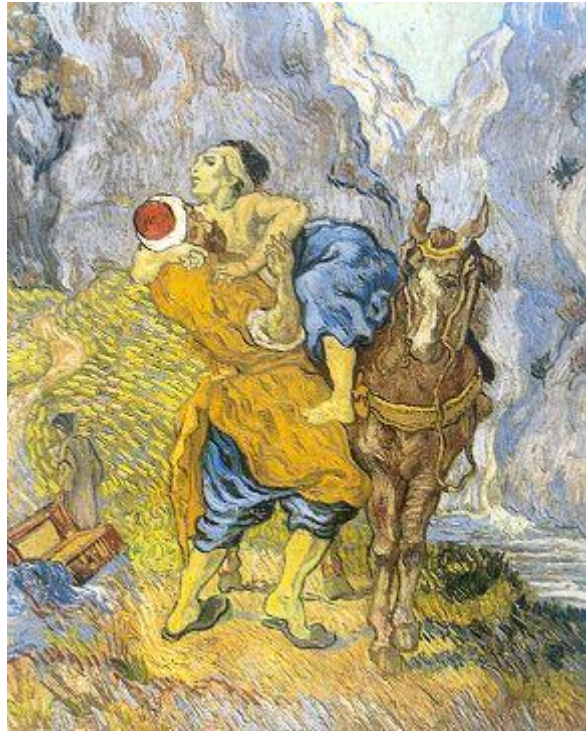


The Holy Gospel
after the report of the apostle

Luke



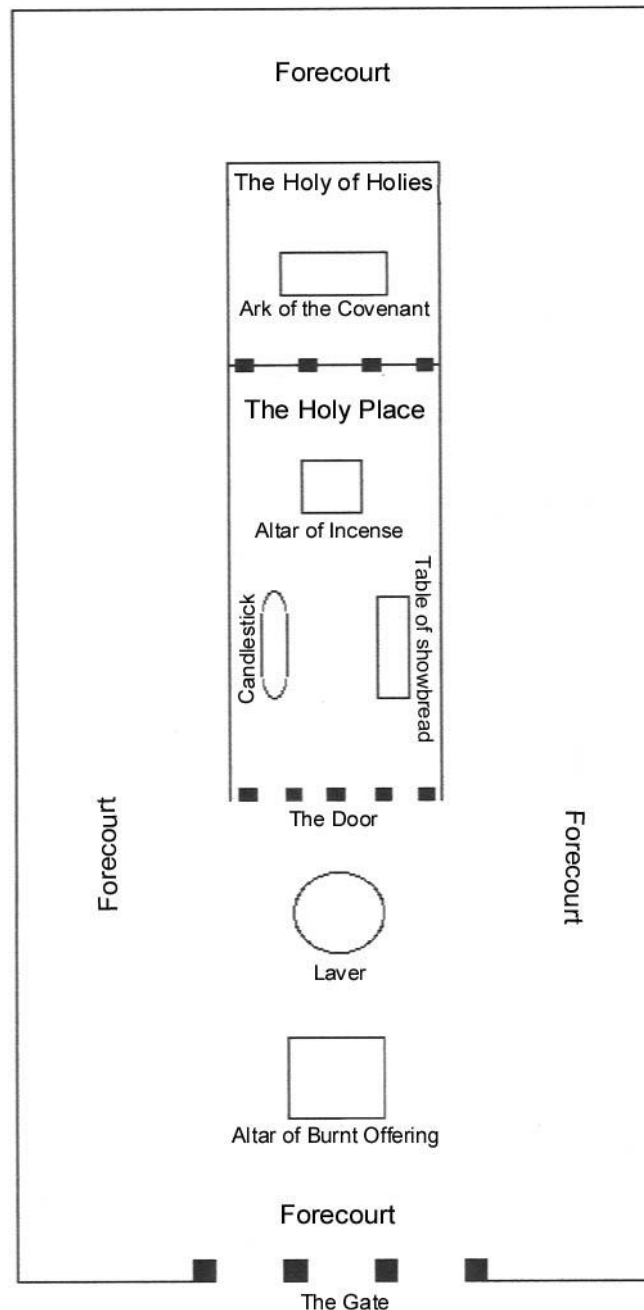
The Book of the NEW MAN in Christ

*About Jesus, the High Priest, and how we,
as priests of the most high God,
must serve Him.*

"Verse by verse"
the deeper meaning of this Bible-book,
explained in the light of the Israeli Tabernacle.

By E. van den Worm
2nd revised edition, January 2000

Plan of the Israeli Tabernacle



2

General note:

1. In principle the Bible texts have been taken from the Authorized Version. One could, of course, when so desired, use any other Bible translation.
2. We have **frequently** added text between brackets in the Bible verses **to clarify the meaning of the Bible verses**.
3. In most cases where **he** or **him** is mentioned to point to **males** it also counts for **females**.
4. It is allowed to copy the study, on which way, when the source is mentioned.
5. If this study is a blessing for you, it's our wish that the message shall be passed on to others. We ask you in the first place to attend other people on our Blog. But you could also, as far as we are concerned, copy it (many times), and hand it out. A margin for profit is **not** allowed hereby. See note 4, above.

New make-over: December 2022

This and other studies from E. van den Worm can be downloaded FOR FREE from our Blog:

<https://endtimemessenger.wordpress.com>

Part I

The court-life of the believer

Chapter 1 ¹

The gate of repentance unto the NEW LIFE in Christ.

3

Introductory words:

In the Gospel after the evangelist Luke we see the Lord Jesus portrayed as **the Son of man** (after the flesh: from the seed of David – Romans 1:3), as the **NEW MAN** in God, as the New Creature. And, of course, each new creature is a priest of God, because he enters into, and is in, a relationship with God. It is exactly this relationship which issues the new creation. And **by** and **in** that relationship with God the new creature is a priest, who stands between God and fallen man. Therefore the Gospel after Luke is, in the first place, a revelation of Jesus Christ as the wonderful High Priest of God, because He is revealed here as the Son of man, the First among the new creations of God. Spiritually, what applies to the Head (i.e. Jesus), also applies to the Body (the Christians). It is therefore also a book of the Christian as a royal priest, who can be a priest, because He, Jesus Christ, is the High Priest. It is the book of the NEW MAN, because he lives in unity with that wonderful High Priest and Savior, whereby the NEW MAN can also be a channel of God's streams of mercy on behalf of God's people.

This first chapter shows us in particular the gate of repentance opening unto the NEW LIFE. We will look at this Bible-book in the light of the Tabernacle. Would it have been possible for us to approach that holy place of that time, we would first have had to enter a gate in order to come unto holy ground. This is also the case if we begin to read this Gospel prayerfully and with proper respect.

The colors of Jesus' Being are displayed by this gate: scarlet, blue, purple, and white. Especially the white typifies purity, characteristic for the NEW MAN. The purple signifies the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is expressed in the Gospel after Matthew. The scarlet signifies God's Son as a servant, His willingness to die for fallen humanity, as the Father asked it of Him, already before the foundation of the world. This is told unto us in the Gospel of Mark. The blue tells us of Jesus as the Son of God, which is described in the Gospel of John. The color of Jesus, as described by Luke in his Gospel, is therefore **white**. He is that **pure NEW MAN** and High Priest.

1 verse 1-4: *"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in (good) order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. "*

Luke, the doctor and later evangelist, wrote to a certain Theophilus. This last name may be a fictitious name, as "Theophilus" in Greek means "son of God". Therefore he directed this Gospel to each son of God, to each perfect (read: sincere) child of God. And the purpose of the evangelist is to bring religious security in the heart of each child of God.

The birth announcement of John the Baptist.

We will now have a close look at the birth announcement of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was a preacher of repentance. He called to repentance the people of Israel, that is to say the Jews (namely the tribe of Judah, wherein is also included the tribe of Benjamin) ². He came in the spirit of Elijah, the prophet that called Israel to repentance, after it had strayed (spiritually), and had served Baal through the doing of queen Jezebel, the wife of king Ahab of Israel. The Baal religion in fact is a nature worship. On closer consideration the Baal religion wants to let itself go in worldly

¹ All chapters are also worked out separately: Better formatting and a larger letter for easier reading. (note AK)

² There is a difference between Israel and Jews, which we like to explain in short. First the people of Israel contains twelve tribes, named after the 12 sons of Jacob (who received the name Israel from God). Later there was a split, and the Bible mentions then the "House of Israel" and the "House of Judah" (the Jews). The **"House of Israel"** (also named Israel) is the empire of 10 tribes which in history was taken in exile from Canaan by Assyria. After this they mingled with the heathens (originally to Europe etc.) where they now live as an "hidden nation". Specially the "Christian nations" in the North West of Europe and the countries to which many immigrated, like America, Canada and Australia. The **"House of Judah"** contains two tribes namely Judah and Benjamin, which lived in the promised land in the days that Jesus walked on earth. The house of Judah (the Jews) is the part of Israel that was hardened (Rom. 11:25).

lusts, the worldly ways are indulged. The Baal cult (i.e. the worship of Baal, an idol) had a licentious character, whereby the fertility was idolized.

Elijah called Israel away from Baal – away from the loose worldly lifestyle that Israel had fallen into – back to YaH-WeH. He called them to the living God and Lord, the God of purity, modesty and justice. This was Elijah's manner, and so was this John the Baptist also.

We read, that God announced the birth of this John the Baptist. Everything right and good comes from God. It is God, Who calls us unto repentance. We can't come unto God without this call to repentance; and He uses the mouth of the preacher of repentance for this. The preacher of repentance is a gift of a loving God, to people who are lost in sin. God in His compassion filled him with the Spirit, Who calls unto repentance. He is a sounding board of the call which comes from the heart of God.

The birth of God's instrument, which would sound forth this call, was announced here. Again: the call to repentance must come from God into the heart and being of the sinner. Without this voice of the Spirit, Who also was in Elijah, no sinner will repent. This we read in John 6:44 "No one comes to Me (i.e. Jesus) unless the Father, Who sent Me, draw him..."

1 verse 5: *"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth."*

4

Zechariah was a priest, and his name means "God remembers" or "God is mindful (of)". From him this preacher, who preached repentance, was born. Zechariah had prayed for this son, who was given to him and his wife in their old age. Let us understand the spiritual meaning of this. As Zechariah prayed for a son and prayed for his people, so also must we pray God to let His call unto repentance be heard on behalf of sinners, whom we love, and whom we would love to see "in Christ". If we pray in this way God will hear, and will send that call unto repentance through the mouth of one of His serving children. So also was this John the one asked by God, who had to sound forth the call unto repentance to the faithless people of Judah.

This priest (Zechariah) was of the course of Abia. In his time David had established 24 divisions (see 1 Chronicles 24:1-19). Such division consists of a chief priest with his helping co-priests. As one would understand, with the growth of the generations the number of priests had increased greatly, but the number of divisions remained 24. Twice a year a certain division had a chance to serve in Jerusalem in the temple. Zechariah was of the eighth division, namely the division Abia had when he was chief priest. God chose for this John the Baptist to be born, a man of the eighth division. We see how wonderfully God worked, because the symbolic worth of the number 8 is that of the new beginning, of the **resurrection**. He also chose Zechariah, because he and his wife were righteous in His eyes. We read this in the following verses:

1 verse 6: *"And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."*

1 verse 7-9: *"And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord."*

We know that such a division counts many priests. The task to burn incense among all religious acts the priests are to perform, is a holy task. Incense was to be laid on the altar of incense, after it had been cleansed of the ashes, and whereon new coals had been laid, after which the assembled people were to be blessed. It was a wonderful, holy task in their eyes: it was the most holy task the priests of such a division had during that week. Because it was such an extraordinary task lots were drawn. During such a week only seven priests of an entire division were appointed by lot for this work. It was customary that the one on whom the lot had fallen, withdrew from further lot drawing for the rest of his life; the reason being that such a division was especially large in number. It so happened that the lot fell on the priest Zechariah... After the altar of incense was cleansed of the ashes of the offering of the previous day, and new coals had been laid on it, he entered. Quietly he came near, knowing what holy task was awaiting him; namely to offer incense unto that great God, to bring Him honor, and praise and worship.

1 verse 10: *"And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."*

They waited outside for this priest's blessing.

1 verse 11-12: *"And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zechariah saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him."*

When he was thus occupied with the offering of incense, to then worship God, and afterwards to exit backwards, keeping his face towards the altar of incense, he suddenly noticed the angel! Fear came over him!

1 verse 13: *"But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zechariah: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John."*

John means: "God is merciful", "God gives grace".

1 verse 14-15: *"And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."*

And see now what task was awaiting him:

1 verse 16-17: *"And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

I already pointed out to you: Elijah was a preacher of **repentance**, his task was: to call to repentance. He must sound forth the merciful call, which came straight from the heart of God, to the people of Israel. He was a sounding

board for God's grace. **It is God, Who always calls to repentance!** The repentance unto God, a deed which goes out from **us**, after God called us thereto, is not only the basis and the beginning of a healthy religious life, but also a **new beginning each day**. This must be a distinguishing mark of our religious life **each day: absolute, whole-hearted repentance** unto God. Not a single Christian can go on in sincerity for God without this daily mark!

John had to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children"; he had to move the hearts of the elders to a childlike acceptance of God's will, and a similar approach to God. He had to "turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just". For disobedience to God's will characterized Israel, and characterizes today's spiritual Israel (the Church)! Repentance shows **obedience** to God; yes, being willing to obey with all one's heart His **entire** Word. If, in any way, we are disobedient (or want to be disobedient) to God's will, then there is no repentance in us! If there is a bondage of sin, which keeps us captive, there is a pain in a **repentant** heart, a wrestling in prayer to God for deliverance and mercy to **be able to** obey Him! And this wrestling in prayer continues until God pours out His redeeming grace! When we receive God's strength unto deliverance, then again it is up to the Christian himself to show his good will, and break the bondage of sin, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, himself, in the power of grace he received. God calls us out of the darkness of sin, and we must ourselves be willing to get out of the darkness, in God's strength. So Abram had to leave the people of Ur of the Chaldees, his original dwelling place. God called him hereto in order to bless him; but Abram had to do it himself, he had to leave those people in the strength given him by God. The will to act and to obey must come from deep **within ourselves**, as a positive answer to God's call, then the strength to obey will issue from Him. **God must be able to see in the depth of our heart a sincere repentance life, an sincere longing for that life in His justice. Then He will satisfy such a heart with His justice.**

John had to "turn the disobedient to the **wisdom** of the just". **Wisdom** is the distinguishing mark of the just. A righteous person will, at each deed he wants to do, ask himself prayerfully: "is this after God's will?"

1 verse 18-19: *"And Zechariah said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings."*

When still young, Zechariah had prayed for a son, but he now did not believe the angel's announcement for he and his wife were already old, and, humanly spoken, the fertile period was over; he therefore asked the angel for a miraculous sign. He could not accept God's Word... but God requires of His people that they believe His Word! Then the announcer made himself known: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God!" Do you know who Gabriel is? He is the messenger of God's revelations and will; he is the teacher of God's children. So, also Mary received from him the announcement regarding Jesus' birth (see Luke 1:26-35), and, earlier, also Daniel received a revelation from him (see Daniel 8:16-26; 9:21-27). There is but One with God, Who teaches the children of God, and He is the Holy Spirit. Therefore Gabriel is an Old-Testament appearance (revelation form) of Him. He is the third revelation form of the Godhead Himself, and had to condemn Zechariah' unbelief! Zechariah received the sign he asked for; but that sign was at the same time God's judgment over his unbelief:

1 verse 20-22: *"And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people waited for Zechariah, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless."*

When Zechariah came out, his hands were stretched out to bless, as is customary with all the priests, who perform such a deed, but his mouth remained silent... he could not utter the blessing...

Beloved, let us **continue to repent** from the heart, and **obey Him** from the heart, but let us also be willing to believe His Word. These are the pillars on which a blessed, religious life rests!

1 verse 23-25: *"And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach (contempt) among men."*

The miracle of Elisabeth's conception (at a very old age) then happened. She kept her joy over this miracle of God to herself for five months. After all, the people would not have believed her, and would have laughed at her... Only when it became visible that she was pregnant, she showed herself to the outside world. God had removed her "reproach among men" by this conception, and that in her old age. A barren woman was someone God did not want to bless. In people's opinion her righteousness must have some hidden sins or shortcomings. But now they could not say or think any such thing of her. God had splendidly made good all defamation she suffered by working this miracle in her!

God's Spirit announced the birth of the NEW LIFE.

In the light of the Israeli Tabernacle we are still looking at the gate, the entrance to the Holy Place of Jesus. This spiritual Holy Place is a life in communion with God. It is holy life ground; it is a life that seeks to live in absolute union with God. It is also growing towards the fullness thereof; namely to the perfect union with our God and Lord, Who seeks this in us and demands it from us. Therefore we must know a life which progresses in ever increasing purity and holiness, because He is pure and holy. If we wish to come to the heart of God, **we must be willing to be purified in all our thoughts and our desires**; we must be willing to be sanctified by Him in our thinking and in our heart.

This purity and holiness of the NEW LIFE in us, yes the NEW LIFE Itself, is no power, but a second revelation of the Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is the NEW LIFE, that has come into this dark world. Now the birth of this NEW LIFE was announced. It often happens, when God does something in your and my life, that we notice the foreshadow (lit. adumbration) thereof beforehand; we then dream dreams or receive revelations which tell us that

God is planning something with us. Here too God's announcement of a very important, coming event is seen: the birth of the NEW LIFE of men.

1 verse 26: *"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,..."*

With the "sixth month" is meant the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy. Elisabeth hid from the outside world for five months. When she showed herself again to that outside world in the sixth month and they discovered her pregnancy, Gabriel came to the virgin Mary with His announcement.

1 verse 27-30: *"...To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house (line) of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God."*

We know that the angel Messenger of God, Gabriel, was a revelation of the Holy Spirit. Mary was favored by God, she had "found grace with God". Verse 28 says "...the Lord is with thee". How wonderful that God is with us. This is only possible when our conscience is pure, and we live a life that is subjected unto Him; when **nothing** and **nobody** stands between God and us anymore; when **all** has been confessed to God, and our conscience cannot accuse us anymore about any disobedience towards God. Then there is no division, no stumbling block between us and God anymore; then **the Lord is with us!** He could be this way with Mary. This woman had seen to it that there was nothing in her life that could stand between her and God. Our religious life is to strive for this too: that **nothing** and **nobody** stand between us and God. Such a life knows no self-righteousness or self-delusion (to think much of oneself); not a single "yes, but..." to God's will. Such a life is pleasing to God, and will manifest itself in spiritual fertility. Such a person has a heart which is like fertile soil, like ploughed ground ready to receive the seed of God's will. This seed will sprout here, will grow, and flower and bear fruit, the one 30, the other 60 and next 100-fold!

We see that even in these "ploughed" hearts there still is a gradation of 30, 60 and 100-fold. If 100-fold is perfect, then we could also speak of 100%, 60% and 30%. We can then speak of 100% when such a life is completely under the management and the power of the Holy Spirit; of 60% when 40% of such a life is still self-willed, even if that self-will seeks to please God as well; of 30% when 70% of the "labor for the Lord" still is done in obstinacy and in one's own power.

All other lives, where there is found even a semblance of disobedience to God's will, is bound to (spiritually) come to grief and fail completely. One reads this in the parable of the seed (Matthew 13). There only in one of the four cases the seed becomes fertile; in two other cases a period of life and growth may be seen, but these irrevocably end. In the fourth case the seed did not sprout at all, as it fell on rocky ground. Only those who are willing to unconditionally open up to God's Word, without any "yes, buts..." will receive NEW LIFE and fertility, for this NEW LIFE only knows one foundation, namely: Jesus Christ, His holiness and purity (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Let us therefore wholeheartedly obey His Word and the Holy Spirit; let us put Him above all things and all people in this world! Let us not continue to entertain stumbling blocks in our life; not allow nor maintain in our heart and life things and relationships with other people, when God points an admonishing finger at them. In case of a bondage in sin, let us not rest until we have received the strength from God to break that bondage in His Name, that we may continue to live a resurrection life. Then the divine testimony about us will be: "The Lord is with us!" He will witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

"Thou are blessed among the women". Mary indeed was an especially blessed woman: she was to bear the Savior of this world in her womb. She received the wondrous calling to bear as a human child in her womb, and to give birth to, the Son of God, Who has been alive from the "eternity of the past" already. When God's miracle had taken place, God's glory lay there, hidden in Mary's womb, as a tiny seed of life. God had called her thereto, because she was, and remained, an open channel for God's provisions; because she had seen to it that nothing came between her and God.

If God wants to call you and me to a certain ministry, then **nothing** should be, nor remain, between us and God. There should always be an openness; then this (God's) call will sound; then it will be heard by us. It is solely in this way that God could use us, in His time and in His way. Let us seek such a condition and stimulate its growth, keeping our conscience, and also our life, clear of any offence before God.

1 verse 31-33: *"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his (fore)father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob (or Israel) for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."*

The Name "Jesus" means "YaHWeH saves", "YaHWeH came to save". He is the Revelation of YaHWeH, Who is **full of grace**; Who with a smile of reconciliation, although full of justice, says to the sinner: "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Jesus is YaHWeH, Who, full of grace, says to the sinner: "Come, **all** is finished on Calvary's cross!" "Jesus" is the Name above all names; it is only by that Name that we could be saved. It is the Name we could bring before God's throne pleadingly, because that Name bears in It the grace of Calvary (or Golgotha) that we might be mindful of this all reconciling sacrifice to God; namely when we pray to God in that Name. The Name Jesus for us is a pleading in itself with God. When we call to God with the Name of "Jesus", we remind Him of that great sacrifice of Calvary, which Jesus brought for us. Hence it is written: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32). For calling in faith upon that Name is a pleading on "Calvary".

"He shall be called the Son of the Most High", and He is! For the One that came into Mary's womb was God, the Lord, Himself! The second Revelation in the Godhead – incomprehensible for the un-anointed, human mind – detached Himself from the Godhead in the heavens; God's heart left the heavens and came into the womb of Mary in that unconscious state. Beloved, was not this a wonderful gift of God? Voluntarily God's Son left His glory He had in those "ivory palaces", where the streets of gold are; where He enjoyed the worship of the highest angel hosts; all this He left and came in that unconscious, fetal state into Mary's womb, where He made Himself vulnerable by clothing Himself with **humanity** (Romans 1:3; 8:3). O, what a miracle of divine self-abnegation, as was also all of His earthly ministry, which would end as "sinner" on a cursed tree (see Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13), although Himself without sin... This was the only way to save you and me; to snatch the whole Church out of satan's³ claws, and from (spiritual) death! Then He would rise to NEW LIFE: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (given Thee life) (Acts 13:33). This pronouncement of God Paul did not associate with the birth of the Child of Bethlehem, but with His resurrection from the dead, where God's Son, as it were, tasted a new birth, but then as the Head of the Church, of the whole of the NEW CREATION.

"He shall be King over the house of Jacob for ever". When He says this, it is not only the "handful" of Israelites that God refers to, not the handful of sons of Jacob after the flesh. No, the "house of Jacob" represents here the whole Church of all time; it the worldwide Church, drawn from all of humanity, from all generations. For Jacob is the type of the Holy Spirit; the "house of Jacob" is the house of the Holy Spirit, the Temple wherein He lives. He is the King over this Church for all eternity; of His Kingdom there would be no end!

1 verse 34: *"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man (have no [sexual] relationship with a man)?"*

Mary had had no intercourse yet with a man, she was still a virgin.

1 verse 35: *"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

Jesus came forth from God Himself, by a new creation of God. Mary would be overshadowed by God's Spirit. He stood before her to overshadow her, and only waited for her agreement, her willingness, to receive.

1 verse 36-37: *"And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."*

1 verse 38a: *"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word,..."*

Once Mary had voiced her willingness to receive this NEW LIFE – despite the sacrifice that was asked of her – God's Spirit, Who first had been standing before her, overshadowed her... Then the miracle happened! God's wonderful Son in an instant was hidden in that unconscious state, in that impregnated womb... O, that sweet trembling of holy joy Mary must have felt...

1 verse 38b: *"...And the angel departed from her."*

When the work was done Gabriel parted from her. Here was a miracle of divine mercy and grace, revealed in the life of a willing soul. Beloved, are we as willing? Are we willing to receive God's Word in our heart and being – whichever sacrifice is required? Are we willing to receive the Word in our being, **despite of any cross-working process?** Mary did; she despised the shame of unwed motherhood; in those days this was an **insuperable** disgrace! She subjected herself completely to that faithful God, without worrying about the (to be expected) contempt of the people, that it would happen to her according to His will...

Mary's visit to Elisabeth.

We know that Elisabeth conceived her only son in her old age, namely John the Baptist. This John was a prophet of repentance; he was the bearer of God's call unto repentance; he was the incarnation of God's call: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!" He was as it were filled with the call: "Leave your sin, surrender and obey the mighty and loving God and Lord!"

Mary, being pregnant with the NEW LIFE Itself, visits her older cousin Elisabeth, who was pregnant with the caller unto repentance. It was not Elisabeth (who was pregnant with the son, that would be the caller unto repentance) visiting Mary (who would give birth to the Son of man and the Son of God); no, it was the other way around! Which spiritual lesson do we learn from this? It is this: that redemption and salvation always comes from God Himself; it is **God's action** coming to the person who is willing to repent. When the NEW LIFE, the gift of grace (namely Jesus, the Son) of God, and human willingness to repent come together in one house, then there is fullness of joy! I still remember as clearly as when it happened, what torrent of joy it gave me personally! We also see here how a spiritual joy came over these two women.

1 verse 39-45: *"And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; And entered into the house of Zechariah, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."*

³ We write the word "satan" not with a capital, as it is not a name, but a word meaning opponent or adversary, accuser.

Note here that wonderful joy that filled Elisabeth, on account of the Holy Ghost. It is the same joy which fills us when NEW LIFE has indeed come to us. "Blessed are you among women". Indeed, Mary was the chosen one to give birth to the Son of God as the Son of man.

"Whence is this to me, that **the mother of my Lord** should come to me?" This pronouncement of Elisabeth refers to that blessed state wherein Mary was. Not, that she was the mother of God! No, far from it! She herself states in verse 38: "Behold, the handmaiden of the Lord". She was prepared to serve God by bringing into the world God's Son in His incarnation (becoming flesh, man). It is true that she was the mother of this Son of man, of the Man Jesus. Mary herself was to be delivered by this Redeemer from the bonds of spiritual death. She knew no preference whatsoever above all other sinners; although she was enormously favored by God; which is why the angel greeted her with: "Thou, favored one", "for thou hast found favor with God". She, too, had to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. From God's Word we know what a "baptism" means scripturally. The **water baptism** as well as the **baptism in the Spirit** (Romans 6:3). This is why she was also found among the 120 who had withdrawn in that upper room to pray, and who waited for God (see Acts 1:13-14). Making her the mother of God would be blasphemy, and a dishonor to God!

We will see that not only joy will fill a soul if it receives the NEW LIFE, but also that praise unto God will fill the heart and lips of him.

8 Mary's song of praise.

We have seen that joy went out of Elisabeth, but the song of praise comes from Mary. This is, because the song of praise unto God finds its source in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of worship unto God. **He** is the cause, when praise wells up into our heart.

1 verse 46-55: *"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the **hungry** with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our (fore)fathers, (namely) to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."*

Let us have a closer look at this song of praise of Mary. It is said here, that God grants His grace to the **lowly**; to them in whose heart is found meekness to surrender to God in admission of their own sins.

Mary, through the Holy Spirit, further says that He shows mercy to those who fear Him; who walk in the fear of God; who, because of this fear dare not continue to walk in conscious sins before God's face; who, because of this fear, do not continue to tempt God with "yes, buts...". Let us obey God, on account of this fear, for this Word is like a sword which will slash away the sin out of our being or which will slay us in the day of judgment.

He further shows His mercy to the **hungry** (verse 53); to them who sincerely long for this NEW LIFE; for this pure communion with God's Son and the Father. This is confirmed in the Beatitudes of Jesus: "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6).

Here the state of mind/walk of life is described, a convert must have. He must be: **humble**, admitting he being a sinner; he must be: **God-fearing**, hearing and doing the Word in fear and trembling; and he must be: **full of desire** for this NEW LIFE in the righteousness of God. To those God will grant His **grace**; He will do great things for them (verse 49); He shows them His mercy, yes, from generation unto generation (verse 50). The Bible tells us, that He is merciful unto the fourth generation of His servant. Verse 51 tells us that God will "show strength with His arm" unto those; a wonderful work, a divine work. He will exalt the lowly (verse 52); He gives them greatness, godliness and an in-filling of His Spirit; He gives them gifts and powers; He gives them His nature in ever increasing measure. God sees the **heart** of the convert and does not judge according to their esteem. He also fulfils and finishes the promise He has given to such persons provided they continue in this state of mind/walk of life (verses 54-55).

1 verse 56: *"And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house."*

Mary stayed with Elisabeth until the ninth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, i.e. until the birth of John the Baptist. Then she returned to Nazareth, to Joseph and her house.

The birth of the "caller unto repentance".

1 verse 57-58: *"Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her."*

Here a son was born, his name was John. We know, that this name means: God is gracious. We also know he was filled with God's call to repentance, which is why he called himself later "one calling in the desert". With the desert is meant: the wilderness of this world on account of sin. He calls unto a life of **repentance**. Repentance unto God is the foundation of each day of our life of faith. We **must** lead a converted life. Being converted means: having turned to God to obey Him henceforth with all our heart. Should there be any disobedience in our heart, then something must be wrong with our conversion. For we must live a **completely** repentant life, each day of the rest of our life; whereby we ask the Lord from the bottom of our heart: "Lord, what is it that You want me to do?" It is only such a repentant life that will bring divine joy and peace in the heart.

Now the birth of John is the fulfillment of God's call thereto in this dark world. God has called, and is still calling today. And we are to answer positively with a heartfelt and resolute: "Yes, Lord, I will!"

1 verse 59-63: *"And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zechariah, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father,*

how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all."

After ritual descriptions of the Law the child must be circumcised on the eighth day, at which occasion his name is determined. People wanted to call him after his father Zechariah (i.e. YaHWeH is mindful [of]), but God already had given him a name: he was to be called John (i.e. God is gracious), because he was to make known God's abundant grace through his call to repentance. This new name was added by God unto the line of Zechariah. We, too, will be given a new name by God, a new beginning, if we really wish to live this repentant life. "Repentance" for many, also for those who have called themselves a "Christian" for a long time, is a concept which is difficult to digest, which they soon forget to practice. However, they do remember the concept of grace well, the forgiveness and the grace they wish to receive from God daily. But let us hold on to this, beloved: **without repentance grace from God will not come to us!** Without our obedience to His Word grace from God will not come. This is why so many Christians live a life without joy, without peace in their hearts, without grace; without worship.

On the eighth day, at the circumcision, an Israeli child is officially taken into the Israeli community, into Abraham's covenant with God (i.e. the covenant God made with Abraham – see Genesis 17:9-27). This was the reason that on that day God lifted the judgment on Zechariah' unbelief. The priest, who was dumb, spoke again.

1 verse 64-66: *"And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him."*

The moment Abraham's covenant was concluded with the little John, at the shedding of his blood, God's grace was poured out, also over his father Zechariah. All judgment on his unbelief was lifted from him. Eight is the number of the resurrection; and this resurrection takes place when grace is given by God, after all judgments over sin in our being are taken away. It is clear, that this blood of the circumcision points to the blood of the New Covenant, the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, the blood of the Lamb of God. Therefore, after the circumcision of John, the bondage which jammed Zechariah' tongue, was broken, and he could magnify God in praise.

Zechariah' song of praise.

1 verse 67-69: *"And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;..."*

This "horn of salvation" refers to the power of the coming Messiah (i.e. the Anointed [by God]; also: Redeemer, Savior, Sanctifier).

1 verse 70-71: *"...As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;..."*

We should consider these enemies of Israel then, and of the spiritual Israel today, in a spiritual sense. They are the demonic and anti-Christian powers, that spiritually or through human channels work their destructive work, and that in fact are hostile to Him and His kingdom. Thereto also belongs our own "flesh", namely the sinful forces and powers which rage in this "flesh", and try to draw us back to the world.

1 verse 72-75: *"...To perform the mercy promised to our (fore)fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our (fore)father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."*

God wants to save all people of good will, all who have accepted the Savior; not only deliverance from **all** enemies, but also a life to serve in love, without fear before God; whereby we could stand in God's throne room, before His face as if we had never sinned. It is a life in the sweetest union with God Almighty, whereby we share His holiness and justice; and this all the days of the rest of our life.

Did Zechariah until now sung about the Messiah's mighty work of redemption, Which was to come, now the prophecy turns to the born preparer of the way for this Messiah.

1 verse 76: *"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;..."*

The caller unto repentance will always go before the Messiah; a life prepared to repent before a life in and with Jesus. Without sincere repentance no NEW LIFE is possible, and hence also no anointed ministry in the Holy Spirit.

1 verse 77: *"...To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins;..."*

God reveals to a truly repentant heart, also by means of His servants, the knowledge to be saved, but also a personal introduction to that salvation in forgiveness of sins.

1 verse 78a: *"...Through the tender mercy of our God;..."*

God knows a deep compassion for our lost state, which is why He meets us with His grace.

1 verse 78b: *"...whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us;..."*

The "Dayspring from on High" is a new name for the Messiah, which was to come.

1 verse 79: *"...To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

He would come unto the sinners to save them.

John grew up in the grace and strength of the Spirit, and waited patiently for God's call unto active service in Him, isolated and continuing in prayer.

Chapter 2

The birth of the NEW LIFE

The previous chapter ended with the circumcision of John the Baptist, the symbol of a willing entering (on our side) of the Blood-covenant with Christ: a willing surrender unto God, that all of the process of God's work on the cross, unto the annihilation of our old life, might be done unto us. After the promises without repentance of God's Word the NEW LIFE of God, which will then be poured into us, will follow such faith and attitude of life. In this light it is understandable, that in this new chapter the NEW LIFE of God is depicted in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God's profound wisdom lies herein: John the Baptist had to be born earlier, and only thereafter God's Christ: first heartfelt repentance and surrender must be born in us before NEW LIFE of God can be produced in us; because, as we saw, this NEW LIFE could only develop within us on the pure and holy foundation of Jesus Christ.

10

The birth of Jesus Christ.

2 verse 1-3: *"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city."*

Here is a brief report of the first census in the Roman empire. This census had taken quite a lot of doing: everyone had to be registered in the town or place of origin of the family. This most probably had to do with civil rights. In any case, this registration was done in connection with taxes, that were to be charged. Thereafter such censuses were to take place once every 14 years in the Roman empire.

2 verse 4-5: *"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David); To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child."*

Obedying the command of the emperor of Rome, because Israel in those days was under the dominion of the Roman Empire, Joseph, too, went with Mary to whom he was to be married, to Bethlehem, the city of the origin of the entire house of David, unto which Joseph as well as Mary belonged. Mary then was in an advanced state of pregnancy of the Child Jesus: it was about the time that she should deliver. One understands how difficult that must have been. This gives us a striking idea, how a Christian who is truly full of Jesus, often has to suffer painfully the things of this world. Here Mary already stood in the adumbration (the most central, darkest part of the shadow)(or foreshadow) of the cross, which would also crucify her own life, her "I"/self, completely. Quietly, and without grumbling, with a patient heart, Mary must have gone this for her difficult way beside Joseph.

2 verse 6-7: *"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger (i.e. a feeding trough for animals!); because there was no room for them in the inn."*

He, Who is the NEW LIFE, the Resurrection Life, Himself, was born in a manger, in a stable for animals. He **must** be born there. God had determined that. That stable was the place predetermined by God. In that dirty stable for animals, where also was dung, He must be born; because the human heart into which He must be born in the Spirit, is also dirty, like a stable for animals, because of all the sins of the people. This explains why He had to be born there, exactly there. He was laid in a manger, because He was to be food, the Bread of Life, for us. When we eat Him in the spirit; i.e. when we open our heart unto Him, and allow Him (access) into our heart and life, then we will receive NEW LIFE. I repeat: Jesus Christ can only really become the Bread of Life for us, when we, in answer to the call of the preacher unto repentance (in those days John the Baptist), repent sincerely. If we thus have communion with Him, as our Prince of Life, by accepting His Word and by having all His promises in our life fulfilled by Him, then we **know**, by our faith, that the ETERNAL LIFE, the Kingdom of God, enters into our heart and life.

The witnesses to His birth.

Now we shall have a close look at the witnesses at His birth. Projected unto the inner life of our heart, the birth of the NEW LIFE knows similar witnesses. God's Word is unfailing and wonderful. As He came among witnesses in those days, so it is with the coming of the NEW LIFE into our heart.

God's Word mentions three kinds of witnesses around His birth. Shortly after His birth: the shepherds. Forty days after His birth: two old, faithful souls: Simon and Anna. The third group of witnesses are the three wise men, who came to witness to the birth of the "born King of the Jews" about two years after His birth. Alleluia! And so it is in the deep center of our own being. Let us learn to see this, as we study the relating Scripture parts in the light of the birth of the NEW MAN in us. For you already know that the Gospel after Luke is the Gospel which announces the NEW MAN in God, who as a matter of course is a priest of God; all this because this Gospel mentions Jesus Christ as God's NEW MAN and High Priest. By Him alone we could be a NEW CREATION, and priests of the most high God.

The first group of witnesses: the shepherds.

2 verse 8-14: *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord (suddenly) came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (or better translated: in the people that please God)."*

Well then, who perceive first of all God's joyous message of redemption and renewal? It is our ears. They first hear the Gospel, which is brought to us by His angels; they are: the servants of God. At the birth of Jesus they were the creatures of heaven, but at the projection unto our inner being they are the earthly angels of God: the proclaims of the gospel, and servants of God. Scripture also calls an earthly servant of God an angel of the Lord (Revelation 2 and 3).

Thus it is **our body** which first hears the joyful message of God. And how do we react to this heard or read joyful message? If we react positively, like the shepherds did in those days, then things are well with us.

2 verse 15-20: *"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."*

The angels' message was received with faith and passion. They immediately went to investigate whether this was true, and they went to Bethlehem (this means: House of Bread), in order to hear and see everything concerning that wonderful Savior and Messiah they were told about. Would we also have acted in such a way when we heard the good news? Did we then immediately go to the place of gathering, the house where the Bread of Life is handed out? Did we also with faith and passion look for Him until we would have found Him? So then, **our body** is the first witness of the NEW LIFE, that God wants to give us, and has given us. If not only our body heard this message, but if also our **inner being** shared it, then only will be fulfilled in us this wondrous new thing. Then our **spirit** will be a witness of the NEW LIFE, and will share this new thing.

The second group of witnesses: Simon and Anna.

2 verse 21-24: *"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb (of Mary, His mother). And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."*

According to the Law God had given Israel, a woman was impure for seven days after the birth of a son, and at the birth of a daughter 2 x 7 days (see Leviticus 12). On the eighth day after his birth a son was also considered pure, and the circumcision was allowed to take place, whereby he was taken up into the community of Israel. At this religious ceremony he was also given his name. This way the child shared the blood-covenant God had made with Abraham (see Genesis 17:9-14), and which He confirmed in Moses by means of the circumcision. The number eight being the number of the resurrection into the NEW LIFE. So our spirit, too, must share in this NEW LIFE by living in relationship with and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It further is written here: "When the days of her purification were accomplished...". When are these accomplished for a young mother? Leviticus 12 teaches that an Israeli mother must remain "three and thirty days in the blood of her purification", only then was she allowed to go to the temple to bring the burnt and sin offering required by the Law. That is, at the birth of a boy, only after 7 + 33 days = 40 days. At the birth of a girl that was 14 + 66 days = 80 days. Now forty is the number of fullness of trial.

Is not there in this number symbolism a wonderful picture which must be found again in our inner life? 8 is the number of resurrection, of NEW LIFE; but 40 is the number of fullness of trial that we have chosen Jesus above all things or people here on earth. Do we really? Does our spirit choose Him at all the trials of every day life? This way of life of our spirit must, in this life, grow out of an early beginning unto fullness, from eight days to forty days, from rebirth unto mature holiness; that we, purified by God of all the old and sinful in us, choose this NEW LIFE above **all** else! That we choose Jesus Christ above **all things** and **all people**! Only then can we truly and worthily take our places in the spiritual temple of almighty God.

Such a life devoted to God is depicted here by two people: a man and a woman: Simeon and Anna.

2 verse 25-35: *"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came (led) by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising*

again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yes, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

You here see Simeon act first. He was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. So also our spirit, from the deepest part of our heart, must want to be obedient under the guidance of God's Spirit; we must **be willing** to be led by the Holy Spirit. We must be willing to leave what He wants us to leave; must be willing to do what He wants us to do. We must be willing to be what He wants us to be. So we must proceed step by step under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Now this is guidance by the Holy Spirit, Who will lead us from resurrection to fullness, from rebirth to mature holiness. We must be willing to walk this road of God **obediently**. We must be willing to go obediently to the world of the Child Jesus; from the Child Jesus through Calvary's cross to union with the throne of God, in Christ. Are we thus willing to bring our sin and burnt offerings unto God complete obedience unto Him? Are we willing to completely follow Him wherever He goes or stands? O beloved, this kind of offer requires a whole life of purification and sanctification in the patience of God's Holy Spirit on the basis of our faith in the shed blood; in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us. Then we shall arrive at a life that will follow and obey Him in all His gentlest and tenderest gestures, to the honor of His unsurpassed Name, and to the richest spiritual fruit-bearing in Him. However, we often are so unwilling, and our flesh fights against the wise and loving decisions of our God. O, if only we would learn to obey Him; to never again grieve Him; to beg Him for the strength to do the things which are so beneficial to our eternal spirit...

12

But not only has Simeon been pictured here as a type of the human spirit, but, as we read on, also Anna, a daughter of Phanuel.

2 verse 36-39: *"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity (from the day she married as a virgin); And she was a widow of about fourscore and four (i.e. eighty-four) years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned unto Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."*

God's Spirit did not just want to show a man as a type of the human spirit, but also a woman. In other words: He equally loves the spirit of a man and that of a woman. Both come as witnesses to the birth of the NEW LIFE, of His existence here on earth. Let us accept this in gratitude. When therefore our spirit has accepted Him as our Prince of Life, then only remains for our soul to die, to make room for the heavenly soul, the soul of Christ. Each day's revelation now must become the **fulfillment** of this Word. Only then our soul, too, will form the third witness of our share in this NEW LIFE in Christ.

The third group of witnesses: the three wise men.

This third group is not mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. Matthew does report it in his Gospel (see Matthew 2).

About two years after the birth of Jesus, three wise men came "from the East". We will investigate who they were and where exactly they came from. God's Word is not very clear about this. There have been explanations about this, but we will, in this study, leave this an open question. Our interest lies in the image, projected upon our inner being, and what it tells us. They reacted to the birth of the "born King of the Jews", as **our soul** is to react to everything concerning Jesus, and all of the Word of God.

Man has a physical life. And we have a spiritual life, but also a soul life. All three kinds must bear witness to the birth of the Christ within us. These three wise men form the third group of witnesses; together they form the testimony our soul has to give in all its revelation forms.

Were Simeon and Anna, types of our spirit, led by the Holy Ghost when God's anointing came over them, so were these three wise men led by a star. Israeli symbolism (the teaching of symbols, namely a sign or subject depicting something spiritual) know only the six-pointed star as the holy star of God which refers to the Messiah and His coming. As we know, this star consists of two equilateral triangles: one pointing upwards, the other downwards. Together they form the well known "Star of David", the sign of each religious Israelite.

The upwards pointing triangle with its three corners or three sides portrays God in His threefold revelation. The downward pointing triangle depicts man who, after the image of God, also consists of three elements, namely: spirit, soul, and body. Linked together these triangles form a six-pointed star, the image of the God-Man, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, also called "the Bright Morning-star"; but also (the image) of each child of God, in whom God's Spirit has made His dwelling to lead this child of God to complete surrender to, and acceptance of, the Lordship (and thus the dominion) of Jesus Christ; and Who wants to cleanse the changed (i.e. heavenly) soul of man in this way, and to adorn it with (all) gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The soul of God's Word often is depicted as a raiment that must be washed, day by day, in the blood of the Lamb, in the power of the Holy Spirit, until it is immaculately white as a wedding gown! Our deeds, our words, our silence, our wishes and our acts, God regards them as a raiment. Our purification and sanctification in Christ so form the raiment of our righteousness in Him. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 19:8) Therefore each day our soul radiates what our spirit wants and desires; as our spirit leads, so our soul reveals itself in our daily actions and words, in our wishes, thoughts and desires. The spirit within us is the responsible leader, which one day must answer to God, and which has an **eternal** destiny.

The three wise men were led by a star to the "born King of the Jews", where they brought their offerings; so our soul, by the indwelling Spirit and the Word, must be formed into a complete likeness of God's purity and holiness; of God's righteousness, which is given us in Christ by His excellent grace. These three are called "wise" by the Word of God, because they came to the "born King" and subjected themselves to Him, as was evident in their offerings of gold, incense and myrrh. "Gold" is the god of this world, which to the worldly man is worth everything. But

the first wise man laid this at His feet as an offering, that he might receive from the King of the Kingdom of heaven the Gold of a NEW LIFE in the Holy Spirit, which is tried by fire. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..." (Revelation 3:18). The second wise man lay "incense" at His feet, as a sign that he wished to worship only Him. Let us be careful not to worship man or thing, neither our "I", which is worshipped by men who are proud and full of desire for honor and/or fame! The third wise man laid "myrrh" at the feet of the Child Jesus. "Myrrh" was used by the Israelite as an ingredient of the Balm ointment, wherewith the dead were anointed. This "myrrh offering" was an expression of his express will to **die** in Him to the old life, the life of the flesh; to be buried in Him that the gold of the NEW LIFE in and with Christ also be victorious in him. O that we all, who say we love Him, express this in our prayers, in our confession, in our acts and walk, in our thoughts and desires, in our speech and silence!

Our prayer is that the image of the Lord Jesus Christ will be found in our soul life – by our offering of gold, incense and myrrh – and that this image, by our faithfulness in bringing these offerings, will grow into maturity! How beautiful God's Word is in Its symbols. They are as a many-faceted brilliant (diamond) held in the light of the sun. These pictures reveal all the depths of our inner life. Unfortunately, they are hidden for many. But God's Spirit will reveal them to those who sincerely long for God's righteousness. God wants to tell them of His love for you and for me; yes, for all men. And He wants us all to give the same testimony – after body, soul and spirit – of His birth, of His growth, and of His maturity in our being. May God grant that this testimony after body, soul and spirit will be found in you and in me unto our salvation in Him, unto the honor and glory of His still unparalleled Name.

Christ wants to grow in us and work through us towards the strength that works in us with power.

2 verse 40-52: *"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they (his parents) saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."*

We have studied the first part of this chapter in the light of the birth of Jesus in our heart and life; of the testimony our body, our spirit and our soul give of this birth in our being; therefore it goes without saying that we continue to study this remaining part in the same light; namely in the light of a growing of Christ within us.

We read a report of an event in the life of the twelve-year-old Jesus. Let us first look at the symbolic (meaning) of the number 12. In various places in the Word of God the number 12 is built up of 3 x 4. The number 3 points to the triune God. The number 4 to the world and the four quarters. The number 12 thus tells us of the work of this triune God in the whole world. Therefore 12 is the specific number of the Church of Christ, particularly the work of the Holy Spirit in this world after Jesus had given Himself in His atoning sacrifice. There also were twelve tribes of Israel which again form the Old-Testament type of this Church. There were twelve foundation-apostles, who laid the foundations of the Church of Christ and built it up.

Therefore it is understandable that the twelfth year of Jesus would not pass into oblivion like all those other "quiet" years of His youth. In His twelfth year He was found in the temple by Mary and Joseph, because He must be "in the things of His Father". God's Spirit, if He is working in us, wants us to be the same: namely producing spiritual gifts and fruit. One was astonished at His wisdom and answers. It could also be that one asks oneself: where did that preacher or evangelist get it from? One will especially wonder about this, when such a person never visited a Bible school or theological college. For the only source that preacher or evangelist has is Christ. He should have no other source if His Word is still to be "prophetic". The Holy Spirit was also active in the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, in His capacity as Teacher of the Church. So, a Spirit-filled preacher, who is uneducated in the things of God's Word, by the light (and thus insight) of God's Spirit, could explain clearly and wonderfully God's Word. Then the gift of God's Spirit is active in such a life to the full knowledge of the Son of God, that one be not tossed to and fro and carried about with every influence of cunning deceit of human errors, but grow into a complete man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4: 13-14).

Let us therefore seek this wondrous activity of the Spirit within us. Let us especially seek to be baptized with His Spirit and let us then be filled, and remain, with that Spirit, and long for it that that Spirit will grow in us to all Its fullness. Not to use this anointing, but to have ourselves be used by God's Spirit as an instrument in His wonderful Hand according to **His** will. Strive after it that the anointing of God will have a free hand in your life that His anointing work in and through you. Then He will show the world that His saving Hand is almighty, for that anointing of God, working on in the Word, is not to be stopped by any power. As Revelation 6 verse 2 says, He is conquering and to conquer!

Mary and Joseph found Him this way after a three-day search. So, we, too, will find Jesus in our life if we toil and seek Him for three days. Symbolically these three days mean our sharing in His death and resurrection. If we truly seek Jesus in this way, through His death and resurrection, we shall find Him; He, Who can work everything in our life, and Who can form our life into a fruitful branch of His. He could only do this if we surrender completely to the

divine standards He has established in His Word; if we willingly subject ourselves to His divine chastisement – in the strength we will receive from Him – lay off all things of the flesh and of the world.

Chapter 3

Wanting to live in a continuing disposition of repentance from now on.

The active effect of the Word unto repentance.

In this chapter we will study the Word of repentance active in us. We have looked at it in its "before-state"; we have studied it in its birth, and now in its active working in the life of the person who is willing to open up to this purifying and justifying power which is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The power of repentance **must** first of all **be active** in our **personal life**, and then also in the Church for it to be effective outside; for it to bring this word of repentance to outsiders.

14

It goes without saying that there has to be an interaction: **We** must **be willing** to repent, to accept Him as the Prince of our further life; **We** must be willing to conform to the word of repentance; **We** must be willing to turn our back to the powers of sin; **We** must be willing to resist the urge of worldly lusts in our flesh and the worldly standards and requirements; **We** must now turn more to God and His Word; **We** must now ask: "Lord, what are **your** standards, what do **you** want me to do?" Then **He** will give us the **strength** to actual repentance which is in Jesus Christ.

This word is directed to all, but in particular to the young people of these last days wherein satan works in an extraordinary measure. In our days the (strong) inclination is seen to shake off standards of life, while these standards have mostly come from the Holy Scriptures. One regards **as hypocrisy** the keeping of these standards. One wants "the truth", and in the case of sinful man: letting oneself go in sinful lusts and desires, while man should comply to the will of his Creator instead. Let us realize the situation, especially the young ones among us. It is only when man is willing to comply to God's standards, that God can give him what He wants to give him: strength **to continue** to choose His will, and above all a sharing of **Himself**!

3 verse 1-2: *"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch (prince over one quarter of the Roman province of Palestine) of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness."*

Here we get to know a working of the Word of God. Precisely determined, measured in time, the Word of God came to John. John had already been called by God, but... had not yet been sent out on an actual ministry. Now, at that exact point in time, the power of God's Word came over and in John, and took control of him, because he was a spiritual channel, which had been fully prepared to receive this divine Word; to be taken over by this Word. John then became the personification of that "living word unto repentance!" Glory to God! And if this Word of repentance has completely "taken over", filled us completely; when we have become the personification of this Word, then, it is true, we have become insufferable for the world, but **irresistible** for those who are willing to repent. Then we will pull them out of the world's pool of sin, out of God's fiery judgment! To God be the glory!

3 verse 3-6: *"And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As is written in the book of the words of Esaias, the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

Here we see the divine working of the Word to repentance. Once it is in us, it is irresistible, and it does not need any propaganda. For this divine Word then is like a light in the darkness, as a fire which consumes the dry wood. The appearance of John, in the valley of the Jordan, worked like a bright flash of lightning in those areas. It was seen by everyone, everyone came to him; drawn as it were by a magnet.

No propaganda is necessary for the Spirit of God if He is active. A true Holy-Ghost revival was going on here, which was powerfully effective in that area. Without any "propaganda" the whole country knew John the Baptist in no time at all. So was the Lord Jesus Christ's action too. Therefore, beloved, if you want a Holy-Spirit revival, pray and beg for it, and be willing to be cleansed, sanctified and used by Him yourself. Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and offer yourself to become His instrument; let Him be, and remain, your Master so that God's anointing work through you. Pray earnestly about this. It may cost you everything; you must dare to pay the price for it. Let God work, give Him a free hand and you will see that the anointing of God will make an instrument of you and me which will bring many out of this world unto voluntary repentance and subjection to God. Beloved, let us seek this, for the end-time (= the end of times or the last days) requires such laborers; laborers who allow God's anointing to work through them. Then you will see that, in a short time, the work will surpass that of many years. Be sanctified in Him that the anointing can work freely through you; that the anointing will not be hindered by our hobbies, pet subjects, habits (good and bad). If we then have allowed this Word of repentance to work in us, we will see that God's power in us, as an introduction to His full grace, will prepare the way hereto: namely to the union with His anointing, with the full Word of God, with the living God Himself, Who is a consuming Fire, but also an enchanting Love-fire. Then all valleys – the sinful pits in our being – will be made smooth; all mountains and hills – all stubbornness and proud desires – will be made low by God's powerful and recreating Word. Then the crooked ways in our life will be made straight. Let Him do all this in your being; long for it. However strange this may sound, but in this light it is under-

standable: Long for the cross...; love your cross... Long for it, that all works of the flesh, which, naturally, are always sinful, be killed by the works of the Spirit (Romans 8:13); also praying for His strength to undergo all this. This "Way of sorrows", it is true, is a painful affair for our flesh, but He will be with us, and will make this sacrifice of our flesh a joyful, holy feast after our spirit. Remember, that the Israelites had to travel three days out of Egypt to offer the Lord a sacrificial **feast** there (Exodus 5:1-3). For us, too, this sacrifice of self will be a spiritual feast of joy and peace and justice in Christ Jesus!

So all flesh shall see "the salvation of God". If we are prepared to bring this sacrifice, then we will receive this promise we have read about in verse 6. All flesh that had "itself crucified" will see and taste the salvation, the glory of God. Let us be willing to be purified from all the old and sinful in us by the Word of repentance, so that we will be different people, NEW CREATIONS of God, **new** men, **new** women, Jesus-men and Jesus-women, who have truly and completely given up the old life, who have been found willing by God to pay this price. Glory to God!

Produce then fruit that is worthy of the repentance!

3 verse 7: *"Then said he (John) to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers (here: children of the serpent, of satan), who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

15

You see here that the willingness to go this Way is revealed in the wish to be baptized. It is also God's command, His sacrament (means of grace), to seal this willingness to repent! By being baptized (in water) we therefore show our willingness to go this Way, to undergo the life of the cross, so that all of the old life will be buried, and we may be raised to the NEW LIFE with, in and by Him. From the side of man can only come the full willingness to undergo all this. The divine works that truly kill and bury the old in us, and that pour out the NEW LIFE into us, come from God Himself. In God's eyes we, by the act of faith of the water baptism, are justified; just as Abraham's faith – in God and His promises – were reckoned unto him for righteousness (Romans 4:3 and 23). The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, coming unto us in the Holy Spirit, will become for us a process of the cross, a Destroyer of all works of the flesh (Romans 6:3); but also NEW LIFE in God. "But of him (i.e. God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

If we long more and more for the Lord Jesus Christ, He will come to us. This divine coming brings with it the consequence that the old life must be dead in us, but also that NEW LIFE is revealed. If we long for Jesus, we long for a process of the cross..., for we ask for fire, for divine fire (that will consume all the wrong in us)... **After** this fire the stream of living water from the Father and the Lamb, will come in us (Revelation 22:1). This is the only and necessary way for man unto his salvation and to receive the NEW LIFE.

This willingness to die to the old life should not be a one-time thing, but it should be the attitude for the rest of our life; an everyday way of life. This attitude should not only distinguish us when we are being baptized, but also every day of the rest of our life. We should say "alleluia" (praise ye the Lord) to all that God works and permits, for all things and circumstances from now on only happen to us when He allows it by His hands, pierced for us. Let us then for all these things ask for God's strength and wisdom to go this His way in His patience. We can be calm and bravely go on, for a divine promise accompanies us on this way of the cross: "And we know that **all these things** work together for good to them that **love God**, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). For those who love God above all else, all things he must experience, work for good for the obtaining of eternal salvation in God.

3 verse 8-9: *"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, (After all) we have Abraham to our (fore)father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."*

Our further life must produce fruit which go (together) with true repentance. Our further life must be proof of the powerful works of God as an answer to our willingness to repent. Beloved, this brings struggle with it! It is a battle against all temptation and deception of the evil one, which will come our way from now on. Let us then not be "defectors" in this battle; let us not "partly" or "to some extent" betray God and His Kingdom. Each day the evil one will attempt to make us lose in this battle; be it with the sweet flattering of alluring temptations or with the roar of oppressions and persecutions. The Lord demands a daily victory from us. And well He may, because He wants to be a daily Strength unto victory for us. When we, in obedience, let Him work in us, then He is the Victory unto us. When we truly do this, then we will see that our life "produces fruits which are worthy of the repentance", because our life will then show the works of our Redeemer, Savior and Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.

When our life does not show these fruits, then it is because our repentance unto God is not sincere, because we live in a false repentance, and in reality still live the "old man's life". Appealing to being a member of a church then is just as futile as what the Jews said in those days: that they were children of Abraham. Equally futile it is for a child to call on Christian parents, on kinship to God. We must **personally** come to true repentance; we must come to a **personal relationship** with our Redeemer.

God is mighty to "raise children to Abraham out of stones". He is Almighty; He can raise to life dead things. Spiritually dead people He can make into children of God, if they are willing to turn to Him. If there is no willingness to repent "God's axe is already laid at the root of the trees". God's axe of judgment will have to cut down the unrepentant as useless trees in a wood; they are only good to be thrown in the fire.

What are the fruits worthy of the repentance?

Believing in the divine work that Jesus finished, is wonderful, but we will receive **nothing** personally of God's works of grace, if we do not open our being, our inner person, to Him in **complete** repentance. All of our being must turn to Him, and all of our being must ask Him the question: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" He will then reveal His will to us, and give us the strength thereto. When we have received that strength from Him, we must act in faith!

Just like someone who has just been healed from a long illness, whereby he had to stay in bed for a long time, has the will to walk again is able to walk by the renewed strengths of his physical recovery, even if at first this will be rather clumsily and with shaky knees; so we too must, in the spirit, according to the will of the Holy Spirit, be willing to walk our (spiritual) race. From now on we must walk in the Spirit and not after the flesh anymore (Romans 8). When we stand thus before God, in such a willingness to live, then **faith** in Him alone is sufficient; as we sing regularly: "Only believe, all things are possible, only believe!"

We will now see which fruits the NEW LIFE of those who have repented unto Him must show.

3 verse 10-14: *"And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He (John) answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more (taxes) than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."*

John lived on the "edge" of the Old Covenant (i.e. the period indicating the relationship between God and man BEFORE Christ's [first] coming), and therefore was only able to point out to the converts **the observance of God's law**. One had to arrive at a life of loving one's neighbor as oneself; a life which is free from the idolatrous craving for earthly possessions, for money and goods. One must arrive at a life which does not misuse position and power to rob others of their earthly possessions. John did not call them out of their social jobs of tax-collector (someone who in those days collected the taxes for the Romans), and soldier, for he knew that they were both needed for the upholding of the state; but they had to exercise their functions in a sanctified life which was free from the material, from earthly possessions, in honesty and purity.

John also lived on the "edge" of the New Covenant (this is the period indicating the relationship between God and man AFTER Christ's [first] coming), and as such he could indicate, full of hope, the power all converts would receive of the soon to come Messiah: namely, the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire!

3 verse 15-16: *"And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."*

The people saw John there in a divine function. He was "clothed" with the Word. The (LIVING) Word of God had come to him (see John 1:1, 14). Do you understand this tremendous greatness in the spirit? God's Word, Which had spoken in creation: "There be light!" and there **was** light; that Word had come to him; he was filled with it, every fiber of him revealed that Word, It inspired him, and made him strong in the spirit. Because of it he was "on fire" for Jesus, a fiery "flame" which kindled many. This John – when he by the Holy Spirit noticed what men were thinking of him – rejected all honor and pointed to the Man, Who was soon to come, Whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose. So shall each true child of God, each true laborer, never be willing to accept the honor people want to give them for the greatness of the Word of God, which radiates from them, but will always point out that that greatness only goes with that almighty Word of God, Which through grace lives in their being. It is this Word Which will baptize the people with the Holy Spirit and with fire!

It is this indwelling power of God which, in the first place, breaks down sin in our old nature by the baptism in His Spirit (see Matthew 3:11; Luke 12:50 and Romans 6:3) – with "baptism" is meant dying (off), and this takes place in and by the water **and** Spirit baptisms, namely the baptism with His purifying fire (see Isaiah 4:4b) – and which next will reveal the fruit of the NEW LIFE in and through us as a wonderful work of His grace, as a result of our faithfulness in repentance and faith. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering (is being able to endure much before becoming angry; patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23a). "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9).

You see what wonderful results true repentance brings; here we become aware of the divine answer we receive to our sincere prayer for deliverance from our old, sinful life and to be filled and strengthened with the NEW, divine LIFE – when we open ourselves for God, in repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is God, Who then works all things in us of deliverance and renewal, of sanctification unto fullness in Him. Yes, it is God only, dwelling in the heart of the one who has accepted and therefore has received His grace, Who urges to testify and to do all the work in His divine vineyard. Therefore to God only be the glory! In the following verse we read for which purpose the Holy Ghost is given:

3 verse 17: *"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor (of all inedible and thus worthless chaff), and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff (the empty hull) he will burn with fire unquenchable."*

The Holy Ghost is given to us in the first place to sift us: to divide the chaff from the wheat; to blow away all that's carnal in us that the wheat of the NEW LIFE of Him may be revealed in us. All who turn out to be an empty (spiritual) hull, will be burned in God's unquenchable fire of judgment! Let us therefore be willing to be sifted (purified) by the Holy Spirit. We should be able to say: "Lord, do with me as Thou wilt!" The process of the cross which the Lord will then put us through, will cause pain and trouble; we might be brought into difficult times and/or nasty situations, in order to – in deep, spiritual pits – long for deliverance from things we beforehand loved. Such "pits" do not have to be gone through, if we only immediately and sincerely obey God's Word... But some children of God force Him to bring them into "Jonah experiences", because they are not willing to let go of certain sinful ties, although on the other hand they entreat the Lord to cleanse and sanctify them. Therefore the Lord wants to teach us to obey His Word and will in wisdom that we do not have to go through such Jonah experiences. Jonah would not have had to spend three days and three nights inside that large fish, if only he had obeyed the Lord God immediately.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is granted us further in order to strengthen us inwardly on this chosen way of repentance and further sanctification (Ephesians 3:16). Finally the baptism in the Spirit is given us as a clothing (as an armor, and thus a preparation for the [spiritual] battle) with divine power as a testimony to Jesus' victory (Acts 1:8).

3 verse 18: *"And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people."*

Let us, just like John was driven by the Holy Spirit to testify and preach the Gospel, pray the Lord to move us to testify to our neighbor, to the world around us, and to the preaching of His Gospel.

The world hates the Word of repentance.

3 verse 19-20: *"But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison."*

John, the repentance preacher, the personification of the Word of repentance, was no popular figure. He was hated especially by Herodias. Herodias managed to not only have John imprisoned, but, as we can read in Matthew 14, to have him beheaded as well. In these verses we see the hatred the world fosters against all who are filled with God's Word of repentance. The word "repentance" for the worldly-minded person, also for the worldly-minded believer in the Church, is a hateful word; a word full of vicious stings. But for a wise child of God this Word is the gate, namely the entrance to the NEW LIFE.

17

God's answer to each wholehearted conversion expressed in the water baptism.

3 verse 21-22: *"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."*

If there were One Who repented, the Lord Jesus Christ was; if there were One Who had completely turned His life to the Father, and Who was completely open to Him, Jesus was. So we also must open our lives for the Lord Jesus Christ. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:57). As the Son had to live by the Father, so also must we live by the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a seal to the "repentance" the Lord Jesus Christ, Who became an Example for all converts, was baptized in water; whereupon the Father answered with the full baptism with the Holy Spirit, Which descended on Him in the physical figure of a dove. In this way the Lord Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, and was established by God as the Messiah (i.e. Anointed One; also: Redeemer, Savior, Sanctifier) for His people. Here the Holy Spirit revealed Himself as a **dove** and **not as fire**. In Israel the dove was one of the **sacrificial animals** (Leviticus 1:14). Here Jesus was strengthened by the Holy Spirit in His earthly anointing – to die, as **the Lamb of God**, for the salvation of (the people of) this world. He (i.e. the Holy Spirit) comes in and over us as a fire (Acts 2:3) to burn away our sinful nature (Isaiah 4:4).

The baptism and infilling with the Holy Spirit is a clear divine proof that the believer has inwardly turned to God. Let us ask God for this divine confirmation of our conversion. By the baptism with the Holy Spirit not only NEW LIFE of God flows into us, but we also will experience the relationship with the Giver of that **life**. Let us seek this, because He promised this to every believer who has truly turned to Him; this wonderful, spiritual relationship to the honor and glory of His Name (Acts 2:39). Let us strive after the in-filling by His Holy Spirit in **timeless fullness**; let Him fill us **continually** and in **full** measure! So we will, walking and laboring in this life, stand before the throne of God, in full openness of being, that His Being in all holiness may fill and dominate our being unto the finest "fibers". So we shall be able to serve Him in blissful worship, in all we do and don't, in speech or in silence. This is the **fullness** in Him unto which the Holy Spirit wants to lead us. Whoever says that this is impossible here on earth, dishonors the finished work of Christ, and detracts from the Word of God which says that He wants to bring His Church to an existence in Him "without any spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27), unto the fulfillment of **all** the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19).

The genealogy of Jesus.

3 verse 23-38: *"And **Jesus** himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph (verse 23)..., which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was **the son of God** (verse 38)."*

This chapter of lasting conversion with as proof the fruits worthy of the repentance, and finding its confirmation in the water baptism, followed by the Spirit baptism – of and in the Lord Jesus Christ – is concluded worthily with the genealogy of Jesus "in the order of priests"; namely the list of descendants who runs through Nathan, the prophet. So each sincerely repentant and Spirit-filled child of God is called to be a royal priest in Him (i.e. Jesus), like Jesus is the High Priest of this Royal Priesthood.

With these first three chapters of the Gospel after Luke the High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek"⁴ (Hebrews 5:6) and the establishment of all of His priesthood in and by Him, are announced, and have let us in as through a divine gate.

⁴ Melchizedek (meaning "king of righteousness") is the name of the priest-king of Salem (Jerusalem) who blessed Abraham, and to whom Abraham gave the tenth of the spoil (see Gen. 14:18). Melchizedek was the priest of the most high God. His name is also mentioned in Psalm 110:4, but he has no further role in the Old Testament. In the New Testament there is an important Messianic typological teaching developed around this Old Testament priestly and kingly personality (see Hebrews 7). The scriptures see him as a type of Christ.

Jesus, God's High Priest, tried and despised by many, but... accepted by others

God's High Priest tried.

As we know the Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation of the NEW MAN in his perfection. He is the First Citizen of the NEW CREATION and as such is also the High Priest of God. The NEW CREATION begins in us when we are reconciled with God, on the basis of our faith in the dear blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, and when we – in and by the Holy Spirit – come into relationship with the risen Christ, in order to live a priestly life, a life that is in complete service to God.

The Gospel after Luke reveals both to us, Jesus as the High Priest Himself, as well as the royal priesthood, namely Christians as priests of the most high God, whom He bought from sin with His sacrificial blood (His blood shed for our sins as an offering [a ransom]), by His excellent grace.

18

We got to know the first three chapters as a good and necessary basis of the repentant life God wants to establish in man. It is God, Who comes to us and calls us to repentance. And it is this repentance, together with the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified, which, as we have seen, forms the gateway to this NEW LIFE in God.

Now we will look at this NEW, pure, priestly LIFE in all its facets, which God will give to those people, that, in repentance and faith, long for it intensively here. Long to share His death and resurrection (see Romans 6:3-5), which Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (river) points to. We will first look at the trial of Jesus, the High Priest, Himself; thereafter at His rejection by the one, and acceptance by the other. In the next chapter we will be able to look at the royal priesthood; these are all Christians who followed Him in His death and resurrection, and who could walk after Him by the inward working power of His relationship.

Jesus Christ, our High Priest, after He was baptized with the Holy Spirit, was tried; as also each priest of God, when he must stand in his (divine) ministry, is tried; namely herein: whether he be willing to do **God's will** in his life. Of a priest it is demanded that he count **all** of his own will and life as nothing, in order to be able to do that wonderful will of God in his life. All of one's own will, all hobbies, all desires of one's own, the social job; in short: all we have and are, what we as a human being want and desire; all these must be laid on God's altar of (burnt) offering. God must be able to do with his priest what He, in His sovereign (almighty; independent of any higher authority) Love, wants and desires. Do not we pray: "Thy will be done in heaven, as also in the earth"? Beloved, this then is God's demand for a priestly ministry, in any degree and of any nature. Hence, in regard to this demand, a priest is tried by God again and again. We are confronted with the choice again and again whether to choose the (sinful) enjoyments of the world or His pure will and service, because He calls us to a voluntary priesthood in His purity and holiness. Should we fail in our choice, and if we choose to do our own will, then God will not continue with us until we will have learned to lay off this stubbornness; until we humbly begged the Lord to deliver us from all reasons which cause us to be stubborn... Let us learn to obey and fulfill His will heartily, then we can proceed like that spiritual racer from Philippians 3:14 in increasing revelation of this NEW LIFE in our everyday life; ready to lay down all that hinders us in the race to that goal in Christ.

4 verse 1: *"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,..."*

It is the Holy Ghost Who leads us into trials and puts us opposite the foe! The enemy tempts us with all the "beauties" of this world, and the Holy Spirit puts us before the choice whether to obey God's Word or... to choose that which is the enemy's. After all, He calls a voluntary people that is willing to serve faithfully and as a priest, being completely in God's service.

4 verse 2a: *"(Jesus) Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing..."*

For forty days Jesus was tempted by the devil! God Himself allowed this to happen. The High Priest, God's own Son, had to prove His faithfulness and willingness in His service as High Priest.

4 verse 2b: *"...and when they (the forty days of fasting) were ended, he afterward hungered."*

Here is a forty-day fast, prompted by the Holy Spirit! Jesus' fasting was proof of His desire to only fulfill the will of the Father in His life. One is only moved to such fasting by the work of God's Spirit. Then all hunger disappears; then the spirit experiences an intense relationship with the Holy Spirit, and we will experience His sweet dominion over us. Thus it was with Christ.

"Sacrifice and offering thou (God) didst not desire; mine (Jesus') ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I (i.e. Jesus), Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:6-8). Then the Spirit suddenly takes away His strength from Jesus; the Spirit's protection falls away, and the Man Jesus is set before the tempter; as a result of a forty-day fast He now feels a gnawing hunger in His body, and the tempter comes to Him with all the fullness of his demonic cunning and force of temptation. This temptation **really** was a trial for Jesus! He was **truly** Man; He was the second Adam. But, He did endure **and** overcome; He proved to really want to serve God the Father, and **not Himself**, not in any respect! He proved to be willing to be God's Servant unto the fulfillment of the sacrifice on the cross, the offering of His own life! So Jesus knew intense hunger that hurt his body! And in that situation satan came to Him.

4 verse 3: *"And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."*

In other words: "Use Your creative power if You are God's Son; make from this stone bread to satisfy your hunger; what stops You?"

4 verse 4: *"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."*

The Lord Jesus beat off this temptation. No, He did not want to make bread out of that stone. He first had to continue this fast until God told Him that He could stop; He wanted to live by the Word of God only; to be completely obedient to the will of God. This was the temptation of Jesus after the body. He was put before the choice to either continue serving God or to give in to His stomach's cry. A temptation of the body with the one is whether to give in to the stomach, with the other to a different physical desire, against God's will.

Will we resist him when he comes to us in his satanic power of temptation, as Jesus resisted the devil herein? Will we let God's pure will take the upper hand in our life or... will we give in to the (strong) desire of our senses, of our body, when temptation makes it hot for us? Whom or what will we choose then? Let us follow the example of our High Priest and say, that man shall only (truly and eternally) live **by every Word of God!** Jesus was not to be tempted on the physical level, and the devil departed to prepare a new attack of satanic temptation.

4 verse 5-8: *"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

19

Again, I assure you, that these temptations really were trials for the Son of man, and that they were not show temptations. After all He lived in a body like ours (Romans 1:3; 8:3). In each person there is a tendency to dominate others. The point of dispute, even in the Church, who is to be first, has always been present in the history of mankind, and in that of the Church. This was also the case among the twelve fundamental apostles (the ones sent by God in the first Christian period) (Luke 9:46). It is obvious, "flesh" always seeks to have dominion over others. The devil knew and knows it. He showed the Lord Jesus the glory of all the kingdoms of this world to tempt Him: that He could have power and dominion there... The devil said: "They (i.e. these kingdoms) have been delivered unto me". God did **not** give him this dominion, but Adam (and by him all humanity) fell under the dominion of sin, and hereby, naturally, under the dominion of satan. Satan hereby became "the prince (the inspirator) of this world" (John 14:30).

In the beginning of creation this was not so. Adam received dominion over creation from God (Genesis 1:28). Then he fell into the sin of disobedience and hereby of treason against God. Therefore the dominion over creation fell to satan. He then became the legal ruler, and he voiced his claim over these kingdoms in verse 6 of this chapter. And the Lord Jesus Christ did not contradict him on this point!

To receive these kingdoms from the hands of the evil one in fact is to worship him, which demand satan also connected to the acceptance of this offer of his. After all his satanic spirit lives in the glory of all these kingdoms; his craving for grandeur, his own reaching for power. Love of and desire for (the possession of) all this glory and power is the worship of satan himself. But the Lord also rejected this temptation, on the level of the soul. He wanted to only worship God the Father, and to be His servant. "Pierce my ear, O God!" (i.e. "I want to be Your eternal servant") was the prayer of His heart.

Beloved, what would we do if the tempter would approach us cunningly (deceitfully) on this point? Power, a central place in the Church... There are many preachers who, by this offer of satan, deviated from the simplicity and subservience to Christ... They then are servants of satan in the shape of an angel of light! They then were anointed by satan to perform wonders and signs; it is true that they preach Jesus, but their heart is a deadly trap, a house of trade, a breeding ground for injustice (Matthew 7:15-23). They do not seek to serve God with a sincere and humble heart; they do not seek what God wants them to do, but they seek fame and dominion, many people who will listen to them, they seek money that flows unto them through collections and gifts; they seek respect and respectful greetings...

Let us not seek these things, beloved, but let us humbly conform to that which God has established for us in the ministry in the true love and justice of God. Such service does not, in any way, seek self; but seeks to serve the Church according to the inner workings of the Holy Spirit, Who will always act in accordance with His holy Word. Let us consider with Jesus: "What does it profit man, though he wins the whole world, if he sustains damage to his soul?"

We thus notice that also in the Church the spirit of the world (1 John 2:16) can reign. This therefore is the reason that there still are so many schisms and divisions in the Body of Christ...

One day an other "Christ" (anointed one) will receive this same offer from the evil one, and he will give in to the temptation therein. He will accept the glory of the kingdoms of this world from the hand of satan in worship of satan himself. Then satan will get into him, and will reveal him as the antichrist (anti = against, opposite; hence: the opponent [enemy] of Christ and the Christians) announced in the Word! But let us, like Jesus, say to such temptation: "Go away from me, satan, for it is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and serve only Him!"

Let us continue to honor and praise the Lord, even if He has determined a humble place in His Body for us. For Christ is the Head, and we are members of His Body. A (spiritually) healthy Body, which consists of many members, always does what the Head wants and orders. After all, all parts of His body, however small or simple are needed. Satan thus failed also on this second point. Again he withdrew only to return with yet another satanic attack.

4 verse 9-13: *"And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."*

Was the former temptation aimed at the soul, at the life (a life of dominion and power); here we see a temptation aimed at **the spirit**. We ought to serve God, and not our own will, our own spirit.

The devil took Him on top of the ridge of the temple at Jerusalem. In those days the temple at Jerusalem was the center of all religious activities. The ridge of the temple therefore was the highest place thereof. From here the devil tried to tempt the Lord Jesus to a show, an act of power, intended to glorify His own spirit. He was to show the people in this way, how mighty He was as God's Son.

The devil also tempts us to put on a show; let us not want to "show" in our faith. Let us not, seeking men's honor, through our behavior ask: "You see me? Don't you think I'm great?" Let us never seek to use God's gifts to find satisfaction for this kind of carnal motivations. God's Spirit will never lend Himself for this. It is always the evil one, who will help, should we have fallen for this temptation of his.

Let us never give in to this satanic wish to worship self, which will never rejoice in a Holy Ghost revival, unless self is allowed to have a central place in this revival. Let us be willing to serve God sincerely in all meekness, and not tempt Him in these things. Let us, in all truth, be willing to serve the Lord Jesus for the good of His Body, even if we are abused by the people and the religious leaders!

The devil abused God's Word from Psalm 91 verses 11-12: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." This psalm speaks of the protection and sheltering of a (sincere and Spirit-filled) child of God that has learned to take shelter in the hiding place of the Most High. This is, when we fully obey God; when we are in the center of God's will; only then God will be able to keep us completely on all our ways.

The concept "angels" here points to the Holy Spirit and His multi-formity of revelation and work. It appears more often in Scripture that the Holy Spirit is depicted by "many angels"; for instance in the dream of Jacob and his ladder, which reached into heaven; the corresponding text in Matthew 4:11 also is an example of this. Here, in Luke 4:14, we are not told that the angels came and ministered to Him, as in Matthew 4:11, but as follows:

4 verse 14: *"And Jesus returned **in the power of the Spirit** into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."*

The power of the Holy Spirit again took possession of the Son of man. Jesus, the High Priest, had proved that He in all truth only wanted to serve God, even to the bitter end. God's anointing again became available to him; in the service of His Messianic ministry, to the honor of God the Father alone, and for the salvation of mankind. And it was in that power that He returned to the world, notwithstanding the forty-day fast he went through...

Beloved, let us follow this High Priest on His path in the power of the Spirit that we too – after body, soul and spirit – might follow Him without failing, and serve Him, defeating the devil in all his temptations. It is a fact that, after the same measure of power which works in us by grace, his temptations will come to us with God's permission. But, in all these temptations, let us want to choose Him alone; His honor, His Word, His work. Let us remember that our choice definitely is the decisive factor for our further life and work for Him. If we choose the temptation than that will be your part and it will fill the rest of your life and take you to the abyss...; if you choose Jesus, then Jesus will be your part in the rest of your life as "Abraham's child"; as God said to the patriarch Abraham: "I am your exceeding great Reward!" Whom do we choose? God leaves the choice to us. Let us take a radical point of view in our choice, and never take the path of compromise (an unforced agreement, whereby both sides give in a little). Then "God's angels" will also serve us the rest of our life and in our future work for King Jesus.

So the Lord Jesus could return and teach the people as a man in power, with many wonders and signs which came forth from the love and grace of God Himself.

4 verse 15: *"And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."*

The High Priest despised and rejected by many...

Here is the Best among the best, God's High Priest Himself. Yet He was despised and rejected by many. It will surprise many, when coming across this fact for the first time, that even God's Son can be looked upon with contempt and rejected by people, by many among the people of Israel; but, at closer inspection of this phenomenon, it will become clear to us. After all, His spiritual work is only seen, understood, accepted, and appreciated by those who are willing to stand in the light of God. If this is a fact (of being despised and rejected) in general, it is (especially) so for the environment wherein one grew up as a preacher. This is, because that environment often has a (dark) prejudice against such a preacher. Even God's Son did not escape from this. He, Who is the Word Itself, grew up in Nazareth, was listened to by hearts filled with prejudice and criticism: "Is not this the son of Joseph, that carpenter?" It was their prejudice which prevented them from being open to His Messianic anointing; they only asked themselves with astonishment how it was possible that This One possessed such (spiritual) wisdom. It was this same prejudice which closed their hearts for Him, when He pointed out to them the dark state Israel's nation was in. They then were filled with anger. "Whom does He think He is?"

Let us read the report from the bible:

4 verse 16-19: *"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book he found the place where it was written, **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**"*

Here He read a part of the bible, where Isaiah prophesied (and thus predicted) about Himself some 600 years beforehand. The Lord God had sent Him and anointed Him Messiah.

When we are to have an active ministry, we receive an anointing from God to act and speak in His holy Name. We first receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and thereafter, after we proved to be faithful and devoted, the anoint-

ing when He calls us into active service for Him; as it also is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me." After that anointing we are clothed (equipped, and thus prepared for the [spiritual] battle) with the power to testify and serve.

The ministry of the Gospel.

Let us look at the ministry of the Lord Jesus before His sacrifice on the cross; a ministry whereto also some of us are called – in this period (of time) of the Holy Spirit – (anointed) to edify the Body of Christ. In this calling is mentioned firstly: "He has sent Me to preach the gospel to the poor". The Gospel is preached to the poor in spirit; to them who know they lack the NEW LIFE, and who hunger for it. This is the foundation for everyone who has been called, by grace, to the glory in God: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Not only must every child of God be aware, at the beginning of his religious life, to be a (spiritual) beggar; but he must also realize to be continually dependent of the flow of grace, which by faith come from God's heart. After all, of ourselves we are nothing; we are, as is written, "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10). When we, as usual, think we can manage something ourselves, and we thus do not sufficiently take into account our dependence on Him in all our spiritual labor, then we are altogether wrong! Each preacher must receive his "manna" (the true spiritual food, the "meat") fresh from Him in wrestling prayer to God, that it may reveal His healing power in the Church. To such poor therefore God's Gospel, God's Good News, must be revealed.

21

This Gospel is preached "to heal the broken-hearted". To change the sorrow such people have towards God because of their sin and their state of sin into joy; when they experience that this burden has been removed by our Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

This Gospel must be proclaimed to preach to the "prisoners" of the evil one "deliverance" from many and various captivity of the devil to have these prisoners experience the redeeming power of grace of the blood of the Lamb, whereby they will be delivered from these bonds of sin and other occult bondages of satan and the world, and so taste the freedom of that "joyful kinship of God". This Gospel must be preached "for the recovering of sight for the blind". The proclaiming of the Gospel must make God's will known to His people. Not only the basic principles (see Hebrews 6:1-2) of this knowledge, but finally also **all** of God's will. A preacher must not only feed his audience with "milk" (light spiritual food), but the more advanced must also have "meat", namely the deeper teachings concerning God's Word. This Gospel must be proclaimed "to set at liberty them that are wounded"; to give to those that realize their own weakness, the power of the Holy Spirit to go and act in the freedom (the being delivered and thus free) of all (power of) sin and worldly desires in order to remain in the righteousness and justice of God, despite all sin and the worldly things around them. Finally this Gospel must be proclaimed "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"; to show the people the blessed hope of the children of God, which is awaiting them in God's Kingdom after the rebirth of all things, in the Millennium of peace of Christ as well as in God's eternity thereafter.

This then was the spiritual task of Christ before His crucifixion, and is the task of every preacher after Him (John 20:21).

Again: The hardening in Nazareth.

We now turn again to the spiritual state Nazareth was in when Jesus addressed this wonderful Word to them. He wanted to acquaint the people from Nazareth with this wonderful Gospel of grace, deliverance and renewal. We will now see how the people from Nazareth reacted to this love of the Savior.

4 verse 20-21: *"And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."*

In other words: "Here am I sent by God and anointed to be a Savior and Sanctifier to you, to grant you grace upon grace from God."

4 verse 22: *"And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"*

They wondered: "How can this son of Joseph, that simple carpenter, have so much wisdom concerning the Scriptures? He has not even attended the theological school; He did not sit at Gamaliel's feet... (a well-known Jewish scribe in those days)". They did not open their hearts to God's anointing which worked through Him with power, but remained in their prejudice concerning Him... When one receives a prophet of God as such one will receive God's streams of grace, which, because of that anointing of God, flow from him onto his audience. When one does not accept him as such, then one will not share these streams of grace; even though one may be amazed that he spoke so well. Let us not make the mistake of rebelling against the Holy Spirit, Who has given such a one the calling, ministry and function; let us acknowledge and accept those given by the Holy Spirit for the edification and perfecting of the Body of Christ. After all, calling and function by the Holy Spirit are recognizable by the fruits of the labor in the Lord. Let us not be annoyed either by the (possible) young age of the called. The Lord Jesus probably was also much younger than many among His audience, He was thirty years old... And this "Young Man" dared to proclaim God's judgment over these mostly older people of Nazareth! Many a man reacts this way in the Church...

4 verse 23-24: *"And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician (healer), heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country."*

The Lord could not do any wonders of healing in Nazareth as He could in Capernaum, because of their unbelief in His Messianic (anointed by God) ministry. A servant of God generally is not taken seriously in the social environment he grew up in. In a social environment in which people did not see him grow up, however, this may be so if they are right before God. Knowing this then, let us not make this general mistake concerning the called of the Lord who

may come forth from our own young people, and, fed by criticism and prejudice, walk on with unbelief in our heart concerning their ministry.

In the same way earlier prophets of God often were not valued nor accepted as such by the people of Israel. They were often humiliated, despised, and even killed! They often were believed more by the pagans from the surrounding nations... as was the case with Elijah in his days. He could not work the miracle of the multiplication of the flour and oil among the widows of Israel during the 3½-year period of drought, but he could at Sarepta, in the house of a pagan widow from Sidon. Elisha could not work the miracle of the healing of leprosy among the many lepers of Israel, but he could with Naaman, who was a Syrian...

4 verse 25-27: "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."

These words, as it were, are prophetic regarding the rejection of the Messiah by Israel, and the acceptance of Him by the pagan nations. Here God's Word came to Nazareth in its harshness of the judgment over their unbelief. In such a case one always knows two reactions. Either one turns to God in sincere repentance; or one hardens oneself... and rejects the preacher!

4 verse 28-29: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."

The devil took possession of their heart and thinking; they were furious with that young Preacher, Who dared to say such things of them. They became so infuriated that they wanted to kill Him. They drove Him to the abyss of the mountain, upon which their little town was built. There they wanted to cast Him down...

4 verse 30: "But he passing through the midst of them went his way,..."

Here the working of the powers were revealed (1 Corinthians 12:10a). It was as if they did not see Him anymore! As if their eyes were blinded. He could calmly pass through their midst and leave! The Lord Jesus revealed this gift more often in His ministry. So the law of gravity was abolished by this gift, when He walked on the Sea of Galilee during a violent storm. By this gift also the wind was calmed during that storm on that same lake.

Taking this lesson to heart, let us accept those the Holy Spirit has called to a certain ministry. A ministry proves itself by the fruits of the labor in Christ. Let us love these ones, whether they be young or old. Again: let us not despise the youthful age of a called one. But let us watch carefully with the eyes of an anointed of God in order to be able to see whom God wants to use in the Church for her edification and perfecting; whom He has sanctified thereto. "And whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans 8:30).

A called person will not say: "I have such and such a calling". The fruits of his labor in the Holy Spirit testify of his calling and ministry in the Lord. It is always the fruit that proves what kind of tree we deal with. In particular this goes for the world of the spirit.

Jesus, God's High Priest, believed and accepted.

Previously we had a closer look at the rejection of God's High Priest remarkably a rejection by religious people. It was the rejection of Him, Who, being the Only One, could work in their life with power and majesty. They rejected the Savior given to them by God, because their heart was not truly in the light of God's will. But now we will have a closer look at the other side, namely the acceptance by believers of God's High Priest.

4 verse 31-32: "And (He) came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."

Jesus came and taught in their synagogue, and the people that came were willing to be taught. We see something wonderful here: the Word of God in energetic activity. We know that the Word of God is inseparable from the blood of Jesus, God's Lamb, and also from the Holy Spirit, for these three are one says the letter of John (1 John 5:8). By this powerful effect on man, who accepted Jesus, the Son of God, as God's High Priest; by the effect of the (cleansing) "bath water of the Word", of the blood and of the Spirit of God in a human life, the Word will have the upper hand in such a life and hence such a life will be totally changed into a life after God's will. When we have accepted Jesus, the Son of the living God, the incarnate Word, and when we love Him, then we want to obey this Word with all our heart. And there, where we are still lacking, there we seek God's work with heart and soul in order to be able to obey this Word, also at this point.

Beloved, let me point out to you a remarkable and wonderful thing in this part of Scripture. We read that verses 31 and 32 are about the power of the spoken Word. But also verses 42 up to and including 44 deal with this. Let us first read this part.

4 verse 42-44: "And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

Between these two passages which are about the spoken Word, we see the power of this Word at work in the destruction of the evil and satanic works of satan in man. It is written "He has taken captivity captive". Moreover, on the one hand we see Jesus' work fulfilled in the individual; on the other hand we see it happening to the crowds. Verses 33 up to and including 37 tell us of the deliverance of one possessed person; in verse 41 the same thing happened to the masses.

4 verse 33-37: *"And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about."*

4 verse 41: *"And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ."*

Here we see the Word of God destroy the grip the devil has on man and on his life; here we see God's Word defeat the devil, in the individual as well as in the lives of many. The Word of God not only is redemptive for man and his life; but also in his body. We read about this redeeming effect on the individual, namely on the powers of sickness, in verses 38 and 39; and of this same deliverance, but then to the masses, in verse 37.

4 verse 38-39: *"And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her (healing). And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them."*

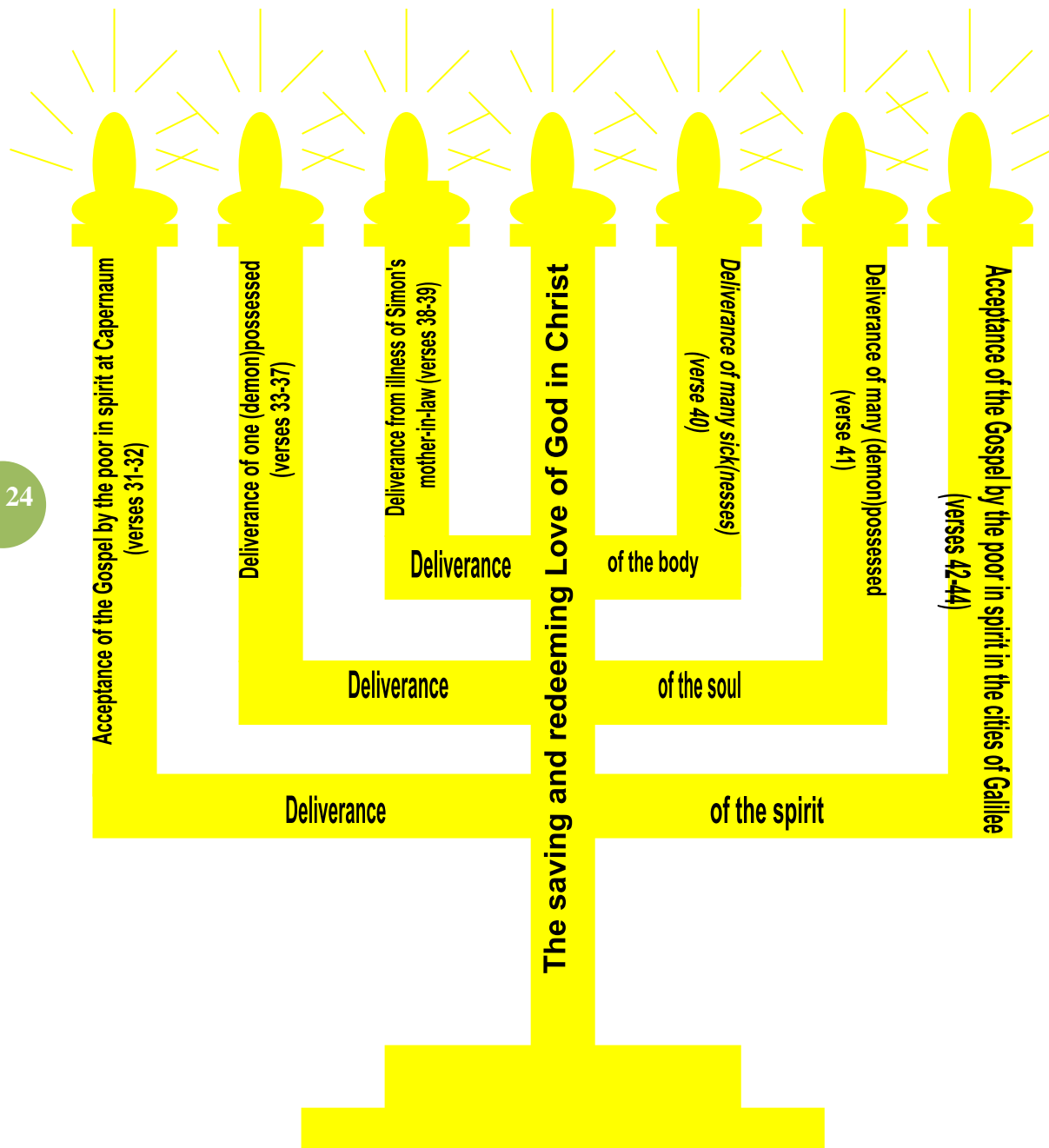
4 verse 40: *"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them."*

When we look closer at the working of this Word of God, we see a lit sevenfold candlestick of God. In the shaft (the middle arm from which the other arms come, with the foot on which the whole candlestick rests) of this candlestick we see the Love of God burning brightly. The outer pair of branches are formed by the acceptance of the Word of God by the poor in spirit; in a town like Capernaum on the one hand, as well as in the other cities of Galilee on the other hand. The next pair of arms is formed by the deliverance of the human soul of the slavery and dominion of demons; of the individual as well as of the masses. Then we see the inner pair of arms formed by the deliverance of the human body of powers of disease which form a satanic effect in the body of man. The one arm will show this in the life of an individual, the other shows the same effect of God in the masses. Glory to God! The sketch on the following page will illustrate this.

Here we see the spoken Word gain the victory over the works of satan. When we have accepted Jesus Christ as the High Priest given us by God, and as our Prince of Life, then this Word of the living God, as a result of His excellent and sanctifying grace, will work that miracle of banishing from our life satan, completely and in all his works. For this we must seek Him with all the love and sincerity of our heart. Then He will let Himself be found in His redeeming and sanctifying power. But our heart must continue to pursue Him, day by day, that we may continue to experience Him as "an overflowing refreshment and renewal", because He will then have surrounded us (and thus taken up into) His eternal redemption. Then we shall see with amazement that all sin and all burdens, put upon us by the evil one, fall away from us; and that we will be able to serve and follow Jesus more and more, because we learned to love Him in ever increasing measure.

We have studied this chapter in the light of the altar of burnt offerings of the Israeli Tabernacle. This object tells us of God's works of grace, because of which we are given eternal redemption by our faith in "Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; a complete redemption of all the works of satan (Hebrews 9:12)! The next chapter we will view in the same light.

(Verses 41-44 were already studied before)



Chapter 5

The church, a royal priesthood, a people won out of sin.

Sinners are cleansed by the Word of the cross, and sanctified to be members of the Body of Christ that they may bear fruit (1 Corinthians 1:18).

5 verse 1-4: "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesareth, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught (of fish)."

Here Jesus Christ brought God's Word to the gathered people listening to Him. He brought this Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. It was like a fire that burned away the sins, and renewed man, and changed him (inwardly) according to His will. When the basic principles of the Word have also been established in us, then He will also say to us that which He said to Simon: "Launch out into the deep, and cast out your nets for the catch." For we, after we have received the basic principles of Christianity in our heart and in our thoughts, must obey the following command: "Launch out into the deep", "Give also the depths of your own heart over to the Son of the living God". He wants to cleanse of all carnal and spiritual pollution also the depths of our inner being. He wants us to come to the prayer: "Search my inner being, Lord, that by You **all** darkness in me be truly removed, and I be purified of all carnal and spiritual defilement(s)!" A hunger, a thirst must arise in your and my inner being to be completely delivered from all

that is not from and of Him. This with the purpose to, in priestly service, "cast out our nets" to "catch" people in His Name.

5 verse 5-11: *"And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both their ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."*

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is brought to (the people of) the world, and it builds a pure and spiritual body out of sinners, a **new humanity**, of which each person has an active part in the whole. Each member of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ shares in the work in the divine Kingdom, great and small, from apostle to the smallest helping hand; all help with the calling, after the inner working of the Spirit of God and His gifts, to come to the fulfillment of what God wants; of that which He intends. A (large) army of witnesses must be created (here: be prepared).

25

Do not all members of our natural body work together for the maintenance and perfecting of this body; unto the finest muscular tissues, no matter how simple each part's function? In the same way each person in the Body of Jesus has his own work. But **all** and **all things** work – and work together – to perfect the Body of Jesus by the power and wisdom Christ gave us. **Each one** must come to active co-operation under the mighty leadership of God's Holy Spirit, namely to witness. In our profound joy we can't help witnessing. The verb says: What the heart thinks, the mouth speaks. Is it not the most natural thing for an apple tree to bring forth apples, and a cherry tree cherries? In the same way, by the inner working of the Spirit, this testimony life will grow naturally in a healthy Christian life, and we will bring forth fruit, and help to form the Body by the power of Jesus Christ, by the inner working of the Spirit, and by the gifts He gives. So we "catch" people and lead them into the Kingdom of God; each one after the calling and after the measure of the gift of Christ.

Beloved, let us have an active part in this Kingdom of God. Let us be prepared to lose (the power of) the old and sinful in our heart and life by the power of the Word of the living God and the blood of the Lamb. By this Word let Jesus Christ truly come alive in us. Let His Kingdom in us be formed by the justifying power of no one less than Himself! When we discover something within us which is not entirely according to His will, let us then hand it over to Jesus Christ that He may completely purify and sanctify us, and baptize us with His Holy Spirit, and fill us to all His fullness.

In the preceding part we viewed the Body of Christ as a whole; namely the Body consisting of many members, each with his own calling and work; now we will have a close look at such a member; at the justification of his soul, his body, and his spirit.

The justification of the soul.

Our God is a Fire, Who can purify all who are willing of all carnal and spiritual defilements on the basis of our faith in the shed blood of the Lamb. Our sun too is a fire. If the atmosphere (i.e. the layer of air which surrounds our earth to a height of some 1,000 km) wherein we live, would not have been there, the sun would be deadly. The same way God's justice is deadly for man without the grace of the blood of Jesus which was shed for us on Calvary. But because of this grace of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary God's justice now is for life. Beloved, we are sinners, from head to toe. God sees natural man as someone with abscesses which have not even been washed (Isaiah 1:6). We do not have to excuse ourselves, or blame the roots in the depths of our subconscious. We must all be justified, by the Holy Spirit we must all be set free and cleansed from our sins and our self-centered life. We are all the same, essentially equal, soaked in the same nature of spiritual death, which has its be freed and cleansed of our sins and our old self-centered-life by the Savior.

We do not have to be ashamed before Him for He "tastes our heart and our kidneys". He knows us even unto our deepest fibers, and therefore we do not have to hide anything from Him. He asks us to come to Him just as we are that He may justify us. And this justifying is by faith in Him, by the yielding of all of our being to Him, that He may come in our inner being, and may become to us Salvation and Sanctification, and – by our faith in the shed blood of the Lamb, which wrought an eternal salvation for us – victory over all power of sin.

This working of this word of grace, in the light of the Israeli Tabernacle, is symbolized in the altar of burnt offering. In fact this altar of burnt offering consisted of rough natural rocks, which were not allowed to be worked and thus made "beautiful". There were twelve stones, one for each tribe. Such a stone (spiritually seen) stands for the sinner, who, in complete confession of sins, comes to God for grace. If there was no stone, Israel was to take sand, unclean desert sand. The rocks or sand must then be laid in the brass tray of the altar of burnt offering. On top of this a grid was placed, on which the sacrificial animal was offered and burned. This sacrificial animal points to Christ and Him crucified.

In the same way Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb of Calvary, must be laid on the "table of our sinful heart". The same way Christ was consumed for us, so also all our being, namely the offer of our old and sinful life, must be also consumed by the fire which consumed the Lamb of God. We must become one planting with Him in His death (Romans 6:5). The dying of Jesus must also be experienced in our being. This "Word of the cross", namely the complete dying (off) of the old man, must also be planted in our life that sinful man in us be killed, and we come to the NEW LIFE – completely freed from each working of the spiritual death in whose power we formerly were – and brought to the freedom of the joyful kinship of God!

Now this, beloved, is pictured in this part of Scripture. It is a symbolism we learn to understand by the Holy Ghost. The first part deals with the justification of the soul (verses 12-16). The second part with the justification of the body (verses 17-26), and finally the justification of the human spirit (verses 27-32).

5 verse 12-16: *"And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto **them**. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."*

God's Word has its own code which we must learn to understand by the Spirit. Our soul, our life, is like a film showing us our iniquities. In God's eyes the soul is like a man whose skin is white with leprosy. In God's Word leprosy is symbolic for being in a deep state of sin, for being steeped in sin and injustice. So we come to God with our leprosy, and He teaches us to lay it at the foot of the cross, with Jesus and Him crucified. And there also this man received cleansing from his leprosy; deliverance from all the sins he had committed. They were taken from him and put upon Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of Calvary, where the offer he was to bring the priest for his cleansing according to Moses' law, referred to. Jesus herewith linked this healing He had brought about, to His own death on the cross at Calvary.

26

It is written, that the leper called out: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst cleanse me." There was faith and desire here to be cleansed. We can only be cleansed of our sins, at the foot of Calvary, when we **heartily desire to be freed** from all sins and bondages of sin. We cannot be delivered from anything without a sincere desire for deliverance. Only when we feel sin weighing heavily upon us, and we lay it at the foot of the cross, handing it all over to God, only then will we experience the redeeming working of the blood of Calvary. Then "the skin" of our soul will be completely clean; which in God's eyes is like a pure, whitened "garment of the soul". "They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). Thus God cleanses your and my soul. We stand before God, as if we **never** sinned, in a garment of the soul, white as glistening snow!

The justification of the body

5 verse 17-26: *"And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him: Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is This Which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear (**awe**), saying, We have seen strange things to day."*

Being taken with the palsy; another symbolism. This man could not move. Because the brains were covered in blood the central nervous system was affected. The brains could no longer pass on commands to the muscles, which was the reason he (because of his paralyzed body) could not move anymore, and lay there as a sorry bundle of life. It was obvious he needed to be cared for by others. Beloved, our body is the same way when sin has affected it. It is not active spiritually. We then have no "alleluia legs". This body is then dead, spiritless, without any activity for the service of the Lord. In this symbolism we also see four people, four friends of the paralyzed man, who kept on trying to bring him before Jesus, which was difficult, because many people surrounded Jesus; and because the house He was in was crowded. These four then went upon the roof; they removed tiles from the roof and let down the paralyzed man through the resulting hole. We see a tremendous persistence in all four. These four symbolic friends, also of your and my body, who are they?

When we look at the disciples of the first Church, we see that they observed four things with perseverance, namely: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Our **first** spiritual friend is "the true doctrine". We must persevere in the true doctrine and teaching. The **second** spiritual friend is the fellowship with brothers and sisters. We must not neglect the meetings. It is necessary for us to gather together often to strengthen each other, or to be strengthened by each other. The **third** spiritual friend is the holy Supper; we must persevere in sharing His blood (shed for us). The **fourth** spiritual friend is the prayer life. These four spiritual friends will bring us before Jesus, Who will also justify our body. When will this happen? When the fire of God (which consumes anything that is not according to His will) comes to dwell in our body by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Then the body will receive "alleluia legs", and it will learn to testify and to go there where Jesus wants us. By the infilling with the Holy Spirit God's fire is brought more and more in our body, and because of that the body is made more subservient for the Kingdom of God. May our body which so often is contaminated by all kinds of lusts, be cleansed and purified by the fire of God.

There once was a servant of God who explained that the Spirit of God fills **the soul** of man at the conversion and redemption; He fills **the body** at the baptism with the Spirit of God, and He seizes **the spirit** of man at the sanctification and perfecting. The Spirit of God must also seize our body. And the last member He will bind completely is

our tongue. "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).

This tongue which at first could pour forth such venom (angry and ugly words, gossip, etc.), will then honor and praise in many languages as the Spirit gives it utterance. And our body is then urged onto spiritual activity in Christ. This then is the justification of the body. It is a process which lasts a lifetime. Most people are dominated by the longings and desires of their body. Let us then give God's Spirit, being come into our body, free rein and let us learn to obey His gentle prodding and guidance.

The justification of the spirit.

5 verse 27-32: *"And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples (followers), saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician (doctor); but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

27

The last thing the Holy Spirit will finish, is our spirit; bringing it in complete harmony with His will. It is that part of man that He immediately starts with. After having come into contact with us, He cleanses our soul and He renews our thinking; we then seek the things that are from above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of the Father. He starts to release our spirit from all bondages of the evil one; bondages that defile the soul through thoughts and deeds as a result of our many weaknesses.

The publican Levi, later the apostle Matthew, was an idolater. He very clearly was under the spell of money (money crazy) as he collected more than the obligatory taxes for himself. He therefore served Mammon (the god of money). An idolater does not worship God, even if he says so, but his idol. Just like Levi, a person can be in the grip of a craving for money (and other possessions), but he can also serve other idols, like "self". Such a person then is consumed by a craving for honor and/or fame. Or one may idolize his own wife and/or children, or a famous person. Other things, too, may have an idolatrous effect on us, e.g. a job, the television or simply a car.

The Spirit of God will gradually free us from all bondages, and teaches us to reach more and more towards the infilling with, and thus being full of, that wonderful Savior, because we will have learned to love Him above all things and all people. He teaches us to have a burning desire for the (pure) purpose in Christ, and to hasten towards this goal in the spiritual race (see Philipians 3:10-14).

Levi arranged a thanksgiving feast out of joy, because he was freed by Christ from the oppression of Mammon (the oppression of much money and many possessions), and because he deeply honored his new Master. He invited his colleagues and acquaintances to the feast to be witnesses of his joy. It was not that he still supported them (their way of life), but because he wanted them to meet the Messiah Jesus. Likewise we also must distance ourselves from the (spiritually) wrong way of sinners, but we must try to draw those sinners to the Lord Jesus. We should not adopt a "holier than thou" attitude towards sinners, but kindly lead them to Jesus. We after all are saved sinners ourselves, purified and renewed by God, by the grace which is in Jesus Christ.

By these images Scripture showed us the wonderful way of justification of the soul, body and spirit; a way which leads us towards the indwelling of God's fullness in us (Ephesians 3:19). Let us advance more and more on this road, until the Lord increasingly takes shape in our every-day life. Let us advance with caution that the evil one mislead and/or tempt us not on this road; or lead us astray from this divine way. Let us ask the Lord: "Lord, make me blind to all the things of the evil one, just as You were blind to them. Make me deaf to satan's tempting, just as You were deaf to them". Jesus died "for our sins, but was raised for our justification". This is the purpose of Jesus for us; a justification of soul, body and spirit. Amen.

The sincere longing of the redeemed person for God leads to fasting.

What does Scripture mean by "fasting"? Fasting, as a religious act, is not eating and not drinking during a certain period. Fasting has existed for a long time, and satan's followers know how to utilize this. Fasting can free the spirit of diverse obstructions. The "dukuns" (conjurers of dark spirits) of Indonesia also use this means. The Egyptian priests, worshipers of Amon-Ra, the sun-god, also fasted. The yogi do the same. Satan knows the effect of fasting on the human spirit. God Himself taught the Israelites by His Word how to fast.

5 verse 33: *"And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?"*

Fasting therefore was known to the Jews, but it was not used any longer as a means to draw nearer to God, but purely as a tradition, as a religious attitude. They then fasted once a week. This also happened at the great memorial festivals. But the Lord intended something quite different with fasting. This is explained to us in God's Word.

5 verse 34-35: *"And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."*

Fasting is viewed here from the angle of the children of the bride-chamber. These are the New-testament believers; namely they that are willing to be part of the Body, the Bride's body, of Christ and who, because of this, are called in Scripture the children of the bride-chamber. This is a totally different kind of fasting. With this fasting one does not seek spiritual power, as the unbelievers do when they fast, even if they do it as a religious custom like the Jews did in those days; but this fasting is the result of a sincere desire for complete deliverance of iniquities on the one hand, and for a deeper and firmer union with the Bridegroom on the other. This desire for a deeper and firmer union with the Bridegroom, in the Holy Spirit, only could take place after the Ascension of the Bridegroom, and after

the relationship between the children of the bride-chamber and the Savior Which was taken into heaven has become evident – by the teaching (and the resulting insight) of the Holy Spirit; after a clear vision had been obtained and the Holy Spirit could be poured out into the yearning heart.

By their spiritual contact with the holy things of God, in and by His light, the children of the bride-chamber discover how much iniquity is still present in their inner being, deep within the subconscious of their soul; iniquities they see in the world around them, and also in themselves. From Scripture you know that God does not tempt, but that man is tempted when he "is drawn away from God of his own lust, and is enticed" into iniquities (James 1:14). The enticing force therefore is within ourselves, in our own flesh. If that be dead, so not a single sin of the world could tempt us any longer; just as not a single sin could affect Jesus. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30b). Well then, the young child of the bride-chamber, indeed, accepted the Lord and opened his heart to Him, but it also discovers this world of iniquity within itself, whereof it has not yet been delivered. He knows from Scripture, that, by his faith these iniquities indeed are covered by the blood of the Lamb, whereby he received forgiveness; but he sincerely longs to be delivered from these. On the other hand this (often strong) influence and power of these iniquities is felt, when he come into circumstances of temptation, whereby he often allow themselves to be drawn towards sin... It is this struggle Paul described in Romans 7:13-26. This struggle is felt by the (sincere) child of the bride-chamber which longs to be completely delivered from the angel of sin rooted deep within itself; which (angel) is in the world because of lust; by the lust which is aroused, amongst others, by what we see with our eyes.

So, yearning for the salvation, for the complete deliverance from these (powers of) iniquities within him-self, such a child of God is prompted by the Spirit to fast (Isaiah 58:6). With fasting and prayer he implores the Savior and Redeemer to enter into the tangle of iniquities within self, and to deliver him from this spiritual prison, from this grip of the spiritual wickedness in himself. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). We desire to be delivered from our body, our flesh. We desire to be with the Lord, but over and over again we discover within ourselves powers which work within us, which draw us away from Jesus...

The "firstlings of the Spirit" are the first workings of the Spirit in our inner being; namely those of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and of rebirth. But we, as joyful and sincere children of God, long **for the complete deliverance from all iniquity**. This longing must grow towards the point where we, with Paul, deem everything dung (reprehensible) for the sake of the excellency of knowing Jesus (Philippians 3:8).

This deliverance can only be brought about by the Holy Ghost on the basis of our faith in the shed blood of the Lamb. He alone can kill the inner workings of our "flesh" when we invite Him to do so. When we learn to live with Him, He will, through this relationship, teach us the fear of the Lord; and when driven by this fear of God we lay down everything – even that which somewhat resembles "flesh" and sin – on the altar of (burnt) offering of His grace, with a plea to Him to burn that offering to ashes. In this (personal) relationship we learn to wrestle with Him just like Jacob did at Peniel, and we will also say, "Lord, I will not let You go unless You bless me" (see Genesis 32:24-30). In this light we must view, in the first instance, the fasting of the child of the bride-chamber. However, this yearning of a child of the bride-chamber has two sides. We looked closely at the first one (namely the wish to be completely delivered from the power of sin within us); the second one, as the positive part of it, is the sincere longing for the relationship with the Savior Himself.

The example of the runner Paul gave in the letter to the Philippians (3:14) fits in with a New-Testament fast. In this **everything** is loosed and discarded which even slightly hinders, or possibly could hinder, this spiritual race. Such a life focuses simply and solely on the pure goal in Christ. However, such a life of fasting and prayer we cannot put upon ourselves; we must, through grace, be prompted hereto by the power of the Holy Ghost. Blessed the person who is thus called to share the Supper of the Marriage of the Lamb of God (see Revelation 19:9)! For it is certain, that he will taste the glory of the Bride in Christ in all the fullness of God's riches and glory. Anyone who comes to the true fast shows the Lord in this way that he seriously wishes for deliverance of sin **and** for a relationship with Him in the Spirit. And this is the reason why the Lord mentions fasting here in connection with the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

5 verse 36: *"And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old."*

Here a piece of new material, which has not yet shrunk, is sewn onto old, already used material. One will understand that, when the garment is being washed, the piece of new material will shrink causing it to tear loose from the old. The Lord compares this to an old-me-life, which longs to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Here is a person with an old-me-life, thus still wanting to remain in the lusts of the flesh, who asks for the Holy Spirit. But what one often does not realize, is that one asks for (divine) fire, which will consume him. The fire of God comes as a judgment, and will destroy such a life! Hence an unbeliever should not pray for the Holy Spirit (perhaps one wishes to show off that power, just like Simon the sorcerer or magician); but a person must first be born again (born of God), before praying for the power of the Holy Ghost. One must first have tasted the redemption of the old man. Don't forget, God's Spirit is **holy**! Let us therefore pray for the Holy Ghost, when the heart has been renewed. The Savior had this followed by a similar image:

5 verse 37-38: *"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles (wineskins); else the new wine (here: the type for the Holy Spirit) will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."*

The new wine here is the type for the Holy Spirit, and the new bottles (wineskins) are the renewed life, established in us by the rebirth. This parable, concerning the Holy Ghost, was given here by the Lord with regard to the fast. Fasting therefore is often connected to the quest for this baptism. We mentioned fasting earlier in connection with the yearning of the child of God for the perfection in Him.

5 verse 39: "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."

A person who through lack of a relationship with Christ is not yet spiritual enough, will not immediately desire the NEW LIFE of a relationship with Christ – wherein are interwoven the life of the cross, namely (the will) to die to the old sinful life, **and** to the power of sin – but will rather remain in the old, wherein self tries to please God, and, as a result of that, knows no life of the cross.

The Sabbath-rest of the NEW PERSON in God.

Once these iniquities have been removed by the power of the Holy Spirit and the blood working inwardly, then, as we saw from the above, our (spiritual) hunger for Christ will be satisfied. Such a life rests completely in the hand of the Holy Spirit, and is led by Him to the very quiet waters of His rest. This then is the spiritual condition the Sabbath, which God established in Israel, refers to.

How amazingly the eating of the grains of corn on the Sabbath, which form an indication towards Christ – the Bread of Life, the (LIVING) Word of God – and the eating of the showbread by David and his men, which also points to Christ, fit in the frame of this argument (see the next verses).

Luke 6 verse 1-5 *"And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days? And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him; How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."*

The Pharisees and the scribes only see the literal celebration of the Sabbath as an institution of God. However, God established the Sabbath as an image of that which then still was to come; as a lesson to arrive at the insight and the experience of the spiritual sense of it: the rest in Him, which is not to be disturbed. And He is the Lord of the Sabbath as well. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

Luke 6 verse 6-11 *"And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it (let it waste away)? And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness (fury); and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus."*

We will not expand on the wrong attitude of the scribes and Pharisees regarding the Sabbath, but we will take a closer look at the miracle of the healing of the withered right hand. This man received healing on the Sabbath. It is important for us to understand the spiritual lesson here. As we know, the Sabbath is complete rest in God, wherein man has learned to be still, and to refrain from acts in one's own strength. By the power of Jesus life entered his (the man's) right hand, and that right hand could work. Differently put: When we fully rest in Christ, the Holy Spirit will work perfectly through us, and will use us as an instrument in His hand. Then, by His power, we can use our "right hand" in the Lord's service. Likewise, His Body will labor in this world, in order to – in His Name – establish His royal priesthood, a completely new humanity! So His Church, represented in the next verses by the twelve chosen apostles, will be revealed in this world.

Luke 6 verse 12-16 *"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter), and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was (to be) the traitor."*

Twelve is the biblical number of the Church. 12 is 3 times 4, and three is the number of God, while four is the number of the world (the 4 corners of the earth – North, South, East and West). The number twelve thus means: God, Who by His grace wants to save the entire world by means of His anointed, in and by the power of His Holy Spirit; in order to build His Church (Matthew 16:18; Psalm 127:1-2), for He alone is the Establisher and Builder of His Church and of the New Jerusalem. Amen.

Chapter 6

The basic principals of God's priest-kingdom.

(Verses 1-16 have already been studied in chapter 5, see above, on this page)

Introduction:

As we have already shown: God is going to establish a kingdom of priests. Each one in this kingdom will be a priest for another person. A priest who hands out God's gracious blessings to another; who intercedes with God for that other person; and who lives before God's face in honor and praise and thanksgiving. Because of a greater devotion and a more faithful dedication to God, the one priest will receive, through grace, a place closer to God than another priest. Because of this he will receive more gracious blessings from God, and passes those on to others. One sees,

that therefore in this wonderful Kingdom of God, the highest placed person – this is the one closest to God – will be everybody's servant.

"But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

From high to low God's Kingdom therefore consists of priests. The one regards and prays for the other. Intercession for another is a priestly job. At the head of this Kingdom is the High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who forms the Source of all God's blessings and allocations (here: gifts, ministries, etc.). In intercession, the priests are to bring the needs of the people to the High Priest, to God. And in their turn they hand out the blessings they have received from the High Priest-God to others. Well then, everyone is doing priestly work, and thus is a priest; but he also is more or less a king, because he is a child of the great King. All are children of God, but there are princes (here: rulers) among God's children, who, because they are closer to God by their priestly function, are better "media", namely spiritual channels with a pure reception and passing-on of God's wonderful blessings and provisions.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). It is a glorious Kingdom, that one day – for all eternity – will stand in the glory of God. It will bear within itself that divine glory, and out of that fullness we will give to others. This way God will dwell in the midst of His children; He will dwell in His priests eternally, and especially in His High Priest. Everyone will be filled, to a certain measure, with the glory of God, and share with others of His grace and His love. In God's Kingdom the motto will be **giving**; giving to others that those others may be full, just as they are. So love, purity and justice will reign in that Kingdom of God. Let us now look at the basic principles of this Kingdom. Before doing this, let us first read the introductory verses:

6 verse 17-19: *"And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all."*

Here one sees again Jesus' distributing power of grace. Virtue went out of Him. Sometimes He gave that power to the apostles and emissaries, and they in turn gave of it to the people. We see the same picture at the multiplication of the loaves. He handed out the bread and the fish, after having blessed and broken them, to His apostles, and they distributed them to the people.

In the texts of this Gospel a "level place" is mentioned. In the corresponding text of the Gospel after Matthew we know, that He then stood on a mountain. Hence it must have been a mountain plateau. There He addressed a large multitude. Let us dwell on this for a moment. At several occasions He addressed a crowd of thousands of people. At the first multiplication of the loaves He spoke to 5,000 men; not counting women and children. The second time the number of people was 4,000 (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:29-39). Yet everyone could hear Him clearly, although He had no microphone and amplifier at His disposal. Do not we see here the majesty of God, and His mastery over the laws of nature?

Here we see one of the Holy Spirit's gifts revealed; namely that of **power**. The same gift was revealed (and clearly seen) when He walked over the Sea of Tiberias; also when He calmed the storm there. This gift, which Jesus possessed in all fullness, He also wants to give to His children, anywhere the gift is needed for the increase of His Kingdom and for the glorification (and thus the proclamation) of His Name.

I.

The attitude of the priest towards God.

6 verse 20-26: *"And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their (fore)fathers unto the prophets. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation (see also Luke 16:25). Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their (fore)fathers to the false prophets."*

We learn here how the attitude of the priest and child of God must be towards his God and Father, in spite of the sinful people around him. In the verses 20-21 there is mention of a "Lazarus attitude". Surely you heard the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31). Lazarus was poor; he begged and asked. Anyone would understand that this is meant spiritually, and not literally: not every poor beggar goes to heaven, and not every rich man goes to hell. On the face of it this seems to be expressed in this parable. But the Holy Spirit refers here to the "Lazarus attitude", and the "rich man's attitude" of our heart. I already stated that the first two texts of this part of the bible renders the "Lazarus attitude" of the heart of a good servant of God; while the verses 24-26 render the "rich man's attitude" of the heart of a bad servant of God. This last (inner) attitude is caused by that feeling of self-satisfaction, which is sinful in God's eyes; that feeling of being more righteous and holier than other sinners; a feeling that the Pharisee had towards the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14).

Spiritually seen the rich man brought a rich meal on the table. The ones that were invited admired his wealth and generosity; and the rich man felt flattered by that admiration which he was after. But Lazarus was conscious of the wounds of his soul, and his sins, **and** of his spiritual poverty. Someone with a "Lazarus attitude" soon will pray:

"Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!" And he begs God for food, for spiritual food. A person with such an inner attitude will be saved by God; he will receive grace. However, a servant with a "rich man's attitude", someone who pretends to be one rich inwardly, is doomed (condemned to hell) by God. Why? Because he is proud of his self-righteousness, which means that he never really had any part in God and Jesus Christ.

A true servant of God will always have a "Lazarus attitude"; his heart will always **sincerely long** for grace and for the full relationship with that great God. In his life there will be moments of great (spiritual) refreshment, but these will be followed by periods of great (spiritual) hunger and thirst for God! This great (spiritual) hunger and thirst will always mark the true child of God. These "poor in spirit" will have the Kingdom of God within themselves and will inherit it. One poor in spirit will always ask, and will always open his heart to receive grace. But in order to receive, he must be able to **give** himself to God from the heart; that the Lord God, through Jesus Christ, may completely change (renew) his carnal thinking and inner being by His Word and the Holy Spirit, to NEW LIFE, after His will. He must be able to do this after **His will** and not after **ours**. The prayer, deep in the heart of such a child of God is: "Break me, make me, mould me completely after Your will, O God!" In accordance with that inner hunger and thirst, God will satisfy His hungry and thirsty child with His justice, His love, and His blessings; and will use him for priestly labor for others by means of His anointing of Spiritual power.

If you have the right spiritual attitude that spiritual hunger should be present any moment of the day; then God will give His manna (spiritual food) also each day again; not once for all, but each day anew; a new portion for that day. And the next day the hunger will be there again, which must be satisfied by God. Seen in this light, our morning prayers therefore are so important. For we are to receive through these prayers: new manna; new strength to walk the way of victory that day; to go from grace to grace; to walk with Jesus!

In verses 22 and 23 we are shown the hatred satan has towards those with a "Lazarus attitude". Satan reveals this through worldly people, but also through the unconverted and partly converted Christian. They will reject you; will separate themselves from you; they will call you a "goody two shoes". They know you do not belong with them in your thinking and feelings. Your presence alone in their midst condemns their actions, walk and speech; therefore people in society, in your office or in the factory do not like you. They want nothing to do with you. But why should we fear? The Lord overcame the world! And He has the last word! He will keep you in His omnipotence as long as He can maintain you as His child. And if the Lord has not preserved us, then something might be wrong with our kinship, and we should examine ourselves in the light of His Word.

In verses 24-26 we read about that "rich man's attitude". Such people are praised by the world (read: satan). Between the lines of verses 25 and 26 we can hear satan laugh and praise such people, saying: "Good on you, boy, you are headed the right way!" The worldly men agree with this, and one hears them say: "You are a wonderful person, just and good and very praiseworthy!" Beloved, if this is happening to you, then mostly something is wrong with you!

We read in this Scripture part about the "Lazarus" and the "rich man's attitude"; about the attitude we are to have before God. I pray God that you may always have this "Lazarus attitude"; the attitude of the "poor in spirit", that God may give you His rich gracious blessings.

II.

The attitude of the priest towards the world, towards the sinner who knowingly treats us meanly.

Scripture begins with:

1. Our attitude towards those, that hate us.

6 verse 27-28: *"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good hem which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."*

You might say: "Yes, but that I cannot do!" And you are right: you cannot! Fact is, it is an impossibility for man! But please realize that it is the foundation on which God's Kingdom stands! It is the basic principle that ought also to live in each child of God, namely: **grace**; this is mercy, prompted by the love of God, towards the sinner. The Lord Jesus, by this love, was driven to the cross of Calvary – to die there for the whole world of all time, and to work reconciliation with God – when we were still sinners... when we still mocked Him... He prayed: "Father, forgive them, for **they do not know what they do!**" He prayed that for His murderers! Prompted by that same love Stephen's dying lips prayed the same, when he was stoned by his murderers (see Acts 7:54-60). And this same love must also be poured into our heart and thinking by the wonderful workings of the Holy Ghost.

In my opinion there is a difference between the biblical concept: "first love" and this love towards our neighbor. The "first love" is the love towards God which began to burn in our heart when we heard the Good News for the first time; when that message set us on fire, after that we surrendered to Jesus full of remorse, conscious of our sins. This "first love" we should keep in our heart, if we are ever to come to this "bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:14) as Scripture says, namely to this (divine, and thus perfect) love towards our neighbor. Therefore we should not confuse the love for Jesus (the first love), which we must continue in order to finish the Way, with this love for our neighbor.

Driven by this love to Jesus we learn to hand over ourselves, our life, our thinking and our actions, into His pierced hands in order to be broken there by Him and to be destroyed, in order to have it replaced by a new life, which finds its motives and motivations in **the love of God**, which He, by the Holy Spirit, will pour out into our heart (Romans 5:5); that we, just like Jesus, might be moved by the (eternal) fate of that sinful neighbor; even if we are treated badly by him. It is only in this way that we could love our enemy; only this way we could do, and spread, good towards those that hate us. So we could also bless those that curse us; and pray for those that use violence against us. In fact, it is not we that love, but He, Who loves through us. Then we could say with Paul: "I am crucified with

Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth 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" (Galatians 2:20).

All this happens, because we taste the fullness of His love; because we experience the lovely fragrance of Jesus, the Rose of Sharon; because the Spirit of Christ saturates us, and we are therefore full of Him. Then the nasty behavior of our neighbor towards us, will not affect our attitude towards them, because we only look on their eternal salvation, knowing that behind their words and actions is hidden the power of the prince of this world (satan). Verse 32 corresponds with verses 27 and 28.

6 verse 32: *"For if ye love (only) them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners (who are [still] in the world) also love those that love them."*

This is the attitude of the worldly person: love those who also love them. There is no heavenly reward for this; but to love when we are being hated, is a totally different thing. Divine glory is needed for this: the indwelling and work (fruit) of the Holy Spirit. God does not ask us here to be nice, no **acts** of love... but to love. We must love in truth. If one **has** love, one acts lovingly. If one **acts** lovingly, one not necessarily must have love! One could namely also be nice, but not mean it!

2. Our attitude towards them that do us no good.

6 verse 29: *"And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also."*

Here is the neighbor who is violent against us, and robs us. This verse corresponds with verse 33.

6 verse 33: *"And if ye do good (only) to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same."*

A real child of God, a true priest, must be able to do good to those, who do not good, but evil, to him. This is only possible when Jesus dwells in us, and prevails within us. A person cannot do this by himself, for God asks us to be **perfect** in the midst of this sinful world. In the midst of this world his Church ought to be **perfect**, namely: "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27).

We cannot achieve this in our own strength; human justice cannot match this in the least. **Justice from God** is needed for this; justice God must work in us, whereby we also are called a child of God. It is the justice of **God Himself**, which is given to us by the Holy Spirit. Should we try to do justice ourselves, then we might do good things in the eyes of people, but we would have no part of the righteousness which is of God. On the other hand, justice of God is revealed in our life when the Holy Spirit, His nature, is expressed strongly in and through us towards others.

3. Our attitude towards those who want to borrow or have something from us.

6 verse 30: *"Give to every man that asketh (something) of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."*

It is the worldly man's nature to be greedy, and hence he is inclined to steal, while the nature of the child of God should be: to give! Verse 34 corresponds with this text.

6 verse 34: *"And if ye (only) lend to them of whom ye hope to receive (everything), what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to (other) sinners, to receive as much again."*

The world lends, and requires it back with interest, yes with usury (unlawful interest, excessively high interest). But the **new humanity** should have a different mentality regarding material things. A child of God's desire should rather be directed towards the infilling with the Spirit of God; towards a perfect walk by that Spirit.

In this world we need material things, but it should not become a means in itself. It should remain just a means to provide our body with the necessities in this life. In this world we should hold loosely unto matter in this world, and we should not be Mammon worshipers; not become slaves of (the desire for) money and possessions.

Verse 35 is a summary of the right, already discussed, attitude God's priest should have towards the people in this world.

6 verse 35: *"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, ad ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."*

Two golden lessons follow from these teachings. We read about them in verses 31 and 36.

6 verse 31: *"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."*

In Dutch we have a proverb saying about the same in negative way, meaning: "Whatever you do not want to happen unto you, do not do it towards another." If you do not want to be mocked, then do not mock another. If you do not want to be slandered, then do not speak negatively about another either. If you do not want to be harmed, then do not harm another either.

6 verse 36: *"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."*

The merciful forgives the person who harmed him. And, the merciful does not remember the evil one has caused him anymore either. "Our Father" taught us this too: "Forgive us our debts..." How? Exactly: "...as we forgive our debtors." When we cannot forgive others their trespass against us, then God does not have to forgive us our trespass against Him either (Mark 22:25-26). God will not go on with us, unless we agree with the forgiveness of the one, who trespassed against us. We should receive with open arms the one, who is guilty towards us, when he arrives at forgiveness and renewal like God does towards us. If we cannot do this we are in spiritual darkness. God's Word warns us most urgently. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now" (1 John 2:9). May these basic principles of our being a Christian penetrate deep within us. And if we have not yet discovered

these within ourselves, then let us go to the Lord with it, and plead: "Lord, make me so!" Verse 37 tells us how our attitude towards worldly man and our neighbor should **not** be:

6 verse 37: *"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."*

It is not ours to judge our neighbor who did us harm, but we should leave the judging to God. Our task is to continue to bless him driven by the love of God. Do not condemn him (condemn or curse someone eternally) either; do not wish him eternal destruction..., but pray for his salvation. In your spirit do not keep him bound to his evil, but forgive him! This Scripture part then ends with the great characteristic of each child of God towards his neighbor: **give!**

6 verse 38: *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."*

Beloved, this is, what God asks us to do towards a defiant world. And when John testifies: "His commands are not grievous" (1 John 5:3), then it is only, because he stood in that light and in that love of God!

It is impossible for us to fulfill this God's command in our own strength. We cannot even obey, in our own strength, the ten commandments which God gave to Moses, which are only a shadow of this, let alone this command to be perfect. We can only act in this way, if we stand... and walk in His glory. For only then can we draw from that glory; that glory and nature of God. Therefore, beloved, pursue the fullness of God that you, too, could meet this requirement, namely a godly walk which is shown to us here. We glorify God in this world by the way we live. Not with words, but by our actions and the way we behave, we glorify Him; because then the world will see that Jesus' victory over sin and satan has been fulfilled in our being and in our life! The world can then see: Christ is alive and works out His plan in His own.

III.

The priest's attitude towards his divine service.

6 verse 39-40: *"And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."*

In this text is expressed which attitude the priest should have towards his Master's service; he should namely not wish to be greater than the anointing God gave him; he is namely blind to all the things of God he was not anointed for. God must anoint him for even the smallest ministry, that he may, in that ministry, receive God's guidance and revelations. For each servant has to do his own work, a smaller or greater part of the whole work. Everyone receives the anointing for his ministry; be it in the Church where God placed him or in a larger context, in the midst of the world.

God grants insight and wisdom for that part whereto He called him, that he in that work, may not be as one blind. For, as is written, if a blind leads a blind, both will fall in the ditch. If he therefore does things, God did **not** call him to, God will give him no light (and thus no insight) in those things, and he will then act as one (spiritually) blind. He will then mislead the Church and/or the people; make them to stray from God, together with him. Let us therefore not want to be more than the anointing God gave us. We do not have to guess at this. God will make it clear to us, when He has called us unto a certain spiritual ministry, what it is He desires from us. The Church itself will see by the spiritual fruits we grow in the Name of Jesus, that we were called to that ministry by God. For the call to a certain ministry in the Lord, proves itself by its fruits. We should not want to do more than that which Jesus asks from us. We should not want to accomplish more than that which Jesus wants to work through us. We should not be more than our Master; but each perfect disciple (follower) will be equal to his Master. Our ministry is at its most glorious and wonderful when we solely want what Jesus asks us to be and to do.

Let us not want to be holier than Jesus; being in His way in our human zeal. Especially when He has called us to be a servant, we should want to be a **sheep** of the great Shepherd. We should go **behind** the Shepherd, and not go on ahead of the Shepherd; not in sanctification, nor in any service! If we do, we suffer from religious over-zealotry, and we will therefore certainly "fall into the ditch" of the evil one; we, and those, which by God's grace have been entrusted unto us! But, when He has told us to do something, than let us **do** it too, but then with the focus of our faith upon our Chief Leader.

But if we notice that, regarding certain things, the Lord has not yet opened the way, then let us wait quietly; putting all things into His hands with thanksgiving and praise. **He will do it!** He will make **everything** right in our life and in our ministry, if only we strive for the perfection thereof. In His time, and in His way, **all things** will happen. For, for a child of God, and a servant of the Lord, there also is a waiting period at the feet of the Master. Moses had to wait forty long years in the desert at Midian before God called him to be a leader of the people of Israel. Moses himself began too early (and thus in his own strength); it therefore was obvious that he went ahead of God's time and plan; he then murdered the Egyptian... (see Exodus 2:11 v.v.).

Let us therefore wait patiently at Jesus' feet. He knows His time. Whoever believes, will not hurry! However, your heart must remain with Him – in active prayer – regarding the things you expect from Him!

IV.

The priest's attitude towards his own life of the cross, and sanctification.

6 verse 41-42: *"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."*

A priest must be strict towards **himself**. The life of the cross, namely the dying to the old and sinful life, and the sanctification for the priest must begin in **his own Jerusalem**. It has always been God's principle: Start at Jerusalem, and then advance. The life of the cross, and the sanctification must begin in one's own life, in one's own heart. We should not look at others and then discover how must is still lacking (spiritually) in those others, or what is wrong with them. Let us not point at others and talk about him or her. Rather, let us look at ourselves; things with us are far from right. We often excuse our own faults and shortages, or do not regret them; but the faults of others we often find so great; but God's Word says that there is a beam in **our** eye, and a splinter (mote) in the eye of others! Let us therefore be sure to put all our sins and iniquities in our own life at Jesus' feet, prayerfully. We should give our old, sinful life to Jesus! Jesus' process of the cross should work through all this, that we completely die to our old life.

The Lord wants us to voluntarily hand over these "beams" to Him. All sins, all weaknesses, all bondages; we must get rid of these to Jesus. We must be delivered from them by Him! We cannot enter the Kingdom of God when we are still (spiritually) bound to all the old in our life; let alone that we could serve Him in that Kingdom! When we then, by the grace and mercy of Jesus, have been freed from that great beam in our own eye, then we should not just go to our brother to remove the splinter from his eye. No, listen to what great caution God's Word urges us in such a situation: "...and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's (or sisters) eye."

O, that caution of Jesus; his priest on this earth should never lose sight of it! Did He not treat that adulterous woman with all His love and with care. He does not want to hurt or reject a sinner; in His love He wants to save them, and win them over for Him. Only sinners who really refuse to listen, will He harshly speak the truth to, and even then with a bleeding heart. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood (chicks) under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34)

A priest of God must be a NEW PERSON in whom the Word of God is alive and active. He must be as a good tree, which, because it is good, also bears good fruit. He must be a pure mediator, between the Lord Jesus and the sinner who is to be saved. A pure flow must take place through him of God's redeeming, gracious blessings. In him there should not be any blockage by sin, which causes an obstruction for the gracious blessings. He must be so, firstly for the Church, but also towards the world, wherein he is to be a missionary.

6 verse 43-45: *"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."*

In God's Word a NEW MAN is likened to a good tree which as a matter of course brings forth good fruit, and no thorns and thistles; fruit trees which give fruit to the people, good food which naturally does not cause sickness or death.

Let us learn to pass on to others the fruit Jesus causes to ripen in our life and being. It certainly is not so that the Church and the world need **us**. Far from it: they need **Jesus**, they must see and taste Jesus! It must be Jesus working through us; and Who can be tasted in the anointed Word. Only in Him is Life! He alone forms true Food!

The NEW MAN is completely obedient to the Word of God, and that a person can not do in his own strength. The NEW MAN does this, because he rests on the Rock of Ages, our Lord Jesus Christ; he does that which the Lord Jesus Christ says to him Man, who is not yet renewed, may call Him "Lord", but will not obey Him, because he lacks the strength to do so.

6 verse 46-49: *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."*

In this parable the Lord teaches us the secret of those who obey Him, also in times of depression, of temptation and persecution. They are the ones, who were willing to dig out the sand of their own carnal will and thinking; and laid them at the foot of the cross, until, in a true Spirit-baptism, they found the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages; until they had a personal contact with Him in their prayer life, that their spiritual house be founded on His Being, His will and His works. Such a spiritual life will overcome all attacks of the evil one.

However, if our spiritual life is not founded on such a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, it cannot stand the test of the life of the cross (namely the dying and suffering for the sake of His Name), which the Lord puts upon us, and of the temptation and persecution (which the evil one puts us through). Such a Christian life will, at some time, slide down and destroyed by the power of the evil one. Such persons were not willing to "dig away" the sins and the sinful life which stands between them and the Lord Jesus Christ. They did plead with Him for mercy, but they do not know actual redemption, purification and sanctification in the power of Jesus, which is depicted here by digging and going deep until the Rock (i.e. Jesus) is found.

They will continue to struggle in the weakness of their flesh, while almighty God, by the all-appeasing cross of Jesus, was also available for them. There is sand – the flesh – between the Eternal Rock and their spiritual house. There are Christians, who go on for years and years, and are weak just the same after all these years; still sinning in disobedience to His Word. They do not know nor taste the power, that can completely change (recreate) them into a true child of God.

Let us therefore prayerfully wrestle to get to know this Rock, to give ourselves (completely) to Him in joyful surrender. Let us therefore prayerfully wrestle to taste of the power which will change us completely into children, and into servants, into priests of the LIVING God. Yes to God, to God be all glory!

The Lord Jesus Christ, our resurrection power in every way.

In case of illness.

In the light of the Israeli Tabernacle we, in this chapter, have arrived at the brass laver and the door to the Holy Place; objects, which respectively tell us of the actual dying (off) of the old man, **and** the resurrection in the NEW LIFE, which becomes ours **through** and **in** the Lord Jesus Christ, by the baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit; and by the growing together in the Spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ, in His death as well as in His resurrection (Romans 6:3-12).

7 verse 1-10: *"Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither hought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and aid unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."*

Here we see a case of resurrection from a sickbed of someone who was sick unto death, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a Roman centurion's faith. Today, one might translate this rank with "captain". This image, the faith of a pagan centurion, is like a prophecy (prediction) of the entering in of paganism into the Kingdom of God. He believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as being the One, sent by the Father with powers (of attorney) in the Spirit of God. This faith became obvious by the words he spoke. He said... that he, too, had a commander over him, and soldiers under him. He would receive an order, and would execute it by giving his subordinates the necessary commands. He compares this situation with the ministry of Jesus. The Father in heaven sent His Son, and the Son defeated the enemy, the power of darkness, by His Spirit-filled Word. The Spirit of God executed Jesus' orders for healing, which were in the Name of the Father unto wonders and signs and unto fulfillment of the whole Word of God. Jesus would also banish the darkness and the power of sickness from the life of this centurion's servant, who was very dear and valuable to him.

By God's grace this centurion had this faith, and Jesus marveled. Jesus had not found such wonderful faith, not even in Israel, God's people. He found this faith in a heathen! Glory to God!

We receive faith by grace, it is a gift from above. By this given faith the centurion saw in Jesus the Messiah, the One sent by the Father; and he saw that the omnipotence of the Spirit was available to Him. Therefore he said, in different words: "Lord, just speak, say a word, for the Spirit of God will do it!" Now this is what it is all about: We should not believe because we see wonders and signs, but we must believe in the Word of God! This must be the foundation upon which our faith rests. We should act in faith because God said so!

The Word declares to us, among others: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). Anyone, who comes wholeheartedly to Jesus and calls on Him for help in his need, and asks Him to come into his "house", will receive spiritual health and ETERNAL LIFE; he will receive resurrection power. Therefore call on Him in the day of trouble, and He **will** deliver you from that situation of power (Psalm 50:15).

In case of miserable circumstances.

7 verse 11-17: *"And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all (here: a wave of awe went through all of them); and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about."*

The death of her only son, who was also the breadwinner, caused the widow of Nain to be plunged in miserable circumstances. In that time there were no social laws in Israel, like we now know in our country, whereby such people are taken care of financially. The Lord saw her sorrow and cares, and was moved with inner compassion for her. The resurrection power of the Son of man, which soon was to be confirmed by His death and resurrection, caused a complete turnabout in the circumstances she was in. He walked up to the bearers of the bier, on which the dead man lay, and touched it. Majesty and authority went out of the Prince of Life. Moved by awe for the Man, Who performed so many miracles, the bearers put down the bier. And He said: "Young man, I tell you, get up!" He had restored her son to the old mother, and had banished all darkness from her dejected mind and life! To God be all glory!

Moved by His great compassion for sin-sick humanity, whereby it might be in such stormy and dark circumstances, the merciful God throws us His "life jacket" in His Word! "Cast all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). "Be careful for nothing, but in **every thing** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made **known unto God**" (Philippians 4:6). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be move." (Psalm 55:22). We must learn to give Him access to all our troubles, in everything that burdens us down, and He will do all these things! Praise be to God! He not only gives us NEW LIFE, but, as we have seen, also healing and deliverance from all deep pits of life.

He saves His servants from all doubts the evil one prompts.

7 verse 18-30: *"And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger (i.e. John) before thy (Jesus') face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."*

Here the evil one caused a wonderful servant of God to doubt and to come into great difficulties: he was captured by Herod and was to spend the rest of his days in the dungeon, in the midst of enemies. Some faithful disciples, however, came to visit him... The great prophet of God was caused to doubt because of these circumstances... Because of the bitter circumstances his wonderful focus on Jesus was obscured. See how powerful the evil one can work, even in the life of such a servant of God. Therefore, beloved, if doubts arise in **your** heart, by whatever causes, act as John did: because of his imprisonment, he sent others to Jesus. In fact, he went to Jesus with his doubts. We too should confess the doubts, with which the evil one holds us in bondage, to Jesus; that He clear our faith outlook, and keep it fastened on Him again. And He wishes nothing else, but to clear and strengthen our faith outlook, that therefore we might (again) share Him, His resurrection power and glory.

Jesus did this to John in this way, who heard the testimony concerning Jesus from his disciples; namely he heard of His redeeming and saving power, of His proclamation of the gospel to the poor in spirit, and the message that the Kingdom of God had come near.

When John's disciples were on their way back to him, Jesus did not rebuke John for his doubts, but He even confirmed the divine calling of John as a prophet of God. He certainly was no reed shaken to and fro by the wind of oppression; neither was he a bad servant looking for his own profit, clothing himself in rich garments; but he was a great prophet; the angel God sent before (or ahead of) His Messiah. Yes, of all those born of women, no one was a greater prophet than John the Baptist.

In the Kingdom of God, when it is revealed, **all** doubts will vanish. There even the least (the lowliest) will have a ministry, more wonderful than the one John had. What a wonderful future awaits all of God's children!

But the Lord did not only refer to the ministries in eternity, but also to the ministries of the Kingdom of God, which are hidden in the hearts of the New Testament believers. After all, if the wonderful ministries in the Old Testament were led and prompted by an **outward** anointing, so the ministries of the New Testament were led and prompted by a God, **Who dwells IN His children**. Jesus' words: "He that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he (i.e. John)" count as a prophecy of a future servanthood to God which was still hidden then.

He is only the Lord of Resurrection for all sincere believers.

7 verse 31-35: *"And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children (who accept this wisdom)."*

The generation of Jews Jesus lived amongst, He compared with "children sitting in the marketplace..." In the marketplace one buys and sells, one seeks one's own profit... It is the spirit which also dwells in the worldly man: "every person for himself... and God for us all!" Seeking for the greatest possible profit; becoming as rich as possible! "Marketplace believers" therefore are believers who remain worldly and carnal. They, in fact, are believers whose faith is **death**, because God will not have anything to do with them as long as they are not willing to leave the world (behind).

Such believers remain "**sitting** in the marketplace"; remain in the world, and they will build their house of faith and religion in that world, which is fruitless and sinful. They are full of criticism of each other: "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept..."; but they are blind towards their own **lost** cause: namely their remaining seated in the marketplace of this world... Such believers have no part in the Kingdom of God, in God's works of grace; therefore they also rejected God's prophet, John the Baptist – the fore-

runner of the Messiah – and called him a devil; therefore they also rejected the Son of man, and called Him "a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and criminals..." This last one, in their haughty and self-deceiving eyes, was disgraceful!

But God, Who Himself is supreme Wisdom, in His actions of mercy has been justified by His **real** children; for the existence of redeemed sinners who have been brought into God's salvation, testify of God's supreme wisdom which He displayed in the execution of His plan of salvation.

He is each redeemed sinner's greatest Treasure and the Object of worship; He baptizes him with the Holy Spirit.

7 verse 36-50: *"And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with (her) tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed (even) my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much (or: she showed much love): but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little (or: shows little love). And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."*

In reference to the corresponding story in the Gospel of John (chapter 12), we assume that the woman was Mary of Bethany. She was a prostitute, a "sinner", but Jesus delivered her completely from the spirit of fornication. Gratitude and love towards her Savior filled her. When Jesus came to visit their house, how she would sit at His feet for hours, and look in His loving face, in devotion and worship, when He told her about God and His Kingdom. By grace and by the light (and thus insight) she received from the Holy Spirit, she understood deep within her heart that He would step into the breach for all sinners, thus also for her, and sacrifice Himself, even if she did not know how yet. Therefore she came with her sister Martha, who was to serve at the feast of the wealthy Simon of Bethany, a Pharisee who was healed of leprosy by the Lord (see Mark 14), and who therefore, out of gratitude, invited Him for a feast/banquet.

Lazarus, whom the Lord raised from death, had been invited to this feast too. Mary came with her sister to serve her Savior publicly. With her savings she had bought an alabaster (a pure white, rather translucent marble) bottle full of costly spikenard, and she brought it with her. Spikenard is a spice which was much used for embalming the beloved dead. Why did she buy especially spikenard? She probably could not have explained it herself. But something in her heart told her, that He was about to make that great sacrifice for all sinners; and she so much wanted Him to stay with them... When the feast was going well, she made her way into the festival hall, no longer able to control her gratitude and love, and cast herself at the foot of the bench, on which Jesus lay. While the tears of gratitude flowed, she continuously kissed His feet, drying them with her hair. Then she took the alabaster bottle, broke the thin neck of the bottle and poured the costly contents over His feet.

Astonishment filled the bystanders, some were irritated because of... the (in their opinion) waste of the expensive ointment; others had watched all this with mixed feelings, knowing what kind of woman she was. What did they know about the profound gratitude, worship and holy affection which lived in the heart of this delivered woman? Therefore Jesus protected her in the midst of all those critical looks. This spontaneous act of a thankful follower of Jesus, would be proclaimed throughout the whole world, everywhere the Gospel would be preached... (Mark 14:9). Why...? Because it contains a deep spiritual lesson, as she had acted by inspiration (prompting) of the Holy Spirit, Who already worked in her heart, even though He had not yet been poured out.

Mary of Bethany, the redeemed sinner, in this act of gratitude was the picture of each redeemed sinner, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, **glorifies Him openly** out of a grateful, completely devoted heart... by word and further way of life.

Here the infilling with the Holy Spirit is depicted by the possession of the spikenard in that alabaster bottle. This alabaster bottle is the type of the life of the believer himself. In order to pour out that ointment such a bottle needed to be broken. If one did not, that costly ointment would come out drop by drop because of the very narrow neck of the bottle. One could compare this to the narrow opening of our cologne bottles. But Mary did not want to give the spikenard drop by drop, therefore she broke the bottle and poured the contents over Him (Mark 14:3). Mark states, that she also anointed His head with this ointment.

That bottle cost 300 pence (Mark 14:5); in those days that was almost a year's wages of a land laborer, who was hired at a penny a day (Matthew 20:2). Just like Mary then broke that bottle, so each sinner must break the bottle of his life by allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to do it. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13)

Your and my sinful nature must be broken for and by Jesus Christ, if that costly spikenard of the Holy Spirit, which is poured out into your and my heart, is to come to full development and disclosure in this world. **We must come to**

the breaking of our own inner being, of our own sinful nature, otherwise this nature will always be in the way of our purification, sanctification and servanthood. Our own will, our self, will always produce impurities in our sacrifice, and form a life-size obstacle for the execution of the true will of the Almighty, because He will not interfere with our own will.

Something might be good and terrific in our own eyes, but not in those of the Lord! Our flesh stands in His way. Because of our own blunt, stupid will He cannot reveal in us His majestic power unto salvation, His inexpressible grace. Therefore **our** will, **our** viewpoint of things, **our** life's desires **must be broken** by Him to make room for **His** will, **His** viewpoint of things and **His** life's desires! Then His spikenard will flow (out); and its exquisite fragrance will fill the whole environment; and His inexpressible grace will bring redemption and NEW LIFE for many.

Mary was **full of gratitude**. Jesus had delivered her soul; a tremendous joy had come into her soul, so that she cried with profound gratitude. And this gratitude must remain in every full soul! When this great thankfulness is not found in us anymore, if this has gradually disappeared from us to be replaced by the daily grind of everyday life, then something is wrong, and that "fullness" misses each value! Then we, as it were, have pushed the Holy Spirit "in a corner". Other things have become more worthwhile in our life, while He should take in the all fulfilling, the ruling place in our everyday life. Therefore we must be willing to give the Lord a free hand to break everything in our life, and to break that which is not from Him, even if it is very dear to us. Only then will He be central in our life and in our outlook on life. Take heart, beloved, and dare to fully accept this life of the cross from Jesus' hand. Or do you doubt His love and His wisdom? Let the Lord be Sovereign (Almighty; so that He can do whatever He wants and when He wants) in our daily life.

Mary was filled with **deep humility**. She covered His **feet** completely with her kisses, and dried His feet, which were wet with her tears, with the hair on her head. The hair of the head is a symbol of a woman's virtuosity, and her ornament at the same time. She dried His feet therewith. A deep humility lived in her heart. This same humility should **remain** in each person who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Not a trace of self-glorification should rise in us. After all, was formerly the Spirit filled soul not a sinner himself; a piece of "firewood" pulled out of the fire of judgment by Jesus? Is not all glory, a Spirit filled soul can reveal, that **of Jesus**, and never his own? We are all sinners, who have been pardoned (excused) from punishment, and who by grace may clothe themselves in the ceremonial garments of our Prince! For such there is not a single reason for glorification, rather one for gratitude and humility!

Mary further was filled with **love** towards her Savior: she kept on kissing His feet. A kiss is the expression of a love, living on the inside. A Spirit filled soul should **remain** in this love. He should continue to foster a passionate, burning love for his Lord and Master; only then will he be able to overcome any setback or false accusation coming from the enemy. Only then will he be able to withstand any temptation. This "first love" should not only remain in a child of God, but should also grow into perfection. I know satan wants to weaken this love with all of his means. This is, because only this love could make us fully obedient; because only this love will take us to the perfect purity and holiness of His Bride(church) (see Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 19:7-8).

You see, Mary here portrays a fulfilled child of God; a child of God after the Father's heart!

Part II

The life in the holy place of the resurrection person

Chapter 8

Like a sevenfold candlestick for God

39

In the previous chapters we saw how the priest of God was formed; namely out of sinners, lost in sin and guilt. For Jesus was willing to cleanse us, who were sinners, in His blood, and to renew us in and by His Spirit. In Chapter 7 we saw, that in Christ we may be resurrected into NEW LIFE. In this Chapter we shall have a close look at the different kinds of priestly labor we may perform in and by Him after having been anointed for it by Him. We will discover that we have been saved by Him **in order to save others!** We will also discover that this labor, in its totality, makes God's light to shine as by a sevenfold, gold candlestick which was also to be seen by those who, deliberately coming **out** of the Forecourt, entered that Holy Place.

This candlestick consisted of a shaft (one arm with a foot on which the whole candlestick rests) in the middle, and of six branches, which come out of the shaft by twos. That shaft and those branches together give a sevenfold light. The same way the spiritual candlestick of God (namely our testimony in and by the Holy Spirit) today gives its sevenfold light in this dark world for the glorification of the wonderful Name of God. So a child of God, cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus, and renewed in and by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit, must walk in priestly service in this world; in order to proclaim to that same world the sevenfold light of God's glory, and to reveal it. Let us have a closer look at this sevenfold Light, in sequence.

1.

We must deny ourselves things and be prepared to bring sacrifices in honor of Jesus.

8 verse 1-3: *"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."*

We see here, as the first light of God's candlestick, the willingness to bring a sacrifice for the use of the Gospel of God... We see here women willingly going with Jesus, Who is the Word of God, Who proclaimed His Father's Word, namely the Gospel, the Good News. They took care of all the material and financial things He needed for this. The life of each servant of God should be like this. Everything he possesses materially, should be dedicated to the increase of God's Kingdom.

There is a clear characteristic in the life of a servant of God: he is not stingy for the work of Jesus! His purse is always open for the work of his Lord. He even put **all** his belongings in Jesus' hands. When you see someone who is stingy with regard to Jesus' work (think of the biblical "tithing"), then you know such a person is not yet born again. Which is not to say, that a servant of God is wasteful with his money, but the Lord has full control over it. Jesus knows that His children still need money in this world for all their activities.

2.

We must dedicate our life to Jesus, and labor in honor of Him alone.

A servant of God is a revealer of the Word, a proclaimer to the world of the Gospel. God's Word must be heard from his mouth. He must be a sounding board of God, that is always ready (and thus pure); an **open** and not a clogged channel.

8 verse 4-15: *"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be (mean)? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the (explanation of the) parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with (daily) cares and riches and*

pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth (spiritual) fruit with patience."

Here we see a sower sowing seed. The Lord explained that the seed is the Word of God that is proclaimed to the world. The Word of God comes forth from the heart of the Father. And it is God's servant, who in prayer must be open to this and having received it must sow this Seed into the hearts of the people.

Elsewhere in Scripture we read again, that the Word is the **Sword of the Holy Spirit**. Therefore it is the Holy Spirit, Who must wield this Sword, and **neither you nor me...** Again: we should not wield the Word; it is the Holy Spirit within us, Who through us must wield the Word. Then it will be a Sword. To what purpose? For the destruction of bonds of sin and powers of sin. The Word must cause the souls of the people to want to die to bonds of sin, and must deliver them from the powers of sin. But if we are not willing to be delivered, then this Sword will be **judgment** to us! But when we are prepared to see the evil within ourselves – by the Word revealed to us; and when we are prepared to lay our (old and sinful) life in the hands of Jesus Christ, our Lord, then this Sword of the Spirit will kill all sin in us and... deliver us from all works of satanic powers in our life (Romans 8:2).

Seen in this light, who do you think the Sower is? It is God's Holy Spirit, Who works in and by His servants... He builds the Kingdom of God! He alone is the Builder of the Kingdom of God and of the temple of our heart (Matthew 16:18; John 15:5; Psalm 127:1-2). We are merely channels; human channels in His hand, through which the Word may flow which must come directly from the heart of the Father; and for which we pleaded, wrestling in prayer before His throne. It is His bread, the Bread of life, which we must pass on in His Name. And this Word, this Seed, is mighty Seed, which must be sowed by Him Himself working through His servants. In this parable are mentioned four cases of reception of this Seed (namely the Word) in the heart, and only in one case this event has **eternal value!**

In the first case we see the seed fall by the roadside. In this case the Gospel message is heard – maybe with great attention, whereby the listener saw himself, in God's mirror, as a great sinner whom Jesus in His mercy wants to save – but one does not come to actual surrender to the Savior; the seed is not planted **IN** the heart, even if it lies temporarily "on the table" of that heart.

You might know how powerful the germination strength of natural seed is. I was told that even stones can split apart when such a stone is in the way of the germination. So is the Word of God, but it must be planted in the heart of man. The human heart must embrace and love the salvation of the Lord Jesus; it must gratefully grasp His promises, and praise Him for that; it must familiarize itself with the Word of God as it is given to him in His mercy. Then the Word will work! But in this case one does not surrender to the Savior, and... the evil one rushes in, and takes that Word away from his heart.

In the second case we see the seed fall in stony ground, it landed on a rock! There might have been a thin layer of soil on that rock, otherwise the seed would never have sprouted. But when the seed wants to take root, it is stopped in this activity by that rock of stubbornness, and self-centeredness.

The seed at first was received with great joy... Why? The person who received the seed noticed in his spirit an open gate to God's heaven he also wanted to enter. He saw that God's gifts of grace contain power, namely (the power) to become a son (or daughter) of God, and to receive power in Christ; and he longed to have this, or be it. He only sought glorification of self, for in his heart was a rock of self-centeredness, and he sought to have found this glorification in religion. God's seed cannot take root here; the Person of Christ cannot grow in them, because this heart seeks itself, and only wants to clothe itself in the glory of Christ! This person's own spirit here is the great handicap to grow and to come to maturity in the (LIVING) Word in his life. Such people do not seek to magnify Christ in their life (something which can only happen by crucifying self), but they want to be important themselves amongst their fellow-believers. The Word of God is bound to be doomed in such a heart.

Beloved, if you ever wanted to receive God's Word in your heart in order to gain honor and glory in your life with it, in order to shine like a star in the religious sky, then stop **now!** Then there will be a true turning unto the Lord. Do you know, satan loves to see this kind of "believers", for he knows that such "Christians" (and the works in their own strength) are doomed. If you find this "rock" in your own heart, then come to Jesus with it, that He completely pulverize it. All self-will and self-centeredness in us must completely disappear, and this is only possible if we surrender to the works (of grace) of the Lord.

This is why Paul is opposed against leadership of novices, of newly converted (people) in the Church: "An overseer (bishop)... not a novice lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:6) For, in a novice, a newly converted, self is not yet completely crucified, and it will therefore be the honor, which (unfortunately) often is the result of this leadership, which is not killed... but rather fed... with conceit as a consequence. Something, which will bring to the fall himself and many of the Church.

The self-centeredness of the believer and servant of God must be pulverized by the Holy Spirit just like grains of incense are. And when these "grains of incense" are burned, they will only serve for the glorification of the great God, Who transformed a lost sinner into a child of God!

Let us also look at the third case... The seed, the Word of God, here falls amongst thorns; these are: worries, wealth and the lusts of life. Such a Christian heard the wonderful Word of redemption and grace, and loved it. Unfortunately this soul did not surrender **all** worldly desires (1 John 2:16) which are in his heart, to Jesus, for Him to remove these from him such as the worries of (daily) life, bondage to wealth and possessions, sexual lusts and other (earthly) pleasures of life, etc., etc. He is not willing to lose some of his bonds to Jesus... Deep within his heart there is no cry to God to put to death **all** works of his body, soul and spirit; yet he desires to receive that NEW LIFE from God...

Such an attitude of the soul is revealed in every-day life in wanting to **remain** in the lusts (especially the sexual lusts) of this life; in wanting to **continue** to enjoy worldly wealth and possessions; in wanting to **continue** to struggle with the worries of daily (cost of) living, in wanting to remain – in any form – in the pride of life.

Sincere children of God **do not want to remain** in the enjoyment of all this, but ask and plead with the Lord to put His purifying fire into it, while they, if necessary – by the power of God – hold loosely onto their possessions, and put these into the service of God's work, there where the Holy Spirit requires it of them (see the explanation of the first light of the candlestick).

Christians, who have not surrendered their bonds to Jesus, are bound to, sooner or later, meet with (spiritual) failure: for the thorns, namely the problems, desires and sins, suffocate the Word. You know, that the Lord commanded the Israelites, at the conquest of the land Palestine, to kill **all** Canaanites..., because even a remnant of these people would otherwise induce the people Israel to worship idols, and to abandon God: for "a little leaven (type for sin) leaveneth the whole lump" the New Testament teaches. However, Israel did not obey God. The consequence was that the spirit of Baal was to dominate Israel later on... Baal was the god of the Canaanites, the god of the natural passions, namely the carnal and sexual lusts. Likewise all natural passions, when these have not been altogether put at the foot of Jesus' cross, in Jesus' hands (pierced for us), will gradually dominate the Christian again, and reduce him to a mere name-Christian! So King Solomon, bound (by sexual lusts) to 1,000 women, was gradually driven to the worship of their idols (see 1 Kings 11:1-8)... These women (of different background and race) had become many kinds of sex idols for him.

The Word of God warns us, that He (through His purifying Word) can only work in us, when we surrender all these things to the Lord Jesus! We should never do this in our own strength, but by the works of the Spirit of God. However, we must be willing, and plead with Him to come in all this as our Savior, and Redeemer, and Soul saver. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13) Revelation 12:11 also speaks of this.

In the last case the seed fell **in good soil**. It was **good soil** that the seed fell into; this is: a human heart that does not seek self, and does not want to live its carnal life, but (a heart) that wants to be rid of it all to Jesus, the LIVING Word of God, Which has now come into his life. The corresponding verses in the other Gospels not only tell us of a hundredfold fruit-bearing, like here, but also of a thirty fold and a sixty fold fruit-bearing. When 100 is the highest feasible thing, we can speak of a 30%, 60% and 100% fruit-bearing. In the first case 30% of all labor is done by the Spirit, and 70% still by man; because God's sanctification in man could not yet fully work. In the second case 60%, the greater part of all work of that servant of God, by and in the power of the Spirit, and 40% in own strength. In the last case 100%, which is all the work, is done in the power of the Holy Spirit!

God wants to give us 100% fruit-bearing. But it all depends on our yielding and devotion to Him. Many run ahead of Him (consciously or not), and in doing so leave Him behind! But when we follow the Lord... He will do it for us, and give us a 100% crop (Ephesians 2:10). We see this "running ahead" of the Lord so often in the young. They love to take action! But I ask you seriously: "Who, in these situations, is to come into action? Is it not the Holy Spirit? How can the Word work mightily in the Church and in this world, if not through the Holy Spirit?" It is God's Spirit, Who must work through His laborers (Ephesians 6:17)! What must we do before it comes to pass? We should actively pray in our spiritual waiting period; we must pray for His revival and make ourselves available to Him.

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth. See how he waits there in the desert, friends; see how he waits patiently for the hour of God's glory. In that hour the Holy Spirit empowered Him... so it is written; and then he truly became "the Word (sent by God), calling in the desert"! Wait for the moment the Spirit of God will clothe you with servanthood; fight for it with fasting and prayer; wait for the great day of God! This is God's will and this is God's calling for every servant of His! Wait for His moment. And when He calls, then follow Him! Surrender to the service of Jesus! But, remain **humble** in heart in all labor for Jesus (Luke 17:10). We shall discuss it in the following.

3.

We must deny ourselves and "burn (up)" to the honor of Jesus.

In the above we saw that a task of a priest of God can be: the proclamation of the hidden things of God's Kingdom; the proclamation of the will and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; but also God's judgment if this grace is rejected. We saw, that this grace bringing task cannot always be equally fruitful, because the hearts are not always equally open to the Word of Jesus. We will now see the conditions as to how this Word is to be brought. The way a servant of God spreads this Word, namely the way he lives his life each day to the honor of Jesus, forms the third light of God's sevenfold candlestick in this world.

8 verse 16-18: *"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."*

We discover in these verses, that the task of spreading light of a priest of God must take place in a life, that is completely devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ... and the motivation of which is simply and solely the love of Jesus.

This servant here is compared to a lit candle. He spreads light to the honor of Jesus alone, and not to one's own honor. This light comes directly from God the Holy Spirit, unto the salvation of those who re-joice in it... God placed this candle on a candlestick, and this typifies the uplifting power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's get this straight: the preaching of the Word is **not** talking **about** Jesus or **about** the Word of God, but it is the uttering, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, of a revelation directly received from God. This is why Scripture also speaks of light, that is spread abroad, but which in fact is darkness (It **seems to be** light. Matthew 6:23; 25:7-8). In this case, as far as the proclamation is concerned, there is nothing divine, but all happens from man!

The wonderful light of God's Gospel therefore must be: the Word of the living God, the LIVING Word of God, which is spoken through His servant. Such a Word is alive, and powerful, and penetrates into the life and the inner being

of the audience. However, such a life of devotion to God and His Kingdom demands a price: it costs God's servant the sacrifice of all of his "I"-life, and inner state; for he must decrease...

Because God's servant opened himself up for the spreading of God's wonderful Gospel, this light of God, he as far as his own life is concerned, burns (up) like a candle. For this Word is like a fire, and makes God's servant equal to that fire. Everything in his being, that is still "flesh", slowly but surely burns up! The more sanctified such a servant is by God's fire, the more wonderful this fire of God's glory will be seen by others, and tasted in his life and ministry. Therefore, beloved, fellow servants of God, let us stand before Jesus in **self-denying** devotion, that His light will be seen in our life and in our ministry, brightly and in ever increasing measure. It is written that this light should not be covered by a vessel; neither should it be put under a bushel, as a corresponding text tells us in a different gospel; nor should it be put under a bed. These are symbols for the "flesh". A vessel speaks to us of wine and of drinking; a bushel of food; and a bed speaks of carnal lusts, and of laziness. In other words: the powers of the flesh should not hinder the light-spreading task of God's servant, nor should they make it impossible. Therefore we must hand over this "flesh" (voluntarily) to Jesus in order to have it crucified, that we die to it (completely). The Lord Himself must consume all this with the fire of His Being.

Let us realize that we serve a God of fire. And we surrendered to Him. He must burn our old and sinful life to ashes! O wonderful wisdom of God, Who burns our carnal nature to ashes, and Who gives us NEW LIFE in the glory of His holy and glorious divine Glow! We cannot be a servant of God without a walk of the cross, without a process of the cross. We cannot be a servant of God without having our life crucified by the mighty fire of God's glory and holiness, for servanthood means contact with this fire. We **must** yield to that purifying flame. If we don't, we will be consumed by His **judgment fire!**

This fire of God makes us equal to His Image; it reminds us of that event, far back in history, when He created Adam in His Image, whereby Adam became a son of God...

Beloved, let us hand over **everything** to the Lord to have it crucified, that there remain nothing within us that constantly hampers Him, and causes Him grief; and this is necessary that He make us "without spot and without wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27); that we be a useful instrument in the almighty, pierced hands of our Lord Jesus Christ! Then the glorious Word of God can flow through us in the majesty of His creative power. Let us strive for this 100% ministry of the Word!

O, the Word of God is creative, it is almighty and divine! And this condition of the LIVING Word of God we **must** be able to reveal. Not in our own strength, but by allowing Jesus, Who is this LIVING Word, to reveal Himself through us without Him being hampered by the "flesh". If the Word is able to reveal Itself in this condition... then, as verse 17 says, it will reveal all the hidden things of God's will to the people; but also all the hidden things deep within the sinner's heart of man! This last for the purpose that man, who by God's Spirit realizes his own sins, will remorsefully repent; and the first, that we in worship and gratitude enter into all of God's promises our ear at first never heard of, and our eye never saw!

Verse 18 tells us that, when God – by our sincere surrender and dedication and faithfulness – has been able to put something of Himself within us, He will increase that something. We go from glory to glory. It will develop into a 100% servanthood in God! But if God was **not** able to do this, by our own unrepentance, and we **think** we have something from Him, while God did **not** put anything of Himself within us, than even this **idea** will be taken away from us: this dead faith will be taken away from us by the storms which will ravage our spiritual life...

We have now looked at three lights of God's candlestick, and will now look at the light the shaft of the candlestick gives.

4. We must fully obey God in word and deed; that the anointing of God reveal itself freely in and through us.

8 verse 19-21: *"Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which **hear the word of God, and do it.**"*

We have seen that the Word of the living God must consume our old life. And this must be of body, soul and spirit! When we look at the outline below we notice that the shaft of the candlestick "traverses" three pairs of branches. These three pairs symbolize the life in the body, soul and spirit. The outermost branches symbolize the life in the body; the middle branches typify the life in the soul, and the innermost branches the life in the spirit.

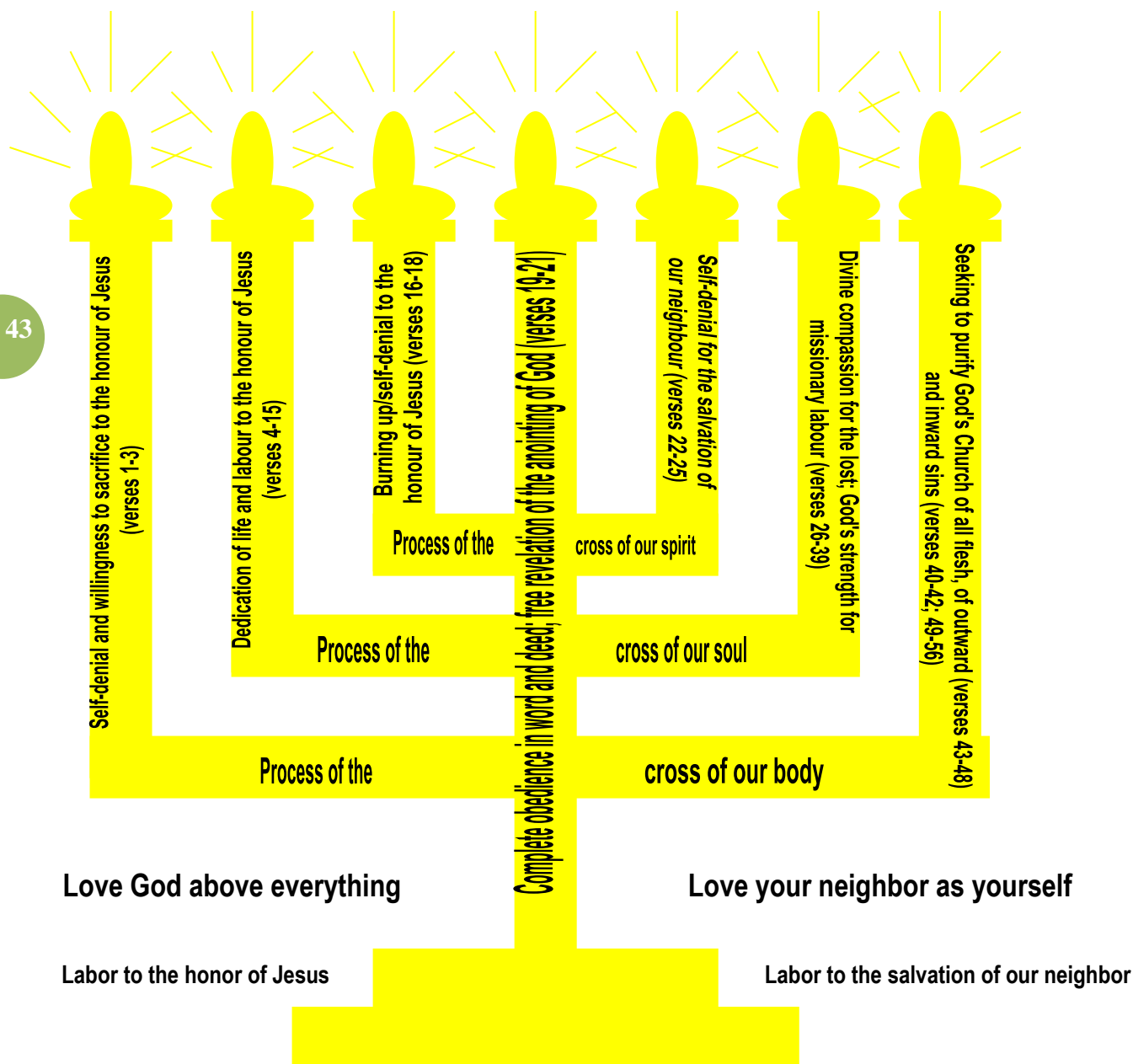
The shaft symbolizes the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – in the Holy Spirit – Who crosses our soul and our spirit that we be truly subservient to Him alone, to the Word of the living God! Because of this the Word of God becomes, as it were, "flesh and blood" in us. Thus we are made a "branch" of the LIVING Word of God (Romans 11:16-24), of the tree of life! Thus we will be as one with Him. In this way we become branches of the wonderful Vine (John 15:1-8). This is why the Lord Jesus calls those, who hear the Word of God, and also **do** it, His mother and His brothers, members of the holy Family of God!

We saw that the body, the soul, and the spirit of the servant of God are brought to servanthood **to the honor of Jesus** – by the fire of God's holiness and glory, crossing our flesh – unto the revelation of His love and glory, and that the motivation to this servanthood is the love towards Jesus, the love towards God. Thus the great requirement, which also was expressed in the law of the Old Testament is met, namely: **"Love God above everything else!"**

We shall see after this, that this revelation of the love and the glory of God must serve unto the salvation of the neighbor, but also to spiritual growth of the entire Church; for the revelation of God's glorious being in this dark

world brings the salvation, the redemption and deliverance, the cleansing and sanctification, yes, the fulfillment, to the sinful people of this world. For all this is of God, Who gives us grace for grace!

In this way also the second requirement of God is met, which also was expressed in the Old Testament: **Love your neighbor as yourself!**



5. We must deny ourselves that the Lord may use us to the salvation of our neighbor.

8 verse 22-25: "Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and here came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is our faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him."

A prophetic image is given here. Jesus stepped on board the ship on the Galilean side (of the lake), and got off on the heathen side, close to the town of Gadara. Gadara namely was a town of the Greek settlement "Decapolis", which means "Ten cities".

This event symbolizes His going out of the heavenly palaces, and His coming on earth. We read that He slept before the storm rose; here symbolically His death is pictured. The storm which rose when He was asleep, pictures the storm that rose in the hearts of the disciples during those fearful three days and nights "the Son of man was in the heart of the earth". But God's Son rose from the dead, typified here by His being woken from sleep by His disciples. At that moment He gave them new courage with the gentle reproach which sounded in His words: "Where is your faith?" The fear of the Jews, and the feeling of being abandoned by their Master was so great, that His disci-

ples at first did not even believe He had risen from the dead, when they were told by the women (Mark 16:9-11)! Later on the Master appeared to them Himself, and they were full of joy and new courage (John 20:19-20)!

What else does this picture tell us? It tells us of the **self-denial** of the Son of God Himself (Philippians 2:5-8). He left heaven's palaces in order to save lost sinners; pictured in the following texts by the deliverance of the demon possessed, and thus lost, Gadarene! He left the heavenly glories and riches to save the Gadarenes, us, which are fooled by satan and sin; to deliver you and me from the hellish powers! You see, the self-denial of the Son of God was for the Church which still was to be formed! Let us follow His example; let us – in the same self-denial – be willing to leave comfort, wealth, self-will and ideals to be renewed by Him, and used to save lost souls in His Name; let us learn to give **everything** to tell those, who are still in the world, how graciously Jesus Christ calls them to come to that Realm of His glory. Let us also shine this sevenfold light of God in this world, namely the light of the complete sacrifice of the "self-will" of our spirit, that we may take sinners to Him, driven by His love – by the divine mercy and compassion He alone is able to put in our heart, by the inner workings of the Spirit of God.

How few among us know this divine compassion for lost souls! We love Jesus and want to serve Him, but the divine compassion for sinners in this world, which must be the motivation of our service, is known only by few among us! Come beloved, let us desire from Him that the light of His love for sinners will also be kindled in our heart, which is God's miracle of a "crossed spirit", of a spirit that was willing to experience the process of the cross.

We shall see hereafter how also our **soul** and our **body** must be crossed through by God's Spirit and God's wonderful Word to be able to stand in this dark world as God's sevenfold candlestick of gold, to the glory of God and to the salvation of many; to the increase of His Kingdom on this earth! In this previous we have automatically arrived at the next point of light of the divine candlestick:

6.

We must receive divine compassion for lost souls.

8 verse 26-27: *"And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware not clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs."*

We now know the motivation of the Jesus' crossing over to Gadara: divine compassion, divine love for the Gadarene. We now also know that this forms a prophetic picture of His coming on this earth to free us, who are possessed by the power of the evil one, and sin; to deliver us from this power. And He was moved hereto by His love for sinners. This Gadarene man was naked; and so were we too, in the spirit, because of our sins, when we did not know the Lord yet. The Gadarene lived "in the tombs", near the power of death! So was our life before also in spiritual death; we rejoiced in things and circumstances which belong to the realm of the dead! When these things of "the flesh" are now still found in our life, then this is a bad sign; a sign that we are not yet dead to these things. Therefore we need to bring all this most urgently before His throne, at the foot of the cross, that He give the death blow to these things; so that we be delivered from the "abode in the tombs", namely this spiritual death.

8 verse 28: *"When he saw Jesus, he cried out (loudly), and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not."*

One tastes here the satanic aversion of an unrepentant soul for Jesus and the things of the bible. Often a (very obvious) resistance is perceivable in him against Jesus and the Gospel, and this is caused by the power of the evil one which is working in him. For carnal man forms a spiritual unity with the power of darkness; they have the heartbeat of "hell"! They will avoid you, as a child of God, because you are different from them. But the Lord Jesus overcame the powers of hell, and that is why they cannot harm you, unless God allows it.

8 verse 29: *"(For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the [demon possessed] man. For oftentimes it had caught him [by force]; and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)"*

This man was chained, because he was demon possessed, and therefore he was dangerous for his surroundings (and probably for himself as well). Nowadays most people would call him "crazy" or "mentally disturbed". But, he was truly possessed, namely by satan. True, they had chained him, but these fetters he had broken in the power of satan. With these fetters are meant, spiritually, God's commandments. God, as it were, had placed humanity "in the chains of the law", as He had grafted this law into the hearts and consciences of every person. But man broke these chains, these commandments of God's law by doing what he wanted to do himself. Forbidden things form a temptation for a sinful person! Driven by this tempting power of satan the sinful person breaks God's law; consequently one mocks God and His commandments (Psalm 2:1-3)!

The demon possessed man of Gadara was driven into the desert by the devil, to the wilderness, to the places of death and destruction!

8 verse 30-33: *"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion (thousands): because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked (drowned)."*

Here we learn that "many devils" can indwell one human body. We also see clearly, that the Lord solely deals with the person He wants to grant His grace to. "...I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." (Exodus 33:19b) The Lord had nothing to do with the swine, which symbolize the unrepentant in the world (dog and swine are the biblical symbols for them). The satanic power in a way could do with them whatever it wanted. That is why the demons were allowed to enter into the swine, who, driven mad by them, plunged into the

abyss. So it is with people who love this world, and all that is in it: they do not want to know the Lord. Therefore "God sends them a spirit of uncleanness", says God's Word (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). In other words: He allows the satanic power works on them and misleads them. And driven by this "spirit of uncleanness" they plunge into the abyss of hell! God does not bother with those who, knowingly, do not seek Him; God only deals with those who consciously (or unconsciously) seek Him.

8 verse 34-37: *"When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again."*

The Gadarenes were afraid. What of? Well, to lose **more**. They lost their swine. They wanted to keep what was theirs; spiritually seen they wanted to keep their old life; they did not want His "process of the cross". And that is why they begged Him to leave them before they lost more because of Him. Carnal people are that way, they do not want Jesus, the Word of the living God, for they do not want to lose any of their worldly lusts, desires, and pleasures to Jesus; they want to keep their old life. "But whoever wants to keep his life, shall lose it." Thus there are a lot of "Christians", who shrink from the process of the cross. They are willing to receive grace from Jesus. They want to be healed by Him, find a job by Him, or a new home, or find help in other needs, but His cross – a change in life by His divine intervention, by His divine fire, so that room is made for a pure and holy life in His love – that they do not want! Such people will **never** be able to inherit ETERNAL LIFE, for the way to ETERNAL LIFE goes only through His cross!

8 verse 38-39: *"Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."*

We must continue to see this story as a prophetic symbol, wherein Jesus typifies the "Joyful (Gospel) news", carried by the power of the Holy Spirit and cleansing the sinner of all powers of evil; and by doing so giving NEW LIFE to that saved and purified sinner.

Now, this redeemed sinner asks Jesus to be allowed to go with Him; spiritually seen: to be taken away from earth to be with Him in heaven. But the Lord did not allow him this, but commanded Him to testify to the Gadarenes of God's grace to him. He had to continue Jesus' work there...

In this world let us all be prepared to shine forth this light of God's grace in our every-day life; with the same compassion Jesus had in His love for sinners, and in the same power of the Spirit. Then we can say with Paul: "the love of Christ presses me..."

Beloved, we may love Jesus, but the true motivation of our spiritual labor in Christ is this compassion for the (eternal) fate of our neighbor; compassion which must be poured into us, and which must work in us, by the Holy Spirit. A sinner, to whom the Gospel is brought, senses this compassion, senses this divine love which goes out in order to save the lost! A soul feels whether the Gospel preacher (or another child of God) loves him with the love of God! There are many teachers, but few fathers in Christ... This love, which comes from above, (all being well) is felt by the Church in the ministry of her pastor... This love is felt in the ministry of the evangelist which expresses itself before God, also in his pleas: "O God, give me those souls, otherwise I'll die!" This, because that evangelist, in his divine compassion, is moved with the lost state of those souls... Driven by this same compassion let us pray to the Lord of the harvest: "Lord, send more and faithful laborers into Your vineyard!" And now: Who should be so moved for your and my lot, if not Jesus of Nazareth! And yet He said: "I can do nothing, unless I see the Father do it!" He had to **wait** despite His compassion. He knew He must be led by God's Spirit. "I can do nothing (for the Kingdom of God), unless I see the Father do it." Beloved, you see how **everything** is dependent on that great God; how **He alone** builds the New Jerusalem (according to Revelation 21:2; 9-27)!

I pray God that He will give His laborers this divine compassion, but also His guidance in all the work **IN** the Church, and for the salvation of those who are still outside!

The purification of all "flesh", and the perfecting of the Church, solely under the mighty guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We will now look at the last light of the candlestick of God's testimony.

8 verse 40-56: *"And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceived that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed*

him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done."

Two stories are intertwined here, and they together form a mystery, the key of which lies in the symbolic value of the biblical number 12. In His bible God often has His own code, which the Spirit of God must reveal to us in order for us to understand the mystery. The number 12 speaks of God's NEW CREATION in this world; of His Church, which He – by the power of His Spirit and Word – created in this world. In the Old Covenant this Church consisted of the 12 tribes of Israel. In the New Covenant the Church was under the leadership of 12 apostles. In the end-time 12 x 12 x 1000 (= 144,000) perfect anointed ones will precede the Church (Zion) in Jesus' Name (Revelation 14:1-5).

In this double story we first meet a little twelve-year-old girl. Until that time she was cheerful and lively, and in her twelfth year she broke down, and died after a severe illness. Then we see a different life! They were twelve sad years, twelve years wherein the woman with the blood issue, in everybody's sight became increasingly weaker because of this sickness. Two lives, yet one story... so wonderfully woven together by the Holy Spirit as if they formed just one story. In fact it **is** only one story, of one life! For both lives symbolize the life of the Church (Congregation) of Christ, the Church of the living God, which must (and can be) be led to healing, i.e. to fulfillment, solely through the work and guidance of the Spirit of Christ, namely the Holy Spirit.

46

The woman with the issue of blood typifies **the conscious life** of the Church **in the flesh**, namely our deliberate sins, our sickly, spiritual state, whereby we are continuously accused by our conscience before God; the twelve-year-old girl, on the other hand, that at first knew that happy childhood to only die suddenly, typifies **the hidden, unintentional sins** of the Church, which are brought into the open by the revelation of the Word and the works of the Holy Spirit. The Word of Truth, in the power of the Holy Spirit, reveals our sins which at first were hidden from us (John 16:8). When they were still hidden from us we were happy, and praised and glorified the Lord. But when the Word of Truth turned us inside-out, and we discovered through God's grace that that which we thought was the Spirit, turned out to be "flesh" after-all, the awareness of sin, and sadness came into our heart. We got to know ourselves to be great sinners.

Because of this revelation of the Holy Ghost Paul had to confess that he was the greatest sinner of all! When all was revealed by the Word and the Holy Spirit, all self-righteousness in his heart disappeared like snow before the sun. So it is with our life: when the light of the Holy Spirit comes into your and my life, and we are turned inside-out by it; when our own deep inner being (whereof we at first were not aware) is unveiled for ourselves, then we discover how we, ourselves, in the depth of our heart, are still entangled in the spiritual death, and this will fill our heart with sadness towards God. We then know that we are lost, unless the grace of Jesus purifies us anew each day.

Often a soul can behave so proudly. But, through the Word and the Spirit of God we must come to sincere meekness, and complete subjection to God. And when, from the depth of our heart, these hidden sins are revealed by the Spirit, we can no longer behave so proudly, and we must confess before Him: "O Lord, have mercy on me a sinner." "For from within, **out of the heart of men**, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness (vice), an evil eye (looking at someone with a murderous look), blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). You see, you and me, yes the whole Church, must be cleansed from **all** flesh, from all intentional, but also from all unintentional, sins in order to be healed; that spiritual health, this is: NEW LIFE, **perfectness**, be her share. The entire Church of God must come to that measure of purification and sanctification, that she, in the end-time, may (and can) function as the Bride(church) of the Lamb of God which knows no more sin; being "without spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27)! And this (divine) work must and can solely be done under the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit! All initiative and leadership in this purification and sanctification of the Church must come from Him. "And he (Christ) gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;... For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:11-16).

So the laborer of Christ should also have no faith at all in his own strength and planning, nor in the strength and help of other people, but should put his trust completely in the powerful leadership, anointing(s), and provisions of Christ alone, in his ministry of Christ in the Church, as well as in his mission in the world outside. To God be **all** glory!

Conclusion.

Summarizing, let us look once again at the candlestick of God's testimony in the world.

We see the similarity between the first branch of the candlestick, and the last one; both refer to the "**flesh**". The first branch reveals Christ by the working of the cross in the body of believers, so that they give up personal comfort in order to support the work of Christ financially, to the honor and glorification of Jesus' Name alone; the last branch reveals Christ by the full working of the cross in all "flesh" of the entire Church, whereby deliverance is achieved from all intentional and unintentional sins. And so we receive the fullness of our NEW LIFE, by the infilling with – and by the inner working of – all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). When we look at the next pair of branches of the candlestick of God's testimony, which here also, as it were, sprout out of one knot of the shaft, then we see that both refer to the **soul**.

On the one hand we see Christ take shape in the believer by a working of the cross in the soul, whereby a willingness is found to dedicate one's life to the honor and glorification of Christ; on the other hand we see by the same working of the cross the old life make way for the NEW LIFE, which knows divine compassion for the sinner, for all lost souls, and a divine desire to save all those lost souls, and, wholeheartedly, bring them to obedience unto God and His Word. This compassion is not human, but divine, and is only brought forth because He poured out His loving nature within us. We can bring the Gospel without a semblance of compassion for the lost; without our heart crying out because of their lost state. This compassion is a fruit of God's Spirit, which can only come into us by His influence. This compassion alone should form the great urge whereby God's servants would give up their social jobs in order to be led to His vineyard by His Spirit. Then the "sheep" will feel the love of the Good Shepherd in the behavior and speech of their minister (pastor), because this divine love will be seen and felt through everything. This "love is long-suffering (patient; being able to endure a lot before getting angry); it is charitable (merciful, gracious, gentle); this love is not envious; love does not act rashly (impulsively); it is not puffed up (having a too high opinion of self); it does not act unseemly; does not seek self; is not bitter; thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; it covers all things, believes all things; endures all things; it never fails!" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Let us now pay attention to the last (and innermost) pair of branches of the candlestick. Both refer to the human **spirit**. If, by the crucifixion our spirit, on the one hand Christ is revealed in our willingness to diminish, and finally be dumb at the undergoing of all His decrees; on the other hand He is revealed by the powerful anointing of His presence unto the salvation of our neighbor. This way it is only the LIVING Word of God we make our most precious property, having as the only goal the salvation of humanity which is lost in sin! Humiliation and persecution are willingly suffered as long as the purpose in Christ is served in this world. And this whole process of the cross of body, soul and spirit can only be worked by the shaft of this candlestick of God's testimony: namely by Jesus Christ, the Lord, Who must fulfill this in our life by the purifying fire of His being, and by the powerful anointings of His Spirit. Only then His Church can be a true candlestick, and shine as His witness (by spreading its light), and labor in this dark world... It is Jesus Christ and none other than He, Who must fill us; it is Jesus Christ and none other than He, Who must shape us; it is Jesus Christ and none other than He, Who is the Builder of the New Jerusalem, and Who can draw His Church out of this sinful world; it is again and again the LIVING Word of God **alone**, Which must work through us and enable us to stand in this world as bearers of light.

Beloved, all this we must yearningly expect in this world, that we be taken by Him from glory to glory; in order that He work through us and He stretch out His pierced hands through us for the salvation of this world. In my opinion I do not need to stress the fact that such a life demands a continual state of prayer in order to watch with Him; in order to serve Him in this world the way He wishes, and to understand His gentle signs.

How seldom most of us actually seek Jesus, that He, Who is the Shaft, the Center of the Candlestick of God's testimony, truly cross through our body, our soul and our spirit that the Word of God come to a true disclosure in our life. Supplications to Him and for Him are the only way to reveal this mighty candlestick of God's testimony in this world, and this is necessary in order that this light develop into the promised mighty Holy-Spirit revival of these last days. Amen.

Chapter 9

Like a divine shewbread in this world.

(Part I)

This part teaches us to keep God's Word of protective grace on the table of our purified and sanctified heart!

In the previous chapter we had a close look at the servant, namely the priest of the Lord, being a glowing candlestick in this dark world to bring to others the light of God's truth unto their salvation; now we will see that the life of the priests, God's children, themselves are as many wondrous signs in this world by their relationship with Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. Their life, in the light of the Israeli Tabernacle, should be like a "shewbread". In the Holy Place of the Israeli Tabernacle stood "the table with twelve shewbread". Know, that 12 is the symbolic number of the Church, which should be the revealed fruit (or: the result) of the Holy Spirit. A "life like a shewbread" therefore means: a life, wherein the glory of God is revealed. Chapters 9 and 10 must now be seen in the light of the twelve shewbread.

The prayer life, the true gauge of our spiritual hunger.

Beloved, we cannot be a shewbread in the world by our own strength. We must give Him access into our heart. And He will only come into our heart and being when we truly long for Him, and seek Him with all our heart... (Jeremiah 29:13). There also must be found a willingness in our heart to obey Him; a subjection of our whole being, whereby He can make us obedient. These are the conditions for being able to be baptized with His Holy Spirit. Only the wish to be baptized, without the act of seeking Him in prayer, which is characterized by a total surrender, in this case will not help you much further. Not for nothing it is written: "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain..." (Zechariah 10:1a). The true gauge of your longing for the Lord is your prayer life. How much time do you spend daily on the seeking and admitting of Jesus? How much time do you spend on seeking contact (communion) with Him? You should add up the times of struggling, seeking prayer until you found contact (communion) with that great Shepherd (i.e. Jesus); until you actually reached the spiritual Rock (i.e. Jesus), on which you, together with Jesus, could build your spiritual house (Matthew 7:24); you will then discover how much you truly long for Jesus; in what measure you truly want to be used by Him.

I know, you all long for (more of) Him, but you are prevented by all kinds of things, and these things are as many fruits of the increasing iniquities, such as: watching TV too much, and looking at the wrong TV programs; reading novels or gossip magazines; maybe even lust-arousing (pornographic) literature; the desire for more (or more beautiful) material possessions, whereby and wherefore you have to work overtime. You see, the things which keep us away from Jesus, and from prayer, can be of different sorts! The devil will do his utmost to keep you from praying; because nowadays he is weakening the prayer-life by tempting you with all kinds of worldly things, just as he made that fruit in paradise desirable to Eve. He will take away that "continual sacrifice" – namely the continual dedicated prayer based on His finished work on Calvary (Daniel 12:11; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11)! Because of the sin of this prayerless or prayer-poor life (1 Samuel 12:23) we could never have communion with Him, and because of this we could never come to the status of "shewbread" in this life.

We must become wondrous signs in this world by communion with Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.

9 verse 1-6: *"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip (travel bag), neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where."*

He called the twelve disciples unto Himself – namely the apostles sent (out) by Him; but here these apostles represent **all** the laborers of Jesus, high and low. Before sending them away He first gave them a portion of spiritual power over all demons and sicknesses (Luke 10:19). Here, they had not yet received the baptism with the Spirit, but they acted in the power of God which, as it were, was transferred unto them. The laborers of the Lord, from the time after the first Pentecost outpouring (see Acts 2:1-4), must act in His Name, under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Essentially it remains the same: a child of God, by his communion with the Bread of Life, is put in this world as a wondrous sign! And it is only by this communion, and solely under His express guidance that he can fulfill the great mission, which is written in Mark 16:15-18, because the Spirit of God alone is the Binder and Looser of sins and powers of darkness! "And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19). Compare this with Matthew 18:18. So all satanic powers and forces had to fall back before the apostles, and so all powers and forces of the (spiritual) darkness will still make way before each child of God, that is willed with the almighty Spirit, as long as he only does what the Spirit commands him to do. Do you then understand that the words of such a child of God are binding and loosing; that the preaching of such a person is binding and loosing; that such a ministry is binding and loosing? For the Spirit of God Himself is then active in and through His servant! How wondrous such labor in the Spirit is, when the life of God's servant has been completely crucified, and the Lord does not find any resistance anymore. In the end-time God will bring part of His Church to such a position. This then will be God's Bride(church), namely that part of the Church which was willing to follow Him... in such a Bride-church; and, spiritually seen, they will be indeed "without spot or wrinkle"!

Verse 3 says: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip (travel bag), neither bread, neither money..." Nothing was to be taken that could support them (could help them). They were to completely depend on the omnipotence of God; there had to be faith which leaned completely on the almighty Sender. Verse 4 says: "And whatsoever house ye enter into there abide..." When someone of a town, wherein is preached, has accepted the Word, and offered the preacher lodging, and thus hospitality, then that preacher should not move to someone else's house, because e.g. that house might be more comfortable; for so the love of the first one is rejected. And such behavior would not go with the Spirit of the Sender, and is unworthy of a laborer of the Lord! Verse 5 urges even to "...shake off the very dust from their feet..." of the towns that are not willing to receive God's laborers. There is not to be any relationship between God's laborers and those who reject His Word.

9 verse 10-11: *"And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing."*

The corresponding verses in the other Gospels tell us, that the apostles had returned to the Lord with great joy, on account of the miracles they were able to perform during their mission, because the Spirit of God was being revealed.

The Lord then took them to an area near Bethsaida, and He departed alone to a desert place. This way He wanted to teach His disciples, that after that release of divine power, dedicated, humble prayer was needed... for the restoration of a person's spiritual inner being. When a servant of God was allowed to act so wonderfully in His Name, it is a good thing when that servant, after such a powerful service, retires in the shadow of the cross; the place he belongs to, together with all other believers whom Jesus has won out of the world (Luke 17:10).

There once was a preacher who was wonderfully used by the Lord. He was used so wonderfully, that he... sometimes had problems with his ego. He testified, that, after having been used so wonderfully, he needed many hours in prayer in order to arrive again at that humble subjection to God, wherein the Lord could use him.

Of ourselves we all are unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10), because **all** activity should be guided by **Him** alone. He is the only Builder of the New Jerusalem (Matthew 16:18; Psalm 127:1-2)! He is the only One, Who could form Christians into real and (spiritually) mature children of God. He is the only One, Who could make His children into perfect saints of God! After such a servant of God has retreated with Him, there will be new labor in Him again for him Therefore

we read, that the people returned to Him afterwards. The Gospel was brought to them, and He again healed the sick. Labor and prayer should always alternate. If there is **much** work, then **many** prayers should go before, and many prayers should follow! The spiritual "battery" must be recharged again and again.

The Bread of Life and Herod.

9 verse 7-9: *"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him."*

Jesus knew that Herod solely wanted to see Him out of curiosity. Therefore He wanted nothing to do with him. Let us not be involved with "Herodian christians".

John the Baptist is not in the picture further on, but in the corresponding texts of the Gospel, after the report of Matthew and Mark, he again is revealed to us as a wonderful shewbread of God.

God's Church must be a shewbread, and this is only possible by the communion with the Bread of Life.

49

9 verse 12-17: *"And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have not more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets."*

Here we have the story of the first miraculous feeding, which forms a prophetic picture of the Church of God in the **early period** of Christianity. The second multiplication of the loaves is a prophetic picture of the Church of God in the **end-time** (Matthew 15:29-39).

A little boy brought five loaves and two fishes for his own meal, and willingly he gave them to the Lord Jesus. By the blessing hands of the Lord Jesus Christ they were multiplied in such a manner, that a crowd of approximately 5,000 men (not even counting women and children) were satisfied with them, while twelve baskets full of chunks were left. The symbolic value of the number 5 is that of "reconciliation"; five loaves, spiritually, thus mean: Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life, Who gave Himself to reconcile us to God. Eating of this Bread thus means: sharing the reconciliation... and salvation by Jesus Christ. And then there were two fishes. Fish was commonly eaten with bread, and it gave the bread a good taste. A "fish", in the bible, is the divine code for the Holy Spirit. Bread and fish thus means: the Word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Word is alive and powerful by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Eating this bread with fish thus means: having communion with the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God must not only be heard, but we must "eat", experience, and taste it. It must work in our heart and being. Then the Savior will renew and strengthen our life. As food is worked in our body to (form) flesh and bone and hair and nails, so this spiritual food must deliver, fill, and renew us.

This food satisfied about 5,000 men. Here again the number 5, which speaks of reconciliation and redemption;... of cleansing and sanctification. These 5,000 men are symbolic for God's holy place in the Spirit, which is formed by the reconciling and redeeming work of Jesus Christ, our Bread of Life. It was God's first harvest from the starting period of Christianity. This large crowd was to sit in groups of 50 and 100 men, as corresponding texts in the other Gospels also tell us (Mark 6:40). This is a wonderful picture of the Church of Jesus Christ, as it reveals itself nowadays in this world in the separate, local churches.

There were also twelve full baskets of chunks left over... Twelve is the symbolic number for the Church. With the leftover of the Bread, the Word of Life, the entire Church was built in the course of history. The twelve baskets full of chunks form the picture of the scriptures we received through the first Church, which today still serve as spiritual food for the entire Church.

Communion with the Bread of Life gives a clear and true view of it with Jesus and God's Word.

9 verse 18-20: *"And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. He said unto them, But Whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God."*

All who truly ate of the Bread of Life, got to know Him intimately in their everyday life, and these, by the revelation of the Spirit, could say nothing else but: "Thou art the Christ of God"! He is the Son of the living God, Who came to us as the Christ, the Messiah.

Communion with the Bread of Life brings about the process of the cross, and sanctification of the life.

9 verse 21-22: *"And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; Saying, The Son of man **must** suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."*

It is written that the Son lives by the Father, like we, too, are to live by Him (John 6:57). He opened His whole Being for the will of His Father; and this will and this life of the Father drove Him straightway to the cross! He became Man simply and solely to die a ransom for humanity, which was lost in sin...! He had to work the reconciliation between mankind and God the Father! We, in turn, must deny our life (by willingly giving up our own desires, etc.) and opening our selves to the will and the life of God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The result thereof we will read in the following verses.

9 verse 23-27: *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."*

If we want to deny ourselves (and thus be prepared to willingly give up our own desires, etc.), and are willing to open ourselves for Him and His life, then He will burn away the old and sinful life within us, for God is a holy Fire! In His grace His Being of Fire will burn to ashes the old life within us as a result of which this old life will completely disappear. However, if we do not subject ourselves and our old life to Him, this same Fire will consume us **in judgment!** However, if we do submit to Him, we will not only be consumed by this Fire, but we will also be renewed and thus changed!... for our inner being shall then be equal to His, because the divine Fire of God's Essence will inspire us (it works within us as a driving force), whereby we become equal to His fiery Being! For He prepares us in order to live in His Fire later on; for the Kingdom of God is a world of pure, divine Fire! And no one could live in that Fire, except those God has prepared thereunto (1Timothy 6:16; Hebrews 12:14).

Even the millennial Kingdom of Peace will be a realm of great heat, according to our standards, for the son will burn seven times hotter than it is now, and the moon will be as hot as the son is now (see Isaiah 30:26)! Who could stand that if God would not change our physical conditions? He **will** change them... for the resurrection of the righteous will precede the millennial Kingdom. God's children will then have a resurrection body, and therefore they alone will inhabit the millennial Kingdom of Peace. Therefore, Beloved, open now your heart and being for Jesus! When we want to keep our old life – a life, which is sinful through and through – we will lose it later on; for it will be consumed by the fire of His judgment; and we will undergo His eternal damnation, namely the sentence to hell.

Let us be wise, and willing to have ourselves prepared by the Lord Jesus Christ for His Kingdom; a Kingdom in the fullness of His glory and power! Then He will change us "from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). And, when we have opened ourselves for the inner workings of Jesus, in our heart and life, then it goes without saying that we will lead a life which is truly a testimony of the resurrection life of Jesus, namely of the **NEW LIFE** which reveals itself in and through us. Not or scarcely proclaiming this **NEW LIFE** amongst unrepentant people in a world hostile towards God, is not worthy of a child of God! "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Verse 27 says: "...there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God". These believers will have seen the Kingdom of God before their death; in other words: these will have been clothed with power from above and will taste the life in the Kingdom of God with their spirit.

Beloved, let us learn to open ourselves completely for Him, in complete effacing of self. Especially by the communion with Him, let us learn to live **His** life that **His glory** be seen in us; even if this means that **our** life must be burned to ashes by Him. His glory in us is, more than anything, to be preferred to that ego... for before His face there is **fullness of joy**. It is a life full of wonderful joy and peace, and full of the justice of the Holy Spirit!

Communion with the Bread of Life brings true worship of the Lamb of God.

9 verse 28: *"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray."*

In a spiritual sense the climbing of a mountain – namely the mountain of God's glory, Mount Zion (Hebrews 12:22) – is always having communion in prayer with our Lord Jesus Christ. For this ascent the Lord intentionally chose from the twelve apostles only Peter, James and John. These three apostles here form respectively the symbols of faith, hope and love.

Longing for communion in prayer with Jesus is a sign that we have heard the call of Jesus (the right way). For prayer is not an imposed task! It is the Spirit of God, drawing His child to prayer, giving him an anointing for prayer. Then comes a sincere desire in the heart for Jesus, which draws us, again and again, to the prayer room (the inner room), because that sweet communion with Him calls us. If we have received one or more ministries from Him, then we must experience that inner burning of the Lord Jesus Christ; namely the fire of His love which draws us (again and again), because He wants to lead us. If we obey Him, then our words will be anointed with power from the Holy Ghost. Without having this relationship in prayer first, every spiritual labor will be worthless! It is only when we have understood His will for that hour, and for that moment, that we can be channels of His glory! Pray to Him for such a sincere desire for prayer, and He will lead you, upwards on the mountain of His glory and holiness.

We cannot climb this mountain of God's glory, heaven, in our own strength. It is too high, too wonderful, and too holy! God must see the sincere longing, the desire in our heart to be with Him on His holy mountain. Then He will give us that hunger for prayer, and will lead us out of our everyday cares in order to take us, in the spirit, to the wonderful heights of His holy mountain. Then we will be carried on the wings of the Spirit, and taken before the throne of the Father and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "For through him (i.e. Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit (then we will come united with His Spirit) unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). Then we will also experience His wonderful fire in our heart and life, whereby we will be on fire for Him (and go)! O the joy we will then feel! Is it not written:

"Fullness of joy is (to be) before Your countenance"? Let us put away from our life all insincerity and tepidity (half-heartedness), in order to come to this **fullness** of heavenly joy!

The divine Author of the bible found it necessary to record "eight days after these words". For "eight" is the biblical number of the "resurrection". In this image it refers to our rebirth. It is only **after** our rebirth that we can experience the (holy) mountain of communion and worship.

9 verse 29: *"And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening."*

On this mountain we experience the glory of Jesus; He reveals to us His glory and presence there.

9 verse 30-33: *"And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease (His death on the cross) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles (three tents to stay the night); one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; not knowing what he said."*

At the glorification of Jesus on this mountain Moses and Elias (Elijah) were also present. Moses as the symbol of the Law of God; as the symbol (if I may say so) of the Word of God "after the letter"; and Elias (Elijah) as the "king of the prophets"; as the one who represents the servant of God... who must bring this word – in and by God's Spirit.

It is clear therefore that two things accompany the glory of Jesus, namely: the Word of God (which, of course, we should not only learn by heart), and the preacher of this Word, namely God's servant. And now we see that Peter made a mistake here; for he wanted to put up three tents. He therefore put all three at the same (spiritual) level. Namely: Moses, who represents the written Word (the bible); Elias (Elijah), who represents the preacher (the servant) of that Word, and Jesus, Who is the LIVING Word of God Himself. We will see that Peter is reproved by the voice of the Father.

The sleep that came over the disciples is of the same kind as the fear that came over Isaiah, and which made him call out: "Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips!" This situation is also to be compared with the "falling down as dead" of Ezekiel as well as John (on Patmos). For all this was the (direct) result of the revelation of the Lord's glory. The more the Lord reveals His glory to us, the more we will see how sinful our nature is. Only by His grace would we be able to stand and stay in His glorious light; yes, we will be able to rejoice therein and cheer! Because of our continual contact with Jesus, in and by our prayer life, we, as a "son of the Light"..., as one born of Light, will soon feel at home in this (heavenly) glory.

In God's eternity we will have the same experience of His glory, but then in perfection. O that indescribable joy a child of God will one day experience before His throne and countenance! Then we will recognize the things (fully) that we experienced here in a limited fashion... For ourselves it would be **much** better to be at Home there, in that sweetness of His worship, and in His service up above. But for the sinners it is more useful that we are here on earth, that we, in His service, win many souls still for eternity.

Thus Peter wanted to build a tent for Moses and Elias (Elijah) too, by this is meant that he wanted to give them the same glory as to the Son of God. Unfortunately, this same mistake is made by us too, namely: by putting the servant of God on a pedestal. But it is not about that servant of God's, it is not about that person! If He deems it necessary God could replace him by another, for no one is irreplaceable! The point is the anointing working through us; it is about His Presence Itself! On the other hand we should not reject an other servant, appointed by God. If God appointed him, who are we that we should reject and judge such a person if his behavior is pure? After all, he will continue his work or falls off according to the will of his own Master. Let us rather fear and honor Him, that wonderful Spirit of God, Who sometimes calls one and then another to manage the work in His Church, in His name. This way God's Church could be built, stone by stone (that is to say: LIVING stones); in order to – in the Spirit – form one wonderful Body together to worship Him; to honor and praise, and to serve in this world, as the light of God, unto the salvation of many.

In all this all glory, of course, must be for the Son of God, the Bridegroom, and **not** for His servant! No glory whatsoever is for the servant, rather ridicule and scorn. Were not the apostles, and Paul in particular, vilified in this world! The world did not want them! And Paul – in whom the Spirit of God could work mightily – was even despised by many (spiritually blinded) laborers of the church at Corinth! Why? Because he was full of the Spirit... and they were in the flesh! They did not have the Spirit (and thus the works) of God, and were therefore driven by jealousy.

Hence it is on the one hand **not the bringer** of the Word (Elijah), nor on the other hand is it about the Word **after the letter** (Moses). Is it not written: "The Spirit gives life, the letter kills?" (2 Corinthians 3:6) It is not the bible book, which some idolize, either which is involved; but it is the LIVING Word of God Himself... the Lord Jesus Christ, Who meets us in this written Word.

9 verse 34-36: *"While he thus spake there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."*

We see here God revealed in His threefold revelation: Jesus, the Son, in His glory which He reveals here before His full glory which He will reveal in the millennial Kingdom; the cloud as the revelation of the Holy Spirit; the Voice as the revelation of the Father.

Peter stood corrected when God's voice said: "This is my beloved Son; hear Him!" To stress it, it is further written: "And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone." In other words: that which the voice said only referred to Jesus, and not to Moses or Elijah.

When **we** too are seized by His power, then we too will long to simply and solely fulfill His will and no longer ours. Our will longs to be "served", while it is His will to bring other souls in that eternal salvation. Then we will no longer desire that which, in our eyes, seems so desirable, after the lust of our flesh or the pride of life; but we will only long for Jesus and His daily service. We will then want to reveal **the glory of Jesus in our life**, the price of which is: denial of our own life; yes, the (spiritual) death of this old and sinful life; more and more each day. If this is your and my desire, and we therefore can pray in all sincerity: "Lord, remove everything in me which is not according to Your will and pleasing, and do with me whatever You want, if only You come in Your **full glory** and as long as **the fullness of Your anointing** flows through me!"... Then, and only then, will we be part of God's Bride(church) which He will soon reveal; a Church without any spot or wrinkle, or such.

It is my sincere prayer that God give me this full process of the cross, whatever it may cost me; and that He give this too to the many supporters in the faith, who in their spirit desire the same thing in all sincerity. When we, in all sincerity, pray "the Lord's prayer", than we pray in this fashion: "Our Father, Which art in heaven, **Your** Name be hallowed, **Your** Kingdom come (in our heart), **Your** will be done (not mine)". You see, when we seek His will and glory... then all this will be fulfilled in our life, step by step. It is my sincere prayer that God gives you and me this same longing, as His Word requests, in order to ascend (together) the mountain of His glory, to give up **everything**, all glory and lust of the flesh. Only in this way could we – in His strength and in His abundance – truly labor for Him. Only those, who are willing to stand in this way in the fire of His (full) glory, and in the abundance of His strength, will be part of His Bride(church) in due time. O what majesty and might the Word, spoken through the Bride(church), will reveal! It will be creative; recreate **or** fiercely judgmental." Yes, come soon, Lord Jesus!"

We receive anointing and spiritual power through communion with the Bread of Life.

In the verses 28 through to and including 36 we have seen that we must have a prayer and worship life in order to stand in His glory; to, in His Name, labor in this divine abundance. We will further discover that we are powerless against the forces of darkness, when the relationship with Jesus (something which is only obtained by prayer and worship) is neglected. From the next Scripture part we will learn that anointing and Spirit power are only obtained by that communion with the Bread of Life and by following obediently His indispensable guidance in His service.

9 verse 37-42: "And it came to pass that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father."

We see here a great (spiritual) failure which the disciples had to experience when Jesus was not with them. For the father of the boy who suffered seizures as the result of demonic attacks begged them to cast out the satanic spirit through prayer. And, remembering the wonderful mission and labor they just recently had experienced (see verses 1-11), they started this spiritual work full of expectation, but... nothing happened!

When a servant of the Lord relies on his routine and experience and not on the **divine mission and help**, and this for each soul or situation anew, than things will go wrong! **The divine anointing is then absent**, and that is the end of it! It is – simply and solely – this anointing of the Holy Spirit (through the servant), which gives wonderful faith; the Holy Spirit must work in all spiritual work, and must teach, reprove, and build up; it is this anointing which works wonders and signs of healings and powers, whereby the laborer of the Lord must only be His instrument. God's laborer is to pray patiently and with faith, and must be open for this anointing and guidance of God's Spirit. The necessity of the anointing and power of God's Spirit is being expressed in the words of Jesus: "Bring thy son hither (to Me)!" It is always Jesus (God's Spirit) Who must do it, and not man, who must only be the instrument of the Spirit.

Jesus had a complaint precede these words: "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you?" And in the corresponding texts of the Gospel of Matthew we read: "...this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (verse 17:21). This complaint referred to His disciples, who acted in unbelief, because of lack of anointing. The anointing of God can only be received by **praying and fasting**, whereby we learn to understand and follow His divine will (better). In this prayer and fasting a child of God must be guided by Him. This seeking for Him will then not be broken by anything, not even by eating. Then **everything** loses its value compared to this divine anointing, this communion with the Bread of Life!

Once we have received God's anointing for a certain service or ministry, and when we are true to that anointing and obedient to His guidance, then, through the working of that anointing, **all** forces of darkness, thus also demonic spirits such as the one mentioned in this Scripture part, must go!

One day the Church, namely that part that belongs to His Bride(church), will be able to labor in the **fullness** of that anointing, that "end-time anointing". It is written in Obadiah: "And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (verse 21). These "Saviors" are laborers of the Lord, wherein and whereby He can work so perfectly and powerfully that the Word of God can reveal Itself in all Its creative power and strength for the salvation, deliverance, healing and renewal of many!

Communion with the Bread of Life brings, after the process of the cross, brotherhood and unity in Christ.

9 verse 43-45: "And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying."

This Scripture word was (yet) hidden for them, but not anymore for a Christian after Pentecost (after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit – see Acts 2:1-4). It has been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit that this miracle of Jesus' love, namely His death and resurrection, is the Bread of Life for us. It is not without reason that it says: "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55). Spiritually seen, it is all about this death (and resurrection) of Jesus **for us**. In other words: we must share in His death, namely we must die to our old and sinful life, and only then can we share His resurrection(power) (Romans 6:5). We must take this spiritual food to eat; we must longingly take in this Truth that we be "**one** plant" with this death (and resurrection) of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:10-11). Then, with Jesus, we will die to all unrighteousness, and with Him, we will enter the NEW LIFE (1 Peter 2:24). This divine process of the cross, this sign of the blood of the Lamb of God, accompanies us during our entire Christian life. This red thread of Jesus' atoning blood must be found from our conversion unto the divine marriage. After all, in order to experience this marriage one must first have **accepted** the divine invitation to come to, and to eat of, the **supper** of the marriage of **the Lamb** of God (Revelation 19:9). Over and over again the atoning blood of God's Lamb must cleanse us of all dead works, and make our garment (meaning: our inner life) white (clean, pure), until it is full of God's justice. For all eternity the highest praise will be sung of this atoning death of Jesus (namely His death as sacrificial Lamb unto the reconciliation for our sins).

Let us faithfully and sincerely have ourselves cleansed by His blood; then this blood will destroy the works of our flesh. Flesh, amongst others, will always have dominion over our spirit and over others; it will always be the first, whereby true brotherhood (being together [especially in the spirit] of believers in the fear of, and in love for, God), and fellowship (contact, unity) in Christ is disturbed!

9 verse 46-48: *"Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."*

One sees the "flesh" raise its monstrous head: Who is the boss, who among us is the first? When Jesus, the Bread of Life, truly dwells and reigns within us this thought in us will be killed, and the honor will always go to **Jesus** alone.

I once heard of the following vision: There was a mountain, and on the top of that mountain was a tall tree. It was well covered in leaves and it seemed that that tree felt proud, more than all other (trees). The onlooker watched, and lo, the tree lost all its leaves and withered. Suddenly candles were seen, large and small, which burned cheerfully before the throne of God. And Jesus, Who sat on the throne, said: "This is how it should be". This tall, beautiful tree represents a laborer for God, who was allowed to stand on God's holy mountain. God used him mightily, until pride went into him. Because of this he felt more than his brothers and sisters, and looked down on them. Then God's anointing left him, and he withered... This is not how it is to be; the second picture **is**: Here God's children stand **side by side** as large and small candles, and they all spread their light, **purely for the honor and glory of Jesus**, Who sits on the throne of their heart. **Side by side**, without any jealousy, they glorify their Lord and their God, and they do this also without any self-magnification as He has called them to His service.

Beloved, let us not look at each other with envy, but let us only focus on the throne of God, on the Perfecter of our faith, on our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us all, as children of **one** Father, be prepared to glorify Him **side by side**, each after his own calling. For **He** must be the Head in the Church, and He will, after His will, send some of us out into this world to the salvation of many. When we work for Him in this way, giving Him all praise, honor and thanks, and testifying of Him, then the peace **and** joy **and** righteousness of the Holy Spirit will remain in us, and will keep us unto the ETERNAL LIFE! If we thus walk and act in the Lord, then we will not wither (spiritually), and will always remain fresh.

We must also always obey His anointing. Paul once wanted to preach in Asia Minor, but God's Spirit prevented him from doing so; the Spirit directed him to Greece. And he obeyed! That preaching in Asia Minor was also good work, but we must submit to His guidance. There are some laborers, who have a certain calling, but who, at any cost, want to do something else. And what do they get, in that other ministry? As far as that true spiritual stream of life is concerned, they will run dry, and (if they are not careful) they will die spiritually. Why? They did not listen to the will of God's anointing, but follow their own stubborn way. They try to use the Holy Spirit for **their** way! But the Holy Spirit does not want to be used, our holy God wants to use **us**! When we submit to His anointing, then He will see to it that no power struggle will develop among us, and that the thought: "I am more than the others!" is killed, that that anointing, without obstructions, can have its way in and through us.

Let us look further to this brotherliness, this co-operation in the labor for Jesus and appreciation for each other, especially because of that anointing.

9 verse 49-50: *"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."*

Let us have true fellowship! When God's anointing works in us, then we would not act like John did at the time. He feared **competition**; instead of rejoicing that the Name of Jesus was also glorified by others, which did not belong to their group. Beloved, let us not act that way! Then this anointing will also give us a gentle spirit and understanding for them who, for some reason, are hostile against us.

9 verse 51-53: *"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem."*

You probably know that Jews and Samaritans are at each others' throats. The Jews spat on the ground when they passed a Samaritan. For it is an eastern custom to express contempt by spitting on the ground in passing a con-

temptible person. Such an attitude, of course, adds fuel to the flame of the Samaritans who, also because of this, felt very discriminated against. The natural reaction was hatred! Hatred against the Jews, and against those that wanted to go to a Jewish town.

9 verse 54-56: *"And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village."*

God's anointing will remove every spirit of judgment and criticism (namely criticism that runs down others). For each judgment belongs only to the Word and the Spirit of God. Sometimes He uses the mouth of **one** of His servants to utter this judgment, as was the case with Ananias and Saphira (see Acts 5:1-11). One day we will be allowed to judge, also fallen angels, at God's great judgment throne, when we are full of this Spirit and the Word (Revelation 20:10-15). But now that anointing has been given to us to draw sinners to God's grace; and we must be loving, patient, and gentle towards those, who do not yet have any idea or insight of this grace of God; and, of course, we must keep strictly to God's true Word. In general we must be strict with ourselves, and tolerant towards others; especially towards those, who have only just come to believe. We can only do this, when the Bread of Life is truly active in us.

54

Communion with the Bread of Life qualifies us to follow Jesus, and to labor for Him.

When we have communion with the Bread of Life, He will develop a calling within us. This first reveals itself in a **desire** to work for the Lord Jesus, and **then** in a personal, actual, well-defined calling. That might be in dreams, as in the case of Joseph; or in clearly hearing the voice calling us (by name) as with Moses; or in a different way, but in any case it must be made known to you **personally**, and not through others. God's will then has become known to you. The Spirit of God will not leave us in doubt in such an important matter (and task). He anoints us unto the ministry with His calling. When we have received God's calling and anointing unto the ministry from Him, this does not mean, that we must immediately set off. We must wait prayerfully for God's guidance and prompting (which sets us in motion). The same way John the Baptist, in the wilderness, had to wait prayerfully for the moment God would indeed call him to action. Before he was born, he already was filled with the Holy Spirit, but he determinedly made his public appearance dependent on the inner prompting and guidance of the Spirit. And there in that desert "the Word came to John" (Luke 3:2); God called him there unto the actual labor, namely that of a preacher unto repentance and a baptizer in water.

With Moses, on the other hand, it went differently. He longed to act as leader of the oppressed nation of Israel. In his heart he was conscious of the fact that God had called him thereto. But he could not wait for the time God had stipulated! Because of this he came to murder the Egyptian, and had to flee to the desert of Midian. Spiritually seen, human activities are on the terrain of death; but when God works in and through us by His anointing, that anointing brings about NEW LIFE. Only after forty long years of waiting, whereby all human ability (and desire) to lead had disappeared, God actually called him into action to deliver His people Israel.

On the contrary, David knew how to wait on God. After Samuel had anointed him king over Israel, and he therefore knew God's final will for him and his life, he calmly went back to the sheep of his father Jesse. Even when Saul called him into the palace he did not use that opportunity to prove his anointing. Neither did he kill Saul, when he had the opportunity in the desert of Ziph, and David said to Abishai, one of his head servants, when he urged him to do so: "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed!" He waited for God's time, for he knew that God Himself would fulfill his anointing, and would place him on the throne of Israel. And, in God's time this did happen!

In the following Scripture parts three different situations are outlined. The first situation pictures someone who longs to work for Jesus, but who ran ahead of God's calling thereto.

9 verse 57-58: *"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whither soever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."*

Foxes are cunning animals and they here symbolize cunning (namely sly, and thus shrewd) people; people who through sly deception (want to) become rich. Birds of the air in God's Word stand for satanic forces, and, here in particular, people whose thoughts and feelings are guided by the powers of hell. With their dark practices they gather riches. They are all too eager to have it made, for themselves. Among Christians it is all too often those laborers who always ask for more money, much money, for "the Lord's work". While God's Word says: "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8b). But God's Son, and all who sincerely follow Him, do not want to use occult practices in order to get money. Jesus warned this enthusiastic follower that he could not live a sincere, serving life in his own strength. Only when God has called us unto such a life, will we receive power from Him to endure the many, difficult moments in such a life. And He will also give us the means and the gifts to do this work.

9 verse 59-60: *"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."*

The Lord Himself here called someone to labor in His Vineyard. But that calling was **not** received in an undivided heart (namely a heart that belongs to no one and nothing else). For he wanted to first bury his father. And a father figure is someone who demands his children to obey. This called one still had a "father" he had to obey. This means: he was still bound to his old (worldly) life; he was still enslaved (to one thing or another), because of which he had to obey that. In the heart of this called one a spiritual battle was waging. He wanted to obey the divine calling, but on the other hand he could not loose himself from (certain) worldly bonds and/or responsibilities. He finally said (put in different words): "Let me wait with working for You, Lord, until my worldly obligations and demands are no more." For instance: "Until I am retired; then I will work for You." This called one put his social calling before the heavenly calling

from God! Jesus answered him: "Let the dead bury their dead." In other words: Let the dead – these are: the worldly people – see to the burying of the dead, this is: looking after the social responsibilities, "...but go thou and preach the kingdom of God!" Let us learn to place relations in this society, and family matters after the heavenly calling of Jesus. He will take care of our social well-being if we give the matters of the Kingdom of God priority over those of this society!

9 verse 61-62: *"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

This called one did not want to start immediately. He wanted time to slowly detach himself from his social life, and from his living habits. He wanted time to say goodbye to things and those that were in his house; of the things he was used to daily. He wanted to let go of his old life little by little in order to, very slowly, come to work for Christ. But, think of Lot's wife, beloved! With pain in her heart she looked at the treasures she had to leave behind in Sodom. As born laborers of the Lord we indeed have a totally different life.

Before we had the say so over our time, our money, and over ourselves; in the labor for the Lord **He** is the One, Who has command of us and whatever is ours. Then nothing is ours and for ourselves anymore. Our Lord demands of us that we use the talents and gifts He gives us, in the best possible way. He asks us to be available at all times, even if He calls us to the labor "at any time of the day or night", namely at inconvenient moments. It was not for nothing that Paul considered himself "a prisoner of Jesus"! He was caught in the bond of love of Jesus, Who called him to the most difficult life for him, full of suffering and misery after the flesh, but full of heavenly glory after the spirit, full of an inner contact with a comforting and strengthening Taskmaster and Savior. And Paul purposely chose this life of labor in the Lord!

If the Lord has filled you with the Spirit of God, then a calling goes with this baptism with the Spirit. He does not just baptize you with His Spirit! When you pray: "Lord, baptize me with your Spirit!" then there should also be the willingness to devote your life and your being to Jesus and His Kingdom. When we pray: "Lord, I want to work for You", then there should be a loving heart that is willing to toil for Jesus. For this being baptized with the Spirit of God; this being submerged in His Spirit; is a becoming **united** with Jesus, Who is the (true) Bread of Life, in order to reveal His glory in this world more and more; whatever this may cost us! And, when our life is truly filled with God's Spirit, then this also means that we have a divine calling, which we must obey.

Let us heed the warning written in Matthew 25:24-30 and Luke 19:20-27 about the evil and lazy servant, who respectively saved his talent and pound, by the which given spiritual gifts and strength from the Holy Spirit are meant and the severe judgment of the Lord over such people, lest we fall under the same judgment of the Lord with the result that the Great Tribulation will then irrevocably be our share!

Everyone who is truly filled with God's Spirit, must, after the calling of the Lord, share in this (divine) labor. For then we have been submerged by **one** Spirit into **one** Body. And once we have become members of the Body of Christ, the members of that **one** Body, under the leadership of the Head, must, each after his own calling, fulfill the labor in Christ in this world, whereby **God** be given all glory!

Chapter 10

Like a divine shewbread in this world. **(Part II)**

Communion with the Bread of Life brings mission in divine holiness.

We see here that unity with Jesus results in **holy** labor. The number 70 (10 x 7) topologically stands for "perfect holiness". Thus **spiritual labor in perfect holiness** is involved here. If, in the first shewbread (Chapter 9:1-11), we saw that our labor must be in the strength of the Holy Spirit (and this, of course, goes for ALL labor in Him), expressed there in the number 12; here we see which spiritual level our labor, in the power of the Holy Ghost, must reach; namely that of **perfect holiness**.

The number 7 in God's Bible always points to the end-time, namely to the moment the period of God's grace (a 2000-year period), wherein we are (still) living now, will be closed. Prophetically this tells us that during the last worldwide revival of God's latter rain (this is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the end-time), of which we now already have received "the first drops", a service in **such holiness** will be revealed; a service in God's full justice and power, to which Obadiah 21 refers: "And Saviors (namely God's anointed) shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (herewith are meant: worldly Christians); and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

10 verse 1-2: *"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye **therefore** the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."*

Let us reflect for a moment on this "therefore" of the Lord. There are only few believers who are willing to work for Jesus with complete dedication of self. It is written, "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few!" As a result of His saints' prayers, Jesus could bring about a change in this. He could make devoted laborers of repentant sinners, should they really want to; and draw them out of their social jobs to come and work in His Vineyard. Please note: we should not emit ourselves! We should not imagine that we be called, for such an imaginary calling never brings us Jesus' necessary co-operation, namely the anointing of the Spirit, Who must do the work through us. We must

be called by Him! And even if we **are called and sent by Him**, then we **still** must scrupulously follow his guidance through prayer contact with Him.

There are also different kinds of calling. The **one** is called to be an evangelist, the other a teacher, yet another a local shepherd, and the next a prophet; and, in the near future, during the worldwide revival of the great latter rain, we will see again apostolic callings. Apostles are the pillars of God's Church here on earth; "all-round" laborers who will have the general leadership in the power, wisdom and love of the Holy Spirit.

Besides these five great callings we also find the smaller callings of "help" in the spiritual Body of Christ; these are helpers who, amongst others, must help the local shepherd to fulfill his pastoral service, such as: elders, deacons, youth group leaders, Sunday school teachers, choir members and leaders, musicians, typists and printing assistants, etc. We cannot push ourselves into such a calling. Should we do so, we would find out that it does not "work", because God denies us the necessary anointing and devotion! It is God's Spirit alone, Who can make us fruitful, in whichever spiritual labor; it is also God, Who determines for us the nature of the calling, because He, as no other, knows our heart. We may have a desire to serve the Lord in a certain calling; but a desire is not a calling (1 Timothy 3:1). However, each calling basically knows the human desire to be able to work for Jesus. But it always is the Lord alone, Who sends (forth) His laborers into His Vineyard (Mark 4:13).

10 verse 3: *"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves."*

56

In this short command "Go your ways", which the Holy Spirit gives, and will give, to His "emissaries", lies a mighty force to send out, which urges the called to work for Jesus, irresistible drawn by His divine love; even if this labor takes them into circumstances which are not pleasant or comfortable, yes, which even might be dangerous! "Lambs" need **the Shepherd**; they do not have strength in themselves; their strength is that Shepherd. For when the wolf comes, then it is up to the shepherd to resist and chase off the wolf... Do not imagine that you are strong or clever enough to defeat the wolf, the satanic power, which reveals itself in the worldly person. It is God's anointing in you which must do it through you! Never forget that you, as Jesus' laborer, are up against a well organized, spiritual power of darkness, of spiritual evil (demonic forces) in the air which have the present world in their power, and which (in greater or lesser measure) lead all worldly people (Ephesians 6:12). But on the other hand we should also never forget that the Lord Jesus said: "...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). In and by Jesus we will win the victory over the powers of the world and of hell! But this also shows us how important it is for this spiritual battle, to be equipped by Jesus with the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20). The stronger God's servants are clothed with God's Spirit, the stronger the resistance of hell will be revealed in the attitude of the worldly person. This is the reason that Jesus warns us for the danger of wolves.

10 verse 4: *"Carry neither purse (wallet), nor scrip (travel bag), nor shoes: and salute no man by the way."*

When God's anointing leads us then these words will be fulfilled in our lives. For by the urge to send out God's servant will only seek to win souls of people for Jesus, unto their eternal salvation; he never seeks to enrich himself (purse), or to satisfy himself materially (scrip, shoes). If you do seek these things, then it would be better for you to try and find yourself a good job in the world, or to do business. When God's anointing truly leads him, this servant will not seek honor among the people; which is expressed here in the words: "...salute no man by the way." A true servant of the Lord does not seek men's honor, but simply and solely the smile of the Sender! Neither does he seek dominion over them (1 Peter 5:3).

10 verse 5-9: *"And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them; The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."*

Here you see the old, but **not** antiquated, example of God's mission: two by two, and from house to house; from city to city; looking for sons and daughters of peace; for people who inwardly long for peace with God. And this case has two (equally important) sides; the evangelists are to bring the Good (Gospel) News, but besides that, must also, as a confirmation of God's grace and power, heal the sick in the Name of Jesus! Besides a physical one, here is also a spiritual task. One has to pray for healing of the sick, because sickness is a result of sin; and the Lord defeated sin on the cross of Calvary! However, we should not forget that the spiritual task, namely winning the souls of people for God's Kingdom, must remain the most important one; and in order for Him to heal them, the souls of people must have turned to Jesus.

10 verse 10-16: *"But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the (final) judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."*

The Word of God must also be preached to the unwilling. Should they remain unwilling to repent to the Lord Jesus, then not a single spiritual bond must exist between the servant of God and these, except that he continue to pray for grace for them.

Here Jesus accuses the Jewish cities Chorazin and Bethsaida, as well as Capernaum because of their unrepentance. Capernaum was "exalted unto heaven", because it had been Jesus' dwelling place in those days; but, because of their unrepentance that city "would be thrust down to hell" on the judgment day. You know how evil Sodom was, it even was so bad that it had to undergo God's judgment prematurely! Yet it would be more tolerable

for the people of Sodom and those of the pagan cities Tyre and Sidon on the Day of judgement, on account of the enormous fact that they had rejected the offer of God's grace from the hand of God's Son! **Rejecting the Gospel of God's grace is, in God's eyes, the worst sin!** Even if this offer of grace is made, in the Name of God, by the most humble servant; it is made in the Name of almighty God! Woe the person, who rejects or ignores God's extended, saving hand. For in all these things it is not that servant and his meekness, but it is God's anointing working through him, the LIVING Word of God Himself, we, with such an attitude, spiritually strike in the face! God's judgment is severe when the sinful person resists His Spirit, Who calls unto repentance!

10 verse 17-20: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Do you now understand with what authority God sends His servants? When we attack His servants, we attack Him; the same way we attack a country when we attack its ambassador.

A laborer of God is clothed and drenched with the Spirit of God; when we offend such a laborer, or attack him, we offend or attack God Himself! The opposite is, that no demonic power can stand against that which God wants to work through His laborer. Jesus already saw the divine revelation of the result of the labor of His servants: namely the casting out – like a bolt of lightning – of satan from heaven. Jesus means by this "heaven" "the Kingdom of heaven", the Church on earth, the souls that are saved and delivered (Revelation 12:9). The servants of the Lord should not rejoice in the divine delegation of spiritual power over the works of the evil one, but much more in the fact that their names are written up in heaven, in the Book of Life; that they have been grafted as branches into the Tree of Life. You and I may hereby experience His peace, His joy and love; yes, His righteousness and power, as a holy reality.

Communion with the Bread of Life brings revelation of God's power and mysteries.

10 verse 21: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

By the revelation of "these things" the Lord means the revelation of Himself, His redeeming power and will, and His Word through His servants, unto the salvation and preservation of many. God gives this divine power, and reveals this knowledge of His Being and His will to deliver only to His children, and not to the wise and cautious in the world, even if they call themselves spiritual.

As a result of the sin active in us, it is a natural desire of man to be grand and terrific. But God makes us His children. It is a process of the cross which the Spirit must work in us. God must (be able to) make us free of this wish to be "grand and terrific", because this is a sinful lust of the unclean human spirit. He must (be able to) make us free also of this sin, which tosses about within us (which carries on restlessly [and terribly] within us), and works in us. God will (have to) let us go through painful things, which will cause us to become smaller and quieter.

Moses, as "prince at Pharaoh's court", thought he would be able to save his people, and to deliver them from the Egyptian slavery; and with these thoughts he went to his people and... became a murderer. How this "prince" was driven by fear into the desert in order to become a shepherd of sheep; the most despised profession among the Egyptians... There he learned during those forty years to become so small that, when God finally called him to save His people, he found himself not worthy to fulfill this calling. It was exactly this attitude God needed to be able to work wondrously through Moses, because Moses was aware of his continual (and thus total) dependence on God then.

James wrote in his general letter that we should count it great joy when we – for the sake of our faith – must undergo many trials and temptations, because this process of the cross brings us to patience and perfection in God. This process of the cross causes us to die to our own (old and sinful) life, so that God can fill us more and more with the eternal, divine life and with Himself. God's process of the cross makes us small in our own eyes, so that we learn to expect everything from Him; and only this way will (and could) we receive grace upon grace from Him; and strength upon strength in order to be able to work for Him.

"Wise and sensible men" think and/or say that **they** will solve that problem "in a jiffy"; but when we have been made very small by Him and His process of the cross (and thus incapable in our own eyes), then we will realize our helplessness, and will come to Him for help and salvation; and He will then give us the light, and the strength, to do the things after His will. Glory to God!

10 verse 22: "All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

"All things", thus also God's plan of redemption and the judgment of humanity which has fallen into sin, have been delivered unto the Son. The way in which sinful man must be saved, and the glories that are awaiting the saved person – in and by the perfect communion with Jesus Christ – have been delivered unto the Son. Both, the process of the cross which is needed for this, as well as God's salvation awaiting the resurrected person.

The Father has delivered all things to the Son. He alone truly knows who the Son is. There is an unprecedented intimate relationship between the Father and the Son which no one knows, for... "no one knows who the Son is, but the Father". Neither does anyone know Who the Father is except for the Son; and only those to whom the Son wants to reveal it, know Who the Father and Who the Son is. For this purpose He purifies and sanctifies such people in and by His Word and Spirit; He submerges them in His Spirit, and gives them access to the Father by the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 2:18), Who, for others, dwells in an inaccessible light (1 Timothy 6:16). God's hidden things (mys-

teries) are revealed to us through our relationship with the Son of God: namely, getting to know better and more completely God's Being (Essence), His will to redeem IN Jesus Christ, as well as the glories of His Kingdom. All these things will be revealed unto us, if we allow more and more of God's Word into our lives. And we could then hand out all this to others as Bread (namely as spiritual food), because we taste all this spiritually; because we own all this. Because His Word has also, so to say, "become flesh" in us.

O that wonderful Jesus! He can knead and shape a person so that he becomes pliable; as yielding as clay in the hands of the potter. At first we are stiff and unmanageable; then He pours the water of trial and oppression on it. Then He kneads us until we finally have become pliable, so that He can shape us into whatever form He wants... We learn to thank Him, also for all the bitter and nasty things in our life... One day we will kiss His wonderful hands, because they have worked and allowed all these things in our life... For **us** it must always be Jesus, now and forever! For ETERNAL LIFE has been given to us, by God, in Him (1 John 5:11). God has made Him the wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption of God to us (1 Corinthians 1:30). Is it any wonder that Jesus uttered the reflections of His heart to His disciples by ending with the following words:

10 verse 23-24: *"And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."*

Because of their faith, **and** with their own eyes, the disciples saw the Son of God, the Messiah of this world; they heard His words... and ate of His spiritual Food (Bread), and were filled. They saw Jesus, **their** Bread of Life! The same way we will also know this (spiritual) fullness by eating of the Bread of Life (i.e. by partaking of Jesus and His Word [the Bible]), and by drinking of the Water of Life (i.e. being filled with the Holy Ghost); by eating His flesh, and drinking His blood (i.e. sharing His death; by willing to die to our old and sinful life). And this is possible because we discover and see Him – in faith – in His Word; because He – by His Word – reveals Himself to us; and because we believe and accept that He – by the Father – has been given to us as our ETERNAL LIFE! "And this is the record that God hath given to us ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11-12)

Communion with the Bread of Life gives us compassion for lost souls.

When we have a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, we know divine compassion for souls that are in danger of damnation. Carnal man does not know this compassion for those they do not know. At best they pity those that are close to them. He cannot pity those at all that, for one reason or another, are hostile to him. In this part of Scripture we are told of a Samaritan, who showed mercy to a Jew! We know, that the Jews despised the Samaritans (the nation that came into being by the mixing of Jews and Arabs); and that, in response, the Samaritans hated the Jews because of this contempt. But when Jesus has come into the lives of people, hate changes into mercy, also towards those that despise us; and we can be compassionate about the (eternal) fate of those that hate us, just like the merciful Samaritan in this part of Scripture.

10 verse 25-28: *"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit ETERNAL LIFE? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou has answered right: this do, and thou shalt live (eternally)."*

Here is a lawyer who wanted to test Jesus, and who therefore came to Him with the question: How does one inherit ETERNAL LIFE? Jesus' answer was (and is): "When one knows the love towards God, which comes from the heart, and from the soul, and from the understanding, and when one loves one's neighbor as one-self"! People who have received this love (Romans 5:5) will inherit ETERNAL LIFE. And the other way around: ETERNAL LIFE is characterized by this divine love. We shall live and labor for God and for each other for all eternity!

10 verse 29: *"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?"*

This lawyer thought he could produce this love by himself, and therefore he asked Jesus who his neighbor was, which he must love like himself. Jesus then gave him the (spiritual) lesson of "the merciful Samaritan" in order to make him realize that this love is humanly impossible, because it is a divine love and not human love! As we know this love must be poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as divine grace. We also know that we can only receive this love, this nature of God, when we – in truth and faithfulness – have communion with the Bread of Life, whereby we will resemble Him more and more inwardly (and thus in our daily actions and walk, in our speech and our silence, etc.).

10 verse 30: *"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."*

Jesus told of a Jew who traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho. As you probably know Jerusalem is in a high, and Jericho in a low place, namely in the valley of the Jordan river. Spiritually seen a person is indicated here who turned his back on God's Church, because of which his life went downhill. On the way he was attacked by robbers, who beat him half to death in order to rob him. These robbers are symbolical for the demonic powers who attack, and spiritually completely clean out, each believer, who "strays" from Jesus, so that he is near to spiritual death... It was God's grace that still a little life remained in him, a little spiritual life.

10 verse 31-32: *"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite (i.e. a temple servant), when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."*

First a priest, and then a Levite passed by, and they saw him lying there, half dead. But nothing in their heart moved them to compassion. Especially because of their spiritual function they ought to have had sincere pity on

this beat up man. However, they made a detour to avoid meeting him. Otherwise they would have had to help him because of their function. And, helping such a person was a nuisance... and, according to them, it did not go with the destination they had. What a terribly selfish person can one often be, naturally; with little or no compassion and pity for one's fellow-man.

We, too, often know someone who has strayed from Christ through his own fault, and who has been pulled far into the world by evil forces, with possibly just a little grain of spirituality in him. Do we also pity such people? Or do we shrug such a case off with "It is his own fault"? Do we react to it with: "He knows the Way; why should we have anything to do with him"? We then act just like that priest, and that Levite in Jesus' story. It is the attitude of Cain, who, when God asked him where his brother Abel was, purposely evaded the answer with "am I my brother's keeper"? (Genesis 4:9). It is the attitude of the carnal (sinful) man, who does not know God's love!

10 verse 33: *"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him."*

In this Samaritan we see Christ working in you and me. The natural hatred disappeared from this man... and the love of God, by God's grace, came to live in his heart: he was able to sincerely pity a person who despised him for his origin! His heart was deeply moved by his fate.

Only when Jesus Christ has made His dwelling in our heart – when He truly possesses our heart, and has poured out His love into it – could we see this lost state in our neighbor; the impotence of a fellow man to turn to God (and His Church). Then our heart, just like Jesus', can be moved with the same compassion because of the love of God! If only all preachers would have this divine love, how their sermons would be loaded with this love of God, so that anyone in the audience, who strayed (or is in danger of straying) from the (true) faith in Christ, could soon be brought back to the true freedom in Him. Only when we have that compassion of Christ's within us, if the love of Christ urges us, could we speak heart to heart with such a soul. The human will to save alone cannot save such a soul.

10 verse 34: *"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."*

This Samaritan poured oil and wine in his wounds in order to disinfect and soothe them. Oil and wine here stand for the Word of God, the Word of the cross in the power and love of the Holy Spirit. And he dressed the wounds. Only the Word, brought in the love of God, can do the same with spiritual wounds. After that he lifted him onto his own mount. This might have been a donkey, for a donkey is a beast of burden! The same way our heart could have a prayer burden concerning a certain case or a certain person. Spiritually this means that the Samaritan interceded for him before God to plead for divine mercy and grace. He transported him to the inn and cared for him there. This means: he took him to a church so that he could be sure of aftercare for this soul that used to stray.

10 verse 35: *"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."*

Through the savior we see Christ here, giving two pennies to the innkeeper. These two pennies, spiritually, stand for spiritual gifts and strength from the Holy Ghost, which Jesus gives to the pastor (the shepherd) of the church to take (especially spiritual) care of this man, and for anyone coming to his church. The Samaritan also promised the innkeeper to give him back everything he spent on him above the two pennies. Again Christ speaks here through the savior: When He returns on the clouds, He will give that shepherd (and anyone else who has done His will) his full reward.

10 verse 36-37: *"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? and he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."*

Jesus meant: "Go forth and see to it that you receive this (divine) love in your heart." And this indeed was a problem for this lawyer, for this neighbor was a Samaritan! How could he produce this perfect love for a person which was so despised by the Jews? Jesus pushed him into the only corner where he could find this love, because this was (and is) impossible with the carnal person: namely, the prayer to God for grace... to lead him **too** to the divine outpouring of this love.

Communion with the Bread of Life brings a sincere desire for the depths of God's Word, and loving subjection.

10 verse 38: *"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house."*

Here we meet the family from the little village of Bethany, which means "House of Poverty". Martha lived there with her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus. Spiritually these three persons respectively stand for: the body, the soul and the spirit of man. Jesus came to Martha's house. Spiritually this means that Jesus came to make His dwelling in the body of that believer by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

10 verse 39-42: *"And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

From the above we learn this lesson: When Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, has entered His temple, which is our body (1 Corinthians 6:19), we should not occupy ourselves (unnecessarily) with all kinds of religious actions and activities, that tire us out spiritually and/or physically; and that only satisfy our flesh (Martha with all her "serving", even if that was meant well). But let our soul, "our Mary", come and sit at His feet in worship and loving subjection, in order to learn from Him and His Word, in much contact in prayer and worship, what is His will for us (in our life). Then our soul will learn

to realize that we must remain at His feet in deep (Sabbath) rest, that He work and build in us with power; yes, fulfill all His promises in us. He will then open doors for us through which we can enter; and He will make the way, on which our feet will go, plain for us. In this way we will labor and bear fruit on the wings of His Spirit after the perfect will of God.

"Our Martha", our carnal will, may mean well, but will never earn the approval of the Spirit, for flesh and Spirit are always opposed to each other (are at war with each other – see Romans 8:5-8). Our body, "our Martha" is only useful when the Spirit will be proficient (and thus strong) in us, because "our Mary", our soul, has truly learned to desire to only act after the will of God. Then the Spirit will work through us, and He will use our mouth, our hands, and our feet, thus our body, to reach His divine goal, whereby our spirit, "our Lazarus", will (and must) serve Him. Again: our soul must **know** that complete subjection (to Him) at His feet; then the Spirit of God will be able to take possession of us – after body, soul and spirit.

We see this family of Bethany again... but then in the proper spiritual condition; namely **after** the resurrection of Lazarus (John 12:1-8). Now Martha can serve after the will of God, because Lazarus, after his resurrection, shared the meal (with pleasure) (spiritually seen: because he voluntarily shared the Offering of the Lamb of God; by the which is meant the dying to the old, sinful ego), and because Mary glorifies Jesus in worship.

We hope and pray that all God's servants will experience this (Sabbath) rest, through which the activity of the Holy Spirit can reign in and by all; to use them as channels of His greatness. Then wonders and signs will not fail to occur, and will take place in that wonderful Name of Jesus, in the strength of that glorious Spirit of God. Amen.

Chapter 11

Our life must be a lovely fragrance (namely as of incense) before God's countenance.

In the light of the Israeli Tabernacle we must see this chapter in the sign of the altar of incense. For the altar of incense is the place where we, in prayer and worship, come to God and His Christ.

When we have read all chapters so far, we have seen the divine ascent (by the which a higher spiritual level is meant) in the heavenly Tabernacle. We went from the sevenfold candlestick, which typifies the revelation of God's Good (Gospel) Message in the power of the LIVING Christ, to the table with the twelve show loaves, which speaks of communion with this powerful (and LIVING) Word of God, whereby the sinner changes into a child of God, into a show loaf of and for God, in this sinful world. By this experience of the indwelling Christ and His mighty, inner workings, the child of God comes to true worship of his great Redeemer and Savior; of his great Lord and God, with which we then (in the spirit) have come near to the altar of incense. And every time the revelation of His Word in us becomes more wonderful and glorious, we come to a deeper experience of communion with Him, which goes together with an increasing dying to self; whereby we come to glorious worship of our Savior and God.

In this way we become acquainted, over and over again, and in increasing measure, with this divine triangle in the holy place of His spiritual tabernacle: namely with the candlestick, the table of show loaves, and the altar of incense. It is this divine triangle which sanctifies us by the power of His blood, His Word and His Holy Spirit. It is also this divine triangle which – when we will have finally been completely freed of all flesh (namely of all our sins and our sinful nature) – will let us, through the veil, into the perfect life of God's Holy of holies. And this perfect (and thus holy) life God's Bride(church) must already have here on earth in order to be able to experience the wedding feast with her heavenly Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Part I:

How we must come to God in prayer.

11 verse 1-2a: *"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."*

1: We must come to Him in absolute acceptance of His Fatherhood, in obedience and respect for Him. In the very first place our altar of incense (in the spirit) must be characterized by **worship of our great God and His, for us, so lovely Name**.

In those days, when Israel's high priest had to enter the Holy of holies once a year, at the Great Day of Atonement, he was to do this with in the one hand the blood of sacrificial animals (for the atonement of sins), and in the other hand the smoking censer (Leviticus 16:12-14). This incense is symbolical for our worship. Before everything else, we must come to Him with praise and worship!

We will now look at seven points in total, to see how we can come to Him in (and by) our prayer-life. We saw that the first point was: come to Him in **worship**, namely in surrender of our sinful being on the basis of the shed blood of Lamb of God.

2: We must come to Him with absolute acceptance of His divine **lordship**.

11 verse 2b: *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."*

We do not come to God to, in the first place, ask Him for something, but we come in the first place to Him to **give** ourselves to Him. "Thy Kingdom come." Where? Deep within our own heart. "Thy will be done." Where? Again, deep within our own heart, in our own life! For, God must be able to, after His will and pleasing, be King (and thus Lord – Ruler) **in our own heart and life**, that He fulfill His will – in and through us – just as He can do this in heaven!

3: We must come to Him pleading upon His blood.

11 verse 3: *"Give us day by day our daily bread."*

We know that this "bread" does not only refer to the bread in the literal sense, wherewith we feed our body, but also and in particular, to the spiritual food, which is the "Bread of Life". For this "Bread of Life" is His flesh – the true spiritual food – and His blood – the true spiritual drink – (see John 6:51-58). And this is called the Word of the cross, by the which is meant His sacrifice on the cross for us (for the atonement of sins). Therefore we must look upon His finished work on Calvary, and plead upon His (atoning) blood, but we also must form **one** planting with this atoning sacrifice of His, whereby is meant that we, too, must be willing to completely die (off) to our old, and thus sinful, life (Romans 6:5; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11).

As we now know, Israel's high priest was not allowed to enter the Holy of holies without this atoning blood (of sacrificial animals), just as he was not allowed to enter without incense. If he did, he would be killed – just like Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons (see Leviticus 10:1-2), were slain by God's judgment.

"Give us **day by day** our daily bread". So we must come to Him, **daily cleansed by His blood**, and **daily sharing**, in the spirit, **His dying on Calvary**. This is what we need from Him **day by day**.

4: We must come to Him confessing all our sins of the past (and with all our needs).

11 verse 4a: *"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us."*

As well as confessing **our** sins God must be able to find in our heart the willingness to forgive others, who are indebted to **us**. And it must be such a willingness, that when they come to us for forgiveness for their crime, we (in the same moment) will be able to do so with all our heart. As children of God we should not harbor any grudges and/or hatred against anyone, whatever they may have done (or still do) to us. We must have forgiven them in our heart already, so that when they come, we, urged by God's love, will be able to grant them that forgiveness (Mark 11:25-26).

5: We must develop a sincere desire to be (completely) purified and sanctified by Him.

11 verse 4b: *"And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."*

Herewith are meant the needs **of the future**; the time lying before us. Prayerfully ask the Lord to put a deep longing in your heart for complete purification and sanctification; it is a prayer very pleasing to God. This will lead us to a life wherein we will be completely free from (the power of) the evil one, whereby we also will be completely free from sin, and from the power of our sinful flesh and our sinful lusts! The plea: "Deliver us from evil" means: "Father, deliver us (completely) from all dark desires, so that the evil one and his temptations will have no hold over us anymore; because our sinful flesh and our sinful lusts will be dead completely through Your works of grace." Then our flesh can be no playground for the evil one anymore! He wants to take us there; and this will also happen if our heart is sincerely aimed at this.

6: We must come to Him with perseverance and boldness.

11 verse 5-8: *"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."*

We must come to Him with the same perseverance and the same boldness as this shameless friend. God will then give us what we desire (after His will and pleasing). We may come to God and boldly claim His promises, given in His Word.

This friend asked shamelessly for three loaves; and these are symbolic for **the perfection in God!** He is the type for the sinner who comes to God and claims His promise of perfection in Him... in order to, in the fullness of His nature and being, be able to serve others in the midnight hour; in the hour when the dark forces will rule (as never before)... He asked for the three loaves in order to stand (and persist) as a pillar of God in the midst of the storms of this age – storms of unrighteousness, because the majority of humanity live without norms and values, without God and His law – to be for others in this world as God's channel of salvation and NEW LIFE!

7: We must come to Him with faith!

11 verse 9-13: *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give **the Holy Spirit** to them that ask him?"*

We cannot please God without faith. We must pray to Him with the **assurance** in our heart, that it will be given to us. We must seek with the certainty in our heart, that we will find. We must knock with the assurance in our heart that it will be opened unto us! Here then is the faithful trust a prayer and worshipper must have in order to go!

We have now examined seven points; points that show us **how** we must approach God. Let us then, in faithful trust, come to Him in the perseverance of the shameless friend, with the predominant desire for (complete) purification and sanctification by Him; let us come to Him confessing our sins, pleading on His shed and precious blood; **let us come to Him in total subjection; with the plea: "Not my will, but Thine be done!"** Finally, let us come to Him with that all-surrendering worship of our great God. If we come to him in this way, He will answer our sincere

prayer; If we run at His gates of heaven, they shall be opened unto us, and He will pour out His blessing over us after the full riches of His benevolence (mercy, kindness, grace and great patience)!

Let us now closer examine the last point. *"Who prays, receives!"* As you have read, the prayer is for bread. And it is also written, that, when we pray for bread, He will not give us a stone. We mentioned before, that the Bread of Life speaks to us of the broken body, and the blood shed for us. What is meant here, is a prayer to share in His death, a desire to die (off) to our old, sinful life. And if we pray sincerely for it, and really desire it, He shall give it to us! *"Who seeks, finds!"* What do we seek? We want to receive a fish. The fish is God's code for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. If we pray in all sincerity and purity for the Holy Spirit, He will not give us a serpent; He will not allow a demonic spirit to take possession of our being! If we should pray for an egg, He will give us no scorpion. An egg stands for a born-again life, and a scorpion for a satanic, or fake, rebirth. If we sincerely pray to share His resurrection life, He will also give it to us! *"Unto him who knocks, it will be opened!"* What do we knock on God's door for (and the Door is our Lord Jesus Christ – see John 10:9)? **For the fullness of His Spirit, and His gifts!** Compare these texts with the corresponding texts in Matthew 7:9-11. **His (spiritual) gifts are only given to us for ministry in His Church.**

The predominant basis of this praying, seeking, and knocking must be **faith**; faith, that we will certainly receive when we pray sincerely. We can then be certain that we will find what we seek; we then have the faithful trust that it will be opened unto our knocking. Whoever comes to God in this way, will be born on the wings of the Spirit of God to His throne, in order to receive there what he prayed for; to find with Him, what he seeks; to, having gained access, experience the intense joy of His presence and the majesty of His omnipotence!

Part II:

The obstacles in our prayer life.

Prayer and worship are disturbed by sin.

In the above we have seen **how** to come to God in prayer and worship. In the following verses we will see what the obstacles are in this service unto God. We will discover the reasons why we pray so little (and sincerely) to the Lord, and why we so little worship and praise Him. These (often big) obstacles are formed by sin in all its forms. For sin forms a separation between us and the Lord. Scripture starts by mentioning the greatest sin: namely the slandering (falsely accusing) of God, of His Holy Spirit!

11 verse 14-20: "And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand; because ye say, that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."

Here we conclude that He was false accused by the Pharisees, namely the Holy in Him, God's Power working through Him. They knew very well, that He was the Son of God. The Lord revealed it to us in the parable of the evil husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-46), wherein He revealed the depths of their heart and their evil plan: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance" (Matthew 21:38). They did not want to lose their position of leadership in Israel to Jesus! For if they should believe in Him, they would have to obey and follow Him.

Among them we know Nicodemus who sought Jesus in secret, because he feared the other Pharisees. We know that he eventually chose Jesus' side, and he openly showed it by, after His death, bury Him, together with Joseph of Arimathea, in the grave that belonged to Joseph. Nicodemus was a teacher among the Pharisees! Yet, as Jesus' disciple, he had no prominent position. For Jesus preferred fishermen, simple people, and He made them into apostles. He gave them power and strength; He gave them wisdom and insight in spiritual matters, while the scribes of the Old Covenant, such as Nicodemus, apparently only became followers among them. In this respect, Saul of Tarsus, later renamed Paul, formed an exception. Considering all this, you may understand, why the Pharisees did not at all intend to lose their leadership, especially as they very much liked to receive honor from people, and also because they were money-grabbers.

Therefore they knowingly uttered these false accusations towards Jesus when they said that He cast out the devils by Beelzebub! This is sinning against the Holy Spirit – because it is God's Spirit working wonders and signs, etc. through Jesus – it is a sin which will never be forgiven (Luke 12:10; 1 John 5:16). Whoever is guilty of this, will lose **every** desire to serve Him further in truth, because the Spirit of God will have left him permanently! This sin creates an **absolute** separation from God, and makes any further prayer life **impossible!**

Let us see why so little is being prayed and so very little is being worshipped.

11 verse 21-22: "When a strong man armed (i.e. the devil) keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he (i.e. God's servant, urged on by the Holy Spirit) shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

That first strong man is the evil one who guards many a court of the deep heart, unfortunately also that of many who call themselves "children of God". You may understand that, when the evil one guards the court of our heart, and makes sin to rule there, that this heart is not eager to seek Him in sincere prayer; and that it certainly will not feel like worshipping God's greatness. It goes without saying, that such a heart rather delights itself in worldly lusts, desires and pleasures, thereby showing a seemingly holy life of faith among fellow believers.

Beloved, how is it with us? Where do we stand, in truth? Do we know that intense longing for prayer, or is our life still filled with things that grieve Him?

Scripture tells us about **One**, stronger than the evil one, namely: the Spirit of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. If we allow Him to enter our heart, then He will overcome the evil one, and purify us in the blood of the Lamb. It is only when our heart is purified by this gift of grace from God, when the Holy Spirit has come to us through our faith and our repentance unto Jesus, that our life's attitude will be different; then we will turn to His throne in prayer, and we will seek the things that are above. Should we, by the tricks of the evil one and by our weaknesses, have stumbled and fallen, our heart will be filled with sorrow and we will repent anew to God, immediately and full of remorse. We will (have to) give priority to that which is from above (and thus heavenly) over that which is from below (and thus earthly). When His divine grace fills our heart each sting of sin in our heart and life will no longer be able to exist. But, when we (still) allow sin and the evil one in our heart and life, God's grace will depart from us...! Gradually our prayers will become shorter and shorter, and shrivel up to traditional, short prayers! A sincere prayer life forms a faithful value indicator of our desire for (contact with) God: And God will give us His blessing according to the measure of our sincere longing for Him.

Lack of prayer causes our faith life to be shipwrecked.

11 verse 23: *"He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."*

"He that is not with Me..." These words include a prayerless life, and such a life is always more or less anti-christian because of the more or less working of the evil one, and thus of (the power of) sin. Jesus testifies: "Such a person is **against Me**!" In fact such a person is an enemy of the cross of the resurrected Christ! For it is only when we (voluntarily and completely) accept his cross in our life, and thereby die to our sinful nature, that we could truly follow Jesus. A person who does not pray, or rarely does, is worldly indeed. His life is equal to the conduct of worldly people. Someone who is with Jesus, and thus knows a true prayer life, has given his life completely to Him, that He work therein powerfully **after His will** and Word! And all the works of the evil one will glance off such a life, like waves crash on the strong rocks! Glory to God!

"He that gathereth not with Me scattereth!" If we do not have a faithful prayer life, the evil one, through his temptations and tricks, will get a hold on us, and we will be drawn away from God, and eventually also from God's Church... And our thoughts and desires will (again) be filled with earthly minded matters!

A child of God **must** have a prayer life, whereby he can be an open channel for all works of grace of our God, Who wants to be with us, always, through His Holy Spirit; yes, Who wants to be IN us. A true child of God knows this new **attitude of life**, whereby the heart continually seeks God's throne of grace. Hereby he experiences His righteousness, His peace, and His joy. To God be all glory! Samuel considered a life without prayer a sinful one (see 1 Samuel 12:23).

However, if our life is not filled with such vigilance, we, as already stated, will fall into the power of the evil one (again) through his tricks and temptations; this is also told in the following Scripture verses.

11 verse 24-26: *"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."*

When we have repented unto God, and have been delivered from the evil one by His works of grace, and when we have been washed by His precious blood (and thus purified) of every stain and wrinkle of committed sins, then we are like those who are likened here to a house, out of which the demonic power has been driven, and which thereafter was swept (clean) with brooms, and decorated. But afterwards we must turn ourselves to Him, fully alert and with faithfulness, in and through our prayer life, in order to experience, continually, His works of grace and His protection. For the cast out, angry demon, as we read that here, seeks to enter anew his "house" (i.e. our heart). That "house" used to be decorated after his taste with sinful and worldly lusts, with sinful desires and passions; but now this "house" is cleansed in and by Jesus' blood! It is decorated with spiritual decorations he does not like. It is filled with the Word of God, which he hates! Satan wants to have it back, and lies in wait for it, waiting for the right moment. If such a "heart house" is not alert and does not dwell in the hiding place of the Most High, he will attack it with other, very cunning demons, and with all kinds of temptations through people and/or things. If we say "yes" (or not a clear "no") to these tricks and temptations we will be lost! He will invade our "heart house" in that same moment, and he will again defile it; and we will again experience the bondage and the desire for worldly things. Then, as it were, "the sow will have returned to her wallowing in the mire (mud) and the dog to his own vomit!" (2 Peter 2:22). If this (unfortunately) happened, and God, in His great mercy, speaks to us again, then let us not harden our heart, but let us come to Him again with penitent repentance. Let us then again (be willing to) receive His grace which will give us the strength to say "no!" to sin and temptation, **and** to continue on **the Way** in the strength of Jesus. Yes, more than this: to receive our holy God physically that we serve Him, by His anointings, in holiness and power!

These "seven other spirits, more wicked than himself" are clothed in a "Christian" garment. They do not tempt you with great and (humanly speaking) very bad sins, but with "Christian sins", if I may use this word choice. For these "Christian sins" must (and will) turn you into a fake Christian... The evil one knows that you do not want to be a sinner anymore, and neither a worldly man; for you have become a "Christian" after all. Well, he will permit you to be a "Christian", but including him. And so, because of him, you will become a fake Christian (a hypocrite). In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul calls this "the mystery of iniquity".

In the twelfth chapter these "seven spirits" will be discussed at length. Verse 27 up and including verse 54 of this chapter the so-called holy worship and service to God will be described.

No Roman idolatry!

11 verse 27-28: *"And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."*

This eleventh chapter discusses prayer and worship, and so far we have learned that sin is **the** greatest obstacle for the prayer life. We now see something different, a satanic deception which began very early already, namely: the "worship of Mary". A woman in the crowd declared the womb, that bore Him, and the breasts that He sucked, "holy". Mary is being worshipped here! As we here see the devil began very early indeed with his satanic deceptions. He did (and does) this to draw us away from Jesus and His redeeming work. But the Lord immediately corrected this, and put the "hearing and keeping of the Word of God" centrally focused; with this is meant Jesus, the incarnate and thus LIVING Word; Who is a gift of grace from God, whereby sinful man is cleansed and sanctified; by Whom alone we are saved!

God's judgment comes over those who do not know the sign of the cross.

11 verse 29-32: *"And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the (final) judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."*

By the sign of Jonah, wherewith (the power of) Jesus' death and resurrection is meant; by this sign of Jesus' death on the cross, we must be delivered of (and thus dead to) our old, sinful life. Our "old man" must be dead, by God's works of grace; the "NEW MAN", in God, must develop in our life by the continual stream of God's grace; by the communion with Him which we receive through a life of continual (and thus constant) prayer.

A continual working of the cross (namely a dying to the old and sinful nature) should be noticeable in the life of a child of God; from the beginning of the life of faith unto its fullness... In this way, in due time, in the perfect union of the divine marriage, we will not be called to the marriage supper of the Son of God, but to the marriage supper **of the Lamb** (Revelation 19:9). Because Jesus was slain for us **as the Lamb**; and we must follow Him; **also** in His death (namely the dying [off] to our sinful nature) in order to come to the resurrection! The "scarlet (red) cord" of the blood of the Lamb will always be a sign to the children of God, and it will also be their protection against sliding back into the power of sin and the devil! Glory to God! Well then, this Lamb of God demands the central place in your life (2 Corinthians 4:10-11). If you give Him this central place, then He will give you the NEW LIFE in His strength and joy. But be it known, that hereby you will lose your own sinful ego, your own earthly ideals, to Jesus. Know that all this will die, disappear, by His power. And you are to accept this, for "what will it profit you if you gain the whole world, and lose your soul" (Matthew 16:26). Therefore, beloved, you must give all this to Jesus, voluntarily... For only then will we receive a different life from Him, a different (i.e. heavenly) soul; other ideals, other strengths; namely, those of heaven, from above. This way "this sign of Jonah" (namely the desire to die to our old and sinful nature) will be "branded" (and thus known) in your personal life.

If we reject this sign of Jonah, namely **this** work of grace of God, in our life, then God's judgment is bound to strike us, because by nature we belong to a wicked generation, and, if we want to be saved, we must come to Him often for the forgiveness of our sins, and confessing our guilt! Do open your heart and inner being for this divine sign, this divine brand, and you will experience a gentle God, a merciful God, a God rich in blessings. You will experience deliverance upon deliverance; anointing upon anointing. Beloved, be a child of Him that is eager to receive the sign of Jonah; that loves the life of the cross! The old and sinful life will then completely fall off you, and He will make you a child of God without any spot or wrinkle.

Beloved, do you long for these streams of mercy of God? If so, He is the Lord in heaven, and He will fulfill His Word in your life! He will strengthen you, and then, having done so, He will say: "Get up... and walk"! Then (in faith) you must get up and walk, and go with Him that wonderful holy way (see Isaiah 35:8), which otherwise would be too wonderful for you, and which will lead you to fullness in Him, **here on earth already!** You then will speak, live and act in that wonderful Name of Jesus, and nothing will be impossible for you any longer, for... you speak, you live, and you act at the impulse of that great and mighty "I AM"; you are afloat on His omnipotence; you do only what He wants!

The (daily) worries of life form obstacles in our life of prayer and testimony.

11 verse 33: *"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel (a measuring cup for measuring corn), but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light."*

Although told differently, you see the same thought conveyed here. Lighting a candle means, leading a life unto honor and glory of Jesus. And this must not be hidden, not under a bushel either; this is "the measure" of our daily sustenance.

If the prayer life is the basis of a life in honor of Jesus, then that life will also be expressed in the glorification of that sweet name of Jesus. Of course such a life is not to be obstructed by the worries of our daily sustenance. However, if our life is ruled by all this... then our eye will be diverted from God's throne of grace, and will (increasingly) be fixed on the daily worries, activities and circumstances of this life, whereby the life of prayer and faith will slowly, but surely, deteriorate and die! Well then, this candle, this life unto honor and glorification of Jesus, must be put upon a candlestick. The candlestick is the symbol of God's almighty Spirit, Who will increase our life of faith, and strengthen our testimony life. He will give you and me the divine power for a life of prayer and testimony. He will

cleanse and sanctify our body, our soul, and our spirit and make them unto a testimony of His redeeming, glorious name; for the "Lord Jesus Christ" Himself is the strength of our cross and resurrection life (1 Corinthians 1:30)!

11 verse 34a: *"The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light;..."*

If our spiritual eye is focused on God's throne of grace, and we are open to His divine grace, then our whole being will be lit by Him. Then we will walk in His light. Then we share the cleansing in and by His blood; then we (actually) walk in union with Him, and with His priestly and royal people. Then we can testify of this Light (i.e. Jesus), because this Light fill us!

11 verse 34b: *"...but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness."*

If our spiritual eye is not focused on His throne of grace, and our life is not filled by Him through our attitude of prayer, namely with His nature, then it is evil. It is focused by the evil one on the "bushel", on the worries of our daily sustenance; and our thoughts will be filled with envy, jealousy or hatred, or even with murder, as happened to Cain (Genesis 4:3-8)!

11 verse 35: *"Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."*

It is put so subtle here. Jesus warns us here: "Look out! You think this is from God, but it is from the evil one, of your self-willed, self-centered heart, which received its motives and motivations from hell!"

Beloved, let us not be deceived; and let the evil one not trick us, but let us truly have our spiritual eye focused on God's throne of grace, that His light may enlighten us with His truth, His grace and His peace!

Our heart often is so deceitful, full of evil intentions, and it is often tempted unto a "careful covenant with hell"! It does not want to lose the Lord's grace, but it nevertheless casts covetous eyes on the lusts of "the flesh" and the world, and it often wants to be religious after its own will. Beloved, do not do this; remember Samson's fate!

11 verse 36: *"If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."*

O, that wonderful light from above, when the sign of Jonah will be completely fulfilled in us (and we will have died to [the power of] sin within us), and this light dwells in us! Then Ephesians 5:27 will have been fulfilled in us: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be **holy** and **without blemish**". Then God's work is fulfilled in us, and He, Who Himself is the Light, will dwell in us in all His perfection! Glory, yes, glory to God!

Part III:

The false worship and service.

We will now better acquaint ourselves with a religious group of people who outwardly do their best to seem (very) religious, but who in fact are hostile towards God and His Son. We will discuss Babel, the (idolatrous) Babylonian (public) worship (see Jeremiah 50:8 and 51:6, 45).

In the previous verses we have seen how sin, like yeast, turns the whole religion sour, and because of that makes prayer and worship impossible. It is this sin, in its different forms, which has its roots firmly in this religious people: namely that of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' days. Let us therefore be watchful, and realize that sinful situations are dangerous and deadly for us, and we should avoid such situations. Let us not play with them, like Samson did, otherwise they will cause us to sin... Eve, too, experienced how dangerous a sinful situation was... Looking at the fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil", through satanic suggestions, aroused a desire for it, and caused her to disobey God. Let us therefore, having learned from this, avoid **all** sinful situations, in whichever form! My sincere plea is that God will grant you and me the wisdom for this.

But let us now further investigate the life of faith of the scribes and Pharisees, for their religion and worship were far different from the true spiritual life, and this was caused particularly by their hidden, sinful ways of life.

11 verse 37-41: *"And as he spake a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you."*

Jesus ate, and, before He began to eat, He had not washed His hands. This irritated the Pharisees. They had a religious law, which they themselves had introduced; namely, that one must first cleanse one's hands before eating. They blamed the Lord Jesus terribly for this, and considered Him a sinner! Now, if we should look at this with anointed eyes from heaven, then we would conclude, that by sinful Pharisees the **pure** Son of God was labeled a sinner! These were the ones, who knew only an **outward** religion; and who never had wanted to cleanse their sinful inner being in the streams of grace of their merciful God, Who wanted to be merciful to them as well, if only they had come to Him with sincerity. Outwardly they were pious, but their innermost being was "full of ravening and wickedness".

If we, too, are unwilling to banish the sinful works in our life, which actually means that we reject the gracious gift of the NEW LIFE in Jesus, then we, too, will sooner or later know such a religious life, such pious actions, without any true spirituality. Then we, too, will (primarily) be focused on all kinds of religious laws and actions, whereby we (consciously or not) only show an outward piety. Paul pointed out to us this (large) group of apostates and hypocrites, which would be present in the last days, and this is the time we now live in; they will be people with "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:5). They deny the power of the anointed Word; they in fact do not want to know it, because this Word condemns the sin in them, and wants to banish it; therefore such "believers" rather keep up the appearance of godliness.

"But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you"; was the Lord's advice. In other words: "Confess the unrighteousness which is in you: put it at the foot of the cross, put it all on the altar of His grace, and He will cleanse you in His blood."

We cannot experience the NEW LIFE, which is given us in Christ by grace, if we have not been truly washed, and thus cleansed, in His blood; if we have not first escaped the corruption, which is present through lust (2 Peter 1:4), by the redeeming power of Jesus' blood. We could not serve Him in His strength if we not first possess this NEW LIFE! We could not worship Him, if our heart has not truly turned to Him in faith and subjection. The Pharisees **did** want to serve God, but, **without** inward change of their heart and life; hence this complaint of the Lord:

11 verse 42: *"But woe to you, Pharisees! for ye tithe (of the proceeds of) mint and rue (these are herbs) and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**"*

The Pharisees and the scribes were very precise in paying tithes of everything and they did this as obviously as possible, that people might see it, for they were eager to be honored by people. But they passed over the **judgment of God**, whereby is meant the fear to sin before God (and His law); and they also passed over the love of God, namely the nature of God which would be given to them by grace. So Jacob – by grace – received God's NEW NATURE, whereby he was allowed to call himself Israel (struggler with [and for] God) (Genesis 32:28). But the Pharisees and scribes were unwilling to do this, for they sought, as mentioned before, the honor of people, which shows in the following verse:

11 verse 43: *"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets."*

How many Christians conduct themselves just like these? They do (sometimes many) "good works", but continue their sinful conduct, whereby they (try to) justify themselves in a deceitful way. Let us not deceive ourselves, beloved, for the sole reason of appearing righteous in one's own (and/or others') eyes. It would be much better if we, like that tax collector in Scripture, would confess our sins before God, than, just like that Pharisee in the same parable, to justify ourselves (see Luke 18:9-14). The right place for us is at the foot of the cross, for by nature we are sinners, that have found grace with God. We ourselves are useless servants; who could only be useful if His mighty anointing prompts us to act and speak. An unrepentant "Christian" laborer in the Church of God will seek the people's honor, and (often) is greedy for money. For, by nature, a person always serves his own self. Let us not be that way; let us not have a heart wherein still the "ego" lives, but a heart, where henceforth the prayer: "What would You, Lord, that I do?" will dominate.

11 verse 44: *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not (are not visible, hidden) and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."*

Deep within their (still completely) sinful heart, and thus also their spiritual life, death, that is to say: spiritual death, already had the upper hand, but they hid this from the people. Therefore they formed part of the "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thessalonians 2:7), but they tried to hide this by their pious behavior. They did not want to leave or surrender their hidden unrighteousness to God, because deep in their heart they worshipped these like as many idols... But Jesus, of course, was wise to them.

Many Christians only behave piously when they are surrounded by fellow Christians. But as soon as they are alone, of amongst strangers, their true nature appears! Beloved, let us not behave this way! "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven (the symbol of sin which spreads more and more), neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness (evil); but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8).

Let us sincerely long to be delivered by Jesus from all leaven of sin, that we, in all truth, have communion with Him, Who is the true Bread of Life. It is only in this way that we can serve and worship Him in spirit and truth! We will see that the Pharisees and the scribes not only lived unrighteously (although they hid this), but that they were also hostile towards everything that came from God, because their motivations came straight from the depths of spiritual death (thus from hell)!

11 verse 45-46: *"Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous (too heavy) to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."*

These lawyers claimed to possess the wisdom of God, but because this was not so, they often put (heavy) burdens upon the people, namely by human laws introduced by themselves, which appeared to be wise. They appointed themselves to be "the voice" of God, and in so doing put "the will of God" in a human and unbearable light;... while they themselves did not want to obey these laws. They not only laid heavy burdens upon the people, but they attacked (physically or verbally) the true servants of God, and even took pleasure in their death!

11 verse 47-51: *"Woe unto you! for ye build (here: decorate) the sepulchres of the prophets, and your (fore)fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your (fore)fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."*

These religious people were hostile towards everything that came from God, or was sent by Him, because they were in fact children of the devil. Therefore they also attacked His anointed. It is from this (essentially godless) generation, namely the generation of the devil's children, that all this blood (of prophets, etc. which were killed by them, or with their approval) is to be required.

One day the false church of the end-times "will be drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6), because they too belong to the "mystery of iniquity". "And upon her head was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). So the true priests of God were and are persecuted and killed (some of them) by these priests of darkness, who had appointed themselves, and still do, as angels of light! This group of false laborers made (and make) their own laws and institutions, and made (and make) it appear to the people as if they came (and come) from God. As we already saw, they also attack(ed) God's anointed. Moreover they twist(ed), by their false teachings, God's Word in such a way that it became (and still becomes) powerless, because of which people did (and do) not find "the key to salvation" anymore. We read this in the following verse:

11 verse 52: "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

For us, Christians of the New Covenant (i.e. the period which indicates the relationship between God and man **after** Christ's [first] coming), that "key of knowledge" is in the first place the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, that wonderful name. Secondly, that "key of knowledge" is the wonderful light (and thus insight) of God's Holy Spirit on everything concerning Jesus, God's (LIVING) Word. Have the "Pharisees and lawyers" of our age not also taken away this key, so that many were and are hindered to enter into the promised salvation of God? Are not they, too, hostile towards the **full and eternal** gospel in Jesus Christ? (Revelation 14:6).

It is only when we, by faith, have received Jesus in our heart and life, and – by Him – the baptism with the Holy Spirit, that this Spirit will lead us in all truth (John 16:13) and convict the world (also that world still remnant within us) of sin, and of unrighteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). Let us be willing to know this gift of grace of the Father (namely Jesus, the Son) very intimately, that we come to the full knowledge of His overflowing grace!

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Let us not keep our hearts far from Him, but let us give Him the place of honor therein! He is for us the **only** key, "the key of David" Who grants us access to **all** the holy places of God!

In this last part of Luke 11 we have briefly mentioned the false church, namely the "overspreading of abominations" of the church (Dan. 9:27). It is our sincere prayer that no one of us will ever belong to that. But if we are not watchful we will be, slowly but surely, drawn into it by the devil's diversions (intentionally leading by another, **wrong way**).

11 verse 53-54: "And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth (**urging him to make statements**), that they might accuse him."

The Lord had showed the Pharisees and lawyers their true (spiritual) condition. This was the only chance they still could be saved. But they hardened themselves and resisted Jesus, and sought to catch Him in His statements. The same way the "Pharisees and lawyers" of the end-time will have itchy ears, when the sharp call to sincere and complete repentance (after the Scriptures) come through to them; and they will leave the meetings to go to places where they are spiritually "pampered" by a "gospel" that continually promises them grace, in spite of their sinful way of life!

Beloved, let us separate ourselves from such Christians, preachers and teachers!

Chapter 12

The cleansing / purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh".

(Part I)

Seven "Christian" demons or "holy" devils.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Luke 11:24-26).

Through faith in the Word of God and in the shed blood of Calvary a man (re)turns to the Lord Jesus with all his heart, and by the Word of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the demon dwelling in him, which he had mostly obeyed, is cast out. Alleluia! So this man's inner being was completely cleansed in the blood of Jesus, and, in due time it was garnished with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This man became a Christian.

But this exorcised demon of worldly lust, of worldly desires (1 John 2:16), that used to dwell in him, returns because it longs to live in its former "house" again. But this person, in whom this demon used to dwell, now has been cleansed spiritually; he now is a Christian obedient to the Word, and even baptized with God's Spirit! And, one would expect that such a worldly spirit like this demon, which is very rebellious and hostile towards God, would find no more entry into the life of this Christian. But, if it would succeed, it could defile this life again with its presence, so that the Spirit of God would eventually have to leave this person. But then this demon would have to act very, very cunningly! For this person does not want to behave in an unchristian way. And, because this demon knows it, it will tolerate that Christian behavior. But, it goes away to get seven other demons to help it to stalk and repossess the "house" (namely the heart) it used to live in. These seven other demons are more cunning than the first one. The

first one is very rebellious towards God, but the others act in a sneakier way. All seven of them wear a white, "Christian" robe. And this robe gives them a "Christian" look, whereby they are accepted easier by Christians. In this way the old demon returns to this Christian, hidden amongst these seven "Christian" demons.

Unfortunately (too) many Christians think that, after the (inward) renewal by the Word and the Holy Ghost, nothing can happen to them anymore. God Himself delivered them from the "old man" after all, they think. Let us study more closely the work of these seven "Christian" demons, one by one. God's Word revealed them in Luke 12.

The first demon: the "Eye of men".

The first demon is called "Eye of men", and it is all too eager to point out fellow brothers and sisters, neighbors, or people we work with at the office or at the factory, and it whispers in our ear:

"Now that you have repented you must behave like a Christian, for it is written that as a Christian you must labor worthy of that repentance. So, especially see to it, that the people you see daily, do not see you play around. Wrong words and/or deeds, you tend to do in weakness. Therefore cover these carefully, and show yourself as a tough follower of Christ. If you are alone or in strange surroundings or abroad, where no knows you, then it does not matter."

Brother and sister, do you hear these whisperings in your ear too? Then rebuke this demon "Eye of men". Bind it in the Name of Jesus, and cast it out in that same Name, in outer darkness where it belongs! Have nothing to do with "Eye of men". You only have to heed the (all seeing) eye of God! You have not repented unto people, but unto God. It is not your attitude towards people which is decisive, but it is your attitude towards God. We should please our **Lord Jesus Christ** in everything.

This demon distracts us from our wonderful Savior, and draws our attention to the people. If we let ourselves be deceived by it, then our Christian life will be a game of hide-and-seek between you and your acquaintances, between you and your brothers and sisters. Therefore God's Spirit will have to leave you, because you cannot hear His divine voice, which wants you to focus your whole being on your Redeemer and Savior, anymore. And this Christian demon of hypocrisy will take possession of your heart and will dwell in it in the place of the Holy Spirit. This "Christian" demon in us will see to it that we wear a "Christian" mask when we are near acquaintances, but especially in the presence of the leader, and in the (congregational) meetings. You will behave just like the Pharisees and the lawyers. And because you have become so keen on what people think of you, it goes without saying that you will seek the honor, and thus the appreciation, of people, for in their eyes you want to be a good, blessed Christian. And this praise of people will see to it, that deep in our heart, the old pride we have come to detest so when we repented, will rear its head again. It was because of pride in the Pharisees that they took the prominent seats in the synagogue and loved the greetings in the markets.

Again, brother and sister, do not let yourselves be deceived by "Eye of men", for one day, on the day of judgment, every person will know what you thought in the depths of your own heart; or what you spoke, even if it was in your inner room.

12 verse 1-3: *"In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inasmuch that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven (symbol of sin that spreads) of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."*

Let us see to it that we be delivered from "Eye of men", **before** we are called to justice; otherwise it shall be our accuser before God and let Him know that you have always obeyed and served it!

The second demon: "Fear of men".

12 verse 4-7: *"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings (coins of little value), and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."*

The second demon is called "Fear of men". It will see to it that you will see your unconverted neighbors as giants, having a finger in many pies; whom you are to fear. This same demon influenced ten of the twelve spies of Israel (see Numbers 13). It also is all too eager to incite our tongue, that unruly evil, to gossip and other evil (see James 3:1-18). Let us see what all it whispers in our ear:

"Be very careful to whom you proclaim the gospel; for you know that God's Word speaks of "casting pearls before swine", and that these swine can turn around and tear you to pieces... Such people do not understand you anyway, and you will become an object of mockery and scorn, and surely you don't want that; what a disgrace that would be! Be very careful that you do not talk too much to people about the gospel; they might call you a fanatic (namely a religious fanatic), or even religiously deranged! Imagine them telling your boss. You most certainly would come into his bad books! No, always be sober about witnessing for Jesus. The Holy Spirit will send people to you, who (like) to listen to you, and ask you to tell them more about the gospel. I think it would be better to be quiet about it yourself. For this way you will always be accepted by people. Why should you make more enemies than is necessary? The Lord chose you to hear, and accept, the gospel... and you are saved thereby. That is wonderful! Certainly the Lord will also draw others He has chosen thereto. After all He said: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit will it happen!" So leave it to His Spirit, do not do it yourself... Rather testify, if that is what you want, in the church, among your brothers and sisters; they at least will understand..."

This way "Fear of men" will draw away your attention from (the Almighty) Jesus; and will show you the power and might of the worldly people; and also their unrepentant attitude. But, my brother and sister, do remember this well:

our testimony of Jesus should not in any way be dependent on that. We are to completely focus on the Holy Ghost! We must labor according to His will, and testify in His strength. He (i.e. the Holy Spirit) will then glorify the Lord Jesus through us. He will not bring people to us, but will lead us to people and places where we must speak in the Name of Jesus, and testify of Him. Even if this person is our boss at work or at the factory; even if they are highly placed people. We must not (and may not) be ashamed of the gospel! Shame for Jesus and His gospel message is the deceitful poison "Fear of men" pours into our hearts. For we (must) know that the Holy Spirit, in all circumstances and with all people, will give us wisdom and thus the right words in our mouth; but for this our attitude **must** be like that **of every Christian**, namely that **we are saved to save others**. We must learn to understand the gentle prodding of the Spirit at this point, and learn to develop the gifts of ministry given to us. So He will lead us on our way (of life) in the first place to always be a witness of Jesus through our conduct, but also, at His command and with His guidance, testify of Him.

Finally, the demon "Fear of men" can put so much fear to testify in our heart that we, because of this fear, not only will be quiet about our faith, but that we even will deny our Savior, when the people ask us about our religious denomination!

12 verse 8-9: *"Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."*

Let us therefore never again look to people, but only focus on the Lord Jesus. We should not (want to) be men pleasers... but God pleasers! Let us plead with Him prayerfully to fill us so with His Holy Spirit, that God's Word be in us like a fire that will blaze up in us into an unstoppable flame of love unto salvation and healing of souls. And, if we are thus on fire for Him, He will make us irresistible witnesses by the great compassion for souls He has poured out into our hearts. All power and love to witness, all gifts of ministry come from the Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of that that He told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem **until** they would have received the power to witness from above; and this power and gifts (of ministry) we will only receive when we are truly filled with His Holy Spirit.

When we have received the baptism with the Spirit – and this is only really so when the biblical seal of **new tongues** proves it – then let us not leave it there, but ask God's Holy Spirit for more anointing and power to testify of Jesus, that we, without resisting Him, can be send out into His field of labor on account of the loving urge of the indwelling Holy Spirit. And this, purely and solely for the salvation of lost souls and for the edification – namely increase, in numbers, but especially in spiritual depth – of the Body of Christ.

Not only will "Fear of men" keep us from speaking, so that we hardly or not dare to testify of Him to this humanity which is becoming increasingly more sinful; but it may get to the point that we deny our beloved Savior, when socially higher placed persons inquire after our denomination; most certainly if this may cost us our job (or worse). We also may be so filled with intense fear by it towards people (who think differently), that we finally may join the mockers of the gospel. At first we will join in the laughter, but in the long run we will mock as well... It is something the Lord will never forgive, because this is an unforgivable sin: namely the sin against the Holy Spirit! In the light of the grace of Jesus one will then have trespassed in the Holy of holies...

12 verse 10: *"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."*

A permanent hardening will take place in such a heart, and there will not be the slightest form of remorse, and in his heart no desire will arise for a restored relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Fear of men" will be especially active in times of persecution. Before these difficult times will begin, let us already have learned to walk in His fullness and according to His wonderful Word and infallible guidance, expecting everything from Him. So that, when, and in whichever way, earthly or spiritual foes make our life miserable for us, He will deliver us out of these troubles.

12 verse 11-12: *"And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."*

The third demon: "Chasing after the gold". The pursuit of more money and material; the dance around the gold calf and thus the worship of the Mammon.

12 verse 13-14: *"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"*

The next demon, of which we will investigate the working method, is "Chasing after the gold". It will do its utmost to have you go after more income, more possessions, a better position! So that you will continually be busy working (overtime, moonlighting, etc.); not because it is necessary, but because of the extra income it brings; to buy luxury articles; to go on holidays. Whereby both husband and wife work, causing neglect of the children's upbringing, and their becoming running wild. This desire for more money often is also the cause that (also religious!) men and women live together unmarried in order to be able to keep the widow's pension of the woman, or another benefit. Listen, it whispers in your ear:

"Do you see the nice car of your neighbor? Nice, isn't it? Of course you want one too. Mind you, all your neighbors have beautiful cars... and yours is such an old and ugly thing, while your salary is more than that of many a neighbor. Actually that is rather embarrassing. So, you should also have a new(er) one. God's Word says that you are not to envy other people's possessions, but surely you are entitled to have a good car; in fact you have had a right to it for quite a while. Surely you want to work hard for it... Why not do a lot of overtime, that is bound to earn you much money! And that Johnson at the office for instance; that is one terrific boss, isn't he? He could easily overtake you. Using your elbows a little would help... That man is actually too stupid for his position, don't you think so? Suppose he would make mistakes which are detrimental to the office, and you would report that to the boss, then

you would do the business a favor. For, such mistakes as Johnson makes now and again, cause the company loss, and that is not right. No, it would good to show the boss each mistake of Johnson's, and the boss would know immediately that you have a heart for the business, for the good of the company is also yours... For, if the company makes good profits, it could pay its employees (and thus you!) more. And if I were you, Christian, I would study further, qualify further for your job, get diplomas. Your family is growing, and it needs more money. You should spend every available moment on your study now. It is true, the Lord does ask you to testify, and to work in His vineyard... but you can do that once you have earned your diplomas. After all you must look after your family well, for God's Word says that you will otherwise be worse than the Gentile. What about it, if your wife would go to work as well? Boy, on such a double income you could live very comfortably! You could buy a lot of luxury things. A super fast computer, for instance. And what about a dishwasher? Then you would not have to do that nasty washing up. And, going on holidays once (but preferably twice), of course, is essential. That way you could relax nicely, and after all the stress of the daily work you really need that! So, do that before all else..."

The demon "Chasing after the gold" will try to completely win you over, and the Spirit of God is grieved time after time. You hardly hear the voice of the Holy Spirit anymore, pointing out the riches Christ offers you. Earthly riches, which "Chasing after the gold" so tantalizingly dangles before your eyes, have won you over and you will long for these things very much; you will dream of them. And this demon will see to it that this desire will become increasingly fierce, irresistible... So "Chasing after the gold" has come to dwell in your heart and your first love, the love for Jesus, your fierce longing for Him, and for the possession of the riches of heaven, herewith immediately fades... yes, where has it gone? Where is it now? It is gone, not in your heart anymore! In the place thereof "Chasing after the gold" has come... and it is your guide from now on. Its slogan: "The end justifies the means" has gradually become yours as well. Slowly you learn, if still in a "Christian" way, to "walk over dead bodies"... If you were driven thereto, you would explain away even a murder... Therefore, go away "Chasing after the gold", in the Name of Jesus!

Let us be content with that which we receive from our heavenly Father, for He knows what we really need. And let us learn to give our time and our heart to our Savior, because He can do with our time after His will and pleasing and fill our heart with His great, redeeming love!

The fourth demon: "Rest in the gold"

The next demon, we will study the working method of, is called "Rest in the gold". He will do his utmost to draw your focus away from Jesus as being the Lord out of Whom everything is, and to Whom all things belong (therefore also your time and your money), to then focus your eyes on your possessions, such as your savings, or your own home, or your good position in society.

12 verse 15-19: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up (stored) for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

This is the thought that was put on his heart by "Rest in the gold". Let us listen some more to its satanic, cunning whisperings in the heart of a Christian:

"How wonderful it is, Christian, nothing can happen to you; you now have enough money and you have a good position in society; you can pay for everything you need, and that is very convenient! You could also support the Church if you want to. And surely you would want that, for you are a confirmed Christian. But... if I were you, I would not chuck my money around as far as this support is concerned. Each capital, no matter how large, can be depleted by chucking your money around. Just remember the prodigal son... So, if I were you, I would consider this question carefully... Yes, I know, testifying for Jesus is the Lord's commandment for each Christian, but you could easily take care of that with your money. Just give something to your pastor, and you will see that he will treat you with proper respect; respect that is due to a man like you. For, your pastor may proclaim the gospel, but you see to it with your money that this is possible. This way you share the gospel work. You also could send some money for mission work, and all those little money-missions together must cost quite a tidy sum, would they not? And so you have sent someone in your place this way; with your money you made mission-work possible. So you have served God too. And that is wonderful, isn't it? God will reward you for that in heaven, for you do believe in Him, and so you will go there of course. For God's Word says, that everyone who believes will have eternal life. That goes for you too! And now that you have sent someone to the mission field through your money, you do not have to go yourself, and your conscience – concerning Jesus' command to witness – can be at peace too. Now you yourself have the opportunity to enjoy your money, and I hurry to add: of course in the proper way, worthy of a Christian. But, surely you could have the most delicious food and the finest wines too, if only you do not indulge in it. And a villa in a sunnier country would not be an extravagant luxury either, if you look at that bleak climate here. And if you have led such a quiet life here on earth, then surely a wonderful, eternal life in the hereafter awaits you as well. After all, you believe in Jesus Christ, so the pearl gates of the New Jerusalem are also open to you. Mind you, you see it also in the Church, there you are treated respectfully by God's servant... This is a foretaste of what awaits you in the heavenly Kingdom..."

O, in the Name of Jesus, let the power of "Rest in the gold" be broken, so that this (and any other) Christian be made free from its false mammonish (idolatrous money hunger) rest! So will we, being freed from these bands of "Rest in the gold", be able to focus on the Lord Jesus **alone**, in order to put ourselves **and** our capital or position, altogether on God's altar, so that all that we are and have will be in the hands of Jesus – the Redeemer and Savior of all people. After all, all things are possible with God, Who took upon Him the unrighteousness of **all** humans by the sacrifice

(on the cross) of Jesus. So will also this Christian, delivered from the false calm at the hand of this demon, be able to expect everything from the Lord Jesus alone; to offer **everything** to Him, all that the Lord Jesus asks of him. And this "house", this life, just like Zachaeus', will receive salvation from God (see Luke 19:2-8)! However, should "Rest in the gold" succeed in staying in the heart of this Christian, then God will have to say to him:

12 verse 20: *"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"*

For this type of Christian the divine warning is also applicable:

12 verse 21: *"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

The fifth demon: "Worry about sustenance".

Now it is the turn of the fifth demon. And may I introduce it to you? Its name is "Worry about sustenance". It will leave no stone unturned to confuse the eye of the Christians, and their subjection to Jesus, by means of numerous big and little worries. Yes, it is its intention to turn them into a large mountain in the eyes of Christians, or a tempestuous sea, wherein they are bound to drown! This way it tries to destroy or suffocate the faith in Christians, as God's Word says in Matthew 13:22. Let us eavesdrop its cunning whisperings in the ear of a Christian housewife:

"O, life is difficult, is it not? All prices are going up. How are we to live. You can hardly do anything with your income. And the children cost so much money. Their coats are too small already, and they wear out their shoes within two months. And if this is not bad enough, in a few months' time another new arrival is due, whom you must also clothe and feed! Yes, yes... I really feel sorry for you! And that husband of yours, is he to be trusted completely? He was so nice to his secretary. Did you see that? You should really rub it in when you see it again! And what a troublemaker that neighbor lady of yours is! These days the children cannot do anything or she is already wound up! Say, and what do you think about your taxes this year? I think they will be increased again this year. What use is a salary raise now? It is taken away by the more expensive articles and increased taxes. I really feel for you! And then there is that bill for the payment on your dishwasher, for which you have not money at all at the moment. O... it would drive you mad! And then listen to that pastor of yours. He actually states that you are to give 10% of your income to the Church! Yes, yes... fattening him up and... you being reduced to poverty. And, how do you think your Mary looks these days? She is bound to have some kind of decease. She has no appetite either, remember? If I were you I would take her to the doctor. And at night just before going to sleep: You are tired, are you not? So terribly tired. Well, the Lord knows it too. Just fold your hands: that is good, and now go to sleep. The Lord will not blame you."

We will leave it here. Listening to one such case is bad enough. If the demon "Worry" sings its song of worry in our ear, let us immediately chase it away in the Name of our Lord Jesus. For if you allow it into your heart, God's Spirit will (have to) leave you, because, bent under the (many) worries, you will not see Jesus anymore! However, if we keep focused on Jesus in faith, and cheerfully expect the outcome from Him, then He will surely lead us out of all worries, for His name is "Wonderful"! For, if we stay focused on Him in faith, then, notwithstanding still pressing worries, soon a song of praise will arise in our heart and mouth because of His caring love for us! Let us listen closely to what He says in the following verses:

12 verse 22-32: *"And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn: and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

And as far as satan's false whisperings is concerned about that 10% of your income, this really belongs to God for the financing of God's work here on earth. Abraham already gave to Melchizedek, the High priest of the God most high, tithes of all he possessed. This was before the Mosaic law (law God gave to Moses) was established. By Moses' service the bringing of tithes for the Lord became a law. Let us read Malachi 3:10: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." During His walk on earth the Lord Jesus taught the Pharisees and the scribes to keep up the tithing, but thereby to keep in mind God's other, weightier demand, namely regarding the judgment, the mercy and the faith! "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of (the proceeds of) mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone**" (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42).

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus even teaches us to hand over to Him **all** that we are and have, that He may have it at His disposal, to do with as He wills. And we must obey Him, according to this will. Let us therefore learn to give cheerfully these tithes (minimally) of all that we earn and possess, and possibly more, because this belongs to Him, as **all** that we are and have is His. We will then experience that the promise in Malachi 3:10, given to the Israelites, **also** applies to us. And if we cannot do this yet, then pray the Lord that He will make this possible in our life; that He lead our life in such a way that we can do this cheerfully. The Lord's work after all needs cheerful offers to pay for the many expenses, such as the overheads and the support of e.g. missionaries. God's servants, who, because they were called to give **all** their time to the Lord's work, should not die from hunger either, but they should

receive whatever is needed for their living. Further do the labor fields demand a lot of money! Glory to Jesus! Finally, let us listen to this part of the words of Jesus Himself:

12 verse 33-34: *"Sell that ye have, and give alms (gifts to the poor); provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

The sixth demon: "Sleep tight".

Now it is time to expose the sixth demon. What its name is? Its name is "Sleep tight"! It will leave no stone unturned to weaken your prayer life; to cut off the contact with your Savior. "To sleep spiritually" means, that the inward man of the heart does not know a true prayer life, whereby we will share death and resurrection **in** and **with** Jesus Christ, anymore; that we are not alert anymore to the creeping in of sins and false teachings. Did you know previously the wonderful experience of hours of prayer, something which probably was not without fruit in your testimony life; these hours will slowly decrease. Perhaps at first one hour still, then half an hour, then a quarter of an hour, until it is only a quick prayer and you (regularly) forget to pray.

What is the cause for this? How did "Sleep tight" achieve this? Well, it gave you very many things to do, spiritual as well as earthly; it thereby took seized you. It caused you to be "pressed for time"... But also in other ways does it attack our prayer life: by a wave of lust for the world, and material abundance... Yes, "Sleep tight" knows many ways to keep us from praying. We can see the work of this demon revealed in the slumber and sleep of the five wise and five foolish virgins, which parable we can read in Matthew 25:1-13... Mind you, it **also** influenced the wise! There once was a preacher who saw through this, and who, because of that, developed a rule for life: The more activities (for the Lord), the more need of prayer! Scripture points out to us the silent, and cunning, action of this demon by comparing it with a thief, sneaking up and breaking into our house, because of which our spiritual life weakens...

12 verse 39: *"And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through."*

You might think that you still stand and live in Christ, but you do not know, that you have not been His for a long time already. It is only when, by God's grace, we are enlightened by His Word, and we see in this never failing mirror of God our own inner being, that we discover that all freshness and simplicity of true devotion and communion with Him is lacking in us. How sobering His words to the Church at Laodicea sound: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and **knowest not** that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." (Revelation 3:15-17). The Lord also states of the Church at Sardis the following: "...thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Revelation 3:1b).

Which advice does the Lord give us in Luke 12:35 to make us able-bodied, whereby we will be able to resist the deceptions of this demon?

12 verse 35: *"Let your loins be girded about (namely with the truth of God's Word and with the Spirit of Truth) and your lights burning (i.e. be [spiritually] alert)."*

The Israelites wore long loose garments, which hampered them when they were serving. Therefore they pulled up the upper garment, and fastened it around the hips. What does this mean to us spiritually? Let us first read another word of Scripture. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about **with truth**..." (Ephesians 6:14a). And that truth is God's Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the incarnated Word of God, thus the Spirit of Truth. We must therefore be willing to serve Him according to His entire Word, and be at His disposal in order to, under His management, labor in His vineyard. This requires a true **devotion**, an openness of the heart; to be able to receive His guidance and will in the prayer life. Only then can He give us His love and gifts to the labor, all revelations of His own Spirit and Being, through the faithful servant. This way we can burn for Him like a candle; and proclaim to the people around us His resurrection and His power – to the redemption from sin by communion with Him.

By the Word, the prayer life keeps alive the **Maranatha expectation** (i.e. the expectation that the Lord will soon return); on the other hand the Maranatha expectation keeps us praying that we be found prepared by Him at His return. When the five wise and the five foolish virgins lost the Maranatha expectation which is told us by the words: "While the bridegroom tarried (when His coming was delayed)... they slept" (Matthew 25:5), they lost the prayer life... with all the sad results thereof! It is because of this, that Scripture has linked up this **watchfulness** to the expectation of a speedy return of the Lord Jesus.

12 verse 36-38: *"And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch (one of the four parts, wherein in times past the night was divided), or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."*

12 verse 40: *"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."*

The seventh demon: "Work in the flesh".

It is only a small step to get from spiritual sleep to **willfulness**, to a further "service" to the Lord in one's own strength; and thus in the "flesh". That is why we call this demon "Work in the flesh". "Work in the flesh" will always cause one to serve out of, and for, oneself; it is something which is always to the disadvantage and harm of the true fellow servants **and** of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ! This demon is a true hunter, which hassles one to labor "for Jesus". However, if we act **in faith** – the opposite of a willful service – then we will draw from His fullness;

something which can only happen in a life of (sincere and continual) prayer. Then we can, as verse 42 says: "...give their portion of meat (namely spiritual food) in due season" to those the Lord has entrusted to us; to serve them, in Christ, with the Word. But if we listen to (and obey) the whisperings of "Work in the flesh", who always co-operates with "Sleep tight", then we will become (greatly) unfaithful to Christ. We then no longer draw from the fullness of God's love and strength to the edification of His Kingdom, but we will use (read: MIS-use) God's Word to beat others around the head with, and to pursue our own goals. It is odd, that God's Word reveals that such "service" is linked to carnal, sexual debauchery.

12 verse 45: *"But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;..."*

"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women (here: the spiritually weak) laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:6-7). "These are murmurers, complainers, **walking after their own lusts**; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 16).

12 verse 46-48: *"The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."*

Let us therefore rather (be willing to) serve the Lord of the Harvest faithfully, and act according to His guidance and driving-force, so that to us, too, the following Scripture part applies:

12 verse 41-44: *"Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable (only) unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."*

My brother and sister, let us now, being warned, carefully walk in keeping with God's Word, and be alert to these seven evil spirits (these demons). For, over and over again, co-operating with each other, they will try and overpower the depths of our heart; and if we are not alert to this – in continual prayer and subjection, that we remain in Christ through the strength of the blood of the Lamb – they will pounce on our heart and overcome it (with force, and thus without permission), whereby they will have power over our heart and life again. When that happens, the "old Adam" – namely the satanic spirit which, by our faith in the blood of Jesus, was dispelled – will again take possession of us, and Luke 11:26 reveals to us, that "the last state of that man is worse than the first", which is to say that such a person, spiritually seen, in the end is far worse off than before his repentance. Beloved, let us therefore (always and everywhere) be watchful for the unwanted and (often) unnoticed invasion of these "Christian" demons!

The fire of the Holy Spirit will deliver us from all powers of hell.

We ourselves are no match for the works and powers of these demonic forces. We must and can be delivered from them, and this can only happen when we put their works, the works in our sinful flesh, in the hand of God's Spirit for them to be burned away, and thus destroyed by the divine fire (Romans 8:13) on account of our faith in His eternal redemption, obtained by the shedding of His blood on Calvary (Hebrews 9:12).

The Lord wants us to be completely freed (and remain so) of these seven sins of hypocrisy. He does not want us to be hypocritical in our faith, life and works. He wants us to pursue a sincere faith in Him... which will not be without any fruit of the Spirit. Only in this case, whereby repentance, subjection and devotion to Christ are sincere, the holy fire of the Spirit will (be able to) deliver us from **all** works of the flesh unto the deepest fibers of our entire being; to the foundations thereof! Then He will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire, and, each day anew, fill us with Himself; truly fill us, so that we finally be **completely** dead to our (sinful) flesh; whereby we could serve and follow Him according to **His** will and pleasing. To God be all glory for this!

12 verse 49-50: *"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"*

In the first place, we are (or will be) baptized with the Holy Spirit to be consumed by the fire of His Being; That is to say, the old and thus sinful man in us! The water baptism as well as the baptism in the Spirit are in the first place sharing the death of Jesus (Romans 6:3). If we sincerely long to completely die to our old and sinful nature, then His powerful, inner working will consume to ashes this old man in us (Psalm 20:4; Isaiah 4:4).

In Matthew 13 we read the parable of the seed, and how the seed which fell in good soil, bears fruit: a hundredfold, sixty-fold and thirty-fold. A hundredfold fruit bearing is a symbol of the perfect work of the seed, namely of the divine seed of the Word of God, which was sown and which matured in our heart and being. In other words: Here a 100% working of God's Spirit, in and by the believer, is revealed. In those other cases we have a 60% and a 30% working of God's Spirit in the believer. For, the Holy Spirit could only achieve that much in the believer because of a (still) imperfect subjection and devotion. Respectively 40% and 70% are still works of the flesh, and are reprehensible to God; even if they are meant well. These are works and actions in one's **own strength**!

Before the Lord Jesus could pour out the fire of the Holy Spirit onto the earth, he first had to go through the baptism of death on the cross (see Luke 12:50). Jesus meant by this, that He first had to die for this; had to shed His blood on Calvary.

The fire of the Holy Spirit brings division between hypocrisy and true faith.

12 verse 51-53: *"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be di-*

vided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against her mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

If we mean "peace of the heart" with peace, **then** Christ came to bring peace. But here the Lord means by "peace" a peace amongst each other; being able to get along (namely in the same spiritual state). In this sense He came to bring division: division between believers and unbelievers; yes, even a division between hypocritical believers and sincere believers. For, the temple of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the person, wherein the Holy Spirit dwells) has **nothing in common** with the temple dedicated to the idols (i.e. with those who serve the devil) (2 Corinthians 6:16). The Lord wants us to break away, to separate ourselves, from all those who, in whichever way, want to continue to serve the darkness (and thus the devil). A Dutch proverb says: "Show me your friends, and I will tell you who you are". "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6: 17-18).

Therefore a (spiritually) unequal marriage is, from the beginning, condemned by the Word of God! Little do such people know what cross they take into their home; what sword of deep division awaits them! For who is to say that the unbelieving partner will ever come to believe and obey the Word of God. It is more likely that the believing partner will be drawn into a worldly life, and thus to a hypocritical faith!

74

Now that we know this, let us pursue the divine flame of this purifying fire, especially when we see that His return is at hand.

12 verse 54-55: *"And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass."*

You might know that the Mediterranean (Sea) lies west of Palestine (Canaan, the promised land), and that a sea-wind is always damp, full of rain clouds. But, south of Palestine lies the Negev desert; and when the southern wind blows, it naturally will be hot.

12 verse 56-57: *"Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"*

They had some knowledge of the natural things, everyday things such as predicting the weather, but they lacked insight in the spiritual things, such as recognizing the Messiah Who came to them; because of their hypocrisy they were insensitive and blind.

We, in our days, are before His (speedy) return. The signs thereof in this world do not lie about it! On account of these signs and the predictions thereof in the bible, we can be certain that Jesus will soon return; it may be in a few years already! Especially the young among us can be sure of it: The Lord will return in their lifetime. At first invisible in and by the Holy Spirit, and later on physically visible on the clouds of heaven in glory. And yet, how little one longs to share this divine fire in his being: how little one sincerely desires the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit! Why? God's Word explains it: it calls them **hypocrites**! These are people with a **hypocritical** faith; their faith has been affected by the seven demons of hypocrisy! Before the judgment seat of Christ these demons will act as the accusers of such "Christians". We can read this in the following verses:

12 verse 58-59: *"When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite (the last penny)."*

Let us do our very best to, by the fire of the Spirit, break this band with the demonic forces. And know, that we should hand over our bondages to Jesus, for in order to lose them we must subject ourselves completely to Jesus, so that He – in and by His Name – deliver us from any occult power!

And, we also should know very well, that when we are not part of the **complete** deliverance from these demons, we will suffer the Great Tribulation... because the Wedding Supper, the preparation unto the great and **holy** union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, has passed us by (see Matthew 24:21; 25:1-13 and Revelation 19:9). We will then have missed the boat, beloved! Let us realize this! But when we **pursue** peace with everybody, and sanctification (Hebrews 12:4), then we will also **pursue** the (pure) goal in Christ, until, by His perfect **grace**, we will have indeed reached the fullness in Christ, whereto God has called us (Philippians 3:14). Amen!

Chapter 13

The purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh". (Part II)

The rejection of unrepentant Judaism – until the time of the end.

The majority of the Jews and their leaders in Jesus' time lived an unrepentant life.

13 verse 1-5: *"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners*

above all the (other) Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent**, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all (other) men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent**, ye shall all likewise perish."

Here the Lord reproached the Jews in His days for their un-repentance... Not only the Galileans, that were slain by the sword of Pilate, but **all** Galileans were sinners. Not only were those inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were buried by the fallen tower of Siloam, sinners, but **all** inhabitants were! This does not mean, that the Jews of Jesus' days were not religious. They most certainly were! But their religious practices and actions came from their (sinful) flesh; they did everything by following their self-will. And, even if the works of the flesh seem right in the eyes of men, they are **always** diametrically opposed (and thus contrary) to God's will. For God wants us **to turn to Him** with all our heart (and soul), so that we may be open to His works of grace; that we come to the true purification and sanctification of our life and inner being. If this is a spiritual truth today, in the days when Jesus walked on the earth and lived among men, it was exactly the same! We must therefore be willing to be delivered from our self-will! For this self-will is **always** at war with the will of God; even if sometimes, superficially, it seems to agree with God's will (Romans 8:5-8)!

A life without sincere repentance is unfruitful for God's Kingdom.

75

13 verse 6-9: "He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

In above text God the Father is pictured as the owner of a vineyard, and that vineyard is the world. And in that world He had planted a fig-tree, and that fig-tree is God's symbol (of the twelve tribes) of Israel. The dresser of the vineyard here is the symbol for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The three years that the owner (i.e. God the Father) waited for the fruit of the fig-tree (i.e. Israel), are an indication of God's offer of grace to Israel. In the Old Covenant time this happened through the shed blood of sacrificial animals; and in the light of the New Testament it is an indication of God's offer of grace (in the first place to the Jews – see Note 1 on page 3) in and through the sacrifice on the cross (and the shed blood) of the Lamb of God. All bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed to the **perfect** Lamb, and thus the **perfect** sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, He was to spend three days and three nights "in the heart of the earth", when He fulfilled that offering (see Matthew 12:40).

Our conversion and our belief in God's **perfect** sacrifice and in the omnipotence of Jesus, His Son, is a necessity for God, and the **only way** to bring about a NEW LIFE of spiritual fertility within us (and to develop it). His works of grace had to do that for the Jews in those days, and must do it for us also today. However, this is only possible when there is a sincere longing in us to surrender **all** self-will to Jesus Christ; a desire to be completely delivered from our self-will. Just as Jesus Christ was killed on the cross (and had to be killed) for our sins, so too must we covet (and pray for) this process of the cross in our thinking, heart and life, whereby we express the will that we too are prepared to completely die to our old and sinful ego, to our sinful "flesh". When the Lord sees this sincere desire in us, then it shall be done in our life, so that all thoughts and desires, all our actions and walk, etc. which are not according to His will and pleasing, be destroyed, over and over again.

The fig-tree (type of a religious Jew) bore no fruit, but only leaves. And leaves only serve the life of the tree itself; but fruit serves the reproduction, and serves the life of others. A religion according to one's own view therefore is always egocentric, and will always seek one's own advantage and honor, even if this is often hidden under beautiful show motivations. It is only the love of God, planted in the purified heart of man, which brings forth eternal fruit.

We also see from this parable, that our Savior is **very** patient, and that His sole purpose is to grant us grace (still). That therefore was the reason the dresser of the vineyard (type of the Lord Jesus Christ) requested another year's respite of the owner (type of God the Father). He wanted to give extra care to the tree (type of the religious Jew) by digging around the tree, and fertilizing it. As you can see, we have a wonderful (and very gracious) High Priest, Who prays and intercedes for us with God, and Who **wishes to bring us to repentance** by allowing trials in our life, and Who wishes to put His precious Word in our heart. These trials and this Word of God must convict us of our un-repentance, and of our self-willed attitude; they are to cause us to repent and surrender to Him, that He cleanse us of all dead works, and of all sinful thoughts and desires.

We see the same patience with regard to the Jews of those days in Israel. The judgment of God did not follow immediately after the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of man. God waited approximately another forty years, and during that period the Gospel of His grace was proclaimed among the Jews. It was only around the year 70 B.C. that God's judgment was fulfilled over this nation. Then the city of Jerusalem was burned down by the Roman armies, and many were killed by the sword. The survivors were exiled from their country... and were scattered over the whole earth!

The Pharisee, the false laborer, came into being by the unrepentant life of the Jews at the time.

13 verse 10-17: "And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the

stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter (of the line) of Abraham, whom satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years (already), be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him."

76

We see a woman, who, because of a decease in the muscles, had become very crooked, and had been bent down for eighteen years already, and was not able to straighten herself. It is the same with sin within us. It can bind us in such a way, that we cannot but sin. The same way the drunkard is driven to his strong liquor; the junkie to his needle; the whore-hopper to the whores; the adulterer (and thus married man) to his mistresses; the gambler to the gambling house! It (sin) then has become such in that life, that one cannot do without it anymore (and often does not want to either). How far a person who follows (likes to follow) his own will, in whichever way of life, can be driven away from the (complete) freedom of sin and bondages we (can) have in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Therefore, beloved, it is important that we obey Him in all things! Let us therefore seek Jesus at all times, that He, through our faith in His sacrifice on the cross, make it possible for us to – in and by Him – be completely free from **every** sin and **every** bondage. He will deliver us from all bondages, just as He did that for that woman on that Sabbath. It was Sabbath, when Jesus delivered her. The same way we, too, will be (completely) delivered by Jesus, when we are and remain in that Sabbath of faith – by the which are meant the rest in faith and the subjection wherein we expect **everything** from Him – because by His death on the cross He brought about eternal redemption from all works of darkness for us (Hebrews 9:12).

Just as Jewry by its un-repentance brought forth Pharisees, so you and I will be **hypocrites** in all labor for Jesus if we do not repent to the depth of our heart (and soul) in order to (be able to) receive from Him all the necessary works of grace in our heart and life. The Pharisees occupied themselves, zealously, with useless religious acts, whereby they eventually ruined themselves more and more, because these religious acts had nothing to do with (the service and subjection to) the LIVING God; with the result that they were kept in bondage of (the power of) sin. The Pharisees were, and continued to be, money grabbers and were desirous of the honor (and appreciation) of people! You can see how dangerous a religion can be when one follows (or likes to follow) one's self-will; for one only deceives oneself!

Un-repentance leads us to egocentric views regarding God's Word, and thus to (bringing) a false teaching; it causes us to be workers of iniquity.

We will now have a closer look at a worker of God, who unfortunately, despite his faith, did not have a good conscience all the time; and this was caused by the fact that his heart was not **thoroughly** converted!

13 verse 18-19: *"Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls (birds) of the air (here: symbol for demonic powers) lodged in the branches of it."*

Here is a person who allowed the seed of God's Word into his heart, and who received it with gladness. The seed started to sprout in that heart, and to grow and flower, whereby his life was seized with the LIVING Word of God. The mustard seed became a mighty tree... type of an enthusiastic and diligent worker of and for God! But look, "birds" came and build nests in the foliage of that tree... In Matthew 13 Jesus explained that "birds" are the powers of the evil one (verse 4 in combination with verse 19). In above text it says birds "of the air". The apostle Paul therefore calls devils "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

When a believer, a laborer in Christ, a child of God, is not very particular (anymore) about sin, and allows its works in his heart and life, because he is not faithful (anymore) in his repentance to his Lord and God... then he is to be compared with this mustard tree, which is increasingly infested with nests of birds of (from) the air, namely influenced by the "spiritual wickedness in high places" (these are: the evil powers of the air). Such a laborer, by the works of (the power of) sin, will lose the grace of a pure view on (and thus insight in) God's Word and will. He will fall into false doctrines. Therefore it is very understandable that the Lord followed up this parable with the parable of the yeast, because it describes the type of (the power of) sin.

13 verse 20-21: *"And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God (i.e. the church of God here on earth)? It is like leaven (i.e. the type of sin and false teachings), which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."*

The "Kingdom of God" in this world is formed by its followers; they are the believers (namely the followers of Jesus), the (spiritual) children of God who together reveal His Kingdom in this world. This "Kingdom of God" was revealed wonderfully at the time of the apostles (read the book of Acts); the glory of God was clearly present in them. How differently it was with the "Kingdom of God" in the dark Middle Ages, when false teachings and idol worship was the order of the day.

In this second parable the "Kingdom of God" was likened to leaven! Leaven or yeast is a fungus or mould. A spore (a reproductive cell), invisible to the naked eye, settles on food or drink and develops its flake of fungus or mycelium (tissue out of which a flake of fungus develops) in that food or drink: an almost invisible network of fine threads works its way into the food, and develops in that drink. The same way the yeast fungus develops in flour. After some time there is no "common" flour anymore. The yeast has mixed with it, and a (totally) sour dough resulted, called sourdough. In all of Scripture nothing else is meant by leaven but sin, which is **all** rebellion and resistance towards God and His law! The "woman" in above text is the type for the then ruling church; and she mixed this sin, this sinful life, with "three measures of meal". This pure, white flour is the type for the Word of God. The "three measures" indicate the divinity thereof.

Here servants of God **in name** are mentioned, therefore they are **name-Christians** (Christians in name only), **hypocrites**. For, deep in their heart they are workers of iniquity, but... they hide this deep within their heart. These "servants", by their sinful life, give a wrong picture (and example) of God and His Word. The reason is that the Spirit of

God, Who alone is the **right** interpreter of God's Word, has deserted them; wherefore such "servants" (and because of their wrong teachings, many believers) arrive at human, and thus wrong, insights and explanations of the Word of God! By such "servants" the bible is "explained" and deformed into a "(church)doctrine" with nothing of God anymore! One could not possibly find the way to salvation in such a wrong "doctrine". How little it is **emphasized** by such people, that Jesus is the **only** and **true way** to ETERNAL LIFE; the **only** Gate and Door (and thus the only entrance way) to (the obtaining of) God's salvation; and that one only receives redemption from sin and curse through faith in the finished work of the Lamb of God (Hebrews 9:12 and 14). In their "doctrine" one sometimes finds very bad idolatrous and differing teachings, whereby believers stray from God. Is it any wonder that satan is all too willing to use such workers to bring confusion in the pure teachings of God?

The same way the scribes and Pharisees twisted and explained the divine scriptures after their human insights and ideas, whereby they, also by their sinful life, rejected the only Gate, which gives access to the LIFE: namely our Lord Jesus Christ. While He was the only One, Who, if they had wanted to at all, would have been able to deliver them from all their sins and errors!

13 verse 22-24a: *"And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? and he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait (narrow) gate..."*

77

In this life we have to choose between a life of pleasures and amusement – with as a result a terribly sobering hangover thereafter (which will always be the sign of a life wherein one follows his own will in every respect) – or a life, wherein we allow God, by His excellent grace, to plant in our heart and life His holy standards. Once we have made the choice for God (and His law), we must show it through our lifestyle every day anew. This (conscious) choice for Jesus **and** a life after **His** standards often brings struggles with it, a struggle with self. Sometimes the temptation – which, by satan, come across our path through sinful people or through tempting things; and which could be experienced as very desirous or good by our despicable and sinful flesh – is so great, that the choice for Jesus, and the pure life He offers, becomes very difficult because of this. Let us learn to flee to Him in prayer, when we are (or will be) engaged in such a struggle, whereby satan, right from the start, will be shown up very soon as a liar and a murderer! We must see that we, fighting our own sinful "flesh", enter in through the narrow gate, by the which is meant the spiritual experience of rebirth. The rebirth is the beginning of a change (namely the re-creation) of a sinner unto a child of God, by the spiritual contact with Him, Who has accepted us by our conversion to Him and by our faith in Him and in His atoning blood. We, fighting against **everything** that is not according to His will and pleasing, must try to stay on the narrow path, on the (only) way which leads us to that spiritual fullness in Him, whereto He has called us. And that path, that way, is our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: "I am **the way, the truth, and the life**" (John 14:6). If we don't, we will fall prey to the temptations and deceits of satan, who has no other intention than to draw the Christian away from the **only** and **right way**, which Christ truly is – and of which the bible shows us that we (in faith) should walk this path – and that would be the end of us, as is written up in the following verses. We shall then fall under God's judgment.

13 verse 24b-28: *"...for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our street, But he shall say, I tell you, **I know you not** whence ye are; **depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity**. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."*

Beloved, one day the door of God's mercy for the unbelievers and unrepentant shall be closed; namely when the Great Tribulation begins. Only for the Jews there will be another three-and-a-half years' time of grace under the ministry of the "two witnesses of God"... (see Revelation 11:1-13). During the Great Tribulation new conversions among the so-called gentile nations will **not** take place anymore; namely after that the Bride(church) will have gone to her place in the desert, where she shall be kept safe for the terrors of the antichrist during the 3½ years of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14; 2 Thessalonians 2:7).

All other (sincere) believers, who did truly repent, but whom the Lord Jesus had to leave behind because they had not been considered perfect by Him (see Matthew 25:10-12; Luke 17:34-37; Revelation 12:17), He will strengthen through His Spirit during this Great Tribulation, that they testify of their faith in Jesus Christ, in spite of the anti-Christian time, that they, in so doing, still enter God's Kingdom; even if they might pay for it with their martyr's blood. For they will have to give their lives for (their faith in) Jesus (Revelation 7:9-17).

However, all those who are (and remain) unrepentant in heart, all the workers of iniquity, will always stay outside the door of grace, and fall under God's judgments; even if they think and maintain the opposite, and even if they performed miracles in the name of Jesus, as is mentioned clearly in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. **Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, **ye that work iniquity**." (Compare these verses with Luke 13:25-27)

13 verse 29-30: *"And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."*

The highest and most wonderful promises are made by the Lord to the Church of the last days, "the Church at Laodicea", as it is called in Revelation 3:14-22. It is a lukewarm church, fallen deeply into sin, but its victors, by their perfect union with Christ, will be able **to sit in His throne with Him** as a part of the Bride(church).

Unrepentant laborers will develop into persecutors of the true children of God.

13 verse 31-35: *"The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected (am I ready [to die]). Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me (anymore), until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

In these verses the enmity towards all of God's prophets, which, in the course of history has existed among the majority of the leaders of Israel and among Jewry, is expressed. Jerusalem, the religious center of all Israelites, had killed and stoned the prophets sent by God, in its rebellion against God.

Herod Antipas, who was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (prince over one fourth part of the Roman province of Palestine), wanted to kill Jesus (the Prophet among prophets) too. This Herod was also the murderer of the prophet John the Baptist. But Jesus, the Son of God, was not afraid of him and his threatening language at all. For Jesus knew exactly how much time was given Him by God the Father, before He was to fulfill His sacrifice on the cross; hence the sure answer, which we read in verses 32-33.

78

But the Pharisees and scribes, the religious leaders of the Jews in those days, were also very hostile to Jesus, so much so that they eventually had Him killed. It was they, who, with God's intentional permission (see Isaiah 53:10), had Jesus crucified. You see that unrepentant religious laborers are instruments of the evil one. It is these hypocritical laborers who lay violent hands to the lives of true children of God, throughout all of history!

When the period of grace wherein we (now) still live, is coming to an end, one will see the same thing happen. The false church – in Revelation 17 called "the great whore", by the which that satanic and great Babylon is meant – will then be drunk with the blood of the saints (verse 6)!

Because of this unrepentant attitude of the Jews then, which reached its peak when the Son of man was murdered, God's judgment fell on them, and God definitely withdrew His offer of grace from this nation! None of this nation that turned away from God, would see the Savior with his eye of faith (verse 35). And this is to remain so until the time nears of the end of the present world! This explains the stubborn unbelief of the Jews, up to this present day, concerning Jesus Messiah.

We now near the day of the end: the Jews as a nation have returned to the land of Palestine. And still one is blind to Jesus Messiah, leaving out of consideration the few, personal conversions. But one day this nation, driven by their anxiety, wherein it will be led, **and** by the preaching of the two witnesses of God (see Revelation 11:1-13), will come to see Him Whom they had pierced, and crucified, because they had rejected Him then, in their (fore)fathers. Then, at the return, with great power and glory, of Jesus on the clouds, this nation (one third part of them – see Zechariah 13:8-9) will have already been so prepared spiritually, that it, with one accord, will say to the coming Lord: "Blessed is He, Who comes in the name of the Lord." To God be all glory for this!

With the Jewish nation as a cautioning example the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is shown here, that it is to watch out for an unrepentant heart, for all forms of un-repentance, because they otherwise would miss the so needed, and thus indispensable, works of the Spirit of God – based on their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ – unto redemption, renewal and confirmation; something it will absolutely need, especially in the end-time, in order to reach its purpose of perfection.

In the previous chapter we showed you that the Church must also be cleansed of the seven "Christian" demons, because these will otherwise lead them to a religion, useless to God and to themselves, if these (demons) should come to rule in the hearts of Christians. Moreover, the number 7 (the number of God's holiness) tells us that these "Christian" demons, working in and through Christians, imitate (copy) God, even unto His wonders and signs! This number also tells us that their acting with wonders and signs (which originate from satan), will strongly increase at the end of the period of grace (Matthew 24:11).

Chapter 14

The purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh".

(Part III)

In and through Christ we must be willing to be delivered from the noxious terrestrially and worldly minded view(s) of life.

This new chapter deals with the fatal, worldly influence(s) in the life of Christians; an influence which is experienced by the body (verses 1-6), the spirit (verses 7-11), and the soul (verses 12-24). It is the influence which is exercised on each worldly minded person (and thus also on each worldly minded Christian) by the spirit of this world; by the (demonic) forces in the air, whereby, in our human nature, from birth, there is rebellion against God and His will. And because of this influence by the tempting and deceiving forces going forth from satan, many Christians are reduced to spiritual death, to a life without God and without rules, because the power coming from satan fills them.

But God wants to cleanse us from every sinful lust in our natural spirit, soul and body, which this demonic worldly spirit seeks to manipulate by means of its temptations and deceits. That is also the reason why He says to us:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters..." (2 Corinthians 6:17-18; compare also Isaiah 52:11 and Revelation 18:4). And, if we really do what He asks of us, He will fill us with His nature and Spirit, so that we will be (or become) truly children of the almighty God.

At the end of this chapter (verses 25-35) He advises us to, carefully and with discreetly, accept the purifying and sanctifying working of His power of grace, because it is solely this way of the cross – namely the way we, in and through Christ, must go in order to (completely) die to (the powers of) sin within ourselves – which will lead us to the blessed presence of the fullness of His Spirit in us.

The spiritual death brings sickness in the body.

14 verse 1-6: *"And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched him (closely). And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy (or oedema). And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could (or rather would) not answer him again to these things."*

79

The spiritual death reveals itself here in the dropsy (oedema; this is a sickly [abnormal] accumulation of fluid in the body) of that person, who was also invited into the house of the chief of the Pharisees. The same way the spiritual death can reveal itself in all kinds of sickness in our body, and weaken it, sometimes unto death. But Jesus came to deliver us (completely) from this spiritual death **and** from all its effects in our body, soul and spirit. And He **will** heal us, if we surrender to Him (completely), so that we will experience that wonderful rest (of the soul) which is in Him (see Matthew 11:28-29). But, in order to be (completely) healed by Him we must have completely mended our ways and turned away from all the old and sinful things in our heart and life. Also there must be, besides faith in Him, **the desire to be (completely) delivered from all influence(s) of the spiritual death**, which also causes sickness.

The spiritual death brings pride and the desire for honor and/or fame in our spirit.

14 verse 7-11: *"And he put forth a parable to those which were (also) bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

The Lord here tells us a parable of someone, who was invited to a wedding feast. So are we all invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb of God (Revelation 19:6-10). Every worship service or (public) expression of our faith must be seen in the light of this spiritual feast.

Man finds himself, by nature, and thus under the influence of the spiritual death, very important and, at any occasion, loves to assign himself an important place. This, unfortunately, is also the case at all religious occasions, where one loves to be seen, and heard. Positions in the Church, which were taken this way, whereby one was driven by pride and the desire for honor and/or fame, unfortunately disturbed and/or ruined many gatherings already; sometimes to the extent that congregations were torn apart thereby... When do we learn to subject to that mighty guidance of God's Spirit? When will the sincere plea live in our heart which only asks: "Lord, what would **You** have me do?" On the other hand many spiritual leaders are also guilty of stubbornness (self-will); of the (often strong) tendency to rule and of short-sightedness, whereby they, and not the Spirit of God, have the say-so.

All those, who by their willfulness, and thus driven by pride or the desire for honor and/or fame, have taken in (or even won [by fighting for it]) positions in the Church of God, or who were called by people or by themselves (and so **not** by God!) to hold certain positions in the Church, and thus act in their own will, **always** oppose the Spirit of God, and by doing so harm the Body of Christ! Is it not Christ alone Who is the **only** Builder of the New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11:10; Psalm 127:1-2)? Therefore we all are to be called by Him alone, in order to be used as living instruments in and by His building Hand (1 Corinthians 3:10)! Is not Christ alone the **only** Good Shepherd (John 10)? Therefore all, who are called **by Him** to the pastoral function, should only be living extensions of His shepherd heart!

The satan, who is the cause of the spiritual death within us, always holds out the false hope to us of a great ministry in the Church and in the world. Let us therefore learn to recognize the voice of satan, and rebuke him, in order to (be able to) take in a lowly place at His feet, giving Him all the glory; to (be able to) hear His loving commands there concerning our ministry in Him, that we perform those in His strength (Romans 12:3). This way we shall learn to honor each other; namely the anointing which (also) works through our brother and/or sister. We shall also learn to esteem others more than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). If we have the sincere desire in our heart to serve **Him**, and if He has also called us **personally** thereto, then He shall lead us also **personally** to that position (appointed by Him) in Him. He will personally prepare us to (be able to) do good works (see Ephesians 2:10). As Christians we should not use our elbows; but God will remove all obstacles personally! In this way He also put David on the throne of Israel. The Word of God is applicable here: "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16)!

Should we, however, fill a position in the Church of God while we have not been called to it, and led by the Spirit of God, then we could, if we have a winning human personality, draw many to us and captivate them, but because of us these will, during their earthly life, not become "**citizens of heaven**" (by which is meant a life of complete subjection and devotion to God). For this is something only the Spirit of God can do. And if we are not called, we miss the so needed anointing of God, because only His anointing can work strongly and with power in the hearts of the audience,

whereby they, should they really want this, could be (completely) delivered and renewed by His power. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Because of the spiritual death our soul will crave worldly possessions.

14 verse 12-14: *"Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors: lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."*

Here the Lord describes what the motives of the soul are, that is ruled by the spiritual death: such a person is looking for a reward. Such a person likes to receive in return, in some form or another, what he gave the other. Only when we act in the opposite way, will we be deemed holy by the Lord, because it is proof that we have been renewed by Jesus and His Gospel. The NEW LIFE within us is not looking for a reward, but, prompted by the love of God, will give without any desire to receive something in return.

From the above it becomes clear what an enormous difference there is between the desire for (more and more) worldly goods, and the sincere desire for more and more of the Bread (i.e. the spiritual food) of the Kingdom of God. As we can read in the following verse, one of the listeners to Jesus made an allusion to this during the meal in the chief of the Pharisees' house.

14 verse 15: *"And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."*

And, as we can read below, Jesus took up the remark and showed, how all desire for the Bread of the Spirit could disappear gradually, even from the heart of the children of God, when they, by not being alert (enough), have allowed the spiritual death into their life. Then the possession of (many) earthly goods may seem more important to them than eating of this divine banquet, whereby is meant the union with the Lamb of God at His Marriage feast.

14 verse 16-24: *"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent (in agreement with each other) began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them (try them out): I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of these men which were bidden (first) shall taste of my supper."*

With the supper described above, the great Supper of the Marriage of the Lamb is symbolized by the Lord. It is a prophetic type thereof. Here the appalling fact is expressed that those that were invited to this supper, at the time that the Marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated, will have more interest in their possessions in this world, than in the partaking of this (divine) banquet. They give greater priority to worldly goods than to the spiritual and divine.

Those that are (will be) invited to the Supper of the Marriage of the Lamb are children of God; they are the ones who were cleansed in His blood and filled with His Holy Spirit. But we see what will happen in the end-time under the influence of the (ever) increasing unrighteousness: the love for their Lord and Savior, with many, will cool because of the (often unconsciously) permitted intrusions of the spirit of this world (Matthew 24:12). Therefore, especially in this end-time, we must fight sin in all its forms, so also worldly-mindedness, with fire and sword; in order to keep those outside the gates of our heart! (James 4:4). The prophecy of the parable of the five wise and the five foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) tells us, that the spirit of this (present) world will have such a great effect on all of the Kingdom of God (namely on all ten virgins), that it will **entirely** fall asleep (spiritually)!

In the beginning of the twentieth century the Pentecostal movement, led by the Holy Spirit, sounded forth loudly its Maranatha call (the call that the Lord will soon return), because of which there was a revival everywhere. They went out in this world as ten virgins, full of (spiritual) fire and in the strength of His testimony. But... unfortunately – for lack of vigilance for the spirit of the world – this testimony strength gradually disappeared from the Pentecostal movement again. The ten bright lamps went out... The majority of the Pentecostal children (whereby are meant Christians who are filled with His Holy Spirit, just as on that first Pentecost we read about in Acts 2) at this moment is (spiritually) asleep and weak... The Spirit of God had to withdraw His strength from these children of God, because worldly interests came into their heart...

In above verses, the first group that was invited, and whom God's servant, the Holy Spirit, addressed had become entangled in worldly riches. "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it..." The possession of a piece of land here stands for (their desire for) riches and a good job in this world. Many Christians, and unfortunately also many Pentecostal children, lost their first love because of this; because they did not continue to love the Lord **above everything else**, and gave all priority to this earthly existence because of which their soul became entangled therein.

The second group that was invited and whom the Holy Spirit addressed, has become entangled in physical lusts. "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them..." "Five yoke of oxen". The number 5 tells us of our five senses which draw us, with the strength of oxen, away from Jesus and His Kingdom, and thus from His redemptive power, to serve as slaves of the lusts of the flesh.

The third group whom the Holy Spirit addressed deemed the will of the neighbor, of his wife, of higher value than the union with the Lamb of God! "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." How many children of God have not stayed away from congregations and prayer groups after their wedding? How many of them have not turned their backs on the Lord, or pushed Him to the background of their life, because they deemed of more value

the possession of their wife than the union with the Lamb of God? The Spirit of God is very grieved by all this... Therefore He withdrew His wonderful testimony power from the Pentecostal children, whereby formerly many wonders and signs were done in His name. The Pentecostal children are asleep... and it is high time that they wake up from this spiritual sleep, otherwise there is a great chance that they will miss the Marriage of the Lamb! For... it is written: "I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." The five foolish virgins will be among those, for they are those unto whom the door to the wedding hall will be closed (Matthew 25:10-12). Let us rather turn away from our materialistic dream, from our sinful life of lusts, and from sinful relations; and turn back to our Lord and God, and again love Him above all with that wonderful first love. Let us rather (be willing to) serve Him in that former, wonderful (testimony) power, in order to pursue the fullness in Him promised to us; a life in His perfect purity and justice! If we act thus, in faith, then He will accept us and strengthen us with His Spirit!

But, Scripture also predicts a great desertion of Christ in the end-time, and that is the time we **now** live in. Many Christians will become unfaithful to Him, and will turn back to the world and its ways.

A spiritual comparison is to be made with the Jews of Jesus' days: a part of them followed Him (as the Christ), but the great majority rejected Him. But, many gentiles turned to God and His Kingdom then! Glory to God!

It is true that in this end-time there will be great apostasy of the Christian nations... but a new people will go in through the gate of God's Kingdom, and, by the Spirit of God, will be made worthy in every respect, and completely sanctified, to share the Supper of the Marriage of the Lamb! This last is mentioned in the prophecy in the verses 21-23. God's Spirit turns then to the (spiritually) poor, crippled and blind, and calls them to take part in the wedding of the Lamb of God. This is a Holy Spirit revival under the church members, whose insight in God's Word is now (still) poor, crippled, and blinded. He calls them out and makes them partakers of the spiritual joy of the Wedding of the Lamb.

Also will God's Spirit turn to the world and, by a worldwide revival and by the force of circumstances, will bring in **many new people**. He will guide them into the perfect joy of the Marriage of the Lamb! But those, who were invited to the Wedding feast earlier, and who (when the moment arises) will not accept, will have no part **of the true spiritual joy, which the union with the Lamb brings**. Their share will be the Great Tribulation! We have been warned for this, and forewarned is forearmed. The verses 34 and 35 underline this once more:

14 verse 34-35: *"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghil; but men cast it out (compare with Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:49-50). He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."*

In Scripture salt stands for the anointing of God, for the baptism and infilling with the Holy Ghost. "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9:49). A child of God therefore, especially because of his anointing, is called "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). Salt only has value as long as it flavors the food, and as long as it works as a preservative and as a purifier. The anointing is only of value in the life of a child of God when, in and through him, it can work powerfully to testify, **and** when it purifies and sanctifies his life. But when the salt becomes saltless (i.e. tasteless and useless) it is thrown away!

So the child of God, too, whose anointing, by his worldly-mindedness, has become powerless, will suffer the Great Tribulation. He will not be deemed worthy to be kept safe in the desert with the Bride(church) of Christ under God's covering power, out of sight of the serpent (whereby is meant the antichrist, in whom satan dwells and rules) (see Revelation 12:14).

God's summon unto spiritual REarmament.

14 verse 25-27: *"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not (the sin in the heart and life of) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."*

God demands of His children a **complete** dedication from a heart that has learned to love Him above all; yes, above all who are close to us... even above our own life! This "hating" means: "loving less", "putting in second place". For He Himself wants us to (learn to) love our own wife, father and mother, children, our neighbors, yes even our enemy. When, by our faith, we have really learned to know and love Him, then there will be nothing in this world that is more important to us than knowing our loving Savior and God (personally). For, if it's right, His holiness filled our soul, when we repented unto Him and He touched us, and in the spirit we felt something of the special strengths of the NEW LIFE in Him.

God asks us to continue in this first love, and, because of this great love for Him, to go the way of the cross, whereby is meant the sincere desire to be **completely** delivered from our old, sinful man by the power of His blood, His Word and His Spirit! On this way of the cross (where our old life is – voluntarily – crucified) we must continue to love Him above all; whereby it is of the utmost importance that, for whatever reason, we be not drawn away to the right or to the left by the love for our wife, by the love for our father and/or mother, by the love of our children, or by the love of whichever neighbor. On this way of the cross we should not let ourselves be tempted by material things and possessions, or by our social position, but we should mainly focus on Him, Who is the chief Leader and Perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Yes, even if satan brings suffering, persecutions and/or martyrdom on this way, then still, our love for Him, we should follow this road faithfully. And by our progress on this way of the cross, by the decreasing of our ego and our self-will, we get to know Him better in all His love and glory; then – in and by Him – we will go from anointing to anointing, from glory to glory by the powerful, inner workings of the Spirit of God!

Yes, beloved, there is nothing more wonderful in this life than living the life of a faithful child of God, that, in that same faithfulness, has learned to serve Him in His power. He may live in the shadow of His omnipotent, invigorating presence.

14 verse 28-33: *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply (perhaps), after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."*

We must be aware of what the prize is Jesus demands from us **personally**. For we must hand over the entire old man, which is led and ruled by the forces of darkness, to Jesus. And, do we really want this with all the consequences attached to it? If we really do, we may throw in our lot with Jesus. Then we also want to share sincerely His death and resurrection, and, as proof that we really want this, keep His promises of the cross in our heart (2 Corinthians 4:10-11). He then will build with us a (spiritual) tower that will truly reach into heaven. Jacob dreamed of this when he was on the way to his uncle Laban at Beth-El (Genesis 28:10-15). It is a totally different life, that is directed vertically upwards (namely to God); while the old life is directed horizontally (and thus to ourselves and the world).

Let us now **intentionally** hand over **all** that concerns our (old, present) life to Jesus, that He be for us – in the NEW LIFE He gives us – a High Place, a wonderful Hiding Place, when the enemy rants and raves around us. For we have a adversary we must not underestimate: namely satan and his helpers, the world and our own flesh! But, the Lord overcame the entire force of darkness at the cross (Colossians 2:15), and He also laughs at the powers of the world (Psalm 2:4; John 16:33); yes, also the worldly powers in our own flesh has He overcome! What more do we want? If God be for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31)? For He, Who is IN us (and will remain IN us, if we remain faithful to Him), is more than he who is in the world; whereby are meant the forces of satan, that carry on in the world (1 John 4:4). Beloved, let us then **intentionally** choose Him and His way (of the cross); and serve Him faithfully!

Verses 34-35 were already discussed.

Chapter 15

The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh”. (Part IV)

A threefold parable of God's redeeming love.

In and through Christ we must be willing to be delivered of every spiritual mistake and self-will in the service of the Lord.

How often children of God follow their own sinful heart, and that they act willfully while serving their Lord and Savior. Many Christians often do not ask themselves, whether they do walk and act in and by the Spirit of the Lord. How often is the Lord not saddened by the stubborn actions of many a child of God, because, tempted by one's own deceitful heart, one over and over again tries to justify oneself before God and men.

Strikingly the Lord Jesus Christ tells us in this chapter, by means of three parables, of a spiritually mature laborer, and child of God, who also acts so willfully (and thus wrongly), but – we must give God alone all thanks for this – also of His redeeming love, whereby he is found again and brought back home (with God and His Church), because he let himself be found by that divine love!

The first parable: The lost sheep.

15 verse 1-7: *"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."*

We read here about **the redeeming love of the Son of God**. In this parable the relationship between shepherd towards sheep is discussed. Some two thousand years ago the Savior gave His (earthly) life on the cross at Calvary; but now, by His resurrection in the NEW (divine and eternal) LIFE, He is united in the spirit with His spiritual Body, namely the Church, and all its members. He now is, **for all eternity**, united with humanity in the spirit, with all who have accepted Him in their heart as their Lord and Savior.

What is a shepherd without sheep; what is a head without the body? By (physically) dying and rising the Son of God, by His (Holy) Spirit, has become the Head of the Church, His (spiritual) Body. What is a vine without its branches? What is a bridegroom without his bride? By His death and resurrection, which brings us (and all who are willing) redemption – He forever entered into this wonderful relationship with those who sincerely believe. He sought this union with the (believing) person; this union is given Him (by the Father), and the joy over this must have been so immensely great that He was fully prepared to suffer the shame and death on the cross; and because of which He was able to meet this suffering courageously. He is the Prince of Life, but He put Himself under the heel of the prince of death to save mankind. He (voluntarily) surrendered to the power of darkness, to satan. Satan is (and remains)

His enemy, but He voluntarily put Himself under his heel to save you and me, His Church, His Body and His Bride, by sharing the human body, vulnerable to sin (He, as the Son of man on earth, had a will of His own). The joy of these (spiritual) riches, He knew, would be great for Himself as well as for His Bride(church)!

The sheep in this parable is not a lamb, but a mature sheep in a (special) group of a hundred! This has a deeper meaning, for the number 100 can be divided in 2×50 , whereby the number 50, seen in biblical light, is God's code for the infilling with the Holy Ghost. These two groups of 50 sheep refer to God's children and laborers of the so-called "Former Rain" (whereby is meant the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; see Acts 2:1-4), and those of the so-called "Latter Rain" (whereby is meant the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the end-time), which now is about to break through. Therefore, to keep it brief: this sheep belongs to the Bride-church. Thus, it is a Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit of God; a Christian belonging to the "elite corps" of Jesus! What made this sheep withdraw from the flock (the Church) and from its Shepherd? It had tasted the sweet relationship with Jesus; it had the sweet guidance to the green pastures of God's Word, to the very quiet waters of the comforting communion with the Holy Spirit. What made it draw away from Shepherd and flock? What was the reason? Slowly, ever so slowly, and undetected by the unwatchful eye, the poison of sin penetrated little by little the heart, once purified by the blood of Jesus. By the cleansing in the blood of the Lamb of God, this heart used to live in fervent devotion for Jesus and His Kingdom. Clearly a fiery "first love" was present. But by the almost imperceptible penetration of sin that (spiritual) fire was quenched... Because of it the sheep **inwardly** went through a straying from the **only** and **right way**, so that it did not feel at home with the Shepherd and the flock. The self-willed ego-life again flourished... and because of it, it reached the point that it separated itself from the Shepherd and the flocks... All kinds of causes could be mentioned for this, but in fact they were all caused by a three-headed monster, namely by the (sin)monster of lust. This monster tempts with... a beautiful man and/or woman, and sinful enslavement to sex; with (pursuing) riches, or the worries and many activities of (daily) life; a self-willed labor for Jesus or pride; a desire for honor, fame and the applause of people.

We are not told why this sheep drew away from the Shepherd and the flock. What we do know, is that this three-headed monster will try carefully and resolutely to sneak into hearts which are devoted to God. And if it is successful, the self-centered life, in different areas of life, will surface again, and before one realizes what is happening, one (again) is a prisoner of some lust which leads to sin! Slowly, but surely, this force of sinful lust will then come and dwell in that life, and will force the human spirit to satisfy this lust; because of which the person, who at first was a servant of justice, now again has become a servant of sin.

One could also become disloyal to the Lord by following (the will of) another person, while that will in essence is contrary to the will of God. And that person could be: an essentially apostate minister, a friend, one's own husband or wife. One could also idolize the minister, one's own husband, wife or child, or another person, with the sad result that one automatically strays from the Savior because of this. For, if we no longer love Jesus Christ above all and everything (else), if we no longer give him the (seat on the) throne of our heart, but give that place to something or someone else, then all mercy will (have to) leave us, and we will lose the bond with His Holy Spirit and His Word. Then we will separate from the Shepherd and from the flock.

Nowadays we see many separate from the flock; they no longer visit the congregations. And, most assuredly, even if they claim the opposite, they have left the Shepherd. Their heart no longer is the property of Jesus; their heart does not have the first love for Him anymore, for if that were so, they, in spite of everything, would be found in the circle of the flock and, above all, at His feet.

Drawn away by lust and self-will the sheep strays further and further from the Shepherd and the flock, and becomes increasingly more entangled in the thorns of the wilderness of this life. But, *alleluia* (praise ye the Lord), there is One, Who came to seek that which is lost; the rescue operation initiates **from Him**, from Him personally. It comes forth from the compassionate heart of the Shepherd: "He leaves the ninety-nine and goes after that which is lost, until He finds it!" The Spirit of the Lord seeks for the lives of those who once belonged to His flock. He seeks them with His searching love: He calls them with a wonderful Word of grace. He goes to them, He approaches them, He calls them; He calls those whose hearts have almost been totally destroyed by sin. Blessed that sheep that responds to the call of the Shepherd. So many believers were lost in the wilderness of the earthly life. Some used to preach the Word full of fire themselves; namely the news of Him, Who died for us on Calvary, in order to give us a **NEW LIFE** here on earth, **and ETERNAL LIFE** in the Kingdom of God. But many did hear the call of the Shepherd (again), but did not respond; they stayed away and were lost forever! But this sheep was blessed, because it responded to the call of the Shepherd! It bleated, it called for help! Glory to Jesus! "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 50:15).

Beloved, that is how it is when we respond to the call of that almighty Shepherd of Love. When we do, and in all sincerity say: "Yes, Lord, here I am, the lost and strayed sinner!", then He will put us upon His shoulders. We do not have to take care of the homecoming, He will do that for us. He will rectify what we have spoiled (botched), without any reproach, if we confess our sins to Him (Proverbs 28:13). He it is Who will take us **back** to the safe circle of the flock (the Church of the Lord), whereby we will be one of the 100 (2×50) again. Glory to God's great mercy! He it is Who carries us upon His shoulders, Who fills our heart with new joy and courage, whereby we receive strength to fight in the life of the cross (i.e. the dying process of our old life), and to enter into His Kingdom. It is Jesus Who will restore all things for us, when we again accept Him in our heart, because for Him all darkness must disappear. Then that same first love will be kindled again which made David exclaim: "For by Him I have run through a troop (with Him I will defeat [the army of] the enemy); and by my God have I leaped over a wall!" (2 Samuel 22:30; Psalm 18:29). It is God's mercy when this first love is kindled (again) in our heart and life, but this first love **must** burn in each laborer of Jesus! O, that first love, the love for Jesus, that love that is so needed and necessary, also for the labor for Him. But, this first love must go together with the "**fear of God**", whereby is meant the fear to again stray from God into the desert of sin of this life; the fear which keeps us alert to shut every little door and chink to satan that might cause us to stray again.

Beloved, let us maintain that first love. It burns in the hearts of those who have just discovered the great love and mercy of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. But do you still have this first love? For with all, who are not alert enough, who do not walk in the fear of God, this first love will gradually disappear, because of the powers of those monsters of lust and self-will. Therefore we must see to it that we remain in this first love, in the ardent love for Jesus. We must continue to feel this burning longing for Jesus in our heart and life. Even after thirty, forty or fifty years. For, however long we have walked (in faith) with Jesus during our earthly life, this first love must lead us, and must be the basis of our everyday life. This first love must be the motivation of all our labor, of all our speaking. It is the love wherewith we love **God** with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength. It is by this love that we can reach the final phase of our sanctification and our justification; whereby we will also experience that perfect love towards our neighbor; yes, even towards those who hate us! It is by this love for Jesus that we will stand as conquerors on the shores of the crystal sea (see Revelation 15:2).

This sheep then again returned to the flock; this child of God fortunately came back again in the circle of his brothers and sisters; in that circle where he can love his Lord and Master and can serve Him, because he has been delivered from all self-will and sinful lust! Glory to Jesus!

The second parable: The lost penny.

15 verse 8-10: *"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*

Here we have the same story as the one we just discussed, but now seen from **the redeeming love of the Holy Spirit of God**. The woman here is the symbol for the Church, that is to say the Bride-church, for she has on a string of ten pennies. The string with the ten pennies in Israel is a token that one is a bride (to be). The penny is a biblical expression of the powerful revelation of the Holy Spirit through the child of God (Matthew 20:1-16). It is the spiritual power whereby all concerning the Kingdom of God is achieved. The penny here stands for a laborer (man or woman), who is filled with His Spirit. What the lost sheep was in the former parable, the lost penny is in this story. Was for the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, a "sheep" lost, one out of a hundred; for the Holy Spirit a penny is lost, one out of ten, whereby the Church lost the token of being a Bride-to-be; and whereby the Holy Spirit lost one of the abilities to reveal Himself in this world.

As you know **all** Jesus' laborers must co-operate (together) to make His Body perfect. **All** are needed to form the Bride(church). In Jesus' Name each one must do his part to make the Church "without spot and wrinkle", and thus without sin. But here one of His "elite corps" is gone! You may understand the Holy Spirit's concern. One of the channels through whom He used to work is not in his place any longer. That penny fell off the string! And that string typifies the living community of the Holy Spirit.

Surely you know why leaves fall off a tree. When the sap stream diminishes such a leaf turns yellow. As long as those life-giving sap streams could flow through that tree that leaf was green... but now those sap streams have diminished, to finally stop. The leaf is then taken along by the ever increasing wind and storms; to a place the wind and storm blow it to... So it is in the spirit, and this also happened to this "penny"; to this soul that was filled with the Holy Spirit. When it pulls away from the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God because of self-will and sin, when that living relationship, that stream of **living water** (type for the Holy Spirit) is gone, then this laborer will, slowly but surely, fall away from the circle of fellow laborers. And this apostasy does not happen just like that. This, outwardly visible, desertion is prepared by an inwardly progressing process. It is something we could also see with the straying of the sheep. We know it happened because of the effect of the three-headed monster of the lust. This laborer, consciously or not, allowed the satanic effect in his heart and life. And before he knew it, that lust sat on the throne of his heart. It is the same lusts that are present (especially) in the worldly person, that slowly but surely re-conquered his heart; they even might wear a "Christian" garment. They made the heart wherein Jesus "dwelt and sat on the throne of" into... a den of murderers again, into a marketplace, into a "walled-in dwelling place" of self-will and un-righteousness.

So it was with this "penny". It came under the "dust" of sin, and therefore got lost. Again we see the action initiate with God, the Holy Spirit, alone. Each action to save a soul comes from God. Did the redeeming action in the case of the lost sheep come from God, namely from **the Son of God** as the Good Shepherd; in the case of the lost penny the action also came from God, namely from **the Holy Spirit of God**, Who works in His Bride(church) in and through the woman. "Now the Lord is that Spirit..." (2 Corinthians 3:17a) the Word of God teaches us; it is one and the same God!

By the inward urging of the call of God's Spirit the Church is driven to action: it is driven to intercede for souls and to proclaim the **sin-revealing** Word. As we have read, the "woman" lights a candle and sweeps the house. The house (God's temple in the spirit) is a symbol of the sinner; it is full of "the dust of sin". The "woman" here handles a broom, whereby the active faith based on the Word, is pictured. The candlelight is the sin-revealing Word of God that is spoken to that sinner, and... praise the Lord, God grants mercy, namely active faith to achieve (complete) purification and deliverance of each (power of) sin. The Word has become active in that heart... and has revealed all sin, and "swept it away" by accepting the power of the blood of Jesus and of His death on the cross. Blessed be that "penny", blessed that soul, that laborer, who does not harden his heart, but who allows himself to be found. As the sheep bleated to the call of the Shepherd, so also this penny lets itself be found during the sweeping. In other words: he answered the call of the Spirit. And now that he is found, he again is added unto the string with the other nine. He now again experiences the relationship with the Holy Spirit, and he is restored in his function by the Spirit, amongst the nine fellow laborers. It is written "There is joy also amongst the angels of God". The "angels of God"

are a type of the (sincere) laborers of the Lord. All who serve Him sincerely, will rejoice in the return and **the restoration** in their midst of their fellow laborer.

We clearly see the searching love of the Holy Spirit in this story. In essence it is the same story as that of the searching love of the Son of God, we looked at in the parable of "the lost sheep". It is emphasized that it concerns a laborer of God, filled with the Holy Spirit. The temptations of satan, however, are so cunning, that even a Spirit-filled laborer can be lured away from the place of God's blessings, if he is not watchful. Lured away from the place where he was able to work in the Name of the Lord. Beloved, the Pentecostal movement used to be one jubilant congregation, whereby almost everybody was filled with God's Spirit. When I call to memory those congregations of those days, in the former Dutch Indies, and especially the "fellowship services" (i.e. the combined services of various Pentecostal churches), then I see a congregation of many children of God, and I hear their worship and praise in "many tongues, as the Spirit gave utterance"... Together they sounded like the rushing of many waters and of strong thunderclaps. Glory to God! Where has all this gone? Many children of God nowadays go through life unfilled. The praise and worship of many Christians has gradually disappeared from the heart, because of which the victorious prayer has made way for the supplicant prayer. Where did that great love for God go, whereby this revelation of the Spirit of God was possible. God's Word tells us that, by the penetration of the (ever) increasing iniquity of this three-headed monster, the love of many will grow cold, whereby the Church has also fallen into her sleep of sin (Matthew 25:5)! And, when we no longer have that divine fire, then where are we, beloved? We will lose the divine power and the enthusiasm for the things above. O, let us not underestimate the power of satan, but let us pray for wisdom to (be able to) recognize that power.

We must allow the Spirit of God to convict us continually of sins that cling to us. We must continually dare to stand before His **judgment seat**, that He convict us of each sin (John 16:8). Let us, continually and voluntarily, thoroughly **inspect ourselves**, and let us sincerely long to be (completely) delivered from **all** of our sins and our self-will by the grace and power of Jesus' atoning blood. Let us **pursue** complete redemption, purification and sanctification and the **peace with all**. Let us **return** to the uniting string of the Holy Spirit.

The third parable: The prodigal son.

Again we find the same story here, but then seen from the love, namely the **waiting (expectant)** love of our **Father-God**. The Father does not search, He does not go out, like the Son and the Holy Ghost, but He waits (expectantly).

15 verse 11-32: *"And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain (gladly) have filled his belly with the husks that the wine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated (urgently asked) him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."*

The laborer, whose (spiritual) life we received an impression of in the previous parables, here appears in the parable of the prodigal (and also younger) son. This younger son asked his father for the portion (of the inheritance) that was his due. Beloved, did you ever read Acts 2:39 where is written: "**For the promise is unto you**, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call". "The promise is unto you"! This younger son therefore asked, spiritually seen, from his heavenly Father, that which was his due according to this promise; namely his portion. In other words: he prayed for the gift of the Holy Spirit, he asked to be baptized with the Spirit of God... And this portion was due him because of the (divine) promise and grace, after that he was born again (Romans 8:17). And God the Father gave it to him: He baptized him with the Holy Spirit. The elder son did not ask for anything, although it was also his due; therefore he did not receive the baptism in the Spirit either; but the younger son did ask; he prayed for it, and received the baptism with God's Spirit! "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them **that ask him?**" (Luke 11:13). The younger son therefore received this promise, because he prayed for it. But there was something (which we have seen in the two previous parables) which slowly sneaked into his heart; slowly but surely! Slowly all (spiritual) freshness and the sincere love for Jesus ebbed out of this devoted soul, which was blessed with the spiritual gift of God's Holy Spirit. Slowly but surely this so necessary love for Jesus and the Father diminished. And this happens to so many, because many only pray for this gift of the Holy Spirit to have strength to **testify**, while this gift is also intended for the **sanctification** of our **own** sinful being. These only pray here for strength to **testify** of Jesus (Acts

1:8), but not for His **purifying fire**, which "purifies" the threshing floor (the floor where the grain [type of our life], is cleansed from all useless parts with suitable instruments) of our heart and thinking (Matthew 3:11-12).

We saw that self-will and the lusts of this world took possession of this heart, because of which he got a strong (inner) desire "to go away to that land of his desire", to follow his lust(s). And when he had gathered together everything he **left** his parental home in order to let himself go in all that seemed so desirable to him. He left the sweet communion with his Savior. At first he still could be found amongst his brothers and sisters in the meetings, but his heart no longer really (sincerely) loved the Savior. He might still have been active in the church, but most certainly **without** the anointing strength of the Holy Spirit! All spirituality slowly but surely ebbed away from him... killed by the growing, sinful lusts and stubbornness in his heart and life. And as we can read in Mark 4:18-19: "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world (namely the worries and [daily] occupations), and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful". Such a laborer therefore is still able to preach, while he already walks after his lusts with his heart and life (by his thoughts and way of life). Such a laborer, therefore, will use worldly methods to reach his goal. Yes, there are laborers who continue to preach all their life, while their heart (and life) wallows in sin. God's Word warns us against such false "laborers".

Spiritually seen this younger son left his Father-God and His (divine) love, because of which he soon lost all his spirituality, all his spiritual riches he had received from his Father. And this happened because his heart committed "adultery" (turned away from God), and he yielded to carnal debauchery, because his heart longed for the lusts of this world. He started in the Spirit, but he (clearly) ended in the flesh. The "flesh" again ruled in his heart and life. Finally a great spiritual need (famine) came into his heart. Instead of returning to his Father, he hired himself out to a pig farmer. This "pig farmer", beloved, is a type for satan. He became a servant of satan: he tended swine, he served sin; he became a slave of... Then he longed to fill his belly with the fodder of the swine; thus things that revive "the swine in him"; that made sin in him grow. Then it is written: "...and no man gave unto him". One must see the loving hand of the Father in this. This "son" wanted to completely give himself over to the power of sin, but God, in His redeeming love, prevented him from doing so.

In the first and second parable we saw that God's call of love brought this prodigal son of His here, in this situation, to his senses: "...he came to himself..." Glory to God! He was woken up by God's redeeming Word. He asked himself bewilderedly how deep he had sunk, how much lower he had become than the "hired servants" (these are believers in their initial phase, believers who have not yet been born again). And yet they have an abundance of Bread, of spiritual food, by their presence in the house of the Father (i.e. the church). But he perished with (spiritual) hunger. Everything had ebbed away, was gone! Here we have the first step of a true repentance to God: the **realization** of deferring in the powers of sin! Then follows the second step of a true return: **the inner, firm resolve to turn again to God**, to there confess guilt; thus a true repentance. "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (verses 18-19). "Make me as one of thy hired servants!" he wants to say to the Father. He thought that by his straying he would have lost the sonship to God; he wanted to be one of the "hired servants" instead, one of the "common" believers...

So many sinners, so many that strayed, just like this prodigal son, came to **this realization** and to **this resolve**, but never came to the redeeming **action**. You know it well: The road to hell is paved with the best intentions... You are willing to do it, but... **you never act on it**. But this, initially lost son, did; which you can read in the following verse: "And he arose, and **came** to his Father!" (verse 20). You see, this prodigal son did arrive at the redeeming **action**. And, although he was still a fair distance from his Father's house, his Father already saw him coming and, meeting him, he fell on the neck of his returned son. Even before this son had made his confession of guilt, all was already forgiven. Then he kissed him as a son...

In verse 21 follows the confession of guilt: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son". But before the Father heard what he said, he already came to His deed of overflowing grace; He said to His servants (here the type for the Holy Ghost): "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him!" The best robe God the Father gives us, is the robe of the NEW LIFE, the resurrection life. The son, who was initially lost, hereby was restored in his relationship towards the Father; he again was a NEW PERSON, once more a child of God. In him once again was a new heart, bubbling with love, that wanted to serve the Father sincerely. The Father thus put him again in the glory and (spiritual) freshness of the NEW LIFE. He also received a signet ring from the Father. This signet ring is the symbol for the seal with the Holy Spirit, Who again flowed through his heart and life, whereby he again could honor, praise and worship!

After that his (formerly) bare feet were again given shoes; this means that he was prepared to again proclaim the Gospel of God's peace to all people, wherever they might be; to all whom God wants to call to (Ephesians 6:15). He once more became willing to labor for Jesus and His Kingdom; to follow the call of the Lord of the harvest. Finally the greatest, spiritual gift was given: He was allowed to eat of, to feast upon, the fatted calf. Spiritually seen, by this banquet is meant a **total deliverance from worldly lusts**. A **permanent relationship with Jesus** – Who for us is the broken bread of life and the Lamb of God slain for us – in His death and resurrection, which, spiritually seen, we too must undergo. It is **an eternal feast; a wedding feast; a permanent union with Jesus, God's precious Lamb; and the infilling with His Spirit!**

A permanent infilling with the power of the Holy Spirit filled this younger son so, that a feast, a spiritual feast sprouted in his heart. He experienced, in abundant measure, that wonderful mercy of God. He again labored in those abundant and perfect (spiritual) streams of God's love and mercy. Glory, glory to Jesus! Complete restoration of honor, because he actually returned to the bosom of the loving God, Who reveals Himself threefold.

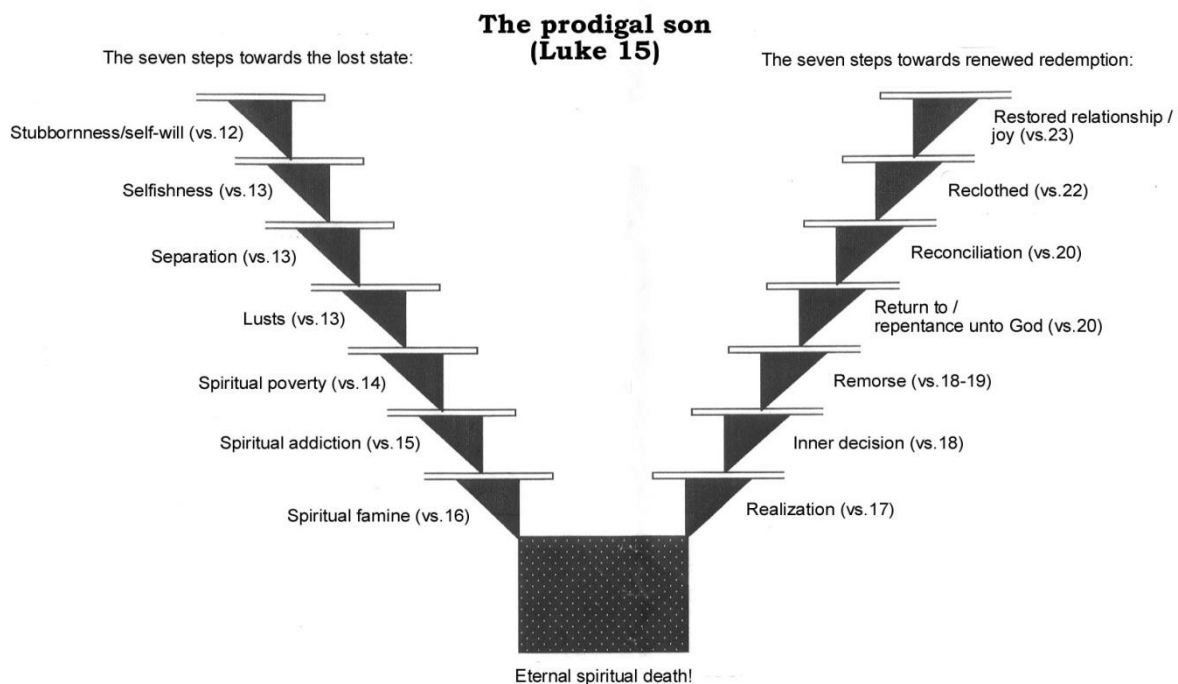
It is also important to look at the self-will and jealousy of the elder son. Here then is faithfulness, but... **without the experience of a banquet; without the experience of union...** He did labor, but only did this out of habit, out of tradition. Each day he traditionally did his duty, but inwardly he did not rejoice in it. In his heart there was not that bubbling love, which would make him jump up in joy. He never, as long as he served Him, had asked His (heavenly) Father any of all this, although all that His Father had, belonged to him as well. And when the younger son – after that he by his (sinful) behavior, had shamed the Father – received everything at this return, the elder son uttered, full of jealousy, the reproach: "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends". But this was because his (heavenly) Father wanted him to **ask** for it, **pray** for it. "All that I have is yours; ask for it and you will get it! Ask for a kid to have a feast; ask for that bubbling glory in the heart, and I will give it you! Ask for the infilling with My Spirit; ask for that relationship with Me! Shut yourself in your inner room and seek after (ask for) that relationship with Me, with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13). And I will give it you!"

The younger son received the portion, because he asked for it. That he wasted this portion and dealt wrongly with it is quite another matter and not the Father's fault. This younger son had to learn that not he was to rule over this spiritual "inheritance" [namely the gift(s) of God's Holy Spirit], but that this spiritual "inheritance" was to rule **him**... We should not wish to use the Holy Spirit; we should not wish to labor with the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit must be able to use us as His instrument; He must be able to make us do His will. We must be (able and willing to be) tools in His mighty hand. He **alone** is the Builder, we may help Him, **after His instructions and management**, by allowing His strong anointing to go through us.

The elder son was envious of the spiritual feast his younger brother was experiencing; mind you, a brother who initially strayed!

If we, in the spirit, have not yet experienced this feast – if we have not yet reached the point where we could receive these spiritual riches, namely the Spirit of God – then let us not be (or become) envious of others –who, it is true, used to be sinners, but returned and (after that) again came to this fullness of joy– because God had been merciful to them. Let us rather rejoice with God that a sinner returned, and let us **also** ask for these riches of a relationship with Him in our own heart, then we too might experience that spiritual festive joy. So far, beloved, the elder son.

In this chapter of God's redeeming love we have seen how necessary it is to maintain that first love, namely the love for our Savior and God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Should this love have become cold, because of sin(s) that sneaked in, and stubbornness, then it is our sincere plea that this Word of God may cause us to truly return to the bosom of the Shepherd and to the spiritual string of the Bride, whereby the Bride-church is meant, and to the bosom of our Father-God. We long for it that God grant us this! Amen.



The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh” (Part V)

In and by Christ, we must be willing to be delivered from all unholy desires for earthly things (such as: money, unholy sex, fame).

This chapter, too, we are to see in the light of the veil (i.e. the curtain that separated the Holy Place and the Holy of holies) of the Israeli Tabernacle: hereby is meant the breaking off of all (powers of) sin in our flesh – by the union with His body that was broken for us, and His blood that was shed for us – in the strength of the Holy Spirit.

We will now have a closer look at those sins, which will always reveal the (sinful) flesh by the unholy desire for (much) money and property; for unholy and unrestrained sexual experience and for receiving fame and honor (thus applause) from people.

88

In and by Christ, we must be willing to be cleansed of all Mammonish idolatry.

The Scriptures start with the greatest and most committed sin: namely the desire for (much) money, riches and possessions. It is the dance around the gold calf, the worship of the mammon, which is done in many ways and in all intensity in this world... The Scriptures warn us emphatically for this: "For the love of money is the root of all evil..." (1 Timothy 6:10).

16 verse 1-8: *"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."*

The Lord here pictures the way of life of a dishonest steward. He was a man who had no difficulty using his lord's money for himself. But these dark practices of his were discovered, and his lord dismissed him and asked him to account for his stewardship. But, being self-centered and unjust, he looked for a way to still be able to provide for himself, after his dismissal, if in a dishonest way... He even made his lord's debtors accessories to his dishonest practices, that he might blackmail them later, when he would be pressed for money, with the papers they themselves signed in hand. He did this for the purpose that these debtors might not deny him the necessary money as part of the loot, for fear to be accused by him of being accessories to the deceit. And that lord praised the well thought-out action of that dismissed steward, whereby he insured the future for himself.

The Scriptures then make a comparison and compare the action of the children of this world regarding their future, with that of the children of God. And the Scriptures conclude that worldly people insure themselves more carefully of a "good" (earthly) future than the children of God do regarding their eternal future. Children of God should manage their finances as carefully and honestly as possible, yet with a "loose hand" as well; that hereby neither the "100 measures of oil", namely the 100% ministry in the Spirit they owe their heavenly Father nor the "100 measures of wheat", namely the 100% ministry of the Word, are influenced unfavorably. The child of God should rather spend his money on the labor of the Lord. And those who receive this money will thank God for the (generous) gift and pray for the mercy and blessing of the Lord for the (generous) giver. This last thing is said in different words in the following verse:

16 verse 9: *"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."*

According to the Lord the being of the mammon (as it is the god of the money) is unrighteous and in practice we also notice this to be so. Often "trade" in essence is swindle; one often competes with one another in a dishonest manner, and one recommends things as being "fantastic", while one would not want to buy them oneself. The stain of unrighteousness clings to money... Therefore the Lord advises us to rather make friends with this "unrighteous mammon". Whereby is meant that we had rather, by means of gifts from a loving heart, act in such a way with our money that, if we should be in need (this is: when we, spiritually seen, are lacking towards the Kingdom of God), God will be gracious towards us to call us (again) to repentance and to His mercy. It goes without saying that such a child of God could still be lost if he does not want to respond to God's gracious call to repentance.

16 verse 10-13: *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*

God here compares two things with each other, namely the earthly possessions and the heavenly (and thus divine). Money and goods on the one hand, and the divine, heavenly gifts on the other. He then calls the gold (or money), thus everything that is meant by the unrighteous mammon, "least" in the life of a child of God! And so it has to be! God, His Word **and** His labor, working in and through us by the Spirit, must be for us "much" (namely the most important) in our life, and finances "least" (namely the least important). If, however, we are unrighteous (thus dishonest) in finances, then we are clearly (still) bound to mammon, and the Lord then cannot (and will not) let us share His spiritual gifts and riches. The Lord has also made us stewards over all the money he entrusts us with. The money belongs to this world, because it is necessary for buying and selling; it is not something special which belongs to the Kingdom of God. Therefore the Word says that money is "that which is another man's"; that we, who subjected our heart and life to Him and His Kingdom, must spend well. If we are dishonest in money matters, then He will not give us the portion in Him, He already gave to us in His Word. For if He would entrust those heavenly and divine matters to us, then we – because we have not yet been delivered from this mammon, from the unholy desire for (more) money and possessions – would use these (divine) powers for ourselves, and not for the good of His Kingdom. If we still have such a wrong (namely self-centered) condition of the heart, then another (in this case satan) will be ready to give us his spiritual powers and anti-anointings. Let us therefore heed this warning! Therefore it is very necessary that we, as children of God, show our preference, strongly and keenly, with regard to our God Who blesses all, with regard to our Savior; while we must use "the filthy lucre" with a loose hand. We cannot serve God and mammon.

16 verse 14-15: *"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."*

"Love of money", as we already saw, is "a root of **all** evil!" For it is an all-controlling longing for (more) money... With the Pharisees this dark desire was firmly rooted in their heart, because of which they were a bad example as religious people and leaders of the Jews of that time. But God is not to be linked up to the gold (with the love of money in a human heart), because the darkness has not a single part of the Light (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Woe that servant of God who falls by the stealing-in of the mammon. For, when one has received special gifts of the Spirit, such as that of healing, then great amounts might be paid in collections. And instead of spending these collections, with a wise heart, on the building up of the Kingdom of God, such "laborers of God" build themselves villas (with all the frills), and also see to it that they have large bank accounts... They began in the Spirit, but they clearly end (up) in the flesh... Let us not follow them. Let us watch ourselves that we do not long for (more) money, for this is an idolatrous and magical power. Only when we are sincere and steadfast in the Lord, the mammon (i.e. the [idol] god of money and possessions) cannot get us in his power.

When a religious leader (clearly) is guilty of an idolatrous form of love of money, and is accused thereof, then his reaction may often be like that of the Pharisees in Jesus' days: "They derided (scoffed at) Jesus!" in answer to His accusation, in an attempt to justify themselves (verse 14). And "self-justification" is a form of pride..., which was the reason the Lord said: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

In and by Christ, we must be willing to be cleansed of all unholy and unrestrained sex-experience.

16 verse 16-17: *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle (dot on the i) of the law to fail."*

In above verses the Scriptures teach us, that: "the law and the prophets were until John"; but also that "Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4); and that "(Jesus) blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14); and that "we are delivered from the law" (Romans 7:6a). Unfortunately some believers interpret this that we, in this time of grace, could live from hand to mouth, because God is sure to grant us grace when we pray for it... But we do not read the bible properly! For we – in and by Christ – will only be delivered from this law, if we have died to the desires which are forbidden in this law (read Romans 7:6); and from thence walk in the NEW LIFE out of Him, in the spirit of the resurrection. However, if we again give in to the desires of the (sinful) flesh, then **the full weight of the law will be in force again** (Matthew 5:17-18). In the NEW LIFE God's law (i.e. the law of His justice, holiness and love) must be engraved unto the hearts of His children (Jeremiah 31:33); whereby – **in** and **by** Him – we might (want to) act and live by it. Then we also will obey the law (i.e. God's commandments) as a matter of course, and not consider it a prohibition anymore, a "Thou shalt not...!" This is what life is meant to be in the Kingdom of God: one obeys God as a matter of course!

The Lord also said that "every man presses into (the laws of) the Kingdom of God", and He warns, that "not tittle of the law will fail". Unfortunately every believer of the New Covenant (to a lesser or greater degree) offends against the laws of the Kingdom of God by acting contrary to these laws (the commandments and prohibitions); by sinning against them, because one lulls oneself asleep with the thought that we live in God's time of grace, and all was finished on the cross by the Lord (Colossians 2:14). It is a complaint of the Lord, Who wants nothing else but that man, by His grace, learns to live in the absolute purity and holiness of His Being.

In those days after John, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ formed the Kingdom of God, because the Church then still had to be "born". The Lord here foretells His death on the cross by the crime committed by the Sanhedrin (i.e. the Supreme Council; the Jewish court of justice in the days of Jesus) and the Jews.

Unfortunately it often happens that among the children of God (the laws of) the Kingdom of God is abused, especially with regard to the marriage and faithfulness in marriage; and against the pure sex-experience (something that can only take place within the bonds of marriage) in general. Therefore this chapter continues with:

16 verse 18: *"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."*

In Hebrews 13:4 it is written also: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled"; then the verse continues: "but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." In this single text of Luke 16 (verse 18) all the unholy desires for living property (for an other man or woman), and the unrestrained sex-experience (even with children!) is touched on (briefly); and at the same time also the most appalling tragedies in marriage which are in the world, and, unfortunately also the premature ending of the marriage of many Christians (which was contracted before God's countenance).

In God's law, which Moses was to pass on, are the commandments: "thou shalt not commit adultery" and "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" (Exodus 20:14 and 17). In God's eyes a marriage is for life. In Matthew 19:4-6 we read: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder". "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only **in the Lord**" (1 Corinthians 7:39).

Should marriage partners who both are in Christ, get a divorce, then both sin against this commandment of the Lord. Matthew does make an exception here, namely if it is a question of "fornication" (i.e. adultery) (see Matthew 5:32). If this is **not** the case, then neither party may remarry, because they otherwise sin against that which is written in Luke 16:18. And this applies until one of the two dies.

Paul makes an exception in the case that one of the two parties is unbelieving (and this "unbelieving" is to be taken in the true sense of the word). "But to the rest speak I (Paul), not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace" (1 Corinthians 7:12-15). In the last case, however, the divorce must be sued by the unbelieving party, therefore not by the believing party. This then is the case when one of the partners, being already married, has come to the faith, not when a believer marries an unbeliever, for then the believer chose that bond himself, against the will of the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 6:14).

Strife in the marriages of children of God should therefore not end in divorce, but are to be straitened out in the spirit of reconciliation. "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27).

In and by Christ, we must be willing to be delivered of all desire for honor, fame and the applause of men.

This sin is not immediately to be detected in the following verses, but when God's Spirit has opened our eyes for it, we will understand. Was the desire for money and possessions a matter of the **soul**, the desire for an other woman (or man) is a **physical** matter, while the desire for honor and/or fame is a matter of the human spirit.

16 verse 19-31: *"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine line, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."*

At first sight one here sees a description of a man, who, humanly spoken was very well dressed. For he wore garments of purple (a reddish purple [die] material) and fine linen. Purple is a **royal** color. Garments in those colors were worn by kings, princes and other people in "high", often leading, positions. This rich man also wore clothes of fine linen. In the Tabernacle of Israel fine (**white** twined [woven with double yarn]) linen was the symbol of **justice**. Here, too, it seems to create the impression of justice. But it also says that he lived happily every day, in luxury and abundance, for he was very wealthy. Here, of course, it is a parable, for that it is not the literal situation is clear, for it is absurd to even think for a moment that every rich man in this world will go to hell, simply because he had such a good life on earth. Just as it is absurd to think that every poor man in this world goes to heaven, simply because he had such a terrible time on this earth. The rich man and Lazarus therefore depict (two) types of believers. In this light we will look deeper into this parable.

Spiritually seen, the rich man shows an abundance of good deeds, whereby are meant "the labor of the Lord", namely his works of goodness and piety. In the eyes of people he is a happy and marvelous Christian, and he likes to give that impression to his fellow believers. But God looks at him differently; it shows in verse 23 and on... The Lord had to throw him in hell. What thought comes up here? That all of his religious life was a farce. He did not know a (sincere) subjection and confession of guilt. After all every natural person is a sinner. He also did not know humility and true servitude with regard to God, whereby the grace, mercy and strength of the Lord, in order to be

able to do **His** work, could not enter this human heart. No, this religious life did not come forth from a heart that was abundantly blessed by **God**, but it was a fruit of "holy" (better said: hypocritical) flesh, that with a lot of outward show sought after the honor and the applause of his fellow believers. It concerns here the third sin (namely "the pride of life" – see 1 John 2:16); this is the (sinful) desire to receive honor from people. It is a monster out of the darkness, a satanic power, which delights in putting up a blockade between the believer and his God, and thus making the way to God **impossible**. For, the grace of God, all being well, makes us grateful and humble. Pride and the desire for honor and/or fame make it impossible for God to be gracious to us. That is why this "rich" man, after his earthly life, opened his eyes in hell!

Lazarus, however, is the opposite symbol of this rich man. His name means: "servant of God", a "help to God". Lazarus was covered with sores; which symbolically is to say, that he was conscious of his sins and shortcomings. "And the dogs licked his sores!" This means that his fellow sinners comforted him. This man lay in the gate of the rich man's house, and longed to be satisfied with the crumbs that fell off the rich man's table.

When above parable is clear to us, then we see the rich man as a distributor of the bread of heaven; namely as a scribe, a (bible) teacher or an evangelist. His gate then gets the meaning of Jesus Christ, the only Gate to ETERNAL LIFE. Lazarus wished to satisfy himself with the crumbs of the spiritual food he could and was allowed to eat.

Thus Lazarus forms the picture here of a broken and downcast spirit, that seeks grace in Jesus Christ and that longs to serve Him in all his weakness. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). Is it any wonder that he was found in heaven after his death, "lying in the bosom of Abraham"? Hereby is meant that he entered into the **eternal** rest of God!

This "rich" man saw Lazarus lying in Abraham's bosom, in spite of the great chasm that separated them. This sight would have been most tormenting to him, and would have caused a continual sorrow and remorse. But, it is not written that Lazarus also saw the rich man. In my opinion no one who will be allowed to enter into the heavenly glory, will be able to see the condemned (these are the ones who have been condemned to the hellish punishment). Abraham, here the type of our Father-God, however, did see him.

This condemned (man) called him: **Father** Abraham. For he **was** a child of God, but unfortunately a tempted and lost child. In fact he asked the Father-God to send Lazarus to, in his torment, cool his tongue with the water he saw. This water in heaven is the water of life. In fact he was **too late** asking for grace, because of which it could not be granted him anymore. The chasm, literally and figuratively, was unbridgeable! "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but **after** this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). After death grace no longer is possible, but only a terrible judgment, if we refuse or forfeit the grace of God during our earthly life.

When the "rich" man realized the impossibility of his own salvation, he thought of his five brothers (real brothers or brothers in the faith), whom the same fate was awaiting should they not ask God for mercy during their earthly life, and therefore not receive it. The five brothers and himself were six. And 6 in the number symbolism is the number of (sinful) man. This condemned (man) asked Abraham (here the type for God the Father) to raise Lazarus from the dead to thus warn his brothers, that they not continue in their carnal way of life, the end of which would be this place of torment. But God pointed out to him that they had the Word of God (in those days the books of Moses and the prophets), and that they would not believe anyway, even if someone, raised from the dead, would tell them.

Let us be warned by this parable, and not live and act like this "rich" man, but let us (be willing to) live humbly, in full subjection to God, in order to expect from Him His rich gifts of grace.

Chapter 17

The purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh" (Part VI)

In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be cleansed of all sinful words and actions which may be exchanged from man to man. We must live in that abundant love of God, whereby we, too, become merciful and gracious towards our neighbor.

This new chapter discusses the irritations and temptations our old nature can cause in the heart and life of our brothers and sisters in Christ. In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) delivered from our old nature, especially from all actions and/or words which give cause to irritation and temptation; wherewith we may offend our brothers and sisters, and whereby their progress (or growth) in God's Kingdom may be hampered or prevented.

17 verse 1-2: *"Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, then that he should offend one of these little ones."*

By "one of these little ones" the Lord Jesus means a sincere child of God; a person (large or small, young or old) who, like a child, knows that he is dependent on the Father in everything. The Lord Jesus not for nothing depicted His greatest Gospel preachers as little children: "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matthew 18:5). "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me" (Mark 9:37). Compare also with Luke 9:48. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say

unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). By "their angels" is meant "the born-again spirits, of God's children which serve God" All being well the believing person who is truly born again of God, must be just as humble as Him, Who said: "...and learn of me; for I am meek and **lowly** in heart" (Matthew 11:29). When Jesus, our heavenly King, was here on earth, He did not walk as a Prince in Palestine (the present-day Israel), but as a humble **Servant** of God the Father, with as His only and greatest desire: to save sinners for eternity. How very differently, strayed far from this divine example, many Christians and preachers, who preach God's Word, walk among their fellow believers and neighbors today!

Let us not bring to irritation and temptation our neighbors, and certainly not those "little ones" (namely our brothers and sisters); whereby we, as it were, bring them to resentment and sin. That is also the reason why God says that for such believers it might be better "that a millstone were hanged about their necks and they be cast into the sea"; whereby is meant that it would be better that such unbelievers (possibly by force) be removed from the fellowship (the congregation of brothers and sisters; the church), that they no longer hinder or block the others' way to salvation, holiness and justice. Not for nothing God says: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 105:15). "For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zechariah 2:8b). Christ would rather see the opposite of the (sinful) attitude which causes sin and temptation in the Church; namely the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which must grow to fullness in the NEW MAN; this is the true **fellowship**! For love towards our brothers (and sisters) is **the** characteristic of being children of the Lord Jesus. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be delivered from all spitefulness.

According to the Lord, the first attitude which causes sin among fellow believers is **spitefulness** or **implacability** in spite of the fact that the other, guilty party possibly already asked for forgiveness.

17 verse 3-4: *"Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."*

For the Lord proclaims a gospel of **reconciliation**. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

He, Who paid for us an **unpayable** debt, wants us to live in the same spirit towards each other. He wanted to express this in the parable of the unmerciful servant; which we can read in Matthew 18:23-35, and which ends with these words: "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Does not "the Lord's prayer", the model prayer the Lord gave us, teach the same thing? "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). The Scriptures then continue in the verses 14 and 15 with: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, our heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

We serve a merciful God, Who wants His children to be merciful as well as a result of the mighty, inner workings of His Spirit. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" we are taught by one of the basic rules of Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:7). This is why He also gave us the parable of "the good (merciful) Samaritan" in Luke 10:25-37. His express demand with regard to His children is: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

Returning to our subject we see the reaction of the disciples, who, on hearing His teaching, answer with:

17 verse 5-6: *"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."*

Indeed, no man can fulfill this rule for living in his own strength. By his faith in God, he must be justified in such a way, that he can do this, for "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38). Faith in God and in His wonderful promises make possible the impossible!

In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be delivered from all conceit/vanity that we ourselves are quite something already.

If there is something that upsets the relationship between brothers and sisters, it would certainly be the irritating sin of pride: namely thinking we are **a lot more** than others.

17 verse 7-10: *"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow (think) not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, **We are unprofitable servants: we have done (only) that which was our duty to do.**"*

When we, by the grace of our high God, may serve because He called us (personally and for that "special" task), let us then not imagine to be better or more spiritual than the other, "common" brothers and sisters; thinking to be "bood buddies" already with our God, and already belonging to the group of His "chosen confidants"!

It would suit us, **saved sinners**, to "condescend to men of low estate" (Romans 12:16b); for how easy "the old man" within us, if he is not yet completely destroyed by the inwardly working power of the Spirit, would rise again, and

destroy all the spiritual work of the Holy Spirit in us. Let us therefore follow the advice of Jesus, and say to ourselves: "We are **unprofitable** servants; for we have only done that which was our duty to do."

One day all weakness and all our sinful "flesh" will have died (off) by His workings in us (1 Peter 2:24), and we then could live and walk entirely in His resurrection power. Even, or especially, when we are truly humble of heart and expect **everything** from Him, then we, by faith (and that correct state of the heart), could now already say jubilantly: "...we **know** that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). All glory to God for this!

In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be delivered from the sin of ingratitude.

(The more) we experience God's grace in our heart and life, how easily we reach the thought that all that is given us by His grace, each day again, is a matter of course. Something we do not need to thank Him for (anymore)! Naturally this ingratitude grieves the loving heart of God, but... an ungrateful attitude also wounds, and sometimes is even offensive to, our brothers and sisters and may upset the relationship among each other.

17 verse 11-19: *"And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."*

Let us pray for protection against and deliverance from all the temptations (namely satanic forces, powers and sins) of the last days.

In the end-time there will be specific temptations for the Church as a whole, as well as **in** the congregation. But the Lord Himself warned us for this: "And because iniquity (also in the Church!) shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). We will return to these temptations unto unrighteousness later on.

The Pharisees, yes even His own disciples, thought Jesus would build the Kingdom of God in their days. But, there was a great difference: The Pharisees were afraid for this, because they realized that they would then lose their leading function among the people, but... Jesus' disciples longingly looked forward to it.

17 verse 20-22: *"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh **not with observation**: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, the days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it."*

Although it was not yet understood at the time, Jesus spoke here of the period we call "the Church's dispensation", which was to start shortly after His death and resurrection; namely the period wherein the Kingdom of God, hidden it is true, namely in and by His Holy Spirit, would rule in the born-again heart. Jesus also told His disciples of that time that they would not see "the days of the Son of man" – those are the days preceding His return – because (as we now know) they would come some 2000 years later. Jesus prophesied then of the people of the end-time, thus for us, "upon whom the ends of the ages have come".

1: The temptation that will be there on account of the (many) false prophets; their false anointing will result in (the worship of) the antichrist.

17 verse 23-25: *"And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."*

The corresponding verses in Matthew 24:23-27 are as follows: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Also compare this with that which is written in Mark 13:21-23. These temptations, therefore, are caused by the satanic anointings, which are brought about through "the hidden injustice" in the Church unto the upsetting (and thus hindrance of the growth in number as well as in depth) of the Church by satan and his anti-anointings (namely charismas from hell). This "hidden injustice", that Jesus also talked about in His sermon on the mount (see Matthew 7:15-23), already existed in the days of the apostles, but it will be especially strong (or in force) in "the last days" (of the end-time). Even in such strong measure, that the chosen of God are **almost** tempted (Matthew 24:24).

Paul warns us against these people: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (viz. God's Holy Spirit) will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:7-10).

If this "false Pentecost" – namely a false or anti anointing, and therefore **no** in-filling with God's Holy Spirit – in fact already is an annoying matter, especially when it occurs in the midst of one's own church; in the last days this deceit will only increase, especially because there will be a terrible tepidity and spiritual sleep in God's Church, whereby (inner) apostasy from (and thus unfaithfulness towards) God will be the order of the day. Because of this the effect of the **lie (liar)**, with signs and wonders, will be more tempting and deadly than ever, whereby many will come under the spell (and thus in the power) of the anti-christian anointing! But, it is only when the Restrainer, namely God's Holy Spirit, working through His Church with His grace-bringing works, will have been removed from the world, that the antichrist will reveal himself fully, and be able to perform his blasphemous works. And that is what he will do during the 3½ years of the Great Tribulation. The fact that God's Holy Spirit, Who opens hearts, will no longer be present with His works of grace then is **the** reason that no more **new** conversions will (be able to) take place during the Great Tribulation; God's door of grace will then be closed to the gentiles (the unbelievers).

When Jesus returns it will not be as at the coming of the antichrist, to whom it applies: "See here!" or "look there", and "a certain place on earth" (which will create confusion); but He shall come as the lightning, which goes out from the east to the west (clearly visible)! He will come on the clouds of heaven, with great power and glory! (Mark 13:26; Matthew 16:27; 26:64; 24:30; Luke 21:27 and other).

2. The temptation of increasing (multiplying) unrighteousness.

17 verse 26-30: *"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days (of the return) of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and **destroyed them all**. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and **destroyed them all**. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."*

Let us have a look in the time wherein Noah lived. In Genesis 6:1-5 we read: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of (the wicked) men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose... And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants (rulers) in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

In the time before Noah two strictly separated groups of people developed: **the children of God**, descendants of Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve given to them by God in the place of the righteous Abel, who was murdered by Cain; and **the children of men**, the descendants of Cain, who walked in the wicked steps of their ancestor Cain. That strict separation was the result of the true, religious life of the group of people, mentioned first. But in the days of Noah there was tepidity in the religious life; yes, apostasy from (and thus unfaithfulness towards) God! It was because of this that the clear barrier, which at first existed between the views of life of both groups of people, slowly but surely disappeared! They married women from the (wicked) world, with the result that thereby the view of life of the "sons of God" was affected by worldly ideas. By accepting those worldly ways of thinking and living the religious (inner) experience disappeared completely, or only was an outward show! These worldly ways of thinking and living, whereby all divine "rules of life" with regard to marriage were set at naught, were punctuated by Jesus when He compared the days of Noah with our last days. Finally this wicked view of life of the "children of men" took the upper hand in (just about) all people, because of which crime and violence increased hand over hand. The Scriptures tell us that their wicked deeds were **numerous** on earth, while in their world of thought there was **nothing else but wickedness**.

How strikingly this is pictured, **also** for our present world wherein the unrighteousness increases very much. A striking, similar incidental between the time of Noah and that of ours further is that, that many grew taller in the body then as many do so now again. There were **giants** among the people, and their violent actions were gigantic too; they became famous for their violence and notorious. A striking similarity, isn't it?

Let us now take a look in the time wherein Lot lived. In Genesis 18:20-21 we read: "And the Lord said (to Abraham), Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorra is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." And in Genesis 19:4-9 we read further: "But before they (= Lot's family and his two guests [namely two angels]) lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know (have sexual intercourse with) them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow (viz. Lot) came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge (over us): now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon (against) the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door."

From the intercession Abraham made for Sodom and Gomorra for the sake of Lot, we understand that (in God's eyes) no righteous people lived in these two cities at all, except for Lot's family. Both cities were ruled by a crazy (or deranged) form of homosexuality: men as well as women (also called lesbians) who deformed their views of life, and who put their stamp on the daily and economic life. Jesus referred to Luke 17 verse 28 for this.

And we see that also in **our** days homosexuality, of men as well as women, takes on unprecedented forms in number; and also that it is professed (more and more) shamelessly in public and through public channels. The immorality

of the days of Lot is spreading fast until one day they will have reached the same insane climax, which will be the reason that God will have to intervene by means of His terrible judgments, whereby this sinful world (with its sinful inhabitants) will be destroyed.

We can say with surety that the unrighteousness (in all areas) will increase tremendously in our days! For, after all, we hear (and see) nothing else nowadays than that man misbehaves in every way: Crime and violence are the order of the day; many people really have become **bestly** in all their doings. And this extreme way of thinking and living of present-day man also penetrates the Church. Through lack of watchfulness of the Church of Jesus Christ unfortunately many Christians are contaminated hereby, because of which they lose the true love for their Lord and Savior. Verily, this (very much) increasing unrighteousness forms a great irritation for and in the Church of the last days!

3. The spiritual pressure of the increasing persecutions and oppressions.

17 verse 31-33: *"In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."*

Let us also investigate the corresponding texts of this word of scripture in the Gospels after Matthew and Mark to (be able to) understand what the Lord means by this advice. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 24:15-22) "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment... But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days" (Mark 13:14-20).

Here it therefore refers to a time wherein the "abomination of desolation" will rule (dominate) "in the holy place". What is the "abomination of desolation"? What is meant by "in the holy place"? Will this be a temple rebuilt by the Jews? To God it is an "abomination" when someone who used to be holy (again) falls into sin, and then, knowingly, continues in that sin.

So the Jewish leaders formed "an overspreading of abominations" (see Daniel 9:27), namely an abominable part of His people; because they continued to bring (fulfill) the sacrifices of the Old Testament, despite the supernatural signs the Lord God also showed them: namely the tearing of the very thick veil (i.e. the curtain that [before] separated the Holy Place from the Holy of holies) in the temple, the moment that Jesus died on the cross of Calvary (for the atonement of our sins); as well as the great earthquake (Matthew 27:51); and, of course, His resurrection from the dead, of which they heard through the testimony of the Roman guards (Matthew 28:11-15). But despite all these supernatural signs they, knowingly, continued in their rejection of the blood of **the Lamb** of God (that could cleanse everyone who will from all sin), and continued to prefer (the offering of) the blood of oxen and billy goats; and in God's eyes this is a great abomination!

But also the antichrist is an abomination in God's eyes, because he will be a "christ" (namely an anointed one of God), who is fallen into sin, even if he would hide this sin at first. This therefore is the reason the Scriptures count him among all those who commit "hidden iniquity" (2 Thessalonians 2:7), by which they show that they, knowingly, reject the (New Testament) sacrifice of Jesus and the purification by His blood, and thus prefer service to satan.

The texts discussed here of this chapter in Luke, therefore refer primarily to the days wherein the antichrist will rule (dominate) and, according to the prophecy of Paul, will sit as a god in the then rebuilt temple at Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:4). It will be a period of (very great) oppressions, for which God very clearly warns us here; a period with will develop into that never before known "Great Tribulation", the "short" 3½ year period wherein the antichrist will rule over all the earth!

It is important, that His people will then have been freed from each material bond, so that, at their flight from the persecutor, there will be no desire at all anymore to return to save their (valuable) possessions. How terrible such a (sudden) flight must be, when mothers despair greatly concerning the fate of their babies and or (little) children they have (had) to leave in a rush. "Pray", saith the Lord, "that your flight be not in the winter", namely in barren weather circumstances. Jesus warns us, that the same not happen to us that overcame Lot's wife, because her heart remained back with her possessions at Sodom. For punishment she was turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Let us therefore long to be delivered by the Lord from each bond with this earthly life, before that terrible time arrives; that we will have made up our mind to completely be dependent on Him.

In Matthew 24:9-11 we are also warned against this terrible time, with the (great) tribulations resulting from it, which shall come over the whole world, and which already now is experienced by Christians in a.o. communist and Islamic countries: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and **ye shall be hated** of all nations **for My name's sake**. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many!"

The escape of the perfect ones.

Before this difficult period begins, it is necessary that we are already purified and sanctified in such a way by the workings of the Holy Spirit, that we – despite all temptation, deceit and oppression – be part of God's **perfect** Bride-church (Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 12:1); for only those who are without spot or wrinkle, those who are holy and blameless, will be (able to be) saved in and by God's omnipotence in that special place in the desert determined by God, where the serpent (i.e. the satan) cannot harm her (Revelation 12:6 and 14); she will be "kept" there for the duration of that horrifying time of the Great Tribulation. (Compare also the promises given to Philadelphia with this – see Revelation 3:10). All the remaining (sincere) believers, namely "the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (see Revelation 12:17), but who have not yet reached the measure of God's fullness; all those countless many, will be killed martyrs under the (satanic) reign of the antichrist (Revelation 7:9-17)!

In the last verses of Luke 17 concerning the **acceptance**, we are told about those the Lord Jesus has been able to completely deliver; namely the **acceptance** as a member of the Bride of the Lamb; or put differently: unto the partaking of His marriage. By His works of grace He could cleanse them of every stain or wrinkle of sin (Ephesians 5:26-27), because they were completely open to it by their faith in the finished work on Calvary.

17 verse 34-37: *"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."*

The one shall be taken, and the other one left... and this will happen (simultaneously) over the whole earth, where it will be day on the one side, and night on the other. This is also the reason why there is talk of a bed (night); and at the same time labor (day). Where the ones that are left will be, we know; namely in that world where the antichrist rules then, but the question is where the ones that are taken to be members of the Bride, will be **gathered**. The Lord Jesus tells us here that they will be gathered "like eagles" in His spiritual Body, the Bride of the Lamb; they will partake in the marriage of the Lamb.

Chapter 18

The purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh" (Part VII)

In and by Christ, we must be willing to be cleansed of the sin of prayerlessness.

In the chapters 12 up to and including 17 we have seen how the sin lodges in the deepest and finest fibers of our being; and this goes for every Christian! But we also know that our Lord Jesus Christ, by the offering of His body on the cross at Calvary, **once and for all** brought deliverance from all sins and powers of sin (Hebrews 10:10b; 1 Peter 2:24). By this sacrifice He gave us **the** way unto life, that we might escape all sin and darkness and might have communion with God, because the veil – which indicated the separation between God and man in the Tabernacle, and was (and is) pointing to our sinful flesh – was torn because of the offering of His atoning death (Hebrews 10:19-20; Matthew 27:51a); whereby the (direct) contact with God became possible again for each person who believes in Jesus and His sacrifice for us.

In the light of the Israeli Tabernacle we must see these chapters in the sign of this veil, torn for us (which points to Jesus Who gave His life for us). We, too, must, willingly and thankfully, undergo this "way of the cross", namely the breaking down of our old, sinful life – by the inner, powerful workings of His Spirit and blood – that Romans 6:5 become a living reality in our life: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection".

We will now have a closer look at the last one of all sins a Christian must be delivered from. This sin, to un-anointed eyes, may seem small, but for God it is a very great obstacle, for because of this He cannot grant us the **fullness** of the glory of His nature; namely union with His holy, true and merciful Being. For sins, however small in our eyes, separate us from our God! "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, **that he will not hear**" (Isaiah 59:2). The indicated last sin is the sin of **prayerlessness**. For it is a matter of the highest urgency to put all of this sinful being of ours **completely** in the hands of our faithful Redeemer and Savior. With David we must pray: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). If we sincerely desire this He will investigate our entire being and show us our sins and shortcomings, that we feel them as a burden, because of which we all too eagerly would lay them down at His feet; that He wash us clean in His precious and dear blood! Then we will experience His deliverance in our heart and life and will shout for joy before His countenance, because we will know by then that we are freed from the pressure and demonic compulsion of sin. For, "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (of [the power of] sin)" (John 8:36).

Let us now see **how** we must come to God in prayer, and which obstacles there are (may be); because of which our prayers shrink to quick prayers. Yes, because of which we even go through life prayerless, (thus without God)... Despite the fact that this subject was already discussed at length in Chapter 11, it appears that the Holy Spirit finds it necessary after all to touch on it again here.

We must pray with perseverance until we receive an answer.

18 verse 1-8: *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (spiritually); Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not (help her) for a (long) while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long (is patient) with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find (true) faith on the earth?"*

In this parable we are confronted with a widow who goes to the judge to seek justice, because her opponent did her wrong. But the judge was unjust and would not hear her. But, this widow clung to this judge like a bulldog. And, being wearied by this persevering woman, he finally administered justice. By this parable the Lord wants to teach us to display the same kind of perseverance in our prayers, until, in answer to our prayers, we are granted grace by our God.

We must put the sins the Lord showed up in our conscience at the foot of His cross; confronting God with the promises of His own Word. Let us thus, filled with a sincere desire for God's justice, pray unto God with perseverance, pleading with Him to, after His own holy promise, answer us because we are willing to be completely cleansed, and want to become as pure as He is. And we are to continue praying until He fills us with jubilant faith by the assurance that He heard our continual prayer. If we remain faithful to Him, we shall find that He leads us in the full answer to our sincere prayer. For, He wants to make us pure, as white as snow, as white as white wool (Isaiah 1:18)!

(Very soon) there will be a time when Christians with such persevering prayer life will be persecuted. The "wise ones" among them will be led away (and kept in) the wilderness (see Revelation 12:6 and 14), but the "foolish ones" among them (the remnant of her seed – see Revelation 12:17) will have to go through the Great Tribulation, because they have not reached the fullness of Christ. And during this Great Tribulation they will be killed by the antichrist (see Revelation 11:1-2; 20:4). When Jesus thought of this, He sighed: "But when the Son of man cometh, shall he find (true) faith on the earth?"

We often still sin by showing the opposite of persevering prayer; maybe because we are (too) soon disappointed if our prayer is not immediately answered. This might also be the reason why our prayers often shrink to quick prayers. Let us pray the Lord for just such a persevering heart as the widow's in above parable. Does not nature teach us that no new life will come without patient pregnancy and labor pains? Likewise that NEW LIFE of God shall not be given us without this patient waiting (expecting) and the labor pains, whereby the wrestling prayer is meant, as Jacob did (see Genesis 32:24-26)!

We must pray with a penitent heart.

18 verse 9-14: *"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in them-selves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather (more) than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

Both prayers remind us of the offerings of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-5). Like Cain offered the (best) fruits of **his** harvest to God, so this Pharisee pleaded on the ("good") works of **his** righteousness. And like Abel, especially because of his awareness of sin, only pleaded on the blood of the **substitute offering** of the sacrificial animal, so this publican only prayed to God for grace because he was aware of his sinful state.

Because of the added word "rather" (in our bible translation) by the translator (verse 14) the impression is created that the Pharisee who prayed so haughtily, was also justified by God. But this is impossible, for such a haughty prayer will **never** receive God's approval and blessing, just as Cain did not receive it! We, too, should never appear before God's face with a "holier-than-thou attitude" with regard to our fellow brothers and sisters. Were we not **all** pulled out of the mire of sin? Not for nothing it is written that the one who thinks to be standing (strong, spiritually), must watch out that he does not fall himself. Is not everything, that is really good, really righteous, really noble and really loving, from Him? Would it be right that we exalt ourselves regarding the things which are not of ourselves, but which were given to us by God's grace? It is Jesus Christ, and Him alone, Who should receive all honor and glory. For, when we spread the fragrance of (divine) righteousness, then this is not of ourselves (otherwise it would be **selfrighteousness**), but it is the fragrance of the Rose of Saron (see Song of Solomon 2:1), whereby is indicated Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom, Who by His grace will flower (and grow) **in** us.

Let us always be willing to stand before our God in a "Lazarus condition" – namely "begging" for spiritual food, that we grow spiritually, whereby He will be able to let us walk in and by His grace – but never with (spiritual) pride, such as that rich fool in the parable of the "rich man and poor Lazarus in Luke 16:19-25, who, because of this, opened his eyes in hell!

We must pray like a child.

18 verse 15-17: *"And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them, but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."*

Just like a child we must believe everything concerning the Kingdom of God. We must have the faith and trust a child has in its parents. How happily and trusting a child can be when someone promises it something. Our relationship with God, too, must be one of childlike dependence and affection. For, a child blindly trusts that which its father says or promises. "My father said it and therefore **it is so!**" When we have **such** a heart's condition with regard to our heavenly Father, we will receive all the promises from God!

We must watch that our possession and all other matters which relate to this earthly life, do not form an obstacle in our prayer life.

18 verse 18-30: *"And a certain ruler asked him saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit ETERNAL LIFE? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, of wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."*

Although Jesus Himself was the Son of God, and thus (a part of) God Himself, yet He put Himself in the same position as a human being. He came to this earth as the "Son of man", and therefore called Himself not good, but said that God alone (in the true sense of the word) is good.

And although this rich ruler, from his youth up, obeyed the law of charity, yet he felt he was missing something in order to inherit ETERNAL LIFE. God did not give that commandment in the Old Covenant (namely the ten commandments according to Exodus 20:1-17, and Deuteronomy 5:6-21) to His people in order that they be saved by that law (otherwise Jesus' sacrifice on the cross of Calvary would not have been necessary); but that His people, by that law, come to humility (subjection, meekness) and awareness of sin; that they by way of symbolic animal sacrifices which all point towards the great sacrifice of Jesus, God's Lamb, still receive His grace.

In order to obtain this meekness Jesus had to point out to this rich ruler the sin, which, without him noticing it, had him in its grip, namely his worship of the mammon (i.e. the god [idol] of money and possessions); his preference of the mammon. For the security of his earthly life he did not draw on the rich source of God's works of grace – which already fell to God's people in the Old Covenant through animal sacrifices – but from the awareness of his (earthly) wealth, his great amount of money and his possessions. How completely different it was with wealthy Abraham, who did not trust in his possessions, but who expected the city of God, with the firm (and thus trustworthy) foundation, of which God Himself is the Architect and the Builder (Hebrews 11:10; Revelation 21:10-27).

The spirit of this "rich" ruler had to be loosed from this great bondage to money and things. And, because he thought he had to do this in his own strength, he went away disappointed. The disciples, too, thought the same and uttered their disappointment with the words: "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus had said, **also** to this "rich" ruler: "Take up your cross!" (Mark 10:21). But these words of Jesus they then did not yet understand. Only when, after Jesus' death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit had come down in His Church – whereby the gifts of the Spirit of a.o. wisdom and knowledge (regarding God's Word) were revealed (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11) – could (and can) the depth of this word of grace be understood. For it is only through obedience to the commandment: "take up your cross" – whereby is meant that we must die to our old and sinful ego and lusts, and this is only possible through His Spirit's works of grace, our repentance and our faith in His blood which was shed **for us** – that we can be delivered from all (sinful) works, bands and lusts of the flesh. It goes without saying that we must readily and gratefully accept these divine works in our heart and life. But not only this; the believer must **also** be willing to share the NEW (resurrection) LIFE of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, and be willing to lead a life in union with Him; as the head has with the body; as the bride has with her bridegroom!

Jesus stressed the (often) idolatrous bond of money and material possession by saying: "...it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." In other words: this demonic force is **very** strong. There are not many rich people who would prefer the wealth of Jesus over their earthly possessions! Therefore Jesus says here that the chance of a camel going through the eye of a needle is greater than a rich man (spiritually seen) coming loose from his riches. (The "eye of a needle" is the small door opening beside the large city gate. When this large city gate was closed at night, this small door was opened and guarded.) Let us pray that God be especially gracious to such people that their eyes, too, be opened unto the riches of God's grace, which we may find and receive in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Once they are delivered from (the power of) their earthly possessions, they too will be prepared to serve the Lord Jesus, and be willing to dedicate their possessions with joy to the service of the Kingdom of God! And we must thank and praise God for such a changed human life, for it is His work in the heart and life of (us) people!

Only through a fervent and sincere prayer life, confession of sins and total subjection can we really share the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

18 verse 31-34: *"Then he took unto him the twelve (disciples), and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge (lashed*

with a sort of whip) him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Jesus knew in detail what was awaiting Him, and, also for Him, this would not have been easy, even though He knew why He must undergo all this. He, Who was without sin, it is true voluntarily, had to die on the cross for **our** sins that we inherit ETERNAL LIFE in Him. He, Who was without sin, had to experience the horrible results of **our** sins in His body, **literally** until death followed. The mocking and satisfied look of His executioners (who were inspired by satan) already grinned into His face. For He, the Prince of LIFE, had to give Himself over into the claws of him who (literally) sows death and corruption. But, especially by this sacrifice of His life, He would finish off (deliver the deathblow to) death and also satan, the master of death; in order to bring to all who, by His offering of grace, become children of God the (eternal) victory over sin and death, which He won for them all by the sacrifice of His life. Therefore He could courageously meet his death on the cross with deep resignation, yes even with joy; in absolute obedience to God the Father! As we can also read in Hebrews 12:1-2 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God**".

99

This laying aside of (i.e. [voluntarily] dying to) all sin and lusts of our sinful "flesh", this going on the way (of the cross) with resignation (patiently) which – in Jesus Christ – was proposed to us, this truly sharing in His suffering and death, but also in His resurrection, can never be our portion without a heartfelt prayer life, without confession of our sins, subjection and devotion of all of our heart and all of our soul! Let us, in searching prayer (and fasting) (be willing to) seek Jesus; His great grace and wonderful works in our heart and life!

Only by a sincere and persevering prayer life do we get insight regarding the ETERNAL redemption plan and Word of God.

18 verse 35-43: *"And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."*

We read here about a blind man who sat by the way to Jericho, begging. He persistently called for Jesus Messiah (Son of David), despite the fact that they tried to silence him. We see here his **persevering** faith in Jesus, in the fact that He was the (promised) Messiah, and that it was in His power to heal him of his blindness. Because he urgently and persistently prayed (begged) Jesus for healing, he received his sight.

Let us act the same way in order to be healed of our spiritual blindness regarding the ETERNAL redemption plan of God and the mysteries of His Word, that He anoint our eyes with eye salve, that we see (the spiritual things of God)... (Revelation 3:18b). Has the Holy Spirit not been given to us for a teacher to teach us how we may arrive at righteousness? (Joel 2:23a, and John 14:26).

We have now had a closer look at the sevenfold cleansing of God's Holy Place (namely our spiritual temple; see a.o. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Ephesians 2:21), which were shown us in these seven chapters of the Gospel of Luke. A cleansing which was also already prophesied by Daniel (8:14), but which will only be fulfilled in the hearts and lives of His Bride(church) in the end-time.

We now live in the time that this cleansing (or justification) of God's Holy Place is taking place in the hearts and lives of those who sincerely long for it. The Holy Spirit now is brooding (like a bird to hatch **new life**) over the hearts of God's children in order to build out of them, out of all who sincerely wish for it, a Church without "spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27), **and** in order to lead this group of God's perfect ones – in whom the end of all the (sinful) flesh is achieved by the powerful works of His Spirit, His blood and His Word; and in whom also "the measure of the stature of the **fullness** of Christ" is fulfilled by the glorious indwelling and revelation of His nature and being (Ephesians 4:13) – as a pure virgin to her Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2), that He marry her at that wonderful divine wedding feast; all who will be part of the Bride of Christ, here on earth, in this end-time (Matthew 25:10; Revelation 19:7). Let us pray that our Lord Jesus Christ – by His Holy Spirit and Word – will soon (be able to) form His Bride(church), and that she will be ready for the task unto which she is called.

Maranatha (= The Lord is coming soon)!

The connection between Luke, chapters 12 up to and including 18, and the seven churches of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3.

Luke 12	I	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all hypocrisy in our heart and life, and pursue the new experience of "the first love" towards Jesus.	Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) They lost the first love.
Luke 13	II	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all partial or total un-repentance and unfaithfulness.	Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11) They are faithful.
Luke 14	III	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all worldly-mindedness.	Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17) They are world-minded.
Luke 15	IV	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all self-will and all idolatrous errors regarding His service and teachings.	Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29) They are idolatrous.
Luke 16	V	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all unholy desires for earthly things and possessions (such as money, women, fame, etc.).	Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) They are materialistic and content with self.
Luke 17	VI	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all sinful acts and/or words with regard to our neighbor and which lead to sin and irritation; we must learn from Him to live after His love, mercy and grace.	Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13) They have (sincere) brotherly love.
Luke 18	VII	In and by Christ, we must be (willing to be) cleansed of all prayerlessness.	Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) They are spiritually dead and lead a prayerless life.

Part III

The life in 'the holy of holies' of the marriage child of God

Chapter 19

God's (royal) priests know an absolute devotion to their King.

101

Worldly-mindedness must be a victory gained for a laborer of God.

By nature man is worldly-minded. Therefore an unbeliever can only perceive the visible and material things with his senses. Their senses are blind to the supernatural things, the spirit realm. Their intellectual capacity, their "common sense", is based only upon these sensory perceptions. This therefore is the reason they could **never** find God and the supernatural things with their intellect alone. However, their spirit is capable, once they (start) to believe the truth regarding this spiritual world and the supernatural things of God, to make contact with God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can deliver them (completely) from all forms of bondage to tangible (and thus visible) things and from a way of life which is solely focused on this earth. Through faith the born-again and now spiritual person can receive a completely **new** existence from God, as well as divine powers and inspirations from the Holy Spirit for the life and the ministry he is called to. In 1 Corinthians 1:30 we read the following: "But of Him (i.e. God) are ye **IN** Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us: **wisdom**, and **righteousness**, and **sanctification**, and **redemption**."

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, brought us **in the first place redemption**. The "redemption" (from sin and guilt) therefore does not take place by one act or another, but by a **person**; namely by the second revelation form of God: the Son of God. Yes, **all** divine works of grace are given to us in and by Him, and this therefore is the reason John, in his first general missionary letter, writes: "**He that hath the Son hath life**; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (5:12)!

Again: Only Jesus can deliver us from all material bonds, from all earth-bound acts and from all emphasis a man may put on the treasures of this earth. And not only this, but He also gives us an ETERNAL treasure in the **knowledge of Him** and in the **relationship with Him**, whereby we receive that (divine) love, peace, and joy, but also His divine strength to be able to live in that divine justice and mercy. "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and they exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1b), whereby is meant that God wants to be our Protector, and wants to be an eternal Possession unto us.

"Yea doubtless, and I count **all things** but loss for the **excellency of the knowledge** of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung (garbage), that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8). In this light we must view the new standpoint Zacchaeus had taken regarding earthly possessions, after our Lord Jesus had found him and granted him godliness.

19 verse 1-9: *"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son (of the generation) of Abraham."*

Here is Zacchaeus with a strong desire to see Jesus. God had drawn him unto Himself because He knew his deepest being. For, no one comes to Jesus unless the Father has drawn him (John 6:44).

In order to be able to see Jesus properly Zacchaeus had climbed a wild fig tree... That was very appropriate, for his life, too, was like that of the wild fig tree: wild through sins and stubbornness. That was also the reason Jesus asked him to come out of that fig tree. When Jesus calls us unto Him, we, too, must humble ourselves in confession of our sins that He deliver us from them. And when we obey then He will become to us a Deliverer (of sin and guilt). "**If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free (of sin and guilt) indeed**" (John 8:36).

Let us, too, experience personally that Jesus Christ is our Deliverer; because the burden (and the power) of sin has fallen off us! We first must believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, and also that this was done **personally** for us. We also must believe in **Jesus' omnipotence** to deliver us (completely) from sin. That is the legal side (the promise) of our redemption. Then, by God's work of grace, the **deliverance**, as a real experience, will come over us. This is the **realistic** side of our deliverance. First there was **faith**, now reality.

As Jesus' disciple Zacchaeus laid his life on the altar of burnt offering to die to his old life. So his old publican life, a life full of stinginess and deceit, could be **burned to ashes** by God; because of which Zacchaeus was renewed, and was called a son of Abraham, a son to whom salvation was brought by God's work(s) of grace.

19 verse 10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus said to Zacchaeus that He was to stay in his house that day; the same way Jesus, after He delivered us from all earthly lusts, comes to make His dwelling within our heart and life.

He had freed Zacchaeus from the idol mammon; and the same way He will free us, if we sincerely want to, from each idol and each idolatrous attraction of sin, fear and worldly-mindedness! When He enters into our heart and life, the spiritual death (and thus satan) must go. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

A true laborer of God receives from Him the spiritual ability (such as gifts, powers, etc.) to – in and by Him – work with Him.

19 verse 11-13: "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy (do business with this) till I come (back)."

Jesus was near to Jerusalem and His disciples thought, that He was about to rule as a King over the earthly Jerusalem. Therefore He told them the parable of a King-to-be, Who **first had to leave** for a distant country (namely heaven) to receive the Kingship there (from His Father), **to return** afterwards as a ruling King. This king-to-be (future king) had ten servants. The number 10 in the bible is the number of fullness (perfection); **all** His servants throughout **all** ages are meant here. (Compare: "The Kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins" – see Matthew 25:1a). Each servant He called unto Himself, received a pound, symbol of the divine gift (the revelations of the Spirit – see 1 Corinthians 12:1-11), to be able to really serve Him.

19 verse 14-27: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury (interest)? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

In order to receive a ministry in the service of the Lord, we need the divine gift of sharing His anointing – namely the revelation of the indwelling Spirit of God – in order to build and perfect the Church. But, before there can be any talk of the revelation of the indwelling Spirit of God, God's Spirit must first be able to come and live in His temple, His dwelling place, whereby first the body of the believer is meant. We can read this in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "What? know ye not that **your body** is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's". The Lord also warns us in John 15:5b "...**for without me ye can do nothing!**" Nothing regarding the eternal things of God. We are only **co-workers** with God (1 Corinthians 3:9). He determines the work we are to do in Him. Us fits an eternal: "**What would You, Lord, that I do?**" (Luke 17:10).

The great line in this labor (in, by and for God) we find in Ephesians 4 verses 11-13: "And **he** (God) gave **some**, apostles; and **some**, prophets; and **some**, evangelists, and **some**, pastors and teachers; (1) For the perfecting of the saints, (2) for the work of the ministry, (3) for the edifying of the body of Christ: (4) Till we **all** come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The Holy Spirit's work, in and through God's laborers, must bring the Church of the LIVING God to **unity of doctrine** (namely: knowing the **real truth** concerning God's plan of redemption, renewal and perfecting of mankind), and by the knowledge of this unto **union with God** (namely: knowing Him, because He is IN us, and we IN Him) until "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" in all is reached, whereby is meant the **perfection** in Christ; where Ephesians 3:18-19 speaks of: "(that ye) may be able to comprehend with the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled with ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD.**"

Let us now return to above parable. The Spirit of Christ, symbolized by the pound, has come to dwell in His temple (which is, and must be, in our body – see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). What do you do with Him? Do you let Him and His guidance freely work in you, or are you binding Him? We let Him free, when our spirit continues to serve Him by the sincere prayer of our soul: "**What would You, Lord, that I do?**"... without being in His way. We bind Him, when we let our own will guide us into labor for Him, and continue to live after the lusts and longings of our sinful flesh! This life after the flesh can also relate to our religious work. We then do something for Him highhandedly and by our own will. It is

something which is bound to be worthless to God. God cannot sanctify us by such a life in the flesh, let alone work through us! However, if we give Him the free hand in our heart and life, because our heart sincerely longs for this, then He is able to work mightily through us, that we be a blessing to others. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9a). This way we also meet Ephesians 2:10.

This then was the way the first (faithful) servant, who was called to account by his king. The pound he was entrusted with grew to ten pounds. This means that the measure of the Spirit in him grew ten times as big. And we know that in the bible, 10 is the number of fullness, of perfection. Do you want this? Do you wish to let God's Spirit grow and work freely in you, until at last He has brought you unto His fullness; until God's Spirit has brought you "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"? This means that God finally has His way for the rest of your life; that God, in His fullness, comes to make His dwelling in your heart and life! (Ephesians 3:19b). He will then put the seal of His love and mercy on your life, and work through you in His perfect, redeeming and sanctifying power. Then you will be able to say with Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth 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" (Galatians 2:20).

Soon a perfect revelation of Christ will become reality in and through us: His desire has become our desire; His will our will; His thoughts our thoughts. For this will happen when He will have made His Bride(church) without spot or wrinkle (i.e. perfect) (Ephesians 5:27). It is because of this that Obadiah, speaking of this time, prophesied: "And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (type of the worldly-minded Christian); and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (verse 21). Christ will be able to reveal Himself, and work, so powerfully **in** and **through** them that they can and will bring His people the full salvation of God like saviors. In the strength and in the Name of the Lord Jesus they will lead the Great Revival (namely the so-called Latter Rain period of the end-time), which will go all over the world. To God be all glory for this! Let us remember that this perfect sanctification in Christ is a **process**. Let us therefore **now** give **ourselves** completely, with heart and soul, to Christ.

With the second (faithful) servant the pound grew to five pounds. The number 5 in the bible is the symbol for the **reconciliation** with God, but also of the **deliverance** from all powers of darkness, and from all sinful and dead works (works in one's **own** strength) of the "old man". Here the five pounds of this second (faithful) servant typify a wonderful state of **holiness** which was brought about by the full **fire** of the Holy Spirit (see Isaiah 4:4, and Matthew 3:11-12), but not yet of perfection (the number 10) in Him.

If, in the light of the Israeli Tabernacle, the **Holiest of holy** is the type of the group represented by the first servant; the **Holy Place** is for the group of God's children represented by this second servant. There were **five** pillars which bore the "door" of the Tabernacle (type of the Lord Jesus Christ and His five wounds). And this "door" led to the Holy Place of the Israeli Tabernacle. The 3-partite division and order of the Israeli Tabernacle is as follows: First the Forecourt, then the Holy Place, and next the Holiest of holy. They are symbols of successively: the Paradise (where all deceased believers go after their death); the heavenly Canaan (God's true church here on earth = God's heaven on earth); and the New Jerusalem (the [Bride]church, the wife of the Lamb, coming down from heaven – see Revelation 21:9-27). That, which we usually call "heaven", in fact relates to these three (different) areas of the Kingdom of God.

When He comes into our life, we must let God's Spirit cleanse us of all dead works of the old, sinful man, that we, being cleansed in Him, shine His light in this world, just like the sevenfold candlestick did in the Holy Place of the Israeli Tabernacle. Let us not put away the gift (namely the "pound") we received from God in a sweat cloth like that third (unfaithful) servant did; whereby we push away the Holy Spirit in our life in order to, in our own strength, work ourselves into a sweat for the Lord, and therefore de-activate God's Spirit by the (spiritually seen) dead works of our "flesh", namely works in sin and self-will!

How many children of God, although baptized with the Holy Spirit, do their **own** works, and labor in their own, human strength! Such Christians do not have themselves sanctified by Him either, but "do their best" to seem righteous in the eyes of their neighbors, as if they could earn heaven by **their** works (in their own strength and after their own insight). In Romans 10:2-4 we can read: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, **have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God**. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth".

Many Christians try, with set jaws, to walk the "holy way of Christ" (see Isaiah 35:8), while He testified: "My yoke is soft, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). This stubbornness in the service of the Lord is also depicted by the church of Ephesus in the book of Revelation (2:1-7).

We must subject ourselves to Him alone, with a completely sincere heart, and devote our life completely to Him. Then **He** will (be able to) work through us (Ephesians 2:10). Therefore it is no honor to us. It is **not** our righteousness, but **His** righteousness, **not** our love, but **His** love, which must work in us. As Paul testified: "The love **of Jesus** constrains us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). When you work **yourself**, you perspire (sweat). The "pound" was wrapped in a sweat cloth by the third (unfaithful) servant. He received God's Holy Spirit, yet he worked in his **own strength**. And, as we read, the returned king spoke His judgment over him; he should have given the "pound" to the bank, if he did not know what to do with it. The bank here symbolizes God Himself. He should have come to God and should have put this gift in God's hands, in absolute subjection. Then God would have been able to lead him into this rest in the labor for Him, "practicing usury" with this pound, namely winning souls, etc.!

We also know what will happen to the enemies of King Jesus: they will taste eternal death, eternal damnation, just like satan and his angels. Therefore, beloved, let us pursue the in-filling of His Holy Spirit, after that He delivered us from the lusts of this world; let us be willing to be a **co-worker** with God, then He will be with us until the end of this world.

Picture of perfect servanthood to Jesus Christ.

19 verse 28-31: *"And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him; thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him."*

Jesus went to Jerusalem, where He, voluntarily, would be sacrificed as the Passover Lamb of God. He did this in **absolute obedience** to His Father. We can read this in Hebrews 10 verses 5-7: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

So He went over the Mount of Olives and saw the city of Jerusalem laying before Him; only the Kidron valley still separated Him from this town. Closer to Him, on the slope of the Mount of Olives, Bethphage lay before Him. He knew a disciple lived there who owned an ass's foal; and He needed that colt, because, before being crucified, He wanted to make a triumphant entry, as a King; as was prophesied by Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (9:9). In this story our attention is drawn towards this foal of an ass, a foal no man had ever sat on. This animal is the symbolic picture of the Bride(church) of Christ, who bears on her heart Christ alone, because he wants to serve Him alone, in complete surrender of her heart and life. "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib (according to the literal Jewish translation: my voluntary princely people)" (Song of Solomon 6:12). By these "chariots" are meant the chariots whereon the Warrior (i.e. the Spirit of the Lord) is standing when He, through us, fights sin in the church and in the world.

The Bride(church) will be glorified with Christ, but, like Him, she will first have to go through the process of the cross of "Calvary". A heavy task of trials and martyrdom is awaiting the Church (Revelation 6:9-11; 17:6), but also a crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12:1), a symbol of (divine) labor in apostolic strength, when she learns to share the victory of the Lamb. Then she will have put on the entire armor (Ephesians 6:10-18), and she, together with Him, will be crowned with the divine crown of the Lamb at the Wedding. The Bride-church knows that she will be allowed to share this glory and crown with the Lamb, and she also expects that, because the Word of God has predicted it (Isaiah 60:1-2; Revelation 12:1). But she, like the Lamb of God, will first have to undergo heavy trials and suffering in order to go through this, purified.

Luke 19:32-35: *"And they that were sent went their way, and found (the colt) even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon."*

The owners of the ass's foal in this picture are characteristic of the powers of darkness, wherein man is born, and whereby he is bound to Satan, and thus to the power of the spiritual death. But when Christ claims us, people, from them – by our faith in Him and in His redemptive work on Calvary, beside our sincere repentance and subjection – they will have to let us go. For He has won the victory over them and is our new Lord of life. And He will lead us straight to the heavenly Jerusalem.

19 verse 36-38: *"And as he went (to Jerusalem), they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."*

When the crowd of disciples saw this, no doubt they remembered Zechariah's prophecy (9:9); all the more reason their very high-strung hearts burst out in a joyful and loud jubilation of "Hosannas (which means: hail, or save us)". They thought that at last the long-promised Kingdom of God would begin, and that Jesus, the Messiah, would be their new King; they expected Him to soon end the Roman rule and oppression, and become the new ruler over the whole world of those days. However, they expected an earthly (political and economical) kingdom instead of the **heavenly** Kingdom of God, which changes hearts and lives. They thought this, because they were (still) blind to the heavenly Kingdom of God, and to the atoning sacrifice on the cross, which Jesus, God's Lamb, still was to bring.

But above picture still has a wonderful aspect. For, when – by our repentance, subjection and devotion – we have followed His lead obediently, and in so doing, have come closer to God's throne of grace, then our praise will automatically swell to a tremendous joy and a loud jubilation. Where true praise lacks, the spirit is **not right!** For before His throne of grace there is **fullness of joy!** (Psalm 16:11). A real (sincere) Christian will (be able to) praise His Lord even under very difficult circumstances. Like Paul and Silas. We can read this in Acts 16 verse 25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas (imprisoned in the dark dungeon of Thyatira) prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."

The more **He** possesses **you**, the more wonderful your life will be, namely full of praise unto God!

19 verse 39-40: *"And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."*

Here there is a group of religious people, who outwardly **seemed** pious, but yet criticized other believers, when they exuberantly praise their Lord and Savior. They soon find that praise exaggerated, often because their own hearts are cold and dry. The Pharisees obviously were afraid that this triumphant reception of Jesus, within the walls of Jerusalem, would be the beginning of the end of their power. And this was also a clear sign that they, de-

spite their piety, were not **for** but **against** Jesus! They were terribly afraid and jealous of all attention for Jesus Christ. Are not (the human) flesh and (the divine) spirit always at war with each other? (Romans 8:5-8)

19 verse 41-44: *"And when he was come near (Jerusalem), he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (the time God took care of you)."*

Jesus grieved greatly over the Jewish people, because they caused God's judgment to come over them by rejecting Him, their Messiah. "He (Jesus) was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own (nation, people), and his own received him not" (John 1:10-11). "And this is the condemnation, that light (namely Jesus) is come into the world, and men loved darkness (viz. satan and his lies) rather than light (viz. Jesus and the truth), because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

This was the situation with the Jewish people of Jesus' days. Their leaders rather let themselves be led by occult motivations (satanic whisperings and insights of their own), and the people allowed themselves to be misled by their leaders. And this deception came forth from the fact that they, themselves, had not chosen for Jesus, the Light of the world. God could use only a small part of this nation, because they sincerely sought God; they were the ones that come to (truly) believe in Jesus Christ.

The leaders of the tribe of Judah (the so-called Jews – see note 1 on page 3) knew that they were dealing with the Son of God. We can gather that from Jesus' words of the parable of the evil husbandmen (see Matthew 21:37-39). But we can also gather that from the attitude of the chief priests and of the leaders of the Sanhedrin (the Supreme Court of Justice; the Jewish court of justice of Christ's time) at His resurrection; the fact that, for a lot of money, made an agreement with the guards, that had fled in fright, to say nothing about His resurrection, proves it. They preferred the darkness (viz. satan and his lies) over the light (viz. Jesus and the truth)! Therefore God's judgment came in the year 70 after Christ: Titus, the commander-in-chief of the Roman army, came with his armies and drove out and murdered many Jews, and made the remaining Jews a despised wandering nation; he also burned (down) their city and the temple, and, as predicted by Jesus, left no stone upon another. Above prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled then. And it will be only in the end-time in the last year-week (i.e. a period of seven years), when the fullness of the gentiles will have begun, that God again will take care of the Jewish people. And this will also take place by means of His two witnesses, namely Moses and Elijah, who will return to this earth (see Revelation 11:3-13. Compare also Matthew 23:38-39; Amos 9:11-12; Matthew 17:10-11 and Malachi 4:5-6).

Sooner or later God's judgment will also come over us, when we prefer the darkness (these are the works and influence of satan in our heart and life) over the light (than the divine life of Jesus in our heart and life); when we prefer to live in the darkness rather than **in the light of God!** Let us rather devote our heart and life to the work of God and His Kingdom, by sincere and complete repentance and subjection.

In complete dependence upon, and unity with, Christ let us labor to cleanse His (spiritual) temple, namely our heart and life.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, riding on the ass's colt, He was surrounded by a jubilant crowd of people, who thought He would establish His Kingdom that moment. He entered the temple grounds, and the people expected Him to proclaim publicly the Kingdom of God there, and that He would summon His people to a holy war against the Roman rulers. But... He did nothing of the kind! He did make a whip and drove out of the temple the traders who, note, traded in the temple.

19 verse 45-46: *"And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves."*

The people were clearly disappointed in their expectations. For they had expected a Messiah (Deliverer). Who would give them a better life, politically and economically; a Messiah Who would act militarily against the Roman oppressor. But Jesus advocated zealously the purity of the Temple (in our days the Church), as well as the purity of the temple of our heart. For our heart must completely belong to Him, that He dwell and reign in it (viz. rule, as He is our Lord and Master).

Let us, in close union with Him (we in Him and He in us) act the same way. Let us also not have any other goal than to lead His Church to the fullness in Him, in and by His strength. And this is only possible when those, who lead His Church, by God's grace and calling, and thus by His guidance and wisdom, bring her to the complete salvation in, and subjection to, Him (Ephesians 3:11-16).

19 verse 47-48: *"And he taught daily (the remaining days before His imprisonment and crucifixion) in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him."*

Despite all opposition from the powers of darkness and from the people who (by the power of satan in their life), oppose us (His Church), Jesus will (with and by His Holy Spirit working through His servants) also thus teach us to lead His Church to the full and perfect knowledge of salvation in Him.

The life of the bride of Christ will be in deep and perfect UNION with God

We must view this chapter in the light of the Ark of the Covenant (also called the Covenant chest) which stood in the Holiest of holy of the Israeli Tabernacle. The lid of the Ark (or chest) is called the "mercy seat", where also the two cherubim (statues of angels) stood. This lid with the two cherubim was formed from **one** lump of pure gold. The two cherubim **and** the mercy seat are symbolic for our almighty God. The mercy seat as the type for the Son and the two cherubim as the type for the Father and the Holy Spirit. This lid forms a complete and well-closing unity with the chest itself, which, although made of acacia wood, was covered with leaf gold; which points towards the Bride(church) of Christ; who seen from the **outside** is living in deep and perfect union with God in His threefold revelation. It is a union which is emphasized by the two stone tablets of the law, the ten commandments (type for the inward workings of the justice of the Father-God); and the gold cruse with manna (type for the inward workings of the mercy of the Son of God); and also Aaron's staff, which had budded (type for the inward workings of the omnipotent union with the Holy Spirit of God), which were in the Covenant chest. These three objects depict the deep **inner** union of the **Bride** with the almighty God. A description of these are to be found in Exodus 25:10-22 and Hebrews 9:3-5. It is like the Word says in Matthew 9:15 that we must live in this dark world as "children of the Bride chamber" (literal translation from the Greek), namely **in absolute union with Him alone!**

Christ, the High Priest, lives in deep and perfect UNION with the Father, and acts exclusively after the will of His Father.

20 verse 1-8: *"And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."*

In the previous chapter we saw Jesus, urged by the holy (and purifying) fire of His Father, cleanse the temple of the Jews – because they, by their (unholy) desires for material gain, traded even in the temple, thus in God's house – in order to restore this temple in its original purpose, that it be **a house of prayer** again.

In this temple He clearly acted as someone with power, much to the irritation of those who had the leadership. In their eyes Jesus' behavior was very inappropriate. The piqued and furious chief priests and elders, who had ignored this trade, and who most probably profited from it themselves, demanded that the Lord Jesus give them an explanation of His behavior; they wished to know who had given Him the authority for this action. The Lord, however, only was willing to answer their question if they would answer His counter-question. He associated the problem raised by them with the baptism of John. For, if they believed this baptism to be of God, then they would also heed what took place at Jesus' water baptism, whereby a voice from heaven testified: "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). Then they would have known that He acted in the authority of His heavenly Father. But, because of their cunning considerations, of which we read in above (bible)verses, they said: "We do not know whence this is (viz. the baptism of John)". Therefore the Savior did not inform these (spiritually) digressed leaders either that the fire of God's holy wrath urged Him thereto.

Our Savior had (and has) no other desire than to **always** live in deep and perfect union with the Father. "As the living Father hath sent me, and **I live by the Father**: so he that eateth me (i.e. who partakes of the holy Supper [symbol of the eating (sharing) His flesh and blood], whereby we acknowledge to also want to die to our old, earthly-minded life), even he shall live by me" (read John 6:57-58). The same way we are to live in deep and perfect union with our Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus lived in such deep dependence on the Father that He testified: "...The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19b). "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). So, too, are we to live; in the same dependence and servitude to our Lord Jesus Christ. Never should our will be done, but always His!

God's laborers must serve Him in deep union with, and devotion to Him and in His (perfect) love.

Jesus wanted (and still wants) all God's laborers to work with the same love, devotion and sense of unity as His. How far from this perfect image, however, were the spiritual leaders in Jesus' days! He showed their deep (spiritual) deterioration, their works full of egocentric motivations and their rebellion against God in the following parable.

20 verse 9-17: *"Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the lord of the vineyard,*

What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone (symbol for Jesus) which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner (viz. an indispensable cornerstone)?"

These (spiritually) digressed laborers of God's vineyard served **themselves** instead of the Lord. They wanted to profit (a lot) from their "religious" labor. They passed over the most important goal, namely to bring people to repentance, subjection and obedience to God; and instead thereof they pursued selfish goals, such as material gain and power, a good position, honor and applause among their fellow believers.

They silenced the prophets which were sent by God in a despicable manner! And finally they crucified God's only Son, God had sent them! Therefore God took away His "vineyard" (here: His work field) from them, and brought them into judgment. Because of this judgment (a.o.) Jerusalem was destroyed and burned by the Roman armies. Many of them were killed, or sold as slaves and banished from their home and land. Palestine (present-day Israel) was to be trodden upon (and thus taken possession of) by the gentiles through the ages, until the time of the end of this present world...

God then gave His "vineyard" to His people, (spiritually) born of the gentiles, from all the nations of this world, among which also the ten "lost tribes" were and still are (see note 1 on page 3). These new people He made into a Dwelling Place of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22), of which He is the Cornerstone (verse 17) **and** the Foundation, upon which this spiritual building rests. In other words: He was able to have a relationship with these people, in such a way that He has been able to live and work **in** and **through** them. And when the Jews would repent they would be added unto them (Romans 11:11-29).

20 verse 18: *"Whosoever shall fall upon that stone (symbol for Jesus) shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."*

Whosoever does not accept the Son of God, will stumble on Him, on this "Stone"; that person will come under the crushing judgment of God! And when God's judgment falls on them, then He will (have to) crush them! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the **living** God!" (Hebrews 10:31), "for our **God is a consuming fire!**" (Hebrews 12:29). But **this same fire** of God can cleanse us (completely), and is merciful to all them who truly repent unto Him and who, by faith in Him, give themselves over to Him, to from then on live in deep union with Him, and to serve Him sincerely. That our **spirit** always serve Him and be devoted to Him!

The internal conflict (the ambivalence) in the soul of the people of God.

20 verse 19-26: *"And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marveled at his answer, and held their peace."*

In this world God's people know a certain ambivalence. For, living in this world, God's people must also obey the government, which is put over them; also regarding the tax duty. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:1-7).

But **the spirit** of the child of God must **also** obey its **heavenly** King, and be (completely) devoted to Him. Our spirit must pay Him the spiritual temple tax. The temple tax among the people of Israel – which amounted to half a shekel, the so-called shekel of the sanctuary – depicts the relationship the people of God must have with Christ's (atoning) sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.

We read about this in Exodus 30:11-16: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, **to make an atonement for your souls**. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation (the tabernacle of the temple, now the Lord's Church); that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, **to make an atonement for your souls**."

This reconciliation with God will be our share when the total man within us, after body, soul and spirit, shares the sacrifice of Calvary and His resurrection. The so-called shekel of the sanctuary here forms a symbol for it. We must really be willing to relate to this sacrifice of Jesus Christ, (be willing) to share the suffering and dying of Christ, and thus be willing to die to our old and sinful life. And this is only possible when we confess our sins (over and over again), together with the sincere desire **to live out of Him** (completely) from then on. "For if we have been **planted together** in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5).

Let us sincerely desire to lose this earthly bondage – thus **every** bondage to material things and money; **every** worldly sense, and **each** semblance to the world in our contacts with others – by His inward, powerful workings; that we know Him in His resurrection power; in His heavenly walk and in **all** His heavenly blessings; **here on earth already!**

Therefore let us give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. And should a battle of motivations rage in our soul, let us ask Him for the strength and the courage to **always** choose for Him and His Kingdom!

Our body, too, must subject itself to God's (purifying) fire.

20 verse 27-40: *"Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that (future) world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the (burning) bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all **live** unto him. Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. And after that they durst not ask him any question at all."*

The Sadducees formed a priestly sect of distinguished and wealthy Jews of Jesus' days, who only believed in life on earth, in the life in this body. For them God's blessing meant: financial gain, prosperity and health. They denied the resurrection from the dead. Therefore they came to Jesus with their story of the woman and the seven men to show how absurd a resurrection was in their eyes. Because the life in this body to them was **the** life, as a logical result thereof sex had an important role in their life. But Jesus corrected their error. It is true that the (mortal) body perishes through death, but the human spirit, **the real man**, is an ETERNAL creature. Before God Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead persons, but for Him they are living spirits. For their spirits live in His Kingdom, and await the moment of the resurrection of the body, which will take place at Jesus' return. And the resurrected body is not subjected to sexual intercourse, but will be equal to the angels.

We must lay this sexual desire which God put in man in the hands of our Savior, as well as **all** other things; that they form no hindrance at our purification and sanctification and our devotion to Him. The dominion thereof, together with all other lusts of our body, so that it will not become an idol in our heart and life, He must destroy by His purifying and cleansing fire. Human strength and effort must not set the tone here (even though we should sincerely long for it); but, like all other things, it should solely happen by the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit, by His inward, divine work. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit!" (Zechariah 4:6). "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

We will become perfect by the relationship with Christ.

20 verse 41-44: *"And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord (God) said unto my Lord (Christ, the Son of God), Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?"*

Christ is the Son of David as far as His flesh is concerned (namely through [the ancestors of] Mary), but He is **also** the Son of God, because He came forth from Him out of **the eternity** of the past. Therefore He is the Lord to David, as well as for **each** child of God. Although David (by divine revelation) knew that Christ would come forth from his offspring, he did not want to boast of his ancestry regarding Christ, but he solely wanted to give Him all divine honor (which He deserves!), and therefore called Him his Lord; which in truth He was and is. David so recognized His Lordship, His Kingship, also over his own heart and life.

With the same devotion and dependence, let us seek union with the Lord Jesus Christ, that, in and by Christ, our heavenly Father be able to bless us with **all** spiritual blessings from heaven (Ephesians 1:3). Therefore let us not want to serve Christ in our own way, independent of Him; for this would, on the one hand, not bring eternal results, and on the other hand we would have to miss the spiritual blessings in Christ, which would lead us to fullness in Him.

However, if we do have that close relationship with Christ, then we will be allowed to sit with Him at the right hand of the Father, to there be delivered from all (demonic) powers in our heart and life, which cause us to sin; in order to be perfected by Him in this way. Our enemies, the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12) are submissive by the Lord to those who are least in Christ; who spiritually seen form the feet of Christ "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

We must, in truth, have (comm)union with Him.

20 verse 45-47: *"Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats (way up front) in the synagogues, and the chief (most important) rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses (i.e. squeeze widows dry financially), and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."*

The scribes sought material gain, as well as the honor, fame and the applause of the people. Therefore they did their best to walk as dignified as possible among the people; they receive esteem and respect! They did not know the true spiritual condition of the heart, which is only achieved by a true relationship with God. This is the reason they did their best to walk and labor in the shape of godliness, but it was obvious that they did not know the power of God (2 Timothy 3:5), which must lead them out of all darkness into His wonderful light.

Let us not be nor act like that, but let us, in all truth, be "in God" and "He in us". "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit (i.e. the fruit of the Spirit [see Galatians 5:22], those will taste the fullness in Christ): for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).

Chapter 21

God's justice is like a two-edged sword; it brings to the (sincere) believer full grace, but judgment to all others.

Viewed in the light of the Israeli Tabernacle, this chapter shows us the symbolism of the two tables of the Law, with on it the ten Commandments, which were hidden in the Ark of the Covenant. They depict the full justice of God, represented in the ten Commandments, although this "full justice of God" will, of course, only be revealed to us in the **full** (and thus complete) **Word** (viz. the bible) of the LIVING God. We can read about these perfect ten Commandments of God for the Kingdom of heaven (on earth) in Matthew 5:17-48; 6:1-34 and 7:1-29. This Word of God is like a sharp two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). It brings about full grace and it forms a power of God to make into children of God (John 1:12) for those, who, by acceptance of this (divine) Word, have turned repentantly unto God and have given over their lives to Him, beside having a sincere **faith** in the Word of the cross and in His omnipotence to plant this Word into us. But for all the unwilling, the disobedient, the unrepentant, and the sinners, however, it forms the full and terrible judgment of a wrathful God. We can read in John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." And in Hebrews 10:31 we read: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the **living** God."

This **full** (and eternal) Word of God – which will be revealed to us by the Spirit of God in ever increasing measure in the last days (see Revelation 14:6) – will bring God's (Bride)church to the fullness of Christ in these last days. We can read this a.o. in Hebrews 9:11-12 and Ephesians 5:27: "But Christ... brought about (or obtained) an **eternal redemption**" ... "that He might present it to himself a glorious church, **not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing**; but that it should be **holy and without blemish**." This victorious Word of God is a fact in heaven, but here on earth it must still be realized in the hearts and lives of believers, who have repented unto Him. And, as we all (could) know, the Church of God has never reached this level in the course of history; even if her image in the initial period of Christianity is to be called very wonderful indeed. But, in the end-time, God will clothe His (Bride)church with the "Bridal adornments" of **perfection and justice** (Revelation 12:1; 19:7-8), and take her in unto the Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), according to the promises in His Word. It should be clear to everyone that the spiritual condition of the (Bride)church must hereto be brought to that condition of the heart of the poor widow in the first verses of this chapter.

21 verse 1-4: *"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury (poverty) hath cast in all the living that she had."*

In her deed this woman acted out a **total offering**, she gave **everything** that she possessed to God, to her Lord and Savior. God will find the same inner disposition in the end-time, in the heart of His (sincere) children, namely a **total subjection**; whereby He can bring them in His perfect, **eternal redemption**, and, spiritually seen, He can envelop them with the (divine) garment of **spotlessness, wrinklelessness, holiness and blamelessness!** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with **all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ**" (Ephesians 1:3).

But over those who are and remain unwilling – namely the disobedient, the idolaters and all, who wish to remain in sin – the judgment, in the fullness of God's wrath, will come of a righteous God. And this God's judgment – in and over this world – means that the demonic forces of "the spiritual wickedness in high places" will be loosed more and more, so that the people of this world will be handed over to the destructive powers of satan, in whom the wicked (and sinful) person likes to remain. These people will then have to experience the harshness, cruelty and evil of him they (consciously or not) chose for their master.

Characteristic of these judgments of God are statements like: "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" (Revelation 9:14). Hereby is meant the unleashing of demonic angels upon mankind; angels who will

pour out in increasing measure their calamities and destruction on humanity! The Euphrates or Frath is a river which flows at the garden of Eden, and is symbolic for **mankind**. (Compare: Revelation 9:14 with Revelation 7:1-3 and Revelation 16:12).

As the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman commander-in-chief Titus, which was predicted by Jesus – and which was the result of the unbelieving, unrepentant Israelites of Jesus' days – took place around the year 70 after Christ, so also will the judgment predicted by God be poured out over the unrepentant part of His House (Church), and over the unbelievers, in the end-time.

21 verse 5-6: *"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

21 verse 7: *"And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?"*

When His disciples asked Him for the specific signs which would mark these days of God's judgment – signs which also will introduce His return – He gave them the following as the very first sign:

21 verse 8: *"And he said, Take heed that ye be not **deceived**: for **many** shall come **in my name** saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: **go ye not therefore after them.**"*

In the end-time satan will produce a **great multitude** of imitation spiritual workers. He will give them a (false) anointing which will **imitate** the divine work in Jesus. Yes, they will even perform wonders and signs; but they are wonders and signs of the liar (2 Thessalonians 2:9). And these "angels" of satan, pose as "angels of light", **act** as if they are **real** workers of God, and this is because they scorched their consciences "as with a cauterizing iron" In Matthew 7:22 we read how astonished the people were about their (eternal) damnation by God. For, although we here deal with laborers of the Lord, who digressed in sin and unrighteousness, they kept their calling. For the Spirit of God is able to (continue to) work through such people, while He passes by their personal salvation. We also notice this in the words of the Lord, which we find in Revelation 3:17b: "...and (thou) **knowest not** that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". Compare these texts regarding the false laborers also with 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

"Christ" means "anointed one", namely the anointed of God unto the labor for Him. But these people, namely those of 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, are false Christ's, false anointed ones; for they were anointed by satan, but pose as "angels of light". Therefore God, as judgment, allows the strong delusion, because they did **not** accept Him – in Jesus Christ **as God's redeeming, purifying and sanctifying power**. We can also read about a similar judgment of God in Romans 1:18-32. And in 2 Thessalonians 2:10b-11 we read: "...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie". The same story one finds in the Old Testament, in 1 Kings 22:19-22.

It will be these (false) laborers which will deceive those great multitudes of people, and catch them in their nets (Matthew 24:11 and 24). The tragic result will be that this crowd of people will be gathered as weeds in the end-time, to be bound up at the time of harvest in order to... be burned (see Matthew 13:30).

Therefore let us rather be led by the true Holy Spirit of God, Who always leads us **out** of sin by His purifying, sanctifying and justifying works! So, the end-time is a time wherein two spiritual movements run parallel. The first spiritual movement is that of the Holy Spirit of God, Who reveals His redeeming, purifying, sanctifying and perfecting works in full-Gospel power in His own, and Who, as a result, will create a perfect Bride(church), which will be God's instrument in the restoration of the Church and at the worldwide revival in "Latter Rain Power" (i.e. the Holy Spirit revival of the end-time, as a.o. prophesied in Joel 2:23-30). The second movement, perhaps in looks more spectacular, is that of satan, which also brings forth wonders and signs, but then of the liar! The result of this will be the false (and politically minded) world church of the end-time, about which we can read in Revelation 17, 18 and 19; also called the hidden Babylon or the "Great Whore", which will prepare the **anti-Christian** path of the person of the antichrist. Warned by the Word of God, let us watch and pray that we too be not entangled in the snares of these – for un-anointed eyes – hidden, anti-Christian works, of this satanic power of hidden unrighteousness.

Another form of divine judgment we will come across in the last days of the present-day world in increasing measure and eventually worldwide in extent, is that of war, and also of rebellion against governments of state!

21 verse 9-10: *"But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions (**revolutions**), be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."*

The red horse of Revelation 6:4, the horse which is the symbol of war and revolt, will then have been loosed upon a world averse to God. Revolt against state authorities is used more and more to, under pressure, realize certain political and social goals. More and more wars and revolts in ever increasing measure make today's world seem like one great powder keg. When all this will take place, like we see it now in today's world, then the Lord comforts His children with above word of Scripture: "Be not terrified, for I have everything under control". And in Psalm 91:7-8 we read: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." And further in verse 10: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling (house)."

This judgment of God will only pass us by if we remain in the center of the will of God, Who is our **hiding place**. As there can only be that wonderful calm in the eye (namely the center or heart) of a raging and an all-destructive whirlwind, so will God also let His own hide in the shelter of His omnipotence, when His judgments of war and revolt are raging around us!

21 verse 11a: *"And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences..."*

This really is relevant in our days. The violent death (symbolized by the black horse of famine, also as a result of economical recession; and the pale horse of death, in Revelation 6:5-8) will bring an abrupt end to many lives by natural disasters, such as earthquakes and famines; while also very contagious diseases, which will travel all over the world, will make many victims among the world population. But, despite all those terrible judgments the almighty God demands of the destroyer (sent by Him): "Hurt not the oil and the wine!" (Revelation 6:6b), whereby is meant: "Do not damage my sincere children, who had themselves led by the oil of the Spirit and who have been washed in the wine of My blood!" A different form of judgment of God we find in the following words:

21 verse 11b: *"...and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."*

In Revelation 6:12-14 we read: "And I beheld when he (the Lamb of God) had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (We see the same thing when we sit on a train. Then it seems as if the trees on either side of the train flash by; but in fact the train races on, and the trees stand still. The same way the earth will be moved from her place, possibly by a collision with a meteorite, while the stars stay in their places.) And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

Enormous catastrophes, great disasters as a result of (very) far-reaching changes in nature and in the universe, as it were make a clean sweep in order to prepare this earth for that wonderful and divine era, called the Millennial Kingdom. For in this (divine) Kingdom the sun will shine seven times as strong as it does now (Isaiah 30:26), because of which there will be no more night (Zechariah 14:6-7). It goes without saying that man and beast with a body of flesh and blood cannot live in that Kingdom, and God will have to create a nature of a totally different composition. It will be a paradise in the full glory of God!

Another form of God's judgment we find in the persecution mania and the demonic oppression which then will rule the world. An ever increasing anti-Christian spirit will take possession of all disobedient and unrepentant people, besides increasing satanism. All this will pave the way for the global acceptance of the antichrist as ruler of the world.

21 verse 12-19: *"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers **for my name's sake**. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. **But there shall not an hair of your head perish**. In your patience possess ye your souls."*

Satan and his demonic armies will bring this world in a persecution mania with the purpose to form a spiritual anti-power against the true Church of the LIVING God; a Church which will then have been clothed with (great) Latter-Rain-Power (i.e. power of the Holy Spirit), whereby, in and by this **divine strength**, they will bring the whole world in that last, great Latter-Rain-**Revival**. But, through persecution God's opponents (namely satan and his helpers) try to turn around the tidal wave of worldwide, spiritual revival.

Let us then in times of great need, under pressure of the persecutor, continue to trust in the almighty guidance of the Holy Spirit, and especially in times of danger let us stay close to Him, Who said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; **I have overcome the world**" (John 16:33). In times of need He will give us "a mouth and wisdom", put the (right) words in our mouth and give us insight regarding the things we are or are not to say or do. Naturally He will also give us the strength to remain in His victory!

In those (very) difficult times we must be **very** careful, for the spirit of persecution mania could also seize our parents, children, brothers, sisters, relatives or friends..., as our fellow brothers and sisters (unfortunately) already experienced in countries with a communist regime. But, considering all these things, let us not lose heart, for God, Who has His Spirit dwelling within us, **already defeated the enemy!** Because of this **He has all things under His control**. Let us, despite everything, remain quietly in His almighty, guiding hand, but also continue to trust in the (divine) provisions of His almighty Spirit. Let us "so possess our souls in patience" (Romans 8:31).

A last form of God's judgment we find in the period of time of the Great Tribulation, which will last 3½ years, and wherein the antichrist will have full dominion over the whole world and all its inhabitants (Revelation 13:5-8). Then the last seven plagues, namely the seven vial **judgments**, will rage over the world (Revelation 16). During this Great Tribulation God's door of grace (the only way to eternal salvation) will be **closed** to unbelievers (Matthew 25:10; Luke 13:25); in this period, therefore, no new souls will come to repentance anymore; also because the Holy Spirit of God (Who works on hearts and lives) will then have been removed from the world (2 Thessalonians 2:7). All Christians, who will then still live in that world, will be killed as martyrs by the antichrist, in a mass worldwide slaughter (Revelation 7:9-17). Only in Israel will the Lord, by His two witnesses, continue His work of grace (Jeremiah 30:11; Revelation 11:3-13).

It is in this very anti-Christian world that the seven terrible vial judgments of God will be poured out (Revelation 16). And these God's judgments will end in the predicted gathering of anti-Christian armies which will war against the returned Christ – with His armies of saints, who will descend with Him – on the plains of Megiddo. By this battle, which we tend to call the battle of Armageddon, the complete unrepentant, anti-Christian mankind, at least with regard to their bodies, will be destroyed by the intense glow of His shekinah glory (by which is meant the glory of God's presence) **and** by the then seven times hotter sun! (see Isaiah 30:26; Malachi 4:1 and 3); at the same time the antichrist and the false prophet will be cast into hell (Revelation 19:11-21).

21 verse 20-24: *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall*

be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This (predicted) judgment over the Jews was partially fulfilled in the year 70 after Christ, and, as it were, is a (sad) example for the events, which will also take place at the end of the Great Tribulation. For Jerusalem will then also be the target of the (final) battle. The then living, anti-Christian people will, under the leadership and commandment of the antichrist, try to destroy all Israelites (Revelation 16:12-16; 11:7), who were converted during the Great Tribulation (thus in the last moment) by the ministry of God's two witnesses (see Revelation 11:3-14). But, when half Jerusalem will have been occupied by these anti-Christian armies, Jesus will return in **glory**, and put His foot on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:1-5; Matthew 10:23). A clear sign that He won the victory!

God's judgments will end by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. First He will judge as Judge over the anti-Christian people, and after that He will rule as King over them who will inherit the Millennial Kingdom (of peace). The following judgments will introduce (and thus usher in) the return of Christ:

21 verse 25-33: *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud **with power and great glory**. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but **my words shall not pass away**."*

As we already mentioned terrifying events and disasters, as judgments over sin, will precede the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything (in heaven and on earth) will be shaken by (strong) forces from the heavens. The people will faint for dread and fear, because of the expectation of the nasty things which will come over the earth. But to His children the Lord says: When these things begin to take place, **look up** and rejoice, for the kingdom of God, wherein we will be **delivered forever** from pain, sorrow and any kind of trouble, is near.

The Lord then gives us one of the most convincing signs of His return. For He says He will return when the **fig tree shoots forth**. And by the fig tree all of the people of Israel are indicated (thus **all** twelve tribes), because this (tree) is the national emblem of the people of Israel. And we read that the fig tree (thus Israel) will shoot forth. As we know, the Jews have been a people banished from their country for ages throughout history. But now, in this age (namely from 1948) there has been a **national restoration** of this nation; a people which, despite the pressure of many countries (especially the countries around them), has been able to maintain itself as a nation. So the fig tree has sprouted, and this will have happened in fullness when all tribes of Israel will have returned out of the world (Ezekiel 37, 47, 48). The Lord Jesus said that the generation that experiences this restoration will **not** pass away before **all** will have taken place regarding His return. Therefore this present generation will witness the fulfillment of **all** prophecies, which have so far not yet been fulfilled.

21 verse 34-36: *"And take heed unto yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."*

Let us therefore stay close to Jesus! Let us, spiritually seen, always remain (just) in front of the Son of man – namely in absolute repentance – that we receive all heavenly blessings from Him, which are in and by Him; that we – as "children of the daytime" (of the light, namely Jesus) (1 Thessalonians 5:5-8) and not as "children of the night" (of the darkness, namely satan) – see His return come near in the spirit, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let us watch not to slip down into the sins of our flesh and into the lusts of this world, for then His return will come for us "as a thief in the night", namely unexpectedly. Then His return will take us by surprise, and we will not be ready (inwardly) to meet Him as Bridegroom and Lord. However, let us continue to occupy ourselves with the things of the Lord, as Jesus also did in His last days as Son of man:

21 verse 37-38: *"And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives (where He prayed to the Father). And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him."*

Chapter 22

The seven introductory blood steps which led to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary.

22 verse 1-2: *"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him, for they feared the people."*

The Passover feast was near. And it was predestined that Jesus should give His life at this feast for a world lost in sin and guilt. For, this feast was established by God (see Exodus 12:1-28), and pointed to the Sacrifice of Jesus Who, as the Lamb of God, would (voluntarily) give His life to reconcile God with man.

The forces of darkness – which then were mainly active in and through the priests and scribes (the religious leaders of the Jews in those days) – tried to capture and kill Jesus in a crafty way. Reason for this was that these chief priests and scribes feared the people, because they people (still) followed Him, because they saw in Him their political Messiah. They did not see Jesus as the Savior of their souls, but mainly as a political leader, and thus as the one who would rescue and deliver them from the Romans' rule.

As we know the high priest of Israel was not allowed to enter the Holy of holies of the Israeli Tabernacle without blood (of a sacrificed animal), and without his censer, wherein the prescribed (by God) incense burned. This also was only allowed once a year, namely on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Having arrived in the Holy of holies the high priest had to sprinkle the blood of the sin offering (i.e. the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the Israelites) seven times; first on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant, and then seven times in front of it. These sprinklings symbolized the seven **introductory** steps of Jesus, which led to His sacrifice on the cross; as well as the seven **actual** steps which led Him to His death (on the cross).

1st introductory blood step:

Judas' betrayal.

22 verse 3-6: *"Then entered satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve (disciples). And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude."*

Satan could, of the twelve disciples, use the disloyal Judas (as an instrument) to capture Jesus without rebellion. Perhaps Judas never had a (truly) repentant heart; or perhaps he gradually became entangled in the nets of the (idolatrous) mammon; for he managed the money and therefore was responsible for the finances of this core of Jesus' disciples. However sad, it is unfortunately a fact that he betrayed His Master for money – namely for thirty silver pennies, the price for a slave. And he promised the chief priests, etc. that he would seek a "good" opportunity to have Jesus captured without rebellion, without the common folk noticing anything.

Let us (be willing) to learn a lesson from this, that we being warned against the crafty temptations of satan, who tries to capture **us too** in the nets of the mammon, are delivered from the (often strong) desire for earthly goods and riches. Let us (be willing) to see the danger of idolatrous effects, possibly formed by material things (such as money and goods) and/or people (such as husband, wife and/or children). Let us realize that they may create a separation between us and our Savior-God. For, as is also written in 1 Timothy 6:10, hunger for money is the root of all evil. And this is, because in this world everything (and almost everybody) is for sale for money.

2nd introductory blood step:

The Passover: God's only way to salvation, which, in the Father's heart, was already established at the foundation of this world.

22 verse 7-13: *"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover (meal) that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare (it); And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover (meal) with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room (room on the top floor) furnished: There make (it) ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover (meal)."*

Here are a few more symbols we may take to heart. The question was put where Jesus wished to eat the Passover (meal). The Lord linked up the finding of this place to some marks, which were prophesied in advance: At entering Jerusalem they would find a man, bearing a pitcher of water. A pitcher filled with water is the symbol of our repentant life, a life now (completely) devoted to God. The Passover (meal) therefore was to be celebrated in a heart and life which has turned (sincerely) to God. And, here is a **man** bearing a pitcher with water. In those days this did not occur often. Usually it was a **woman** carrying that.

The master (good man) of the house would show them a large, furnished upper room. This large, furnished upper room is the symbol of the heart which is (completely) devoted to God. Thus: we are to eat the Passover (meal), now Communion, with a heart that is turned to, and devoted to, God. We must keep our heart (with all diligence) from everything that is not good (Proverbs 4:23); we must keep our heart for Jesus and His gracious works.

22 verse 14-18: *"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover (meal) with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."*

Jesus would eat the Passover lamb for the last time in the way, established by God in the Old Testament, and drink wine therewith, as is still customary today; for soon Jesus Himself, in and by His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, would form the great Anti-type, whereby is meant the spiritual reality, whereof all others form a shadow. "Purge out therefore the old leaven (= symbol for sin), that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our Passover** is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The Kingdom of God would, by His resurrection, ascension (to heaven) and by the (Pentecostal) power of the Holy Spirit, break through (begin) in the hearts of those children of men who (truly) turned to Him. In and by the Holy Spirit, this Passover will bring us in close **union** with His **death and resurrection**; make us "one planting" with them (Romans

6:5); whereby NEW and divine LIFE can be poured out into the hearts and lives of all He, by His sacrifice, was able to grant grace (Revelation 3:20b). These works of grace He put as a divine promise in the sacrament (means of grace) He was about to establish, namely the sacrament of the Communion; a promise He would confirm by the shedding of His own blood.

22 verse 19-20: *"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament (covenant) in my blood, which is shed for you."*

It is a renewal of the divine blood covenant God made with Abram (as mentioned in Genesis 15), and the (divine) works of grace of which at the end of this period of grace (i.e. in the end-time) will be **so** miraculous, that God will be able to realize and fulfill His great mystery – of which Revelation 10:7 speaks, and whereby is meant the revelation of His Bride(church). Then He will be able to celebrate the Supper of the Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). This Supper precedes, and is a preparation unto, the Wedding. This is to prepare the Bride as a (divine) channel, as a (divine) instrument in His hand to gather in the last, great harvest of souls. After this harvest of souls (see Revelation 14:14-16) and after the Millennium the eternal Marriage of the Lamb will take place (Revelation 21:1-27). God then will have created a Bride for Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, that the **eternal** divine marriage feast be celebrated.

22 verse 21-23: *"But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."*

Luke brings this revelation of Jesus after the establishment of the (New Testament) Communion. The other gospel writers, namely Matthew, Mark and John, place this revelation of Jesus **after** the eating of the (Old Testament) Passover lamb, but before the establishment of the (N.T.) Communion.

The fact that someone shares the O.T. Passover or the N.T. Communion unworthily tells us, that not everybody who eats the Communion bread and drinks the wine, shares the Kingdom of God in truth. But everybody has to examine **himself** scrupulously, as we can read in 1 Corinthians 11:28-29: "But (first) let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. **For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself**, not discerning the Lord's body". But this Word **also** tells us that there might be **traitors** among those that share the Communion, especially "at the last hour", when people will be possessed by satan, because of which they (a.o.) will suffer from an increasing persecution mania (Revelation 9:1-12)!

3rd introductory blood step:

The salvation of man – after body, soul and spirit – drove Jesus to Calvary.

Man in his lost state cannot possibly serve and follow God. And, as man is born in that lost state (in and by original sin), God, in and by His justice, has created a way for that lost person to (be able) to escape. "For the creature was made subject to vanity (namely sin; for satan keeps man enslaved to sin. [The bible translators **mistakenly** thought that God made man to sin, and wrote the nouns in capital letters]), not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:20-21). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified **freely by his grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:23-26). "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power **to become** the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:10-13).

Man is a trinity, created after the image of God, consisting of spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The **spirit** of man is wicked by nature, recalcitrant and subject to lusts and (often strong) lusts for fame and honor of people, after the pride of life; but also after dominion over other people (this is the judgment of God, whereto also the angel Lucifer [now: satan] was subjected after his desertion of God; while man, in his corrupt state as the slave of sin, is driven by satan). But fortunately for us people, Jesus Christ, by His great love for us, was driven by God's Spirit (Hebrews 9:14) to fulfill His redeeming sacrifice, whereby (after repentance and subjection to Him) He could and can deliver the spirit of man from this (satanic) slavery of passions and lusts.

22 verse 24-27: *"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."*

It is only possible for God's laborer to **really serve** the Church unto (complete) deliverance and perfection (of their soul) in Him, when he, himself, by grace, has been delivered by Jesus from the satanic desire for honor and dominion over people, and from all satanic motivations to sin. Of course, only in and by that precious Name of Jesus, and driven by the power of God. Only after faithful service on earth to the building and perfecting of His Church, will God's servant be allowed to enter into higher service (in heaven) where He will be allowed to serve Jesus and the Father as king and priest in the ETERNAL Kingdom of God.

22 verse 28-30: *"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

The human **soul** may be prepared to do many things in this life for God and His Kingdom, but, in its own strength, it will not be able to do anything at all that has eternal, heavenly value, especially when it becomes hot under its feet. The Lord Jesus Christ first must have been able to cleanse our soul in and by His blood – for our sins must have been forgiven and annihilated, and this is only possible by our faith in His (atoning) sacrifice on the cross of Calvary – only then could He renew us and clothe us with His divine power with the so-called gifts and revelations of the Holy Spirit; in other words: share His anointing with us that we be really subservient to Him and His Church.

22 verse 31-34: *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me."*

In John 15:5b it is written: **"Without Me thou canst do NOTHING!"** There is no one who knows the weakness of our soul better than Jesus does. He knows that our soul by nature is in the power of satan. This therefore is the reason He wanted and was able to bring His atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary: His strong desire to deliver our souls from the satanic power.

Our human **body** too cannot be subservient in His Kingdom on earth if it has not yet been delivered from the power of satan. For, satan will then be able to torment our body with sickness and lack, and fill it with all kinds of (wrong) desires and passions. The Lord Jesus must first (be able to) deliver our body from all satan's powers; and He can only do so if we give (over) our heart and life completely to Him.

22 verse 35: *"And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip (travel bag), and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing."*

Despite the fact that He already sent out His disciples before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (on that Pentecost day – see Acts 2:1-4), His (divine) presence and power were already there to protect them and to provide in all their needs – in spite of the fact that He was (still) present in the body on this earth, and thus not yet ascended to heaven – because of which they could also act with (divine) power and strength, even against many satanic forces. We can do **nothing** without His **anointing (command)** for a specific work (Ephesians 2:10).

22 verse 36-37: *"Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end."*

As the prophetic word above predicted, Jesus would be crucified between two murderers (as a criminal). He was to be taken away from this earth and from His disciples, especially that they (might) be delivered from all power of satan. After Jesus' leaving they had to look after themselves. To that purpose they had to sell "their old garment", namely lay (down) their old, natural life at the foot of the cross (where Jesus died for their sins); that they by God's grace might receive the NEW LIFE. A (divine) life they would receive by accepting the (LIVING) Word of God in their heart and lives, namely the sword (i.e. the strength) of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). The Savior therefore spoke above words to His disciples in a spiritual sense, but they did not yet understand the spiritual meaning then.

22 verse 38: *"And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough."*

For they thought of a physical defense by means of real swords. They did not yet understand the (deep) spiritual concepts; they could not comprehend them yet. Therefore the Lord ended His teaching with the words: "It is enough". By the Spirit of His Father, Jesus was driven to Jerusalem to fulfill His sacrifice – for the redemption of man, after body, soul and spirit – on the cross. And Jesus, the Son of man, as the Lamb of God, went this way patiently and willingly... "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared **me**: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offering and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:5-10).

4th introductory blood step:

Jesus' inward acceptance of His task as the Lamb of God.

22 verse 39-46: *"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."*

Jesus sought in the prayer to His Father the inward willingness and strength for His depressed state of mind, because He knew exactly what was awaiting Him. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened (how it oppresses/frightens me) till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). But Jesus did not only think of Himself, but also of His disciples, because He knew in what great need they would be. Therefore He advised them: "Pray, that you will not be tempted."

Jesus knew that He had come into this world to be made sin and an offering for sin. He was (and is) **the Lamb of God** Who had to take upon Him the sins of all of mankind. But He still had to obtain the inward willingness to be soiled with the dung of the human sins; and then also to die for those (often terrible) sins. Jesus wrestled in the spirit,

and to such extent, indeed, that His sweat – on account of this enormous spiritual stress – mixed with blood that was squeezed out of His veins! He wrestled so long until at last – **after** having been strengthened by that angelic appearance from heaven – He could muster that inner strength to resign Himself to this command of the Father. Here two natures wrestled with each other within Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man. Here also (the beginning of) our victory over sin and satan was fought and won by Jesus; hence we only are able to overcome the power of sin and satan in our heart and life through Jesus; under the condition that we subject ourselves completely to Jesus in order to enable Him to work this His redemption in us!

5th introductory blood step:

The capture of Jesus.

22 verse 47-48: *"And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"*

Judas knew that Jesus, when He was in Jerusalem, was used to pray in the evenings in the garden on the mount of Olives. Therefore he probably would have kept watch on Jesus and His disciples; and when it turned out that his assumption was right, he hurried to the chief priests and elders to report to them that there was a "good" opportunity to strike. A multitude of armed temple guards went along to capture Jesus. Judas would act as if he happened to meet His Master, and had arranged that he, by way of a greeting, would give Him the traditional kiss. For the temple guards that came along this would be the sign to capture Him. And Jesus allowed Himself to be captured willingly, because He knew, that all that was to take place was (pre)destined by His Father.

22 verse 49-51: *"When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him."*

Jesus' disciples had brought with them the two swords, and wanted to defend their Master therewith. Peter, rash as he was, did not wait for His Master's permission and hacked into the crowd. His sword swished closely by the head of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, whereby his ear was cut off (John 18:10). But Jesus withheld his disciples from all further action, and healed Malchus' ear.

22 verse 52-53: *"Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

It was not because of the superior forces that Jesus allowed Himself to be captured. He did it voluntarily. For the chief priests and their men would not have been able to do anything, if God had not allowed the forces of darkness to strike – because all this had to happen according to God's will.

6th introductory blood step:

Peter's denial.

22 verse 54-62: *"Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."*

Here the Lord had to painfully experience the predicted denial of Peter, His disciple, and Peter had to realize that, however good the intentions were (or are), the own human's strength is worth nothing; especially when he thought that now his own life was in danger too. But Peter was truly sorry for his deed. This sincere remorse was a result of the fact that his heart wanted to be true to his Master, but that he lacked the (divine) strength thereto. Therefore the Lord Jesus could (heartily) forgive Peter his denial. When Jesus later gave Peter the command unto his ministry, He reminded Peter of his threefold denial by asking him three times: "Do you love Me?" We can read this in John 21:15-19: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."

7th introductory blood step:

Jesus mocked, beaten and falsely accused by the Supreme Court.

22 verse 63-71: *"And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."*

What terrible humiliation the Creator of heaven and earth (and all that lives thereon) was undergoing here: He was mocked and beaten by puny earthworms (i.e. man as an insignificant creature). And He underwent all this meekly, as a lamb (namely God's Lamb) that is led to the slaughter. It was no use either to defend Himself against the Supreme Court, which intended to find Him guilty of death anyway.

They had finally found a "good" reason to accuse Him before Pilate, and to demand the death penalty for Him. for the Supreme Court in those days was not allowed to pronounce the death sentence over someone, let alone execute it. The Supreme Court found the Lord Jesus guilty of blasphemy, because he called Himself (rightly!) the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Judge and King of this world. And, although this was (and is) true, the foolish people of the Supreme Court did not want to hear of it. They had even already invented a reason to have Him executed by the Roman government: For whosoever dared to call himself King rebelled against the emperor of Rome!

117

Chapter 23

The seven blood steps of Jesus Christ, which let to the fulfillment of His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.

1st blood step:

Jesus before Pilate, as His (earthly) judge.

23 verse 1-7: *"And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time."*

The accusing crowd of chief priests, elders and scribes – with a growing number of followers among the disappointed people; disappointed, because this Messiah did not meet their expectations of divine invincibility – led the captive and shackled Jesus to the Roman judge Pontius Pilate, who was also the representative of Rome. Their (false) accusation was that Jesus would have forbidden to pay taxes to the emperor, and with this they stirred up the people against Him. But their main accusation was that He called Himself Christ, the King. And whoever called himself king, rebelled against the emperor of Rome. Therefore Pilate questioned Him on this point. But Pilate understood all too well – because Jesus Christ did not act in secret, and Pilate must have known of the sermons of this Man – that the issue was a religious conflict among the Jews themselves, and that they had handed Him over to the judge out of spite and jealousy. That therefore was the reason Pilate wanted to release Him, saying: "I find no fault in this Man!"

When Pilate, however, heard that Jesus was born in Galilee, he thought to be rid of this "dirty matter" by sending Jesus on to the judge over that area, namely king Herod, who "happened to be" at Jerusalem.

2nd blood step:

Jesus handed over to the curiosity and the mockery of Herod.

23 verse 8-12: *"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. An the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves."*

Herod hoped to be surprised by Jesus with a "show" of His power. Therefore he was glad, when Jesus was handed over to him. He had heard so much about His wonderful power, and even thought that He might be John the Baptist, who was brought back to life by God (see Matthew 14:1-2). Because of his curiosity he spoke much with Jesus, and asked Him many questions, but the Lord Jesus did not answer him by a single word. Therefore Herod became angry and mocked Jesus, together with his soldiers. He also showed Jesus his contempt by putting a shining **pur-**

ple garment on Him (Mark 15:20 and John 19:2). After that he sent Jesus away, back to Pilate. Yet Pilate's action by sending Jesus to him, pleased Herod. Was there enmity between them at first, from that time on they were friendly.

3rd blood step:

Bar-Abbas preferred over Jesus.

23 verse 13-25: *"And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one prisoner unto them at the Passover feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done; I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will."*

118

Pilate wanted to release Jesus, because he found Him not guilty. And because it was the custom that a prisoner received remittance for punishment during the Passover feast (i.e. the memorial festival of Israel's exodus from Egypt by God's hand, whereby the Passover lamb was slaughtered), Pilate therefore tried to release Jesus at the Passover. Pilate therefore asked the people: "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" despite the fact that he knew they had handed over Jesus because of spit and jealousy (see Matthew 27:17-18). But the people, stirred up by the chief priest and rulers of the people, demanded increasingly violently His crucifixion (and thus the release of Bar-Abbas).

Jesus **is** the Son of God the **F**ather, Who is in heaven; while Bar-Abbas means "son of the father". Bar-Abbas was a murderer and rioter, and therefore his action tells us which father he was a son of, namely "the father from the depth" thus the devil. The people preferred this son of the devil over the Son of God; the rioter and murderer they preferred over the Savior, while He had done nothing but deeds of love among them. And, because Pilate, the Roman judge, could no longer control the very rebellious people, he handed over Jesus unto a true "people judgment" (which means that the people, instead of the judge, sentenced Jesus)...

4th blood step:

Jesus carried His cross (with great difficulty) on the way to Calvary.

23 verse 26-32: *"And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death."*

According to the story that was handed down from generation to generation, it was said that Jesus collapsed several times already under the heavy weight of the cross, therefore they forced Simon of Cyrene, who was on his way home from the field, to carry the cross in the place of Jesus. Most probably Jesus had not slept the entire night before, because first the temple guards and later on the Roman soldiers had flogged and tortured His body till He bled.

In spite of His own miserable condition, the Savior yet remembered the Jewish people and mankind, over whom God's judgment would come because of their un-repentance. He already saw before Him the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 after Christ. This was the reason He said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep for yourselves and your children..." Further in the future (namely at the end of the Great Tribulation) He saw the great final battle Armageddon (see Revelation 6:12-17; 16:16 and 19:11-21) pass by His spiritual eye, and also the divine judgment which will (have to) come over the entire anti-Christian world and all the horrors thereof. Seeing this, He voiced a threefold judgment: "For, behold, the days (viz. in the end-time) are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck." In other words: "Blessed are the women, who do not have any children", for these are only born unto the judgment. Moreover, these are children who only grow up in the **greatest** iniquity (Ezekiel 21:25); children who only grow up to cause their parents grief!

"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." Revelation 6:16-19 tells us the reason why the people who live in the end-time of this world (i.e. the world in its present form) will want to be covered by crashing mountains and hills, for it is written: "Hide us from the face of Him, That sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand (then)?" God's terrible anger will then burst out over a world which has become altogether anti-Christian. His last words to them – words that also contain a judgment, and that were uttered with a loving heart full of sorrow – were: "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" The "green, living tree" was He. He had to undergo this gruesome death in the place of the sinner (the dry wood). He bore in their (and in our) place the judgment of God over sin, because He, in His great mercy, died in our place! But what will God's judgment be over them, who choose the dryness of the spiritual death over the divine life of Him.

5th blood step:

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

23 verse 33-43: "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary (or Golgotha), there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (of Jesus). Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. and they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, This is the king of the Jews. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day** shalt thou be with me in **paradise** (i.e. the place where those who died "justified", rest)."

In Mark 15:25 we read that they crucified Jesus at the third hour, that is at 9.00 A.M our time. It was only at around the sixth hour (12.00 noon our time) that that darkness came over the whole earth. The first three hours Jesus hung on the cross there was normal light. But, during the last three hours He hung on the cross a strange darkness came over the whole earth. This tells us something: During the first three hours Jesus hung **voluntarily** on the cross. If He had wanted to He could have come off it by divine power. Therefore His thoughts during the first three hours were still devoted to the people around Him: Such as His plea to the Father for forgiveness for His murderers ("they do not know what they do"); His concern for Mary, His mother, whom He put in the care of the apostle John (John 19:26-27), and also His promise to the "good" murderer – who asked Jesus, the King, while they hung together on the cross, to remember him when He would have come in His Kingdom – that he would be with Jesus in paradise after his death.

6th blood step:

Jesus entered the realm of the dead (the place where the dead sinners are)

23 verse 44-48: "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over **all the earth** until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."

Darkness came over **all** the earth for three hours. God wanted to say something by this. For He sent His Son into the realm of sin and spiritual death in the place of lost man; He bore the punishment we, sinners, deserve. His hanging on that cross now was **final**; no turning back was possible. He was then permanently made sin by God (2 Corinthians 5:21), that He bear the punishment, which is the result of sin, in our place. In God's eyes He was then (like) the "copper snake" Moses was to raise on a staff (see Numbers 21:1-9). Therefore God had to separate Himself from Him, which resulted in the Son's cry: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani" (Translated: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" – see Mark 15:34). And, in this severe struggle and spiritual dryness of this death (**by** and **for** our sins!), He complained: "I thirst!" (John 19:28). They then wanted to give Him vinegar to drink – something they always gave the crucified to numb the pain – but He refused to drink it (Mark 15:23). His thirst on the one hand related to the divine life, from which He was cut off at that moment; and on the other hand His thirst for souls He seeks to save!

When the last three hours were almost gone, He still gave the cry of triumph: "It is finished!" (John 19:30). He had met the difficult demand of divine justice – that He, as the Lamb of God, had to be slain for the sins of mankind. With the assurance of the victory (over satan and sin) at His side, He then quietly went to His death, and resigned were His last words: "Father, in Thy hands I **commend** My Spirit." When we check the original Greek, then this "commending" means: entrust to. In other words He wanted to say: "Father, do with My spirit as You please!"

When Jesus gave the ghost, God testified of this fact. There was a testimony unto judgment: God made the earth to quake, and the rocks to tear (Matthew 27:51b). But there also was a testimony of God's grace: the veil which hung between the Holy Place and the Holiest of holy of the Israeli Tabernacle tore from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:51a). By this great deed of mercy of Jesus' death (on the cross) reconciliation with God was established and the (repentant) sinner may approach (closely) unto God's throne. Also were graves of saints opened; saints, who just like Jesus, were raised from the dead and came out of their graves, after which they appeared to many (Matthew 27:52-53). And all this testified of the complete reconciliation between God and men; a reconciliation the death (on the cross) of God's Lamb brought for the person who is sanctified in God! The tearing of the veil (i.e. the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holiest of holy) was all the more a miracle of God, because this veil, as we know through tradition, was of fabric of some ten centimeters thick.

When the centurion saw all these signs which accompanied the death of God's Son, he had to admit: "Truly, this Man was righteous!" "This was God's Son!" (Matthew 27:54b). The crowds, which watched all events around Jesus' crucifixion unto the end, also saw these signs. And fear came into their hearts. Did they lay (violent) hands on the Son of God? Therefore they beat themselves upon the chest, when they returned home.

7th blood step:

Three days and three nights in the realm of the dead.

23 verse 49-56: *"And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things. And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just: (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down (from the cross), and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, wherein never man was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."*

Joseph of Arimathaea was a counselor, a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council. He was, although in secret, a follower of Jesus, and had not agreed to His death. However, when Jesus had died, this fear for the Jews in him made way for courage. He took the body of Jesus from off the cross, because it was a few hours before the start of the day before the Sabbath (Mark 15:42), whereby is meant the "pre-Sabbath" in relation to the Passover feast. Together with Nicodemus, a righteous lawyer (see John 19:39), who in secret also was a disciple of Jesus, he paid the last honor to Jesus. They anointed Him, wound Him in linen cloths and laid Him in the sepulcher Joseph in the first instance had had hewn for himself.

The body of Jesus lay here for the full three days and three nights, the mysterious time God established for winning **the complete victory** of the Lamb of God over sin and death. For it is written: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; **ye are yet in your sins**" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Also: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights **in the heart of the earth**" (Matthew 12:40). Let us pray that God will grant us grace, so that we obtain insight and wisdom regarding this mysterious time, regarding these three days and three nights.

Chapter 24

The glory of the risen Christ (active) in the NEW MAN.

We have come to the last chapter of the Gospel after Luke, and this chapter, according to the characteristics of the Tabernacle, we must view in the light of His Shekinah glory. It was the light of His divine glory (and the proof of His perfect presence), that at the time was present between the two cherubim on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. This light depicts the light of the love of God that, by Jesus' atonement, will work in the complete person – after body, soul and spirit – unto the full revelation of His justice in the sanctified person, and to the glory of His sweet and unsurpassed Name! Let us fervently desire the effect of this perfect light of God in our heart and life (Matthew 5:6), until we will be perfect in Him, as it is written: "...every one (disciple) that is **perfect** shall be as his master" (Luke 6:40b).

Should there be among you who think that fullness in Christ here on earth cannot exist, then you detract from the Word of God (Colossians 4:12; Matthew 5:48; John 17:23; 2 Corinthians 13:11), which tells us that He will build a church without any "spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27). Never in the history of the church this was realized, how wonderful members of the Church, especially in the beginning, might have been (see a.o. the book of Acts). But in the end-time, which we have already entered into now, the (perfect) Bride of Christ (namely the New Jerusalem) will be formed! By the powerful effects of the Word and the Spirit of God this Bride(church) will be led into the fullness of and in God. She will be brought to this (divine) perfection in order to be able to experience the divine miracle of the Marriage of the Lamb; namely the actual union of Jesus – the living Bridegroom, the Lamb of God – with His Bride living on earth, namely the then perfected Church (members) which is (are) called hereto (Revelation 19:6-10). And all that will take place **on earth** (Luke 12:36)!

But the Marriage of the Lamb is an event which is hidden from the world. Therefore the divine Bridegroom will not (be able to) be seen by the worldly person, but they will know who the Bride (namely the woman married to the Son of God) is, and this is because of the Shekinah glory of God, which will be seen **in and through** her being and actions (Revelation 12:1; Psalm 45:14-16; Isaiah 60:2). And this glorious Bride(church), although in secret on account of the persecutions by the then present political world-church of the end-time (Revelation 17:1-9), the Latter-Rain-Revival (i.e. the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the end-time – see Joel 2:23-32; a revelation of Him as the revealing light of God), which will then go over all the world; will lead in the omnipotence of her heavenly Bridegroom; as is also written in Obadiah 21: "And **saviors** shall come up on mount Zion to judge (and to recover) the mount of Esau (= type for the carnal Christian); and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

In this Bride(church) the Word of God, which we can find in Ephesians 3:18-19, will have been realized: "(that ye) may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with **all the fullness of God**." Then all the weak and imperfect, all that is man's own, will have been destroyed (brought to nought) by the victory of His resurrection power in our heart and life. Then God will (be able to) work in and through us, and we will be able to completely serve Him with a all-encompassing love and subjection! Then the wonderful waves of God's love and power will go through us to lead carnal man – who, in the end-time, will have been brought to the extreme form of unrighteousness by satan (Ezekiel 22:25, 29) – to faith and true repentance unto God, as a divine triumph; God's last triumph of the end-time!

God calls you and me now to go into His promise of this end-time; for He wants us to be part of His Bride(church) and the Marriage of the Lamb! Let us open our hearts for this and continue to walk in the "circumspection of the righteous" (Luke 1:17), so that God can work His way in our heart and life, and He will be able to fulfill His almighty works of grace in us unto the honor and glory of His divine Name! "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us (namely the way of the cross unto the killing of the "old me"), 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Spiritually seen, in this end-time we will enter an impressive time, even if it will entail a **complete process** of the cross (i.e. a complete dying to our old ego) as far as our "flesh" and our body is concerned; whereby we will experience increasing oppression and resistance. God's Church will have to be detached from all earthly-minded life; and it will have to grow unto the perfection of the heavenly-minded life (Haggai 2:7-10).

Let us look at this last chapter of the Luke Gospel in the light of what was written up before. It is good to put the following, for the sake of order: Now that – by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ – the sin offering for the sin of man was made, **in heaven**, thus with God, an **ETERNAL redemption** of sin and death is fulfilled (Hebrews 9:11-12). Now this victory over sin by Jesus Christ, our High Priest, must, **here on earth, still be assigned** to all, who have **repented** unto Him, have **confessed** their sins, and who have **given themselves over** to Him in **faith** (Hebrews 9:14-15). After all He alone, with the help of His anointed as His spiritual instruments, will build His Church by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 16:8; Psalm 127:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15).

God's Shekinah glory working in our body.

24 verse 1-12: *"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulcher; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."*

The Lord Jesus Christ did not lie anymore in the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, wherein, three days and nights previously, they had laid Him, after they had wrapped Him in embalmed cloths, whereby the cloths became hard as plaster. Only His face they had not (yet) covered, they had put a sweat cloth on it (John 20:7). The women had wanted to work His face with the spices they brought. But the Spirit of resurrection raised Him from the dead!

In Acts 2:23-24 we read: "Him (Jesus) being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed **the pains of death**: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." And in Acts 2:31-32 "He (i.e. David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that **his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption**. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." And in Acts 13:30-33: "But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God second psalm, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee**."

In the place of the sinner, the Son of God and the Son of man underwent **eternal death** (James 1:15). By the baptism in His death He had laid down His life (John 10:17-18) in order to receive that life again at the resurrection. Therefore it is written: **this day** have I begotten you (Acts 14:32-33). **Before** this dying He was begotten of the Father in the eternity of the past (Colossians 1:15). As the newly begotten Son of God He rose from the dead on the day of the resurrection, but now in an **ETERNAL** relationship to His Church – which was to be formed from mankind. God's Shekinah glory raised Him from the grave and had filled His soul with victory and joy. Therefore this newly begotten Son also had to **receive** all divine power **again** (Matthew 28:18; Daniel 7:13-14); something He has always had already as Son of God **before** His sacrifice.

The Roman guards at Jesus' grave were terrified when they saw God's flashing glory revealed there, and immediately took flight. With great ease, characteristic of the resurrection body, the Lord Jesus Christ came out of the embalmed wrappings and left them like a cocoon of cloth (an empty cover) behind in the grave. Peter and John later also saw that empty cocoon of cloths and therefore believed in His resurrection (Luke 24:12; John 20:6-9).

Our body, too, must be cleansed from sin, sickness and death by the Spirit of resurrection. "And if Christ be **IN** you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit of life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10). "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13). We must kill the works of the **body** by allowing the power of the Holy Spirit therein, so that our body be freed from **all** sinful lusts of that body (2 Peter 1:4b). The Spirit of resurrection also frees us from all dominion of powers of disease over our body: "But if the Spirit of Him (i.e. God) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also **quicken your mortal bodies** by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). Finally, by the Spirit of resurrection,

also our body will share the resurrection of righteous, and will thus triumph over the power of death (2 Thessalonians 1:10). "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up again at the last day**. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have **everlasting life**: and **I will raise him up at the last day**" (John 6:39-40). "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in **Christ shall all be made alive**. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's **at his coming**" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

As regards the Bride(church): it will not die at all, for it shall be found alive at the return of Christ, because it was "kept" in the desert by God (see Revelation 12:6, 14). The Bride will put on immortality at some point in time. We can read this in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall **not all sleep**, but we shall **all be changed**, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and **we** (the Bride, which is then still on earth [in the desert] – see Revelation 12:6 and 14) **shall be changed**."

The Bride of Christ will fully experience the effect of God's Shekinah glory, thus also in her body. Not only will the body of the members of this Bride(church) be protected against sin, sickness and death, but they will also, in their earthly body, be carried off to the desert as on the wings of a great eagle (Revelation 12:6 and 14); just as Philip was carried off to Azotus by the Spirit of the Lord (Acts 8:39-40); and Ezekiel was taken to Babel by the Spirit (Ezekiel 3:14-15). The story of the missing in Matthew 24:40-41 and Luke 17:34-37 relates to this same event.

God's Shekinah glory, working in our soul.

Our soul, too, our inner life, must be filled with the resurrection glory of the risen Savior. Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, whosoever believes in Me shall live, even though he be dead (after the body)". When we sincerely believe in Jesus **and** His (atoning) sacrifice on Calvary, we will, spiritually seen, eat and drink of His flesh and blood, whereby is meant the (voluntary) sharing of His death, namely our desire to also die to our old life. And when we sincerely long for this, all sins and iniquities, whereby we, spiritually seen, are (and remain) dead, will depart from us. Then we, too, will be **renewed** after our **soul**. He will make **His thinking** grow in us, **His desire** and **His will**.

We will now read the story of the two travelers to Emmaus, who left Jerusalem with a heart full of sorrow and darkness on account of the violence of the death on the cross, the chief priests and rulers caused their Lord. Their heart was also filled with doubt and unbelief with regard to the rumor, that Jesus be risen from the dead. This last thing, in their thinking, was not possible. Filled with these dark thoughts they left Jerusalem, and descended towards Emmaus, which was situated **lower**.

24 verse 13-35: *"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs (old Greek linear measure at 182 meters, thus approx. 11 kilometers). And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."*

While the travelers to Emmaus, with sadness in their heart, spoke about the events around Jesus, and also about their vanished hope on their deliverance from the Romans by Him, Jesus Himself joined them as one not known to them. After having listened to them for a while Jesus joined their conversation with a heart which longed to help them out of their sorrow and darkness. By quoting texts from the Holy Scriptures and explaining these to them, He revealed to them God's plan of redemption for men. He showed them from the Holy Scriptures how the Christ (sent by God), must come to His full glory through His death of the cross, from which divine "position" He could share with all people His wonderful gifts of grace; namely all who have repented and believe in Him as Scripture says.

His words brought light (insight) and NEW LIFE, and because of that increasing joy in their heart. They now were able to believe in the resurrection of their Lord and Savior, and were very grateful to Him. How they longed to meet their resurrected Lord. While talking they arrived at Emmaus, where (probably) one of them, or both, lived. It was already towards evening, and Jesus acted as if He wanted to go on; He did not force Himself onto them. Then they urged the (for them still) unknown Explainer of the Holy Scriptures to stay in their house; after all He could travel on in the morning. Jesus agreed. But when they were sitting at the table for supper, their Guest suddenly turned out to

be their Host; at least He behaved that way. And while He broke the bread, symbol for the body of Jesus given for us, it was revealed to them Who He was. After that He disappeared from before their eyes.

This story teaches us, that we can only really get in contact with Jesus and His resurrection life, and hereby see His (full) glory, when we sincerely share the breaking of the bread; when we are willing to be one planting with Him in His death; when we sincerely desire, by His strength, to die to our old, sinful life. Then we, by His precious blood, will be (completely) cleansed, and are we able to walk and bathe in His Shekinah light, and meet Him (in the Spirit), in and through our worship. In and by His (divine) love (Greek: agape), we will also be able to live in that true fellowship with our brothers and sisters; with all who live and walk the same way. "But if we walk in the (divine) light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

This story also teaches us, that many among us, when – because of disappointment, doubt and/or unbelief – they no longer can see (or think) clearly and separate themselves from the fellowship with brothers and sisters, whereby there will be a backsliding of their spiritual life. Spiritually seen, they too descend to their Emmaus. How much they need the loving and stimulating words of God's good (Gospel) message in order to receive anew insight and joy; that they, because of this, give over themselves again (fully) to their Lord and Savior to (be able to) meet Him anew, but then with renewed strength!

God's Shekinah light (God's glory, wisdom, insight and life) therefore must again fill our human soul. For only in this divine abundance will our soul overflow in joy, and will the testimony of Jesus come (forth) from our mouth, as a matter of course. In this renewed mood the Emmaus travelers, despite the dark of the fallen evening, returned, **uphill**, to Jerusalem. They received "alleluia legs", legs which effortlessly ran uphill towards their brothers and sisters at Jerusalem to testify of their happy experience and their meeting with their Lord. And, having arrived there, it turned out that also the other believers were exuberant, and testified: "**The Lord is truly risen**, and was seen by Simon (Peter)".

It is because of the experience of this (divine) light (and insight) in our soul, that we (are able to) worship Him in spirit and in truth; (are able to) praise Him and thank Him with all of our heart and all of our mind!

God's shekinah glory working in and through our spirit.

Our spirit, too, must ultimately "walk" and bathe in the Shekinah light of God's glory. And when we thus "walk" after the Spirit, then the heavenly law of the Spirit of life will fill us (completely) and we will, as a matter of course, give ourselves over to Him for an eternal servant, an eternal slave of love, whose joy lies solely in serving his Master!

Our spirit must not only experience that spiritual rebirth, but also and especially a growth unto (spiritual) maturity in Him; until, in and by Him, we have come to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). And as we grow towards this (spiritual) fullness in Him, He will be able to use us in this world, in increasing measure, in a spiritual ministry to the salvation of the people of that world. In order to proclaim to His disciples such a (divine) ministry, He appeared personally to them, while they, out of fear for the Jewish chief priests and rulers, had shut themselves in a room to discuss what they should do (John 20:19).

24 verse 36-43: "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself (suddenly) stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. and he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

Also in His resurrection Jesus remained a Man; but a Man with a resurrection body, and as such He now sits on the throne of God on the right-hand side of the Father. In this resurrection body Jesus was able to walk through closed doors, and He could move with the speed of a thought. In that same body He also ate a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb. We can read about Him in that body, in that glorified state, in Revelation 1:13-16.

The Savior has ascended up to heaven and now sits at the right hand of the Father and on His throne as the heavenly High Priest. From there He has sent His Holy Spirit to get in touch with us, to, in His Name, call us to a spiritual ministry in Him.

Let us grow in Him in order to be able to receive this ministry from Him; let us cleanse and sanctify ourselves in Him that we learn to understand His gentle signs and His Word; let us (continue to) walk in watchfulness against sin "in the circumspectness of the righteous". His Word must dwell in us richly, for His will is always in agreement with His Word. Let us (learn) to fully understand God's plan of redemption for humanity. He told His eleven disciples:

24 verse 44-46: "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

The Spirit of God wants to lead us too to the full truth, and proclaim to us the future things, also by His Word; that we be (completely) filled with the knowledge of His will; that we, in His Name and in His wisdom, teach others this divine will. Let us not only want to receive blessings and teachings from Him for ourselves, but let us also and especially bless and teach **others**. And when we sincerely long for this, then He will call us hereto, and – by sharing His anointing with us (for it is a gift, a gift from Him) – enable and use us just as He also called His disciples hereto:

*24 verse 47-49: "And (also) that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, **until ye be endued with power from on high**."*

It is true that the disciples had to preach and testify in Jesus' Name, but they had to do this in and by the strength of the Holy Spirit and His anointing. Therefore they had to wait with this spiritual labor until they were baptized (and filled) with the Holy Spirit; until they would be clothed with this (divine) power from above. After all it was the Holy Spirit, Who must lead and strengthen them in this (divine) labor. And so it must be with us too now (and with our possible ministry).

Preaching is (and should be) nothing but proclaiming the will and the message of God to the people who listen to us. Testifying is (and should be) nothing but telling the people what wonderful things we have experienced **personally** of Jesus; the **personal** experience that He is our Redeemer and Savior, our Healer and Baptizer with the Holy Spirit. But in the ministry of preacher, as well as in the task we **all** have to testify of Him, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is necessary in order to achieve that this divine work have an **eternal** effect on our audience (Isaiah 55:11; 59:21).

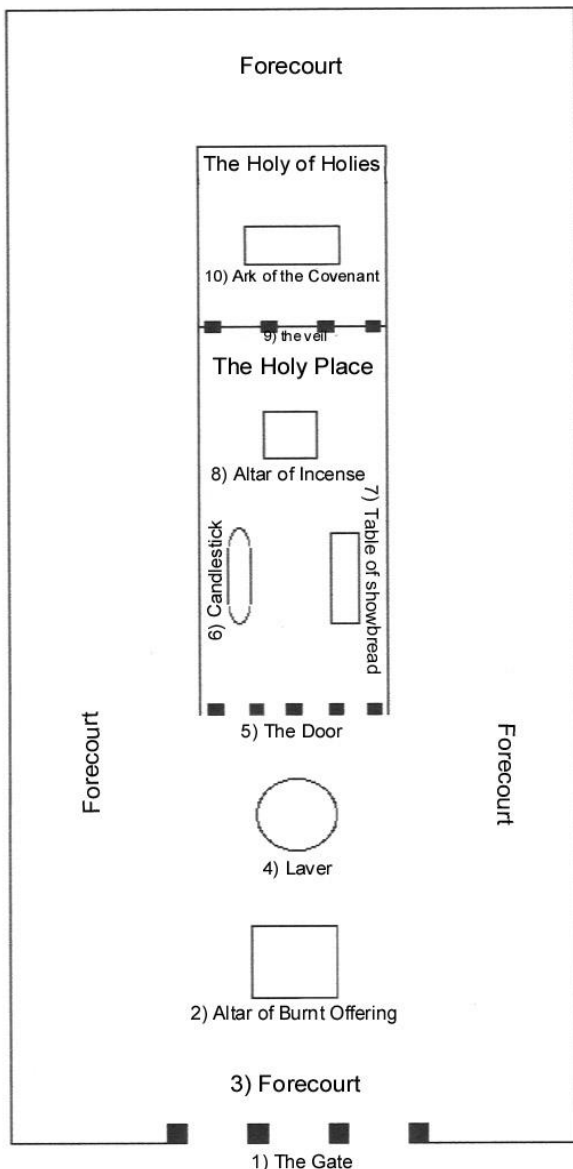
When Jesus had called His eleven disciples unto the labor in Him, He led them outside unto Bethany; and then ascended to heaven. In this ascension lies the assurance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and this is necessary for us all, for only the Holy Spirit could then (and also now) so work through His disciples (followers) as He did in Jesus when He walked on the earth. And while Jesus now sits on the throne in heaven, as our divine High Priest, He will pour out this Spirit on all of His sincere followers, on all who expect this outpouring of His Spirit; on all **He** anointed and chose unto this divine labor.

24 verse 50-53: *"And he led them out (of Jerusalem) as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."*

Let us too walk in this great joy, because we too have been redeemed by Him, and let us continue to serve Him faithfully; continue to work and witness for Him in the strength of the Holy Ghost!

Amen.

How the chapters of the gospel of Luke were seen:



Chapter 1-3	In the light of the gate (1)
Chapter 4-5	In the light of the burnt-offering altar (2)
Chapter 6	In the light of the forecourt (3)
Chapter 7:1-35	In the light of the laver (4)
Chapter 7:36-50	In the light of the door (5)
Chapter 8	In the light of the candlestick (6)
Chapter 9-10	In the light of the table of showbread (7)
Chapter 11	In the light of the altar of incense (8)
Chapter 12-18	In the light of the veil (9)
Chapter 19	In the light of the ordination of the priests
Chapter 20	In the light of the ark of the covenant (10)
Chapter 21	In the light of the table of stone
Chapter 22	In the light of the sprinkling of the blood before the ark
Chapter 23	In the light of the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat
Chapter 24	In the light of the shekinah

Table of contents

Chapter 1	3
The gate of repentance unto the NEW LIFE in Christ.....	3
Introductory words:	3
The birth announcement of John the Baptist.	3
God's Spirit announced the birth of the NEW LIFE.	5
Mary's visit to Elisabeth.....	7
Mary's song of praise.	8
The birth of the "caller unto repentance"	8
Zechariah' song of praise.....	9
Chapter 2	10
The birth of the NEW LIFE.....	10
The birth of Jesus Christ.	10
The witnesses to His birth.....	10
The first group of witnesses: the shepherds.	11
The second group of witnesses: Simon and Anna.....	11
The third group of witnesses: the three wise men.....	12
Christ wants to grow in us and work through us towards the strength that works in us with power.	13
Chapter 3	14
Wanting to live in a continuing disposition of repentance from now on.....	14
The active effect of the Word unto repentance.	14
Produce then fruit that is worthy of the repentance!.....	15
What are the fruits worthy of the repentance?	15
The world hates the Word of repentance.	17
God's answer to each wholehearted conversion expressed in the water baptism.	17
The genealogy of Jesus.....	17
Chapter 4	18
Jesus, God's High Priest, tried and despised by many, but... accepted by others	18
God's High Priest tried.	18
The High Priest despised and rejected by many.....	20
The ministry of the Gospel.	21
Again: The hardening in Nazareth.	21
Jesus, God's High Priest, believed and accepted.	22
Chapter 5	24
The church, a royal priesthood, a people won out of sin.	24
Sinners are cleansed by the Word of the cross, and sanctified to be members of the Body of Christ that they may bear fruit (1 Corinthians 1:18).	24
The justification of the soul.	25
The justification of the body	26
The justification of the spirit.	27
The sincere longing of the redeemed person for God leads to fasting.....	27
The Sabbath-rest of the NEW PERSON in God.	29
Chapter 6	29
The basic principals of God's priest-kingdom.	29
Introduction:	29
I. The attitude of the priest towards God.	30
II. The attitude of the priest towards the world, towards the sinner who knowingly treats us meanly.	31
1. Our attitude towards those, that hate us.	31
2. Our attitude towards them that do us no good.	32
3. Our attitude towards those who want to borrow or have something from us.....	32
III. The priest's attitude towards his divine service.....	33
IV. The priest's attitude towards his own life of the cross, and sanctification.....	33
Chapter 7	35
The Lord Jesus Christ, our resurrection power in every way.....	35
In case of illness.	35
In case of miserable circumstances.	35
He saves His servants from all doubts the evil one prompts.....	36
He is only the Lord of Resurrection for all sincere believers.	36
He is each redeemed sinner's greatest Treasure and the Object of worship; He baptizes him with the Holy Spirit.	37
Chapter 8	39

Like a sevenfold candlestick for God	39
1. We must deny ourselves things and be prepared to bring sacrifices in honor of Jesus	39
2. We must dedicate our life to Jesus, and labor in honor of Him alone	39
3. We must deny ourselves and "burn (up)" to the honor of Jesus	41
4. We must fully obey God in word and deed; that the anointing of God reveal itself freely in and through us	42
5. We must deny ourselves that the Lord may use us to the salvation of our neighbor	43
6. We must receive divine compassion for lost souls	44
The purification of all "flesh", and the perfecting of the Church, solely under the mighty guidance of the Holy Spirit	45
Conclusion	46
Chapter 9	47
Like a divine shewbread in this world. (Part I)	47
This part teaches us to keep God's Word of protective grace on the table of our purified and sanctified heart!	47
The prayer life, the true gauge of our spiritual hunger	47
We must become wondrous signs in this world by communion with Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life	48
The Bread of Life and Herod	49
God's Church must be a shewbread, and this is only possible by the communion with the Bread of Life	49
Communion with the Bread of Life gives a clear and true view of it with Jesus and God's Word	49
Communion with the Bread of Life brings about the process of the cross, and sanctification of the life	49
Communion with the Bread of Life brings true worship of the Lamb of God	50
We receive anointing and spiritual power through communion with the Bread of Life	52
Communion with the Bread of Life brings, after the process of the cross, brotherhood and unity in Christ	52
Communion with the Bread of Life qualifies us to follow Jesus, and to labor for Him	54
Chapter 10	55
Like a divine shewbread in this world. (Part II)	55
Communion with the Bread of Life brings mission in divine holiness	55
Communion with the Bread of Life brings revelation of God's power and mysteries	57
Communion with the Bread of Life gives us compassion for lost souls	58
Communion with the Bread of Life brings a sincere desire for the depths of God's Word, and loving subjection	59
Chapter 11	60
Our life must be a lovely fragrance (namely as of incense) before God's countenance	60
Part I: How we must come to God in prayer	60
Part II: The obstacles in our prayer life	62
Prayer and worship are disturbed by sin	62
Lack of prayer causes our faith life to be shipwrecked	63
No Roman idolatry!	64
God's judgment comes over those who do not know the sign of the cross	64
The (daily) worries of life form obstacles in our life of prayer and testimony	64
Part III: The false worship and service	65
Chapter 12	67
The cleansing / purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh". (Part I)	67
Seven "Christian" demons or "holy" devils	67
The first demon: the "Eye of men"	68
The second demon: "Fear of men"	68
The third demon: "Chasing after the gold". The pursuit of more money and material; the dance around the gold calf and thus the worship of the Mammon	69
The fourth demon: "Rest in the gold"	70
The fifth demon: "Worry about sustenance"	71
The sixth demon: "Sleep tight"	72
The seventh demon: "Work in the flesh"	72
The fire of the Holy Spirit will deliver us from all powers of hell	73
The fire of the Holy Spirit brings division between hypocrisy and true faith	73
Now that we know this, let us pursue the divine flame of this purifying fire, especially when we see that His return is at hand	74
Chapter 13	74
The purification of the holy place in order to come to "the end of all flesh". (Part II)	74
The rejection of unrepentant Judaism – until the time of the end	74
The majority of the Jews and their leaders in Jesus' time lived an unrepentant life	74
A life without sincere repentance is unfruitful for God's Kingdom	75
The Pharisee, the false laborer, came into being by the unrepentant life of the Jews at the time	75
Un-repentance leads us to egocentric views regarding God's Word, and thus to (bringing) a false teaching; it causes us to be workers of iniquity	76

Unrepentant laborers will develop into persecutors of the true children of God	78
Chapter 14	78
The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh”. (Part III)	78
In and through Christ we must be willing to be delivered from the noxious terrestrially and worldly minded view(s) of life.	78
The spiritual death brings sickness in the body.	79
The spiritual death brings pride and the desire for honor and/or fame in our spirit.	79
Because of the spiritual death our soul will crave worldly possessions.	80
God's summon unto spiritual REarmament.....	81
Chapter 15	82
The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh”. (Part IV)	82
A threefold parable of God's redeeming love.....	82
In and through Christ we must be willing to be delivered of every spiritual mistake and self-will in the service of the Lord.....	82
The first parable: The lost sheep.....	82
The second parable: The lost penny.....	84
The third parable: The prodigal son.	85
Chapter 16	88
The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh” (Part V)	88
In and by Christ, we must be willing to be delivered from all unholy desires for earthly things (such as: money, unholy sex, fame).....	88
In and by Christ, we must be willing to be cleansed of all Mammonish idolatry.....	88
In and by Christ, we must be willing to be cleansed of all unholy and unrestrained sex-experience.....	89
In and by Christ, we must be willing to be delivered of all desire for honor, fame and the applause of men.	90
Chapter 17	91
The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh” (Part VI)	91
In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be cleansed of all sinful words and actions which may be exchanged from man to man. We must live in that abundant love of God, whereby we, too, become merciful and gracious towards our neighbor.....	91
In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be delivered from all spitefulness.	92
In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be delivered from all conceit/vanity that we ourselves are quite something already.....	92
In and by Christ, we must (be willing to) be delivered from the sin of ingratitude.....	93
Let us pray for protection against and deliverance from all the temptations (namely satanic forces, powers and sins) of the last days.....	93
1: The temptation that will be there on account of the (many) false prophets; their false anointing will result in (the worship of) the antichrist.....	93
2: The temptation of increasing (multiplying) unrighteousness.....	94
3: The spiritual pressure of the increasing persecutions and oppressions.....	95
The escape of the perfect ones.....	96
Chapter 18	96
The purification of the holy place in order to come to “the end of all flesh” (Part VII)	96
In and by Christ, we must be willing to be cleansed of the sin of prayerlessness.....	96
We must pray with perseverance until we receive an answer.....	97
We must pray with a penitent heart.....	97
We must pray like a child.....	97
We must watch that our possession and all other matters which relate to this earthly life, do not form an obstacle in our prayer life.....	98
Only through a fervent and sincere prayer life, confession of sins and total subjection can we really share the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.....	98
Only by a sincere and persevering prayer life do we get insight regarding the ETERNAL redemption plan and Word of God.....	99
Chapter 19	101
God's (royal) priests know an absolute devotion to their King.....	101
Worldly-mindedness must be a victory gained for a laborer of God.....	101
A true laborer of God receives from Him the spiritual ability (such as gifts, powers, etc.) to – in and by Him – work with Him.....	102
Picture of perfect servanthood to Jesus Christ.....	104
In complete dependence upon, and unity with, Christ let us labor to cleanse His (spiritual) temple, namely our heart and life.....	105
Chapter 20	106
The life of the bride of Christ will be in deep and perfect UNION with God	106

Christ, the High Priest, lives in deep and perfect UNION with the Father, and acts exclusively after the will of His Father...	106
God's laborers must serve Him in deep union with, and devotion to Him and in His (perfect) love.	106
The internal conflict (the ambivalence) in the soul of the people of God.....	107
Our body, too, must subject itself to God's (purifying) fire.....	108
We will become perfect by the relationship with Christ.	108
We must, in truth, have (comm)union with Him.	109
Chapter 21	109
God's justice is like a two-edged sword; it brings to the (sincere) believer full grace, but judgment to all others.	109
Chapter 22	112
The seven introductory blood steps which led to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary.	112
1 st introductory blood step:.....	113
Judas' betrayal.	113
2 nd introductory blood step:.....	113
The Passover: God's only way to salvation, which, in the Father's heart, was already established at the foundation of this world.	113
3 rd introductory blood step:.....	114
The salvation of man – after body, soul and spirit – drove Jesus to Calvary.	114
4 th introductory blood step:.....	115
Jesus' inward acceptance of His task as the Lamb of God.	115
5 th introductory blood step:.....	116
The capture of Jesus.....	116
6 th introductory blood step:.....	116
Peter's denial.....	116
7 th introductory blood step:.....	117
Jesus mocked, beaten and falsely accused by the Supreme Court.	117
Chapter 23	117
The seven blood steps of Jesus Christ, which let to the fulfillment of His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.	117
1 st blood step:.....	117
Jesus before Pilate, as His (earthly) judge.	117
2 nd blood step:.....	117
Jesus handed over to the curiosity and the mockery of Herod.....	117
3 rd blood step:	118
Bar-Abbas preferred over Jesus.	118
4 th blood step:	118
Jesus carried His cross (with great difficulty) on the way to Calvary.	118
5 th blood step:	119
The crucifixion of Jesus Christ.	119
6 th blood step:	119
Jesus entered the realm of the dead (the place where the dead sinners are)	119
7 th blood step:	120
Three days and three nights in the realm of the dead.....	120
Chapter 24	120
The glory of the risen Christ (active) in the NEW MAN	120
God's Shekinah glory working in our body.....	121
God's Shekinah glory, working in our soul.....	122
God's shekinah glory working in and through our spirit.....	123
How the chapters of the gospel of Luke were seen:	124
Table of contents	125