties that they had cheated on. And God has blessed them with something better than a large bank account!

I also know of others who have carefully calculated the fares for the times when they travelled without purchasing tickets on buses and trains and who have paid the amounts back. Those who are faithful in the small things are the ones who will do great things for God.

I also know of some who have gone to university authorities with their degree certificates and acknowledged that they had cheated in their final examinations. They were ready to sacrifice their degrees if necessary, in order to have a clear

conscience. God has usually given such believers favour in the eyes of the authorities, so that they have been pardoned.

But it may not always work out like that. In your case, God may allow the university to take away your certificate! But then that will be God's perfect will for you.

I know of one brother who wrote a letter of apology to someone from whom he had stolen a small stamp many years earlier. A theft is a theft, however small the value of the stolen article may be. It is in little matters that our faithfulness is tested.

I am not suggesting that you now torture yourself, trying to rake up from your memory the little wrongs that you've done in your past life. No. You don't have to do that. God will remind you of what needs to be settled; and you need to settle only what God reminds you of.

There will also be cases where you can do absolutely nothing, because the wrong done is so complicated. In such cases, all you can do is express your sorrow to God and ask for His mercy.

We shouldn't in any case, allow Satan to keep us feeling guilty and condemned forever, just because we can't set a certain matter right. God understands our situation fully – and He doesn't torture us. If you have a willing mind, God will accept whatever you are able to do – even if that be nothing (*2 Corinthians 8:12*).

Praise God that He is so merciful!

God will honour those who honour Him (*1 Samuel 2:30*). And one way that we honour Him is by being faithful in the little things.

If we don't make restitution, we'll be dragging a chain with us, all through our life. God will test us to see if we value a clear conscience more than our money, our honour, our degrees and even our job.

Many fail the test. But, praise God, that there is a remnant, in every generation, of those who love God more than anything on earth.

Forgiving Others

Repentance also includes forgiving others who have harmed us in any way.

Jesus said,

> *"If you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions"* (Matthew 6:15).

He went on to say that we must forgive others from our heart, and not just superficially (*Matthew 18:35*).

It is impossible to be forgiven by God if we don't forgive others wholeheartedly and completely.

We may not be able to forget what others have done to us. But we can certainly refuse to think about the evil they did, whenever we are tempted to do so.

Perhaps someone has harmed you so badly that you really find it difficult to forgive him wholeheartedly. Ask God to help you to forgive; and you'll find that He is more than willing to give you both the desire and the power to forgive anyone.

When we think of the millions of sins that God has forgiven us so freely, it shouldn't be difficult for us to forgive others in the same way. It's when we don't forgive others that Satan gets power over us.

"Forgive," says Paul, "so that no advantage be taken of us by Satan" (*2 Corinthians 2:10, 11*).

A Changed Attitude Towards Satan

There's one more area where matters need to be settled – and that's the area of contact with Satan and evil spirits.

If you have dabbled in astrology, idol worship, palm-reading, black magic etc., or if you have been interested in rock-music and harmful drugs, you need to renounce these contacts with Satan – even though some of these contacts may have been unconsciously made.

The first thing you should do is destroy (not sell, but destroy) all idols, occult books and amulets etc., that you may have (See *Acts 19:19*). Then you should pray saying,

> "Lord Jesus, I renounce every contact that I have had with Satan, knowingly or unknowingly."

Then tell Satan directly,

> "I resist you Satan, in the Name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. You can't touch me any longer, for I now belong to the Lord Jesus Christ."

James 4:7 says,

> *"Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*

Thus Satan won't have a hold on you any longer.

If we continue to walk with the Lord, He'll give us more and more light on different areas of our life. It could be in the worldliness of our dress or speech or in the harshness of our tone of voice, or in the way we are being defiled through our reading habits etc. Thus we'll discover new areas constantly where we need to repent and be cleansed.

We should walk this way of constant repentance all our days.

Chapter Two

Faith

Repentance is the first part of the foundation of the Christian life. Faith is the second.

To have faith in God means to trust Him and to believe what He has said in His Word, in spite of what our feelings may tell us or what other people may tell us. It's as simple as that.

Here are three facts concerning God:

1. He loves us infinitely;
2. He is absolutely wise; and
3. He is Almighty.

Is it difficult to believe these facts? No. Well, then it shouldn't be difficult for us to trust God with all our hearts.

When Eve listened to the voice of Satan in the garden of Eden, it was a failure of faith. She didn't believe that God's commands were for her good. She disobeyed God because she didn't have faith in His perfect love for her.

Faith to Receive God's Gifts

God has many wonderful things to give us. All His gifts are gifts of grace. But we need faith to receive those gifts.

The Bible says we are saved "by grace through faith" (*Ephesians 2:8*). Grace is God's Hand reaching down to us loaded with the blessings of heaven. Faith is

our hand reaching up and taking those blessings from God's Hand.

God offers us the forgiveness of our sins first of all. If we have repented, then all we have to do now is reach out our hand and take what God offers us freely. We don't have to work for it or pay for it. It has already been paid for at Calvary. All we have to do now is to say, "Thank You, Father" and take it. That's faith.

When we don't take what God offers, we are actually insulting Him. We're despising His gifts. Perhaps we think that God is teasing us, the way some people tease children by stretching out their hands with gifts and then pulling their hand back just when the children reach out to take those gifts! But God isn't mean or evil, like such people. He is a loving Father. He really longs to give us good gifts.

That's why the Bible says that "without faith it is impossible to please God" – whatever else we may do (*Hebrews 11:6*).

If we trust God, He will not only forgive our sins, He'll set us free from sin's power as well.

How do we get faith? There's only one way. The Bible says that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ" (*Romans 10:17*). In other words, as we allow God to speak to us through His Word, we'll get faith. That's how our faith increases too.

Through God's Word, we know that Christ died for our sins and rose again; and that if we repent and trust in Him we can immediately receive a full and free forgiveness for our sins. The Holy Spirit then bears witness to our heart that this is true. Through this two-fold witness of God's Word and the Holy Spirit we can be absolutely sure that God has forgiven us and that we are indeed His children.

The Assurance of Faith

God wants us to have perfect assurance in our hearts that we are indeed His children. He never wants us to be in doubt about that fact.

Satan will try his best to keep us in doubt. But we need never be in doubt, for

God has given us many promises in His Word to assure us.

Just look at these promises: Jesus said,

> *"The one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out … Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes has eternal life"* (John 6:37, 47).

> *"As many as received Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), to them He gave the right to become children of God"* (John 1:12).

The Lord says,

> *"I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more"* (Hebrews 8:12).

To put our faith in God's promises can be likened to our putting our feet on a strong bridge while crossing a river. If the bridge is strong, it doesn't matter even if our feet are weak. What is strong faith then? It is trusting in a strong God and in His promises.

Our feelings are often very deceptive. We should never trust them. There's a parable of three men called Fact, Faith and Feeling who were walking one behind the other on a narrow wall. Fact walked in front and Faith walked behind him and Feeling came along at the rear. As long as Faith kept his eyes on Fact in front of him, everything went smoothly. Feeling followed behind him perfectly. But as soon as Faith turned around to see how Feeling was coming along, he tumbled and fell to his death; and Feeling fell to his death too. Fact, however kept walking along the wall undisturbed!

The lesson in the parable is obvious. God's Word consists of unchangeable facts. If our faith looks steadfastly at God's Word alone, there is no danger of our ever falling; and feelings will follow in due course. But if we begin to look at our feelings, then we can easily tumble and fall into discouragement and condemnation.

The Confession of Faith

The Bible says that we must confess what we believe.

> *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation"* (Romans 10:9, 10).

The confession of our mouth is important. To confess God's Word means to say the same thing that God says. That shouldn't be difficult for it just means saying "Amen" ("It shall be so") to God's promises.

The first time the word 'believe' is used in Scripture is in *Genesis chapter 15*. There we read that God told Abram, when he was childless, that he would have as many children as the stars in the sky. And it says that "Abram believed the LORD" (*verse 6*). The Hebrew word for "believe" there, is "aman" from which we get the word "Amen", meaning "It shall be so." So all that Abram did was to say "Amen" to God's promise.

That is what true faith is – saying "Amen" to God.

We read later that Abram called himself by the new name that God gave him – Abraham (which meant "the father of a multitude"). Sarah, his wife was still childless. But that didn't make any difference to Abraham. He still called himself the father of a multitude, because he believed what God had said (*Genesis 17:5*).

That is the confession of faith – confessing what God has said, even when we haven't seen the fulfilment of the promise.

That's all that God asks us to do – to say the same thing that He has said in His Word. When we confess God's promises, we express our faith in God; and then God is able to work on our behalf.

It's by the "word of our testimony" that we overcome Satan (*Revelation 12:11*). Satan, the accuser, is always trying to rob us of the assurance of our salvation and of our boldness before God. We must quote the promises of God

directly to Satan if we want to overcome him.

Jesus Himself overcame Satan by quoting Scripture to him, saying “It is written… It is written… It is written” (*Matthew 4:1–11*).

If we doubt God’s Word, we make God a liar. But when we confess God’s Word to Satan, we take sides with God and His Word against Satan and his lies. In that way we also tell Satan that we believe that what God has said is true, in spite of what our circumstances and our feelings may be telling us.

This is the confession of faith.

Chapter Three

Election and Justification

God's election of His children and His justifying them are two glorious truths that the New Testament teaches us.

Election

The Bible says that God elected us to be His children according to his foreknowledge (*1 Peter 1:1, 2*). This means that He knew from all eternity past those who were going to be His children.

The Bible also says that God chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (*Ephesians 1:4*). Long before Adam was even created, God knew each of us by name as His children, and our names were there in "the book of life" (*Revelation 13:8*).

These are facts that should give us tremendous security.

The Bible says that the foundation of God on which we stand has a twofold seal. On the God-ward side, it reads, "The Lord knows those who are His." On the man-ward side, it reads, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness" (*2 Timothy 2:19*).

God knew His children from before the foundation of the world. But WE know that we are His children only when we actually repent and turn to Him. Our finite minds cannot grasp how God elects His children and yet gives man freedom to choose Him or not. These are like two parallel lines that don't seem to meet in our understanding. But as the mathematical definition of parallel lines

is, they meet at infinity – in the infinite mind of God.

Someone has expressed it like this: As you walked along the road of life, you found an open door one day, with these words written over it, “Whoever repents and believes in Christ may enter in here and obtain eternal life.” You entered in. On looking back, you saw written over the very door through which you had just entered, the words “You were chosen by God in Christ, before the foundation of the world.”

Justification

Forgiveness of our sins takes away the guilt of the past. But that doesn’t make us perfectly holy. And so, we still can’t stand before a perfectly holy God. And so God had to do something more for us.

He had to justify us!

Justification means that God has put the perfect righteousness of Christ to our credit. The result is that our standing before God is now as perfect as Christ’s! That’s an astounding fact! And its true! It’s like millions of rupees being put into a bank account in the name of a beggar – money that he didn’t earn or deserve, but that has been given to him as a free gift.

To be justified is to be accepted by God just as if we had never sinned in our whole life and just as if we were perfectly righteous in our life at present.

God’s Word says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand” (*Romans 5:2*). Now we can come boldly into God’s presence without any fear or hesitation at any time. God Himself has opened the way for that.

In the garden of Eden, as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they felt guilty and ashamed and covered themselves with fig-leaves. God took away their fig-leaves, killed an animal and clothed them with its skin.

Those fig-leaves are a picture of our own good works. Like fig-leaves, our good works cannot cover our nakedness before God; for the Bible says that even

our best works are like filthy rags in God's sight (*Isaiah 64:6*).

That slain animal was a picture of Christ put to death for our sins. The skin was a picture of the perfect righteousness of Christ given to cover us (*Genesis 3:7, 21*).

Justification is a free gift of God. No man can be justified before God on the basis of his own works. One extreme of error therefore is to say, "Let us seek to be righteous in order to be justified by God."

There is however an opposite extreme of error too. And that is to say, "If we are elected and justified, then it doesn't matter even if we sin now." Those who take sin lightly, because they think that God has elected and justified them, would thereby prove that they are not among God's elect at all. (Compare *Romans 4:5* with *James 2:24*).

Once we are sure that we have been elected and justified, Satan's accusations will lose their effect on us. For if "God is for us, who can be against us?" (*Romans 8:31*). Never again in our life need we feel that we are condemned or rejected by God.

"Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One Who justifies" (*Romans 8:33*). Hallelujah!

Such is the good news of the gospel! It is not surprising then that Satan has kept many believers from knowing that they have been elected and justified by God.

Chapter Four

Discipleship

When Jesus told His apostles to go into every nation and to make disciples, they had no doubt in their minds as to what He meant. (*Matthew 28:19*). For He had already explained what it meant to be His disciple.

Luke 14:25–35 reveals most clearly the three conditions of discipleship. There Jesus speaks about a man who having laid a foundation for a tower, couldn't complete it, because he was unable to pay the cost of construction (*verses 28–30*). That proves that it does cost something to be a disciple. Jesus told us to sit down first and count that cost before even starting to build.

God doesn't want us to wait for many years after our sins are forgiven, before understanding what discipleship really means. Jesus told people about the cost of discipleship as soon as they came to Him.

He said that a believer who was unwilling to be a disciple was as useless to God as salt that had lost its savour (*Luke 14:35*).

'Hating' our Relatives

The first condition of discipleship is that we must cut off the natural, inordinate love that we have for our relatives.

Jesus said "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (*Luke 14:26*).

Those are strong words. What does it mean to 'hate'? To hate is the same as to

kill (*1 John 3:15*). What we are asked to put to death here is the natural affection that we have for our relatives.

Does that mean that we are not to love them? No. It certainly doesn't mean that. When we give up our human affection for them, God will replace it with Divine love. Our love for our relatives will then be pure – in the sense that God will always be first in our affections, and not our relatives.

Many don't obey God because they are afraid to offend their father, mother or wife etc. The Lord demands first place in our life. And if we don't give Him that place, we can't be His disciples at all.

Look at Jesus' own example. Although He loved His widowed mother, yet He never allowed her to influence Him away from the perfect will of His Father, even in small matters. We see an example of this at the marriage at Cana where Jesus refused to act on His mother's prompting (*John 2:4*).

Jesus also taught us how to 'hate' our brothers. When Peter tried to turn Him away from going to the cross, He turned around and rebuked him with some of the sharpest words that He ever uttered. He said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to Me" (*Matthew 16:23*). Peter had made his suggestion with a lot of human love. But Jesus rebuked him, because what he had suggested was contrary to the Father's will.

The Father was always supreme in Jesus' affections. He expects us to have the same attitude too. After His resurrection He asked Peter whether he loved Him more than everything else on earth (*John 21:15–17*). Only those who love the Lord supremely are given responsibilities in His church.

The leader of the Ephesian church was in danger of being rejected because he had lost his initial devotion for the Lord (*Revelation 2:1–5*).

If we can say, like the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven, Lord, but Thee? And besides Thee I desire nothing on earth," then we have truly fulfilled the first condition of discipleship (*Psalm 73:25*).

The love that Jesus demands from us is not the emotional, sentimental, human

affection that expresses itself in singing stirring songs of devotion to Him. No. If we love Him, we'll obey Him (*John 14:21*).

Hating Our Own Life

The second condition of discipleship is that we must hate our own self-life. Jesus said,

> *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own life, he cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14:26).

He amplified that further by saying,

> *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14:27).

This is one of the least understood of all of Jesus' teachings.

He said that a disciple would have to "deny himself and take up his cross daily" (*Luke 9:23*). More important than reading our Bible or praying daily, we have to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily. To deny our Self is the same as to hate our own life – the life that we have inherited from Adam. To take up the cross is to put that Self-life to death. We have to hate that life first, before we can slay it.

Our self-life is the main enemy of the life of Christ. The Bible calls this 'the flesh'. The flesh tempts us to seek our own gain, our own honour, our own pleasure, our own way etc. If we are honest, we'll have to admit that many of our best actions are corrupted by evil motives that arise from our Self-life. Unless we hate this flesh, we will never be able to follow the Lord.

This is why Jesus spoke so much about hating (or losing) our life.

In fact, this phrase is repeated six times in the gospels (*Matthew 10:39*; *16:25*; *Mark 8:35*; *Luke 9:24*; *14:26*; *John 12:25*). This is the one saying of our Lord that is repeated most often in the gospels. Yet it is the least preached about and the least understood!

To hate your own life is to give up seeking your own rights and privileges, to stop seeking your own reputation, to give up your ambitions and interests, and to stop seeking your own way etc. You can be a disciple of Jesus, only if you are willing to go this way.

Giving Up All Our Possessions

The third condition of discipleship is that we must give up all our own possessions. Jesus said, “No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (*Luke 14:33*).

Our possessions are what we possess as our own. To give them all up means that we no longer consider anything as our own.

We see an illustration of this in the life of Abraham. Isaac was his own son – his possession. One day God asked him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. And Abraham laid Isaac on the altar and was ready to slay him. But God intervened and told him that the sacrifice was not necessary, because he had proved his willingness to obey (*Genesis 22*). After that, Abraham recognised that even though he had Isaac in his house, he no longer possessed him as his own. Isaac now belonged to God.

This is what it means to give up all our possessions. All that we have must be laid on the altar and given up to God.

God may allow us to use some of those things. But we can’t think of them as our own any more. Even if we are living in our own house, we must think of the house as God’s; and that He has allowed us to stay in it rent-free! This is true discipleship.

Have we done that with all our possessions? Our possessions include our bank-account, property, job, qualifications, gifts and talents, wife and children and everything else that we value on this earth. We have to lay them all on the altar if we want to be true disciples.

God wants us to love Him with all our heart. That’s the meaning of ‘the pure heart’ mentioned in *Matthew 5:8*. It’s not enough to have a clean conscience. A

clean conscience only means that we have given up sin. A pure heart is one that has given up everything!

And so we see that true discipleship involves a radical change of attitude towards:

1. our relatives and loved ones;
2. our self-life; and
3. our possessions.

Unless we face these issues squarely right at the beginning of our Christian life, it will be impossible to lay a good foundation.

Chapter Five

Baptism in Water

One of the last things Jesus commanded His disciples before ascending up to heaven was to:

1. Go and make disciples;
2. baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and
3. teach them to obey everything that He had commanded. The order is important here.

Only those who were willing to become disciples were to be baptized. No one else.

When babies were brought to Jesus, He laid His hands on their heads and blessed them (See *Mark 10:13–16*). However, when repentant adults came to Him, He baptized them through His disciples (See *John 4:1, 2*).

But today what do we see in many 'churches'? Quite the opposite. Babies are baptized; and hands are laid on the heads of the adults ('confirmation')! This is the exact opposite of what Jesus did.

On the day of Pentecost, when many were convicted of their sin, Peter told them to "repent and be baptized." The record goes on to say that "those who received his word were baptized" (*Acts 2:38, 41*).

It is clear that only those who were capable of intelligently receiving God's Word and of repentance were baptized. And that's how it was in every single instance recorded in the 'Acts of the Apostles'.

What Baptism Means

Romans 6:1–7 clearly explains the meaning of baptism. There we are told that our old man was crucified with Christ and that in baptism we are buried with Christ into death. The old man is the mind that we had in our unconverted days that wanted to sin. That has been crucified with Christ.

We don't have to understand this first, before we live in the reality of it. We can just believe what God says. If God's Word says that our old man was crucified with Christ, then we believe it, just as surely as we believe God's Word when it says that Christ Himself was crucified on Calvary's hill. Both these truths are accepted by faith.

The old man and the flesh are not the same. The flesh is the Self-life within us, that opposes the will of God. We all have to carry this with us until our dying day. We could compare the flesh to a gang of robbers seeking to enter our house. The old man is like an unfaithful servant inside our house who constantly opened the door for the robbers to enter. It is the unfaithful servant who has now been killed. The robbers however are hale and hearty! But now we have a new servant, the new man, who seeks to keep the door shut, against these robbers.

In baptism, we testify to the death and burial of the old man (the desire to sin), and to being raised up with Christ so that we might henceforth "walk in newness of life" (*Romans 6:4*).

The flood in Noah's day is a type of baptism too (*1 Peter 3:20, 21*). The whole world was destroyed by God through that flood. Noah went through it in the ark and came out of it into a brand new world. The old world and everything in it were all buried under the flood. This is what we testify to in baptism as well – that our old relationship with the world (and that includes worldly fashions and worldly friends etc.), has all now been cut off and that we are now coming out of the water into a brand new world.

The Mode of Baptism

We now come to the question: HOW should we be baptized?

The word ‘baptism’ is not an English word. The New Testament was originally written in Greek; and the word ‘baptism’ is derived from the Greek word ‘bapto’, which means ‘to cover wholly with a fluid’ or ‘to immerse’. And this is exactly what baptism meant to the early apostles – an immersion in water. Sprinkling water on someone’s head is certainly not baptism.

When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, it is written that “they both went down into the water and… came up out of the water” (*Acts 8:38, 39*).

At Jesus’ baptism too, we read similar words – that He came up out of the water, after being baptized (*Mark 1:10*).

In the New Testament, baptism was always done by immersion. Since baptism is a burial, it is obvious that only immersion can typify that accurately. For, after all, we don’t bury people by sprinkling sand on their heads, but by putting them under the ground completely!

This also makes it clear that only those in whom the old man is dead qualify for baptism – those who do not want to sin any more. For after all, only dead people can be buried! It’s a crime to bury a man who is not dead!

Baptism in the Three-fold Name

Jesus commanded us to baptize “in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit” (*Matthew 28:19*). The Name is singular because God is One. But Jesus revealed that although God is One, He exists in Three Persons, Who are distinct from each other.

It wasn’t the Father who died for our sins, nor was it the Holy Spirit. It was the Son. When Jesus ascended up to heaven, He sat on the right hand of the Father, not the right hand of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the One He sent to His disciples to be their Helper was the Holy Spirit, not the Father. All this may sound elementary. But it is essential that we don’t confuse the three Persons in the Godhead and their unique ministries in our redemption.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read again and again that the apostles baptized

people in the Name of Jesus Christ (*Acts 2:38* etc.). How does this fit in with Jesus' command in *Matthew 28:19*?

When two apparently contradictory statements are found in the Scriptures, we'll find on a closer study that both statements are true.

In order to make plain that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not a heathen trinity, the apostles identified the Son as Jesus Christ. So they baptized people in the name of "the Father, the Son the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit." This was called baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ.

The Obedience of Faith

Baptism should be the first step of obedience in the life of a disciple, leading on to a lifetime of obedience – and this obedience must be the obedience of faith and not the obedience of reason.

If Jesus had leaned upon His own reason, He would never have gone to John the Baptist for baptism. For His reason would have given Him many arguments against being baptized – especially since He had never sinned. John himself could not understand why Jesus needed to be baptized. But Jesus laid aside the arguments of reason and simply obeyed the voice of the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 3:15*).

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding," says the Word (*Proverbs 3:5*). Reason is the Number One enemy of faith – because human reason cannot grasp spiritual truths.

When we get baptized, the last part of our body to go under the water is the upper part of our head. That is symbolic! The authority of our reason is the part of us that is most difficult to put to death! The children of Adam live by what their reason tells them. In baptism, we testify that we have died to that way of life (of leaning on our own reason) and now live by faith in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (*Matthew 4:4*; *Romans 1:17*).

Baptism is slighted by some Christians as a trivial matter. Naaman initially despised Elisha's command to go and dip himself seven times in the River

Jordan to be healed of his leprosy. But it was when he obeyed that simple command that he was healed (*2 Kings 5:10–14*). It is in little things that God tests our obedience.

Obedience to God must never be delayed. If your old man has indeed died, then he must be buried straight-away. It's a crime not to bury a man who is dead!

"Why do you delay then? Arise and be baptized" (*Acts 22:16*).

Chapter Six

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

There are two needs that we all have. The first relates to the past – the forgiveness of our sins. The second relates to the future – enablement to live a life that pleases God. Our first need is taken care of by the death of Christ. To meet the second, God gives us the power of His Holy Spirit.

Power for Life and for Service

We could never have met that first need by ourselves. God had to meet it. It's likewise with the second. We cannot live a life that pleases God or that fulfils all His will, in our own strength. Some are wise enough to acknowledge this right at the beginning of their Christian life and so they seek for God's power straight-away. Others discover it the hard way – by trying and failing repeatedly for many years and then turning to God for His power.

Unfortunately there are still others who after falling and failing repeatedly, finally resign themselves to a life of defeat, believing that it is impossible to live victoriously in this life.

This also applies to our serving the Lord and being a witness for Him. Most believers realise, immediately after their conversion, that they should be witnesses for the Lord. But they often find themselves tongue-tied and powerless. Some accept this as an unfortunate trait of their personality, and give up all hope of ever becoming powerful witnesses for Christ.

Others realise that God has promised them the power of the Holy Spirit. And

so they seek God for this power and receive it. And they are filled with boldness and endued with supernatural gifts to be fiery, unashamed and effective witnesses for Christ.

It is one thing to be born of the Spirit. That's how we become children of God. But it's quite another thing to be baptized (immersed) in the Holy Spirit. That's how we become empowered to be what God wants us to be and to do what God wants us to do.

Our New-Covenant Birthright

Under the old covenant, the Holy Spirit came only upon certain people, to enable them to fulfil a specific task for God. Under the new covenant, however, the Holy Spirit can be received by all. He has come to show us the glory of Jesus and to transform us into His likeness.

John the Baptist pointed to two ministries that Jesus would fulfil – one was to take away sins and the other was to baptize people in the Holy Spirit (*John 1:29, 33*). We need to experience both of these.

The first promise in the New Testament is:

"*He will save His people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21).

The second promise in the New Testament is:

"*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 3:11).

It's significant that the New Testament opens with these two promises. This was the beginning of a new era in God's dealings with man – the new covenant. This is then our double birthright as children of God – to be saved from our sins and to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And God certainly wants to give us our full birthright – not just half of it.

The first five books of the New Testament each begin with the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 3:11*; *Mark 1:8*; *Luke 3:16*; *John 1:33*; *Acts*

1:5). Yet so many Christians have neglected to claim this for themselves.

Rivers of Living Water

The Holy Spirit is pictured in the New Testament as a river flowing from the throne of God and falling to earth (*Revelation 22:1*; *Acts 2:33*). To be baptised in the Holy Spirit is to be immersed under this waterfall. Jesus said that all those who thirsted could come to Him and receive the Holy Spirit so that rivers of living water could flow out from their innermost being (*John 7:37*).

The experience of the average believer, however, is more akin to the hand-pump – a life of struggling and pumping up a few drops of blessing from a dry heart. Yet it need not be like that. If our dryness would only drive us to the Lord, things could be different. To have rivers of blessing flowing out from us to all who come in touch with us is the will of God for our lives.

The first step towards this is to acknowledge our need. Many believers are caught up in foolish arguments about words. But it is power that we need, not correct terminology. What is the use having our terminology right, if we are as dry as a bone? It's far better to be honest and to come to God, confessing that rivers of blessing are not flowing out through us. Having taken that first step, we can then trust God to grant us what we ask for.

All we need in order to be baptized in the Holy Spirit are thirst (an intense desire, born out of a great longing to glorify God) and faith (the absolute confidence that God will give us what He has promised). Let us ask then, with thirst and with faith, for this power, and God will not deny us our request.

The Enduement of Power

The first apostles had forsaken everything to follow Jesus. But they still had to wait until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit before they could go out and fulfil their God-ordained ministry.

Jesus Himself needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit and power before He could begin His public ministry (*Acts 10:38*). If even He needed this anointing,

how much more we need it.

Jesus told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were ‘clothed with power’ (*Luke 24:49*). And just before He ascended up to heaven, He told them again that when the Holy Spirit came upon them they would ‘receive power’ (*Acts 1:8*). On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. And those cowardly men were immediately transformed into bold, fiery witnesses for the Lord (*Acts 2:1–4*). What they received was exactly what Jesus had told them that they would receive – power.

What we need in order to live the Christian life is not just a doctrine but the power of God in our life. The baptism in the Holy Spirit gives us power for godliness as well as power for service.

The Variety of the Spirit’s Working

The Holy Spirit is likened to the wind in the Scriptures; and the wind blows in different ways at different times. “So is everyone who is born of the Spirit”, Jesus said (*John 3:8*). Each believer’s experience will therefore be different in the external details of being baptised in the Holy Spirit. The inner enduement with power however, is what really matters.

God gives us ‘gifts of power’ through the Spirit so that we can serve Him effectively in building up the church as the body of Christ. He is the One however Who determines which gift each of us should have.

Prophecy (the ability to preach powerfully to challenge, encourage and comfort) is the most useful of these gifts (*1 Corinthians 14:1–5*). There are also gifts of serving, teaching, healing, exhorting, giving money, leadership, etc., (*Romans 12:6–8*; *1 Corinthians 12:8–10*). The ability to speak in unknown languages (‘the gift of tongues’) is another gift that God gives, to enable us to pray and praise Him, without the limitations of our mind and our mother-tongue.

If you have not been baptised in the Spirit, seek God and claim your birthright.

Ask Him also to give you an assurance of this. “If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him… You do not have because you do not ask” (*Luke 11:13*; *James 4:2*).

Let us then cry out to God with all our hearts, and say like Jacob said to God at Peniel, “I will not let You go until You bless Me” (*Genesis 32:26*).

There is no partiality with God. What He has done for others He will do for you. Even today, He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (*Hebrews 11:6*). He is more than eager to give the Holy Spirit in His fullness to all who desire to glorify Him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sanctification

The twofold message of the gospel is summed up in the words of Jesus to the woman caught in sin:

(i) I do not condemn you; and (ii) Do not sin any more. (*John 8:11*).

Justification is the starting line of the Christian race and sanctification is the track on which the race is run. The word 'sanctify' means to be set apart. And so sanctification is the process of being set apart increasingly from sin, the world and our own self-life.

The whole purpose of our coming to Christ is in order that we might be sanctified – just as the whole purpose of an athlete coming to the starting line of a race is to take part in the race. It's pointless an athlete joining others at the starting line if he doesn't intend taking part in the race itself!

God's Purpose for Us

Most of us came to Christ at first with some selfish motive – to get some benefit for ourselves – perhaps healing, or deliverance from hellfire. But God still received us, in spite of that selfish motive. The father of the prodigal son loved him so much, that he welcomed him back, even though the son had come home only to fill his stomach. That's how good God is!

But it would be really sad if we continued in the Christian life, only because we wanted to go to heaven. As we understand more of God's purpose for our

lives, we should long to fulfil that totally. Paul's prayer for the Christians at Ephesus was that they would have the eyes of their heart opened to see 'the hope of His calling' (*Ephesians 1:18*).

Romans 8:29, 30 tells us what the hope of His calling is.

> *"Whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

God's purpose is that we might be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. That is what sanctification is all about – to become like Jesus increasingly. This is the Christian race that we are exhorted to run, fixing our eyes on Jesus Who has run the same race ahead of us (*Hebrews 12:1, 2*).

Finishing with Sin

The first step in this race is to stop sinning consciously. Under the Law, there was no exhortation to stop sinning. But under the new covenant, all the apostles are agreed that the twofold message of the gospel is exactly as Jesus put it: freedom from condemnation and ceasing from sin.

> Paul says, "Stop sinning" (*1 Corinthians 15:34*). John says, "I am writing these things to you that you may not sin" (*1 John 2:1*). Peter also exhorts us to 'cease from sin' (*1 Peter 4:1*).

After explaining justification by faith in *Romans 5*, Paul asks this question, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase?" (*Romans 6:1*). And again (with greater force this time), "What then? Shall we sin even once?" (*Romans 6:15* - Literal). The answer in both cases is a resounding 'No'. We should seek not to sin even once, any more.

Does that sound like a heavy, burdensome message? It can be burdensome only to those who want to keep on sinning! But it's a joyful message of liberation to those who are sick and tired of sin's captivity. Any prisoner would be delighted if he heard a message that he could be free. That wouldn't sound

burdensome to him, would it?

Jesus was anointed to proclaim "release to the captives (of sin) and to set free those who are trodden down (by Satan)" (*Luke 4:18*).

The glorious new-covenant promise is:

> *"Sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law* (the old covenant), *but under grace* (the new covenant established by Jesus)*"* (Romans 6:14).

The first step to victory is to believe that such a life is possible for you.

Temptation and Sin

There is a difference between being tempted and sinning. The Bible says, "Each one is tempted when he is enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin" (*James 1:14, 15*). Sin is not born in our heart, until the desire of our flesh has been allowed to conceive. When Satan or the flesh flash a suggestion into our mind, we are tempted. If our mind agrees with that temptation, then a conception takes place and sin is born.

To be tempted doesn't make us evil. Even Jesus Himself was tempted. But He never sinned even once in any way, and so He was totally pure.

The Scripture says that Jesus was "made like His brethren in all things" and "tempted in ALL THINGS as we are" (*Hebrews 2:17*; *4:15*). He was tempted exactly like us, yet He never sinned.

That may not sound very wonderful to some of us, because we may feel that Jesus, being God, could naturally overcome sin easily. But remember, He had "emptied Himself" of the prerogatives of equality with God, when He came to earth (*Philippians 2:6, 7*). Although He was God, yet while He lived on earth as a man, He had access only to the same power of the Holy Spirit that He offers us today. That's why we are told to run the race, "fixing our eyes on Jesus." In our "striving against sin" today, we can look at His example and be encouraged (*Hebrews 12:2–4*). That's because He overcame each temptation that we face, as

a Man too. Thus He has become a Forerunner and an Example for us to follow (*Hebrews 6:20*).

This is "the secret of godliness… – Christ came in the flesh … and was declared righteous in the spirit" (*1 Timothy 3:16*). Although He had our flesh, He kept His spirit pure throughout His life.

This is what gives us hope that we too can overcome as He overcame. For He has "inaugurated a new and living way through the flesh" for us, in which we can follow Him (*Hebrews 10:20*). This is the way of sanctification.

The Old Man and the New Man

We have already seen how the old man was like an unfaithful servant who allowed the thieves to enter the home. That old man however has been crucified, put off and buried. There is a new man now within us, who says, "Behold I have come to do Thy will, O God" (*Hebrews 10:7*).

Yet we know that it's possible for a disciple of Jesus to sin. But there is a difference between a disciple sinning and an unbeliever sinning, just as there is a difference between a cat falling into dirty water and a pig choosing to jump into the dirty water! The cat hates the dirty water, but may fall into it accidentally. The pig, however, loves it. It's all a question of nature. The disciple of Jesus has a new nature that loves purity and hates sin.

The old man wants to sin. The new man never wants to sin. But if the new man is not strong enough, he may not be able to keep the door of his heart shut against the desires of the flesh. That's not because he wants those desires. No. But because he is not strong enough to resist them. This may be, because he has not fed himself sufficiently on the Word of God, or because he has not strengthened himself through prayer.

So, there's a difference between committing sin and falling into sin. It's important to know this difference; for we can then avoid a lot of unnecessary feelings of condemnation in our heart.

The Bible says that "the one who practises sin (that is, one who keeps on

committing sin deliberately) is of the devil" (*1 John 3:8*). On the other hand, he writes to believers saying, "If anyone sins (that is, if one falls into sin accidentally), we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins" (*1 John 2:1, 2*).

Conscious and Unconscious Sin

There is also a difference between falling into sin and having sin. To have sin is to have unconscious sin in our personality – sin that we ourselves are unaware of, even though others who are more mature than us may be able to notice it in us. But such unconscious sin need never make us feel guilty. For God's Word says, "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (*Romans 5:13*). (This also means that God does not impute sin to us when there is no awareness of sin in our conscious mind).

We shall have unconscious sin in us, until our dying day – to a lesser and lesser degree, however, if we walk in the light. The Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves," (*1 John 1:8*). One who says that he has no sin is actually claiming that he has already become perfect like Christ. But God's Word says that we shall "be like Him," only when He returns – not before that (*1 John 3:2*). Those who claim to be totally sanctified and perfect already are therefore only deceiving themselves.

Unconscious sin however needs to be cleansed; and "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all (unconscious) sin" too, as long as we walk in the light of God (*1 John 1:7*). So we can stand boldly now, in the presence of an infinitely Holy God, without any fear.

Such is the power of the blood of Christ to justify us. Hallelujah!

Mercy and Grace

We are told to come boldly "to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (*Hebrews 4:16*). Mercy and grace are not the same. Mercy refers to the forgiveness of our sins. That relates to our past.

But we also need grace – for our time of need, in the future.

Our time of need is when we are tempted, when we are about to fall – just like Peter, when he was about to sink in the sea of Galilee (*Matthew 14:30*). That's when we should cry out for grace; and just as Jesus stretched out His hand immediately to hold Peter, we'll find that we get grace too, so that we stand and don't fall.

There are wonderful promises in God's Word that assure us that God will keep us from falling. Just look at some of these:

First of all, God promises that He will never allow us to be tempted by any temptation that is too strong for us to overcome:

> *"God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it"* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God's Word also says:

> *"He is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless"* (*Jude 24*).

With these and many other wonderful promises given us in God's Word, there is no need for us to sin any more. Our life can henceforth be lived to do the will of God alone (as it says in *1 Peter 4:2*).

Progressive Sanctification

Jesus told His apostles to teach others to obey all that He had commanded (*Matthew 28:20*). One who loves the Lord will first of all seek with all his heart to find out what those commandments are; and then he will seek to obey them (*John 14:21*).

Under the Law, God gave man commandments, but not the power to obey them. Why then did God give the Law? Only in order that man might discover that he's unable to come up to God's standards, and thus see his need of a

Saviour and a Helper. “The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ” (*Galatians 3:24*).

But now God has made a new covenant with man. And He has given us, not only commandments, but also an Example in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus demonstrated by His earthly life that it is possible for us to obey all of God’s commandments.

God has also promised under the new covenant to put His Laws into our minds and to write them upon our hearts (*Hebrews 8:10*). He does this through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The Holy Spirit is our Helper Who not only shows us what the will of God is, but also gives us a desire to do that will and grace to obey all of it too.

God is the One Who is going to sanctify us entirely (*1 Thessalonians 5:23*). We can’t do it on our own. We have to depend on Him – for He is the One Who works in us giving us both the desire as well as the ability to do His will. But we have to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling” (*Philippians 2:12, 13*). We have to work out what God works in, for He hasn’t turned us into robots!

God cleanses us from the guilt of sin. But we are commanded to “cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (*2 Corinthians 7:1*). We have to do this, as and when we get light on any defilement within us.

It is thus, as we “by the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body” (*Romans 8:13*) that the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – will become more and more manifest in us. This is what it means to be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Thus our path will become one of increasing light (*Proverbs 4:18*). This is the glorious way of sanctification that God has made for us.

Chapter Eight

God's Word and Prayer

The two things that a new-born baby needs on birth, are food and air. It's exactly the same with those who experience a spiritual birth. The newborn child of God needs to eat and to breathe.

God's Word is to be his food, and prayer is to be his vital breath.

God's Word – Our Spiritual Food

A child needs milk to start with, but he needs solid food later on. The Bible contains both milk and solid food. The milk is called "the elementary teaching about the Christ" (*Hebrews 6:1*); and the solid food is called "the word of righteousness" (*Hebrews 5:13*).

How soon we move on to solid food, depends on how quickly we obey any light that God gives us.

Our spiritual growth is dependent on faith and obedience.

God has given us promises in His Word so that we can trust Him. He has also given us commands to obey. If we meditate on God's Word regularly and trust and obey Him we will find that we are deeply rooted in God, like an evergreen tree that never withers. God will then be able to bless us in such a way that we prosper in everything we do (*Psalm 1:2, 3*).

We can't understand God's Word by intellectual study alone. We need the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that spiritual truths were hidden from the clever and the intelligent and revealed to babes (*Matthew 11:25*).

What do babes have, that clever, intelligent people don't have?

A pure heart!

God looks at the heart and not at the head. He gives revelation to those who are humble and who tremble at His Word (*Isaiah 66:2*).

Jesus said that only those who were willing to do the will of God would understand God's Word (*John 7:17*).

God's Word – The Sword of the Spirit

God's Word is also the weapon that we use in our warfare against Satan.

It is called "the sword of the Spirit" in *Ephesians 6:17*.

Jesus Himself used this weapon with great effect, during the last three temptations in the wilderness. Each time, he countered Satan's temptations with "It is written…" (*Matthew 4:4, 7, 10*).

That's how He overcame; and that's how we can overcome too.

Satan is the Accuser. We must distinguish between his accusations and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Satan always seeks to harass us and make us feel condemned by his accusations. The Holy Spirit's conviction, on the other hand, is always gentle and full of hope.

We can overcome the Accuser only by "the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony" (*Revelation 12:11*). His accusations concerning our past sins can be overcome only as we give him our testimony that the blood of Christ has cleansed us and justified us thoroughly. We have to use the same weapon that Jesus used: "It is written…".

Confessing God's Word to Satan is the way to overcome not only Satan's accusations, but also discouragement and anxiety and a host of other temptations with which Satan assails our mind.

That's why it is important to know God's Word well, so that the Holy Spirit can bring to our mind the right Scripture at the time of our need.

It is good therefore to have a time every day when we meditate on God's Word

asking Him to speak to us. As we hide God's Word in our heart, it will keep us from sinning against Him (*Psalm 119:11*).

God's Plan for Our Lives

God has a perfect plan for our lives. And He wants to guide us into fulfilling it. The most blessed life that we can ever live on earth is one in which we fulfil that plan completely. In choosing a career or in marriage, how wonderful it is to know that God has already charted a course for us to take! If we choose His way, we can avoid the many pitfalls that Satan has lined up for us. It is through His Word primarily, that God guides us into that plan.

Finding the will of God is an exhaustive subject and has been covered more fully in my book entitled 'FINDING GOD'S WILL'.

Approaching marriage in a spiritual way has been covered in another book of mine entitled '*SEX, LOVE & MARRIAGE – The Christian Approach*'.

Prayer – Speaking to God

Communication with God is a two-way matter. We hear God speaking to us through His Word first. And then we speak to Him.

But prayer is not just making requests to God. A primary part of prayer should be having fellowship with God, like a bride with her bridegroom.

There are no rules on how a bride should speak to her bridegroom.

But as a discipline, it's good for our prayers to consist of:

1. praise to our Father for Who He is;
2. confession of sin and failure;
3. petitions concerning the kingdom of God;
4. petitions concerning our own needs;
5. intercession for the needs of others;
6. thanksgiving for what God has done; and
7. thanksgiving for what God will do.

Jesus told us to “pray at all times” (*Luke 18:1*).

A good habit to develop is to learn to speak to God about the little things of daily life – and thus to be in a spirit of prayer throughout the day. Thus, speaking to God will become a joy for us and not a ritual. We’ll also find that God speaks to us in our hearts in surprising ways.

But these are just the kindergarten-lessons in the school of prayer. We can progress further if we are faithful.

In any case, prayer should never be allowed to degenerate into a dry, empty ritual. Prayer is like breathing. When our breathing becomes difficult for us, then we know that something is wrong! Prayer was never meant by God to be dry or boring.

But as we progress, we will find that prayer becomes hard work. If we are faithful with the little burdens God lays on our heart to pray about, we’ll find that God gives us more and more of His burdens. Thus we can become co-workers with God, in His work of blessing others.

Jesus prayed ‘with loud crying and tears’ (*Hebrews 5:7*). Once when He prayed in Gethsemane, His sweat became like great drops of blood (*Luke 22:44*). His praying was so intense.

Once He spent a whole night in prayer (*Luke 6:12*). He had a habit of slipping off frequently into the wilderness to pray (*Luke 5:16*). As someone has said “Like tourists look for sights to see, whenever they come to a new place, Jesus always looked for a quiet place to pray wherever He went.”

Jesus’ example shows us how important prayer is. If He needed to pray so much, how much more you and I need to.

Fight the battle against laziness then, and determine to be a man/woman of prayer at any cost.

Chapter Nine

Fellowship and the Church

We have already seen that God wants to transform us into the likeness of Christ. But this transformation doesn't take place in us in isolation from other disciples of Jesus. It is only along with them that we are transformed.

God wants us to live, not only in dependence on Him, but in fellowship with one another as well. In Old Testament times, God worked through individuals – a Moses or an Elijah or a John the Baptist etc.

But under the new covenant what God wants is a Body of disciples who have become one under the headship of Christ. This is what 'the church' is – the Body of Christ (*Ephesians 1:22, 23*; *2:14–16*).

The Church – The Body of Christ

The church is not a building, nor is it a denomination. The English word 'church' in the New Testament is a translation of the Greek word 'ekklesia', which means an assembly of people who are called out – in this case, called out of the world to be God's own possession.

All over the world, those who have responded to God's call to be separated from sin and the world, form the church – the Body of Christ. In every locality, these members of Christ's Body should together become a local expression of that body.

The first body of Christ was the physical body in which Jesus came to earth. In that body God showed Himself to the world. Jesus yielded Himself so perfectly

to the Father, that at the end of His life He could say, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (*John 14:9*).

Now our calling is to represent Jesus together, to the world around us. No one can represent Jesus adequately, all by himself. We need one another. The best among us are still imbalanced. We have our strong points, but we have our weak points too. We may be able to reflect Christ well in one area, but very poorly in another area. But together, we will find that the strong points of one balance out the weak points of the other. And if we live in love and submission to one another, Christ can be reflected in His totality through us, to an unbelieving world. This is God’s purpose for the church.

Becoming Part of a Local Church

As soon as you're converted, you need to seek out and join a fellowship of disciples who are eager to obey God's Word and to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

This is where the new convert can be bewildered by the numerous groups and denominations that he sees in Christendom. From one end of the doctrinal spectrum to the other, there are unfortunately, many, many groups that lay claim to be the only true representatives of Christ on earth!!

Many of these groups would thump their Bibles and prove to you that you cannot be a part of the Body of Christ unless you join them!

It would be almost impossible to convince most of them that God has many children who are not in their 'group' and who don't hold exactly to their peculiar forms of doctrine! Such is the power of prejudice! You must be careful that you don't get entangled in this web of Pharisaism and cultism, that plagues much of Christendom today.

Keep your heart open to all who love the Lord and who seek to follow Him in sincerity. They may not dot their doctrinal 'i's or cross their doctrinal 't's in exactly the same way as you do. But that's not serious, if they're walking in the light that God has given them. We cannot demand that they should walk in the light that God has given us.

Receiving All of God's Children

We must have as many brothers and sisters as God has children.

We should wholeheartedly welcome and receive all whom God Himself has received (*Romans 14:1*; *15:7*). If Jesus is not ashamed to call someone His brother, we shouldn't be ashamed either (*Hebrews 2:11*).

There are two extremes to which believers can go, in this matter of fellowship. One is to compromise truth itself in order to maintain fellowship. The other is to demand uniformity in all matters before fellowship is offered. If you are wise, you'll steer clear of both these extremes.

It’s obvious that we can’t work together with those who are not agreed as to how God’s work is to be done. But we don’t have to demand that someone believes exactly as we do, down to the last little detail, before we have fellowship with him. There is a difference between working together with someone and having fellowship with him.

However, you must look for a church in your locality, that can be a spiritual home for you, and to which you can be committed.

The New Testament Church

In the midst of many ‘churches’ in your locality, you should look for one that conforms most closely to the New Testament, as you have understood it thus far. As time goes on, and you understand more of the New Testament, you may feel that you have to leave that ‘church’ and join another which is more in line with God’s Word.

That will only be natural for one who is growing spiritually and who is determined to press on to God’s highest and best for His life. Never settle for anything less than God’s best in every area – and then you won’t have any regrets in eternity.

A New Testament church will not have any denominational label. It is a fellowship of people who have been gathered by the Holy Spirit into the Name of Jesus Christ. The Lord has promised to be present only in the midst of such a gathering (*Matthew 18:20*).

The church that you become a part of, should be one that accepts the Bible as God’s Word and as the ONLY foundation for faith and life. Many cultistic groups, though claiming to accept the Bible alone as their authority, are often found quoting the writings of their leaders with equal authority. As you get close to them you’ll find that they are more bound to the teachings of their leaders than to God’s Word. There may be many good things in them. But if you join them, you will soon find that their cultistic attitudes enslave you.

In God's church, all believers are equally priests of God – for God has made us all priests (*1 Peter 2:9*). A 'church' that has a special class of priests or 'pastors', who alone are considered qualified to minister the Word, is contrary to the will of God.

God has ordained the leadership of the church to be in the hands of elders (always more than one). But these elders need not be 'full-time workers' (*Acts 14:23*; *Titus 1:5*).

In the meetings of a New Testament church, the main emphasis will be on preaching God's Word. All believers will have freedom in such a church to share God's Word according to their maturity and their spiritual gift.

If the Word spoken is truly inspired by the Holy Spirit, you'll find that it comforts and challenges and builds up and exposes 'the secrets of men's hearts' compelling those who hear to acknowledge that God is speaking (*1 Corinthians 14:3, 24–31*).

The main thrust of a truly New Testament church will be to make disciples and to teach them total obedience to Jesus' commandments (*Matthew 28:19, 20*). The distinguishing feature of such a church will be mutual love between its members – as Jesus stated in *John 13:35*, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Such a church where the Word is spoken powerfully, and where the love of God reigns and where the presence of the Lord can be sensed, is the church that you should be a part of, in your locality.

The Importance of Fellowship

It's when we try to live together in loving fellowship with others that we'll find how much we need to deny ourselves and take up the cross every day, if we want to maintain fellowship.

Satan is always busy driving wedges between God's children. If we are mature we'll always be alert to prevent those wedges from being driven in between us

and others. There is great loss when fellowship is broken in Christ's Body – both to God as well as to us.

There is tremendous power in unity in the church. Satan can be overcome only by a united church. Jesus said,

> *"If even two believers are totally one in their spirits, completely united, they can ask the Father for anything and their request will be granted – because I am present in power, wherever any two or three such united souls are gathered together by the Holy Spirit. And such a fellowship of believers can bind Satanic forces in the heavenlies and on earth and thus restrain Satan's power. They can also release people from Satan's bondage through their prayers"* (Matthew 18:18–20 - free paraphrase).

That's why Satan brings division between believers and that's why he forms cliques and groups in a church. He wants to preserve his own kingdom from being attacked by a united church. We must be alert to Satan's schemes and not be ignorant of them.

Just think what limitation there would have been in Christ's physical body if his limbs had been unable to work together. He would not then have been able to manifest the glory of God to this world as He did. This is the limitation that Christ faces today as Head of His spiritual Body, the church, when believers are divided.

We lose too. If you cut yourself off from even one of God's children, you deprive yourself of something of God's riches that could have come to you only through that other child of God. We can know the love of Christ only along "with all the saints" (*Ephesians 3:17–19*).

(For a further in-depth study of the importance of Christian fellowship, you could read my book entitled, *ONE BODY IN CHRIST*.)

Chapter Ten

The End of this Age

There was no clear understanding in Old Testament times about life after death and about God's plan for the future. But Jesus taught very clearly about both these matters. It's good for us to know about these matters too.

After Death What?

Death has no terror for a disciple of Christ, for Jesus has conquered death. Death is a defeated enemy. Jesus died and made Satan powerless thereby so that we need no longer have any fear of death (*Hebrews 2:14, 15*). The keys of death are now in the hand of Jesus (*Revelation 1:18*). Only He can open the door of death for any of His disciples now. Satan can't touch them.

What happens when a man dies? Jesus answered this question clearly when He spoke about the rich man and Lazarus. It would be good if you read *Luke 16:19–31* right now, before proceeding any further….

This is not a parable – for in no parable did Jesus ever use a man's name as he did here. Both the rich man and Lazarus were real people.

> Jesus made it clear here that there are only two places to which the dead go. One is Heaven (also called 'Abraham's bosom' or 'Paradise') – a place of comfort; and the other is Hell – a place of torture and suffering. As soon as a person dies, his soul goes immediately to one of these places, even before his body is buried on earth. And even though he doesn't have a body, yet he will be conscious of his surroundings and of comfort or pain.

Man is a threefold being, consisting of spirit, soul and body (*1 Thessalonians 5:23*). At death the soul and spirit are separated from the body, and go either to paradise or to hell.

While on the cross, Jesus told the repentant thief that he would be with Him in paradise that very day. Both Jesus and that thief went to paradise as soon as their souls left their bodies. Jesus had said that after His death, He would be in 'the heart of the earth' for 3 days and 3 nights (*Matthew 12:40*). From this we know that paradise, at that time, must have been in the heart of the earth. But when Christ was resurrected "from the lower parts of the earth… and ascended on high. He led captive a host of captives" (*Ephesians 4:8, 9*). He took paradise and all the souls in it up to the third heaven.

In *2 Corinthians 12*, when we compare *verses 2 & 4* together, we see that paradise is now located in the third heaven. This is where the disciple of Jesus goes as soon as he dies (*Philippians 1:23*).

The Signs of Christ's Coming

The Bible tells us of a number of events that would take place immediately before Christ's return to earth. Here are some of them:

1. Wars, famines and earthquakes (*Matthew 24:7*). These have been there on earth at all times. But there has been a great increase in their number since the Second World War (1939–1945).
2. A sudden spurt of knowledge and a vast increase in worldwide travel (*Daniel 12:4*). Both of these have also been seen in a far greater measure during the last fifty years than ever before.
3. Men will be lovers of pleasure (*2 Timothy 3:4*). Immorality is a specially evil characteristic of our times. Pornographic movies and video-tapes have all served Satan's purposes in promoting immorality.
4. Men will be arrogant, revilers and disobedient to parents (*2 Timothy 3:2–4*). Today we see the spirit of rebellion all around us – in homes, in schools, in

colleges and in factories.

5. Believers will fall away from the faith (*1 Timothy 4:1*). We see this too in our day, with the wide proliferation of many cults, to which many believers are falling a prey.
6. The rebirth of the nation of Israel (the fig tree – a symbol of Israel – putting forth its leaves – *Luke 21:29–32*). Ever since A.D.70, the Jews had been scattered around the world. This fig tree lay withered for nearly 19 centuries thereafter. But in May 1948, the nation of Israel was born once again. Jesus said that Jerusalem would be occupied by non-Jewish nations until the times of those nations are fulfilled (*Luke 21:24*). In June 1967, Israel occupied the city of Jerusalem, for the first time in 20 centuries.

It is exciting to see what is happening in the world today. The signs are all pointing to the coming of Christ very soon.

The First Resurrection and the Judgment Seat of Christ

When Christ comes, all who belong to Him will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. We will receive new bodies that can never age or die (*1 Corinthians 15:51–53*). Our new bodies will be just like the body that Jesus Himself had after His resurrection (*Philippians 3:20, 21*). Those who died in Christ will also arise from their graves in their new bodies and along with the living disciples of Jesus at that time, will rise into the air to meet the Lord (*1 Thessalonians 4:13–17*).

Then Christ will set up His judgment seat, at which we will be judged (assessed) and rewarded individually for our faithfulness in our earthly lives.

The Bible speaks of crowns being awarded in that day for those who have been faithful. You could read *2 Corinthians 5:10*; *1 Corinthians 3:11–15* & *4:5*; *2 Timothy 4:8* & *1 Peter 5:4* for more details of the rewards that will be given by the Lord to His disciples at that time.

In that day, we will see that “many who are first will be last and the last, first”

(*Matthew 19:30*). Many who appeared to us to be very spiritual on earth, will then be seen as not having been so faithful in God's eyes. Others whom we may not have thought too highly of, will then be seen as having been faithful in God's eyes. In that day, the unknown but faithful widow will take precedence over the world-famous but unfaithful preacher.

In that day, we will discover that many things such as money and fame, that men considered valuable on earth have no value before God; and that many virtues that men did not value, such as purity, humility, unselfishness, mercy and goodness are valued greatly by God.

Then will take place what the Bible calls 'the marriage of the Lamb of God' – the spiritual marriage of Jesus Christ with His Bride – the ones who were faithful in denying themselves and taking up the cross daily and following Him as His disciples on earth (*Revelation 19:8–10*). In that day we will see that it was worth it all to have suffered misunderstanding, shame, persecution and even death itself for the sake of our Lord and His gospel.

The Millennium

A reign of peace will then begin for 1000 years, when Garden of Eden conditions will prevail on the earth, with the lion lying down peacefully with the lamb and the child playing with the harmless cobra etc., (*Isaiah 11:6–9*).

Jesus will then reign from Jerusalem as King over the whole earth (*Zechariah 14:9–21*). Satan will be bound during those years so that he has no access to earth as he has now. At the end of those 1000 years, Satan will be released for a short period to test the unconverted inhabitants of earth once more. Again a great multitude will follow after Satan. This will be God's demonstration to angels and men that these people do not want Christ to reign over them, even after they have seen the 1000 years of peace. Such is man's blindness and stubbornness and wickedness. But God will come down in judgment on that rebellious multitude; and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (which is just a larger version of hell – *Revelation 20:7–10*).

The Second Resurrection and the Final Judgment

God will then set up His judgment seat to judge all unbelievers. This will be the second resurrection. The dead will be raised from their graves. The souls of all unbelievers will return from hell into their earthly bodies to stand before God to be judged. They will then be judged "from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds" (*Revelation 20:12*).

Memory is like a video-tape that faithfully records everything that we have thought, said and done and also our attitudes and motives throughout our earthly life. God will in that day play back this tape for the whole world to see the hidden lives of everyone. This will be God's way of showing that He is perfectly righteous in sending people into eternal judgment.

Those whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire to join Satan whom they served on earth (*Revelation 20:15*).

The End of Time

Then time will cease and eternity will begin. Redeemed men and women will enter into the new heaven and the new earth and the bride of Christ will then shine forth in all her glory (as described in *Revelation 21*).

Satan and all unbelievers will have been removed from that perfect heaven and earth. In that glorious new universe, sin will never raise its ugly head any more and there won't be any lusts in our flesh. Heaven will be filled with people who have joyfully chosen the will of God for all eternity.

The Call to Overcome

Peter says, "Since all these things (the existing heavens and earth) are to be destroyed, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness" (*2 Peter 3:11, 12*).

The message of the Spirit in these last days, can be summed up in one word: "OVERCOME" (See *Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26*; *3:5, 12, 21*; *21:7*).

We began this book by emphasising the missing element in much of today's

preaching to unbelievers – REPENT.

We conclude this book by emphasising the missing element in much of today's preaching to believers – OVERCOME.

The call of God to man, ever since he fell into sin has been to be an overcomer. God told Cain,

> *"Sin is crouching at your (heart's) door…but you must master it"* (Genesis 4:7).

In the last book of the Bible that call is repeated,

> *"He who overcomes shall inherit these things and I will be his God and he will be My son"* (Revelation 21:7).

Nothing on earth can be compared with the glory of a life lived in fellowship with God and in the fulfilment of His purposes. The life that Jesus lived on earth was the most wonderful, the most glorious and the happiest life that any man ever lived. He wasn't world-famous or rich. But He radiated the glory of God through His life.

The good news of the gospel is that you can radiate that glory too. You can be an overcomer all the days of your earthly life. May you be faithful then and live with eternity's values in view at all times. Amen.

Bible References

Bible references are from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) translation unless or otherwise specified.

This Book and You!

Philippians 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Chapter One

John 10:1 - “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

Mark 1:15 - and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Luke 24:47 - and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Acts 20:21 - solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:1 - Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Proverbs 9:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 3:7 - Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

1 Samuel 15:24–30 - 24. Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. 25. Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.” 26. But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” 27. As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28. So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your

neighbor, who is better than you. 29. Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." 30. Then he said, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God."

Psalm 51 - 1. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 3. For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4. Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. 5. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6. Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. 7. Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. 9. Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11. Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit. 13. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. 14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. 15. O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. 16. For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. 18. By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19. Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

1 Kings 21:27–29 - 27. It came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently. 28. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29. “Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son’s days.”

Matthew 27:3–5 - 3. Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4. saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to that yourself!” 5. And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

2 Corinthians 7:10 - For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Ezekiel 36:31 - Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.

Job 42:6 - Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.

Matthew 26:75 - And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Matthew 5:4 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

James 4:9 - Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

Luke 15:11–24 - 11. And He said, “A man had two sons. 12. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth between them. 13. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14. Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16. And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. 17. But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18. I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”’ 20. So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22. But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23. and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24. for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.

Matthew 3:8 - Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

Luke 19:1–10 - 1. He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2. And there was

a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. 3. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. 4. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. 5. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” 6. And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. 7. When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” 8. Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” 9. And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. 10. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Luke 6:48 - he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

Number 5:6–8 - 6. “Speak to the sons of Israel, ‘When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 7. then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged. 8. But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to the Lord for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him.

2 Corinthians 8:12 - For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

1 Samuel 2:20 - Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, “May the

Lord give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the Lord.” And they went to their own home.

Matthew 6:15 - But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Matthew 18:35 - My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 - 10. But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11. so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Acts 19:19 - And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Chapter Two

Ephesians 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Genesis 15:6 - Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 17:5 - No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

Revelation 12:11 - And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Matthew 4:1-11 - 1. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3. And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” 4. But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” 5. Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6. and *said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’” 7. Jesus said to him,

“On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8. Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9. and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” 10. Then Jesus *said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” 11. Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Chapter Three

1 Peter 1:1,2 - 1. To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2. according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Ephesians 1:4 - just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

Revelation 13:8 - All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Isaiah 64:6 - For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Genesis 3:7,21 - Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 21. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

Romans 4:5 - But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,
James 2:24 - You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Chapter Four

Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Luke 14:25-35 - 25. Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26. “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29. Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30. saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31. Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32. Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. 34. “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 35. It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Luke 14:28-30 - 28. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29. Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30. saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

Luke 14:35 - It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown

out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

1 John 3:15 - Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

John 2:4 - And Jesus *said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."

John 21:15-17 - 15. So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16. He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17. He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep.

Revelation 2:1-5 - 2. "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2. 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3. and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

John 14:21 - He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him

and will disclose Myself to him."

Luke 9:23 - And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Matthew 10:39 - He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 16:25 - For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Mark 8:35 - For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Luke 9:24 - For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

Luke 14:26 - "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

John 12:25 - He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

Genesis 22:1-19 - 1. Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2. He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." 3. So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. 5.

Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.” 6. Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 7. Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” 8. Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. 9. Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 12. He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” 13. Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. 14. Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the Lord it will be provided.” 15. Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16. and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17. indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” 19. So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.

Matthew 5:8 - “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Chapter Five

Mark 10:13-16 - 13. And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. 14. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.” 16. And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

John 4:1-2 - 1. Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2. (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),

Acts 2:38,41 - 38. Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 41. So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Romans 6:1-7 - 1. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2. May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3. Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4. Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6. knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7. for he who has died is freed from sin.

Romans 6:4 - Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

1 Peter 3:20-21 - 20. who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. 21. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Acts 8:38-39 - 38. And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

Mark 1:10 - Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;

Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Acts 2:38 - Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:15 - But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he *permitted Him.

Matthew 4:4 - But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

Romans 1:17 - For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;

as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

2 Kings 5:10-14 - 10. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean.” 11. But Naaman was furious and went away and said, “Behold, I thought, ‘He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.’ 12. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. 13. Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” 14. So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

Acts 22:16 - Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

Chapter Six

John 1:29,33 - 29. The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 33. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’

Matthew 3:11 - “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Mark 1:8 - I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 3:16 - John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John 1:33 - I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’

Acts 1:5 - for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Revelation 22:1 - Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

Acts 2:33 - Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

John 7:37 - Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

Acts 10:38 - You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Luke 24:49 - And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8 - but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Acts 2:1-4 - 1. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

John 3:8 - The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 - 1. Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. 3. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but

one who prophesies edifies the church. 5. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

Romans 12:6-8 - 6. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7. if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8. or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 - 8. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9. to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10. and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Chapter Seven

John 8:11 - She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”

Ephesians 1:18 - I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Romans 8:29-30 - 29. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30. and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - 1. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2. fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1 Corinthians 15:34 - Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

1 John 2:1 - My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

1 Peter 4:1 - Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased

from sin,

Romans 5 - 1. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2. through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4. and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5. and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. 12. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13. for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. 16. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. 17. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the

one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. 20. The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21. so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:1 - What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

Romans 6:15 (YLT) - What then? shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? let it not be!

Luke 4:18 - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed,

Hebrews 2:17 - Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Philippians 2:6-7 - 6. who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7. but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Hebrews 12:2-4 - 2. fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

Hebrews 6:20 - where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

1 Timothy 3:16 - By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Hebrews 10:20 - by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

Hebrews 10:7 - “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.’”

1 John 3:8 - the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 2:1-2 - 1. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2. and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Romans 5:13 - for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

1 John 1:8 - If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 3:2 - Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

1 John 1:7 - but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Hebrews 4:16 - Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Matthew 14:30 - But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”

1 Peter 4:2 - so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Matthew 28:20 - teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

John 14:21 - He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

Galatians 3:24 - Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

Hebrews 8:10 - “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12. So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13. for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Romans 8:13 - for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Proverbs 4:18 - But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

Chapter Eight

Hebrews 6:1 - Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Hebrews 5:13 - For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

Psalm 1:2-3 - 2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Matthew 11:25 - At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

Isaiah 66:2 - “For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being,” declares the Lord. “But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

John 7:17 - If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

Ephesians 6:17 - And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Matthew 4:4,7,10 - 4. But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” 7. Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 10. Then Jesus *said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written,

‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

Revelation 12:11 - And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Psalm 119:11 - Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

Luke 18:1 - Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

Hebrews 5:7 - In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

Luke 22:44 - And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

Luke 6:12 - It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Luke 5:16 - But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Chapter Nine

Ephesians 1:22,23 - 22. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23. which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 2:14-16 -14. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15. by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16. and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

John 14:9 - Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

Romans 14:1 - Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

Romans 15:7 - Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

Hebrews 2:11 - For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Acts 14:23 - When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Titus 1:5 - For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

1 Corinthians 14:3,24-31 - 3. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 24. But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25. the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. 26. What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. 27. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; 28. but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. 29. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. 30. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. 31. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

Matthew 28:19-20 - 19. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20. teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Ephesians 3:17-19 - 17. so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18. may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19. and to

know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Chapter Ten

Hebrews 2:14-15 - 14. Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15. and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Revelation 1:18 - and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Luke 16:19-31 - 19. “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21. and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ 25. But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’ 27. And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house— 28. for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ 29. But Abraham *said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30. But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ 31. But he said to him,

‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 12:40 - for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Ephesians 4:8-9 - 8. Therefore it says, “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.” 9. (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

2 Corinthians 12 - 1. Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3. And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— 4. was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. 5. On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses. 6. For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me. 7. Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8. Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in

weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. 11. I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. 12. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. 13. For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong! 14. Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15. I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16. But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. 17. Certainly I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? 18. I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps? 19. All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. 20. For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; 21. I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

2 Corinthians 12:2,4 - 2. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—

whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows —such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 4. was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

Philippians 1:23 - But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

Matthew 24:7 - For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

Daniel 12:4 - But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

2 Timothy 3:4 - treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2 Timothy 3:2-4 - 2. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3. unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4. treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

1 Timothy 4:1 - But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

Luke 21:29-32 - 29. Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; 30. as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31. So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. 32. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

Luke 21:24 - and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 - 51. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52. in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Philippians 3:20-21 - 20. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21. who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 - 13. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 - 11. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one

which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13. each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 4:5 - Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

2 Timothy 4:8 - in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

1 Peter 5:4 - And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Matthew 19:30 - But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.

Revelation 19:8-10 - 8. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9. Then he *said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *said to me, "These are true words of God." 10. Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he *said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Isaiah 11:6-9 - 6. And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling

together; And a little boy will lead them. 7. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

Zechariah 14:9-21 - 9. And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. 10. All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. 11. People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. 12. Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. 13. It will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. 14. Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. 15. So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps. 16. Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them. 18. If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the Lord smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19. This will be the punishment of Egypt,

and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 20. In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “HOLY TO THE LORD.” And the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the bowls before the altar. 21. Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.

Revelation 20:7-10 - 7. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8. and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:12 - And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

Revelation 20:15 - And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21 - 1. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among

them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4. and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” 5. And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He *said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” 6. Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” 9. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11. having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. 12. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15. The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. 18. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first

foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20. the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 22. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 26. and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27. and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

2 Peter 3:11-12 - 11. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12. looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Revelation 2:7,11,17,26 - 7. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.' 11. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.' 17. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.' 26. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;

Revelation 3:5,12,21 - 5. He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white

garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 12. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. 21. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 21:7 - He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

About the Book

The gospel is the good news that man can now live as God originally intended him to. The one who surrenders totally to the claims of Christ can live of constant triumph. Yet many who have accepted Christ as their Saviour do not enter into this glorious life that the gospel offers. Why not?

The reason often is that a good foundation was not laid at the beginning. Our life after we are born again is like a house being built. The most important part of a house is its foundation. If there is a crack on the third floor, the cause can usually be traced to a faulty foundation. It is the same with our lives. Years after we have trusted in Christ, we can suffer the consequences of a faulty foundation laid at the beginning.

The purpose of this book is to enable you to lay a good foundation in your life, so that God's full purpose for your life can be accomplished. Read on then and let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.

This could be the beginning of a new chapter in your life…