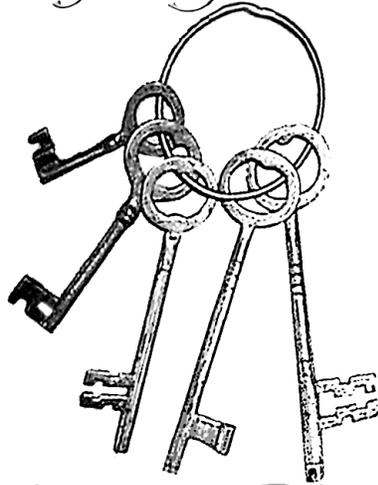


The Keys of the Kingdom



School of The Wordz
with Alan Vincent



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JESUS INTRODUCES THE KEYS - MATTHEW 16: 13-28**THE NECESSARY PREPARATION TO RECEIVE THE KEYS**

See who Jesus is by Heavenly Divine revelation from the Father (verses 13-17),

Then receive and understand what Jesus *also* says (verses 18-20).

Verse 18 - Transition from a Simon to a Peter

"You are Peter (Petros) and on this Rock (Petra) I (of myself) will build my Church and the Gates of Hades (Hell) will not prevail against it".

WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO SIMON'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS (JOHN 1: 40-42)

- You are Simon - A Reed of long grass
Harken (listen with intention of obeying)
- You will be called Peter (Petros) - a boulder or stone suitable for use in building. Jesus prophesies this in His first encounter with Simon-Peter. Now after many steps it's being fulfilled in Matthew 16:18. This is the first time Jesus calls him Peter.
- Upon this Rock (Petra) A massive immovable foundation, I (myself of Me) will build my Church and the Gates of Hades will not prevail against it.
- **And (in addition) I will give to You the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven**

Now you have to learn what they are and how to use them. Only then do the next verses work for you:

Verse 19:-When you understand the Keys and how to use them-Then and only then "Whatever you bind on Earth will be, because it has been (already) bound in Heaven. Whatever you loose on Earth will be because it has been (already) loosed in Heaven.

Verse 20:-He commanded His disciples to tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. Nor does He permit them to tell about the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 9). It was not yet the Time. They had to wait until He was risen from the Dead

Verse 21: -From that time Jesus began to show His disciples ***that He must be killed and on the Third Day be raised from the dead.***

Verses 22-23: -Peter was offended. "This shall not happen to you". Peter didn't understand that Jesus was showing him the first and most powerful Key of the Kingdom and he couldn't see it. Jesus reacted very strongly to this way of thinking. He called it a stumbling block and commanded Satan to leave.

Verses 24-28: -Jesus had a totally different perspective to Peter. He couldn't wait to get to the Cross. Later He explains that by participating in His death we shall see and participate in the coming glory and power of His Kingdom.

Several times in the following chapters of Matthew, Jesus returns to this subject of being killed and the third day rising from the Dead.

He's trying to get his disciples to see His perspective and the joyful purpose in His death and resurrection and it's unique power to forcefully advance the Kingdom.

THE FIRST KEY OF THE KINGDOM (*THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION*).

It has Two Dimensions - His Death and His Resurrection

THE POWER LET LOOSE BY HIS DEATH

As soon as Peter had supernatural revelation from God that showed him who Jesus really was, Jesus spoke these dramatic words to him.

“You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be (because it has been) bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be (because it has been) loosed in heaven”.

From that time on Jesus began to show to his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the Elders and the Chief Priests and scribes and be killed and raised the third day.”

Jesus was really saying the same thing in Luke 12:49-52. He couldn't wait to get to the Cross and so obtain the Power of the Resurrection so at last He could be His fulness in the Church and through the Church (Eph.1:22,23).

Peter couldn't see the Cross as anything but a tragedy and tried to persuade Jesus to go some other route to enter His Kingdom. Jesus saw this as directly from Satan.

This temptation was no different the one where Satan had offered Him all the Kingdoms of this world if only He would bow down and worship him. His response was the same in each case. “Get behind Me Satan!” (Luke 4: 6-8; Matt.16: 21-23).

The first great Key of the Kingdom was in fact The Cross and The Resurrection. But this Key is more like a whole bunch of Keys included in the One Key.

We need to see all of these powerful Keys. They are like the Master Keys of the Kingdom which have to be used first to make the other Keys of the Kingdom much more effective.

These are:-

The Power of the Cross to Redeem and release the Slave of Sin.

Jesus by total identification through baptism fully became the Last Adam and on the Cross became the receptacle and sin bearer of all the sins of Adam's race from the first to the last member, from the first to the last moment and from the first to the last action of each of our lives.

God the Father then fully punished Him and fully satisfied His wrath against Sin so there is literally nothing to pay (1 Pet.2:24; Isa. 53:4-11; John 19:30).

He also eternally put to death the Adamic nature which produced the rebellion, disobedience and sinful acts (2 Cor.5:21)

The Cross pays the full redemption price of Sin through the death that Jesus died. It takes all Sin right out of the way (Lev.25:39-55; Col. 2:13,14). Through the Cross, Sin no longer has any power or part in our Resurrection lives.

Rom 6:5 literally says "If we have been united with Him in a death like His, certainly also we are His resurrection".

The Power of the Cross to Redeem all of Creation from the Authority of Satan.

As God the Creator He made and owns all things. He then gave the Earth to Man to rule over under His Government (Gen. 1:26-28; Psa. 115:16).

He did not give to man any power of Heavenly rule at this stage. This was to wait until he had proved his obedience.

Satan then became the Prince of this World through man's disobedience.

But Jesus, at the Cross, fulfilled all the righteous requirements to redeem it and now has a double right of ownership.

As Man, He became the perfect Kinsman-Redeemer. He has purchased it all back through the Cross. (Lev. 25: 22-28; Ruth 4:1-13, 22; Jeremiah 32:1-44; Rev.5: 1-14).

Since the Cross, this World no longer belongs to Satan and he is no longer The Prince of this World.

The Power of the Cross to legally render powerless and cast down all the wicked principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

The Cross has the power in both senses (Exousia and Dunamis) to remove their ruling authority and influence upon the Earth (John 12:20-37; Col.2:14, 15).

WHY THEN IS IT STILL SUCH A FIGHT?

We need therefore ask the following question and answer it. If this Victory is already accomplished what is the wrestling described in Eph.6:12-16 all about? Why are we still having to wrestle against wicked principalities and powers and how do we do it effectively?

Because the battle is spiritual and not fleshy, we can only fight it spiritually. We have to learn how to be men and women who by our spirit man can actually enter the Spirit Realm of the heavenlies and enforce the judgments already written. Paul taught this in the Ephesian letter and in the Colossian letter particularly. Notice the tenses of the verbs particularly. They are usually past perfect tense, or "realized present". They are never future tense.

THE KEY WHICH WINS THE LEGAL BATTLE LUKE 18:1-8 -

2 COR 10:4-6: The Weapons of Our Warfare are Mighty through God to the Pulling down of Strongholds.

They are Powerful Weapons They are Mighty Weapons

They are capable of pulling down everything that has ever been erected against a Knowledge of God.

THE MOTIVATION TO PRAY

God Needs a Man. Ezek. 22:30,31. Is. 59:16.

The Rule was given to Man. Gen. 1:26; Ps. 115:16; Ps 8:4-6; Heb. 2:5-9. But Man lost it to Satan when he sinned and stepped into independence and came out from under the rule or government of God.

Through Man, Satan has usurped God's place. So why does God allow it to continue? Why doesn't He just judge Satan and remove him?

If God were to judge Satan directly for usurping His authority over this World, He would at the same time have to bring man to judgment as an accessory.

God is not willing for Man to perish (2 Pet.3:9) and is not yet ready to bring him to final judgment. So He has left him still in place as His delegated authority.

Because this is still the dispensation of Man. God's righteousness requires Him to work through Man.

Satan must do the same. He only has a kingdom because certain men serve him. Most people serve him unconsciously, a few know what they are doing. Eph.2:1-3.

God hates evil and all forms of darkness. He longs to move powerfully against it. Ezek. 22:17-29; Isa. 59:15. He just has to wait for a man in order to act on Earth.

In the Old Testament, when God had a man, He rolled back the darkness and righteousness reigned - until the man died.

Daniel, an Example of a Man of Prayer Shaping History.

Causing the Word of God to be fulfilled on the Earth.

Daniel knew the Prophecies of Jeremiah and presumably Isaiah. Is. 44:28 -Is.45:7; Jer. 25:11,12.

His Prayer released the Word to be fulfilled on the Earth. Dan. 9:17-23; Dan. 10:2,3,12,13.

After Four Years the building stopped - Why? God lost His Man.

14 Years went by before another man came and the Work continued.

In Jesus, God Finally Got His Man Permanently. Is.59:16-21.

He lives by the Power of an Endless Life Heb.7:16

He ever lives to Make Intercession Heb.7:25.

His Kingdom and Government Go on Increasing Is.9:7

This Man will finish the Job Heb.1:13; Heb.10:13.

He now has an undying ever expanding Body, the Church to work through.

Therefore present your Body. The Holy Spirit needs our Humanity.

SOME OF THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE**a) A SPIRIT FILLED ARMY WHO PROPHECY (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21).**

This Army will recover all the Years that the Locusts have eaten

The land has been stripped by the four devouring locusts:

a) A SIMPLE WAY OF THINKING. There has been an attack upon the way we think, leading to Synthetic Thinking and the development of Rational Thinking and Humanism.

b) A SIMPLE BELIEF IN THE LORD AND THE BIBLE.

There has been an invasion of sects and cults, spiritism witchcraft, the religions of the world, open worship of Satan, many forms of occult practises etc.

c) THE SIMPLE PURITY OF FAITHFUL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS.

There has been an attack on sexual relationships as defined by the Word of God. The family has been undermined and attacked. Biblical Fatherhood has almost been destroyed. Every form of wicked perversion is now openly promoted.

d) A SIMPLE LIFE STYLE. there has been an active promotion of greed, a desire for things, material success. The false idea that a greater standard of living is the way to happiness and the purpose of life.

The Chaldean army was God's judgment upon His people for their persistent Sin.

The purpose was to bring repentance so that He may send the army of the Spirit so that there many be a recovery of all that the locusts had eaten.

This had it's first fulfillment at Pentecost and is now being fulfilled in a greater measure on a world scale.

The spirit filled army has to be a prophetic people.

What is a Prophetic People? A People who can See!

A Prophet is someone who Sees something and then Bubbles Forth what he Sees.

The Ability to Wage War all depends on what you can See.

The Spies - Num.13:27-33; Num.14:8,9.

Elisha - 2Kings 2:9,10. 2Kings 6:13-16.

b) A COVENANT COMMUNITY ARMED FOR WAR. GEN.14:14-19.

Abram as the Father of his household trained them, armed them, then led them out to fight the four kings. These four kings represent the rulers of the demonic forces that are stripping the nation.

His nephew Lot was held captive by them. Many of us have relatives that have been taken captive by one of the rulers of this present darkness. A Covenant Community of believers trained and armed moving under it's Father head has great power with God and over the powers of the enemy.

c) CRAFTSMEN WHO CAN BUILD THE CITY. ZECH.1:18 - ZECH. 2:4.

The four Strong Horns again represent the demonic powers that have scattered the people of God so that no one is able to lift up their head. The four Craftsmen have come to terrify them and to cast them out. We had better know what these are if they have such power to overthrow the demonic.

The Pattern of Prayer - 5 Levels of Prayer in Luke's Gospel

I. Luke 11:1-4 Jesus the Pattern.

An effective personal prayer life. Your own Secret Place (Matt. 6:6).

II. Luke 11:5-8 Obtaining for a Friend.

Learning to obtain specific answers to prayers so as to meet the needs of those we know.

God is portrayed as Uncaring and Indifferent. It seems so at times, but it is not really the case. He is really training us in Importunity.

The delay has several effects with those who persevere

- a) It purifies our motives.
- b) It clarifies our asking.
- c) It develops our faith.

The Three Loaves symbolize all the Fullness of the Triune God.

V7:- People say it's too Late now - My Children, My Marriage, The Church, Society, The Nation etc. It's never too Late - Persist!

Luke 11:9-10 the Sixfold Guarantee of Success.

Luke 11:11,12. Once we begin to try to meet people's needs we soon discover that many of their problems are demons which have to be cast out.

God will give us a good answer if we ask Him - the Holy Spirit. Verse 13.

III. LUKE 11:14-20. Casting out Demons.

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit coming is to cast out demons, and to Destroy Satan's Works. (1John 3:8).

Jesus cast out devils by the Spirit of God - Matt.12:28. This was the Finger of God. (Luke 11:20).

When the Spirit has come to Us, He will convince the World that the Ruler of this World has already been Judged - (John 16:7, 8, 11).

IV. & V. Luke 11:21-23 Attacking the Strong Man.

The Strong Man - a Ruling Prince Demon - could be Satan Himself

The Stronger Man - This was Jesus in the Days of His Flesh. But now it's His Body, the Spirit-filled Believing Church.

We can fight alone but it's easier together. One shall chase a Thousand, Two Ten Thousand. Josh.23:10.

Zech.12:8 the Weakest will be like David. United we will be like God!

Matt.11:11 The least in the Kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

Someone Stronger must:-

Attack Him

Overpower Him

Take away his Armor on which he has relied

Rob him of all his Possessions.

TWO DISTINCT BATTLES TO BE WON.

- The Legal Battle
- The "Military" Battle.

Jesus only mentions the Church twice by Name

Matt.16:19 - The Individual who makes this Confession has the Power to Bind and Loose. Will Be/has Been Bound in Heaven.

Matt.18:18 - the Local Church Also Has this Power. Where There Is Agreement and they are Gathered into His Name. Whatever they bind will be/has been bound in Heaven.

d) THE LEGAL BATTLE - THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW - LUKE 18:1-8 .

God portrayed as a heartless Judge - not His real character but it seems like it. God is righteous even to the devil.

God the Judge. There must be a Man to prosecute the devil. Even a weak widow woman is enough. Satan or one his princes is the defendant

Satan is given the right to defend himself against a prosecuting church. His defense is to accuse the brethren. Is there sin? Is there faith? Is there perseverance?

If we are righteous and persevere we will win the case.

If we quit before the verdict is given, Satan wins even though we have a cast iron case and God wants to give us the Judgment.

Once the Judgment has been obtained by Man, God can legally release Angelic Hosts to enforce the Heavenly Court Order.

Whatever You bind on Earth, will be (because it already has been) bound in Heaven.

e) THE KEY WHICH WINS THE MILITARY BATTLE

The Legal Battles can be won by an Individual or just Two or Three.

In the Military Battle there is great strength in Numbers. The best format for this is "one accord" corporate Praying accompanied by any appropriate prophetic actions as the Lord may lead.

Prayer Generals are needed to lead this kind of Praying.

Warring Praise and the Scriptures are Mighty Weapons as are Prophetic Visions and revelations.

e.g. 2Chron.20:20 Jehoshaphat.

Ps.149:1-9. Execute the Judgments written.

Isaiah 30:29-32.NIV

And you will sing as on the night you celebrate a holy festival; your hearts will rejoice as when people go up with flutes to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. {30} The LORD will cause men to hear his majestic voice and will make them see his arm coming down with raging anger and consuming fire, with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail. {31} The voice of the LORD will shatter Assyria; with his scepter he will strike them

down. {32} Every stroke the LORD lays on them with his punishing rod will be to the music of tambourines and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm.

These military companies are typed in :-

- a) The Covenant Community Abraham's 318 "born in his House" (Gen 14:9-17);
- b) The Joshua Company (Joshua 6:2-16).
- c) The Gideon Band of Three Hundred (Judges 7:15-22).
- d) David's mighty men and their troops 1 Chron 12:1-40

and Illustrated by :-

The Upper Room Community of "Of One Accord" Prayers. (Acts 1:24; Acts 2:1, 42; Acts 4:24; Acts 5:12; Acts 12: 8 etc.).

f) THE POWER OF JESUS' BLOOD SHED AT CALVARY TO REMOVE THE CURSE UPON THE LAND.

Much land on Earth is now under a curse. It has become caused through violence and murder resulting in the illegal spilling blood. Those offended have often retaliated by speaking curses at the time, calling for revenge and putting a curse of poverty, bareness and sickness upon the inhabitants and unfruitfulness upon the land. These curses were often reinforced by further acts of violent and revenge resulting in further bloodshed. Only the spilt blood of Jesus can deal with this curse. His blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel. It cries mercy and releases from the curse of revenge (Gen. 4: 9-15, 23,24; Heb.12:24).

To be effective, this release often has to be implemented by specific action and also by vocalized forgiveness on the part of those offended. There has to be a decision by the offended ones to remit the sins (through forgiveness) of those who have offended and sinned against them. (John 20:21,22; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; Acts 9:4-6, 20, 31)

America and Europe are full of such curses. In fact most nations on the face of the whole Earth are full of such curses because of their brutal bloody history. When dealt with properly a great release comes.

Without forgiveness, the full legal price has to be extracted. A horrifying example of this was David and the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21: 1-9). If we are the offended ones a full forgiveness on our part is very important for the release of those who have wronged us.

Even more terrifying is the fact, that if we will not forgive, God will not forgive us and we

will be forever tormented until we do. We will not get out of the prison of our own unforgiveness until we have paid to the last cent. Seeing answers to prayer is closely connected in Scripture with our willingness to forgive (Matt.6:12; Matt.18:22-end).

g) THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION TO BRING FORTH THE NEW MAN AS RULER OVER THE WHOLE EARTH.

After Jesus had proved His obedience on Earth, even to death upon a Cross, then the Father was able to exalt Him far above all and give Him a Name which is above every Name. This Man is now Lord and Ruler of all things on Earth, in Heaven and concerning all things under the Earth. Not only in this age but also in the one that is to come. (Phil.2: 5-11).

We already see Jesus as the first fruits. His throne is already established. As the New Man, the Lord from Heaven, all Power and all Authority has already been given to Him in Heaven and on Earth (Psa. 8: 4-9; Heb.2: 5-10; Eph.1:18-23).

He is the First Begotten from the Dead (Col.1:15,18). Once we have Died with Him we will also experience being Raised with Him. As co-risen Men and Women we become participants with Him of this glorious New Humanity which is not part of Adam's race and never was.

It began when Jesus came forth from the Tomb as a glorious New Creation, Jesus Himself being the first fruit. He is the Firstborn among many Brethren (Rom. 8:29). His risen purpose is to bring many Sons to this same glory (Heb.2:10). Once our Old Man (our old Adamic humanity) has been put to death with Him on the Cross, we can live with Him in Resurrection life and power on His throne and rule and reign with Him over all principalities and powers which are well below our feet as well as His.

Through our glorious new heredity we share with Him in this Resurrection authority and rule and reign with Him right now.

THE KEY OF DEATH AND HADES (REVELATION 1:18).

Heb 2:14,15 tells us that Jesus, through His death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil and delivered those who, through fear of death, were in bondage all their lifetime. The Spirit of Death is very prominent in Scripture and seems to be the most powerful and influential spirit working with Satan. In fact, it sometimes seems in some Scriptures, although this cannot be proved, that the Spirit of Death is just another name for Satan himself.

Romans 5:17 tells us that "Death reigned through one man's offence (trespass)". But now, through One Man's obedience, for those who receive abundant grace and the gift of righteousness, Life has now come and has replaced Death. Death has already lost its sting and its victory (1 Cor.15:54-56).

The last enemy to be destroyed is Death itself (1 Cor.15:26).

When the time was right, Jesus, quite deliberately, provoked this Spirit of Death to attack and kill Him. This He did by raising Lazarus from the dead. But it was all part of a carefully orchestrated plan over which Jesus had complete control from the beginning to the end.

The plan, among many other wonderful things, had a great purpose which was to destroy this Spirit of Death and /or the devil through His death and so bring an end to this Spirit of Death's tyranny and so liberate all those, who all their lifetime, were in bondage through fear of death (Heb.2:14,15).

Hades is often confused with Hell and in some English translations, such as the King James version, the two words are interchanged indiscriminately. However Hades (which is just the Greek word transliterated) is a different word from Hell (Gehenna) and has a different meaning. The Hebrew equivalent to Hades is Sheol which means roughly the same thing.

Neither this Spirit of Death nor Satan any longer have the Key or Power of Death Jesus does. Jesus alone now decrees how many days we have on Earth and when they will come to an end. This Spirit, working with other Spirits such as the Spirit of Cancer may try to entice us to accept the inevitability of a premature death. But if we stand in faith he cannot prematurely take our life from us.

Hades literally means "a realm invisible or not seen". It cannot be seen or perceived by any natural sense, but it is not necessarily a place of punishment and is not the permanent abode for lost souls or departed spirits. It is something different. All is certainly not clear from Scripture and there are many teachings, doctrines and various

opinions held concerning this subject.

See the separate Appendix for a summary of these .

What is clear in Scripture is that both Death and Hades are often seen as partners together and are also seen as enemies of God and of His Kingdom, which will themselves be destroyed by casting them into the Lake of Fire (Rev.20:13,14). They will have no part to play in the Eternal Realm and will no longer exist.

Revelation 1:18 Tells us that the risen glorified Christ now holds the Keys of Death and Hades. We are told "He was dead but is now alive for evermore". He deliberately put Himself into the hands of Death and Hades temporarily that He might destroy them permanently. Hallelujah! What a victory.

THE KEY OF DAVID

Jesus spoke these words to the Church at Philadelphia.

Not much is known about the City which originally carried this name which means "The City of Brotherly Love".

It was to this City that Jesus wrote one of the Seven Letters to the Churches.

This has particular significance on the American subcontinent as we think of the birth of the United States of America. William Penn was given a large tract of land and began his "Holy Experiment" having made a covenant of peace and brotherly love with the Delaware Indians. This all took place in and around the City of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. This is regarded as the seed of this nation.

It was to this City that Jesus said of Himself that He "is the One who is Holy and the One who is True. He who holds the key of David. He who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens" (Rev. 3: 7-13. See also Isaiah 9: 7 and Isaiah 22: 15-23).

The emphasis here is the irreversible permanence of what is accomplished. Once open no man can shut it. Once shut no man can open it.

The Kingdom David established is frequently referred to as the forerunner and beginning of God's Eternal Kingdom. A Kingdom and a Throne on which David's Greater Son would permanently sit and rule forever.

If we want to see God's Kingdom come and permanent irreversible change in our City we have to use the Key of David.

This Key symbolizes much more than Authority but a Pure, True, Holy form of Government that is not at all self seeking and never gets corrupted by the power it wields in the Name of Jesus and on behalf of God.

We have to go through all the preparatory steps that David went through to establish and maintain right government.

Many of these have already been covered in previous Schools of the Word, especially the Raising up of David's Tabernacle and the Melchizedek Priesthood.

In this study I want to major on the Government of David's Kingdom, his Leadership Team and how it worked. Once established it became the model by which all other subsequent Kings were judged. Much, if not all of it, then became the model for Jesus, His Kingdom and the Church.

HOW DAVID BROUGHT IN THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM

David began as a loyal servant of Saul and was of excellent spirit. He served him faithfully with no wrong ambition usurp his master. But he was too successful and Saul became jealous of him and of his success. Saul then tried to kill him and when that was not successful, he drove him away and outlawed him.

God, it seems, was willing at first to work with Saul, the people's choice, as long as he was obedient. But he only obeyed partially, so God rejected him from being King (1 Sam 15:23,28).

David was anointed as King by God, through Samuel the Prophet, (1 Sam 16:13), even before he had killed Goliath. But it was many years before this prophetic anointing came to pass. He served Saul with an excellent spirit, even though it was very difficult at times, for a number of years and he became very popular with the people. Finally, Saul became so jealous he determined to kill him and David had to flee for his life and became a fugitive hiding in the wilderness.

Once David was outlawed, his own family and a growing army of mighty men came to him while he was in exile and were ready to make him King by force long before it was God's time (1 Sam 22:1-5).

David was always careful to honor Saul's anointing and refused to retaliate and kill him though he had the opportunity several times (1 Sam 24:4-7; 1 Sam 26:8-11).

Saul was finally killed in battle. David was anointed King a second time, by these mighty men and by his own tribe Judah, shortly after Saul's death (2 Sam 2:4-7) .

Then a long war developed between the two houses of Saul and David. Even though Saul was dead, the influence of Saul's house continued for some time. But the House of David grew stronger and stronger and the House of Saul grew weaker and weaker (2 Sam. 3:1).

Many of the leaders of the tribe of Benjamin, (Saul's tribe), later came and joined David at Hebron and he became King over the two tribes (1 Chron. 12:29).

Seven years later, the other ten tribes acknowledged David as their leader. He made covenant with them before the Lord and he was anointed the third time as King over all Israel by the Elders of all the tribes of Israel. (2 Sam.5:3-5).

David then moved to Jerusalem and began to bring the Kingdom in.

FIRST SOME THOUGHTS ON COVENANT IN TEAM RELATIONSHIPS.

Covenant is a big theme with God and His relationship with man is on that basis. The Bible teaches that many relationships have a covenantal nature to them. The most obvious is the covenant of marriage in which a man and a woman most nearly reflect the covenant God has made with His people or Christ has made with His Church.

In the ideal marriage relationship we see a picture of how God wishes to relate with man and what He will do for us if we will relate to Him faithfully on that basis.

It also shows us how seriously God regards such a relationship. This kind of covenant is indissoluble and the marriage bond between a man and a woman should never be broken. According to Malachi 2:14-16, she is a wife by covenant and God hates divorce. It is treachery even to think of any alternative. There is no way out, only a way through, which we must find by the grace of God.

The Covenant between Jonathan and David

To understand more of how God wants men to relate in leadership and in ministry together, we need to look at the covenant between Jonathan and David.

In 1 Sam.18:1-4; 20:14-17,42, we read a number of things that established the covenant between them:-

- 1) They were knitted in heart to one another.
- 2) They became vulnerable to one another as they laid themselves bare before each other and were now capable of doing much harm to one another.
- 3) They made a definite pact by ceremony to one another.
- 4) Once formed, this covenant had precedence over the natural family relationships that David and Jonathan had. This has to be handled with care because the marriage covenant always has priority over any other covenant between people. But even the marriage covenant cannot override the covenant between an individual and their God.
- 5) In this particular case, because of the way it was expressed, this covenant not only bound the men making the covenant but also their descendants.

This was not true of all covenants and cannot be applied as a general rule. But where such a covenant has been made rightly it can be a mighty blessing on succeeding generations. Or if made wrongly, (e.g. The occult covenants made in Freemasonry or witchcraft) then it can be a binding curse

upon subsequent generations without them even realizing the source. These must then be broken by an definite act of renunciation.

6) The penalty imposed on covenant breakers was very severe. As a result, they were not entered into lightly or broken easily.

Whenever men come together on a leadership team in a Local Church or on an Apostolic Team, the fact that they accept the position automatically brings them into a measure of covenant relationship with the other men, whether such a covenant relationship is formally spelt out between them or not. One thing they must do is recognize the God appointed Head.

Every House has a Head

Everything God builds is built as a spiritual house with someone appointed as the head of that house and every house is a part of another greater house over which Jesus presides as the Head over all things to the church.

The Bible says that every house is built by someone (Heb 4:1-6) and God gives the house and that headship to whoever He chooses.

Once given it cannot be revoked by man but only by God. Every church and ministry established by God is such a house. We cannot just start "a house" or a ministry or a church of our own. If God didn't start it we laboring in vain because God is not building it (Psa. 127:1-4).

If we come to work in any way in an existing church or ministry that God has truly founded, we need to remember that we come into another man's house and we must serve him as the head whom God has appointed. We cannot use his house simply to further our own ends or ministry. Also we cannot usurp his headship and try to take over his house from within, even if we feel he is doing a bad job.

Getting Released Righteously from a Team

No other covenant between men has the same total insolubility as the marriage bond but any covenant must be seen as permanent until God dissolves it. It must be seen as lasting as long as the Lord chooses to hold these men or women together to fulfill His specific purpose.

Once that purpose has been accomplished then they may be released for whatever new work the Lord has for them to do. But this must be done in a proper way.

A man must be released by the ones with whom he is currently in covenant and they must agree that it is the Lord who is leading him on. In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas already knew the new work to which God was calling them but it was also necessary for God to speak to the rest of the team to release these two men. This He did, presumably through prophecy. Once they had also heard from God they were able to release the first two missionaries with faith and joy, certain that it was the will of God for them.

Once a man has moved to some new task he will need to become joined to those with whom he is now working. As a result it is usually not possible to remain joined in the same way to those with whom he previously worked. While the old affections may remain, the old covenantal ties must be released to allow the new covenantal relationships to be formed.

Joining a Team for the Right Reason in the Right Way

Because of the covenantal nature of these relationships, the way in which a new man joins a team is also important. It could in one careless moment wreck the careful work of God over many years.

David's Mighty Men Are a Great Model

Out of all the men that gathered to David during those difficult days in the wilderness, certain of them became his mighty men. There were the three who formed a protective shield around him. Then there were the three who became the leaders of the thirty and then there were the thirty themselves, making thirty seven in all, including David (2 Sam.23:8-39). The main characteristics which marked them out were:-

- a) They were courageous and trained for war (1Chr.12:1,8,24).
- b) They were highly skilled in a whole range of weapons, with the right hand or the left (1Chr.12:2).
- c) They could fight alone if necessary and the Lord used them single handed to win some great battles (2 Sam.23:8-12).
- d) They had a deep love for and loyalty to David (2 Sam.23:13-17).
- e) They had a heart for David and the Kingdom and not for themselves.
- f) They knew how to keep rank (1 Chr.12:22,38).

Joab was not one of these mighty men though he was the Commander of David's forces.

Uriah the Hittite was one of David's mighty men. Even when David had Uriah killed the rest of the mighty men did not break rank and leave him! No one ever defected from David's mighty men. When David turned the Kingdom over to Solomon only then did these mighty men transfer their allegiance to the new King.

Even Saul's mighty men did not leave him but stayed loyal to him right to the end and then came and took his body after he had been slain by the Philistines and buried it.

Joab, a Man of Great Gift but Not of a True Heart

David made this tragic mistake with Joab and we need to be warned. Joab was motivated out of selfish ambition not loyalty to David.

a) He saw his chance for promotion by slaying some of the Jebusites. He grabbed his opportunity for personal advancement. He was motivated by selfish ambition not love for David (1Chron.11:6).

b) When David was about to commit the terrible sin of having Uriah the Hittite slain in battle. Joab cooperated with David, because it was politically advantageous, instead of rebuking him or pleading with him as a true friend should have done.

Later, David, having learned his lesson, was much more careful. In 1Chr.12:17 he sets out some important principals that we need to heed.

Some Basic Questions Have to Be Asked and Answered

As men started to flock to this new popular movement he established four basic principles, three of which were questions regarding their attitude to him and to those already in leadership namely:-

- 1) Do you come peaceably?
- 2) Have you come to help me?
- 3) Will you join your heart to my heart?
- 4) He also gives a clear warning " if you betray me to my enemies, since there is no wrong (violence) in my hands, may God look and bring judgment".

Blessed are the Peacemakers

The emphasis of the word "peacemaker" in Hebrew and in Greek, is to mend and strengthen relationships. So the question David is asking is "will you come with an attitude to strengthen the relationships between us. Because if you have come to cause turbulence or division in our relationships, we don't want you however gifted you are".

Having One Heart and One Mind in The One Place

The second question focuses on the important issue of singleness of vision. For a team to work harmoniously it needs to be working to a common vision and it is the particular responsibility of the leader to see and spell out that vision. The other team members can contribute to that vision but they cannot go off at a tangent to try to work out something of their own. They must see themselves as coming to help the leader to fulfill his vision.

If a man already has a distinctly separate vision, he cannot join the team and then try to impose it on the leader or the team. If his vision is that important to him, it's better for him to remain separate so he is free to work out his vision on his own.

When the Heart Changes to a Different Vision

Perhaps the most difficult situation of all is when a man develops a distinctly different vision after he has joined the team and feels compelled to go free to fulfill it.

The same basic rules outlined above should still apply. He needs to hear from God that this is the time and the right way to go out and do it. It would also be necessary for others to hear and agree that this is the will of God. A man who understands covenant and is in right relationship with his brothers would not want to go out without the security of being sent out by them in joy and faith.

This requires a great deal of care and integrity if it is to be accomplished successfully.

In my opinion, after having seen this happen a few times, it is imperative to go to a totally new situation well away from the previous location and start on truly virgin ground so that people from the previous location are not attracted to the new work. If God is in it He will cause it to prosper and the man going out should have the faith to be able to start from nothing.

Is Your Heart joined to Mine?

David's emphasis on a joining of heart teaches us that in the Kingdom of God men are to be relationally joined not simply organizationally joined. They cannot just be employees or "staff members" but we must have fellowship or "koinonia". Paul speaks continually of his "fellow-workers", his "fellow-soldiers", his "fellow laborers" etc. and uses the word koinonia each time. Koinonia means "to be joined together in a common life or joined together in a common purpose".

Ecclesiastes 4 :9-12, teaches the value of a covenant partnership. It applies first of all to marriage but also clearly applies to men in covenant. In the days of heightened conflict that lie ahead it will be very unwise to be alone and the close fellowship of covenant brothers will be the only thing that will keep us at times.

You Cannot Speak Dishonorably of the Head or Other Team Member

If a man was to be part of a team and speak negatively concerning the leader or the team, he would be doing what David described as betraying his covenant brother to his enemies (i.e. Satan the accuser of the brethren). Loving, loyal confrontation in private according to Matt.18:15-17 is not sin but part of real relationships, providing our motive is to gain our brother.

Obviously any leader is going to make mistakes, but if he is honest about them and deals scripturally with them, then as far as God is concerned there is no wrong in him and God will defend His servant and judge those who speak and act against him.

Don't Rush Into Anything

In the light of all this, joining a team should not be taken lightly. There would need to be a "getting to know you" period during which the style of our relationship should be clearly spelt out.

In the local church, Paul exhorts Timothy, out of hard won experience, "Lay hands on no man suddenly" speaking, presumably, of the appointing of Elders.

Provision needs to be made for a man who maybe being called of God to join the team to investigate that call without immediate commitment on either side. He could be invited to attend all or part of a team meeting but may be asked to leave if a particularly sensitive private matter is being discussed.

In a team setting, it would not be appropriate for the team leader or any other team member to unilaterally invite a new member to join the Team. He needs to be compatible with the whole team and they must meet him and be consulted. On the other hand there must not be an attitude of exclusivity where no one new is allowed in. The whole team must be open, welcoming and ready to receive anyone the Lord is genuinely sending to strengthen them.

Once the new person is known and his gift and measure understood, room must be made for him at the level God has appointed to him. All of us must hold our roles and functions with humility and flexibility. We must be ready for change. We must let a newcomer with greater gift go past us to the higher role God has appointed him.

e.g. Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas finds Paul (Saul) and brings him to Antioch. He soon realizes Paul is a man of greater measure than himself and steps back to let Paul take over from him and become the team leader (Acts 11 thru Acts 15).

MIGHTY MEN IN THE KINGDOM.

Kingdom mighty men have to be :-

I. Greater than John the Baptist - MATT. 11:11.

JOHN 5: 31-35. - He was a burning and a shining light.

JOHN 1:5 - but not that light. Sent to bear witness to that light.

JOHN 8:12; 9:5 I am the Light of the World

MATT. 5:14 You are the light of the World

MATT 11:11-14 - the least in the Kingdom is greater.

II. At Least as Strong as David - Zech 12:8.

III. Mighty in Power And Deed.

Jesus a Man mighty in Power And Deed.

Luke 24:19; Acts 10:38.

On the Disciples - Spirit Comes

Acts 2:1-4.

Power Released

Acts 2:43; Acts 4:31

Spirit Outpoured

Acts 4:31.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Power Released | Acts 4:8-16; 33; Acts 5:12. |
| Stephen a man mighty in Power And Deed. | Acts 6:5,8. |
| Philip a man mighty in Power And Deed. | Acts 8:4-8. |

IV. Mighty by The Spirit.

You Shall receive Power after The Holy Spirit has come upon you. Acts 1:8.

The Spirit came mightily upon

- a) Samson - Judges 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 16:28.
- b) Gideon - Spirit comes mightily on Gideon, He blew the Trumpet Judges 6:34
- c) Saul - 1 Sam 10:6,10; 11:4-7 Esp.6 Later an Evil Spirit comes 1 Sam. 18:10.
- d) David - 1 Sam 16:13.

- **Two Men blew themselves up with the Power of their Anointing.**
- **Two Men were Faithful all their lives though Powerfully Anointed.**
- **Power without Character Is Dangerous.**

The Greater the Power - the Greater the Fall - If we become open to the Devil.

- a) **Samson** is a Type - an Allegory of what happens to a Powerfully Anointed but Unsanctified Man.

A former Terror to the Enemy becomes their Plaything and their Chief Sport.

- b) **Saul** Is a Literal Example of a Man Who Was Mightily Anointed but Unsanctified.

An Evil Spirit came mightily upon Him, Just as the Spirit of God had formerly been Mightily upon Him. 1Sam.18:10.

- c) **David** Is a Literal Example of a Man Who Made It. He Was Mightily Anointed but Sanctified.

No Time to Speak of Samson or Gideon or Alexander the Coppersmith or Annanias and Sapphira or Timothy Etc.

WHAT CAUSED SAUL TO FALL AND DAVID TO STAND?

We need to know so we can learn from their example.

1) Attitude to seeking God:

Saul Only Paid Lip Service to Seeking God.

Went through the motions but no real heart for God.

1 Sam. 14:18-20; 36,37.

The whole nation did not seek God all the Days of Saul (1 Chron.13:1). A leader's attitude affects everybody!

David Sought a Real Relationship with God.

Real heart for God - Really seeks God. Psa..42:1

With growing Responsibility - More Earnest Seeking.

"Let's bring back the Ark" - 1 Chron.13:1

Longed to build a House of Rest for the Ark of God - 1 Chron.28:2

Always Seeking God's Face. Didn't let busyness crowd out his God Time

Zigzag - Sought God - 1 Sam 30:6-8.

Sought God for strategy to beat the Philistines - 2 Sam.5:10-12,17,19,23,25.

2) Attitude to leadership:

Saul Lead by Harsh Legalism and Authoritarianism.

Ruled with natural ability, but always insecure, instead of knowing God and being secure in Him. 1 Sam.14:24.

Saul a Driver - Rule of Fear over his followers .E.g. Pursuit of Philistines

David - a Leader That Other Leaders Joyfully Followed -

Not legally Imposed Authority.

A Shepherd to the House of Israel. A Father
The Sweet Psalmist Joy in Praise and Worship
Gentle not despising with the Weak.

3) Attitude to Prominence and Position:

Saul Seemed O.K. until he was given Position - Couldn't Handle It.

Empire Building. Added to Himself - 1 Sam.14:52

Jealous of David - 1 Sam 18:6-16.

Honor Me Before the People 1 Sam. 15:12 - Etc.

David Truly Humble.

I am weak though anointed King 2 Sam.3:39.

Gladly would have served under Saul, he did not seek the position.

Even when it was difficult, he kept a right spirit 1 Sam.18;14-16.

David sought heart relationship with his Mighty Men.

He gave them space and Consulted with them - 1 Chron.13:1

4) Attitude of Saul to Able Leaders with Initiative. Because of His Insecurity, he felt threatened by them and their Gift.

Kill Them! He was like this to David, Jonathan, anyone who threatened his position before the people and got in his way.

Always concerned about what the people thought of him and being honored by them.

David's Attitude Even to Those Who Wrongly Handled Him or Opposed Him.

To those who were loyal. He welcomed them and rejoiced in their strength and gave them space.

To those who were not loyal. No Retaliation - Honor and Submission - Let the Lord deal with them

Shows kindness many times e.g. Mephibosheth 2Sam 9:1. Hanun 2 Sam10:1

Merciful with those who opposed. But not weak.

Not concerned about the people but what the Lord thought about him (1 Sam 6: 20,21).

5) Handling the Problem of the Jebusites.

Judges 1:8 Israel took Jerusalem. V21 but the Jebusites still lived there.

The House of Benjamin never got rid of the Jebusites.

Saul Was of the House of Benjamin. He lived all his life with Jebusites.

When David Came to the Throne.

His first act was to get rid of them. 2 Sam.5:1.

Paul's exhortation to Timothy, the Man of God. It was the New Testament equivalent of getting rid of the Jebusites. 1 Tim 6:3-16; 2 Tim.2:19-26.

JESUS FORMED A TEAM ABLE TO ADVANCE THE KINGDOM AND TAKE THE CITY.

The greatest model by far in Scripture is given to us by Jesus Himself as He trained the Twelve to become the first Apostolic Team. But the principles He taught and demonstrated apply to any team whether is a Local Church, some other kind of Ministry Team or an Apostolic Team. The Gospels particularly highlight Peter and we learn many principles from the way Jesus brought him step by step through many experiences. Because of Peter's right response he finally became a powerful Apostolic ministry.

STEPS IN THE LIFE OF PETER

1) A Change of Mind or a Change of Life? - John 1:35-42

John the Baptist points to Jesus. Andrew then finds Peter. "We have found the Christ". They followed Him. They decided. "to believe in Him".

They initiated and decided everything.

Peter's First Encounter with Jesus, changed his mind about Him but not his relationship with Him. It changed his mind but not his life.

Jesus Prophecies "You are Simon You shall be called Peter"

Simon - A Reed - Always bends the way of the wind.

Harken - Listening with the intention of obeying what you hear.

Peter - Petros - A piece of building stone. But built on "Petra" the great foundation stone

2) Peter hears The Gospel of the Kingdom - Mark 1: 14 - 20

Six to Eight months later, Jesus comes preaching the gospel ("good news") of the Kingdom of God.

The offer was to re-establish the Rule or Government of God lost through Adam's choice of independence. It is only when this rule is accepted, that the sins and rebellion of the past can be forgiven and brought to an end.

The Kingdom is not a place, but a relationship between a man and God in which God rules as a benevolent Despot over man who responds in voluntary, joyful submission to

that rule by perfect obedience. It is perfect obedience which makes Heaven into Heaven!
It is independence which makes Hell into Hell.

This is a "Kairos" moment. Jesus then calls them to decide.

It is a "diatheke" covenant. They are free to accept or reject the offer but they cannot change the conditions.

The result will be they will definitely be made into "fishers of men".

Peter decides to leave his nets and follow Jesus.

3) A Worker with God or a Worker for God? - Luke 5:1-11

Sometime later Peter is back at fishing. What has happened?
He went off in his own strength and he was not successful.

Returns to what he feels competent in - catching fish! Jesus intervenes and causes him to fail even here.

When Peter does it at Jesus' word he succeeds beyond his wildest dreams.

This is to teach him a very important principle. We are not called to work for God - but to be workers together with Him.

Jesus is the perfect example. He never did anything of himself. John 5:19; John5:30 etc.

Peter see the sinfulness "Depart from me Lord" v.8

Don't be afraid, from now on you will be catching men.v.10

4) Recognizing and Receiving Headship by Revelation - Matt. 16:16-20; 21-27

Who do you say that I am? It must be by revelation

Even genuine revelation does not give one the right to correct and overrule the Head. Peter challenges the Vision

5) The Strongest Horses are the Hardest to Break in - Matt. 17:1-9

The three who had the greatest potential needed a supernatural encounter to come to recognize who Jesus really was to them and not challenge the vision of God he was imparting to them. They had to be bridled and harnessed before their gift could be put to work properly in a Kingdom Team.

This is my beloved Son - Hear Him! They never challenged his leadership again

6) The Offense Test - John 6: 41-71

Jesus is experiencing a wave of popularity after a great miracle.

He preaches to the multitude a controversial and offensive message. He tells the Jewish crowd "To have any part with Me, you must eat my flesh and drink my blood."

Many are offended and leave. Peter is also offended but cannot leave. He knows who Jesus is and is captured by his heart commitment.

Jesus asks "Will you also go away"? Peter replies- "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We are certain and we are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God".

7) The Faith Test - Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 11:22-24

Where is your Faith? Will the Son of Man find faith upon the earth (Luke 18:8)? Oh foolish and slow of heart to believe.

Jesus upbraided them for their unbelief.

Have the faith that belongs to God! The need for God's faith Mark 11:22-24

It is in His life "Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" 1Tim.6:12

Faith comes through intimacy or knowing God. It's easy to hear Him when you live close to Him.

8) The Power to Pray Test Luke 11:1-23; Luke 18:1-8; Matt.26:36-46

Jesus teaches on the five levels of prayer. (Luke 11:1-23)

Only one disciple asks him to teach him to pray - It wasn't Peter! (Luke 11:1)

They fall asleep when they try and can't even watch one hour.(Matt. 26:36-46)

They have to learn to pray as a Son John 16:23-30 not as a petitioner

9) Competition in the Team Test. Matt.18: 1-5; Matt20:20; Matt23:8-12; Mark 9:33-37; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 9:46-48 Luke 22:24-30.

Who is the greatest? They argue, discuss, debate about this one

Family ties stronger than other ties. James, John& their mother are ambitious for the family.

Peter and John never do anything together. Don't really like each other. This has to change

Peter does not have the same intimacy as John with Jesus. He's on the outside

10) The Rebuke and Chastening Test. God chastens, rebukes and scourges every son that he receives - Heb. 12:5-8

This is for their good. To share his holiness. To partake of His divine nature He has called us to His own Glory and Excellence 2 Peter 1:3

For every stage of natural growth there is an equivalent in the spiritual realm. Each Greek Word describes one of these stages. The main words are: -

- Brephos** - A sucking Infant
- Nepois** - A "not yet talking" Toddler A babe

- Paidion** - A child under training or discipline
- Technon** - A Teenager who has been trained to obey and who now accepts and rejoices in a lifestyle of obedience but is not yet mature.
- Huios** -
i) A Mature Son (male or female), over 30 years of age
ii) Has become like his or her Father
iii) Functionally has come into the possession of his/her inheritance
- Neaniskos** - Young man/woman over 30 but under 40 trained and equipped for war

11) John 13 :1-17 - The Foot Washing Test

Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet. He is told that without foot washing he could have no part with Jesus. He then over reacts "Wash me all over". We must understand what this means and do it to one another. It is our responsibility to wash the feet of those we serve as fathers and as leaders. We are also called to wash the feet of our peers. We must be very careful about trying to wash the feet of those set over us.

12) Matt.26:31-35; Luke 22:31-34, 54-62; John 13:36-38; John 21:15-22.

The Flesh and Spirit Test. Learning the difference, especially when it comes to Love

There were many relational difficulties and undercurrents among the disciples who Jesus chose.

The team would not hold together until these were dealt with.

They did not love God, each other or the Lost World the way they needed to.

They needed something beyond themselves to make this happen.

Jesus exposes the need and shows them the answer is in God's supernatural Agape love.

Peter has a genuine "Philea" love for Jesus but it has to be changed into "Agape" love.

Peter does not know his need, but it is exposed by his denial of Jesus. Peter weeps bitterly over his failure.

Peter has to wait until Pentecost to receive that kind of Love. Then he could rejoice in it

13) The Fear Test Luke 1:69-75; 2 Tim.1:5-8; 1 John 4:16-20; Acts 4:31-34

Fear had to Go! Fear is not simply an emotion. It is a spirit and it doesn't come from God. 2 Tim.1:5-8

It's God's covenant promise. Luke 1:69-75
It's overcome by agape love 1 John 4:16-20

14) The Patience Test (Luke 24:49) Transformed in the Upper Room (Acts 2:1-4 Acts 4:33).

They had to wait "until". Of all Jesus' disciples, only 120 stuck it out "until"

At last, right on time, the Spirit fell upon them. Now everything was different

They came out totally different to the way they went in. Everything is now Changed and the City is rapidly taken

Peter has a prominent part to play.

They have great Unity.

15) Peter, now Part of an Inseparable Team Who Stand Together.

Peter stands with the Eleven.

Peter and John do everything together.

- a) Peter now has that Agape Love. (2 Peter1:15)
- b) Peter can now Pray (Acts 9:40; Acts 10:9)
- c) Peter now has the Faith (2 Peter 1:1)
- d) Peter is now Bold and Fearless in preaching the Gospel (Acts 4:8-19)

16) Peter, a Mighty Man of Power and Miracles

But it is the outflow of their corporate Grace and unity (Acts 4:33).

Mighty signs and wonders flow through him (Act 3:6-16 ; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 9:34,40).

THE KEY OF SPECIFIC SIGNS AND WONDERS, PROCLAIMING THAT THE KINGDOM HAS COME

These signs or "semeions" are different to the healing gift and even remarkable obviously miraculous healings. They are signs sent by God to first of all testify to His Son Jesus and then subsequently to confirm his Word and His messengers who bring that Word.

Each one is not only a great miracle but also speaks allegorically a great truth concerning the Kingdom. This is particularly brought out in John's Gospel where Eight "Signs" are selected by John under the direction of the Holy Spirit to be the Skeleton on which the whole Gospel is built.

1) John 2:1-11 Turning the Water into Wine at a Marriage Feast.

This is immediately followed by Jesus' meeting with Nichodemus and teaching on the need to be Born again to enter the Kingdom.

2) John 4:12 - John 5:10 The Nobleman's son.

The difference between leaning Faith and coming to real faith by walking on the Word.

3) John 5:1-10 Raising up of the paralyzed Man at the Pool of Bethesda

Leaving behind the paralyzing effects of the wounds, hurts and offences of our former life and our consequent excuses for being what we should be and not doing what we should do. Instead, we just get up by faith in response to the Words of Jesus to live in glorious newness of Life.

Jesus asks a strange question in verse 6 "Do you want to be made whole"
In verse 7 The man makes three excuses to justify his paralyzed none activity for many years

In verse 8 Jesus gives three commandments in response which require immediate obedience and the man is healed.

We have to respond in the same way to see the same miracle

4) John 6:1-14 The feeding of the Five Thousand

Becoming a Miraculous Channel for Jesus to flow through us to and be The Bread of Life which can multiply the meager natural resources and supernaturally feed a multitude.

5) John 6: 15-21 - Jesus (and for a little while Peter) walk on the Water.

Jesus overcomes a tremendous demonic Storm and meets a great need in the process.

6) John 9: 1-7, 12-34 Healing the Blind Man who was blind from birth

Jesus heals this blind man to illustrate the blindness of those devoted to religion who are resisting Him and His transforming Word. This man was not personally a greater sinner or worse than anybody else, but he was chosen by God as a sign to represent the religious blindness of the Jews and through which God might be glorified. Without obeying the Words of Jesus like a little child, their blindness will remain.

7) John 11:1-45 The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead.

This was to prove Jesus already was the Resurrection and the Life. It was also this miracle which provoked the Spirit of Death to attack Him and kill Him so He, by His death, could destroy it.

8) John 21: 1-14; Luke 24: 13-53; Acts 1: 1-8 After He was Risen from the Dead.

Jesus appeared and did some attesting signs to convince them and get them to see the Kingdom and be ready to receive the power to forcefully advance it.

THE KEY OF HEALING MIRACLES AND CASTING OUT OF DEMONS MAKING THE KINGDOM KNOWN AND "AT HAND".

AS A RESULT IT'S EASY FOR THE MULTITUDE TO SEE THE KINGDOM AND ENTER IT

Jesus began His ministry by casting out demons and healing all the sick who were brought to Him. When He sent out the Twelve (Luke 9:1-8) and then the Seventy (Luke 10:1-10), He gave them authority to cast out demons and to heal the sick and told them to declare that the Kingdom of God had come near.

He further gave them authority over all the power of the enemy and promised them that nothing by any means would be able to hurt them (Luke 10:17).

This is the only recorded occasion that we read of Jesus rejoicing in spirit and declaring He saw Satan cast down from heaven.

The Day the Church was born, it began its life with a miracle and continued to flow on in the same vane. In this way it broke through every obstacle and triumphed over all opposition.

In Acts 4:29-31, facing fierce opposition once again, the Church asked for "Boldness to speak God's Word by the means of signs, wonders and miracles being done in the Name of Jesus.

When Isaiah saw wickedness and darkness on every side in the midst of an apostate people who were seeking wizards and witches and paying homage to the Spirit of Death instead of the Living God.

He cried out in Isaiah chapter 8: 17 What are you going to do Lord. The Spirit of Christ in anticipation of His incarnation declares " I and the children whom the Lord has given Me we are for signs and wonders in Israel".

This same Scripture is taken up in Hebrews 2:13 and immediately goes on into the power to destroy the devil and all his works.

Without this powerful Key we are impotent to advance the Kingdom. With this powerful Key nothing can stop the Church forcefully advancing the Kingdom against all opposition.

Every Church mentioned in Scripture was founded and established on a display of miraculous signs and wonders and the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

Paul declares in Romans 15:18 that it was by signs wonders and miracles that he “fully preached the gospel of Christ” and by this means “he won obedience of the Gentiles in word and deed”.

The writer to the Hebrews declares that “How can we neglect so great a salvation which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard Him. God also testified to it by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit?” (Heb.2: 3.4).

APPENDICES:

1. Eschatology

Douglas, J.D., Org. Ed. The New Bible Dictionary
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2. Thoughts on Hades and The Spirit of Death

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The Keys of the Kingdom. 2003.

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London, Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1375 pages.

ESCHATOLOGY

28, 29; Acts xxiv. 15; Rev. xx. 12, 13), its emphasis is upon resurrection as a fruit of redemption. Resurrection life is an eschatological blessing enjoyed by the redeemed (Col. ii. 12, 13). By His resurrection, Christ abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim. i. 10). Christ's resurrection was not merely the restoration of a dead body to life: it was the first stage of the eschatological resurrection of the last day. His resurrection is the 'firstfruits', the beginning of the eschatological harvest (1 Cor. xv. 23). Because the resurrection already has begun, believers share Christ's resurrection life (1 Pet. ii. 5, 6; Rom. vi. 4; Phil. iii. 10; Col. iii. 1-3). The resurrection of those in Christ is therefore guaranteed by the fact of His resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 12-20), and will be the second stage of the eschatological harvest (1 Cor. xv. 23).

The nature of the resurrection body transcends present experience (1 Cor. xv. 35-57). The essential ideas are that it will be a real body (33-42) which stands in a relationship of continuity with the 'natural' body (36, 37) but which is yet different, not a body of 'flesh and blood' (50). Paul can only describe the resurrection body in terms of incorruption, glory, and power (42, 43). A 'spiritual' body (44) does not mean a body made of spirit but one completely vitalized and transformed by the Spirit of life. The resurrection body does not belong to a wholly other order of existence; it is the present body redeemed (Rom. viii. 23) when mortality is swallowed up in life (2 Cor. v. 4).

Believers who are living at the return of Christ will be transformed without passing through death (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thes. iv. 17). This 'rapture' or being 'caught up' (Lat. *rapiuntur*)... to meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thes. iv. 17) is Paul's way of describing the experience of transition into the new redeemed order of resurrection life without passing through death. See also RESURRECTION.

VI. THE STATE OF THE DEAD

The biblical view of man demands the resurrection of the body as the goal of individual eschatology. Man does not consist of separate parts—body, soul, and spirit. Rather, these terms are different aspects of a single dynamic person. Therefore the life of the age to come requires the resurrection and redemption of the body. Both life and death concern the whole man. This is illustrated by the teaching on immortality. Immortality in Scripture does not mean endless existence but freedom from death (1 Cor. xv. 53; 1 Tim. vi. 16) and from corruption (Rom. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 10). God alone is free from death (1 Tim. vi. 16); but Christ has won life and incorruption for men (2 Tim. i. 10), and they will exchange mortality for immortality at the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54).

The Bible has little to say about the state of the dead. However, even in the Old Testament, man does not cease to exist at death, but his soul descends to 'Sheol' (translated 'grave', 'hell', or

'pit' in AV). Sheol is pictured as a place beneath (Ps. lxxxvi. 13; Ps. xv. 24; Ezk. xxvi. 20), a region of darkness (Job. x. 22), the land of silence (Psa. lxxxviii. 12, xxiv. 17, cxv. 17). Here the dead, who are gathered in tribes (Ezk. xxxii. 17-32), receive the dying (Is. xiv. 9, 10). Sheol is not so much a place as the state of the dead. It is not non-existence; but it is not life, for life can be enjoyed only in the presence of God (Ps. xvi. 10, 11). Sheol is the Old Testament manner of asserting that death does not terminate existence. In a few places God gives the added revelation, later enlarged in the New Testament, that since He is the living God, He will not abandon His people to Sheol, but will bring them into the enjoyment of life in His presence (Ps. xvi. 9-11, xlix. 15, lxxiii. 24; Job. xix. 25, 26). Enoch and Elijah were translated into the presence of God without seeing Sheol (Gen. v. 24; 2 Ki. ii. 11).

'Hades', translated 'hell' (Mt. xi. 23, xvi. 18; Lk. x. 15, xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27, 31; Rev. i. 18, vi. 8, xs. 13, 14) and 'grave' (1 Cor. xv. 55, Received Text), is the New Testament equivalent of Sheol. Probably the story of Dives and Lazarus (Lk. xvi. 19), like the story of the unjust steward in the same chapter (Lk. xvi. 1-9), is a parable which made use of current Jewish thinking and is not intended to teach anything about the state of the dead. Peter speaks of the unrighteous dead as spirits in prison (1 Pet. iii. 19). See also HELL, and section x below.

The revelation that death does not end human existence is enlarged in the New Testament. The natural metaphor of sleep is frequently used of the dead (Mt. xxvii. 52; 1 Cor. xi. 30; 1 Thes. iv. 13), and some see more than a metaphor in this terminology (O. Cullmann, *Immortality*, 1958). However, there are a few glimpses that the redeemed are with Christ after death (Lk. xxiii. 43; Phil. i. 23) and that their spirits are made perfect (Heb. xii. 23). Paul shrinks from death because it seems to be a state of disembodied nakedness (2 Cor. v. 3) and longs for the resurrection body (verse 4). However, his natural fear of death is overcome by the confidence that to be absent from the body means to be present with the Lord (verse 8), and therefore, even though he has no knowledge about the state of the soul after death, it is more desirable than earthly existence. The goal is the redemption of the total man, including the body. Sayings about 'the salvation of your souls' (1 Pet. i. 9; Jas. i. 21) do not anticipate a salvation of the soul apart from the body, for soul as in Mt. xvi. 25 designates man's real life without special reference to his body (cf. Acts xxvii. 10).

VII. JUDGMENT

'It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment' (Heb. ix. 27). The Bible represents God as ruler of men, lawgiver, and final judge (Jas. iv. 12, xv. xxv). Sometimes God is the Judge (Heb. xii. 23), sometimes Christ (2 Tim. iv. 8; Acts x. 42). God 'will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath or-

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doomed' (Acts xvii. 31). The judgment-seat of God (Rom. xiv. 10, xv. 25v) and the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10) are interchangeable terms.

It is impossible to identify a series of distinct and separate judgments. The Bible is concerned with the fact of judgment, not with a timetable. Our Lord's prophecy of the judgment of the nations is an extended simile based on the daily experience of separating the mixed flocks of sheep and goats. Jesus was about to send His 'brethren', i.e. His disciples and representatives (Mt. xii. 48-50, xxiii. 8), into the world, and the final destiny of men (xxv. 46) will be determined by the way they receive and treat His emissaries, for 'he that receiveth you receiveth me' (Mt. x. 40). This parable can be used neither to settle the millennial question nor to prove salvation by good works.

The final judgment will rest on two issues: works and faith in Christ (Rev. xx. 13-15). Judgment will be in accordance with light. Those who have not had the law of Moses will be judged without law (Rom. ii. 12); they have the light of general revelation (Rom. i. 20) and the law written in the heart (Rom. ii. 15). Those who 'by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality' will be rewarded with eternal life; those who have not obeyed the truth but have obeyed unrighteousness will suffer wrath (Rom. ii. 6-8). Again, those who have had the law of Moses will be judged by the law (Rom. ii. 12). The basic principle of judgment is the justice of God (Jn. xviii. 25; Rom. iii. 2, 4).

However, men have not lived up to the light God has given them, and therefore stand under condemnation. The Gentiles have perverted the light of general revelation (Rom. i. 21 ff.) and the Jews have failed to fulfil the law (Gal. iii. 10-12). Since God in His mercy has provided a way of salvation by the redeeming work of Christ, the final basis of judgment is relation to Christ. This is one meaning of the 'book of life' (Rev. xxi. 15; cf. Lk. x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8).

Jesus taught that the destiny of men rested upon their attitude towards Himself (Mt. x. 32, 33, xi. 21-24; Mk. viii. 38). This is the heart of the gospel: salvation, which is primarily eschatological (Rom. xiii. 11; 1 Thes. v. 8, 9) and includes escape from God's condemnation in the day of judgment (Jn. v. 24), is God's gift to be received by faith in Jesus Christ (Acts iv. 12, xvi. 30, 31) and submission to His lordship (Rom. x. 9).

A further aspect of the realized eschatology of the Bible is seen in the fact that this judgment, which belongs to the last day, has essentially already taken place in history. The unbeliever stands under condemnation; the judgment has really taken place, even though the penalty has not yet been enforced (Jn. iii. 18). The believer will not experience condemnation, for he has already passed from death (the condemnation) to life (Jn. v. 24).

The Pauline teaching about justification embodies the same truth. Justification is an eschatological truth. It means acquittal from the guilt of sin by a favourable decision of the Judge on the last day. The opposite of justification is condemnation by the Judge (Mt. xii. 37; Rom. viii. 33, 34; cf. *TWNT*, II, pp. 2102, 221). Yet because of the death of Christ, the justification of believers has already taken place (Rom. iii. 21-26, v. 1). Because of present justification, we shall be saved from wrath in the day of judgment (Rom. v. 9).

Nevertheless, judgment remains an eschatological fact, even for believers. The righteousness we hope for (Gal. v. 5) is acquittal in the final judgment (*TWNT*, II, pp. 210 f.). 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ' (2 Cor. v. 10; cf. also Mt. xii. 36), which is also the judgment-seat of God (Rom. xiv. 10, xv. 25v). However, because of the redemption in Christ, the day of judgment has lost its terror for the man in Christ (1 Jn. iv. 17).

VIII. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God means first the reign of God and second the realm in which His reign is enjoyed. The final goal will be realized only in the age to come. Negatively, this means the destruction of God's enemies: Satan, sin, and death (Rev. xx. 10, 14, 15). Positively, it means the enjoyment by the redeemed of perfected fellowship with God and the full measure of divine blessings (Rev. xxi. 3-8), which are summed up by the expression 'eternal life'. Thus eternal life and the kingdom of God are sometimes interchangeable expressions (Mt. xxv. 34, 46; Mk. x. 17, 24). 'The kingdom of God' in the Synoptic Gospels and 'eternal life' in John are synonymous concepts (W. F. Howard, *Christ-land according to St. John*, 1946, p. 112).

God's kingdom is not established in a single eschatological act but in at least two, probably three, stages (see next section). By His incarnation, Christ 'bound' (Mt. xii. 29) or 'destroyed' Satan (Heb. ii. 14). He 'abolished death' and 'brought life and immortality to light' (2 Tim. i. 10). This initial victory over Satan and death is the work of God's kingdom, of God's redemptive reign in Christ. Thus the kingdom of God, which is still future (Mt. xiii. 43; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Rev. xii. 10), is said to have come near (Mt. iv. 17) or to have come (Mt. xii. 28), and it has therefore brought a present realm of blessing (Col. i. 13). The kingdom of God comes in several redemptive acts.

The final accomplishment of God's kingdom will include a redeemed earth. In the Old Testament this new order is sometimes described as though it were strictly continuous with the present order (Mt. iv. 1-5; Is. xi. 1-9); sometimes it arises out of a catastrophic judgment which falls on the old order (Is. xiii. 9-13, xxiv-xxv). Once the new order is spoken of as 'new heavens and a new earth' (Is. lvi. 17, lxxvi. 22), but this new creation is still earthly existence.

Thoughts on Hades and The Spirit of Death

1) Hades literally means “the unseen realm; the invisible realm”. It is usually understood as a Realm which is apart from this Earth and yet not part of the Heavenly Realm either. It is usually seen to be in shadowy half light and lacking substance and reality.

It seems to be a place or state of unsaved departed spirits of those who have experienced physical death. Hades seems to be a temporary holding place which is different from the final state of Hell (Gehenna) which is called the Second Death.

2) It seems it is possible to be brought back to life from Hades but not from Hell.

3) Hades is not an intermediate place or state for the believer. According to Scripture, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”. Jesus said to the thief on the Cross “Today, you will be with Me in Paradise”.

4) In every example in Scripture, in every occasion of my own experience and in every story where I have been able to determine the facts, when a person died and was raised to life again, it always took place well within 3 days. The raising of Lazarus was the only exception to this. In this case, it seems, Jesus deliberately waited for four days and allowed the body to rot before He moved. Why?

5) Possibly, by waiting to the fourth day in Lazarus’s case, Jesus was demonstrating His total lordship over Death and Hades. This was a deliberate invasion by Jesus into this Spirit of Death’s territory. For some reason, this prompted the Spirit of Death to attack Jesus and kill Him. As a result the Spirit of Death was itself “destroyed” or more accurately, “rendered powerless” (Grk. *katargeo*) through the death of Jesus.

6) Jesus Himself was raised after three days and this was prophesied many times by Jesus Himself and seems to be very significant. It is obviously very important. Why is this so significant?

7) When Jesus was raised it was uniquely declared to be by the “Glory of the Father”. No one ever died like Jesus and no one was ever raised like Jesus.

Rom. 6: 9-11 says “For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, he lives to God. In the same way,

Money, A Powerful Key to the Kingdom

Money is a Great Key of the Kingdom. But the Enemy knows how to use this Key far better than the Church does and has been powerfully using against the Kingdom of God.

There are many ideologies such as Islam, the Homosexual Gay Lobby, ACLU, Extreme Feminism and many more seeking to advance their cause. They use Money as their main means of advancement. Without that Money they would soon be rendered powerless.

We must learn how to bind up these Money resources so they are no longer available to the Kingdom of Darkness and loose them so they become available for the advance of the Kingdom

Tragically almost any initiative to advance the Kingdom of God at this present time seems to lack the Money it needs.

In Haggai 2: 6-9 we read, in the context of God promising to shake all nations and bring these nations to Jesus as “the Desire of all Nations”, that God says “all the Gold and Silver is Mine”.

God has unlimited resources available and the time has come when the Church must learn how to use this Key.

It is urgent that we learn the principles which are necessary to use this great Key of the Kingdom.

Acts 4:31-35 There must be a Right Attitude

At this time the Church was facing great opposition. The Spirit of God responded to their prayers by giving them power to speak with great boldness through mighty signs and wonders which were done at the hands of the Apostles in the Name of Jesus.

In the middle of this passage describing the incredible witness and great power demonstrated by the Early Church, Luke carefully records their unity and their attitudes to the wealth which so many evidently had.

