



The throne of God and the Lamb

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

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WITH PETER HAY AND DAVID BAKER

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The administration of the Holy Spirit is the seven Spirits of God

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with Peter Hay and David Baker

October 2025

Scriptures are quoted from NKJV, KJV, NASB and LITV.

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Chapter I

The seven Spirits before the throne

The apostle John addressed the book of Revelation to the seven churches. He began the book by saying, 'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from *the seven Spirits* who are before His throne.' Rev 1:4. The *seven Spirits* of God describe the full capacity of Yahweh that belongs to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the fellowship of one Spirit. It is Their capacity to reveal one another and to multiply Their one life by offering. The key point is that wherever we see the seven Spirits of God, it shows us where the rulership and offering initiative of God is focused and operative so that the will of God is accomplished.

When we read the first six chapters of the book of Revelation, we note that there are three distinct phases in relation to the seven Spirits of God before the throne.

1. The *first phase* is the church age that began on the Day of Pentecost and will continue until the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end. During the church age, the seven Spirits of God are before

the Son's throne. Rev 1:4. The seven Spirits of God were given to the glorified Son of Man when He ascended from the Mount of Olives and sat down on His own throne at the right hand of God. Heb 8:1. When the apostle John saw the glorified Son of Man, he described seven personal attributes of Christ which reveal that He possesses the seven Spirits of God. Rev 1:13-16. The ministry of Christ, through the messengers in His right hand, is the manifestation of the seven Spirits of God among His lampstand churches. Rev 1:20.

2. The *second phase* will commence when the Father takes His seat in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion for the purpose of dwelling among His people and establishing His kingdom on the earth. Rev 4:2. Describing this phase, the apostle John wrote concerning the throne of the Father, 'From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God'. Rev 4:5. In this phase, the seven Spirits of God are before the Father's throne. The seven Spirits of God will activate and enable the ministry of prayer and worship that will be led by the apostolic administration of Christ and the world-wide presbytery around the throne of the Father. Rev 4:6-11.
3. The *third phase* will commence after Jesus Christ *stands up* from His throne and is presented before the Father to receive the scroll that has been sealed with seven seals. John described the time when Christ will stand up as the Lamb of God by saying, 'I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God *sent out into all the earth*'. Rev 5:6. The seven Spirits of God that belong to the Lamb will be sent out into all the earth when Christ opens the seals. Notably, when the first seal is opened, the ministry of the seven Spirits will be expressed through the 144 000 who will be sent into all the earth to look for worthy houses. Rev 6:1-2.

Seven phases of the throne

The first six chapters of the book of Revelation identify that the ruling and offering initiative of God, which is revealed by the seven Spirits of God, will move from the Son's throne to the Father's throne, and then to the throne of God and the Lamb. It is important to understand the difference between these various phases of the throne.

For example, when the seven Spirits of God are before the Son's throne, it is *the name of the Son* that is being revealed by the Holy Spirit through the seven stars in His right hand. In contrast to this, when the seven Spirits of God move to the Father's throne, it is *the name of the Father* that will be revealed by the Holy Spirit through the world-wide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones.

Notably, the book of Revelation does not identity the phases of the throne before the beginning of the church age. The book begins with the seven Spirits of God before the Son's throne because the apostle John received the revelation while he was in exile on the island of Patmos during the church age. Rev 1:4-9. We have considered that the first six chapters of the book of Revelation identity three phases of the throne. However, later in the book of Revelation, John referred to *another phase* of the throne when he wrote, 'Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them'. Rev 20:11.

Evidently, there are more than three phases of the throne. When we consider the progressive revelation of the ruling and offering initiative of Yahweh *Elohim* from before the foundation of the world to the end of the Millennium, we note that there are *seven phases of the throne*. That is, there are seven phases of the throne that reveal God's covenant purpose, and its progressive fulfilment across human history. We could refer to the throne of God and the Lamb in the new heavens and earth, which is the source of everlasting increase through the administration of the bride city, as *an eighth and final manifestation* of the throne.

1. The first phase is the revelation of *the throne of the Father* that was established in the covenant of Yahweh outside of time and eternity, *before* the foundation of the world. The throne of the Father was then extended, by the immutable word of the Father, over the seventeen prophetic days that belong to this present heavens and earth. In this regard, the third heaven is the throne of the Father. Isa 66:1.
2. The second phase is the revelation of *the throne of the Son of God* that was established on the top of Mount Zion in the third heaven at the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant. The throne of the Son of God is also called the throne of the Lord of hosts because the angelic host of heaven were created to serve before this throne. Psa 103:19-22.

3. The third phase is the revelation of *the throne of the Father* as the source of the fountain of life that flowed from the finished offering of Christ as the Lamb of God on the cross. This phase was revealed when the Spirit of Jesus returned to the bosom and the throne of the Father after His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross had been completed.
4. The fourth phase is the revelation of *the throne of Yahweh the Son* at the right hand of God in the third heaven. Psa 110:1. This phase commenced when Jesus Christ physically ascended, in His spiritual body, from the Mount of Olives and then sat down in His own throne at the right hand of God.
5. The fifth phase is the revelation of *the throne of the Father* in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion in the third heaven. Rev 4:2. Dan 7:9. This phase will commence when the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end and to establish His kingdom on the earth.
6. The sixth phase is the revelation of *the throne of God and of the Lamb* in the third heaven. This *composite* throne will be established after Jesus Christ stands up from His own throne at the right hand of God and moves into the centre of the Father's throne. Rev 7:17.
7. The seventh phase is the revelation of *the great white throne*. Rev 20:11. This throne will be established at the beginning of the Millennium. During the Millennium, every son of God, in their spiritual body, will reign with Christ for one thousand years on the earth. At the end of the Millennium, Christ will sit on the great white throne to judge the ungodly and cast them into the lake of fire.

As we have already considered, at the end of the Millennium, the present heavens and earth will be dissolved before the face of Him who sits on the great white throne. Rev 20:11. Death and Hades will also be cast into the lake of fire. Rev 20:14. Jesus Christ will then deliver the entire kingdom to the Father so that 'God may be all in all'. 1Co 15:28. The throne of the Father and of the Lamb will be the source of everlasting increase, through the administration of the bride city, in the new heavens and new earth. The apostle John described this eighth and final manifestation of the throne by saying, 'He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.' Rev 22:1.

The throne of the Father

We will now consider the seven phases of the throne in more detail. The Father's throne belongs to the covenant of Yahweh *before* the foundation of the world. The throne of the Father is the intrinsic authority that belongs to the Father according to the sanctification of His name. The throne of the Father was established before the foundation of the world when the Son and Holy Spirit sanctified the Father to the intrinsic authority of His name, which is the expression of His fatherhood, in relation to Their covenant purpose.

In relation to the authority of the Father's throne, He is the source of the name and works of every son of God which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit discussed in the fellowship of Their covenant before the foundation of the world. Eph 3:14-15. The Father is the source of every new identity that is brought forth through procreation in this present age. Heb 12:9. Jas 1:17. The prophet Jeremiah declared that the Father is 'the God of all the families'. Jer 31:1. Furthermore, the throne of the Father will be the source of every new identity that will be brought forth in the new heavens and new earth through the new offering mechanism that belongs to the consummation of the marriage of Christ and the church.

The throne of the Father was established in the covenant of Yahweh *before* the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant. The first manifestation of the throne of the Father is outside of time and eternity. At the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant, the third heaven was established as *an extension* of the throne of the Father. When the Father proclaimed to the Son, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You', His word declared the end from the beginning. According to the immutable word of the Father, the third heaven has been *stretched like a tent* over the seventeen prophetic days that have been ordained by the Father for this present heavens and earth. Isa 40:22.

Jesus explained that the third heaven is an extension of the throne of the Father when He said, 'I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for *it is God's throne*; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.' Mat 5:34-35. It is important to recognise that the heavenly Jerusalem is the Father's city, which is populated by sons of God, *before* it becomes the bride of Christ which proceeds from the body of Christ. In His admonition to the presbytery in Philadelphia, Jesus referred to the heavenly Jerusalem as 'the city of

My God'. Rev 3:12. Likewise, the apostle Paul called it 'the city of the living God'. Heb 12:22.

The throne of the Son of God

At the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant, the Son of God established *His throne* on the top of Mount Zion. Notably, this was not the intrinsic throne of Yahweh the Son. It was the throne of the Son of God who had become the embodiment of the Word of the Father. Joh 1:1. The throne of the Son of God belongs to the Son, but it reveals the throne of the Father. From this throne, on the top of Mount Zion, the Son of God proceeded to create the present heavens and earth. The Father is the source of the natural creation, but all things were created by, and through, the Son of God. Joh 1:3.

Speaking about the throne of the Son of God, which was established on the top of Mount Zion at the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant, the psalmist said, 'Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.' Psalms 93:2. Similarly, the prophet Jeremiah declared, 'A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.' Jer 17:12. The psalmist also said, 'The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.' Psalms 103:19.

When the angels were created, the throne of the Son of God also became the throne of the Lord of hosts. Psalms 103:19-22. The prophet Isaiah described his vision of the throne of the Son of God by saying, 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord [of hosts] sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the [true] temple.' Isa 6:1. The prophet Ezekiel also described this same throne when he said, 'Above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.' Ezekiel 1:26.

In the tabernacle of Moses, the ark of the covenant was the symbol of the throne of the Son of God. The *Shekinah* was the glory of the Son of God that dwelt among the nation of Israel. Moreover, Jesus Christ revealed the glory of the Father, as the true Ark of the Covenant, during His 3½-year earthly ministry. The apostle John testified, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'. Joh 1:14.

Jesus returned to the throne of the Father

Having fully revealed the Father as *the Son of God* during His earthly ministry, Jesus was then glorified as *the Son of Man* on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. When His offering journey was finished, Jesus committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father and breathed His last. Luk 23:46. The Father reached out His hands and received the Son into His bosom and to His throne. There is a relationship and a distinction between the bosom of the Father and the throne of the Father. The throne of the Father is the seat of His authority, and the bosom of the Father describes the generative capacity of His fatherhood.

Jesus said to the presbytery in Laodicea, 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.' Rev 3:21. Jesus overcame Satan on His offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross. At the conclusion of His offering journey, He did not return to His throne as the Son of God among the angelic administration. Rather, He returned all the way to the Father's throne that was established outside of time and eternity before the foundation of the world. Jesus said, 'I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.' Joh 16:28.

It is important to recognise that Christ sat down in the Father's throne at the conclusion of His offering journey. When the soldier pierced the side of Christ, the fountain of life, which comprised the water, blood, and the seven Spirits of God, flowed directly from the Father's throne through the physical body of Christ on the cross. Joh 19:34. The Father's throne is the source of the river of life. In the time of the end, the Lamb will shepherd the great multitude to this same 'living fountains of waters'. Rev 7:17. Furthermore, the same river of life will continue to flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the new heavens and new earth. Rev 22:1.

Notably, while the immortal and incorruptible body of Jesus lay in the tomb for three days and three nights, His Spirit returned to the Father who dwells outside of time and eternity. We recall that Yahweh the Son emptied Himself to the bosom of the Father before the foundation of the world and was then begotten, by the word of the Father, as the Son of God. When Jesus committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, He returned to the bosom of the Father for *a second time*. Then, on the day of His resurrection, Jesus was begotten from the bosom of the Father as the first Man in the image and likeness of God.

Speaking about Christ's physical resurrection, the apostle Paul proclaimed that the Father 'raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You".' Act 13:33. This was the *second time* that the Father proclaimed this word. On the day of His resurrection, Christ came *a second time* into this world. Heb 1:6. He had become the Firstborn from the dead. Rev 1:5. Speaking about Christ as the first Man in the image and likeness of God, the apostle John declared, 'No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him'. Joh 1:18.

Following His physical resurrection, Jesus returned to the throne of the Father in *His spiritual body*. Jesus said to Mary at the tomb, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" '. Joh 20:17. In His spiritual body, Jesus ascended to sit with the Father in His throne. Rev 3:21. The spiritual body is not bound by time and space. As we have considered, the throne of the Father is presently outside of time and eternity.

The throne of Yahweh the Son at the right hand of God

It is likely that Jesus travelled to and from the Father's throne, stepping in and out of time, on numerous occasions during the forty days that followed His physical resurrection. Notably, when Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives at the end of forty days, He did not return to the Father's throne. Rather, He took His seat on His own intrinsic throne at the right hand of God. King David prophetically declared, 'The Lord [Father] says to my Lord [Son]: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet".' Psa 110:1. Jesus Christ is presently seated as the glorified Son of Man on His own intrinsic throne. Heb 8:1. Heb 12:2.

This was another significant development in relation to the throne. We recall that Yahweh the Son left His intrinsic throne when He emptied Himself into the Father's bosom before the foundation of the world. Php 2:6-7. When the Father instructed the Son to sit at His right hand, the throne of Yahweh the Son was essentially brought from outside of time and placed on the top of Mount Zion in the third heaven. Jesus Christ is presently seated on His own throne at the right hand of God in the third heaven as the ruler of the kings of the earth. Rev 1:5.

The ministry of the seven Spirits of God before the Son's throne has been revealed by the Holy Spirit since the Day of Pentecost. On the Day of Pentecost, the power of the seven Spirits of God was poured out upon the early church through the Holy Spirit. Act 2:33. Speaking about the ministry of the seven Spirits of God, Jesus said to His disciples concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, 'He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.' Joh 16:14-15.

Significantly, in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation, the seven Spirits of God are before *the Son's throne* at the right hand of God. John said to the seven churches, 'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are *before His throne*.' Rev 1:4. We note that the One who is seated upon the throne is 'Him who is and who was and who is to come'. Rev 1:4. In the first case, this description refers to the Son. Jesus used the same statement to introduce Himself to the apostle John. He said, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End ... *who is and who was and who is to come*, the Almighty'. Rev 1:8.

Jesus Christ *is* I AM. He is Yahweh the Son. However, He has also become the Son of God and the Son of Man. On His offering journey as the Son of Man from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, He *was* dead and is now alive forevermore as the first Man in the image and likeness of God. Rev 1:18. Jesus Christ is presently seated at the right hand of the Father. He *is coming* to His lampstand churches through the seven stars in His right hand. Furthermore, He *is coming* to reward the overcoming presbyters from His lampstand churches. Jesus said, 'Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.' Rev 22:12.

Notably, the Son who is seated upon the throne is also called 'the Almighty'. Rev 1:8. The Almighty is *El Shaddai*. He is the Almighty because He possesses the seven Spirits of God. Jesus introduced His admonition to the presbytery of the lampstand church in Sardis by saying, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.' Rev 3:1. In the first chapter of the book of Revelation, the seven Spirits of God are symbolically represented by the *seven personal attributes* that belong to Jesus Christ. Rev 1:14-16. The key point is that Jesus Christ is revealing or manifesting the seven Spirits of God.

The *seven stars* are the presbyteries in the right hand of Christ. Rev 1:20. During the church age, Jesus Christ is seated upon His own intrinsic throne at the right hand of God. However, at the same time, He is walking among His lampstand churches through the stars in His right hand. The seven Spirits of God are ministered through the seven stars, by the Holy Spirit, to His lampstand churches. The Holy Spirit is the Lord of the church age. Jesus concluded each letter by saying, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Rev 2:7.

The *seven letters* to the seven churches are relevant for the entire church age. However, the content of the seven letters is particularly focused toward the restoration of lampstand churches during the reign of the seventh world kingdom. Satan is the personal ruler of the seventh world kingdom. Jesus said to the presbytery in Pergamum, 'I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.' Rev 2:13. During the seventh world kingdom, the throne of Satan is expressed through the seven heads, with the seven crowns, that belong to the administration of Babylon over the nations. Rev 12:3.

During the time of the seventh world kingdom, the church is in travail to bring forth the manchild that will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Rev 12:5. The manchild is the world-wide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones. The twenty-four thrones are the administration of the throne of David which belongs to Jesus Christ who is the ruler of the kings of the earth. Act 2:30. In the first case, the twenty-four thrones will be placed around the throne of the Son who is seated at the right hand of God. Jesus said to the presbytery in Laodicea, 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.' Rev 3:21.

The throne of the Father in the third heaven

After the twenty-four thrones have been placed, the Father will take His seat upon His throne. The prophet Daniel declared, 'I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days [the Father] was seated.' Dan 7:9. Immediately following the letters to the seven churches, the apostle John wrote, 'After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this". Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne'. Rev 4:1-2.

As we have previously noted, the entire third heaven is an extension of the Father's throne. Isa 66:1. However, when the Father takes His seat, He will place His throne in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion in the third heaven. The apostle John saw that His throne will be 'set in heaven'. Rev 4:2. This is a significant statement. The Father presently dwells outside of time and eternity, and outside of the present heavens and earth. It was the Father's word that established the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant and the seventeen prophetic days that belong to this present creation.

When the Father places His throne in the third heaven, it will be *as significant* as when the Son of God emptied Himself to the womb of the virgin Mary to become the Son of Man. We know that Jesus Christ was the Creator of the entire material universe. The Creator of the world then emptied Himself to be born from the womb of the virgin Mary for the purpose of dwelling with us. Joh 1:14. In so doing, He humbled Himself to live within the context of the natural world that He had created. Similarly, the Father will humble Himself to place His throne within the context of the third heaven, which He established by His word in the beginning, for the purpose of dwelling with us!

When the Father takes His seat, He will dwell with the citizens who belong to the heavenly Jerusalem. Speaking about the great multitude of sons of God in the time of the end, the apostle John wrote, 'They are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them'. Rev 7:15. Likewise, John testified, 'I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" '. Rev 21:3.

The manchild will be caught up to God and His throne when the Father takes His seat in the middle of the twenty-four thrones. Rev 12:5. Rev 4:4. At that time, the living creatures, which represent the apostolic administration of Christ, will be 'in and around' the throne of the Father. Rev 4:6-8. The world-wide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones will also be around the Father's throne. Significantly, the apostle John saw seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God, before the Father's throne. Rev 4:5. When the Father takes His seat, the seven Spirits of God will begin to reveal the offering and ruling initiative of the Father.

What will this look like? In the first case, the seven Spirits of God, by the Holy Spirit, will enable the apostolic administration of Christ and the

presbytery on the twenty-four thrones to worship the Father. The worship of the Father will be initiated by the four living creatures who are full of eyes, which indicates that they are full of the Spirit and of wisdom. Rev 4:6,9. When the four living creatures worship the Father, the twenty-four elders will also cast their crowns down before the throne and proclaim, 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.' Rev 4:11.

The throne of God and of the Lamb

The apostle John continued to describe the Father on the throne by saying, 'I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll [book] written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.' Rev 5:1. The scroll with the seven seals contains the full revelation of the Father's will in relation to both salvation and judgement. The scroll was sealed on Christ's offering journey when He sealed up all vision and prophecy. Dan 9:24. When the seals are opened in the time of the end, everything that Christ has already accomplished on His offering journey will be revealed before the eyes of all men.

After the Father has taken His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne at the right hand of God. We recall that Stephen saw this event in his prophetic vision immediately before he breathed his last. He testified, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God'. Act 7:56. Likewise, the apostle John recorded that He saw a Lamb standing, as if slain, in the space between the Father's throne and the world-wide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones. Rev 5:6. The Lamb is Jesus Christ. He is also called the Lion who is from the tribe of Judah and the Root of David. Rev 5:5.

When Jesus Christ stands up from His throne, He will be presented to the Father by the administration around the Father's throne. Dan 7:13. The Father will give Christ the scroll with the seven seals. The prophet Daniel declared that the Ancient of Days will give the Son of Man 'dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and [men of all] languages should serve Him'. Dan 7:14. Having previously told the Son to wait at His right hand, the Father will declare that the time has come for the Son to rule in the midst of His enemies. Psa 110:1-2.

Jesus Christ will receive the scroll from the Father's right hand and then move into the center of the Father's throne. From that time, the throne will be called, 'the throne of God and of the Lamb'. Rev 22:1,3.

The apostolic administration of Christ and the presbytery around the throne of the Father will sing a new song. This new song will proclaim the worthiness of the Lamb to open and to break the seals on the scroll and then send the seven Spirits of God into all the earth to facilitate the will of God so that the purpose of God is accomplished among the nations. Rev 5:9-10. Significantly, John described the Lamb as having ‘seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, *sent out into all the earth*’. Rev 5:6.

When the first seal is opened, the ministry of the seven Spirits of God will be expressed in all the earth through the ministry of the 144 000. Rev 6:1-2. The 144 000 will reveal the same ministry as the seventy-two disciples in a double-portion measure. They will be sent into all the earth to look for worthy houses. Luk 10:1-12. The worthy houses are the great multitude who will come out of the great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev 7:9,14. They will serve God before His throne day and night. Rev 7:15. The great multitude will then become the laborers who will harvest at least half of the world’s population.

The seven thunders

John testified that when the Lamb opened the first seal, one of the four living creatures, with a voice like thunder, commanded him to ‘come and see’. Rev 6:1. The voice like thunder proceeds from the throne of the Father. It is the revelation of the Father’s authority. After the Father has taken His seat, the voice like thunder will be expressed through the apostolic administration of Christ ‘in and around’ the throne of the Father. We note that it was one of the living creatures, which represents the apostolic administration of Christ, that commanded the apostle John to ‘come and see’.

This brings us to an important point. Each time the voice like thunder is heard, it initiates a specific action from the throne of the Father, through Christ and the church, that establishes the rule and authority of God’s kingdom over all the nations of the earth. The command to ‘come and see’ means ‘come and see the revelation of God’s authority and the fulfilment of His purpose’. The first time that the voice like thunder will be heard in the time of the end will be when the Father takes His seat. John recorded, ‘And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices’. Rev 4:5.

John records that he heard ‘thunderings’ from the throne of the Father at least seven times in the book of Revelation. This includes when the Father takes His seat, when the first seal is opened, when the censer that belongs to the true altar of incense is inverted, when the seventh trumpet sounds, when the 144 000 are revealed with the Lamb on Mount Zion, when the seventh vial is poured out, and when the marriage supper of the Lamb is announced. Rev 4:5. Rev 6:1. Rev 8:5. Rev 11:19. Rev 14:2. Rev 16:17-18. Rev 19:6.

Every time that John heard ‘thunderings’ or ‘peals of thunder’ from the throne, it was the manifestation of *seven thunders*. The seven thunders are the expression of the seven Spirits of God which reveal the authority of God the Father. In addition to the examples that we have already listed, John also heard the seven thunders when the mighty angel descended from heaven with the little book that contains the finished mystery of God. When the mighty angel cried out with the voice like a lion, the seven thunders also uttered their voices. Rev 10:3.

John said, ‘Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them”.’ Rev 10:4. This command highlights the key point that we are making regarding the seven thunders. As soon as the voice of the seven thunders is proclaimed by the apostolic administration of Christ, it activates the entire administration of God’s throne to achieve His purpose on the earth. John was told to *seal up* the content that belongs to the seven thunders because it is not yet time for that word of the Father to be proclaimed.

Significantly, every time the voice like thunder is heard during the time of the end, it will have a significant impact upon all the inhabitants of the earth. King David prophesied concerning the Father, ‘The Lord thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice. And He [sent out arrows and scattered them, lightning, and routed them’. 2Sam 22:14-15. Psa 18:13-14. Specifically, the voice like thunder will cause the enemies of God to be confused and put into disarray. We clearly observe this principle during the ministry of Samuel who was the first prophet who belonged to the Elijah ministry.

The prophet Samuel did not wield a sword. Rather, as a prophet who ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah, his only weapon was intercessory prayer. When the Philistines came to Mizpah to slaughter the Israelites, the nation asked Samuel to pray for them without ceasing. They said, ‘Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He

may save us from the hand of Philistines.’ 1Sa 7:8. Notably, as the Philistines drew near for the battle, ‘the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel’. 1Sa 7:10.

The great white throne

The seventh phase of the throne that belongs to this present heavens and earth is the great white throne. The great white throne is the Millennial throne that belongs to the glorified Son of Man. In the parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus said that the Son of Man will sit on the throne of His glory to judge. Mat 25:31-32. Likewise, John said, ‘Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God [or before the throne], and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life ... and anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire’. Rev 20:11-12,15.

Chapter 2

The manchild with the rod of iron

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul declared that the Father has ‘made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him [Christ], with a view to *an administration suitable to the fullness of the times*, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and the things on the earth’. Eph 1:9-10. The ‘fullness of the times’ will be initiated when the Father takes His seat to judge the seventh world kingdom and to establish His kingdom on the earth. The Scripture also refers to the fullness of times as ‘the time of the end’. Dan 8:17. Dan 12:9.

The administration that is suitable for the fullness of times is described by the apostle John in Chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Revelation. John saw the Father seated on His own throne in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion with twenty-four elders seated on thrones around the throne of the Father. Rev 4:2-4. The twenty-four elders represent one worldwide presbytery that will exercise the rulership of Christ over the nations in the time of the end. The twenty-four thrones

belong to the administration of the throne of David. Luk 1:32.
Act 2:29-30.

In Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation, this same administration is depicted as 'a manchild who will rule over all the nations with a rod of iron'. Rev 12:5. 'The manchild' who is 'caught up to God and His throne' is the one, worldwide presbytery who will be seated on twenty-four thrones around the throne of the Father. The presbytery will exercise the authority of the rod of iron to establish the Father's kingdom on the earth and to shatter the power of the seventh world kingdom.

The rod of iron belongs to Christ. However, we know that the rod of iron will be given to the presbytery around the Father's throne, because it is the fulfilment of the promise that Jesus made to the overcoming presbyters in Thyatira. Jesus said, 'And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - "He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels" - as I also have received from My Father.' Rev 2:26-27. Notably, Jesus was clear that the rod of iron will not be received by the presbytery until the time of the end.

After the rod of iron has been given to the presbytery who will be around the throne of the Father, the presbytery will fulfil its mandate through 'the 144 000'. Rev 7:1-8. The 144 000 are the representatives of firstfruits households who have obtained a double portion of oil during the phase of lampstand churches. The 144 000 will be the ministry arm of the presbytery throughout the earth. We could liken the 144 000 to be the extension of the rod in the hand of the presbytery. The 144 000 will manifest the ministry of the seven Spirits of God and will shatter the power of the seventh world kingdom when they proclaim the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in all nations. Mat 24:14. Rev 6:1-2.

Specifically, when the first seal is opened, the 144 000 will be sent by the apostolic administration of Christ and the presbytery to look for worthy houses in the same way in which Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples to look for worthy houses in His day. Luk 10:1-12. The ministry of the 144 000, as they find worthy houses, will overcome Satan and break the power of his rulership over the seventh world kingdom. We recall that when the seventy-two returned with joy after their ministry, Jesus proclaimed, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.' Luk 10:18.

The household of Mary, Martha and Lazarus is an example of the 'worthy houses' that will be found by the 144 000 as part of the great multitude from every nation. Luk 10:38-42. Joh 12:1-8. These worthy houses will be devoted to the fellowship of the word that is proclaimed by the presbytery around the throne of the Father; will be devoted to hospitality and the care of the saints; and they will possess the testimony of resurrection life in their households. The Father will spread His tabernacle over them, and the Lamb will shepherd them and lead them to 'the springs of the water of life'. Rev 7:17.

The ministry of the 144 000 to look for worthy houses will begin at the opening of the first seal. The period that is described in the Scripture as 'the great tribulation' will begin at the opening of the second seal and conclude at the opening of the sixth seal. Mat 24:21. Dan 12:1. During this time of great tribulation, there will be a great multitude of worthy households who will wash their priestly garments and make them 'white in the blood of the Lamb'. Rev 7:9,14. Significantly, these worthy houses will become the evangelists who will bring over half of the world's population into the kingdom of God during the seven years when the Father's *agape* meal is the main agenda in the world. Eze 39:7-9. Zec 14:16.

The travailing church

The apostle John described *the travailing church* in our day by saying, 'Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.' Rev 12:1. We know that 'the woman' in Revelation Chapter 12 is not Mary, nor the nation of Israel, because she is seen to be *in heaven*. The woman in the heavenly places is 'the church'. The church is the virgin bride of Christ. 2Co 11:2. The virgin church is already betrothed to Christ by covenant, but she has not yet been presented to Christ in all her glory. The consummation of the marriage between Christ and His corporate bride will not happen until the inauguration of 'the new heavens and the new earth'.

It is important to recognise that travail belongs to this present age. There will be no travail in the new heavens and new earth. *Exanastasis* is the travail of resurrection life in our mortality. Notably, the seven wounding events of Christ from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross reveal three dimensions of travail.

The *first dimension* is the travail of Christ, the Seed of the Father, to become the Sheaf of firstfruits who contains the seed of the divine nature that belongs to every son of God. 1Co 15:20,23. The prophet Isaiah described this first dimension of travail when he said, concerning Christ, 'When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *seed* ... He shall see the labour [travail] of His soul, and be satisfied.' Isa 53:10-11.

The *second dimension* is the travail of Christ as He laid down His life in seven wounding events so that the Father, by the Holy Spirit, could draw the bride from His side. The blood, water and Spirit that flowed from the side of Christ, which was the fruit of all seven wounding events, was *the rib* from which the virgin bride of Christ is presently being formed. Gen 2:22. Joh 19:34. 1Jn 5:8. Significantly, the bride of Christ is formed from the rib that belongs to Jesus Christ as the *corporate New Man*. That is, the corporate bride of Christ is drawn from the corporate body of Christ. The corporate bride of Christ is a new creation that must be brought forth, through travail, in this present age. There will be no formation of a bride in the new heavens and new earth.

The *third dimension* of travail in this present age is the travail of the bride to bring forth sons of God, by the Holy Spirit, for the Father. The virgin bride of Christ is presently 'clothed with the sun' because she reveals the glory of the Father as the vessel of multiplication for sons of God. The sun is symbolic of the glory of God. In a later prophetic vision, John saw the bride city, which is the heavenly Jerusalem, 'descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God*'. Rev 21:11. The church presently reveals the glory of the Father because it is composed of godly families who are the context for the multiplication of sons of God.

How does this happen? In this present age, the marriage of a man and a woman is *by covenant*. The covenant of marriage belongs to the Father! Mal 2:11. The Father makes a married couple 'one' so that they can bring forth godly seed. Mal 2:15. The multiplication of godly seed happens in two steps. The first step is to bring forth a new identity through procreation. Procreation is an amazing miracle. The fruit of the physical union of a man and a woman is a new spirit with eternal existence! However, for this new identity to possess eternal life, it needs to be born of the divine nature from the seed of Christ, as a son of God.

This two-step process is the same for a child who is born again while they are still in their mother's womb, because of the faith of at least one of their parents, as it is for a person who is born again later in their life when the gospel of God is preached to them. In the case of a child who is

born again in the womb, it is remarkable to consider that they become a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, a temple of the Holy Spirit, a member of Abraham's family, and a member of the body of Christ before they have taken their first breath in this world. Isa 66:7. Of course, we know that the same child will need to choose the sonship that they have already received, and must progressively choose to *remain* in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as they grow and mature as a son of God.

It is important to understand that until the covenant of marriage and family ends, as a procreative institution that brings forth children as sons of God for the Father, the church as the bride of Christ *remains a virgin* in relation to Christ her Husband. In the new heavens and new earth, the fruit of the union between Christ and the church will be the multiplication of new identities through *a spiritual mechanism* of offering that will supersede procreation. There will be no procreation in the new heavens and new earth. Mat 22:30. Furthermore, there will be no time, travail, nor growth from immaturity to maturity. Every new identity in the new heavens and new earth will be brought forth as a fully mature son of God and of man *in the image and likeness of God*. Isa 9:7. 2Pe 3:13.

In contrast to the bride city in the new heavens and new earth, the woman in Revelation Chapter 12 is a vision of the virgin bride of Christ in this present age. In addition to being clothed with the sun, the virgin bride of Christ has 'the moon under her feet' because she is standing upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. Rev 12:1. Jesus Christ is the chosen and precious Cornerstone who has been laid in Zion. 1Pe 2:4-6. He is the Foundation Stone and the Capstone of the true temple on the top of Mount Zion. The true temple is the body of Christ. Joh 2:21. In the same way that the bride of Christ *is drawn from* the body of Christ, the bride city is built from the true temple. The living stones that belong to the true temple are the same stones that the Father uses to build the walls and gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev 21:12-17.

The virgin bride of Christ also has 'a garland of twelve stars' upon her head. Rev 12:1. The twelve stars represent the twelve apostles who are also the foundation stones of the wall of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev 21:14. The twelve stars are the symbol of authority upon the woman's head. Along with the prophets of old, the apostles delivered the written Scriptures to the church. In every generation, the church maintains its connection to the headship of Christ under the lordship of

the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation of the written Scriptures as a word of present truth spoken by the messengers of Christ. 2Pe 1:19-21.

The apostle John described the present travail of the church by saying, 'Then being with child, she cried out *in labour and in pain* to give birth.' Rev 12:2. We know that this travail belongs to the church in this present age, in mortality, because we read that she is 'in pain'. Since the Day of Pentecost, the church has been connected to the travail of Christ for the purpose of bringing forth sons of God for the Father. However, more specifically, John was describing *the birth pains* that are experienced by the church during the seventh world kingdom before the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end.

During the reign of the seventh world kingdom, the church is in travail to bring forth the manchild. It is important to emphasise that the manchild who is depicted in Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation is not the fruit of the marriage between Christ and the church. As we have already stated, the consummation of the union between Christ and the church will not happen until the inauguration of the new heavens and new earth. The manchild is brought forth in this present age and belongs to God the Father. The manchild is the worldwide presbytery who will be seated on the twenty-four thrones. The twenty-four thrones, which are the administration of the throne of David which will be established over the nations, belong to the dispensation of the Father.

The presbytery will be 'caught up to God and to His throne' when the Father takes His seat for the purpose of dwelling among His people in the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev 12:5. The presbytery is caught up to God and to His throne because this administration will reveal the Father, and will exercise the authority of His throne over the nations in the time of the end. As worthy houses, who comprise the bride of Christ, the focus of our travail is to see the emergence of a mature presbytery that has power over the nations to proclaim the gospel of God and to establish the Father's kingdom on the earth. Eph 6:18-20. We are praying to the Father, 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. Mat 6:10.

At the same time, the present focus of the travail of the presbytery is to understand and proclaim the mystery of God for the purpose of establishing worthy households who possess a double portion of oil. Eph 1:15-23. Eph 3:14-21. We see that our participation in the travail of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, *is a fellowship* in which the church is in travail for the presbytery, and in which the presbytery is in travail for

the church. If the fruit of the travail of the church is the manchild, the fruit of the travail of the presbytery is the 144 000 who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in all nations when the first seal is opened.

During the seventh world kingdom

We know that the birth pains of the church correspond to the seventh world kingdom because John continued, 'And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.' Rev 12:3. The seventh world kingdom is likened to a great red dragon because it is ruled by Satan, who is also called 'the serpent of old'. Rev 12:9. The seven world kingdoms that have ruled over the people of God are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and then the seventh world kingdom. The seventh world kingdom is the United Nations, which was established in 1945, immediately after the second world war.

The United Nations is the greatest manifestation of the administration of Babylon that seeks to unify the nations of the world for the sake of collective peace and security. Nevertheless, the reality is that the seventh world kingdom is *a divided kingdom*. In King Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream of the great statue, the seventh world kingdom is represented by the two feet and the ten toes. Dan 2:31-45. It is divided between the eastern nations and western nations. However, it is also divided because of the mixture of iron and clay. The prophet Daniel proclaimed to the king, 'Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.' Dan 2:41.

We have considered the meaning of the metals in King Nebuchadnezzar's statue in other writings. Notably, the iron was the metal that belonged to the sixth world kingdom. Dan 2:40. It represents the strength of religion that was present in both the western and eastern Roman Empires. In the seventh world kingdom, the strength of the iron is mixed with clay. The clay represents the rapid spread of humanism, which rejects the Creator and believes that humans are the source of their own definition and destiny. In this regard, the prophet Isaiah said, 'Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, "What are you making?" Or shall your handiwork say, "He has no hands"?' Isa 45:9.

The *seven heads* represent the seven administrations that belong to the seventh world kingdom. The seven administrations are represented by many international organisations in areas such as finance and trade, law and human rights, health and science, sport and the arts, education, religion, and international peacekeeping. In addition, the media is often used as the 'mouth', or the mouthpiece, of the dragon in promoting his agenda in the world. The flood that the dragon spews from his mouth is *a river of lies* that is in conflict with the word of truth that proceeds from the mouth of God, being proclaimed by the messengers of Christ in His right hand. Rev 12:15.

The *ten horns* represent the rulers of powerful nations or groups of nations. The ten horns that belong to the dragon correspond to the ten toes on the feet of the statue in King Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream. When we consider the feet of the statue, we note that the ten toes belong to *the final phase* of the seventh world kingdom. In recent years, secular commentators have observed that the world is becoming 'multi-polar' from an economic and political perspective. The world is moving from globalisation to regionalisation. In addition, the power of the United Nations is decreasing, and the power of individual world leaders is increasing.

In our day, we are in the period of transition to the ten rulers who are represented by the ten toes on the statue and the ten horns on the great red dragon. This is an important point, because it is during the phase of the ten kings that the Father will take His seat to establish His kingdom on the earth. The prophet Daniel declared, 'And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.' Dan 2:44.

One third of the stars will fall to the earth

During the time of the seventh world kingdom, the tail of the dragon will cause one-third of the stars of heaven to fall to the earth. John said concerning the dragon, 'His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.' Rev 12:4. This does not refer to the twelve stars that comprise the garland on the head of the woman. Rather, it refers to the stars in the

right hand of Christ who are the presbyteries of His lampstand churches. Rev 1:20.

The vision in Revelation Chapter 12 reveals that one-third of the stars will fall during the phase of the restoration of lampstand churches. This falling away happens *before* the Father takes His seat and the manchild is caught up to God and to His throne. In this regard, it is important to note that this is different from 'the great falling away' which happens *after* the Father has taken His seat and after the birth of the manchild. 2Th 2:3. The great falling away is led by Antichrist, who exalts himself above the presbytery around the throne of the Father before he is cast out of the true temple, as being profane, at the blowing of the third trumpet. Rev 8:10-11.

During the phase of the restoration of lampstand churches, it is 'the tail of the dragon' that causes one-third of the stars of heaven to fall. The tail of the dragon comprises false messengers who proclaim false gospels. The prophet Isaiah declared that 'the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail'. Isa 9:15-16. When Jesus addressed the presbyteries of His lampstand churches, He identified the tail of the dragon as being those who promote the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the doctrine of Balaam, the doctrine of Jezebel, and the doctrine that belongs to the synagogue of Satan. Rev 2:6. Rev 2:14-15. Rev 2:20. Rev 2:9. Rev 3:9.

The first characteristic of a fallen star is that they have *fallen from the fellowship of first love* that belongs to 'the heights of Zion'. Jesus said to the presbytery in Ephesus, 'I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.' Rev 2:4-5. Practically, the presbytery in Ephesus had ceased from walking with Christ among all the congregations that belonged to their lampstand church. Many of the leaders had begun to function as the pastors of independent, local congregations.

Jesus called the presbytery in Ephesus to a specific pathway of repentance and faith. This is the same pathway of recovery for every fallen star. Jesus concluded His admonition to the Ephesian presbytery by saying, 'To him who overcomes [the loss of first love] I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the mist of the Paradise of God.' Rev 2:7. The recovery of first love within a presbytery will lead to the restoration of the fellowship of the *agape* meal, both publicly and from house

to house, in their lampstand church. We know that Jesus concluded His admonition to each presbytery with a promise to the overcomers.

In Chapter 4, we will consider the promise to the overcomers in each presbytery. The seven promises comprise 'the reward of Christ'. Notably, the presbyters in the right hand of Christ, who are learning to overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and by 'loving not their life to the death', are progressively attaining the reward of Christ. Furthermore, the overcoming presbyters are *progressively maturing* as part of a manchild who will rule the nations with a rod of iron, once the Father has taken His seat and Jesus Christ stands up from His throne at the right hand of God.

As we have noted already, Jesus specifically said to the presbytery in Thyatira, 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; *and he shall rule them with a rod of iron*, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father.' Rev 2:26-27. The promise of Jesus to the presbytery in Thyatira connects directly to John's vision of the manchild in Revelation Chapter 12. Rev 12:5.

The rod of iron belongs to Christ and the presbytery

The Father will take His seat during the time of the ten kings who belong to the latter phase of the seventh world kingdom. Speaking about this time, the psalmist declared, 'Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth [represented by the ten horns or ten toes] take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"' Psa 2:1-3. The kings will take their stand against the Father and against Jesus Christ who possesses the seven Spirits of God.

The psalmist prophesied that the Father will sit on His throne in heaven and will laugh at the pride and arrogance of the rulers of the seventh world kingdom. He will speak to the kings in His wrath, saying, 'I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.' Psa 2:6. When Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, He sat down at the right hand of the Father. He is presently seated on His own throne on the top of Mount Zion. The Father has put all things in subjection to Christ. However, we do not yet see all things as being under His feet.

Seated at the right hand of the Father, the Son says, 'I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel".'

Psa 2:7-9. After the Father has taken His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne at the right hand of God to be presented before the Father. The prophet Daniel declared that the Father will give Christ 'dominion and glory and a kingdom'. Dan 7:14.

Christ will receive the mandate to rule over the nations and to shatter the power of the seventh world kingdom with the rod of iron. Referring to this time, the psalmist also declared, 'The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies' Psa 110:2. Christ will stand to rule until He has conquered all of His enemies. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself, on the day of resurrection. 1Co 15:26. At the end of the Millenium, Christ will deliver the kingdom to the Father so that 'God may be all in all'. 1Co 15:28. The Father is the source and the initiator of everything in the new heavens and new earth.

Significantly, when the Father takes His seat and Christ stands up *in heaven* to rule in the midst of His enemies, the authority that belongs to the rod of iron will be expressed through the one, worldwide presbytery *on the earth*. After the Father has given the scroll with the seven seals to Christ, the apostolic administration of Christ and the presbytery will sing a new song to the Lamb. They will proclaim, 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; *and we shall reign on the earth*.' Rev 5:9-10.

The elders on the twenty-four thrones will fall on their faces before the Lamb and will proclaim, 'We shall reign on the earth', because they are the administration of the manchild who will rule the nations with a rod of iron. In the first case, the authority that belongs to the rod of iron is expressed through the proclamation of *the word of God*. For this reason, the prophet Isaiah described the rod of iron that belongs to Christ as 'the rod of His mouth'. He declared, 'He shall strike the earth with *the rod of His mouth*, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.' Isa 11:4.

Notably, Isaiah declared in the same prophetic statement, 'But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the

meek of the earth.’ Isa 11:4. When Christ *stands up* to judge the nations, He will also pass judgement in favour of the saints who are ‘poor in spirit’. Speaking about the blessing of Abraham, Jesus declared that the kingdom of God belongs to those who are poor in spirit, and that the meek will ‘inherit the earth’. Mat 5:3,5. The Lord promised Abraham that he would become the possessor of heaven and earth. Gen 14:19. The promise regarding the possession of the earth will be fulfilled when the time comes for the true descendants of Abraham to reign on the earth.

The prophecy of Micah

The prophet Isaiah and the prophet Micah both proclaimed that the kingdom of God will be established on the earth in the latter days. Both prophets declared, ‘Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths”. For out of Zion the Law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from [the heavenly] Jerusalem.’ Mic 4:1-2. Isa 2:2-3.

Some commentators have suggested that one prophet must have copied the words of the other prophet. However, the truth is that both men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit to proclaim a word that will most surely come to pass. It is a prophetic word that has been confirmed by the mouth of two witnesses! When we consider the prophetic books of Isaiah and Micah, we note that both men prophesied about the birth of Christ, the wounding events of Christ, and particularly focused on the time of the end when Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne to establish the kingdom of God on the earth.

For example, Micah prophesied specifically about the birth of Christ when he declared, ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.’ Mic 5:2. We recall that when Herod the Great asked the chief priests and the scribes where the Messiah would be born, they told him, on the basis of this prophecy, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem in the land of Judah. Mat 2:4-6. We know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The fulfilment of this prophecy verifies the authenticity of Micah’s prophetic ministry.

In the same passage, the prophet Micah also referred to the seven wounding events of Christ. Specifically, he drew our attention to the third wounding event, in the court of Caiaphas, when Christ was beaten with rods. Micah declared, 'They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.' Mic 5:1. In relation to being struck with the rod on His back and His face in the court of Caiaphas, Christ was chastened for our peace. During this wounding event, Christ removed the enmity between Jews and Gentiles and created one new man in Himself. The apostle Paul declared, 'He Himself is our peace.' Eph 2:14. Likewise, Micah prophesied, 'And this One shall be peace.' Mic 5:5.

When the Jewish leaders rejected Christ and abused Him in the court of Caiaphas, God delivered them up to judgement. The nation has been delivered to the judgement of 'blindness'. Significantly, the prophet Micah declared that this judgement will continue until the time when the travelling church brings forth the manchild. Micah prophesied, 'Therefore He shall give them up [to judgement] *until the time that she who is in labour has given birth*; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel.' Mic 5:3. This is an important prophetic statement. It was not fulfilled when Christ was born from the womb of the virgin Mary. It will be fulfilled when the church brings forth the manchild.

We read earlier in the book of Micah concerning the travail of the church, 'Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pains. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.' Mic 4:10. The manchild will be brought forth while the church is still subject to the rulership of the administration of Babylon during the reign of the seventh world kingdom. Notably, after the manchild has been brought forth, a believing remnant of the Jewish nation will return to become part of the true Israel of God. Mic 5:3.

After the Father has taken His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne at the right hand of God as 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah'. Rev 5:5. The Father will give Christ the authority to establish His kingdom on the earth. Speaking about the time when Christ will stand up to rule, the prophet Micah continued, 'And *He shall stand and feed His flock* in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.' Mic 5:4. In the time of the end, Jesus Christ will feed the entire flock who

belong to His Father's kingdom through the word that will be proclaimed by the presbytery around the throne of the Father.

The rod and finger of God

The rod of God in the hand of Moses was 'a type' of the rod of iron in the hand of Christ and the presbytery in the time of the end. We know that Moses used the rod of God to judge the first world kingdom and to deliver the nation of Israel from their bondage. Exo 4:17. Exo 14:16. When the rod of God is used in obedience to the word of God, it is an extension of the outstretched arm and mighty hand of God. Even though it was Moses and Aaron who used the rod of God to smite the Egyptians with the plagues, Moses testified to the nation of Israel, 'The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.' Deu 26:8.

There is an important relationship between 'the rod of God' and 'the finger of God'. We first see this relationship during the third plague in Egypt. The Lord instructed Moses and Aaron to stretch out the rod and to strike the dust so that it became lice throughout the land of Egypt. Exo 8:16. In contrast to the outcome of their enchantments regarding the first two plagues, Pharaoh's sorcerers could not replicate this plague. This does not mean that the third plague was more difficult than the first two plagues. Rather, the demonic power of the sorcerers had been overcome and broken. Recognising this to be the case, the sorcerers said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God.' Exo 8:19. The rod of God shatters the power of the nations on the earth because the finger of God breaks the power of Satan in the heavenly places.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus was accused of casting out demons by using the power that belongs to the ruler of the demons. The kingdom of Satan is divided against itself, and rulership is gained through tests of power. In contrast to this, Jesus cast out demons by *the power that belongs to the kingdom of God*. Jesus said, 'If I cast out demons with *the finger of God*, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.' Luk 11:20. Notably, this same statement was also recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus said, 'If I cast out demons by *the Spirit of God*, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.' Mat 12:28. When we consider these two statements together, it highlights that the finger of God is the seven Spirits of God!

When Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples to look for worthy houses, their ministry revealed 'the finger of God', which is the power of the

seven Spirits of God. The seventy-two disciples returned with joy to Jesus and reported that they had cast out demons in His name. Luk 10:17. The Lord responded to their testimony by saying, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Luk 10:18. He then commissioned them a second time. He said, 'Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.' Luk 10:19. Significantly, this is the mandate that Christ has given to the order of seventy-two during the church age and to the 144 000 in the time of the end.

The sealing of the 144 000

When the first seal is opened, the seven Spirits of God, which are likened to seven eyes and seven horns that belong to the Lamb of God, will be sent out into all the earth through the ministry of the 144 000. Rev 5:6. In this regard, the authority of the rod of God will be sent out of Zion, and the ministry of the finger of God will be seen in all nations. Psa 110:2. As we have considered, the 144 000 will be the ministry arm of the presbytery that will extend to the four corners of the earth. The 144 000 are the representatives of firstfruits households who have purchased a double portion of oil. Mat 25:4.

This brings us to an important point. We are already in the season when the 144 000 are being sealed in preparation for the Father to take His seat, and in preparation for the Lamb to stand up from His throne to begin to open the seals. Christ will not stand up from His throne to open the seals until the number of the 144 000 has been completed. The apostle John recorded in the book of Revelation, 'I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees *till we have sealed* the servants of our God on their foreheads".' Rev 7:2-3.

When the apostle John saw the Lamb standing on the top of Mount Zion, he saw the 144 000 standing with Him. Rev 14:1. We are reminded that Jesus exhorted us, 'Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, *and to stand before the Son of Man.*' Luk 21:36. The focus of our travail is not only that we *escape the judgement of God* that will be manifest on the earth during the opening of the seals. The primary focus of our travail is *to be counted worthy* to stand before the Lamb *when He stands up* to

open the seals. The apostle John observed seven characteristics that belong to the 144 000 who will stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion.

The first characteristic of the 144 000 is that *the name of the Father is written on their foreheads*. Rev 14:1. This means that they have been adopted by the Father and belong to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Furthermore, as we have written in the publication, *The Promise of the Spirit*, after Christ has written the name of the Father and the name of the city of God on a believer, they receive the Holy Spirit *into their spirit*, making them a temple of the Holy Spirit. Joh 2:22. 1Co 6:19-20. When the Holy Spirit comes into the spirit of a believer, He *seals* them, ratifying that they belong to God the Father, and granting to them a title deed to an inheritance, or dwelling place, in the heavenly city. This is 'the seal of the living God'.

The second characteristic of the 144 000 is that they have *learned a new prophetic song*. Rev 14:3. This song is the fruit of their testimony because they have embraced the chastening of the Lord that belongs to their unique ministry among the nations in the time of the end. In relation to this song, the psalmist prophetically declared, 'Oh sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth ... say among the nations, "The Lord reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously"... for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth.' Psa 96:1,10,13.

The third characteristic of the 144 000 is that they have not been defiled by women. Rev 14:4. This means that they have not been defiled by the administration of Babylon that rules over the nations, for Babylon the great is 'the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth'. Rev 17:5. The 144 000 are *chaste virgins* who belong to the bride of Christ. Furthermore, they are *wise virgins* who have purchased a double portion of oil. The wise virgins have oil in their lamps and in their vessels. Mat 25:4. They possess a testimony of regeneration in relation to their humanity as sons of God who are being progressively conformed to the image of Christ.

The fourth characteristic of the 144 000 is that they *follow the Lamb wherever He goes*. Rev 14:4. In the first case, this means that they are being led by the Holy Spirit, each day, on the pathway that Christ has pioneered for them. The apostle Paul declared, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.' Rom 8:14. As the 144 000 follow the Lamb wherever He goes, they will manifest His resurrection life in

their mortality. The Lamb will be their Shepherd, and He will lead them, along with the great multitude, to the springs of the water of life. Rev 7:17.

The fifth characteristic of the 144 000 is that they have been *redeemed from among men* to be firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. Rev 14:4. The 144 000 are the representatives of worthy houses who have become firstfruits houses. A *worthy house* is receiving the cleansing and sanctifying initiative of Christ toward their household. In addition, a *firstfruits house* will manifest the fruit of discipleship as they are taught by the messengers of Christ to abide in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Notably, there will be an overflow of ministry from a firstfruits house to the church and into the broader community. 1Co 16:15.

The sixth characteristic of the 144 000 is that there is *no deceit in their mouth*. Rev 14:5. This means that they have been delivered from being 'Jacob' to become 'Israel'. We are reminded that the name Jacob means 'deceiver'. When Jacob received his new name, it signified that his nature had been changed in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Gen 32:28. He was converted from walking after the flesh to walking after the Spirit. Likewise, the 144 7023000 will be those who have become *bankrupt in spirit*. Mat 5:3. They will not presume to be the source of their own word; nor will they promote the lie of a ministry projection. Joh 8:44. Rather, they will proclaim the gospel of God according to the truth of their own testimony.

The seventh characteristic of the 144 000 is that they are *without fault* before the throne of God. Rev 14:5. This means that they are *a blameless company*. Gen 17:1. 1Th 5:23. 2Pe 3:14. It does not mean that they have reached sinless perfection. A son of God is walking blamelessly when they continue to walk in the light of the word of present truth by responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit with repentance and faith. A son of God who is walking blamelessly will be submitted to the lordship of Christ and will be bringing forth the fruit of sanctification in their own life, marriage and family.

Returning to King Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great statue, the 144 000 will be the stone 'cut without hands' which will strike the feet of the image that represents the world kingdoms. Dan 2:34. Practically, when the 144 000 are sent by the presbytery around the Father's throne to find worthy houses, Satan will be overcome and his power over the Gentile nations will be shattered. These worthy houses comprise the great

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multitude who will come out of the season of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Rev 7:14. The great multitude will then become the labourers who will bring over half the world's population into the kingdom of God. In this progressive manner, the stone that is cut without hands will grow into a great mountain that fills the whole earth! Dan 2:35. Isa 2:2.

Chapter 3

The seven attributes of Christ

The apostle John was praying in the Spirit 'on the Lord's Day' when he heard behind him 'a loud voice as of a trumpet'. Rev 1:10. In Chapter 1, we considered that *the voice like thunder* reveals the authority of the Father's throne, which activates the administration of Christ to accomplish His purpose on the earth. In contrast, the *voice like a trumpet* is the voice of Jesus Christ, which gives us prophetic illumination and direction. Christ said to John, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last ... *what you see*, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.' Rev 1:11.

When John turned to see the voice that was speaking to him, he saw One like the Son of Man seated on His throne in the middle of the seven lampstand churches. Rev 1:12. He was clothed with priestly garments. We know that Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God as our great High Priest. Notably, the apostle John described seven personal attributes of Christ by saying, 'His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp

two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.' Rev 1:14-16.

Of course, these seven elements do not describe the actual, physical characteristics of Christ's resurrection body. When Christ was raised from the dead as the first Man in the image and likeness of God, He did not have lamb's hair, fiery eyes, and bronze feet! We know that Jesus appeared multiple times to the apostles during the forty days after His resurrection, and they did not describe His physical appearance in this manner. Rather, in response to the word of Christ like a trumpet, the apostle John was illuminated to see, by the Spirit, *seven symbolic attributes* that belong to Jesus Christ. The key point is that the seven symbolic attributes that belong to Christ demonstrate that *He possesses the seven Spirits of God*.

The apostle John was looking at Jesus Christ but, more specifically, He was looking at the glorified Son of Man *revealing the seven Spirits of God*. Speaking about Jesus Christ as the Son of David, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' Isa 11:1-2. Notably, we can directly align the seven attributes of Christ that are listed by the apostle John, with the seven Spirits of the Lord that are nominated by the prophet Isaiah.

Head and hair white like wool

The first symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is that *His head and hair are white like wool*. Rev 1:14. The 'wool' draws our attention to the fact that Christ is the Lamb of God. He is the Lamb of God who possesses and reveals *the Spirit of the Lord*. The Spirit of the Lord is the sum of all seven Spirits. In the fellowship of Yahweh, before the foundation of the world, the Father and Son gave to the Holy Spirit the full capacity of the seven Spirits of God. The Holy Spirit became the Helper of the offering of the Father and the Son to bring forth new creation. In this same fellowship, Yahweh the Son was sanctified to be the Lamb. He was anointed with the power of the seven Spirits of God, through the Holy Spirit, to empty Himself to the bosom of the Father. Php 2:6.

When Yahweh the Son emptied Himself before the foundation of the world, it was the first manifestation of the Lamb revealing the Spirit of

the Lord. We know that Yahweh the Son was begotten from the bosom of the Father as the Son of God when the Father declared, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Psa 2:7. As the Son of God, He became *the Lamb of God*. He became the Lamb for the Father's house. Notably, the timing of the Feast of Passover – when the lamb was taken on the 10th day and sacrificed on the 14th day – is the key to understanding that God has ordained seventeen prophetic days for this present heavens and earth. Exo 12:3-6. The offering of Christ as our Passover Lamb, in time, occurred in the twilight of the 14th prophetic day.

The offering of Christ as the Lamb of God, in time, was the manifestation of the offering of Yahweh the Son before the foundation of the world. The apostle Peter declared that we have been redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you'. 1Pe 1:19-20. Jesus began to be *manifested in time* as the Lamb of God, revealing the Spirit of the Lord, when He was baptised in the Jordan River. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of the Lord without measure. Have witnessed this anointing upon Christ, John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Joh 1:29,36.

After His baptism, Jesus stood up to read from the Scriptures in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth. He testified, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Luk 4:18-19. This passage describes the outcome of the ministry of the seven Spirits of God. During His earthly ministry, Jesus certainly opened the eyes of the blind, healed the lame, cleansed the lepers, and delivered many from demonic oppression.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ was anointed with the seven Spirits of God, *again*, for His offering and suffering journey as the Son of Man. Luk 22:43. The blood that was shed in the seven wounding events that Christ suffered on His journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross was the fruit of His travail that was enabled by the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord is also called 'Eternal Spirit'. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul contrasted the blood of the Lamb of God with the blood of bulls and goats. He said, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who *through Eternal Spirit* offered Himself without spot

to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' Heb 9:14.

It is significant that the apostle John described *the head and hair* of Christ to be white like wool. This symbolic attribute of Christ draws our particular attention to *His headship* as the Lamb of God. God the Father has appointed Christ to be the Head of His many-membered body and the Head of the church. Eph 1:22. Col 1:18. Eph 5:23. In the book of Revelation, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, is called 'the Lamb's wife'. Rev 21:9. The church is presently betrothed to Christ as a chaste virgin; she has not yet been presented to Him in all her glory. The consummation of the marriage between Christ and the church will not happen until the inauguration of 'the new heavens and the new earth'.

Eyes like a flame of fire

The second symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is that *His eyes are like a flame of fire*. Rev 1:14. In relation to the seven Spirits of God, the eyes of Christ reveal *the Spirit of wisdom*. In previous writings, we have considered that the eyes of Christ, which are like a flame of fire, reveal His jealous love for our sanctification as well as His wrath upon our sin. When we meet Christ eye to eye, His eyes reveal the motivation of His heart toward us while, at the same time, His eyes reveal the thoughts and intentions of our heart. In this regard, the apostle Paul declared that 'there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account'. Heb 4:13.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated that He possesses the Spirit of wisdom through His spiritual insight and discernment regarding the thoughts and intentions that belong to the heart of man. For example, when Jesus visited Jerusalem for the Passover in the first year of His ministry, many of the Jews believed in Him because they observed His miracles. However, the apostle John wrote, 'But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man'. Joh 2:24-25. Likewise, when the disciples argued among themselves about who would be the greatest, Jesus perceived the thoughts of their heart. Luk 9:47.

Significantly, when we meet Christ eye to eye, we know a fellowship in the Spirit of wisdom that grants us insight and illumination regarding the condition of our own heart. We know that Peter received this kind of

spiritual insight into his heart when he met Jesus eye to eye in the court of Caiaphas. Luk 22:61. The evidence that we have met Christ eye to eye is that we are bankrupt in spirit. However, the Spirit of wisdom is far more than insight into the depths of the heart of man. More significantly, the Spirit of wisdom reveals the deep things in the heart of God.

1Co 2:10-11. It reveals the mystery of God, which is the covenant purpose of God from before the foundation of the world.

The apostle Paul described his own ministry by saying, 'We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak *the wisdom of God* in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory ... God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.' 1Co 2:6-7,10. Paul testified about this same Spirit of wisdom in his letter to the Ephesians. He wrote, 'In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times'.

Eph 1:8-10.

This brings us to an important point. When the apostle John saw the four living creatures in and around the throne of the Father, he described them as being 'full of eyes'. Rev 4:6. The living creatures represent the apostolic administration of Christ, which includes ascension gift apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. Eph 4:11. The apostolic administration of Christ is depicted as being 'full of eyes' because the Holy Spirit gives the messengers of Christ wisdom and insight into the mystery of God. The work of Christ's messengers is to proclaim the gospel of God to us by the Holy Spirit, so that the eyes of our heart are enlightened with the same Spirit of wisdom. Eph 1:17-18.

Feet like burnished brass

The third symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is that *His feet are like burnished brass*. Rev 1:15. The feet of Christ, which are like burnished brass, reveal *the Spirit of understanding*. Understanding is the culture of Yahweh. It is the way that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live together in the fellowship of offering. During the journey of the nation of Israel in the wilderness, Moses lifted up his voice for understanding when he prayed to the Lord, 'If I have found grace in Your sight, *show me now Your way*, that I may know You and that I may find

grace in Your sight.' Exo 33:13. The psalmist noted that the children of Israel saw the deeds of the Lord, but Moses *knew His way*. Psalms 103:7.

In his day, Moses demonstrated the Spirit of understanding because He *knew the Lord*. The wise man wrote that 'the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding'. Pro 9:10. The apostle John declared in his first letter, 'We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life'. 1Jn 5:20. Jesus Christ has given us an understanding because His offering is the full revelation of the way of the Lord. That is, His offering fully reveals the culture of offering in the fellowship of Yahweh.

Notably, the Spirit of understanding is connected to the feet of Christ. The feet of Christ draw our attention to the pathway that Christ walked from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. At the same time, 'the burnished brass' reminds us of the bronze altar in the tabernacle of Moses. Exo 27:1-2. The bronze altar was the place of offering and sacrifice. We know that the tabernacle of Moses was a type of the true temple in heavenly places. The key point is that the seven wounding events that Christ experienced on His offering journey are the altar of the true temple. The place of offering that has been established for us is our fellowship in those seven wounds.

The seven wounding events that Christ experienced on His offering journey is called 'the way of understanding'. Pro 9:6. Pro 21:16. Isa 40:14. 1Pe 3:7. We gain understanding as we walk with Christ on this pathway. It is important to recognise that understanding is more than illumination. The evidence that we are gaining understanding will be the progressive reformation of our conversation and conduct. As we have already considered, understanding is the culture of Yahweh. We particularly learn the culture of Yahweh as sons of God as we embrace the Father's chastening in our life. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul reminded us that the Father 'disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness'. Heb 12:10.

The voice of Christ

The fourth symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is that *His voice is like the sound of many waters*. Rev 1:15. The voice of Christ that is like the sound of many waters reveals the *Spirit of counsel*. The counsel of the Lord is the discussion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world, concerning the predestination

of man. The psalmist declared that 'the counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation'. Psa 33:11. Referring to this discussion between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the prophet Jeremiah asked, 'Who has stood in the council of the Lord, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?' Jer 23:18.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus explained that His word reveals the counsel of the Lord. He said to Nicodemus, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.' Joh 3:11. In the first case, the voice like the sound of many waters is the testimony of Jesus Christ, which reveals the *Spirit of counsel* regarding the name and works of every son of God. Jesus was not the source of His own testimony. The symbol of the *water* particularly draws our attention to *the word of the Father*. The Father's word is the sum of all truth. We are sanctified as sons of God by the word of the Father. Joh 17:17.

Notably, when Christ rebukes us in relation to our sanctification, it is a manifestation of the Spirit of counsel. Pro 1:30. When Jesus rebuked the presbytery in Laodicea, He said to them, '*I counsel you* to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.' Rev 3:18. Furthermore, He said, 'I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears *My voice* [receives My counsel] and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.' Rev 3:20.

We hear the voice of Christ like the sound of many waters when the word of God is proclaimed through the messengers of Christ by the Holy Spirit, as a word of present truth in each season. Rev 2:7,11,17,29. Rev 3:6,13,22. When we respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit with repentance and faith, the word of present truth is *the rain of righteousness* that regenerates the ground of our heart and enables us to bring forth the fruit of sonship in our life. Hos 10:12. However, if we continue to resist the Holy Spirit by failing to respond to the word of present truth, the same rain will eventually become the flood that washes away our spiritual 'house' in judgement. Mat 7:26-27.

The right hand of Christ

The fifth symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is *His right hand that holds the seven stars*. Rev 1:16. The right hand of Christ

reveals the *Spirit of might*. It is His mighty hand! The psalmist declared, 'The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.' Psa 118:16. When Moses reflected on the deliverance of the nation of Israel from the land of Egypt, he testified, 'We cried out to the Lord God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labour and our oppression. So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with *a mighty hand* and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.' Deu 26:7-8.

'The mighty hand' belongs to *El-Shaddai*. Gen 17:1. The name *El-Shaddai* means 'God Almighty'. He is the God who makes covenant and has the capacity to fulfil all of His promises. It is notable that God heard the groaning of the Israelites and delivered them from the land of Egypt because He remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. Exo 2:24. The mighty hand of the Lord is the instrument of both salvation and judgement that expresses *His lordship*. The apostle Peter declared, 'Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.' 1Pe 5:6.

The apostle John saw that it is the right hand of Christ that holds the seven stars. *The seven stars are the presbyteries of His lampstand churches*. Jesus Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God. The power that belongs to *El-Shaddai* is now ministered to all lampstand churches through the presbyteries in Christ's right hand. Notably, in the church age, the power of God is ministered in weakness. The apostle Paul described the nature of his own ministry to the Corinthians by saying, 'For indeed He [Christ] was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you.' 2Co 13:4.

When the word of God is proclaimed to us in weakness through a presbytery in the right hand of Christ, the power of God for salvation is directed toward us because the faith of God is ministered to us! In the first case, the revelation of the Spirit of might is the ministry of *the Spirit of faith*. When we are submitted to the lordship of Christ, it is the faith of God that gives us the capacity to believe and to do the will of God. When we receive the ministry of the faith of God, the Holy Spirit strengthens us in our inner man with the Spirit of might, or power, which belongs to the seven Spirits of God, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Eph 3:16-17.

The sharp two-edged sword

The sixth symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is *the sharp two-edged sword from His mouth*. Rev 1:16. The sharp two-edged sword that proceeds from the mouth of Christ reveals *the Spirit of knowledge*. The prophet Isaiah asked, 'Whom will he teach knowledge?' Isa 28:9. When Isaiah asked this question, he was not referring to the accumulation of information or to intellectual knowledge. He was referring to the knowledge that Christ acquired on the cross when He *learned our obedience* by fulfilling the works of our sonship. Heb 5:8. Speaking about what Christ learned for us on His offering journey, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many.' Isa 53:11.

Jesus said, 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and *learn from Me*, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' Mat 11:28-30. We will become weary and over-burdened if we are striving to maintain a religious projection that we have created for ourselves. *The yoke of Christ is our fellowship in His seven wounding events*. When we are led by the Holy Spirit on the pathway that Christ has pioneered for us, the grace of His resurrection life enables us to complete the works that He has already accomplished for us. By the Spirit, we find the 'rest' that belongs to our obedience and the 'refreshing' that belongs to our fellowship with the Lord and with our brethren.

The sharp two-edged sword that proceeds from the mouth of Christ is the word of the cross. It is a double-edged sword because the cross is the full revelation of the salvation and judgement of God. On the cross, Jesus acquired the knowledge of our obedience, but He also acquired the knowledge of God's eternal judgement upon our disobedience. During the three hours of great darkness, Christ explored and exhausted every alternative to the will of God and took it all out into the sea of God's forgetfulness. When He proclaimed that His work was finished, the only thing that was left was the rest and blessing that belongs to the obedience of sonship. Joh 19:30.

When the word of the cross is proclaimed through the messengers of Christ by the Holy Spirit, it is *a polarising word* because it provokes us to make a choice in response to the word. We cannot avoid the necessity and accountability of choice. When we choose to believe and obey the word that is proclaimed to us, it delivers us *from* the captivity that

belongs to our own religious projections, and delivers us *to* the freedom that belongs to our sonship. Equally, if we reject the word because we disagree with it or because we are ambivalent to it, the same word will deliver us to judgement and will cause us to stumble backward to be taken captive. Isa 28:13.

The face of Christ

The seventh symbolic attribute of Christ as the glorified Son of Man is *His face which shines like the sun in its strength*. Rev 1:16. The face of Christ that shines like the sun reveals *the Spirit of the fear of the Lord*. The fear of the Lord is the outcome of seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is the outcome of knowing who God is. The fear of the Lord is our appreciation of the sanctification of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and it is our respect for the holy ground that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh. The fear of the Lord is expressed through our obedience to His word and through the sanctification of our conversation and conduct as a son of God. Mal 3:16.

It is important that we understand the difference between the fear of the Lord that belongs to the seven Spirits of God, and the fear of the Lord that belongs to the fallen heart of man as a manifestation of the fear of death. For example, when the Lord came looking for Adam immediately after the Fall, Adam said, 'I heard the sound of You in the garden, and *I* was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.' Gen 3:10. Similarly, when the sixth seal is opened, the rulers of the seventh world kingdom will flee from the presence of the Lord, saying to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?' Rev 6:15-17.

Evidently, the fear of the Lord that is a manifestation of the fear of death causes us to hide ourselves from the Lord. In contrast, the fear of the Lord that belongs to the seven Spirits of God motivates us to draw near to the Lord for the purpose of knowing Him and worshipping Him. The psalmist declared, 'As for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; *in fear of You I will worship* toward Your holy temple.' Psalms 5:7. It is notable that when the Father takes His seat in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion to initiate the time of the end, the apostolic administration of Christ and the worldwide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones will respond by falling down before the Father's throne to worship Him. Rev 4:9-11.

During the church age, the light that shines from the face of Christ, which is the light of the seven Spirits of the Lord, is revealed and ministered by the stars in the right hand of Christ. The prophet Habakkuk declared concerning the Lord, 'His brightness was like the light; He had rays [of light] flashing *from His hand*, and there [in His hand] His power was hidden.' Hab 3:4. As a messenger in the right hand of Christ, the apostle Paul testified, 'For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' 2Co 4:5-6.

The ministry of the stars in the right hand of Christ

When the apostle John saw the seven attributes of Christ that reveal the seven Spirits of God, he immediately fell at the feet of Christ like a dead man. Rev 1:17. The impact of this revelation upon him caused him to be bankrupt in spirit. Notably, Jesus reached out and laid His right hand on John. In this action, He strengthened John with the capacity that belongs to the seven Spirits of God. He ministered the faith that was necessary for John to become a messenger in His right hand when He said, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.' Rev 1:17. Jesus instructed John to 'write the things which you have seen [the gospel of John], and the things which are [the letters of John], and the things which will take place after this [the book of Revelation]'. Rev 1:19.

Jesus did not explain the meaning of all His personal attributes to John. However, He did explain the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands. Jesus said to John, 'The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.' Rev 1:20. When we read Christ's admonition to the seven angels, we know that He was not referring to the angelic administration. He was evidently referring to a group of men who comprise a presbytery that belongs to each lampstand church. The word 'angel' means 'a messenger that brings good tidings'. A presbytery is *a corporate messenger* that has been called by God to proclaim the word of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to a lampstand church.

The foundation of a presbytery is firstfruits brethren who have come from worthy houses within the fellowship of local congregations in a lampstand church. For example, the apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, 'I urge you, brethren - you know the household of Stephanas, that it is

the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints – that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us.’ 1Co 16:15-16. Stephanas had a worthy, firstfruits house. He had evidently matured as an elder among the flock and had devoted himself to the work of deaconing. In this regard, Paul identified Stephanas as an overseer. An overseer is an elder and a deacon. The apostle Paul urged the church in Corinth to be submitted to such men.

In addition, every presbytery must be in the right hand of Christ. That is, every presbytery must be connected to the five ministry graces of Christ that are represented by His right hand. The apostle Paul described the five ministry graces of Christ by saying, ‘He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.’ Eph 4:11-12. The ministry graces of Christ comprise one apostolic administration and, together, they are *the gift of Christ* to the church in every generation. Notably, the five ministry graces reveal the four faces of Christ’s administration in the body of Christ.

We have been considering that Jesus Christ possesses the seven Spirits of God. The apostolic administration of Christ reveals all seven attributes of Christ as they minister the seven Spirits of the Lord to the church. Eph 4:11. Isa 11:2. It is one apostolic administration, but we can identify the unique ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. In relation to the seven Spirits of God, ascension gift apostles possess the Spirit of the Lord for the purpose of revealing Christ by ministering the Spirit of the Lord. Ascension gift prophets possess and minister the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. Ascension gift evangelists possess and minister the Spirit of counsel and might. And ascension gift teachers possess and minister the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

When a ‘star’ is properly connected to the right hand of Christ, it will have the capacity to minister the seven Spirits of God to a lampstand church. As the presbytery walks among all the local congregations that belong to their lampstand church, the ministry of the seven Spirits of God will be revealed as the seven lamps on the lampstand. Furthermore, the seven stars in the right hand of Christ are also called to carry the ministry of the seven Spirits of God from lampstand to lampstand. We are reminded that Jesus addressed the presbytery in Sardis as the One who ‘has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars’. Rev 3:1.

Jesus promised that the overcomers in Sardis would *walk with Him* in white garments. Rev 3:4-5. This means that they would also minister the seven Spirits of God among multiple lampstand churches.

There is an important distinction between *the seven stars* and *the seven Spirits of God*. That is, the seven stars are *not* the seven Spirits. Rather, each star that is connected to the right hand of Christ and is walking among the congregations that belong to a lampstand church will be *revealing* the ministry of the seven Spirits of God. The ministry of the presbytery will be manifest as the light of the seven lamps on the lampstand. Because of the relational connection to the ministry graces of Christ through the walking presbytery, the light of the lamp in each congregation reveals the seven Spirits of God. The light of the seven Spirits is then reflected and focused by the members of a local congregation for the purpose of edification in the church, and for evangelism into the community. Mat 5:14-15.

The seven Spirits of God are ministered through the proclamation of the gospel of sonship. As we have already considered, Jesus identified the outcome of this ministry when He stood up in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. Reading from the book of Isaiah, He testified, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor [in spirit]; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Luk 4:18-19.

Notably, at that time, Jesus closed the book and sat down before He proclaimed the seventh outcome. The seventh outcome that belongs to the ministry of the seven Spirits of God is the proclamation of 'the day of vengeance of our God'. Isa 61:2. The day of the Lord, which is the day of His vengeance, will commence after the Father has taken His seat to initiate the time of the end. *Jesus Christ will then stand up as the Lamb of God with the seven Spirits of God*. The Father will give Christ the mandate to rule in the middle of His enemies. Psa 110:2. When the Lamb begins to open the seals, the judgement of God and the wrath of the Lamb will begin to be revealed to the rulers of the nations. Rev 6:15-17. Psa 2:10-12.

Chapter 4

The seven dimensions of Christ's reward

The apostle John received the revelation of Jesus Christ while he was in exile on the island of Patmos during the reign of *the sixth world kingdom*. When John saw the administration of Babylon sitting on a beast with seven heads and ten horns, the presbyter explained to him that the seven heads are also seven mountains. Rev 17:9. The seven mountains represent the seven world kingdoms through which the administration of Babylon has ruled over the nations. Rev 17:9. Significantly, the presbyter said to John concerning the world kingdoms, 'Five have fallen, one is, and the other *has not yet come*. And when he comes, he must *continue a short time*.' Rev 17:10.

When the presbyter spoke of a kingdom which had 'not yet come', he was referring to *the seventh world kingdom*. We know that we are currently living in the latter period of the seventh world kingdom. The seventh world kingdom is the United Nations which was established after the end of the second world war in 1945. The administration of Babylon has ruled over the nations, through the seventh world kingdom, for a period of eighty years. As we considered in Chapter 2, we are presently living in the

latter phase of the seventh world kingdom which is characterised by 'a multi-polar' world order. Notably, the seventh world kingdom will only continue for 'a short time'. Rev 17:10.

Even though the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation during the reign of the sixth world kingdom, he foresaw that the book would be proclaimed by the messengers of Christ, under the direction and lordship of the Holy Spirit, during the *short time* that belongs to the seventh world kingdom. Specifically referring to this *short time*, he wrote, 'Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; *for the time is near*.' Rev 1:3. Similarly, the presbyter who showed John the bride city testified, 'the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must *shortly take place*'. Rev 22:6.

When John wrote the book of Revelation toward the end of the first century, the time was *not near*, and nor were the events described in the book about to take place. However, since the beginning of the seventh world kingdom, the time *has been near*, and the events will shortly take place! The 'short time' that belongs to the seventh world kingdom is the period when lampstand churches will be restored; the Father will take His seat to establish His kingdom; a great multitude will come into the kingdom from every nation, and Satan will be overcome and cast from heaven forever.

Significantly, during the seventh world kingdom, sons of God will be blessed *with a participation* in the prophetic fulfilment of the events that are described in the book of Revelation! As we have already considered, John introduced the book of Revelation by referring to those who will be blessed by keeping the things which are written in it. Rev 1:3. Jesus specifically referred to this blessing of participation when He declared, 'Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.' Rev 22:7. Furthermore, Jesus testified, 'Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last'. Rev 22:12-13.

My reward is with Me

Jesus addressed the apostle John and instructed him to write to the seven churches as the First and the Last. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Heb 12:2. He is the Pioneer of our salvation. Heb 2:10. Heb 5:9. Furthermore, He is the One who possesses the seven

Spirits of God. As we considered in Chapter 3, the seven Spirits of God are symbolically represented by the seven personal attributes that belong to Christ. In addition to the seven Spirits of God, Christ also possesses *His reward* which He has promised to give to the overcomers from lampstand churches.

Jesus described the nature of the reward when He made a specific promise to the overcoming presbyters in each lampstand church. The simple point is that *all seven promises* comprise the reward of Christ. That is, the reward of Christ is the right to eat from the tree of life; the crown of life; the hidden manna and white stone with the new name; the rod of iron and morning star; the white garments; the ministry of being a pillar in the temple of the Father; and the inheritance of the throne of David for the time of the end. Rev 2:7, 10, 17, 27-28. Rev 3:5,12,21.

The content of the seven letters has been relevant for all lampstand churches for the entire church age. Of course, there have been overcomers in every generation of the church. However, the specific application of the seven letters is the restoration of lampstand churches, during the reign of the seventh world kingdom, before the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end. For example, Jesus admonished the presbytery in Thyatira by saying, 'He who overcomes, and keeps My works *until the end*, to him I will give power over the nations.' Rev 2:26.

There have been many seasons of revival and refreshing since the beginning of the church age. After healing the lame man in the temple, the apostle Peter proclaimed to the crowd, 'Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that *times of refreshing* may come from the presence of the Lord.' Act 3:19. However, the specific season for *the restoration of all things* is during the seventh world kingdom. Act 3:21. This is the time when the church is in travail to bring forth the man child which is the administration that is suitable for the fullness of times. It is the man child that will rule the nations with the rod of iron. Rev 12:5.

As we considered in Chapter 2, the man child is the world-wide presbytery that will be seated with Christ on the throne of David. This brings us to an important point. When we consider the seven letters, we note that there is a *progressive restoration* of a presbytery, and a *progressive attainment* of the promises, which comprise the reward of Christ, by an overcoming presbytery. We know that it is a progressive attainment because Jesus promised to give the crown of life to the overcomers in Sardis. Rev 2:10. Later, he said to the presbytery

in Philadelphia, 'Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.' Rev 3:11.

The pathway of restoration and attainment is from independent *fallen stars* to one world-wide presbytery that is seated with Christ on twenty-four thrones around the Father's throne in the heavenly places. The *first admonition* to every presbytery is, 'I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works.' Rev 2:4-5. The *final promise* to every presbytery is, 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne'. Rev 3:21.

There is a seamless transition between the fulfilment of the promise to the overcomers in Laodicea and John's vision of the administration that is suitable for the fullness of times which is recorded in Chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Revelation. Immediately after Jesus finished the admonition to Laodicea, John testified, 'After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must *take place after this*".' Rev 4:1.

The open door in heaven is the same open door that Christ put before the presbytery in Philadelphia. It is the open door for the wise virgins, who have purchased a double- portion of oil, to enter the wedding feast in the time of the end. The world-wide presbytery that is seated on the twenty-four thrones is the fulfilment of the promise that Jesus made to the overcomers in Laodicea. In addition to this, John described the world-wide presbytery by saying that they were, 'clothed in white robes, and they had crowns of gold on their heads'. Rev 4:4. The white robes are the fulfilment of the promise that Jesus made to the presbytery in Sardis. Rev 3:5. The golden crowns are the fulfilment of the promise that Jesus made to the presbytery in Smyrna. Rev 2:10.

The reward to the overcomers in Ephesus

Let us consider the progressive attainment of the reward of Christ in more detail. Jesus addressed the presbytery in Ephesus as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand and who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. Rev 2:1. We know that Jesus Christ is physically seated at the right hand of God in the third heaven. However, He walks among His lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand. Jesus rebuked the presbytery in Ephesus because they had

left their first love. Rev 2:4. First love is the fellowship of Yahweh which is revealed in the church by the four dimensions of fellowship that belong to the *agape* meal. Act 2:42.

Furthermore, the presbytery in Ephesus had fallen from the right hand of Christ. This means that they had lost their connection to the five ministry graces of Christ which comprise His apostolic administration.

Eph 4:11-12. The presbytery in Ephesus had lost their capacity to proclaim the word of present truth as the provision for the *agape* meal in their lampstand church. Jesus said, 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.' Rev 2:5.

Jesus called the presbytery in Ephesus to repent from their independent and self-sourced mode of ministry. Rather than focusing on their own congregations as 'local pastors', they needed to demonstrate the fruit of their repentance by travelling from congregation to congregation as part of a presbytery in the right hand of Christ. Jesus addressed the presbytery in Ephesus as the One who holds the seven stars and *walks* among the seven lampstands because *the first work* of a star in the right hand of Christ is *to walk*. Rev 2:1.

Jesus concluded His admonition to Ephesus by saying, 'To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.' Rev 2:7. The 'tree of life' is Christ. The fruit of the tree of life is the bread of life which comes down from heaven. Joh 6:48. Later in the book of Revelation, the apostle John described the tree of life by saying that it brings forth fruit for every month of the year. Rev 22:2. The evidence that a presbytery has been given the right to the tree of life is that it will have the capacity to proclaim the word of present truth to a lampstand church in every season as the provision for the *agape* meal.

The reward to the overcomers in Smyrna

Jesus addressed the presbytery in Smyrna as, 'the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life'. Rev 2:8. He warned them that they would suffer persecution at the hands of the synagogue of Satan. If they remained faithful until death, Jesus promised to give them the crown of life. Rev 2:9-10. The crown of life is the authority of Christ's resurrection life. James said, 'Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him.' Jas 1:12. Jesus concluded His

admonition to the presbytery in Smyrna by saying, 'He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death'. Rev 2:11. The second death describes the eternal judgement of God in the lake of fire. Rev 20:13-14. Rev 21:8.

In relation to the promise of not being hurt by the second death, the companion passage in the book of Revelation is, 'Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such *the second death has no power*, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years'. Rev 20:6. The final manifestation of the crown of life will be revealed on the day of resurrection when we inherit our spiritual body. However, the crown of life also describes the power of Christ's resurrection life which we receive in our mortality, here and now, as we are conformed to the death of Christ in the fellowship of His seven wounding events.

Having been recovered to the right hand of Christ, the next step on the pathway of restoration for a presbytery is to learn how to *minister in weakness*. This was the first lesson that the apostle Paul had to learn after Christ reached out His right hand to lay hold of him. Paul testified to the Corinthians concerning Christ, 'For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.' 2Co 13:4. The evidence that a presbytery is receiving the crown of life will be the capacity to direct the power of God's resurrection life to a lampstand church *through weakness*.

The reward to the overcomers in Pergamum

Jesus concluded His admonition to the presbytery in Pergamum by saying, 'To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.' Rev 2:17. The hidden manna is the revelation of the mystery of God, which is the covenant purpose of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from before the foundation of the world. Referring to this hidden manna, the apostle Paul wrote, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory'. 1Co 2:7. A presbytery that has been recovered to the right hand of Christ, and is learning to minister in weakness, will progressively gain insight from Christ, through the Holy Spirit, into the mystery of God.

In addition to the hidden manna, Jesus promised to give each overcomer a white stone with a new name written on it. The new name is completely unique for each son of God because it is a name that 'no one knows except him who receives it'. Rev 2:17. Our new name as a son of God was made substantial by Christ on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. Psalms 139:16. Having been born again as a son of God, we express our new name 'in a first fruits measure', by the Holy Spirit, in this present age. Our new name will not be fully revealed until our adoption is complete and we have received the inheritance of our spiritual body for the new heavens and new earth. The apostle John declared, 'Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' 1 John 3:2.

The manifestation of the sons of God, in *immortality*, will not happen until the day of resurrection when Christ physically returns. However, it is important to appreciate that there will be a manifestation of the sons of God, in *mortality*, after the Father takes His seat and Jesus Christ stands up to break the seven seals. The scroll with the seven seals contains the full revelation of the Father's will, which is the revelation of sonship. In the time of the end, the Father's purpose for man will be revealed by a great multitude of sons of God who will manifest the sign of the Son of Man - which is His death, burial, and resurrection - by the power of *exanastasis* in their mortality. The apostle Paul was referring to this manifestation of sonship, within the context of the sufferings that belong to this present time, when he said, 'The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.' Romans 8:19.

The reward to the overcomers in Thyatira

Jesus concluded His admonition to the presbytery in Thyatira by saying, 'He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - "He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels" - as I also have received from My Father.' Rev 2:26-27. As we have considered in Chapter 2, the rod of iron will be given to the presbytery around the throne of the Father in the time of the end. It is the authority to judge the seventh world kingdom and to establish the Father's kingdom on the earth. When the first seal is opened, the 144 000 will be sent into all the earth as the ministry arm of the presbytery for the purpose of looking for worthy houses.

Fulfilling the prophetic dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, which was interpreted by the prophet Daniel, the 144 000 are the stone which will shatter the power of the seventh world kingdom. Dan 2:45. Satan is the personal ruler of the seventh world kingdom. He will be overcome in the heavenly places through the ministry of the 144 000 as they proclaim the gospel of the kingdom in all nations. Mat 24:14. During the opening of the seals, the 144 000 will find a great multitude of worthy houses who will serve God, day and night, in His temple. Rev 7:15. As these worthy houses declare the testimony of their salvation, they will join the 144 000 as laborers in the harvest field of the world. Rev 7:10. The power of Satan over the Gentile nations will be broken as multitudes upon multitudes are delivered from the kingdom of darkness and come into the kingdom of God. Col 1:13.

The presbytery will not receive the rod of iron until *after* the Father has taken His seat. In contrast to this, an overcoming presbytery will receive the morning star *before* the Father has taken His seat. The morning star is the Elijah ministry which will be restored before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. Mal 4:5. Jesus Christ is called 'the Bright and Morning Star' as the source of the Elijah ministry. Rev 22:16. We know that the Lord has been restoring the Elijah ministry in our day. The focus of the Elijah ministry is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. Mal 4:6. Luk 1:17. It is the restoration of worthy houses who are then called to become firstfruits houses by purchasing a double portion of oil in readiness for the coming of the Lord.

The reward to the overcomers in Sardis

Jesus concluded His admonition to the presbytery in Sardis by saying, 'He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.' Rev 3:5. It is only possible for a presbyter to walk with Christ in white garments if they have given attention to their own marriage reformation and to the sanctification of their own household. Rev 3:4. When we consider the admonition of Jesus to the presbytery in Sardis, it is evident that there were some presbyters who were asleep. They had a name that they were alive in terms of their ministry profile, but they lacked a testimony of the life of Christ in their own households. Rev 3:1-2.

In this season, the Holy Spirit has been emphasizing that every presbyter must have a testimony of reformation and regeneration in relation to their own household. Regardless of the nature of their ministry grace, a presbyter must be willing to receive the ministry of Christ toward their own household. As an example of this principle, we note that the Lord appointed Moses to be the messenger who would deliver the nation of Israel from their slavery in Egypt. Nevertheless, the Lord confronted him on his way to Egypt, and was ready to kill him, because of the fallen culture of his marriage and family. Exo 4:24-26. In this regard, the apostle Paul taught that 'if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?' 1Ti 3:5.

In relation to the progressive pathway of restoration, we have considered that a presbytery needs to be recovered to the right hand of Christ; learn to minister in weakness; receive insight into the mystery of God, and learn to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. In addition to this, we have considered that every presbyter needs to give attention to the sanctification of their own marriage and family. Significantly, Jesus promised that such a presbytery will *walk with Him*, clothed in white garments, from lampstand to lampstand. Rev 3:4. Recognizing that the seven Spirits of God belong to Christ who is clothed in white garments, a presbytery that is walking with Christ in white garments will also be ministering the power of the seven Spirits of God to His lampstand churches. Rev 1:12-16. Rev 3:1.

The reward to the overcomers in Philadelphia

Jesus addressed the presbytery in Philadelphia as the One who has 'the key of David'. Rev 3:7. He is the One who has the authority to open and close the door of the Father's house for the wedding feast. Mat 25:10-12. Notably, Christ is also the One who has the authority to open the door for the proclamation of the gospel of sonship among the unclean daughters of Zion prior to the time of the end. Isa 4:4. In this regard, we are reminded that the apostle Paul asked the Colossians to pray 'that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains'. Col 4:3.

Jesus concluded His admonition to the presbytery in Philadelphia by saying, 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more'. Rev 3:12. We recall that the two pillars at the doorway of the temple of Solomon were named 'Jachin' and 'Boaz'. The name 'Jachin' means 'God will establish'. The name 'Boaz' means

'In Him is strength'. 1Ki 7:21. Jesus said that each pillar in the true temple of God will have a threefold name – the name of the Father, the name of the bride city, and their new name as a son of God. Rev 3:12.

In the first case, the ministry that belongs to a pillar in the temple of God is prayer and worship. Fulfilling the promise to the overcomers in Philadelphia, the ministry of prayer and worship will be the focus of the presbytery around the throne of the Father. The presbytery will have golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints. Rev 5:8. The presbytery will also have harps as instruments of worship. As pillars in the temple of God, the presbytery around the throne of the Father will worship the Father and proclaim the worthiness of the Lamb to open the seven seals for the purpose of revealing the Father's will on the earth. Rev 5:12-14.

The reward to the overcomers in Laodicea

As we have already considered, Jesus concluded His admonition to the presbytery in Laodicea by saying, 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.' Rev 3:21. Jesus overcame Satan on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. When His offering was complete, He committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father and returned to the Father's bosom and throne while His physical body lay in the tomb for three days and three nights. Luk 23:46. On the day of His physical resurrection, Jesus then ascended to the Father's throne in His spiritual body as the first Man in the image and likeness of God. Joh 20:17.

In contrast to this, when Jesus Christ physically ascended from the Mount of Olives after forty days, He sat down in His own intrinsic throne at the right hand of God. Psalms 110:1. Hebrews 8:1. Colossians 3:1. The promise to the presbytery in Laodicea will be fulfilled when the church has brought forth the man child. At that time, the world-wide presbytery will be *seated with Christ* on twenty-four thrones around His throne. The twenty-four thrones belong to the throne of David. Psalm 122:5. When we read the book of Daniel, it appears that the twenty-four thrones will be placed around the Son's throne just before the Father places His own throne in the middle of the twenty-four thrones. Daniel declared, 'I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated.' Daniel 7:9.

After the Father has placed His throne in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion, Jesus Christ will *stand up* as the

Lamb of God from His throne, which is between the Father's throne and the twenty-four thrones. Rev 5:6. He will be presented as the glorified Son of Man before the Father to receive the scroll with the seven seals.

Dan 7:13. Significantly, when Stephen was being stoned, he looked into heaven and saw the Son of Man *standing* at the right hand of God.

Act 7:55-56. As an early overcomer, he was looking prophetically, in the Spirit, all the way to the time when the Father will take His seat and Christ will stand up at the right hand of God to begin ruling, through His administration, on the earth.

After Christ stands up to receive the scroll with the seven seals, He will move into the centre of the Father's throne. Rev 7:17. As we have considered in Chapter 1, the throne will then be called 'the throne of God and of the Lamb'. Rev 22:1,3. The world-wide presbytery will sing a new song, declaring to the Lamb, 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth'. Rev 5:9-10. The authority to reign on the earth is the final dimension of the reward of Christ that will be revealed in this present age.

Chapter 5

Overcoming Satan – the lesson of Job

In his epistle, James, the Lord's brother, directed us to study the life of Job. The purpose of this focus is to understand how Christ relates to us, and His motivation towards us, as He processes our lives. Furthermore, Job is the example of a man who overcame Satan. James called this, 'the outcome of the Lord's dealings' or the 'the end intended by the Lord'. He wrote, 'You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful'. Jas 5:11.

In the first case, the experience of Job draws our attention to *the priesthood of Christ*. He is our merciful and faithful High Priest. The Lord revealed Himself to be a 'very compassionate' and merciful High Priest as the One who had fully identified with Job's sufferings. Job came to understand that the Lord was *with him* on the ash heap! In the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, Job received the grace that was necessary to endure his season of trial and to overcome the devil.

In addition to the revelation of Christ's priesthood, we can identify three dimensions that belong to the outcome of the Lord's dealings in the life

of Job. Firstly, *at the end of the Lord's admonition*, Job learned the difference between self-righteousness and blamelessness. Having met Christ eye to eye, Job came to abhor his self-righteousness, which was based upon his own knowledge of good and evil. He testified, 'I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself [my own righteousness], and repent in dust and ashes.' Job 42:5-6.

Secondly, *at the end of his season of chastening*, Job was blessed with a double portion of oil as the type of a wise virgin. Mat 25:4. We know that he possessed oil in his lamp and in his own vessel because he became a minister of reconciliation, by the Spirit, to his three friends. Job's capacity *to pray for his three friends* demonstrated that he had received the double portion of oil. When the Lord gave him 'twice as much as he had before' in terms of his family and possessions, it was the sign that verified, or bore witness to, the double portion of oil that he had already received in his own mortality as the fruit of his participation in the travail of Christ.

Thirdly, *at the end of his season of trial*, Job was the first man to overcome Satan. In addition to Noah and Daniel, the Lord refers to Job as one of the three great overcomers. Eze 14:14,20. We know that Noah overcame the world; Daniel overcame the flesh; and Job overcame the devil. It is notable that the Lord's final admonition to Job contained the secret to overcoming 'Leviathan', which is another name for Satan. The Lord said to him, 'Lay your hand on him [the devil]; remember the battle [has already been won by Christ] - never do it again!' Job 41:8. When the Lord said, 'never do it again', He was referring to Job's own confession that he had tried to justify himself on the grounds of his own self-righteousness. Job 40:3-5.

The administration in the book of Job

The book of Job gives us a helpful insight into the way that the patriarchs lived and served God after the flood, and before God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans to become the father of a new humanity. It is likely that Job lived soon after the initial dispersion of the nations from the tower of Babel. We know that the Lord divided and scattered the nations from Babel by confusing their languages. We read in the book of Genesis that the earth was divided in the days of Peleg. Gen 10:25. Peleg belonged to the fourth generation of Shem's descendants.

Job was one of the patriarchs who lived in the land of Uz. In the record of the seventy-two families and nations that descended from the three sons of Noah to populate the world after the flood, it is noted that Uz was the grandson of Shem. Gen 10:22-23. If Job lived soon after the dispersion of the nations, it is possible that he was the grandson of Uz. In his day, Job was the head of his extended family and the representative of one of the seventy-two nations.

Notably, Job's three friends came from their own regions as the representatives of other extended families who belonged to the seventy-two nations. Eliphaz was a Temanite; Bildad was a Shuhite; and Zophar was a Naamathite. In this regard, Job and his friends all belonged to the order of seventy-two among the Gentile nations. The friends of Job did not comprise a synagogue of Satan. Rather, they belonged to a presbytery of elders or fathers, who ministered among the seventy-two nations while many people still recognised the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men. We know that by the time God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldeans, the nations had rejected God and had fallen into widespread idolatry.

The seventy-two nations functioned underneath the angelic administration. Interestingly, in the book of Job, the angels were described as sons of God. The Lord referred to the angels as sons of God when He asked Job, 'Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? ... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?' Job 38:4,7. The angels were described as sons of God because they were *created by God*. We know that they do not possess the same predestination as man, to be *born of God* and to participate in the fellowship of Yahweh. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul asked, 'To which of the angels did He ever say: "You are my son, today I have begotten you?" And again: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to Me a son?"' Heb 1:5.

We read in the book of Job, 'Now there was a day when the sons of God [the angels] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them'. Job 1:6. The angels regularly presented themselves before the Lord to give an account regarding the activity of men as they spread out to fill the earth. Reporting to the Lord in this manner is consistent with the activity of the angelic administration which is described in the book of Zechariah. Zec 1:10-11. Similarly, in the book of Daniel, the angels were described as 'watchers' and 'holy ones' who had authority over the nations. We recall that the judgement upon

King Nebuchadnezzar was according to the decree of the watchers and the word of the holy ones. Dan 4:17.

God's discussion with Satan

In the days of Job, Satan had not regained access to the heavenly places. He roamed to and fro upon the earth looking for those whom he could condemn by accusation before God. Significantly, it was the Lord who brought Job to Satan's attention by asking him, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?' Job 1:8. Satan could not bring an accusation against Job in relation to his conversation or conduct. Nevertheless, he sought to impugn Job's motives, and undermine the truth of God's word, by saying that Job only lived as a God-fearer because of God's protection and blessing upon his life.

Satan said to the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face!' Job 1:9-11. God boasted about Job to the devil because He understood the efficacy of Christ's priesthood and offering for him. In contrast to this, Satan impugned Job before God because he only understands trading relationships. He believes that a man will be willing to trade everything that he has in exchange for his own life.

God allowed Satan to test his supposition because He knew that Job would overcome the devil by receiving faith to embrace his participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings in the sure hope of the resurrection. As he sat on the ash heap, Job proclaimed his faith for the resurrection by saying, 'Oh that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another, how my heart yearns within me!' Job 19:23-27.

Job understood that even if he physically died, he would be raised by Christ on the day of resurrection to receive the inheritance of his spiritual body. His heart yearned within him as he eagerly looked forward to the redemption of his body. Rom 8:23. Job most certainly possessed

faith for the *anastasis*, which will be revealed when Jesus Christ physically returns at the end of the age. However, during his season of trial, as he came to understand that Christ was *with him* in all his sufferings, he also received faith for *exanastasis*. The apostle Paul used the term *exanastasis* to describe the power of Christ's resurrection life that we receive in the fellowship of His sufferings, while we are still in our mortal body. Php 3:11.

The discussion between Job and his friends

Job's three friends saw that his grief was very great, and they did desire to help him. Job 2:13. As we have already stated, the three friends were not a synagogue of Satan. Rather, they belonged to the presbytery among the seventy-two nations. Each of his friends had their own unique appraisal of his situation, and they admonished Job in a manner that was consistent with their own doctrine. In summary, Job's friends all assumed that he was suffering because he had done something wrong. Eliphaz, who was the first to speak, said to Job, 'Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off? Even as I have seen, those who plough iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.' Job 4:7-8.

As each friend addressed Job, trying to find a remedy for his situation, we observe that they did expound some helpful principles. For example, Eliphaz declared, 'Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.' Job 5:17. We know that this same statement was quoted by Solomon in the book of Proverbs, and by the apostle Paul in the book of Hebrews. Pro 3:11. Heb 12:5. Building on this important principle, the apostle Paul also said, 'Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.' Heb 12:11.

However, despite some of these helpful statements, the discussion between Job and his three friends was based on their own *causal reasoning*. That is, Job's friends tried to identify the root cause of his predicament, so that they could prescribe the appropriate pathway of recovery for him. Each friend brought a comprehensive admonition to Job in which they considered the matter from every angle, with great care and attention to detail, for the purpose of making a clear and unassailable theological statement. At the same time, Job masterfully countered each of their statements with his own appraisal of the facts and his situation.

He maintained his own self-righteous position, and even asked for the opportunity to plead his case before the Lord. Job 13:3,18.

In addition to this, the young man Elihu became enraged with Job and his three friends. His wrath was aroused against the three friends because they had not been able to identify the cause of Job's problem, even though they condemned him. Equally, his wrath was aroused against Job because he continued to justify himself. Elihu said, 'I am young in years, and you are very old; therefore I was afraid, and dared not declare my opinion to you. I said, "Age should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom". But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice. Therefore I say, "Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion".' Job 32:7-10.

Elihu was a younger man who had observed the shortcomings of those who were older than he. He believed that he had an accurate appraisal of the problem and offered a fresh approach to find the solution. Notably, Elihu claimed that his words were true because his spirit had been created from the breath of God, and he spoke from an upright heart and an impartial position. Job 33:3-4. Elihu did not reason from the basis of age or experience. He believed that his understanding had been given to him by God and was now resident within his own human spirit. In this regard, he presumed that his own human perception and reasoning were the source of his wisdom.

Elihu instructed Job that he needed someone to stand as a pastoral mediator between himself and the Lord. He offered to fulfil this pastoral role for Job with an austere but kind demeanour. Job 33:6-7. We know that this was not the apostle Paul's pastoral approach. Paul said to Timothy, 'There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' 1Ti 2:5-6. Many of the commentators still conclude that Elihu was a true messenger because the Lord did not rebuke him at the end of the account. However, his ministry was carnal because he was motivated by *the wrath of man*, which does not produce the righteousness of God. Jas 1:20.

The mode of gainsaying

When we consider the way in which all these men spoke to one another – including Job, his friends, and Elihu – we note that it was not a fellowship among brethren in which the mind of Christ was made known. Rather,

the entire discussion was characterised by the principle of ‘gainsaying’. ‘Gainsaying’ means ‘gaining an advantage by saying’. A person will employ the principle of ‘gainsaying’ for the purpose of defending their own integrity and reputation. Rather than receiving a word of correction, in a spirit of meekness, they will correct the facts in relation to the illustrations that have been used by others to communicate the point. Gainsaying is used to avoid humiliation and shame. However, the only outcome is that it diverts the discussion and removes the opportunity for fellowship among brethren.

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul summarised the Lord’s demeanour towards those who continue to ‘gainsay’, rather than humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God. He wrote, ‘But to Israel he says, “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary [lit. gainsaying] people”’. Rom 10:21. It is important to note that the Lord connects gainsaying with disobedience. When we are gainsaying, we demonstrate that we believe that our own heart is the source of truth. We do not recognise that our own heart is deceitful in the way that it operates. Jer 17:9-10. When we believe that we are right in our own eyes, we will not be willing to listen to, and receive admonition from, our brethren. In the absence of fellowship, there is no opportunity for obedience.

When the discussion around Job’s situation had reached an inevitable impasse, Christ Himself spoke to him from the midst of the whirlwind. Job 38:1. He said, ‘Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?’ Job 38:2. He spoke to Job as the only One who is genuinely able to ‘gainsay’ in relation to the truth of the facts by going all the way back to the creation of the heavens and the earth. The Lord asked Job, ‘Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?’ Job 38:4. The Lord proceeded to challenge Job with numerous rhetorical questions. The Lord finished His first admonition by inviting Job to ‘gainsay’ Him if he desired to continue to live by that mode. The Lord said to Job, ‘Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it.’ Job 40:2.

In response to Christ’s first admonition, Job turned from the mode of ‘gainsaying’ and confessed, ‘Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes, twice, but I will proceed no further.’ Job 40:5. When Job humbled himself under the mighty hand of God, he was then able to meet the Lord and learn how to overcome Satan. In the first case, the Lord declared that it is impossible to overcome Satan, who He called ‘Leviathan’, in the strength of our own flesh. He is too strong for us. He said, ‘Indeed, any

hope of overcoming him is false; shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him?' Job 41:9. Rather than striving in the flesh to maintain his own self-righteousness, the Lord instructed Job to simply lay his hand upon Satan, and to remember that the battle belongs to the Lord. Job 41:8.

In response to the Lord's second admonition, Job testified that he had met the Lord eye to eye. He had seen the deceitfulness of his own heart and learned the difference between self-righteousness and blamelessness. Furthermore, Job possessed a double portion of the oil in his own physical body as the fruit of the Lord's chastening in his life. The evidence of this double portion of oil was his capacity to pray for his friends as a minister of reconciliation. Job 42:10. Job's friends had not spoken in a manner that was consistent with the Lord's view of his suffering. Job 42:7. They needed to be converted from having a gospel of penance to a gospel of repentance and faith in the fellowship offering. The ministry of Job to his friends established a new ground of fellowship in the presbytery that was among the nations at that time.

The order of seventy-two in the church age

Jesus first established the administration that will overcome Satan in the church age when He sent the seventy-two disciples to look for worthy houses. Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples *as lambs* in the midst of wolves. Luk 10:3. As they ministered in weakness, they were revealing Christ, the Lamb of God, who possesses the seven Spirits of God. Their obedience to Christ was their provision and their protection. Notably, the seventy-two disciples ministered the peace of God to the houses who received them and responded with repentance and faith to their ministry.

The seventy-two disciples proclaimed the gospel of peace, which is the gospel of God, to each household. Luk 10:5. However, more than this, as two of the disciples stayed in a specific house, the peace of God was ministered to that household in a fellowship. Luk 10:7. The peace of God that remained in a worthy house was the outcome of the marriage reformation and the cultural change in the family. As each household was delivered from the vain traditions and family cultures that they had inherited from their forefathers, they were also delivered from the oppression of the familial demons. 1Pe 1:18

When the seventy-two disciples returned to Jesus, they delivered their report with great joy. They said, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' Luk 10:17. Jesus responded to their report by saying,

'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.' Luk 10:18. This is a notable statement. The ministry of the seventy-two disciples had overcome Satan in the heavenly places! The power that Satan exercised over the Jewish nation at that time, because of their religious heritage and traditions, was being broken as the familial demons were cast out of each worthy household.

Notably, after the seventy-two disciples had returned with joy, Jesus then commissioned them *a second time*. He commissioned them again by saying, 'Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.' Luk 10:19. There is no record in the Gospels that Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples out again to look for more worthy houses. Rather, when He commissioned them *a second time*, He delivered the mandate to the order of seventy-two for the entire church age.

During the church age, the mandate that belongs to the order of seventy-two has been given to the presbyteries in the right hand of Christ. Rev 1:20. It is the work of a presbytery to proclaim the gospel of God to the households that belong to a lampstand church. The presbytery is called to minister in weakness and by testimony. 1Co 2:1-5. The peace of God is ministered to the households who respond with repentance and faith to the word that is proclaimed to them in each season. A household that is embracing the cultural implications of the word will be finding healing and deliverance from the oppression of unclean spirits.

Significantly, when the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end, Jesus will no longer be walking among His lampstand churches through the presbyteries in His right hand. Rather, there will be one world-wide presbytery around the throne of the Father. The focus of the ministry of the world-wide presbytery around the Father's throne will be prayer and worship. The presbytery will not be looking for worthy houses. This is an important point. In the time of the end, the mandate that belongs to the order of seventy-two will be given to the 144 000. We note that the numeric of 144 is a double portion of 72. The 144 000 are the wise virgins who have purchased a double portion of oil. Mat 25:4.

When the first seal is opened by the Lamb of God, the 144 000 will be sent by the apostolic administration of Christ, and the presbytery around the Father's throne, to look for worthy houses. Rev 6:1-2. The outcome of their ministry during the opening of the seals will be a great multitude of worthy houses from every tribe, nation, people, and tongue. Rev 7:9.

The power that Satan exercises over all the Gentile nations will be broken as the familial demons are cast out from the houses that belong to this great multitude in every nation. Satan will be progressively overcome by the 144 000 and the great multitude during the time of the end, until there is no place found for him in heaven any longer.

Overcoming Satan in the time of the end

At the blowing of the seventh trumpet, Michael and his angels will cast Satan and his angels out of the heavenly places, forever. Rev 12:7-9. Referring to the announcement that will accompany the blowing of the seventh trumpet, the apostle John wrote, 'Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down"'. Rev 12:10. Likewise, we read in Chapter 11 of the book of Revelation, "Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "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.

Significantly, the apostle John identified how Satan will be overcome by the 144 000 and the great multitude in the time of the end. He explained, 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.' Rev 12:11. The blood of the Lamb describes our participation in the seven wounding events that Christ experienced from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. The 144 000 will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb as they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Rev 14:4. Likewise, the great multitude will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb as they wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev 7:14.

The word of our testimony is the fruit of the washing of regeneration in our life, marriage, and family. The regenerative work of the Lord in our life is progressively conforming us to the image of Christ so that what is *true in Him* becomes *true in us*. 1Jn 2:8. In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described this by saying that the testimony of Christ is confirmed in us. 1Co 1:6. In this regard, there will be no discrepancy between the word that is proclaimed by the 144 000 and the culture that belongs to their households. There will be no deceit in their mouth as the expression of a religious projection. Rev 14:5. Similarly, the great multitude will bear witness to the washing of regeneration in their lives

as they proclaim, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!' Rev 7:10.

As sons of God, who have been born of God, we 'love not our lives to the death' because the love of God has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Rom 5:5. The love of God is the divine nature. We are motivated by a sincere love of the brethren, and are enabled by the Spirit of God, to lay down our lives for one another.

Notably, as our hearts are being regenerated by the love of God in the fellowship of Christ's offering, we are also being delivered from the fear of death which motivates us to save our own life. The apostle John declared that 'love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.'

1Jn 4:17-18.

In summary, Satan is overcome by the blood of the Lamb as we embrace our participation in the seven wounding events of Christ, because we are delivered from *the victim mindset* which holds us in bondage to our own knowledge of good and evil. Satan is overcome by the word of our testimony as we bear witness to the washing of regeneration in our lives because we are delivered from *the shame* that holds us in bondage to our own religious projections. Satan is overcome when we lay down our life for another because we are delivered from *the fear of death*, which holds us in bondage to the law of sin. We recall that Satan said to God regarding Job, 'All that a man has, he will give for his life.' Job 2:4. In the end, Job overcame Satan because he was delivered from his victim mindset, his shame, and his fear of death.

When the apostle John witnessed the final fall of Satan at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, he also heard the loud voice from heaven proclaim, 'Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!' Rev 12:12.

Notably, this was the same message that Jesus delivered to all those who belong to the order of seventy-two for the church age and the 144 000 in the time of the end. After commissioning the order of seventy-two with their mandate until the end of the age, He said, 'Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' Luk 10:20. The 'end intended for us by the Lord' as sons of God, is our inclusion in the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.