

The Apostolic Way:

- *The People*
- *The Pattern*
- *The Purpose*

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an apostolic ministry to the nations

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Chapter I

AN APOSTOLIC PEOPLE

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” 1Pet.2:9-10.

There are many descriptions of us as an apostolic people, calling us back to our Scriptural identity that God has given us in Jesus the Messiah.

A CHOSEN GENERATION

The word for ‘chosen’, is the Greek *eklektos* and means to ‘gather out of’ or ‘to pick out’. God has chosen us:

- He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless (**Eph.1:4**).
- He chose us in love to become the sons by Jesus Christ to Himself. We are to manifest God in the flesh; we are to manifest His glory. How awesome is our God (**Eph.1:5, Rom.8:18-19**).
- We were predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (**Rom.8:29**).

God foreknew us; this means He knew us beforehand, before the world was created.

How does a generation come to pass?

In the natural, it is through a seed nurtured in a woman to become a child. In the spiritual it is through the seed of the word of God, the imperishable seed (**1Pet.1:23**). This seed brings forth fruit after its own kind. This generation that is to come forth is the

fruit of the word being preached. We are regenerated by the word (**Titus 3:5**).

We must be preachers of the pure word of God to bring forth a generation of the word. There is a famine for the word of God, but when the word of God is preached again, the word will bring forth fruit (**1Sam.3:1-19**).

The generation of Jacob

“This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face” Ps.24:6. We can be this generation: a generation of lost and broken people who have been born again to become the children of God and who are able to grow up to the time and place of total transformation. Jacob was twisted in his flesh, but Jacob wanted to change. He would not let the Man from heaven go until he, Jacob, was changed. It is time to be like Jacob and seriously seek God; to seriously seek His face.

Appointed to eternal life

When Paul and Barnabas preached the word in Antioch in Pisidia, amongst much disturbance and opposition, the Scripture says, *“Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” Acts 13:48.* The chosen generation is the generation which is appointed. We need to be serious about God’s appointment of us. There are more to find to fill up this generation; they will only hear if someone is sent to preach (**Rom.10:14-17**).

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

We are to reign on the earth as kings and priests (**Rev.5:10**). The time will come when *“the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He*

shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev.11:15), and we shall reign with Him.

What do kings do?

Kings administer the word of God governmentally; they decree and declare the word of God, exercising the keys of the kingdom of heaven (**Matt.16:19**). They make sure that the word of God is known. When kings speak, they must be heard because they have kingly authority.

What is the result of our being kings?

Every home will be a home of discipleship; children will be growing up as disciples, knowing the word of God. There will be no misuse of the internet; no silly worldly games! Let us live as Christians, reigning *“in life through the One, Jesus Christ”* (**Rom.5:17**).

What is priestly ministry?

It is worship and prayer at the altar of incense: is there an altar in your home? Is there a time and a place to meet the Lord? Is the Table of the Lord celebrated in the home?

A HOLY NATION

“But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy for I am holy’” **1Pet.1:15-16**. How do we become holy? How do we become a holy nation? The Scripture says, *“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ”* **1Pet.1:13**. This means putting on the belt of truth; this means filling our minds with the word of God.

We are holy by *“not conforming ourselves to the former lusts”* but as obedient children living our time on the earth in godly fear (**1Pet.1:14&17**). Elsewhere Paul says, *“Do not be*

conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” Rom.12:2. Being holy is being changed by the word and the Spirit to become more like God, living in His kingdom and not living in the world and loving the things of this world (1Jn.2:15).

A nation

A nation came forth from Jacob through his twelve sons. The holy nation comes forth as a result of genuine apostolic ministry. The names of the original apostles of the Lamb are set upon the twelve foundations of the wall of the holy city (Rev.21:14). The city is built from a nation, a holy nation.

The commonwealth of Israel

Before we came to Christ, we were *“aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” Eph.2:12-13.* Now in Christ we share in all the promises and the glory and the adoption promised to Israel. There is no hierarchy or partiality in a commonwealth, everybody is included; everybody is benefited.

HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE

“Our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” Titus 2:13b-14. To redeem means to buy back. Jesus has redeemed us; He has acquired us; we are His purchased possession!

What does this people look like? **Ephesians 5:18-21** describe a special people:

- They will not be drunk with wine
- They will be filled with the Holy Spirit

- They will speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
- They will be a thankful people, always giving thanks to God
- They will be a submitted people

AN APOSTOLIC PEOPLE

God calls us a nation; God calls us a people; God calls us a generation; God calls us a priesthood. All of these terms refer to many, not to one or even to a few. This is the apostolic people of God.

This people has been delivered from darkness and “*conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love*” (Col.1:13).

This people “*have obtained mercy*” (1Pet.2:10). Paul said that he had obtained mercy, because he “*did it ignorantly in unbelief*” (1Tim.1:13). He had been an arrogant man, a persecutor of the church and a blasphemer. We can all change and we are to change and we will change as we submit to the word of God by the Spirit of grace and supplication.

What manner of persons ought we be?

In the midst of warning us of the severe judgement that will come upon the earth to those who live by the elementary principles and evil spirits that are in the world, Peter challenges us as to our manner of life (2Pet.3:10-11). Our behaviour should be characterised by holy conduct and godliness. We are “*looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God*” (v.12).

This is an amazing proposition that Peter presents to us: the judgement of the world [this age] is inevitable! Judgement of fire [fervent heat] will dissolve and melt [expose and destroy] all that is ungodly. Jesus said “*The Son of Man will send out His messengers and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire*” Matt.13:41-42a.

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless and consider that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation”
2Pet.3:14-15a.

Who are these apostolic people?

1. It is the ekklesia: the called out ones, the picked out ones, those chosen (**Matt.16:18**)
2. It is the church: the house of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth (**1Tim.3:15**)
3. They are the body of Messiah, many people; people will see the Messiah in the people who represent and manifest Christ. It will be the perfect man of **Ephesians 4:13**.

How do we become this people?

- I. Respond to the call of God – it is costly.
- II. We need to be discipled and taught in the word, which is the truth; the truth only comes by revelation and then by deep understanding.
- III. We need to be trained and equipped to be sent out into the world to witness.
- IV. We become a functioning member of His body as we grow up under the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (**Eph.4:11-16**).

Chapter II

THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN

There is clearly an apostolic pattern in the New Testament Scriptures that ought to be followed, and must be followed so that the church can be restored and fulfil God's purpose in the earth. This requires that there be **apostles** in the church today. For two decades now God has been restoring apostles in the church, but there needs to be a clear understanding of why we need apostles and that we understand the apostolic pattern that must be followed, so that the church may become *"a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13b).

1. WE NEED APOSTLES TO REVEAL CHRIST

In **Matthew 10**, Jesus commissioned the first twelve apostles and sent them out. He gave them many and various instructions and then in **verse 40** He said *"He who receives you [the apostles], receives Me [Jesus the Messiah], and he who receives Me receives Him [the Father] who sent Me"*

The mystery of God

If we receive apostles sent by Jesus we actually receive Jesus. If we receive Jesus in this way, we actually receive the Father. There is a deep revelation of God to be received, and according to Jesus it comes by receiving the apostles He sends.

Paul talks about this in **Colossians 2**: *"For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and for those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of*

understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of Father and of Christ" v.1-2.

God is Father and God is the Son

The mystery of God is the deep understanding of God as revealed in the whole Bible, but especially in the New Testament. **God is Father to a Son and Son to a Father – this is the mystery of God.** The Father is revealed in the Son and can be known no other way. *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me' Jn.14:6.* Jesus then said, *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him" Jn.14:7.* How were the disciples going to know the Father? Only through knowing Jesus, after He has risen from the dead.

The doctrine of Christ

The apostle John went to great lengths in his writings to make known to us the mystery of Christ. He says, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" 2John 9.* He says, *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" 2Jn.7.*

In the modern world we have the Jehovah Witnesses going all over the world declaring that Jesus Christ is not Jehovah [Yahweh] in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. We have Muslims aggressively opposing the doctrine of Christ and even being prepared to kill. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Even in the Christian churches there has been a pulling away from the doctrine of Christ, replacing it with other doctrines that men have taught to explain the Godhead. There needs to be a clear preaching of the doctrine of Christ; there needs to be a clear

teaching of the divinity of Christ. This is the only foundation of the Christian faith (1Cor.3:10-11).

2. WE NEED APOSTLES TO LAY THE FOUNDATION

A picture of the pattern

In **Ephesians 2:19-22** we have a picture of the pattern, after which the church is to be built. The household of God is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. This is a remarkable statement and one that has been ignored for too long. Every church is built upon some foundational doctrine, but what is that doctrine? The household of God can only be built on the Biblical foundation and that is the preaching and teaching of the mystery of who Christ is. Therefore the building of God's house is only possible if true holy apostles and prophets are in place as foundational ministries, teaching and preaching the mystery of Christ (**Eph.3:5**).

God to be seen

The purpose is for God to be seen in the earth through His church. God needs a people fashioned according to the pattern. Apostles are necessary with prophets to lay the foundational knowledge of Jesus Christ in the church. Relying upon historic denominational foundations will never bring the church to maturity, that is, to the full revelation of who Christ is.

Through the church

In **1 Timothy 3:15** Paul was instructing Timothy how to conduct himself *"in the house of God, which is church of living God the pillar and ground of the truth"*. The primary truth that is to be found in every expression of the church is the declaration of

the mystery of godliness: that *"God was manifested in the flesh"* (v.16). God was seen in flesh! And today God reveals Himself through His Word in the church of the living God. The living God is found in the church through the word that is preached and taught.

What did the first apostles preach?

Acts 5:42

The apostles had been in trouble again for preaching Christ. The high priest and his companions were deeply troubled. They said, *"Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"* Acts 5:28. What an accusation to have made against us: that we have filled our city, our nation with the doctrine of Jesus Christ!

These apostles, after being released, having been beaten with stripes, were rejoicing to have suffered *"shame for His name"* (v.41). And what did they do then? *"And daily in the temple and in every house they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus the Christ"* v.42. This is the fundamental knowledge of God, knowing Jesus the Messiah; that He is the revelation of God in the flesh.

3. APOSTLES ARE NEEDED AS WISE MASTER BUILDERS

1 Corinthians 3:10-11

Apostle Paul had received grace from God to be as a *"wise master builder"* (v.10). A master builder has to know the plan, so that we can all build according to the pattern. There is a master plan that apostles are responsible to make known. The building must have a sure foundation. The only foundation that can be laid is *"Jesus the Messiah"* (v.11). This Jesus who is Yehovah

[Yahweh] in the flesh, bringing salvation. He is the promised Messiah, the King of kings and He has a plan.

The foundation is the knowledge of who Jesus is. God is not a concept; He is a person whose name is Jesus.

The church is to be built up into maturity and every saint equipped to function so that the church will begin to measure up to the stature of Christ (**Eph.4:13**). Apostles are needed, along with all the ministries Christ has given, to bring the church to be a perfect man in the earth reflecting Christ. God will be seen in the earth!

4. WE NEED APOSTLES TO MAKE KNOWN THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

Apostles function in the realm of revelation. Paul speaks of the grace he received to know the mystery and to make known the mystery through his writings and through his preaching (**Eph.3:2-4 & 8**). This knowledge is given by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. We will only see the mystery when we receive the apostles and prophets that the Spirit has revealed it to. There are many today calling themselves apostles and prophets but they do not speak of the mystery of Christ. **Ephesians 3:5** clarifies this: the mystery is revealed *"by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets"*, that is, those who set themselves apart in prayer, enabling them to receive from the Spirit (**Acts 6:4**).

There is one body

In the book of Ephesians, Paul refers to the **one body** (**Eph.4:4**) and to the **one new man** (**Eph.2:15**). One of the primary aspects of the mystery is that the *"Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel"* **Eph.3:6**. There is one body, made up of Jew and Gentile. The body that Jesus is forming in the earth is

made up of Jew and Gentile. There is no such thing as 'a Gentile church' in the Scriptures. There is only the one body of Christ.

There is not a separate destiny for the nations [Gentiles] to the nation of Israel. Christ has *"broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity"* Eph.2:14b-16.

This is a most important aspect of the mystery that few are preaching today. Many are coming up with sophisticated doctrines and eschatologies concerning the future of Israel and the church, therein denying the clear teaching of Paul in the book of Ephesians and elsewhere, and Jesus' own words in **John 10:16**, *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."*

Grace was given to Paul to *"preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Messiah [Christ]"* Eph.3:8, so that we could all **see the fellowship of the mystery (v.9)**. This is the mystery of Messiah, the Anointed One. It is a fellowship! That means that we are all to become participators in this mystery. This mystery has been hidden since creation. It was hidden by God, but it is revealed in Jesus Christ. This is all referred to in **verse 9**.

The result of seeing the fellowship of the mystery is that the principalities and powers will bow the knee to Jesus, when the mystery [manifold wisdom] is made known by the church to the principalities and powers (**Eph.3:10**).

WHAT IS THE PATTERN?

The early church was undisputedly led by apostles. When Paul was converted he was taken to meet the apostles.

Who led the church? The apostles. The first church was apostolic.

The pattern is expressed as **follow me as I follow Christ**: this is the pattern of leadership! This is the **apostolic pattern**:

- apostles lay down their lives for the brethren
- the heart of apostles is to raise up brethren into the callings that the brethren have
- all that apostles have to offer is a lifestyle of following Jesus

Paul's example: Philippians 3:7-14

If you do what Paul did, you will become an apostolic person. Then you will be functioning in the apostolic pattern as a member of an apostolic company who are a pattern people.

v.7 *"What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ."* This is the beginning of our walk to maturity: laying down everything for Christ

v.8 *"indeed I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus My Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ."* We need to have this same attitude as Paul: full commitment! Laying down everything for the sake of gaining Christ! Not mourning what we have lost, but purposely deciding to count them as loss. The reward is gaining Christ!

v.9 All we need is to be *"found in Him, not having my own righteousness ... but ... the righteousness which is from God by faith"*. Faith is the key, not your feelings.

v.10 This is a remarkable prayer from the heart of Paul. His great desire was to *"know Him and the power of his resurrection."*

Most of us like that part of the prayer, but Paul does not stop there. He goes much further: to know *"the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death"*. We often fail to understand the importance of embracing His sufferings in our own lives; we fail to really die to ourselves.

v.11 *"If by any means I may attain to [arrive at] the resurrection from the dead"*. This is speaking of a lifestyle experience of the resurrection. This is walking in the power of the resurrection here and now. Our goal is to walk in Jesus, for Jesus, and through Jesus.

"Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" 2 Cor.4:10. Paul speaks of a lifestyle of *"death working in us, but life in you [others]"* (v.12).

v.12 Here is the decision! Will we press on? Will we *"lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me"*. Do not get stuck where you are and what you feel right now. Make the decision to **press on**. Why did God call you in the beginning? Do you know?

v.13 This is the attitude. *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."* Forget the past! Make a decision: press on into the future. It does not matter if you have been successful or a failure, walk into the new man. Do not let people hold you in the past. Do not let yourself remain in the past.

v.14 *"press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

In verses 12 to 14, Paul uses strong words of action. We are to make decisions to press on, to lay hold of, to apprehend, to forget the past, to reach for the future. Brethren you can do it! You

can press on! You can lay hold of all that God has in store for you. He wants you to be an over comer, to be part of a pattern people, to walk in maturity.

Being a pattern people - Philippians 3:15-17

v.15 *"Therefore let us"*. Paul has changed from personal testimony: I press toward the goal etc, to the plural: let us. *"As many as are mature"*. Paul is now talking to a company of people who have the same commitment and attitude and zeal as he describes of himself in **verses 7-14**. If you and I have a similar commitment and choose to go on, counting the cost and choosing to forsake all, then we are mature. This is the qualification to be a member of the apostolic company; to be part of a pattern people.

"Let us ... have this mind": we are to think differently. We are no longer just individually orientated in following Jesus, but we have become a functioning part of the body.

Then Paul says, *"If in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you"*. If you have made the mature decision to follow Jesus, God will reveal any differences in thinking. It becomes more easy now to discern the good acceptable and perfect will of God (**Rom.12:2**), and it becomes easy to repent, that is, to change our minds.

v.16 *"Nevertheless to the degree that we have already attained"*, that is, the level of maturity that we have, we are to walk as a functioning body in Christ, submitting to the word of God, and submitting to one another.

"Let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind". Let us stop arguing and making divisions according to our own

opinions. Let us build up the body that we are part of and look to contribute to the building up of the whole body.

We are to walk by the same rule. This means we are to live by the rule, according to the measure, and the measure is *"the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Eph.4:13b). This walk is voluntary; we need to have a generous attitude in the company and be committed to being a pattern people.

v.17 *"Brethren, join in following my example"*. Let us walk with the apostle. One can only be an apostle to those who receive him as an apostle.

"Note those who so walk as you have us for a pattern". Are you willing to be a pattern? Can others follow your lifestyle, your example and thereby grow to greater maturity?

What sort of pattern should we be setting?

The Thessalonians were a pattern people, 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

- They *"became followers of us [apostles] and of the Lord"*
- They *"received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit"*
- They *"became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe"*
- *"The word of the Lord sounded forth ... in every place"*
from this people.
- Their *"faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything"*

Longsuffering is a necessary part of the pattern. The apostle must show forth *"all longsuffering as a pattern"* (1 Timothy 1:16).

As an apostle, Titus was to show himself as a *"pattern of good works, in doctrine, integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech"* Titus 2:7. The brethren are to follow this example.

The brethren are meant to be able to follow the example of the apostolic leadership, not being disorderly; not eating without working; not being a burden to other brethren, showing themselves *"an example of how you should follow"* (2 Thess.3:7-9).

The pattern is a lifestyle of discipleship

Our understanding of the pattern is growing and deepening. Discipleship is meant to be a lifestyle, following the example of the apostles in the midst, and receiving the doctrine through them. Being a pattern people is very different to following the normal traditional church pattern. The normal church pattern is mostly expressed in congregational meetings with one minister up the front, trying to provide everything that the people of God need and then the people of God go home and individually and as families seek to follow the Lord.

In discipleship, we function in public - the congregational meeting - and from house to house. We are disciples seven days a week, following the pattern.

Chapter III

THE APOSTOLIC PURPOSE

What is the purpose of God?

To have a mature church in the earth, which fulfils God's purpose in the earth. The church is not an embassy of heaven offering visas.

HOW DOES THE CHURCH FULFIL GOD'S PURPOSE?

Romans 1:5 – Through Messiah Jesus we have **received grace and apostleship for obedience** to the faith among all nations for His name.

There will be a church on the earth that is properly and adequately preaching Jesus the Messiah to all nations.

This church will be functioning in grace and apostleship so that nations become obedient to the Word of God; nations opening up in the timing and the will of God to receive the Word from this mature church!

God will give a window of opportunity in each nation. God will have His apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers ready to go through that window of opportunity.

Through Grace

Grace has been so underrated in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church. The focus was on power, anointing and gifts. However grace is to be accessed. The power of the Holy Spirit is given for witness, but it is through grace that we reach nations.

Grace is the nature of the very personhood of God. **Exodus 34:6-7** says God is gracious; it is who He is. Then the New Testament teaches that it is through **grace** that apostleship is activated to reach nations (**Rom.1:5**).

Through knowledge of the Seven Ones - Ephesians 4:4-6

This is an amazing declaration: there is One Body and One Spirit; there is One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism; there is One God and Father. Have you considered this amazing declaration? Within the seven ones are the core revelations of what we believe.

To enable us to understand these “ones”, Jesus gave us the five-fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (**Eph.4:11**). For a long time I taught the passage on the five-fold ministries separately to the seven ones that need to be preached and taught.

We need to preach the One Body, that it is the very Body of Christ, of which we have been made members by the very will of God, being placed in it through baptism (**1Cor.12:12-13 & 18**). We need to preach the one baptism and the great need to receive the Holy Spirit in our day. We need to ask ourselves, what is the faith that we are to become unified in? What is the hope of our calling? Who is the Lord? There is one God and Father of us all!

By growing up to be that Perfect Man Exegesis of Ephesians 4:7-16

v.7 to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

v.8 When Jesus ascended He led captivity captive and gave gifts (plural) to men - the gift has become “gifts”.

v.9-10 Jesus had to go down into the lower parts of the earth to bring these gifts up. As the gifts work in the church to bring the whole church to a mature understanding of the purpose of God, then Christ will truly fill all things.

v.11 He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers.

v.12 He gave these gifts:

- to equip (set in order the body) the saints
- to “do the work of the ministry”: we need apostles working!
We need prophets working!
- to build up the body of Christ

v.13 These gifts must function until we all come to:

- i. unity of faith
- ii. full knowledge of the Son of God
- iii. to a perfect man. The goal is perfection: ***“Let us go on to perfection” Heb.6:1.***
- iv. to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Let us imagine what this could look like.

v.14 We should no longer be children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; we are to grow up, and that will happen as the ministries do their work among us.

v.15 The members of the body are to speak the truth in love, so that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, Christ. This means going beyond superficial platitudes and getting into reality: it is time to talk about Jesus.

v.16 The goal is a fully functioning body; fully functioning in love; this includes every member.

Growing up to become the Glorious church: The Church, The Bride, the Wife - Ephesians 5:22-33

- ❖ This mature church is submitted to the Lord
 - ❖ Christ is our Head and our Saviour
 - ❖ We are to be subject to Christ in everything; our whole lives
 - ❖ Christ loves us and gave Himself for us
 - ❖ **He is sanctifying and cleansing us by the washing of the water of the Word. The word is the “Rhema” – the quickened word, the word proceeding from the mouth of God.**
- Do you learn the Word and find out what God wants to say to you every day from the Word? If we keep immersing ourselves in the Word we will find it easier to receive the “Rhema” word, hearing God speak to us
- ❖ **Jesus is doing this so He might present her to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, to be holy and without blame!**

Where is Jesus doing this?

Jesus is doing this in the church in the earth through the ministry of the Word. This is the Word that brings faith (Rom.10:17).

The overcomers will be that church

In the seven letters to the seven churches in the book of **Revelation**, there is a reward given to the overcomers. Jesus is looking for a church of overcomers – not a church of Sunday worshipers and Wednesday pray-ers. He is looking for overcomers.

If we do not overcome we do not receive the rewards. An overcomer is one who gets up on his feet after being knocked down ten times. The overcomer will get back up again and go on in the faith. Forget the past! Reach toward what is ahead, pressing for the goal!

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD [the Eternal One], as the waters cover the sea” Habakkuk 2:14. How do we get the knowledge of the glory? It is actually through discipleship, *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* (Matt.28:19), and continuing steadfastly in *“the apostles doctrine”* (Acts 2:42).

The goal is the new creation

In Acts 2:22-36, Peter is preaching Jesus the Christ proving that *“this Jesus whom you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ”* (v.36). Peter is giving a summary of who Jesus is: that God raised up Jesus, *“having loosed the pains of death”*.

The *“pains of death”* is literally *‘birth pangs’*. Jesus was not suffering pain in hell. When Jesus said “It is finished”, the suffering was done. The Scripture says of Jesus, *“Being put to death in the flesh but was made alive in the Spirit”* (1 Pet.3:18). Jesus was in the Spirit immediately after He died in the flesh and by the Spirit *“He went and preached to the spirits in prison”* (v.19).

Jesus was birthing something, He was bringing forth the gifts necessary to build the church. Jesus was in birth pangs, bringing forth the new creation. When He rose from the dead everything in all of creation was to change.

After Jesus died, the veil was torn and the graves were opened. Many bodies of dead saints came out of graves after

Jesus' resurrection and appeared to many (**Matt.27:51-52**). This was all part of the process of Jesus completing His work down below, in the lower parts of the earth (**Eph.4:8-10**).

Jesus went through birth pangs after He died in the flesh to bring forth the new creation in the Spirit. Jesus had to come and die and go below in the Spirit and bring forth the new creation.

Where is the new creation?

- ❖ it is in the earth
- ❖ the earth was cursed because of sin
- ❖ Jesus came to take away the curse of sin from the earth

For this to happen it was necessary for Jesus to die, to be buried, and to be raised from the dead. This all happened as it was written in the Scripture (**1Cor.15:3-4**).

The knowledge of the Glory of the Eternal One is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

God has a plan for the earth. God's plan is not to take you away to heaven. That is why we are to **go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name...teaching them to observe all I commanded**. This is how we give the knowledge of the glory of God.

God's original mandate given to Adam will be fulfilled. "*Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion*" (**Gen.1:28**).

Noah was kept safe in the earth in the day of judgement.

God preserves a people, the righteous, in the earth who will fulfil His purpose.

The coming of the Son of Man will be as the Days of Noah (Matt.24:36-41).

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares shows how the wicked will be taken out and burned in the fire of judgement at the end of the age (Matt.13:41-42). *“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”* (Matt.13:43).

Where is this kingdom? It is in the world (v.38a).

What are the steps to fulfilling this goal?

Hebrews 6:1 says *“Let us go on to perfection”*. Hebrews 6:3 says we will *“If God permits”*. God will permit us to go on if foundations are right.

There are six steps:

- i. **repentance from dead works**
- ii. **put our faith toward God** through Jesus Christ, personally (Jn 14:1)
- iii. **doctrine of baptisms** – for repentance and remission of sins, to receive the Spirit, to be placed in His Body, to be immersed in His name
- iv. **the laying on of hands** to receive Holy Spirit, to be blessed, commissioned, ordained (all of us are priests needing ordination)
- v. **resurrection of the dead** – walking in resurrection life (Jn 5:24-25), born again, raised by hearing the voice of the Son of God
- vi. **Eternal Judgement** – we are to walk in this every day, choosing to believe in Him every day – people only go to hell because they refuse to believe in Jesus; Jesus has dealt with sin.

What sort of people should we be once the foundations are laid?

Hebrews 5:12

- ❖ We ought to be teachers, teaching others about the glory of God
- ❖ Teaching others the foundations which enable them to go on to perfection
- ❖ We are to grow up from being disciples to be teachers
- ❖ We need to grow up to eat the solid food and handle the word of righteousness
- ❖ We cannot stay on milk all our lives

The word of righteousness is the word preached to release faith (**Heb.5:13**). We must contend earnestly for the faith that once for all was delivered to the saints (**Jude 3**). This is the faith we are to die for with a smile on our face, so that people can see the glory of God.

What is God's purpose?

It is the establishment of God's kingdom/government on the earth. The government is on the shoulders of the Son of God (**Isa.9:6**); His kingdom will always be increasing (**Isa.9:7**).

His kingdom is to be seen, functioning in the earth. All those who offend and are lawless will be taken out of His kingdom (**Matt.13:41-42**).

How do we get into the purpose of God?

- **Repent** which is to have a radical change of mind.
- **Believe** in the Word of God, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ

- **Be baptised** into Messiah Jesus, into His name [the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit]. That name is the name of **Jesus**. That **name** means the Person, all that the Person is. There are many fathers in the world but what is His name? There are many sons but what is His name? (**Acts 2:38, Acts 19:5, Acts 8:16-17**)
- **Receive the gift of Holy Spirit**. The gift of the Holy Spirit was foreshadowed in the annual feast of Pentecost, looking back to the giving of the Law on tablets of stone on Mt Sinai.
- **Walk in resurrection life**, that is, laying down our lives for the gospel. Martyrdom is a proof of resurrection life in us.
- **Preaching eternal judgement/condemnation** – that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish [be destroyed or die]. We are to warn and exhort people about this reality.
- **We are going on to maturity, to perfection.**

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he heard the Seraphim declaring *“The whole earth is full of Your glory”* (Isa.6:1-3).

**The knowledge of the glory of
the Eternal God
will cover the earth as the
waters cover the sea**