

The
LAMPSTAND
CHURCH

Believing to see it established in our generation

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WITH PETER HAY AND DAVID BAKER

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Preface

We have this ministry

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described the nature of his ministry as a messenger in the right hand of Christ. He said, 'Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' 2Co 4:2. This statement is a helpful summary of Paul's testimony as a messenger who had been sent by the Holy Spirit to establish lampstand churches. It must become the testimony of every messenger in the right hand of Christ and every believing household that belongs to a lampstand church.

When the apostle Paul declared, 'Since we have this ministry', he was referring to the ministry of the Spirit that he had previously described in the first three chapters of his letter. In the third chapter of his letter, Paul specifically contrasted the ministry of the Law Covenant with the ministry of the New Covenant. He described the Law Covenant as the ministry of the letter which had been written upon tablets of stone. Notably, the ministry of the Law Covenant did have a degree of glory, even though it was a temporary glory. 2Co 3:10. For those who kept the Law, it resulted in the Lord's blessing upon their own life, their family,

and the work of their hands. The Lord's blessing included physical healing, emotional wellbeing, and material prosperity.

In this regard, the Law Covenant was glorious. However, it was only a temporary glory because its blessing was confined to this lifetime. It did not have the capacity to circumcise and regenerate the heart of man. And nor did it have the capacity to give eternal life. Paul declared, 'If the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away [temporal], how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.' 2Co 3:7-9.

Despite the glory of the Law Covenant, the apostle Paul described it as 'the ministry of death' and 'the ministry of condemnation'. In the same way that a person's obedience to the Law resulted in blessing, a person's disobedience to the Law resulted in cursing. Cursing is the judgement of the Law of God. Notably, the judgement of the Law Covenant was not limited to a person's behaviour; it also extended to the judgement of a person's heart. Moses said to the nation of Israel, 'You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, *to know what was in your heart*, whether you would keep His commandments or not.' Deu 8:2.

Even though the heart of man was judged under the Law Covenant, the Law had no capacity to circumcise the other law that had been fathered in the heart of man by Satan. Similarly, even though the Law promised to impart a blessing for obedience, it did not give the capacity for obedience to the nation of Israel. Rather, the Law was a tutor, or a schoolmaster, that was intended to lead the nation of Israel to Christ. The offerings that were prescribed by the Law Covenant all foreshadowed the offering of Christ. The men and women who walked in the faith of Abraham, made offering under the Law Covenant, in faith for the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant as the outcome of His death and resurrection.

The apostle Paul described the New Covenant as 'the ministry of the Spirit' and 'the ministry of righteousness'. After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead in His spiritual body, it was possible for men to receive the Holy Spirit into their spirit, and to be born again of the incorruptible seed of the divine nature as a son of God. Joh 20:22. Rom 8:15. 1Pe 1:23. Furthermore, as a son of God is led by the Holy Spirit on the pathway that

Christ has pioneered for them, the grace of Christ's resurrection life enables them to fulfil the works of their sonship each day. The *righteousness of God* is revealed in their life, from faith to faith, as they progressively do the works that Christ already completed for them on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross.

It is the power of the seven Spirits of God, which is ministered to us through the Holy Spirit, that raises us from the dead with Christ, enabling us to complete the works of our sonship each day. Significantly, it is the same power that enables us to become a minister of the New Covenant. Referring to the power of the seven Spirits of God, the apostle Paul rejoiced and said, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.' 2Co 3:5-6. It is the ministry of the seven Spirits of God, by the Holy Spirit, that multiplies the life of God.

The ministry of the Spirit is the revelation of the seven Spirits of God that belong to Jesus Christ. The light of the seven Spirits of God that shines from the face of Christ is ministered to His lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand. When this ministry is received, it enables a person to turn to the lordship of the Holy Spirit so that the veil of their own knowledge of good and evil is removed from the eyes of their heart. Having been delivered from the deception of their own mind, they are free to behold the truth of their sonship in the face of Christ. A son of God who walks after the Spirit, in the fellowship of Christ's offering, will be progressively changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory.

We walk after the Spirit by walking in the light of the word that is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit to Christ's lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand. Paul rejoiced that he had been given the privilege of being a minister of the Spirit in the right hand of Christ. He recognised that his ministry revealed the glory of Christ and was necessary for his hearers to receive the hope of their sonship, including the inheritance of their spiritual body on the day of resurrection. Speaking about the outcome of the ministry of the Spirit, he declared, 'Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech'. 2Co 3:12. Every son of God should have the same *boldness of speech* as they testify about the ministry of the Spirit to their family, friends, neighbours, and work colleagues.

As we have received mercy

Paul recognised that he had become a minister of the Spirit on the basis that he was a recipient of the Lord's mercy. He wrote to Timothy, 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.' 1Ti 1:15-16. The mercy of God has been extended to all men through the offering of Christ. However, it is only received, or obtained, by those who have become bankrupt in spirit because they have met Christ as their Lord and King.

Like the woman who washed the feet of Christ with her tears, wiped His feet with her hair, kissed His feet, and anointed His feet with oil, the apostle Paul *loved much* because he knew that he had been *forgiven much*. The first dimension of the mercy of God is the forgiveness of the debt that has been accrued, because of our sin, under the judgement of the Law of God. However, it is important to recognise that the mercy of God is far more than forgiveness. The mercy of God grants us a participation in the fellowship of the seven wounding events that Christ experienced from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross.

In the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the other law is circumcised from our heart, enabling us to cease from sin. The mercy of God delivers us to a participation in both the dying and the living of our Lord Jesus. It includes both the remission of our sin in the death of Christ, and the capacity to live as a son of God through the resurrection of Christ. As the recipient of the mercy of God, the apostle Paul testified, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me'. Gal 2:20.

The mercy of God is new every morning because each day we have a new participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Lam 3:22-23. The apostle Paul exhorted us to this daily reality when he wrote, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service'. Rom 12:1. We will continue to be a recipient of the mercy of God until we receive the inheritance of our spiritual body on the day of resurrection. Jud 1:21.

We do not lose heart

Recognising that we are receiving the resurrection life of God in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings each day, the apostle Paul continued by saying, 'We do not lose heart'. 2Co 4:16. That is, when we experience difficulties, or when we are rejected by men, we do not draw back in unbelief and become depressed. Our testimony is that we have the treasure of Christ's resurrection life in our mortal bodies. Paul reflected on his ministry by saying, 'We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.' 2Co 4:7-10.

When we are walking after the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the resurrection life of Christ sustains and strengthens us in our mortality so that we can fulfil the will of God each day. The resurrection life of Christ is also regenerating our inner man. This is the reason why we do not lose heart in the middle of our suffering and difficult circumstances. Paul testified, 'Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.' 2Co 4:16. Furthermore, the resurrection life of Christ that is regenerating our inner man is also equipping us to minister the same resurrection life of Christ to others.

In the first chapter of his letter, Paul likened the resurrection life of Christ that regenerates our inner man, to the comfort that we receive from God as the outcome of His chastening in our life. Highlighting that our testimony of regeneration becomes a ministry of resurrection life to others, Paul said, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.' 2Co 1:3-5.

We have renounced the hidden things of shame

The apostle Paul continued to describe our ministry by saying that 'we have renounced the hidden things of shame'. We must be delivered from our self-righteous shame before we are able to be a minister of the New Covenant. It is appropriate to be ashamed about our sin when it is the outcome of the conviction of the Holy Spirit that causes us to look upon

Jesus Christ whom we have pierced. However, there is another form of shame that is only the manifestation of *our own judgement* upon ourselves. It becomes the fear of being exposed that motivates us to hide our sin by maintaining a projection that we have created for ourselves. If our sin is exposed, it is the same shame that motivates us towards the recovery of our projection through self-righteous acts of penance.

Prior to the Fall in the garden of Eden, Adam and his wife did not know any form of shame. They walked in the light of fellowship with the Lord at the tree of life each day. However, immediately after they exchanged the truth of God for the lie of Satan, and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they became deeply ashamed of their actions and their fallen human condition. Rather than seeking fellowship with the Lord, their shame motivated them to make coverings for themselves with fig leaves. We can liken the fig leaves to the projections that we make for ourselves. In addition to this, when they heard the voice of the Lord calling them for fellowship, they tried to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees in the garden.

Jesus described the motivation of shame that causes us to maintain a projection and hide ourselves from fellowship, by saying, 'The light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil'. Joh 3:19. The self-righteous shame that causes us to love the darkness, rather than the light, is a bigger problem than our evil deeds. When the word of God is proclaimed to us, and we respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit by walking in open-hearted fellowship with our brethren, the grace to repent from our evil deeds and to walk in a new way is found in the fellowship of Christ's offering. The apostle John declared, 'If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.' 1Jn 1:7.

We know that Jesus has already pioneered the pathway of our repentance and our obedience on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. Furthermore, on His offering journey, Jesus Christ has already *overcome the shame* that causes us to recoil to the darkness of our own religious projection. The apostle Paul declared that we are 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, *despising the shame*, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God'. Heb 12:2. Jesus did not despise the fact that He was humiliated because of our sin. He willingly embraced and endured the humiliation of the cross for the joy

of recovering us as sons of God. Rather, Jesus despised our *self-righteous shame* which causes us to hide ourselves because we are afraid of humiliation.

The Lord testified about how He despised our shame, by saying, through the prophet Isaiah, 'I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.' Isa 50:6. This is a wonderful point. Jesus has already overcome the shame that causes us to hide our face because of our fear of being exposed in the light. This means that when the word of the cross is proclaimed to us, there is grace for us to, likewise, *despise our self-righteous shame* and walk in the light of fellowship with our brethren. We renounce the hidden things of shame when we willingly confess our faults to one another. At the same time, we confess our faith that Christ has pioneered the pathway of our repentance and obedience so that there is grace for us to live as a new creation.

Not walking in craftiness

When we have renounced the hidden things of shame by walking in the light, it means that we do not need to walk in craftiness in relation to our ministry. When Paul said that he was not 'walking in craftiness', he was comparing his ministry to the carnal mode of ministry that was employed by many of the other messengers who had come to Corinth. Rather than walking in the light, they pretended to be messengers of light. Paul described their ministry by saying, 'For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' 2Co 11:13-14. We are reminded that Satan is now the most cunning, or crafty, of all God's creatures. Gen 3:1.

The mode of Satan is trading. A person who is walking in craftiness will employ the same mode as Satan in their relationships and in relation to their ministry. Rather than laying down their life for people in offering, they will seek to ingratiate themselves in the eyes of other people for the purpose of gaining favour or receiving something in return. This is a conquering mechanism that often masquerades behind a friendly veneer. A person who is walking in craftiness will rely upon the strategies that they can develop, using their own mind, to achieve the outcome that they want. This may include using persuasive words of wisdom to convince people to believe their message for the sake of a successful ministry outcome.

In contrast to this, Paul testified to the Corinthians in his first letter, 'I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.' 1Co 2:3-5. Paul was among the Corinthians 'in weakness' because he was joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. He ministered to them 'in fear' because he feared God and wanted to please Christ who had sent him. He was not trying to please men, nor was he afraid of being rejected by men. The ministry of Paul revealed the power of the seven Spirits of God because he was poor in spirit and he trembled at the word of the Lord. Isa 66:2.

Not handling the word of God deceitfully

The apostle Paul continued to describe the ministry of the Spirit by saying that we are not 'handling the word of God deceitfully'. 2Co 4:2. A person will handle the word deceitfully if they *cleave with deceit* to the messengers of Christ who proclaim the word of present truth to them. Rather than receiving the word of God with meekness, and meeting the messengers of Christ in a fellowship, they will view the word as a resource that will empower their own ministry projection. Even though a person may communicate the content of the word to others in an accurate manner, their ministry projection is the expression of a lie. This is the case when there is a discrepancy between a person's ministry profile and the culture of their own house.

Paul explained that the opposite of handling the word of God deceitfully is that our ministry is the 'manifestation of the truth'. 2Co 4:2. This means that the word of God that we proclaim is the expression of our own testimony. The mode of Paul's ministry was to explain and to demonstrate his message. Act 17:3. He proclaimed and portrayed Christ as crucified. 1Co 2:2. Gal 3:1. He was the exemplar of his message as a living epistle of Christ. Our ministry is the expression of our testimony when the truth of our message is demonstrated in our own life, in our own marriage, and in our own family. When we minister in this way, the word that we proclaim is an invitation for our hearers to join a fellowship with us, which is a fellowship with the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:3.

Commending ourselves to every man's conscience

The apostle Paul was not interested in communicating information to his hearers that they could use as a resource. The purpose of his ministry was to multiply the fellowship of Yahweh in lampstand churches. For this reason, Paul said that we are 'commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God'. 2Co 4:2. We note that Paul did not separate himself from his message. His ministry was an expression of his own offering, for the sake of establishing fellowship between himself and those who received him. Later, in this same letter, he testified to the Corinthians by saying, 'We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. ... Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.' 2Co 6:11,13.

It is significant that Paul did not commend himself to every person's mind. He was not focused on trying to prove the veracity of his ministry to anyone, or trying to convince anyone to receive his message. He was not concerned by the judgements that the Corinthians made about him and his ministry. 1Co 4:3. Rather, he commended himself to every man's conscience. The conscience of a person is the deepest part of their spirit. A person's spirit is their identity. Our conscience is the faculty of our spirit that enables us to know ourselves, to know God, and to know one another. It is our capacity for fellowship. When Paul commended himself to every man's conscience, he was saying that he wanted to meet each person, spirit to spirit, for the purpose of fellowship.

The light that shines from the face of Christ

When the word of God is proclaimed, the spirit of a person must be illuminated by the Holy Spirit, otherwise, their identity remains in darkness and there is no ground for fellowship. Paul concluded the description of the ministry of the Spirit by saying that, 'if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' 2Co 4:3-6.

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus Christ was revealed to be the first Man in the image and likeness of God. He is presently seated at the right

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hand of God in His spiritual body. He possesses the seven Spirits of God. The glory of God, which is the light of the seven Spirits of God, shines from His face. The light that shines from the face of Christ is revealed, by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the seven stars in the right hand of Christ. This is the *true light* of the world, which is far more important than the light of the sun that sustains the natural creation. It is the light of the seven Spirits of God that illuminates the darkness of a person's heart, enabling them to see the hope of their calling as a son of God who will be conformed to the image of Christ, so that they can reveal the glory of God forever.

Paul testified that the light that shines from the face of Christ had firstly shone into his own heart. He had been illuminated to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Then, as an *illuminated messenger* in the right hand of Christ, Paul proclaimed the word that revealed the same light to the Gentiles. Paul did not reveal himself. He rejoiced that his ministry revealed Jesus Christ and the light that shines from His face. Knowing that this light had illuminated his own heart, he was assured that if a person believed the word that he preached, then the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ would also shine into their heart. He recognised that it was only a person's unbelief that prevented them from receiving this illumination.

In this season, the Holy Spirit is speaking to us *a second time* about what it means to be part of a lampstand church. He is calling every individual and household to believe for the fulfilment of the word that has previously been spoken to us. We are believing to see a lampstand church established in our generation on the foundation of worthy houses. As we are being recovered to the fellowship of first love in our marriages, households, congregations, and in the presbytery, then we will also see the ministry of the Spirit in a new and effective way. The ministry of the households that belong to a lampstand church is to manifest the light of the seven Spirits of God among the unclean daughters of Zion, and then to the world.

Chapter I

The growth of a lampstand church

In the tabernacle of Moses, the lampstand was crafted from one piece of gold, using the symbolism that belongs to an almond tree. Exo 25:31-40. Notably, the symbolism of the lampstand does not depict an almond tree at a static point in time. Rather, it depicts a tree that is *growing*, and it particularly highlights the three stages of development that belong to the almond flowers. Recognising that a lampstand church *grows*, our focus in this chapter is to consider *how it grows* to become the revelation of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh as the light of the world.

The first point regarding the growth of a lampstand church is that it grows *from its root*. The apostle John identified the root of the lampstand when he declared, 'This is the message which we have heard from Him and declared to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.' 1Jn 1:5. When John said, 'God is Light', he was referring to the life and fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*. The light that emanates from the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim* is the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh.

When we consider the life and fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*, we note that the community of *Elohim* - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is the sum of

all diversity. Equally, the fellowship of Yahweh is the sum of all unity. *Elohim* is Three and Yahweh is One. The sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh is the full capacity that belongs to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the fellowship of one Spirit, to multiply Their life and fellowship through offering.

Before the foundation of the world, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit determined to make offering for the purpose of giving us Their life and including us in Their fellowship. They declared, 'Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness.' Gen 1:26. The community of *Elohim* *does not grow*. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, and will always be, the only members of the Godhead. However, the fellowship of Yahweh *does grow* as men are born of God's own life, and are then taught to abide in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is important to begin with this fundamental understanding regarding a lampstand. The purpose of a lampstand church is to reveal the multiplication of the life and fellowship of Yahweh by offering. For this reason, the *light* of a lampstand church is the *light* of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. The light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, which is revealed by a lampstand church, is the *light* of the world. Notably, the light of a lampstand church is *the only light* that shines in the darkness of this present world.

Jesus Christ – the Light of the world

When Jesus Christ emptied Himself to be born from the womb of the virgin Mary, He was the first manifestation of a lampstand that had grown from the root of Yahweh *Elohim*, through the lineage of David. The birth of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, 'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots'. Isa 11:1. Isaiah continued, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord'. Isa 11:2.

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, by the Holy Spirit, on the day of His baptism in the Jordan River. Soon after His baptism, Jesus stood up to read in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth. He declared from the book of Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.' Luk 4:18. Notably, Jesus then said to

all the people, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' Luk 4:21. Isa 61:1-2.

In the flesh of mankind, Jesus was the full embodiment of the lampstand that belongs to the true tabernacle of God. Having been anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, He revealed the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh to the world during His earthly ministry. Jesus testified, 'I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.' Joh 8:12. In the context of healing the physical and spiritual sight of the man who had been born blind, He said, 'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' Joh 9:5.

Jesus was *discipled* by the Father, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to be the Messenger of the Covenant. Jesus testified, 'The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as a disciple.' Isa 50:4. In this regard, we could liken Jesus Himself to *the first mature bud* that emerged from the first calyx, proceeding from the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim* as the root of the lampstand.

From a botanical perspective, the *calyx* is composed of green, leaf-like structures called 'sepals' that protect the bud before it opens. It is the *bud* that opens up to become a *flower*. In the symbolism of the lampstand, the *calyx* represents the context and process of discipleship. It is the context in which a son of God from a worthy house is discipled to become a messenger. The bud represents a disciple-messenger who is sent to look for worthy houses. The flower represents a congregation of worthy houses that are the fruit of the ministry of the disciple-messenger.

Notably, during His earthly ministry, Jesus laid the foundation for a lampstand church that would become the light of the world once He had departed from the world. He did this in three stages. These three stages reveal the pattern of how the branch of a lampstand church grows from the *calyx* to the *bud* to the *flower*. First, revealing the principle of the *calyx*, Jesus taught His own disciples. He may have spent approximately eighteen months teaching the *twelve* disciples before He sent them to look for worthy houses.

It may have been a further twelve months before He sent the *seventy-two* disciples to also look for worthy houses. We know that the seventy-two were sent in the final season of His ministry once He had set His face toward Jerusalem for His offering journey. Luk 9:53. Regardless of the exact timeframes, there was certainly a season of discipleship before Jesus

sent the twelve and the seventy-two to look for worthy houses. Once they had been sent as disciple-messengers by Christ, they were revealing the principle of the *bud*.

The fruit of the ministry of the twelve disciples and the seventy-two disciples was a large group of worthy houses. The house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus was one of those houses in the town of Bethany. It is likely that the 500 brethren to whom Jesus appeared at one time, after His resurrection, were the representatives from all the worthy houses that had been established during His earthly ministry. 1Co 15:6. After the Day of Pentecost, all of those worthy houses became foundational to the fellowship of the lampstand church in the region of Judea. Many of those houses would have been part of the *first flower* on the central branch of the lampstand in Jerusalem.

Branching out from where He is

Zechariah prophetically declared concerning Christ, 'Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.' Zec 6:13.

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus Christ was the first Man in the image and likeness of God. He is *the Man* whose name is *the Branch*. This name denotes that He is the true Lampstand. He is the anointed Branch of the Lord because He possesses the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. Following His resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples and taught them about the kingdom of God for forty days. During this period of forty days, the Light of the world was *in the world*, but the Light was not revealed *to the world*.

At the end of this forty-day period, Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives and sat down in the third heaven at the right hand of God. He is seated on His own throne as both the King of kings and our great High Priest. The ministry of the gospel of peace reveals His kingship and His priesthood. Since the Day of Pentecost, Jesus Christ has been branching out from His throne, which is His place at the right hand of God, to build the temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord is the dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Eph 2:21-22.

There is a relationship, but also a distinction, between the *temple* of the Lord and *lampstand churches*. The temple of the Lord is *the body of Christ*.

The building blocks of the temple of the Lord are chosen, precious, and are living stones. In his first letter, the apostle Peter declared, 'Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' 1Pe 2:4-5. We are individual members of Christ's body.

In addition to being the Head of His many-membered body, Jesus Christ is also the Head of every *household* that belongs to His *lampstand churches*. The building blocks of a lampstand church are worthy houses. It is the Father who places sons of God into the fellowship of the body of Christ. 1Co 12:18. However, it is Christ who builds His lampstand churches by discipling worthy houses through the messengers in His right hand. We recall that Jesus said to Peter, 'On this rock *I will build My church*, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.' Mat 16:18.

Lampstand churches, which are composed of worthy houses, are formed from the body of Christ. The apostle Peter described a fellowship of worthy houses in a local congregation that is part of a lampstand church as 'an elect lady'. 2Jn 1:1. It is a local manifestation of the bride of Christ. In our present day, *the virgin bride of Christ is the fullness of seven lampstand churches revealing the Son's throne*. This is an important point. In the Old Covenant, the lampstand was *one piece* of furniture in the temple. In contrast, in the New Covenant, *every piece* of furniture that belongs to the true temple in the heavenly places is now revealed through Christ's lampstand churches.

Revealing the ministry of *the altar of sacrifice*, the church is the place of offering where we present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. In addition, we know that there was a tangible economy of offering that operated within the lampstand church in Jerusalem. We read in the book of Acts, 'Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and they distributed to each as anyone had need'. Act 4:34-35.

Revealing the ministry of *the laver*, the church is the place where we are washed by the water of the word so that we are cleansed and sanctified for our priestly service. Jesus exemplified the ministry of the true laver when He washed the feet of the disciples during the last supper. We recall that Jesus said, 'If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' Joh 13:14-15.

Revealing the ministry of *the table of shewbread*, the church is the place where the word of present truth is proclaimed by Christ's messengers as the true bread from heaven. Jesus Christ has appointed overseers to serve in the presbytery for the purpose of ensuring that all who belong to the church receive food in due season. Mat 24:45. The bread from heaven is the provision for the house to house fellowship of the church. The lampstand church in Jerusalem received the word that was publicly proclaimed by the apostles in Solomon's Portico, and they then broke bread from house to house. Act 2:46.

Revealing the ministry of *the altar of incense*, the church is the place where we join the intercession and travail of Christ. When the apostle Peter was arrested and put in prison, many from the church gathered in the house of Mary to pray for him. This fellowship of intercessory prayer among the saints was an expression of the true altar of incense. In this present season, during the reign of the seventh world kingdom, the Holy Spirit has been emphasising that there is a unique travail for Christ's lampstand churches to bring forth the manchild administration that is suitable for the fullness of times.

In the tabernacle of Moses, *the ark of the covenant* was the sum of all the pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. The ark of the covenant was the symbol of the throne of the Son of God. In our present day, Jesus Christ is seated upon His own intrinsic throne at the right hand of God. In contrast to the position of the lampstand in the tabernacle of old, the lampstand administration in the true temple stands *before the throne of Yahweh Son*. It reveals the One who is seated upon the throne. The glory of God that shines in the face of Christ is revealed through the lampstand administration that is in His right hand.

The mandate of Jeremiah

How does Jesus Christ branch out from where He is, seated at the right hand of God, to build the temple of the Lord? In the first case, *He reaches out His right hand to lay hold of a messenger*. The temple of the Lord is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Eph 2:20. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, 'By revelation He made known to me the mystery ... which in other ages was not make known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets'. Eph 3:3,5. The beginning of a lampstand administration is when Christ lays hold of a messenger by His right hand and then sends them to proclaim the gospel of God.

In relation to the beginning of lampstand churches among the Gentile nations, Jesus Christ first reached out His right hand to lay hold of the apostle Paul. He was the apostle to the Gentiles. However, before we look at the ministry of Paul, it will be helpful to consider the ordination and mandate that was given to the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet Jeremiah was the forerunner of the ministry of the apostle Paul. Furthermore, Jeremiah was the 'type' of the prophetic ministry of a lampstand church in the end of the age.

The Word of the Lord came speaking to Jeremiah in the same way in which He appeared to Abram. Jer 1:4. Gen 15:1. The Word of the Lord is the Son of God, who is the full embodiment of the Word of Yahweh *Elohim*. The Son of God is the embodiment of *the Scriptures* that have forever been settled in the heavens as the full revelation of the dialogue of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world. Psa 119:89. The apostle Paul declared that *the Scriptures* preached the gospel to Abraham. Gal 3:8.

The Lord said to Jeremiah, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.' Jer 1:5. Jeremiah received his identity as the outcome of procreation. However, before his spirit was formed in the womb of his mother, Jeremiah's name and the works of his sonship were discussed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When the Word of the Lord came speaking to Jeremiah, he was being called to *meet his name* from before the foundation of the world.

Jeremiah lived during the dispensation of the Old Covenant. Unlike a child who has believing parents in the New Covenant, Jeremiah was not born of God in the womb of his mother. However, he was sanctified, or set apart, as a child who belonged to the Lord. Specifically, he was set apart to be a prophet to the nations. In a similar way, the apostle Paul testified that he had been set apart from his mother's womb to be an apostle to the nations. He said, 'It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.' Gal 1:15-16.

Jeremiah was born into a priestly family in the land of Benjamin. Jer 1:1. It is important to appreciate that Jeremiah was more than a prophet to the nation of Israel. He was called to be *a prophet to the Gentiles*. Even though the focus of Jeremiah's ministry was toward the southern kingdom of Judah before, and during, the Babylonian exile, his prophetic mandate was to all the Gentile nations. As we have already noted, he was the forerunner to the apostle Paul. Paul came from the tribe of Benjamin and was called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

When the Word of the Lord first spoke to Jeremiah, he responded in unbelief because of his age. The Lord said to him, 'Do not say, "I am a youth", for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you.' Jer 1:7-8. The Lord was effectively saying to Jeremiah, 'Do not fear, I am your shield.' If he continued to look into the face of the Lord, he would be delivered from the fear that was associated with looking into the faces of those who rejected his ministry. Jer 1:19.

The ordination of Jeremiah

Jeremiah then testified, 'The Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant".' Jer 1:9-10. When we consider Jeremiah's testimony, we note that there are *four elements* that comprise the ordination of a messenger. The ordination of a messenger in this manner is the beginning of the growth of a lampstand church.

The first element of Jeremiah's ordination is that the Lord *stretched out His hand* to lay hold of him. This is the first step in the ordination of every messenger who belongs to the apostolic administration of Christ. A messenger is not self-appointed. Jesus Christ must lay hold of a messenger and impart ascension-gift grace through His right hand. Paul declared that when Christ ascended on high, He gave gifts to men. Eph 4:8. He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastor-teachers, or teacher-pastors. Eph 4:11.

The second element is that the Lord *touched Jeremiah's mouth*. We can compare this with the experience of the prophet Isaiah. When he saw the Lord of hosts on His throne, and heard the seraphim proclaiming the holiness of the fellowship of Yahweh, Isaiah declared, 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Isa 6:5. Despite his prophetic grace and ministry, Isaiah was illuminated to see how far he had fallen from the heights of the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*, which is 'holy, holy, holy'. Isa 6:3. Rev 4:8.

In Isaiah's revelation, a seraph cleansed his lips with a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. Isa 6:6. The coal from the altar joined Isaiah to the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim's* offering and enabled him to present himself for fellowship with the Lord. In the New Covenant, it is Jesus Christ who extends His right hand, by the Holy Spirit, to cleanse the

lips of every messenger who has been illuminated to see how far they have fallen from the heights of Mount Zion. The Lord used His own hand to touch the mouth of Jeremiah because He was ordaining him as the type of an apostolic administration.

The third element of Jeremiah's ordination as a messenger is that the Lord *put His words in his mouth*. It is important that we understand the distinction between the Lord cleansing the lips of a messenger, and the Lord putting His words in the mouth of a messenger. The lips of a messenger need to be cleansed so that they can participate in the fellowship *of the right hand* of Christ. The Lord can then put His words in their mouth, and send them as a messenger *from His right hand* to proclaim His word and to invite their hearers to join the same fellowship.

The fourth element of Jeremiah's ordination as a messenger is that the Lord *gave to him prophetic authority over nations and kingdoms*. He had authority to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. Jer 1:10. In relation to *building*, we are reminded that the apostle Paul described himself as 'a wise master builder'. He laid the foundation of Jesus Christ in every place, and then exhorted every man to take heed how they built their own house upon that foundation. 1Co 3:10. Similarly, Paul was sent to plant lampstand churches among the Gentile nations. 1Co 3:8.

I am ready to perform My word

The mandate given to Jeremiah extended beyond his ministry to the Jewish nation in relation to the kingdom of Babylon in his own day. As we have already considered, he was the 'type' of the ministry of Christ's lampstand administration as we approach the time of the end. Immediately after Jeremiah received his personal mandate, the Word of the Lord came again, saying, 'Jeremiah, what do you see?' He responded, 'I see a branch of an almond tree.' Jer 1:11. *The branch of an almond tree is a lampstand.*

The Lord declared, 'You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.' Jer 1:12. The key point is that the Lord uses a lampstand administration to proclaim His word and to accomplish His purpose among the nations. The lampstand is the Lord's prophetic instrument that reveals the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh as the Light of the world. The Lord will use a lampstand administration to fulfil His purpose in the end of the age, which includes judging the seventh world kingdom and bringing over half of the world's population into the kingdom of God.

Christ's lampstand churches are presently in travail to bring forth the manchild administration that is suitable for the fullness of times. Notably, the administration that is suitable for the time of the end is still a lampstand administration. When the Father takes His seat, the administration will not shift from the lampstand to another piece of furniture in the true temple. Rather, the administration of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh will move from 'the face' of the Son's throne to 'the face' of the Father's throne. The seven presbyteries in the right hand of Christ will become one, worldwide presbytery around the throne of the Father. And the seven lampstand churches will become one, worldwide lampstand that reveals the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh before the Father's throne.

The prophet Isaiah described the ministry of the church as being one, worldwide lampstand in the time of the end. He said, 'Arise, shine, for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord (the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh) is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising ... then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.' Isa 60:1-5.

The lampstand administration of the church will continue to proclaim and to accomplish the word of the Lord until the door to the temple of God in the heavenly places is closed. At that time, Moses and Elijah will replace the evangelistic ministry of the church as the Light of the world for a period of 3½ years. Notably, Moses and Elijah are called 'the two olive trees' (anointed ones) and 'the two lampstands' who stand before the Lord of the whole earth. Rev 11:4. The fruit of their ministry will be the final harvest of sons of God who will gain victory over Antichrist and the eighth world kingdom as they lay down their lives to the death as martyrs.

The ministry of the apostle Paul

In relation to planting and growing lampstand churches among the Gentiles, Jesus Christ first reached out His right hand to lay hold of the apostle Paul. After the Lord met Paul on the road to Damascus, the Lord sent Ananias to lay hands on Paul so that he would regain his sight. The Lord said to Ananias concerning Paul, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' Act 9:15-16. God had sanctified Paul from his mother's womb to be a servant in whom Christ would be glorified. Gal 1:15-16.

The Lord declared through the prophet Isaiah, 'Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles ... I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles.' Isa 42:1,6. Of course, this prophetic statement applied first to Jesus Christ. However, it applied also to the ministry of the apostle Paul. Furthermore, it applies to the ministry of the apostolic administration of Christ during the church age, and it will apply to the ministry of the 144 000 in the time of the end.

Likewise, Isaiah declared, 'And now the Lord says, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him (for I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength), indeed He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth".' Isa 49:5-6. We know that this prophecy was applicable to the apostle Paul because, on his first missionary journey to the region of Galatia, he quoted this passage and applied it directly to his own ministry. Act 13:47.

Jesus Christ personally disciplined the apostle Paul so that he could be sent as a disciple-messenger to the Gentiles. As a messenger in the right hand of Christ, Paul was the embodiment of a lampstand among the nations. The Lord had anointed him with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. He revealed the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh as a light to the Gentiles wherever he travelled and proclaimed the gospel of God. In the first case, we can liken the ministry of the apostle Paul as a disciple-messenger to the first *bud* on the central branch of the lampstand.

To illustrate the growth of lampstand churches, it will be helpful to consider Paul's ministry in the city of Ephesus. The fruit of Paul's ministry in Ephesus was seven lampstand churches in the region of Asia. The book of Acts recorded that, when Paul first came to Ephesus, he found some disciples. It is reasonable to assume that they were disciples of Apollos. Act 18:24. We know that Apollos preached in Ephesus before Paul arrived. He was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. We could liken Apollos to an evangelical preacher who proclaimed the lordship of Christ, but he did not declare the gospel of sonship until he was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. Act 18:26.

When Paul arrived, he immediately asked the disciples about their understanding and appropriation of the gospel of sonship. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' The disciples

replied, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' Act 19:2. The Scripture did not record the entire conversation, but we can assume that Paul took the time to explain the steps of salvation to them. This would have included the significance of Christ sending the Holy Spirit into our spirit as the Spirit of adoption who enables us to cry out, 'Abba! Father!' Rom 8:15.

We know that Paul did preach the steps of salvation and the significance of the Holy Spirit to this group of believers in Ephesus, because he later wrote to them, 'In Him [Christ] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, *the gospel of your salvation*; in whom also, having believed, you were *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory'. Eph 1:13-14.

Paul's first question to the Ephesians regarding the Holy Spirit focused on the need for *God to abide in us*. His second question to the Ephesians focused on the need for *us to abide in God*. He proceeded to ask them, 'Into what then were you baptised?' Act 19:3. They replied that they had been baptised into John's baptism. That is, they had been baptised in water as an outward sign of their repentance from sin, in response to the gospel that had been proclaimed to them by Apollos. Again, the Scripture did not record the entire conversation, but it recorded that Paul proceeded to upgrade their understanding of baptism. Act 19:4-5.

The growth of the lampstand in Ephesus

The congregation in Ephesus began with about twelve families who had been immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus, and immersed into the Holy Spirit so that they were filled with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. Act 19:5-7. We could liken this congregation to *the first flower* in the central branch of the lampstand. Paul then lived among this congregation in Ephesus. In this regard, Paul was no longer the messenger coming *to Ephesus*; he was a messenger living *in Ephesus*. We could liken Paul's ministry in Ephesus to the *bud* above the first flower on the central branch of the lampstand.

Paul spent three months proclaiming the gospel of God in the synagogue. In contrast to the ministry of Apollos, who reasoned from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ, the focus of Paul's ministry was to proclaim the kingdom of God. Act 19:8. Paul proclaimed the gospel of sonship. Paul's ministry had a polarising impact upon those who belonged to the synagogue. Some believed and became his disciples. However, there were others who hardened their heart and did not believe. When they began to

publicly speak evil of the Way, Paul departed from them and took the disciples with him from the synagogue.

Paul then began to teach in the school of Tyrannus. Act 19:9. We know that he did this for two whole years. Act 19:10. It is likely that a believer named Tyrannus allowed Paul to use his school building. In the first case, the school building replaced the Jewish synagogue as the context for Paul's public ministry. Paul taught daily in the school of Tyrannus in the same way in which the apostles had taught daily in Solomon's Portico. However, we know that Paul also taught from house to house. When he later called the Ephesian presbytery to Miletus, Paul reflected, 'I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.' Act 20:20.

In addition to his public ministry, Paul may have used other classrooms in the school of Tyrannus for the discipleship of worthy houses. Of course, he would have also visited and stayed in many of the houses in the Ephesian region. Whether the actual teaching happened in the houses or in the school, Paul manifested a discipleship initiative toward worthy houses. We could liken Paul's discipleship initiative toward the worthy houses in Ephesus as *the calyx* at the beginning of a new branch of the lampstand. He was looking for disciples *from worthy houses* who were able to join the fellowship of the presbytery in the region.

When a disciple-messenger was sent from the fellowship of the presbytery into a new region to look for worthy houses, it was as though a new *bud* had emerged from the *calyx*. When the disciple-messenger established a new group of worthy houses, it was as though the *bud* had produced a new *flower* on the branch. In this manner, the branches of the lampstand church in Ephesus grew from *calyx* to *bud* to *flower*.

It is likely that the one lampstand church in Ephesus contained many *branches*. Each branch would have included multiple congregations within a particular region or geographical area. The leaders from each branch of the lampstand, who belonged to the one presbytery in Ephesus, would have travelled regularly to fellowship with Paul. Furthermore, they would have travelled from congregation to congregation within their branch for the purpose of publicly proclaiming the word of God and discipling the worthy houses in each place.

During his public and house to house ministry in Ephesus, Paul evidently identified some men from worthy houses who had received ascension-gift grace from Christ. Paul was able to send those men as disciple-messengers into the regions beyond Ephesus to establish new lampstand churches.

Having been sent from the right hand of Christ by Paul, each ascension-gift messenger became the first *bud* on the central branch of a new lampstand. For example, we know that the church in Colossae was started by a man named Epaphras. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul referred to Epaphras as 'our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf'. Col 1:7.

The book of Acts summarised the growth of lampstand churches from Paul's ministry in Ephesus by saying that 'this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks'. Act 19:10. During his ministry in Ephesus, Paul endured false accusation, opposition and persecution. Furthermore, there were some leaders and people, such as the Jewish exorcists, who tried to 'cleave to Paul with deceit' for the sake of their own empowerment. Act 19:11-16. However, despite all of those issues, 'the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed'. Act 19:20. The fruit of Paul's ministry in Ephesus was seven lampstand churches in the region of Asia.

Brief comment on symbolic numbers

As we conclude this chapter, we will make a brief comment on two of the symbolic numbers that we observe in the lampstand. First, it is notable that there are 24 buds above the first flower in the lampstand. We are reminded that the buds represent disciple-messengers who have come from worthy houses. The 24 buds represent the fellowship of the presbytery for the lampstand in a nation. In the time of the end, the 24 buds from each lampstand will be gathered up into the fellowship of the worldwide presbytery on the 24 thrones around the throne of the Father.

Second, the total number of parts in the lampstand is important. If we consider the base to be one part, then there are 70 parts in the lampstand. However, if we recognise that the base is the community of *Elohim* - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and therefore consider the base to be three parts, then there are 72 parts in the lampstand. The numeric of 72 is significant because, once we apply the double portion principle, it is 144. In the time of the end, the 144 000 will comprise the worldwide lampstand that reveals the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh in the face of the Father's throne. Rev 4:5. When the Lamb opens the first seal, the presbytery around the Father's throne will send the 144 000 to look for worthy houses and to reveal the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh to the world.

Chapter 2

The restoration of a lampstand church

The word regarding the restoration of a lampstand church was first delivered to us fifty years ago. During *the first time* of this word, it was received by many leaders who professed a faith for a presbytery and a city-wide communion. However, many of those same leaders maintained a collegial mode in the presbytery, and an independent clergy mode among their own outreaches. The last fifty years have been a trial of faith where the word of the Lord has tried us for the purpose of *reforming our culture* so that it is consistent with the fellowship of Yahweh. In the present season, the word regarding the restoration of a lampstand church is being proclaimed to us *a second time* because the time for its fulfilment is upon us.

In contrast to the first time, when many cleaved to the word with deceit, we will inherit the word on lampstand church *the second time*, upon the foundation of worthy houses. A messenger must have a house of peace before he can be sent by the King to proclaim the gospel of peace to another house. A house of peace is a house that has been reconciled to God and Christ the King, because it has embraced the conditions

of peace. Furthermore, it has become a place of fellowship. It is characterised by fellowship between husband and wife, fellowship between parents and children, fellowship with the presbytery, and fellowship with other houses in the church.

At the beginning of the book of Revelation, the apostle John greeted all the households that belong to the seven lampstand churches by saying, 'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne.' Rev 1:4. In this case, John was referring to *the throne of the Son*. Jesus Christ is presently seated on His own intrinsic throne at the right hand of the Father. In the first chapter of the book of Revelation, Jesus is called the One 'who is and who was and who is to come'. We know that this description refers to the Son because Jesus *introduced Himself* to John by saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End", says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty". Rev 1:8.

Four dimensions of the Son's throne

The apostle John continued to describe the glorified Son of Man at the right hand of God by saying that He is 'the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth', and the One 'who loved us and released us from our sins in His own blood'. Rev 1:5. In this way, John described *the four dimensions* that belong to the Person of Jesus Christ who is *enthroned* in His spiritual body at the right hand of God. It is important to recognise that the spiritual body of the Son became His throne. For this reason, the four dimensions of His Person are also the four administrations that belong to His throne.

As the Faithful Witness, Jesus Christ is *the Prophet* who is the embodiment of the word of God and the source of the Elijah ministry. Moses prophesied that Christ would come as the Prophet when he said, 'The Lord your God will raise up a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.' Deu 18:15. As the Prophet, Jesus did not bear witness of Himself. Notably, when Jesus Christ was transfigured before the disciples on the mountain, Moses and Elijah bore witness that He was the full expression of the Law and the prophets, and then the Father Himself declared that Jesus is *the Prophet*. The Father declared with a loud voice from heaven, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!' Mar 9:7.

Referring to the Father's testimony regarding Christ on the mountain, Peter said, 'And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.' 2Pe 1:19. As *the Prophet*, Jesus Christ was raised up on the cross as the full revelation of the Law and the word of the prophets. He established the Law in the cross and sealed up all vision and prophecy. In our day, the prophetic word of God, which is the only light in the darkness of this present world, is proclaimed by Christ through the presbyteries in His right hand. We must take heed to the word of present truth that is proclaimed to us. Heb 2:1-3. Heb 12:25. The word will illuminate our heart if we receive it, but it will also invoke the judgement of God upon us if we reject it.

As the Firstborn from the dead, Jesus Christ is the first Man in the image and likeness of God. He is the great Shepherd who travelled all the way to the bottom of the mountains in the land of God's forgetfulness, on His offering journey, for the sake of recovering us as lost sheep who have gone astray. He returned to the Father, and brought us back with Him, by the power of God's resurrection life in His blood. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul declared that the God of peace 'brought up our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant'. Heb 13:20. The Scripture likens the power of God's resurrection life to the power of the wings of an eagle. In each wounding event on His offering journey, Christ was sustained and brought back from the death of our sin, by this eagle-wing power.

When the Father places us as sons of God into the body of Christ, we become the mortal members of His immortal body. If we are properly connected to His headship, then the power of His resurrection life is given to us in our mortality as we participate in the fellowship of His seven wounding events. It is important to recognise that God has made Christ, as the Firstborn from the dead, to be Head of the church. He is the Head of every household in His lampstand churches. In the time of the end, every household that is submitted to the headship of Christ will be protected under the shadow of the Father's tabernacle, which is under the shelter of His wings. Rev 7:15. Psa 91:1-4. The resurrection life of God will be the protection and provision for every worthy house that belongs to Mount Zion in the time of the end. Isa 4:5.

As the ruler of the kings of the earth, He is *the King of kings* and *the Lord of lords*. He is the ruler and judge of the world. Recognising that Christ is the King of kings, the psalmist instructed the kings of the earth to,

‘Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.’ Psa 2:11-12. The wrath of the King will not be revealed in the world until the opening of the seals. In our present day, the King sits as judge in the middle of His presbyteries and lampstand churches. Speaking about His impending judgement upon the woman Jezebel, and her spiritual children, Jesus said to the presbytery in Thyatira, ‘All the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.’ Rev 2:23.

As the One who loves us and released us from our sins, He is our great High Priest. Jesus became the suffering High Priest when He *offered Himself* to God, in the garden of Gethsemane, to become our sin offering by fully identifying Himself with our sin and death. On His offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross, Christ was fully tempted as we are, and yet without sin. He took our sin out into the fire of God’s everlasting judgement on the cross, while at the same time, He learned our obedience as sons of God. Having completed His reconciling work, He is now seated at the right hand of God as our great High Priest, forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 8:1. Heb 5:8-10. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. Heb 9:15. Heb 12:24. He forever lives to minister to us a participation in His finished offering.

The apostle John’s vision

While the apostle John was praying in the Spirit on the island of Patmos, he heard a voice behind him like the sound of a great trumpet. The voice belonged to Jesus Christ. When John turned to see the voice, he saw seven golden lampstands. He also saw Jesus Christ seated on His own throne, at the right hand of God, in the middle of the lampstands. Jesus was clothed with a robe that reached to His feet, and was girded about His chest with a golden band.

From our individual perspective as sons of God, we know that Jesus Christ is seated upon His own throne as our great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. As we have already stated, He forever lives to make intercession for us by ministering to us a participation in His finished offering. The priestly ministry of Christ is the major focus of the book of Hebrews. Paul wrote, ‘Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: we have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens’. Heb 8:1. However, it is

important to recognise that the major focus of the book of Revelation is *the kingship of Christ*.

It is helpful to consider that the robe that reaches to the feet of Christ is *primarily* a royal robe. It is the robe that belongs to the King seated on His throne. The robe reaches to the feet of Christ, which is the altar in the true tabernacle, because His royal robe fills the true temple that connects heaven and earth. We are reminded that the prophet Isaiah declared, 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.' Isa 6:1. The golden band is also a symbol of Christ's divine authority as the King.

In Chapter 1 of the book of Revelation, John described Christ clothed in a robe and seated upon His throne. In Chapter 19 of the book of Revelation, John described Christ clothed in a robe and riding on a white horse. In both visions, it is the same anointed King who is clothed *in the same robe*. It is a robe that is dipped in blood because Christ has already trampled the winepress of the wrath of God, *by Himself*, on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. Rev 19:13. Isa 63:1-3. Notably, Christ has a name that is written on His robe - it is 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. Rev 19:16.

It is important to appreciate that the King of kings and Lord of lords, who will come on a white horse to judge and make war with the nations in the end of the age, is *the same King* who is presently seated upon His throne and speaking to His lampstand churches today. In both Chapter 1 and Chapter 19, John described Jesus as having eyes like a flame of fire and a sharp two-edged sword coming from His mouth. His name is called 'Faithful and True'. Rev 19:11. We know that Jesus addressed the presbytery in Laodicea as 'the Faithful and True Witness'. Rev 3:14.

Jesus Christ is the King who 'in righteousness judges and makes war'. Rev 19:11. Christ is not yet judging and making war with the nations as the King on the white horse. However, as the One who searches the minds and hearts of men, He is already judging among His lampstand churches. Rev 2:23. And He is already making war against His enemies in His lampstand churches. Jesus said to the presbytery in Pergamum, 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them [those who hold the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans] with the sword of My mouth.' Rev 2:16.

The sword that proceeds from the mouth of Christ is one of the seven personal attributes that John described in Chapter 1 of the book

of Revelation. These seven symbolic attributes reveal that Christ possesses the seven Spirits of God. We are reminded that the name 'Christ' means 'the Anointed One'. Jesus introduced Himself to the presbytery in Sardis by saying, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.' Rev 3:1. The seven stars in the right hand of Christ are the presbyteries of His lampstand churches. It is the work of restored presbyteries in the right hand of Christ to reveal the administration that belongs to the Son's throne, and to minister the power of the seven Spirits of God to lampstand churches.

John fell at the feet of Christ

When the apostle John saw Christ seated on the throne as the King in the middle of His lampstand churches, he fell at His feet like a dead man. In this regard, we can compare the response of John to the response of Isaiah when he saw the King and heard the seraphim proclaim the holiness of the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*. Isaiah testified, 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.' Isa 6:5.

Isaiah was illuminated to see the uncleanness of his own lips because he saw and heard the holy conversation that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh. This is an important point. We only see the depths of our own iniquity when we are illuminated to see the heights of our calling. The outcome of this illumination is that we become bankrupt in spirit. This is not a pathetic position. As soon as we become bankrupt in spirit, we receive the blessing of faith for participation in the kingdom of God - which is the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Mat 5:3.

In Isaiah's vision, one of the seraphim cleansed his lips with a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. Isa 6:6-7. Once his lips had been cleansed, Isaiah was able to present himself, *by faith*, for fellowship with the Lord. In John's vision, Jesus Christ reached out His own right hand to lay hold of him. He then said to him, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.' Rev 1:17-18. This was *the word of faith* that was proclaimed to the apostle John by his King.

After Jesus Christ ministered faith to the apostle John to join the fellowship *of* His right hand, He then appointed him to write to the seven churches as a messenger *in* His right hand. He instructed him to 'write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things

which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.' Rev 1:19-20.

Jesus addressed the presbytery of each lampstand church as a star in His right hand because that was their calling. However, at the same time, He addressed the presbytery in Ephesus as a star that had fallen from His right hand. Christ *reached out His right hand* to the presbytery in Ephesus, and the other fallen presbyteries, by proclaiming His word to them through the apostle John. To be recovered to the fellowship of the right hand of Christ, each presbyter needed to respond to Christ's word in the same manner as the apostle John. That is, each presbyter needed to fall at the feet of their King as those who had become bankrupt in spirit.

Behold I am coming quickly

In this season, we have been considering that Jesus said to His disciples, 'What king, going to make war against another king does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks *conditions of peace*.' Luk 14:31-32. Having already laid down His life for all men, *in weakness*, on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, Christ's second coming will be *in power*, as the King of kings and Lord of lords, to rule in the middle of His enemies.

After the Father has taken His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne at the right hand of God to be presented before the Father. The Father will give Christ the authority to rule in the middle of His enemies when He gives to Him the scroll with the seven seals. Rev 5:7-10. The prophet Daniel declared, 'Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one which shall not be destroyed.' Dan 7:14. When Christ begins to open the seals upon the scroll, the judgement of God and the wrath of the Lamb will begin to be revealed in the world.

In our present day, Jesus Christ is not yet coming to judge the world. However, there are seasons of visitation when Christ comes to judge His presbyteries and lampstand churches. In this regard, we are reminded that Peter said, 'The time has come for judgement to begin at the house

of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?' 1Pe 4:17. In relation to judgement, the coming of Christ is always described as being quick or sudden. That is, Christ always comes at an hour that we do not expect. We know that Jesus used many parables to highlight this principle to His disciples, and to us.

When we recognise that Christ is coming quickly for judgement, it causes us to fear God and to ask for the conditions of peace. In the days of the apostle John, many of the presbyters among the lampstand churches in Asia did not know that they had fallen from the heavenly places, and nor did they understand that Christ was coming quickly in judgement. They did not know that they needed to send a delegation to ask for the conditions of peace. In His mercy, Christ sent the apostle John before His face to be His emissary. John's mandate was to announce that Christ was coming quickly to His lampstand churches, and to proclaim *the conditions of peace* to the presbytery of each lampstand church.

Responding to the word of Christ with *repentance and faith* was the foundational condition of peace for each presbytery and lampstand church. For example, Jesus said to the presbytery in Ephesus, 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen, *repent* and do the first works [of faith], or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - *unless you repent.*' Rev 2:5. He said to the presbytery in Pergamum, 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.' Rev 2:16. Similarly, Jesus called the presbyteries in Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea to repentance and faith.

We note that Jesus did not call the presbyteries in Smyrna and Philadelphia to repentance. However, He did call them to faithfulness. The presbytery in Smyrna needed to be faithful until death in the face of persecution so that they would receive the crown of life. Rev 2:10. The presbytery in Philadelphia needed to persevere in faith so that they did not lose their reward. Jesus said to them, 'Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.' Rev 3:11. In the case of every presbytery, it was the command of Christ that gave to those who received His word the capacity for repentance and faith. The faith of each presbyter was demonstrated by their obedience to Christ's commands.

The reward of Christ

Jesus said, 'Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.' Rev 22:12-13. Notably, Jesus was quoting from the book of Isaiah. We know that He was the source of the prophetic word to Isaiah. Isaiah recorded this statement, regarding the reward of Christ, *three times* in his prophetic book. When we consider the context of the statements in the book of Isaiah, it helps us to understand its application for the church in the end of the age.

Isaiah 40

The first time that this prophetic statement was recorded is in Chapter 40 of the book of Isaiah. This is the passage that is focused on the restoration of the Elijah ministry. The Lord declared that the voice of a messenger, crying out in the wilderness, would prepare the way of the Lord. We know that this prophecy was initially fulfilled by John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ. However, it is also fulfilled by the restoration of the Elijah ministry, in the church, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. Mal 4:5.

Prophesying about the restoration of the messenger administration in the church, Isaiah declared, 'O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid, say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, *His reward* is with Him, and *His work* before Him.' Isa 40:10. The message, 'Behold your God', proclaims that the Father is coming to take His seat. At that time, Christ will stand up to rule in the middle of His enemies.

The reward of Christ is *His wages*. It is the wages that He received from the Father on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, when He fulfilled the works that have been predestined by the Father for every son of God. As we now fulfil the works that Christ has already completed for us, in the fellowship of His offering, He shares His wages with us as *our reward*. Our reward is our inheritance. The apostle Paul declared to the Colossians, 'Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.' Col 3:23-24.

In the first case, our reward is in heaven because our full inheritance is the glory that belongs to our heavenly body. However, it is important to recognise that there are also *seven dimensions of reward* that Christ has promised to give to those who overcome in this present age. When Jesus addressed the presbytery of each lampstand church, He concluded His admonition with a specific promise to the overcomers. Notably, the seven dimensions of the reward of Christ are a manifestation of *exanastasis*, which is the resurrection life of Christ in mortality. Specifically, all seven dimensions of reward will be revealed by the church, in mortality, during the time of the end.

This brings us to an important point. The reward of Christ is the blessing of being an active participant in the administration of Christ that is suitable for the fullness of times. The reward includes the privilege of being a co-worker with Christ, as part of His administration, in the time of the end. For this reason, Isaiah declared concerning Christ, 'His reward is with Him, and *His work is before Him* [before His face].' Isa 40:10. Christ has set His face towards a work that is yet to be revealed in the world, even though He has already accomplished it on the cross. Specifically, this work is to reveal the glory of the Father, before the eyes of all men, by gathering a great multitude of sons of God from every nation.

Isaiah described the work of Christ that will be fulfilled by His administration in the time of the end, by saying, 'He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those who are with young.' Isa 40:11. In the time of the end, it will be the work of the worldwide presbytery around the throne of the Father to feed the bread of life to every son of God who belongs to the kingdom of God. Furthermore, it will be the work of the 144 000 to lead the great multitude to the living fountains of waters that flow from the throne of God through the offering of Christ.

Isaiah 49

The second time that the prophetic statement regarding the reward of Christ was recorded in the book of Isaiah, is in Chapter 49. This prophetic passage speaks about the wages that the Lord has promised to give to His servants, which includes the work of being a light to the Gentiles. Speaking on behalf of the Lord's servants, the prophet Isaiah said, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God.' Isa 49:4. We know that this statement was relevant for the apostle

Paul in his day. It is also relevant for the presbytery and overcoming remnant in a lampstand church during the seventh world kingdom.

Isaiah continued by specifically describing the reward of Christ that will be given to the presbytery around the Father's throne and the 144 000 in the end of the age. The Lord says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth. ... I will preserve You and give You as covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages; ... They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them.'
Isa 49:6,8,10.

Isaiah 62

The third time that the prophetic statement regarding the reward of Christ was recorded in the book of Isaiah is in Chapter 62. In this passage, the Lord proclaimed the ministry of the bride of Christ as a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden in the time of the end. The Lord declared, 'For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns [manifesting the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh]. ... Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him'.'" Isa 62:1,11.

The admonition to Ephesus

Jesus addressed the presbytery in Ephesus as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the middle of the seven golden lampstands. Rev 2:1. He is seated upon His throne at the right hand of God. However, He walks among His lampstand churches through the ministry of the seven stars in His right hand. Jesus commended the presbytery in Ephesus for their commitment to Christian living. They refused to normalise immoral or unsanctified behaviour. Jesus particularly noted that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which He also hates. Rev 2:6.

Furthermore, the Ephesian presbytery did not receive self-proclaimed apostles who travelled as itinerant messengers with their own self-defined ministry. Rev 2:2. Jesus also commended the Ephesian

presbytery because they had laboured for His name's sake and had not grown weary. Rev 2:3. This is a remarkable statement. It means that there were still men within the Ephesian presbytery who desired to reveal Christ, and who were serving the Lord according to the sanctification of their name. We know this because they had not grown weary by trying to maintain a ministry projection. Mat 11:28.

However, despite all of this, Jesus rebuked the presbytery in Ephesus because they had left their first love. Jesus said, 'Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly [in judgement] and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.' Rev 2:5. First love is the fellowship of Yahweh. It describes the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Spirit. First love is revealed by the fellowship of offering in which one lays down life to reveal another.

When Jesus exhorted the presbytery in Ephesus to remember the heights, He was not referring to something that they had previously known or experienced. That is, He was not asking each presbyter to remember something with their mind. Rather, He was speaking directly to the spirit of each presbyter, to illuminate them to see the heights of the fellowship which they had not known before, but had been predestined to join from before the foundation of the world. It was only as each presbyter was illuminated to see the heights of Mount Zion that they were able to appreciate how far they had fallen from those heights.

We have focused on the need for a presbytery to be restored to first love for many years. However, in this present season, the Holy Spirit has been emphasising that the restoration of a presbytery to first love must begin with the restoration of each presbyter to the fellowship of first love in relation to his own marriage and his own family. If a man does not have a testimony of reformation in his own marriage and family, then his ability to speak and make offering in the presbytery, and in the church, will be hindered. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that 'if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?' 1Ti 3:5.

It is important to recognise that there is a restoration to first love, and an expression of the first works, for an individual son of God, a married couple, a household, an extended household, a presbytery, and a congregation. The first works are the works of our faith obedience as a disciple. The first work for an individual son of God is to present

themselves to the presbytery to be disciplined in relation to what it means to abide in the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit. As we have already stated, the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the fellowship of first love.

Our discipleship *in relation to the Father* must include the reformation of our marriages, because marriage is the Father's holy institution which He loves. It belongs to His covenant purpose for mankind. The Father desires a believing couple to become one flesh and one spirit for the purpose of bringing forth godly seed. Mal 2:15. When a believing man and a believing woman choose one another, and desire a godly marriage, the Father sends them to Christ for the process of betrothal. The identity of the man must be reformed as he puts on the new creation rib that has been tailor-made, in Christ, for him and for his marriage. The identity of the woman must be reformed from the new creation rib that the man receives from Christ. This reformation of the man and the woman, in relation to the new creation rib, enables them to be joined together as husband and wife *in one spirit*.

Our discipleship *in relation to the Son* must include the reformation of our households, because Jesus Christ is the Head of every house. Every member of a household needs to look into the face of Christ to receive the reflection of who they are in relation to the other members of their household, and to receive the grace to complete their unique works in the household. Christ has already completed the works of obedience for every husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, and so on. The major focus of the Elijah ministry is the restoration of worthy houses across three generations. The impact of the Elijah ministry in families is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.

Our discipleship *in relation to the Holy Spirit* must include the reformation of our fellowship in the presbytery and as church congregations, because the Holy Spirit is the Lord of the church age. When the brethren fasted and prayed in Antioch, it was *the Holy Spirit* who said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Act 13:2. Similarly, when the apostle Paul called the Ephesian presbytery down to Miletus, he instructed them to 'take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which *the Holy Spirit* has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood'. Act 20:28.

THE LAMPSTAND CHURCH

When Jesus addressed the leaders in Ephesus, they had fallen from first love because they had ceased shepherding their lampstand church as one presbytery. Rather than walking among all the congregations in their lampstand church, each leader looked after his own congregation as a local church pastor, and then met together with the other leaders on a collegial basis. This was a sin against the Holy Spirit because it demonstrated that they were not submitted to His Lordship in the church. The first work for a presbyter is to present himself for fellowship in the presbytery, so that he can be sent by the presbytery to walk among the lampstand church according to the sanctification of his own name.

Jesus warned the presbytery in Ephesus that if they did not repent and do the first works then He would remove their lampstand *from its place*. This is a significant statement. What is the place of a lampstand? The place of the lampstand in the true tabernacle in the heavenly places is *in the face of the throne*. It is the instrument that manifests the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh and fully reveals the One who is seated upon the throne. It has this capacity because it is in the right hand of the One seated upon the throne.

If a presbytery has fallen from the right hand of Christ, then its lampstand church will also be removed from its place in the face of the throne. Rather than manifesting the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, a lampstand that has been removed from its place will only manifest the light of man as a religious institution. From an historical perspective, we know that this did happen to the lampstand church in Ephesus. The fellowship of present truth was replaced by doctrine based on Greek philosophy. The fellowship of the *agape* meal was replaced by the sacrament of the Eucharist. The fellowship of the presbytery was replaced by a single bishop and a church hierarchy.

In contrast to this, Jesus promised the overcomers in Ephesus that they would have access to the tree of life in the Paradise of God. Rev 2:7. The Paradise of God is the third heaven. The fruit of the tree of life is the true bread from heaven. It is the word of God that is proclaimed through the messengers of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, as the word of present truth in each season. The capacity to proclaim the word of present truth, as the bread from heaven, is the first dimension of reward that Christ gives to an overcoming presbytery. The entire lampstand church has a fellowship in this reward, because the word of present truth is the provision for the fellowship of the *agape* meal.

Restoration and corruption of the four faces

In Chapter 4 of the book of Revelation, the apostolic administration of Christ is depicted as four living creatures. Notably, the first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, the third living creature was like a man, and the fourth living creature was like an eagle. Rev 4:7. The four faces reveal the four dimensions of Jesus Christ and the four administrations that belong to His throne at the right hand of God. That is, the face of the lion reveals Christ as the King of kings; the face of the calf reveals Christ as our great High Priest; the face of the man reveals Christ as the Prophet; and the face of the eagle reveals Christ as the Firstborn from the dead.

During the seventh world kingdom, the church is in travail to bring forth the manchild administration that will rule the nations with a rod of iron in the time of the end. Notably, the maturity of a presbytery, that belongs to an emerging manchild administration, is measured by its capacity to reveal the four faces of Christ's administration. With this key principle in view, it is helpful to consider the history of the restoration movement since the beginning of the seventh world kingdom.

The start of the seventh world kingdom coincided with the beginning of the latter rain revival. The latter rain revival emphasised the significance of the ascension-gift ministry graces of Christ and the impartation of spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands. The restoration of the ascension-gift ministry graces of Christ should have been the beginning of the recovery of *the face of the lion* within the presbyteries of lampstand churches. However, *the face of the lion* was corrupted by those who presumed to possess the grace of Christ apart from the fellowship of a presbytery. Such men became 'wandering stars', who often relied upon the strength of their own bodily presence and charisma to enhance their own ministry projection.

The restoration of *the true face of the lion* in the presbytery begins with the call to return to first love. First love is the fellowship of Yahweh. In the fellowship of Yahweh, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make offering for the sake of revealing one another. The face of the lion is revealed when those with ascension-gift grace lay down their lives within the fellowship of a presbytery. They do this because they have been illuminated to see the fellowship of Yahweh that belongs to the heights of Mount Zion. In the time of the end, the face of the lion will be revealed by the worldwide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones around the throne of the Father. The mode of offering that belongs to the face of the

lion will be exemplified by the elders when they cast down their crowns to worship the Father on the throne.

The restoration of *the face of the man* in the presbytery is the restoration of the Elijah ministry. The evidence that the Elijah ministry is being restored will be the capacity of the messengers of Christ to proclaim the word of present truth that is necessary for the church in each season. When a messenger is revealing the face of the man, which is the Elijah ministry, they will proclaim the word in weakness, upon the foundation of their own testimony of repentance and faith in response to the word of Christ.

The corruption of the face of the man is evident when leaders cleave to the messenger, who is proclaiming the word of present truth with deceit, for the purpose of their own empowerment. Such men will view other leaders within the presbytery as ministry colleagues. They will use the word as a resource for the sake of maintaining their own ministry position over their local congregation. The mode of their ministry will be devoid of their own testimony.

Significantly, the focus of the Elijah ministry, which reveals the face of the man, is to proclaim the word of present truth directly to every household. The fruit of the ministry of the face of the man is the public and house-to-house fellowship of a lampstand church. In contrast to this, the fruit of the corruption of the face of the man will be independent local churches or outreaches.

The restoration of *the face of the calf* in the presbytery is the restoration of a true deaconing administration that is devoted to the work of the ministry, under the direction of overseers within the presbytery. A deacon is a servant. Their work is to be poured out upon the priesthood of others as they present themselves as a living sacrifice to God. It is a corruption of the face of the calf when a leader presumes to stand as a priest, or intermediary, between a believer and the Lord. A notable example of this corruption is when a leader uses the principle of the confidential confessional to maintain power over people in the congregation, or they presume to have the authority to grant absolution for sin.

Finally, the restoration of the face of the eagle in the presbytery is the restoration of true elders who shepherd the flock as they walk among the house-to-house fellowship of the church. The apostle Peter admonished the elders to 'shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as

overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.' 1Pe 5:2-3. Worthy houses are the foundation of the presbytery and the house-to-house fellowship of a lampstand church. The restoration of the face of the eagle requires every presbyter to be committed to the reformation of his own marriage and the sanctification of his own household. The apostle Paul declared to Timothy, 'If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take of the church of God?' 1Ti 3:5.

The corruption of the face of the eagle often happens when a man believes that his function in relation to one of the other faces can compensate for a lack in relation to his own marriage or household. That is, a man may believe that corruption in his own house can be overlooked because of his ministry grace (the face of the lion), his ability to teach and preach (the face of the man), or his ability to deacon or facilitate the church program (the face of the calf). Regardless of his name and grace, if a leader is not willing to seek marriage reformation and to purge the leaven from his own household, it will be a corruption of the face of the eagle. Such a leader will often prefer to look into the face of his wife for affirmation and feedback, rather than into the face of his brethren in the presbytery.

Significantly, the restoration of the face of the eagle within the fellowship of the presbytery will enable the presbytery to look for, and disciple, worthy houses. Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples to look for worthy houses who were willing to be discipled in relation to what it means to abide in the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Houses that were willing to be discipled in this manner *became labourers* in the harvest field, as centres for pastoral care among the flock, and centres for evangelism into the broader community. The worthy houses that belong to the face of the eagle in the church, become the evangelistic face of the church to the world.

Chapter 3

The warfare of a lampstand church

In this season, the Holy Spirit is emphasising the need for us to 'overcome through prayer' as individuals, married couples, families, and as congregations. Each congregation that belongs to a lampstand church is called to be *an elect lady* as a local manifestation of the virgin bride of Christ. 2Jn 1:1. When the apostle Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth, he said, 'I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' 2Co 11:2. The church is described as a virgin because the marriage between Christ and the church will not be spiritually consummated until the inauguration of the new heavens and new earth.

In Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation, the virgin bride of Christ is revealed to be a woman who is clothed with the sun, has the moon under her feet, and a garland of twelve stars upon her head. Rev 12:1. She is in travail and in pain to bring forth a manchild. Rev 12:2. The manchild is the administration that is suitable for the fullness of times. The manchild administration that will rule all nations with a rod of iron is the world-wide presbytery that will be seated upon the twenty-four thrones

around the throne of the Father. It also includes the 144 000 overcomers who will become the one lampstand before the throne of the Father, manifesting the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh to the world.

The labour that is experienced by the church is *the travail of prayer* that is necessary to bring forth the manchild. We know that there is pain that accompanies labour, which is commonly called 'labour pain'. However, in addition to this, the church is also in pain because of the presence of the great red dragon in the heavenly places. The dragon stands in direct opposition to the church and desires to devour the manchild as soon as it is born. In this regard, the pain that is experienced by the church is the distress or torment that is caused by the dragon. The great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, is a symbol of Satan and the seventh world kingdom. Rev 12:3. Satan is the personal ruler of the seventh world kingdom.

Speaking about the dragon, the apostle John continued, 'His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born.' Rev 12:4. It is important to understand that there is a distinction between the seven heads of the dragon, the mouth of the dragon, and the tail of the dragon. The *head of the dragon* represents the administration of Satan in the world. The *seven heads, with the seven crowns*, represent the seven administrations that belong to Babylon, which Satan uses to exercise his rulership and power over the nations.

The media is often used as *the mouth of the dragon* to articulate and promote its agenda to the world. In some cases, the media may function as the mouthpiece for the seven heads that belong to the administration of Babylon. However, in other cases, the media will function as the mouthpiece of the spirit of antichrist in the world. The spirit of antichrist is often in conflict with the administration of Babylon. This is not surprising because the fundamental characteristic of the seventh world kingdom is that it is *a divided kingdom*. In this regard, we are reminded that Jesus said concerning Satan's kingdom that 'if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand'. Mar 3:24.

In contrast to the head and the mouth of the dragon, *the tail of the dragon* functions within Christ's lampstand churches. The prophet Isaiah declared that the tail is the prophet who speaks lies. Isa 9:15. The messengers of Satan who propagate false gospels in the church comprise the tail of the dragon. Jesus clearly identified the tail of the dragon within His lampstand churches when He spoke of those who belong to the

synagogue of Satan, along with those who promote the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of Jezebel. The tail of the dragon is more dangerous for lampstand churches than the head or mouth of the dragon because it is the tail that causes one-third of the stars to be cast to the earth.

The households that belong to the church must stand firm in the face of the flood that proceeds from the mouth of the dragon in the world and overcome the tail of the dragon in the church. However, the primary focus of worthy households is to *travail in prayer* to bring forth the administration that will cast *the entire dragon* out of the heavenly places forever. Satan is overcome as we travail in our households because the fruit of our travail is the administration that will proclaim the gospel of God, publicly and from house to house, to the entire world. The manchild administration will deliver the nations from the bondage of Satan and bring a great multitude of sons of God into the everlasting kingdom of God.

Overcoming through three dimensions of prayer

The apostle Paul proclaimed that the manifold wisdom of God is made known by Christ's lampstand churches to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Eph 3:10. For this reason, the church is not engaged in a wrestle with flesh and blood. The church is in conflict with the angelic principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph 6:12. The church does not overcome Satan through political activism or any other form of weaponry that belongs to man. Rather, the church must overcome Satan through the travail of prayer. The travail of prayer is enabled by the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh and is mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds. 2Co 10:4.

In the context of his vision of the woman in travail and the dragon in the heavenly places, John testified that he heard a loud voice from heaven. It is likely that the loud voice belonged to Christ. The loud voice declared, 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.' Rev 12:11. It is important to recognise that the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony, and loving not our lives to the death, all belong to *the fellowship of prayer*. When the Holy Spirit, who is the source and capacity for prayer, joins us to the fellowship of Christ's intercession and travail, we overcome Satan through these three dimensions of prayer.

The blood of the Lamb is the blood that was shed through the seven wounding events that Christ experienced from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. Notably, the first blood was shed in Gethsemane which is *the place of prayer*. It reveals the intercession and travail of Yahweh-Elohim from before the foundation of the world. Jesus commanded the disciples to watch and pray with Him. Mat 26:41. When we join the fellowship of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane, by the Spirit, the blood that was shed from every pore of His body enables us to embrace our fellowship in His offering and sufferings. The *first blood* enables us to overcome the temptation to draw back from our fellowship in Christ's sufferings because of our unbelief.

The *word of our testimony* is the word of faith that is in our heart and in our mouth. The faith of Christ is given to us as a gift through the word of faith that is preached to us by the messengers of Christ. The faith of Christ enables us to speak by faith. The apostle Paul declared, 'Since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written "I believed and therefore I spoke", we also believe and therefore speak.' 2Co 4:13. This describes the fellowship of prayer that we express individually, in our marriages, in our families, and from house to house in the church. The word of our testimony is our participation in *the intercession* of Yahweh-Elohim, which is our participation in the dialogue of prayer according to the sanctification of our name.

The word of our testimony is further expressed by laying down our lives, in the fellowship of Christ's death, for our brethren. When we lay down our lives, our participation in the fellowship of Christ's prayer moves *from intercession to travail*. The travail of Yahweh-Elohim is the offering of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that brought forth new creation. Enabled by the Spirit of God, we lay down our lives for one another in our marriages, families, and congregations. We are also enabled to lay down our lives to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel who have been scattered among the denominations. Furthermore, we are enabled to lay down our lives to recover those who are lost and without hope in this world.

Overcoming the three temptations

Jesus was anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, through the Holy Spirit, for His earthly ministry as the King when He was baptised in the river Jordan. He was then led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to overcome Satan for a period of forty days and forty nights. Notably, Jesus

overcame the three temptations of Satan before He stood up in the synagogue and proclaimed that He had come as the anointed King to set free all those who were oppressed by the devil. Luk 4:18. Likewise, we must overcome these same three temptations before we can be sent by Christ to deliver households from the bondage of unclean and familiar spirits.

The first temptation

The *first temptation* happened when Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones that belong to this natural creation into bread to satisfy His physical hunger. In this way, Satan tempted Jesus to exercise His own prerogative as the Son of God to become the source of His own provision. Jesus overcame this first temptation by His confession of faith that He lived by the proceeding word of God. The proceeding word of God is the true bread from heaven. After feeding the five thousand, Jesus said, 'It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.' Joh 6:63. We overcome the first temptation of Satan as we continue to believe and obey the proceeding word of God which is preached to us.

The proceeding word of God is the word of present truth that is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit, through the messengers of Christ. The word of present truth is *the unleavened bread* that belongs to the true feast of Passover. In contrast to this, when we endeavour to become the source of our own bread, it is *leavened bread*. It is leavened bread because it is the expression of our own pride and presumption that the word comes from us. The apostle Paul identified this leaven among the congregation in Corinth. He said to them, 'Now some are puffed up [leavened], as though I were not coming to you [to proclaim the word to you].' 1Co 4:18. Later, in this same letter, he asked them, 'Did the word come originally from you?' 1Co 14:36.

In addition to receiving the unleavened bread that belongs to the Passover, we must also purge leaven from our houses so that we can keep the true feast of unleavened bread. 1Co 5:8. The feast of unleavened bread followed the Passover and lasted for a period of *seven days*. The seven days signifies that it is a feast that must continue for the entire duration of our lives. Traditionally, the Israelites removed leaven from their houses by searching every room with the light of a candle. Similarly, we must search our houses in the light of the word of present truth for the purpose of purging out the leaven that belongs to our old gospels

and fallen cultural practices. The impact of all the cultures from the past needs to be scraped off the walls and the floor of our house.

The second temptation

The *second temptation* happened when Satan took Jesus to the top of a great and high mountain. This was not a physical mountain in the land of Israel that belonged to the natural creation. It was the spiritual Mount Zion in the third heaven. We know this because Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Satan said to Jesus, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.' Luk 4:6-7. Satan wanted to trade with Jesus for the sake of mutual empowerment.

When Satan asked Jesus to bow down before him, he wanted Jesus to *give worth* to him by receiving his proposition and entering into a trading relationship with him. Jesus overcame this temptation by saying to Satan, 'You shall worship the Lord Your God, and Him only you shall serve.' Luk 4:8. Jesus gave worth to the Father and His word only. The Father's word is the sum of all truth regarding our sonship. We give worth to the Father by believing and obeying His word. In contrast to this, we bow down to worship Satan when we give worth to him by receiving his alternative word, which is a lie, and then trading with him for the sake of the empowerment of our own projection.

When we give worth to Satan's word, it is *idolatrous worship*. It is idolatrous because we have exchanged the truth of God for a lie. Rom 1:25. Furthermore, it is idolatrous because the word of Satan fathers the lie in our heart that we can become like God by being the source of our name and works. The image that we create for ourselves is the reflection of the idol in our own heart. In this regard, all idolatry is a form of *self-worship*. The first example of this form of *idolatrous worship* was in the garden of Eden when the woman worshipped Satan by receiving his alternative word. She then asked her husband to worship her by receiving her word and direction for their marriage and house.

The third temptation

The *third temptation* happened when Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and tempted Him to throw Himself down from the temple. It is possible that this temptation happened on the south-eastern corner of the temple mount that towered above the Kidron valley.

However, regardless of the exact location, Satan was tempting Jesus to reclaim His place as the Son of God on His throne at *the pinnacle of the angelic temple*. Satan said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written, "He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You", and "In their hands they shall bear You up, lest You dash Your foot against a stone".' Luk 4:9-11.

It is significant that Satan quoted directly from the Scriptures in relation to this temptation. He was tempting Jesus to put God and His word to the test by demanding that the angelic administration be sent to serve Him. Jesus overcame this temptation by declaring, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' Luk 4:12. We put God to the test when *we pray amiss* by expecting that God will come to our aid in specific ways. Equally, we pray amiss by presuming that we can somehow command the administration of God to be the servant of our personal agenda. This is particularly the case when we try to use the Scriptures as leverage to demand God's attention or to receive a particular response. It is important to recognise that a son of God does not pray or live this way.

Jesus overcame all Satan's temptation during the forty days in the wilderness. We read in the Gospel of Luke, 'Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time'. Luk 4:13. The 'opportune time' presented itself when Jesus fully identified Himself with our sin and mortality in the garden of Gethsemane. On His offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross, Jesus was in all points *tempted as we are*, yet without sin. Heb 4:15. Having already overcome Satan by the word of His testimony in the wilderness, Jesus overcame Satan again by loving not His life to the death on His offering journey. He did this *for our sake* so that we can also overcome Satan in the fellowship of His intercession and travail.

The whole armour of God

In our present day, the travail of prayer in the church is bringing forth the administration that will overcome Satan and cause him to be cast from heaven in the time of the end. The manchild administration is the world-wide presbytery that will be caught up to the Father's throne, along with the 144 000 who will *stand* with the Lamb on Mount Zion. When the first seal is opened, the 144 000 will be sent by the presbytery to look for worthy houses by proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in all nations. The 144 000 will be sent out 'conquering and to conquer' because they will be engaged in spiritual warfare with Satan and the

principalities and powers that belong to the seventh world kingdom. Rev 6:2. We could liken the 144 000 to the elite troops who will be on the forefront of the spiritual battle.

There will be a particular spiritual battle in the time of the end. However, it is important to appreciate that the church is *already engaged* in spiritual warfare with Satan and the principalities and powers that belong to the seventh world kingdom. The dragon is standing in opposition to the church in the heavenly places now. The apostle Paul described our present time by saying that 'the days are evil'. Deep darkness has covered the people in the world. Paul exhorted every household who belongs to a lampstand church to become wise by purchasing a double-portion of oil in readiness for the time when the Father takes His seat. He said, 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because *the days are evil.*' Eph 5:14-16.

We must put on the whole armour of God now, so that we can withstand Satan in the evil day which is presently upon us. Furthermore, as we put on the armour of God now, we are also preparing ourselves to stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion when He stands to open the seals. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul declared, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.' Eph 6:11-13.

The 144 000 will be able *to stand* with the Lamb on Mount Zion and then go forth 'conquering and to conquer' because they have put on the whole armour of God. The apostle Paul described the armour of God by saying, 'Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.' Eph 6:14-18. Notably, *prayer and supplication in the Spirit* is the seventh element that belongs to the whole armour of God.

When we consider the nature of the armour of God, the first point is that all seven elements of the armour of God belong to Jesus Christ.

They belong to Jesus Christ as the sum of the New Creation and were revealed by Him on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. Speaking about the ministry of Christ, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.' Isa 59:17. This is an important point. The breastplate is *His righteousness*. The helmet is *His salvation*. The shield is *His faith* etc ... The sword of the Spirit proceeds from His mouth. Rev 1:16.

Evidently, the armour of God is not the armour that belongs to natural man. It cannot be produced by man. It is not an expression of the strength of man. The 144 000 will not be engaged in a physical battle and they will not carry military weapons. The apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down argument and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.' 2Co 10:4-5. The weapons of our warfare are 'not carnal' because they are given to us by Christ and they belong to the new creation.

We note the parallel between Paul's instruction to '*put on* the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him' and to '*put on* the whole armour of God'. Col 3:10. Eph 6:11. The elements that belong to the armour of God are the substance of the inheritance that a son of God receives as part of their expression as a new creation. We know that the armour belongs to the substance of our inheritance as sons of God because the faith of God, which is our shield, is *the substance* of things hoped for. Heb 11:1. Furthermore, Paul highlighted that the armour is part of our cultural expression as sons of God, individually and as a community, when he said, 'Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on *the armour of light*.' Rom 13:12.

The weapons of our warfare 'are mighty' because they operate by the power of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. We recall that the apostle John saw water coming out of the mouth of the dragon like a flood. Rev 12:15. The desire of Satan, who is the great red dragon, is to carry the church away with the flood from his mouth. In the time of the end, the earth will help the church by opening its mouth to swallow up the flood. However, this does not mean that the church is reliant upon the earth for protection. The prophet Isaiah declared concerning Zion's deliverance

and protection, 'When the enemy comes in like a flood, *the Spirit of the Lord* will lift up a standard against him.' Isa 59:19.

The belt of truth

The *first dimension* of the armour of God is the belt of truth. The belt includes the armour that protects the loins and thighs. It is the first piece of armour that must be put on. Putting on the belt of truth requires a son of God's sanctification *from the world* and *to the Father*. We are reminded that Jesus prayed to the Father concerning His disciples, 'I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.' Joh 17:15-17.

The truth is the word of the Father regarding our sanctification as a son of God. The first step in putting on the belt of truth is to be delivered from the lie that we can be the source of our own name and works. This lie came from Satan and it is a great deception. Furthermore, when we create and promote our own projection, it is the manifestation of a lie that we use for the purpose of deceiving others. If we live this way, we have no protection from the enemy and will be taken captive by Satan to do his will. 2Ti 2:26. We must be delivered from this lie by responding to the word of truth that is proclaimed to us by the messengers of Christ, by turning to meet Christ eye to eye.

The eyes of Christ reveal the jealous love of God for our sanctification while, at the same time, they reveal the wrath of God on our sin. When we meet Christ eye to eye we are *connected to reality* because we come to know what is true about us in both these dimensions – the heights of our sonship and the depths of our iniquity. Having received the belt of truth in this manner, we then demonstrate that we have put on the belt of truth by continuing to walk in the truth. That is, we continue to walk in the light of the word of present truth so that we have fellowship with one another and with the Lord. In this fellowship, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. 1Jn 1:7.

The prophet Zechariah described those who need to be delivered from their ministry projection. They dress themselves as a prophet, in a robe of course hair, in order to deceive others. When they prophesy from their own resources, they speak lies in the name of the Lord. When such a person is connected to reality by Christ, they will confess, 'I am no prophet, I am a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.' Zec 13:5. This is the confession that accompanies a person who

has received a knowledge of the truth. Notably, the 144 000 will have no deceit in their mouth. Rev 14:5. Their ministry will not be the expression of a religious projection. They will proclaim the word of God according to their own name and as an expression of their own testimony.

In addition to the personal sanctification of a son of God, the belt of truth has a specific application to the sanctification of a man's marriage and household. The protection of the loins draws our attention to the covenant of marriage and the fruit of godly marriage, which is the bringing forth of godly seed. Speaking about the covenant of marriage, the prophet Malachi declared, 'Did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.' Mal 2:15. A man takes heed to his own spirit by looking into the face of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to receive the knowledge of the truth regarding his own sanctification as a man, husband, and father.

The breastplate of righteousness

The *second dimension* of the armour of God is the breastplate of righteousness. In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul declared, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "the just shall live by faith".' Rom 1:16-17. The righteousness of God is the manifestation of sonship. Jesus Christ revealed the righteousness of God for every son of God on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. He did this by learning our obedience and fulfilling the works of our sonship.

The righteousness of God is now revealed in us as we complete the works of sonship that Christ has already accomplished for us. We do this from faith to faith as we receive and believe the word of faith that is proclaimed to us. To put on the breastplate of God's righteousness, we must be delivered from our propensity to establish our own righteousness by taking the Law into our own hands. In this regard, Paul reflected on the nation of Israel by saying, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.' Rom 10:3-4.

A son of God puts on the breastplate of righteousness as they forsake their own righteousness and embrace their unique participation in the

offering and sufferings of Christ in which the righteousness of God is revealed. The apostle Paul testified, 'I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.' Php 3:8-9.

Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace

The *third dimension* of the armour of God is that our feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We know that Jesus sent the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples to look for worthy houses by proclaiming the gospel of peace. They were sent by Christ to exemplify their message, as lambs among wolves, and to extend an invitation for fellowship to every household who was willing to receive their ministry. Their message to every household who welcomed them was, 'Peace to this house.' Luk 10:5. Fellowship with the messengers who had been sent to them, and hence with the Father and the Son, was the blessing of peace that rested upon every worthy house.

Significantly, our capacity to exemplify and proclaim the gospel of peace for the purpose of joining another household to the fellowship of the presbytery, which is the fellowship of the Father and the Son, is completely contingent upon our willingness to have our own feet washed by our brethren. It is notable that our feet must be shod with *the preparation* of the gospel of peace, not simply 'the gospel of peace'. Our feet have been shod with *the preparation* of the gospel of peace when our feet have been washed and we have been sent from a fellowship. This means that our ministry is an expression of our obedience, rather than our own self-appointed ministry.

Paul emphasised the necessity for all ministry to be an expression of obedience by saying, 'How shall they preach *unless they are sent?*' Rom 10:15. When our ministry is a work of obedience, from the ground of fellowship, the Scripture is true, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!' Rom 10:15. In addition to this, when our ministry is an expression of our obedience, then we have authority to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and authority over all the power of the enemy. Luk 10:19. Paul testified concerning the believers in Rome, 'Your obedience has become

known to all ... And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.' Rom 16:19-20.

In obedience to Christ, the seventy-two disciples *were sent* by Christ to find worthy houses and then to stay in those houses to instruct them in the word of the kingdom. The messengers remained in the house *to disciple* the household in relation to what it means to abide in the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When the members of a household chose to forsake the vain traditions that they had inherited from their forefathers for the purpose of embracing the culture that belongs to the kingdom of God, they were delivered from the oppression of familiar spirits and received grace for healing, restoration, and fruitfulness.

The shield of faith

The *fourth dimension* of the armour of God is the shield of faith. Notably, the apostle Paul said that the shield of faith is 'above all'. It is the foremost dimension of the armour of God that is necessary to overcome the world. 1Jn 5:4. Abram first received the shield of faith when Yahweh the Son, who had become the Son of God, came to him in a vision and said, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.' Gen 15:1. The Son of God was saying to Abram, 'I am your faith.'

Having redeemed us from the death of sin and completed the works of our sonship, Jesus Christ is our hope who is presently seated in His spiritual body at the right hand of God. On His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, He also became the Author and Finisher of our faith. This faith is ministered to us from Christ *as a gift* through the word that is preached to us by the messengers of Christ in His right hand. It is given to us as 'the substance of our hope' on each step of our pilgrimage. Heb 11:1.

On account of Christ's finished work, the word that is proclaimed to us by His messengers gives us the faith to believe the word *and* the capacity to obey the word. Faith is the substance of things hoped for because the capacity for obedience is resident within it. In this regard, 'the help of God' always accompanies 'the faith of God' which is our shield. The psalmist understood this principle when he said, 'Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.' Psa 33:20. Psa 115:9,10,11.

Significantly, the shield of faith is necessary to extinguish the fiery darts of the wicked one. Eph 6:16. The fiery darts describe the initiative of

Satan toward a person as he actively seeks to provoke them to draw back in unbelief. It is evident that a person has drawn back in unbelief when they are motivated by a victim mindset, shame, or self-preservation. A son of God who has received the shield of faith is able to overcome Satan and all his schemes through the blood of the Lamb, the word of his testimony, and by loving not his life to the death. Rev 12:11.

The helmet of salvation

The *fifth dimension* of the armour of God is the helmet of salvation. The helmet of salvation describes our understanding and appropriation of the gospel proposition in relation to our salvation. We know that we are not saved through new birth alone. We are progressively saved through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of our inner man by the Holy Spirit, as we walk with Christ each day in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Tit 3:5. The evidence that we are putting on the helmet of salvation will be the regeneration of our heart and, particularly, the renewal of our mind.

We put on the helmet of salvation when we are converted from having a mind that is set on the flesh to a mind that is set on the Spirit. Our mind is a faculty that belongs to our soul. Our mind is set on the flesh when we are focused on gathering information from the five senses that belong to our physical body for the purpose of finding life and avoiding death. The psalmist described this as a soul that cleaves to the dust. Psa 119:25. Furthermore, if our mind is set on the flesh, we will use the Law of God as a resource that empowers the law of our mind, which is our own knowledge of good and evil. We will lay hold of the Law of God because we covet the life that we believe that it will give us. This misappropriation of the Law only brings us under condemnation, which is the judgement of the Law.

We demonstrate that we have put on the helmet of salvation when we have been delivered from this mode of living and this way of thinking. We cease trying to appraise and understand the word of God from the perspective of our own knowledge of good and evil. Rather, our mind is set on the Spirit when we give our attention to what the Holy Spirit is saying *to our spirit*. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit in relation to our sonship. Rom 8:16. When our spirit is illuminated and convicted by the Holy Spirit, then our mind is also reoriented in the light of that illumination. Rather than being focused on the preservation of our life on the earth, our mind is focused on our citizenship in the

heavenly Jerusalem. Col 3:2. When this is our focus, we can be easily led by the Holy Spirit, each day, on the pathway that Christ has pioneered for our salvation.

The sword of the Spirit

The *sixth dimension* of the armour of God is the sword of the Spirit. In relation to spiritual warfare, we note that the armour of God is primarily defensive. Jesus said, 'When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.' Luk 11:21. However, the sword of the Spirit is primarily an offensive weapon in our struggle with the principalities and powers that are in the heavenly places. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. It is the word that proceeds from the mouth of God through the messengers in the right hand of Christ by the Holy Spirit. It is the word of present truth. The sword of the Spirit is a polarising word because it is accompanied by the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle John saw that the sword of the Spirit is a sharp two-edged sword that proceeds from the mouth of Christ. Jesus referred to the operation of this sword when He concluded His admonition to each presbytery by saying, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Rev 2:7. It is important to recognise that the sword of the Spirit is not another way of describing the written Scriptures. That is, simply because a person quotes, or uses, the written Scripture, it does not mean that they possess the sword of the Spirit. Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, 'You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life.' Joh 5:39-40.

Jesus Christ is the full embodiment of the Scriptures. His offering was the fulfilment of the prophetic word of God. In our present day, the word of God is *only proclaimed* by Christ through the messengers in His right hand by the Holy Spirit. Notably, the apostle Paul concluded his admonition to the Ephesian church regarding the armour of God by asking them to pray for him as a messenger of Christ. He exhorted them to pray 'for all the saints - and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak'. Eph 6:18-20.

THE LAMPSTAND CHURCH

Regardless of the nature of the persecution that comes against the church and the messengers of Christ, it is impossible for the word of God to be imprisoned. In his letter to Timothy, Paul reflected on his imprisonment by writing, 'I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained'. 2Ti 2:9. In this regard, we are reminded of the testimony of the apostles when the Jewish Sanhedrin threatened them severely and commanded them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. Peter and John responded by saying, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' Act 4:19-20.

As we conclude this chapter, let us remind ourselves that the *seventh dimension* that belongs to the armour of God is *prayer in the Spirit*. If we have put on the full armour of God, we will be those who are 'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit'. Eph 6:18. This describes our fellowship in the intercession and travail of Christ, which is enabled by the power of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In our present season, the Lord is calling every individual, married couple, family, and congregation to join the travail of prayer which will bring forth the manchild administration for the time of the end. It is the same travail of prayer that overcomes Satan and all the principalities and powers that belong to the seventh world kingdom in the heavenly places.

Chapter 4

The history of the manchild administration

In John's vision of the church, which is recorded in Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation, the virgin bride of Christ is depicted as a woman who is in labour and in pain to bring forth 'a manchild'. Rev 12:1-2. Specifically, she is in labour to bring forth the manchild during the rulership of the seventh world kingdom. The *labour* describes the travail of prayer that will bring forth the manchild. The *pain* describes the conflict that the church experiences because of the dragon that is also in the heavenly places. The dragon represents Satan and the administration of the seventh world kingdom that stands in opposition to the church and desires to devour the manchild.

The manchild is the administration that is 'suitable for the fullness of times'. Eph 1:10. When the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end, the manchild will be caught up to God and His throne. The manchild administration is the worldwide presbytery that will be seated on the twenty-four thrones around the throne of the Father, along with the 144 000 who will be the *restored lampstand* before the Father's throne. The presbytery around the throne of the Father will receive the mandate

from Christ to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Rev 12:5. The manchild administration will possess all of the dimensions of the reward of Christ that He promised to give to the overcomers from each lampstand church.

Jesus said to the presbytery in Thyatira, 'He who overcomes and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - "he shall rule them with a rod or iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels" - as I also have received from My Father.' Rev 2:26-27. In addition to this dimension of rulership over the nations, the manchild administration will become the deliverer of the nations from the power of Satan and his kingdom of darkness. When the first seal is opened, the worldwide presbytery will send the 144 000 to look for worthy houses in every nation. Those worthy houses will become the labourers who will bring over half of the world's population into the kingdom of God.

The most basic definition of 'a manchild' is that they are a *ruler* and a *deliverer*. From that perspective, we note that there have been many historic examples of a manchild. When we consider all the examples of a manchild in the Scripture, we observe an important principle regarding *the first and second times*. That is, when God's call and mandate is first proclaimed to a manchild, it always initiates a season of trial and persecution. The first time for a manchild is a season of suffering. Invariably, the word of their predestination is not fulfilled until the second time. In the second time, a manchild is caught up to the throne to become a ruler and a deliverer.

In this chapter, we will briefly consider the various examples of a manchild in the Scripture. It is important to appreciate that each historic manchild is 'a type' of *the manchild administration* that will be brought forth from the church during the reign of the seventh world kingdom. There is a lesson that we must learn from each historic manchild. Each lesson highlights a particular dimension of the manchild that is being formed in the church, in our present day, as an administration that is suitable for the fullness of times.

The lesson from Enoch

The first example of a manchild who was caught up to God and His throne was Enoch. Enoch belonged to the seventh generation of the sons of God in the lineage of Seth. Notably, Enoch lived for 365 years, but he did not physically die at the end of his earthly pilgrimage. We read in the book of Genesis that he 'walked with God; and he was not, for God took him'. Gen 5:24. We know that the sons of God in the lineage of Seth made

offering at the gate of the garden of Eden. God spoke to them through the two cherubim who guarded the entrance to the garden with their flaming swords. When Enoch presented himself to make offering on a certain day, it is likely that the cherubim drew back their swords, and God invited him to enter through the gate of Eden before he was then translated to heaven.

Enoch is presently being preserved by God *in his mortal body* in heaven. He is waiting in heaven to receive his spiritual resurrection body from Jesus Christ on the day of resurrection at the end of the age. In this regard, Enoch's situation is unique. There are only two other men - Moses and Elijah - who are also being preserved by God in their mortality in heaven. After the blowing of the seventh trumpet, Moses and Elijah will return to minister for 3½ years to reap the final harvest of the earth before they will die as the last two martyrs. In contrast to this, Enoch will not return and he will never die. He is the prophetic forerunner of the great multitude of sons of God in the time of the end who also will not experience death, because they will be alive and remaining for Christ's physical second coming.

In addition, Jude identified that Enoch was a prophet who prophesied concerning the Lord's judgement in the time of the end. He said, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgement on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.' Jud 1:14-15. We know that Jude was not prophesying about the physical second coming of Christ because he declared that the judgement of God will be accompanied by the ministry of the Lord's saints to *bring conviction* to the hearts of the ungodly. Enoch was referring to the ministry of the 144 000 and the great multitude of worthy houses in the time of the end that will be functioning at the same time as the judgements of God are manifest in the earth.

The lesson from Noah

The second example of a manchild in the Scripture was Noah. When he was born, his father prophesied that Noah would become a *deliverer*. He declared, 'This one shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed.' Gen 5:29. Noah was the last of the sons of God who presented himself before the Lord to make offering at the gate of the garden of Eden. Noah walked

with God and found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a righteous man in his generation. Furthermore, he was a preacher of righteousness who was rejected by a wicked and perverse world.

In the days of Noah, the Lord repented that He had made man. The wickedness of man was great and the whole earth was filled with violence. The Lord commanded Noah to make an ark because He had decided to judge the entire world. The Lord first spoke to Noah regarding the end of all flesh 120 years before the worldwide flood. During this period, Noah obeyed the Lord by building the ark, and he warned the inhabitants of the world about the coming judgement of God. The world was condemned at that time because they rejected the testimony of Noah that was demonstrated through his speech and his obedience. Heb 11:7.

The prophet Ezekiel listed Noah as being one of the three great *overcomers*. Eze 14:14. He overcame the world by the faith that he received from God. The faith of God gave him the capacity for obedience, and the capacity to persevere in the face of the world's mockery and contempt. In this regard, Noah is the type of a suffering manchild during the reign of the seventh world kingdom, that has been given the mandate to proclaim that the Father will take His seat to judge the world in the days ahead of us. The apostle Peter has warned us that this message will be the subject of ridicule. He said, 'Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation".' 2Pe 3:3-4.

The manchild that is presently being brought forth from the church during the reign of the seventh world kingdom will need to overcome the world in the same way in which Noah overcame the world by faith in his day. Jesus compared the condition of the world before the Father takes His seat and the Son of Man is presented before the Father to receive the scroll, with the condition of the world in the days of Noah. He said, 'But of that day and hour no-one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.' Mat 24:36-39.

The lesson from Abraham and Sarah

Following the flood, God chose Abraham to become the father of *a new humanity* of sons of God who will be conformed to the image of Christ. We know that Abram did become a king of kings when he defeated the four eastern kings from Mesopotamia who had defeated the five kings in the plain on the promised land. In this regard, Abram touched a manchild dimension, but this was not the focus of his calling. Rather, God had chosen Abram to become *the father* of the Manchild – Jesus Christ. Soon after the defeat of the kings, the Word of the Lord appeared to Abram in a vision and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield [faith], your exceedingly great reward.’ Gen 15:1.

The patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – reveal *three dimensions of fatherhood* that are an expression of the Father’s throne. It was the immutable word of the Father that was proclaimed to Abraham on Mount Moriah. Paul wrote to the Hebrews, ‘Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath’. Heb 6:17. The *second time word* to Abraham on Mount Moriah is the guarantee that the Father will take His seat in the end of the age. Furthermore, it is the guarantee that He will fulfil the promise to Abraham that his spiritual descendants, through Christ, will possess the gate of their enemies, and that all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Gen 22:16-18.

In relation to bringing forth the promised seed, and becoming the mother of nations, it is important to consider *the first and second times* of Sarah. Sarah became an *overcoming* wife and mother. Sarah became an overcoming wife when she trusted God and obeyed her husband by going into Pharaoh’s harem without fear or terror. The apostle Peter exhorted godly women by saying, ‘In former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves [with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit], being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.’ 1Pe 3:5-6.

The *second* season of overcoming for Sarah began after she received the word of faith about her motherhood and had been quickened by the resurrection life of God in her old age so that she was ready to fall pregnant. In the faith of an overcoming mother, she overcame the house of Abimelech. In contrast to the house of Pharaoh that represented the world, the house of Abimelech represented a mixed culture within the promised land. Immediately after this second time overcoming, the word

of the Lord to Sarah was fulfilled and she became the mother of the promised seed.

In addition, Sarah, when she released Isaac to go with his father to Mount Moriah, became the mother of all the nations that will be blessed through Christ. The willingness of a mother to release her child to the accountability of their own choice in relation to the cross of Christ is an integral part of the travail that belongs to motherhood. The fulfilment of the promise that God made to Abraham on Mount Moriah will be the fruit of the travail of her motherhood. Furthermore, Sarah is a type of the travailing church that will bring forth and *deliver* the manchild to the throne of God in the time of the end.

The lesson from Joseph

Isaac was the promised seed who was born to Abraham and Sarah, but he was not caught up to the throne to become a ruler or a deliverer. Rather, the first manchild who was brought forth from the fatherhood of the patriarchs was Joseph. He was ordained by his father when he was given the coat of many colours. Soon after he received the coat from his father, Joseph received two prophetic dreams. The dreams revealed that Joseph was predestined to rule over his brothers and that they would bow down to him. The brothers already hated Joseph because their father loved him, but they hated him even more because of his dreams.

The prophetic word regarding Joseph's rulership was not fulfilled during *the first time* of his life and ministry. Rather, when the opportunity presented itself, he was sold by his brothers to slave traders who were on their way to Egypt. They then covered the coat of many colours with the blood of an animal before they returned it to Jacob. The coat was the symbol of his mandate as a manchild. The blood on the coat signified that the first phase of his ministry would be characterised by *suffering*. Specifically, he had been delivered by his brothers to a phase of suffering in Egypt, which is a symbol of the world.

We know that Joseph suffered injustice in Egypt and was ultimately placed in prison. Joseph is the type of the suffering manchild who suffers at the hands of the world because they are betrayed by a synagogue of Satan in the church. Even though Joseph's brothers had been called by God to become the fathers of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel, they behaved like 'a synagogue of Satan' when they conspired together to betray their brother and then to lie to their father. Rev 2:9. They delivered him to suffering in the world because they were envious of him.

Gen 37:11. The brothers were not recovered to their predestination until they humbled themselves to bow down before Joseph.

The psalmist described the key lesson that we learn from Joseph when he said, 'Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.' Psa 105:19. This is an important principle. The word of the Lord always has a time that has been *appointed* for it to come to pass. The word that is proclaimed on the first time is not *inherited* until the second time. Furthermore, the period between the first and second time is *the trial of faith*. 'The trial of faith' is the season of our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ in which the faith that we have received as a gift from Christ becomes our faith that is more precious than gold. 1Pe 1:6-7.

It is recorded in the Scripture that 'the Lord was with Joseph' in each phase of his suffering. Gen 39:2,21,23. Act 7:9. On the cross, Jesus fully identified with the sufferings of Joseph. Even though Joseph lived before the time of the cross, his sufferings were his fellowship in Christ's sufferings. Christ was with him in Potipher's house and in the prison. As Joseph embraced his fellowship in Christ's sufferings, he received grace from the Lord for his work each day. He was also given favour in the eyes of men.

Notably, it was the two prophetic dreams of Pharaoh that initiated the fulfilment of *the second time* for Joseph. Pharaoh was troubled by his dreams. None of the magicians or wise men in Egypt could interpret his dreams for him. At that time, the king's butler remembered that Joseph had interpreted his dream, along with the dream of the king's baker, when they had been in prison with him two years earlier. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and asked him to interpret his dreams. Joseph responded, 'It [the capacity to interpret dreams] is not in me; God will give Pharaoh *an answer of peace*.' Gen 41:16.

It is remarkable to consider that Joseph was betrayed by his brothers into captivity and then delivered to stand before the king of Egypt to give him a word of peace from God. Speaking about the betrayal that His messengers will experience during the church age, Jesus said, 'They will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, *as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles*. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.' Mat 10:17-20.

God did give Joseph the interpretation of Pharaoh's two prophetic dreams as a testimony to him. Joseph said, 'The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.' Gen 41:25. Furthermore, he said, 'The dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.' Gen 41:32. This statement highlights the second time principle. That is, the one word of God is fulfilled by God in the second time. Joseph told the king that there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. He also advised the king that he should store food during the plentiful years to sustain the nation in the subsequent famine.

Joseph's interpretation and advice pleased the king. Pharaoh made him the ruler over all the land. Joseph's dream regarding his brothers was fulfilled when they were sent by Jacob down to Egypt to buy food from him during the famine. When he finally revealed himself to his brothers, Joseph testified, 'Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity [lit. remnant] for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.' Gen 45:5-7.

As a manchild who was caught up by God to the throne of Egypt, Joseph became a *ruler* and a *deliverer*. He saved the world through the provision of bread in the famine. Furthermore, Joseph later testified that God made him a *father to Pharaoh*. Gen 45:8. In this regard, he was a forerunner to the prophetic fatherhood that was later expressed toward kings by the prophets who belonged to the Elijah ministry. Notably, it was Joseph who increased Pharaoh's wealth and power as the ruler of the first world kingdom because the people gave their money, livestock, land, and themselves to him in exchange for food and lodging during the famine.

When we consider the first and second times of Joseph, we note the parallel to the presbytery in Smyrna and the presbytery in Philadelphia. Corresponding to the first time of Joseph, Jesus said to the presbytery in Smyrna, 'Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil [through the persecution of the synagogue of Satan] is about to throw some of you into prison, *that you may be tested*, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give to you the crown of life.' Rev 2:10. We recall that the word of the Lord tested Joseph until it came to pass. In the same way, every presbytery must

endure the trial of faith until the word of the Lord regarding the manchild is fulfilled in the time of the end.

Corresponding to the second time of Joseph, Jesus said to the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie - indeed I will make them come and worship [lit. bow down] before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.' Rev 3:9. We know that Joseph's brothers did bow down before him and came to know that he had been loved by the Lord through the season of his trial. The restoration of Joseph's brothers was necessary before the whole family of Jacob was established as a remnant in Egypt. Similarly, as we approach the time of the end, leaders who have been called by God to become part of a remnant church will need to forsake the lie of their independent ministry projections, and to submit themselves to the fellowship of an overcoming presbytery like Philadelphia.

When the Father takes His seat, the worldwide presbytery will be caught up to God and His throne. At that time, the worldwide presbytery will become *as God* to all of the kings that belong to the seventh world kingdom. The presbytery will proclaim the gospel of God and will declare that the main agenda in the world is our participation in the kingdom of God. In a similar way to Joseph who fed the entire world with bread during the famine, the worldwide presbytery will 'feed' mankind with 'the true bread from heaven' during the period of great tribulation that is coming upon the whole world during the opening of the seals. Through the ministry of the 144 000, the manchild administration will *deliver* a great multitude of sons of God from their bondage to Satan in the kingdom of darkness.

The lesson from Moses

Following the lesson of Joseph, the next example of a manchild in the Scripture is Moses. Notably, it was the faith and *travail of prayer* that was experienced by his mother that delivered him to become a manchild. In this regard, the mother of Moses was a type of the overcoming church that is in travail to bring forth the manchild in the time of the end. When Moses was born, his mother, whose name was Jochebed, recognised his predestination. Exo 2:2. Heb 11:23. Notably, Moses was born during a period of intense persecution in Egypt. The Pharaoh who ruled Egypt at that time did not remember Joseph. He was afraid of the Israelites, so he tried to suppress them with hard manual labour. However, the more he afflicted them, the more they grew and multiplied.

Pharaoh then instructed the Hebrew midwives to kill every male child as soon as they were born, but they refused to do so. Finally, he instructed the Egyptians to throw every male child into the river Nile to drown. The river Nile was associated with all the gods of Egypt. The prophet Isaiah referred to 'Leviathan', which is another name for Satan, as the twisted serpent that is in the sea or in a large river. Isa 27:1. We note that this persecution by Pharaoh increased in the period immediately before Moses was born as a manchild to become the *ruler* and *deliverer* of the people of God. In the same way, the persecution of the church by the great red dragon in the heavenly places will increase in the period immediately before the manchild administration is brought forth to become the ruler and deliverer of the people of God in the time of the end.

In the face of this opposition and persecution by the Egyptians, Jochebed hid Moses for three months. She was not afraid of the king's command. Heb 11:23. She then made a little 'ark' for him and placed him in the reeds by the bank of the river. In so doing, she released Moses to the Lord, and he was caught up by God to the household of the king of Egypt. He was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. God had chosen Moses to be a ruler and a deliverer. However, *the first time* of Moses did not result in the deliverance of the nation of Israel. Rather, he fled to the wilderness after his own people rejected him and the mandate that belonged to him. Act 7:27.

In his final sermon, Stephen declared, 'This Moses whom they rejected, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?" is the one God sent to be a *ruler and a deliverer* by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.' Act 7:35-36. When the Lord spoke to Moses from the burning bush, it initiated *the second time* of his ministry. One of the key lessons in relation to Moses as a manchild is that the word of his predestination could not be fulfilled on the second time until the Lord confronted him concerning the mixed culture of his marriage and household.

Moses was the type of a manchild who possessed *the rod of God*. The rod first belonged to Moses as a shepherd in Midian. It *became* the rod of God when he received the mandate from God to deliver the nation of Israel from Egypt and then to lead them to worship the Lord at Mount Sinai. 'The rod of God' was the symbol of his authority as the messenger of God to the Israelites and to the first world kingdom. The Lord said to Moses

'See, I have made you *as God* to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.' Exo 7:1. Furthermore, the rod of God in the hand of Moses was the symbol of his authority as the ruler and deliverer of the nation of Israel.

When the Lord sent Moses to Egypt, He said to him, '*I will certainly be with you*. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.' Exo 3:12. The Son of God, who was enthroned on high in the heavens above the angelic administration, *went with Moses* to Egypt. *The word of Moses* was an expression of the authority of the Son's throne over the nations. *The rod of God* in the hand of Moses and Aaron revealed the outstretched arm and mighty hand of the Son of God from His throne. Moses testified to the nation of Israel, 'The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.' Deu 26:8.

There is an important relationship between *the rod of God*, which is the extension of the mighty hand of God, and *the finger of God*. In simple terms, the finger belongs to the hand. The first reference to the finger of God in the Scripture is in relation to the third plague in Egypt. We recall that the sorcerers in Egypt were able to replicate the first and second plagues. However, when Aaron stretched out the rod of God and turned the dust of the land into lice, none of the sorcerers were able to replicate the third plague. The demonic power of Pharaoh's sorcerers had been overcome and broken. Notably, the sorcerers said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God.' Exo 8:19.

The finger of God is the power of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh that belongs to the mighty hand of God. Jesus said, 'If I cast out demons with *the finger of God*, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.' Luk 11:20. Equally, Jesus said, 'If I cast out demons by *the Spirit of God*, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.' Mat 12:28. Evidently, *the Spirit of God is the finger of God*. It is the finger of God that breaks the power of Satan in the heavenly places. Moreover, the finger of God is the instrument that Jesus Christ uses to write the name of the Father and the name of the heavenly Jerusalem upon the fleshly tablet of a person's heart. This signifies that the person has been adopted by the Father and has become a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. They belong to the kingdom of God!

When the Father takes His seat in the time of the end, Jesus Christ will give the rod of God to the worldwide presbytery gathered around the

Father's throne. In the same way that Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt, the worldwide presbytery will have the authority of *the rod of God* to command a great multitude of sons of God to come out of the seventh world kingdom and into the kingdom of God. In addition, the power of *the finger of God* will be revealed by the ministry of the 144 000 as they are sent by the presbytery to look for worthy houses. The households that turn from their fallen family culture to embrace the culture of the kingdom of God will be delivered from the oppression and bondage of familiar spirits. Satan will be progressively overcome, house by house, and will be cast from the heavenly places.

The lesson from Samuel

Moses was the manchild who delivered the Law to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. When the nation entered the promised land, the judges functioned under the mandate of Moses as rulers over the people. Samuel was the last of the judges in Israel. However, more than this, he became the next type of manchild as the first prophet in the Elijah ministry. We know that Samuel was the first prophet in the Elijah ministry because the apostle Peter declared, 'Yes, and all the prophets, *from Samuel* and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days [the coming of Christ].' Act 3:24. From the days of Samuel, the Lord did not do anything unless He first revealed it to His holy servants the prophets.

Like Moses, Samuel was first delivered to the Lord by his overcoming mother. Hannah was continually mocked because of the barrenness of her womb, but she overcame through prayer to receive a son and then to deliver him to the Lord. Jochebed and Hannah were both types of a travailing church bringing forth a manchild. The lesson from Jochebed is that the church must overcome in the face of *persecution from the world* to bring forth the manchild. The lesson from Hannah is that the church must overcome through *the travail of prayer* to bring forth the manchild after a season of barrenness. Having endured a long season of barrenness for most of the church age, the *church will bring forth the manchild administration* in the latter phase of the seventh world kingdom.

Having been delivered to the Lord by his praying mother, Samuel became a manchild who exemplified the ministry of prayer. We recall that the Lord first met him while he was still a young boy who was learning to serve in the tabernacle under the tutelage of Eli the priest. The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in a fellowship of prayer, and ordained him to become the messenger to the house of Eli and to the nation of Israel.

The whole nation of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that 'Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord'. 1Sa 3:20. However, in addition, as a manchild, he also became the *ruler* and *deliverer* of Israel through the ministry of intercessory prayer.

We will briefly illustrate this point. We recall that the ark of the covenant was captured during the days of Samuel because of the corruption of the household of Eli and the idolatry of the nation of Israel. Even though the ark of the covenant was subsequently returned to Israel, the idolatry that had brought them under the judgement of God still needed to be addressed. Speaking as the first prophet in the Elijah ministry, Samuel declared to the nation, 'If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.' 1Sa 7:3.

After the people had turned from their idolatry, Samuel called all the people to gather in Mizpah so that he could pray for their deliverance and restoration. The obedience of the people placed them in a vulnerable position. Having heard that all the people had gathered to the one place, the Philistines came out to attack them. Being aware of their situation, the people said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us [pray without ceasing for us], that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines'. Sam 7:8. Samuel did not wield a sword; nor did he command an army. The only spiritual weapon that Samuel possessed was intercession and travail in prayer.

Remarkably, as Samuel prayed, the Lord answered His prayer with *thunder*. We read in the Scripture that the Lord 'thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel'. 1Sa 7:10. The thunder was a manifestation of God *the Father's voice from His throne*. This brings us to an important point regarding the manchild administration in the time of the end. John saw the worldwide presbytery with golden bowls full of incense and harps, because they will be engaged in a continual ministry of prayer and worship around the Father's throne. The Father will answer their prayer *with thunder* by *proclaiming His word* through the apostolic administration of Christ.

When we read the book of Revelation, we observe that each major waypoint in the time of the end is accompanied by a great thundering from the Father's throne. For example, when the apostle John saw the Lamb open the first seal, he heard the first living creature saying with a

voice like thunder 'come and see'. Rev 6:1. This command means 'come and see the revelation of God's authority and the fulfilment of His purpose'. Each time the voice like thunder is heard, it will initiate a specific action from the throne of the Father, through Christ and the church, which establishes the rule and authority of God's kingdom over all the nations of the earth.

When the Lord answered the prayer of Samuel by thundering from heaven, it caused the Philistines to flee in disarray. When the Father answers the prayer of the worldwide presbytery around His throne by thundering from heaven in the time of the end, it will put the entire seventh world kingdom to flight!

The lesson from David

When Samuel was an old man, the Lord sent him to anoint David as king over the nation of Israel. The anointing of David, while he was still a teenager, signified that he would become the next example of a manchild. However, we observe that, like Joseph and Moses before him, the word of David's predestination to become a ruler and deliverer in Israel was not fulfilled on the first time. Rather, David became a fugitive who was persecuted by King Saul for many years. David was taken from the sheepfold on the first time, but he was not caught up to the throne to *rule* over the nation of Israel until the second time.

Significantly, when David did ascend the throne, he established *the order of twenty-four* to be the administration of his throne over the nation of Israel. For example, David established twenty-four divisions of priests and twenty-four divisions of singers and musicians. 1Ch 24-25. Each shift of watchmen comprised 24 men who stood guard at the various gates of the city. 1Ch 26:17-18. The army had twelve divisions, with 24 000 men in each division. 1Ch 27:1. The simple point is that *the order of twenty-four* is the administration that belongs to the throne of David.

Jesus Christ is the root and offspring of David. He was begotten from the dead, as the Son of David, on the day of His resurrection. The throne of David belongs to Him. He is the King over the true Israel of God. When Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives and sat down on His own intrinsic throne, He elevated the throne of David to the right hand of God. Notably, Jesus Christ has promised to share the throne of David with the overcoming presbyters from lampstand churches. We know that He said to the presbytery in Laodicea, 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit

with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on his throne.’ Rev 3:21.

The twenty-four thrones that belong to the worldwide presbytery reveal the administration of the throne of David that is suitable to rule over every tribe, nation, people and tongue. The administration of the throne of David will comprise presbyters from all nations. Rev 5:9. In the first case, the twenty-four thrones that belong to the worldwide presbytery will be placed around the throne of the Son at the right hand of God. The Father will then place His throne in the middle of the twenty-four thrones and the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount of Zion. At that time, the twenty-four thrones will be around the throne of the Father.

The lesson from Daniel

After the lesson from King David, the next example of a manchild was Daniel the prophet. He was taken captive to serve the king of Babylon while he was a young man. He was caught up by God as a manchild to become the prophet to the most powerful man in the world at that time, when he interpreted the prophetic dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. Significantly, the prophetic dream of King Nebuchadnezzar revealed the Father’s prophetic timetable and the certainty that the Father will take His seat for the purpose of establishing His kingdom on the earth during the latter phase of the seventh world kingdom.

The prophet Daniel served under the kings of Babylon and he later served under the kings of Medo-Persia. However, God also gave him authority over those same kings to proclaim the prophetic word of God to them. Daniel believed that the Most High God rules in the affairs of men. He understood that it is the Father who gives wisdom and understanding to His prophets. And it is the Father who removes kings and raises up kings in the world. We know that it was Daniel who proclaimed the end of the kingdom of Babylon during the feast that was held by King Belshazzar.

When we consider Daniel as being a manchild, the lesson we learn is that the manchild administration will be subject to the administration of Babylon that rules over all nations until the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end. Daniel prophesied that the Lord’s messengers will suffer persecution for 2 300 years. Specifically, he said, ‘Those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they will be helped with a little help. But many will join them with hypocrisy.’ Dan 11:33-34.

The 'little help' that we receive is the resurrection life of Christ, because He has joined our plight, and suffered with us, for the sake of our *recovery to His right hand*. In some cases, the little help will be the grace to suffer and to die *with Christ*. In other cases, the little help will be a miraculous *deliverance* from the hand of our enemies. In every case, the faith of the messenger must be the same as the faith of Daniel's three friends who said to the king, 'Our God is able to deliver us from the burning furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.' Dan 3:17-18.

The lesson from Esther

Daniel prophesied regarding the kings of Medo-Persia. Esther became the wife of one of those kings. Remarkably, Esther also became an example of an overcoming manchild in her day. She was caught up to the throne to stand in the gap for the sake of God's people. Even though she was the wife of one of the Persian kings, she was a type of the wife of the King of kings. When she said to Mordecai, 'I will go to the king, which is against the law, and if I perish, I perish', it demonstrated that she possessed the same faith as that of Daniel's three friends, and that she was submitted to the lordship of Christ as the King of kings. Est 4:16.

The first time for Esther began when she was chosen to be the bride of the king. *The second time* for Esther began when she overcame her own fear of death to petition the king on behalf of her people. In so doing, she also overcame Haman, who personified the spirit of antichrist in her day. Haman manifested the pride and the deceitful scheming that belongs to that spirit. When Esther *overcame* to become the deliverer of her Jewish brethren at that time, she fulfilled the word of her predestination. We recall that Mordecai had encouraged her, 'Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' Est 4:14.

The first and second times for Christ

Jesus Christ is *the Manchild*. The *first time* of Christ began when Yahweh the Son emptied Himself to the bosom of the Father to be begotten as the Son of God. The Father declared to the Son, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Heb 1:5. Then, at the appointed time, the Son of God *further emptied Himself* to be born from the womb of the virgin Mary as the Son of Man. The first time of Christ included His earthly ministry. He came as the anointed King to the nation of Israel, but He was rejected by

His own people and, ultimately, was delivered up to be crucified by the Romans. The apostle John declared, 'He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.' Joh 1:10-11.

The first time of Christ's ministry concluded with the seven wounding events that He suffered on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. On His offering journey, Christ became the Pioneer of our salvation. He fully identified with our sin and death while, at the same time, He learned our obedience and completed the works of our sonship. After He had come back from the death of our sin, by the power of God's resurrection life, and brought us back with Him, Christ proclaimed that *His offering was finished*. He committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father and was *caught up to God and His throne*, while His immortal and incorruptible physical body still hung on the cross.

The *second time* of Christ began on *the day of His resurrection* when He was raised from the dead as the first Man in the image and likeness of God. On the day of resurrection, the Father proclaimed *again*, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Act 13:33. The Firstborn came into the world *again* on the day of His resurrection. Heb 1:6. He had become the Firstborn from the dead. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus reinhabited His immortal and incorruptible physical body that had remained in the tomb for three days and three nights. His physical body was clothed with the glory of His heavenly body, transforming it into a spiritual body.

Having been crucified *in weakness* on the first time, Christ was declared to be the Son of God *with power* at the beginning of the second time. Notably, when Christ became the Firstborn from the dead, the Father declared that He also was a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:5-6. He forever lives to make intercession for us by ministering to us a participation in His finished offering. In this regard, it is *the second time of Christ* which enables us to join the fellowship of everything that He accomplished for us on *the first time*. Jesus explained this point to Peter when He said concerning His offering journey, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' Joh 13:36.

In addition to the second time in relation to Christ's *priesthood*, there is a second time in relation to Christ's *kingship*. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus did not return to judge the world nor to deliver the church from the rulership of the world kingdoms. Rather, He spent forty

days with the apostles and the other disciples to establish the incarnate foundations of the church in preparation for the Day of Pentecost. He gave commandments to the apostles through the Holy Spirit, and He taught them about the kingdom of God so that they were ready to fulfil 'the great commission'. Act 1:1-3. Mat 28:18-20. At the end of the forty days, Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives in His spiritual body and sat down at the right hand of God.

Jesus Christ is presently seated as the King in the middle of His lampstand churches. He possesses the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. His spiritual body is the full revelation of His throne. The kingship of Christ is expressed among His lampstand churches through the word of faith that is proclaimed by the messengers in His right hand. Notably, the kingship of Christ has not yet been revealed to the world. When the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end, Jesus Christ will be presented before Him. He will be *caught up to God and His throne* again, along with the manchild administration that has been brought forth from His lampstand churches. The Father will then give Christ, and the manchild administration, the authority to rule in the midst of His enemies. Psa 110:2. Rev 2:26-27.

When Christ stands to rule in the midst of His enemies, He will progressively put an end to all rule, authority and power that stands in opposition to the kingdom of God. He will reign until He has brought all of His enemies into subjection under His feet. 1Co 15:25. The last enemy that will be destroyed is *death*. Death itself will be swallowed up by life when Jesus Christ physically returns. We recall that the second time of Christ began on the day of His resurrection after three days and three nights. On the day of His physical second coming at the end of the age, every believer will receive the inheritance of a spiritual body from the substance of Christ's spiritual body. Then, at the end of the Millenium, Christ will deliver the entire kingdom to the Father for the new heavens and new earth. 1Cor 15:24.

The first and second times during the church age

During the church age, the manchild administration that is brought forth from the church ministers in weakness and is subject to suffering and persecution. In this regard, the nature of *the first time* ministry of the manchild administration during the church age was exemplified by Stephen. Stephen was chosen as one of the seven deacons. However, the nature of his ministry revealed that he also belonged to the apostolic

administration of Christ. In his final sermon, Stephen proclaimed the principle of the first and second times to the entire Jewish Sanhedrin, with a particular focus on the first and second times of Joseph and Moses.

Stephen began to explain the first time of Christ when he declared to the Jewish leaders that they were his betrayers and murderers. Act 7:52. In response to this word, they were all cut to the heart and gnashed at him with their teeth. Significantly, Stephen then gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Act 7:55. It is notable that Stephen saw Jesus Christ *standing*, rather than being seated upon His throne. Stephen was looking, in the Spirit, all the way to the time of the end when the Father will take His seat and Jesus Christ will stand up to be presented before Him. In that day, Jesus Christ will begin to *rule* and reign with His manchild administration on the earth.

Stephen lived and died during *the first time* of the manchild administration, but he prophetically saw, in the Spirit, *the second time* of the manchild administration. Immediately after Stephen proclaimed that He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, the Jewish leaders rushed at him with one accord for the purpose of dragging him out of the city to stone him. The power of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh that was ministered to him from Christ, by the Holy Spirit, enabled Him to die as a martyr with Christ. His death belonged to the first time of Christ. Notably, Stephen yielded his spirit to the Lord and was caught up to the throne of God *before* his physical body was completely crushed because of the stoning.

Significantly, as Stephen died with Christ in weakness, the power of God was directed toward Paul for the sake of his salvation. We know that Paul continued to resist the grace of God for a short season. However, after his conversion on the road to Emmaus, the apostle Paul also exemplified the ministry of a manchild in weakness. The Lord said to Ananias concerning Paul's ministry, 'He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' Act 9:15-16. Paul learned that the power of God was perfected in his weakness. He testified to the Corinthians, 'For though He [Christ] was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.' 2Co 13:4.

The first time for the manchild administration has continued until our present day. The second time for the manchild administration will

THE LAMPSTAND CHURCH

commence when the Father takes His seat and places His throne in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion. At that time, the worldwide presbytery will be caught up to God and His throne with Christ when He is presented before the Father. When Jesus Christ receives the command from the Father to rule in the midst of His enemies, He will rule through the worldwide presbytery gathered around the Father's throne. The presbytery will rule the nations with the rod of iron. The opening of the seals will be a period of transition from the first time to the second time.

When the sixth seal is opened, the power of the seventh world kingdom will be shattered, and the mountain of the Lord's house will be raised above the nations. Isa 2:2-4. Furthermore, the presbytery around the Father's throne will deliver the nations from the rulership of Satan through the ministry of the 144 000. The 144 000 will be sent by the presbytery to look for worthy houses by proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in all nations. The fruit of the evangelistic ministry of the 144 000 will be a great multitude of *worthy houses*. The evangelistic ministry of those worthy houses will enable over half the world's population to be delivered from the kingdom of darkness as they come into the kingdom of God.

Lampstand Diagrams

The revelation of the light of the seven Spirits of God

The components of the lampstand

Jesus Christ the Branch

The growth of a lampstand - Part 1

The growth of a lampstand - Part 2

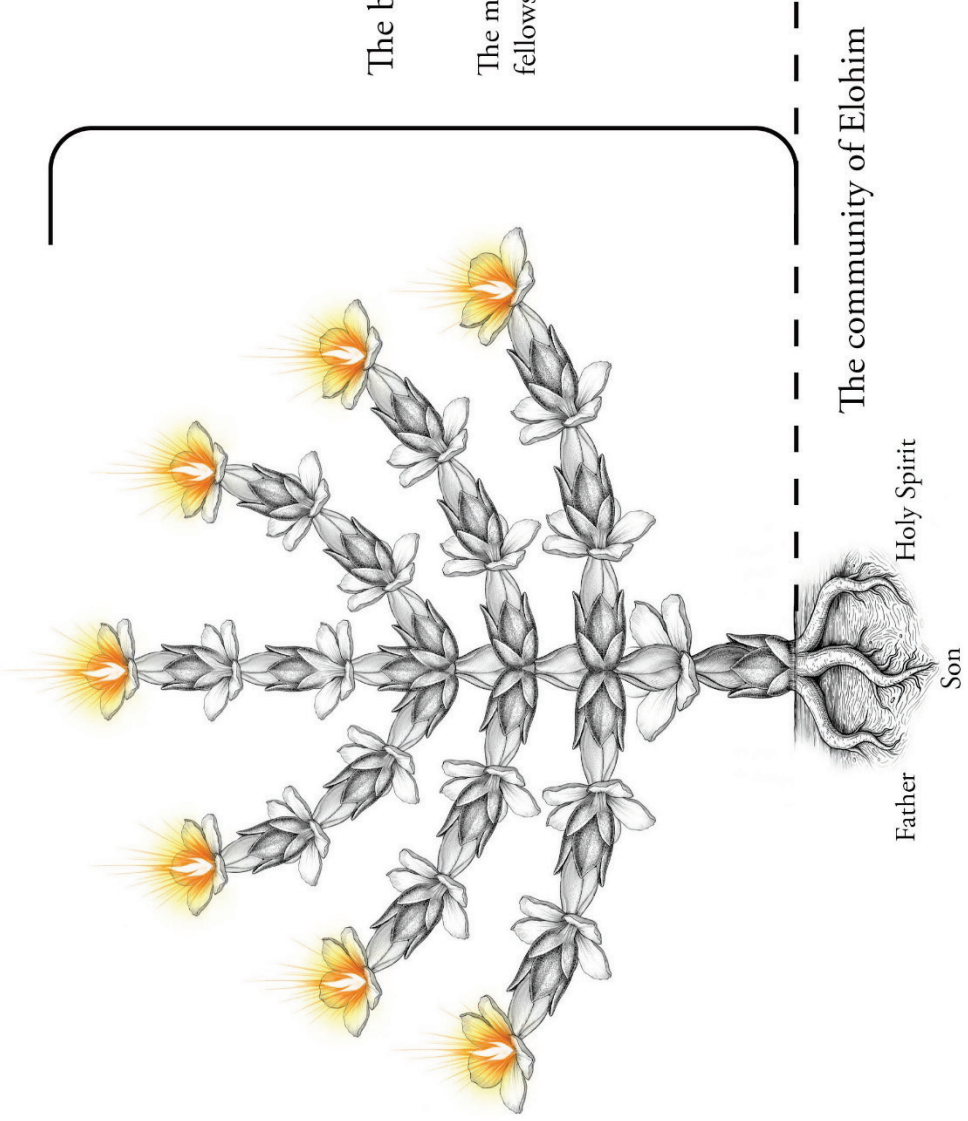
The growth of a lampstand - Part 3

The fellowship of a presbytery

Regional proclamation events

Regional training events

The revelation of the light of the seven Spirits of God



The branch of Yahweh. Isa 4:2

The multiplication of the fellowship of Yahweh.

The community of Elohim

Holy Spirit

Father

Son

The components of the lampstand

A **lamp** is an event which reveals the seven Spirits of God.

A **flower** represents a congregation of worthy houses.

A **bud** represents disciple-messengers.

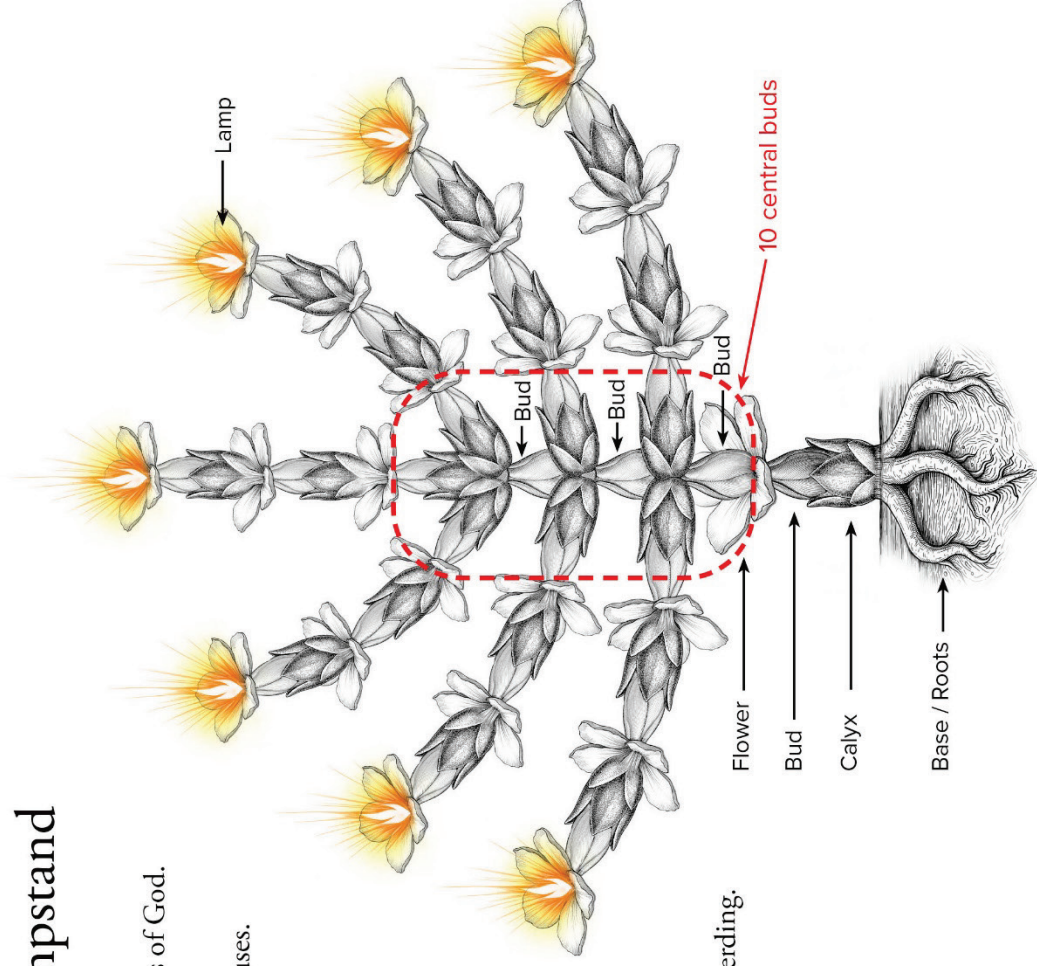
A **calyx** represents a context for the discipleship of worthy houses and messengers.

The **24 buds** represent the full presbytery for a nation.

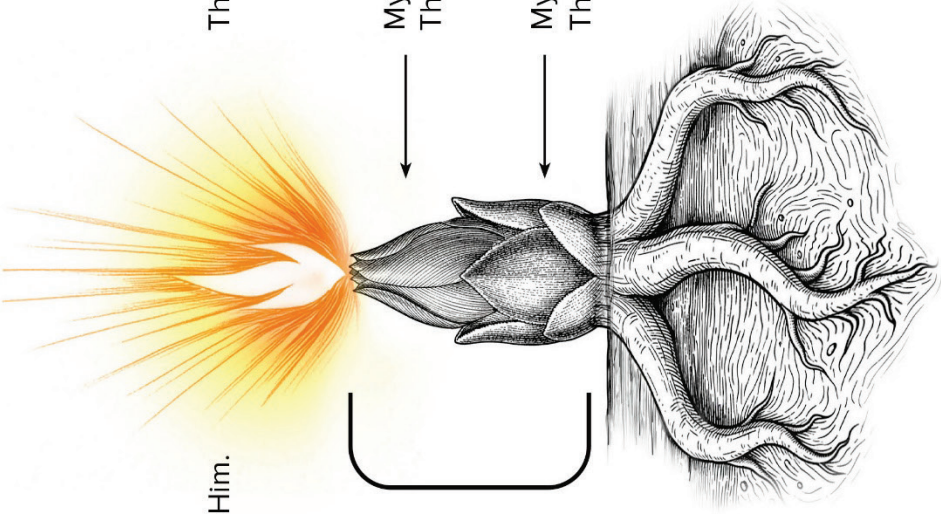
The **10 central buds** in the lampstand represent the meeting of the presbytery for fellowship in the word and the work of shepherding.

The **base** is a three-fold root which represents the community of Elohim.

The total number of parts in the lampstand (including the base) is 72.



Jesus Christ the Branch



The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him.
Isa 11:2

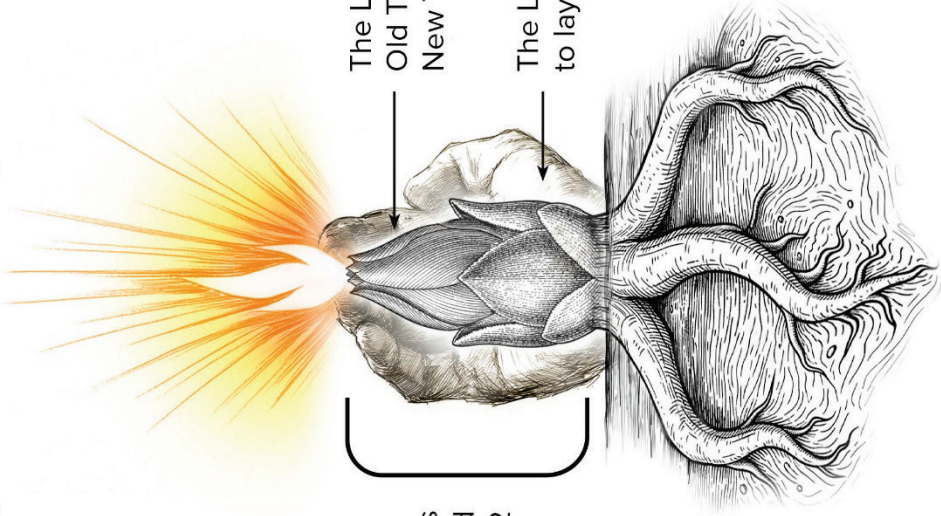
The Light of the world. Isa 9:2

My Messenger. Isa 42:6
The tongue of a disciple. Isa 50:4

My Servant. Isa 42:1
The ear of a disciple. Isa 50:4

A branch shall grow out of his roots.
Isa 11:1

The growth of a lampstand - Part 1

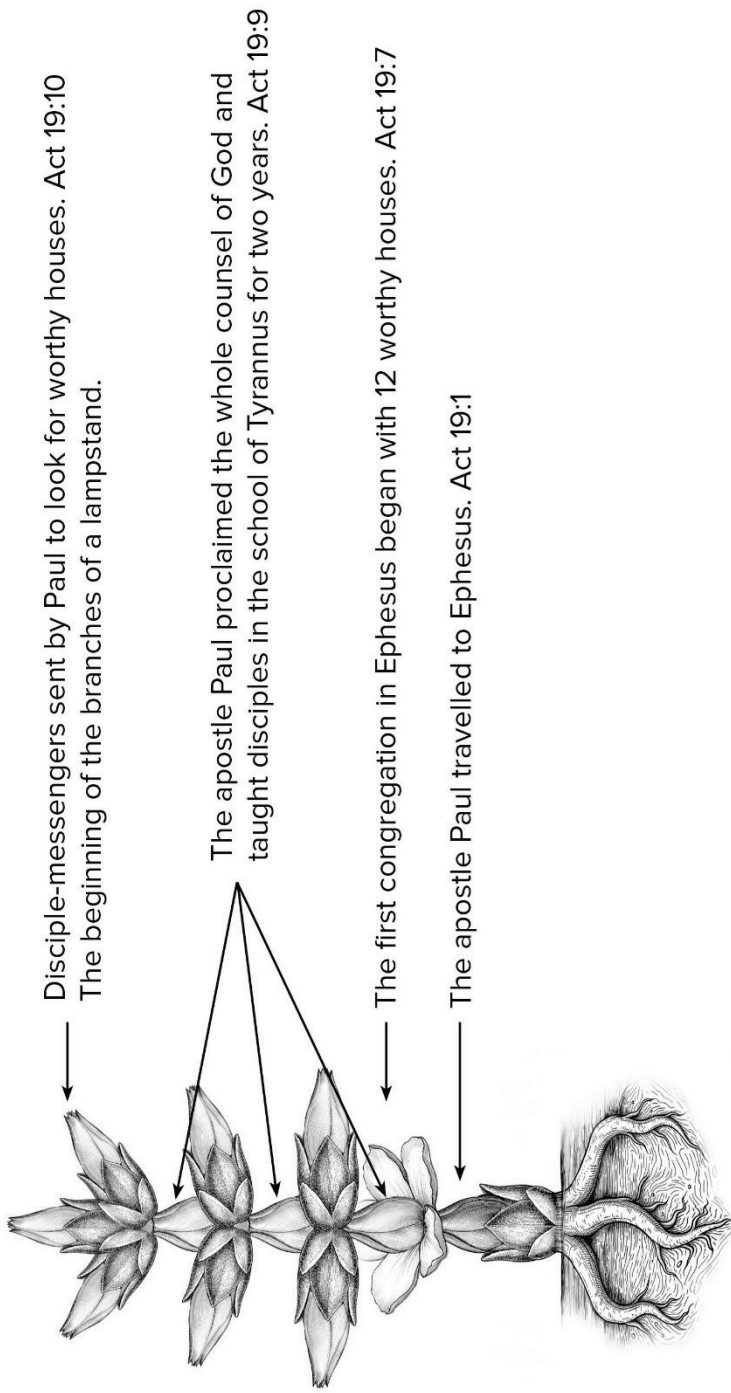


The branch of an almond tree is the Lord's instrument to proclaim and accomplish His word. Jer 1:11-12

The Lord sends a disciple-messenger. Jer 1:7
Old Testament prophet. Jer 1:5
New Testament apostle/prophet. Acts 13:47

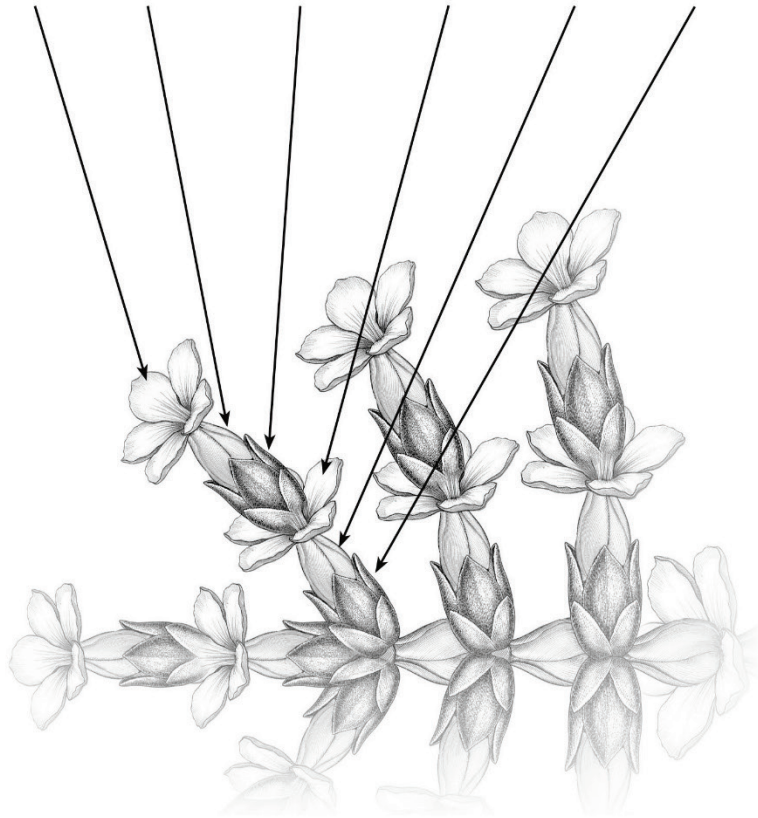
The Lord extends His hand to lay hold of a messenger. Jer 1:9

The growth of a lampstand - Part 2



The growth of a lampstand - Part 3

The branch of a lampstand is the fellowship of the church in a region which includes multiple congregations.



3. Flower: More worthy houses are found and become another new congregation.

2. Bud: Messengers from worthy houses are sent to look for more worthy houses.

1. Calyx: Worthy houses in a congregation are disciplined by the presbytery.

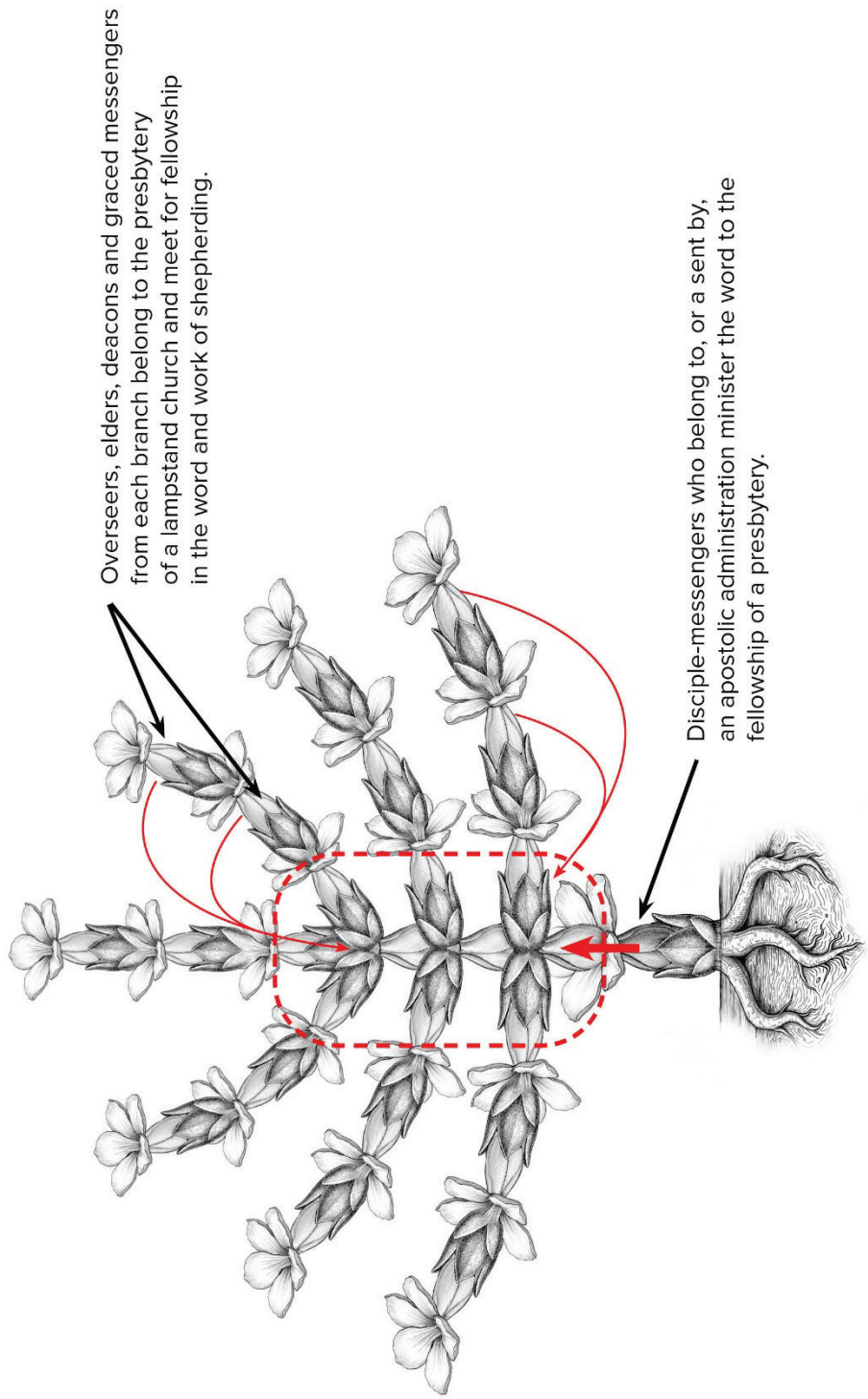
3. Flower: Worthy houses are found and become a new congregation.

2. Bud: Messengers are sent to look for worthy houses.

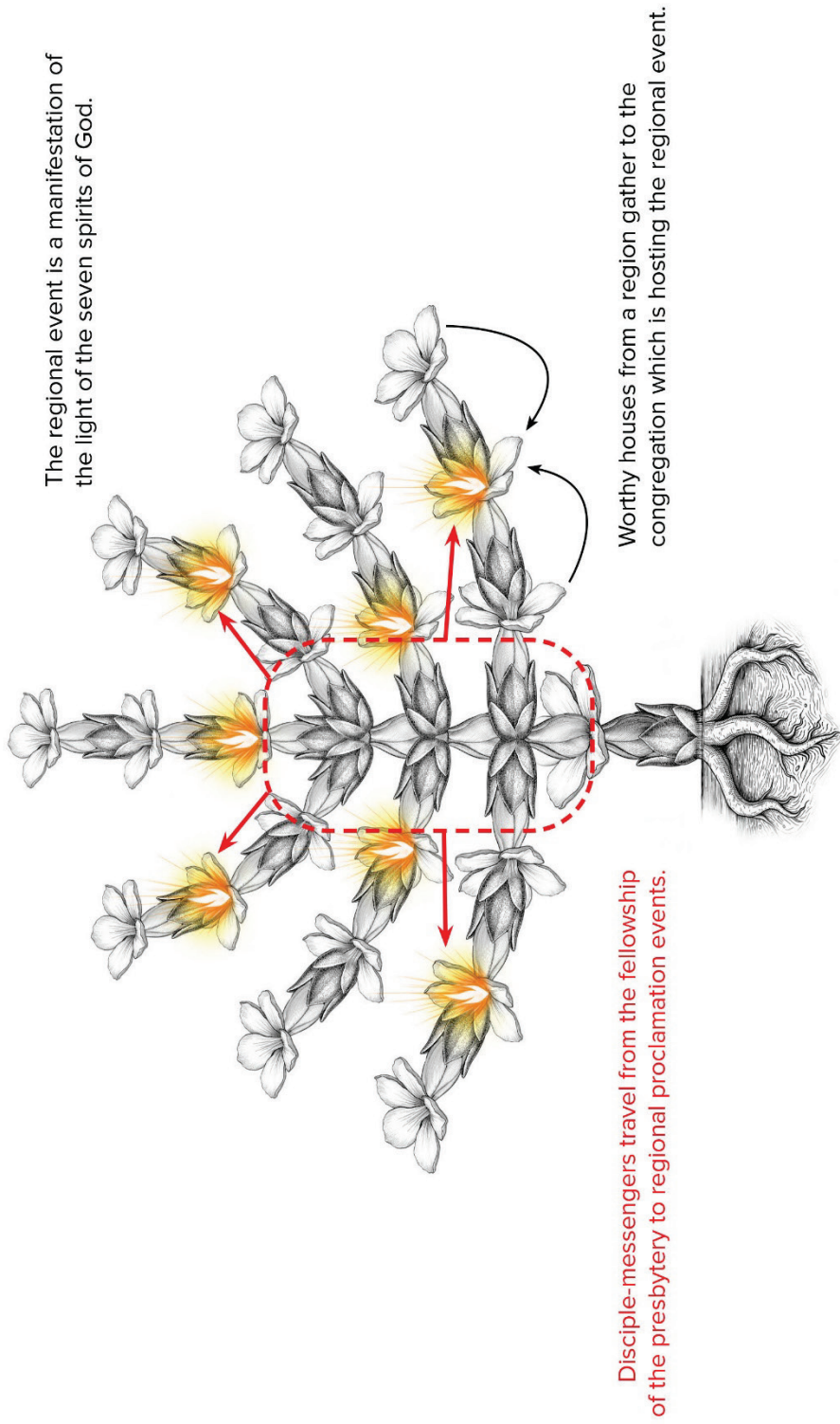
1. Calyx: Messengers from worthy houses are disciplined in the fellowship of the presbytery.

A new branch grows out from the central branch.

The fellowship of a presbytery



Regional proclamation events



Regional training events

