

A call to the eagle saints

SECURING YOUR PLACE
in the
FINAL
REVIVAL



THIS WAY →

The time has come for the Church to
Return from Exile

TOLU OLUNUBI

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;” (Ephesians 6:18, KJV)

This Way — Securing your place in the Final Revival

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Scripture quotations in this book are taken from the King James Version (KJV) or New King James Version (NKJV), unless explicitly referenced as another version.

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FOREWORD

The end-time or Kingdom-related messages, whether in spoken or written form, tend to be “high-sounding” or “technical” thus making such messages difficult to understand and uninteresting and hence the more and more children of the kingdom are “lost” to the generation of skin-deep Christianity with the Church being the worst hit for it because her prophetic understanding is shallow with the result that the Church gets more and more powerless, less prophetic and more denominational in outlook and in practice.

This Way, while seeking to point the way to the believers, as to how to partake and benefit in the prophesied outpouring of the Holy Spirit or the fullness of the “promise of the Father,” there has been a tremendous effort at demystifying the prophetic nuts which ordinarily, are hard to crack! The writing style is unassuming as every subject is considered from several entrances and liberally supported with several scriptures from both the Old and the New Testament perspectives. The Author has sought to be doctrinally balanced with a shepherdic bias thus making an appeal to a wider readership. To this end, **This Way** is a great departure from the conventional writings on prophetic subjects.

This Way is a journey through the prophetic subjects of the entire Bible, it has provided great insights into the prophetic scriptures through illumination helped by the Holy Spirit, and the use of simple language to explain “complex” prophetic subjects.

The Book is easy to read and to understand. It qualifies for a study tool and it is thus recommended to patient and holy seekers – men and women that are seeking the way to Zion (Jeremiah 50: 4 – 5).

This Book is committed to your hands praying the Father of lights and of spirits to breathe upon it and illuminate and enlighten the mind that readeth. The LORD bless you.

SAM POPOOLA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the Lord Jesus Christ

The One who stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks

The One who alone is the Husband of the Bride

The One who is our strength and power,
whose enablement gives us the opportunity to walk in perfection

(2 Samuel 22:33)

To Him alone be glory, praise, dominion, and power, both now and forever.

Holy and Reverend is His Name.

Amen.

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Chapter 1

What is this way?

Greetings in the name of the Lord. We give God praise and bless His holy name for His goodness in guiding your steps to the point of reading this book, and we trust His mercy to favour you with much understanding as you continue. Amen!

In this book, by the help of the Holy Spirit, we would be considering “This Way”, which is: the pathway that a fellowship of Christians in a community is to take to navigate successfully to the destination of [presently] expressing [in their community] the fullness of the New Testament glory that God has ordained for His Church — a glory that was secured for us through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

So, what is this way?

THIS WAY—*Securing your place in the Final Revival*

In scriptures, the phrase “this way” is used to refer to the manner of Christian faith that was believed and lived out by the apostles and early disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 9:2 makes reference to it — this way. From verse 1 to 4, it reads:

“[1] And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, [2] And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. [3] And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: [4] And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? [5] And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks”.

This event is also recounted in Acts 22:4 where the phrase “this way” is also used to refer to Christians. From verse 3 to 8, it reads:

“[3] I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was

zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. [4] And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. [5] As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. [6] And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. [7] And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? [8] And I answered, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.”

In these passages (in verse 2 of Acts 9 and verse 4 of Acts 22) Paul persecuted those who were of “this way”; then (in verses 4 and 5 of Acts 9 and verses 7 and 8 of Acts 22) Jesus apprehended him and asked: why do you persecute Me?

Jesus took the persecution of this way personal. This is because “this way” referred to the Christians — those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and whose conduct was after the pattern He lived and taught. It was a new way of life, distinct from the Jewish way of life, which is why the

jews and unbelievers referred to it as “that way”, while the Christians referred to it as “this way”; and because it is the true way, it is also simply referred to as “the way” — the Christian way of life (which includes both individual conduct and church operation according to God’s prescribed due order). Acts 19:4-12 shows a reference to “that way”. It reads:

“[4] Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should **believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.** [5] When they heard this, they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** [6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, **the Holy Ghost came on them;** and they **spake with tongues, and prophesied.** [7] And all the men were about twelve. [8] And **he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly** for the space of three months, disputing and **persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.** [9] But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of **that way** before the multitude, he departed from them, and **separated the disciples,** disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. [10] And this continued by the space of two years; so that **all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord**

Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. [11] And **God wrought special miracles** by the hands of Paul: [12] So that from his body were brought unto **the sick** handkerchiefs or aprons, and the **diseases departed from them**, and the **evil spirits went out of them.**”

This is a great passage, because in just a couple verses, and within the same context, multiple elements are listed that characterize this way (though not an exhaustive list). These elements, in the order they are mentioned from verse 4 to 12 are:

1. Believe on the Lord Jesus
2. Water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus
3. Holy Ghost baptism
4. Speaking in tongues
5. Prophesying (or the flow of the prophetic gifts of the Spirit)
6. Having an evangelical disposition to reach other believers who are not of the same understanding
7. Preaching the Word of God (the Gospel of the Kingdom of God) boldly to as many people as possible (within the city or even to the whole continent)
8. Fellowshiping together separate from persons who don't believe

9. Contending diligently for the truth and disputing false doctrine
10. God working special miracles
11. Healing of sicknesses and disease
12. Casting out of evil spirits

There are obviously more elements that characterize the Christian way which we would still look at in detail; but these are a good chunk of them. They are qualities that were clearly distinct from the Jewish religious experience, which is why the jews often referred to it as “that way” (as in verse 9). These qualities (along with others we will yet look at) are the pure expressions of the Christian faith as it was initially delivered to the early disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contending for the original texture of the faith

Regarding these pure expressions of the Christian faith, Jude 1:3 says:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

This passage shows that Christians in our present day should seek earnestly to have a Christian experience (individually and as a Church) that has the same characteristics as that which was initially delivered to the saints (before any adjustments, modifications, corruption or docility had the opportunity to come in). Meaning, like Paul, we should be able to say:

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.” (Acts 24:14, KJV)

And as He also said in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, we should be able to say:

“[5] Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; [6] Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

We need to be able to say this (that we are able ministers of the New Testament) because the elements of the Christian way are the possibilities that Jesus secured for us in the New Testament (the New Covenant), and being able ministers of the New Testament is the means by which a fellowship of Christians in a community would be able to express the

fullness of the New Testament glory that God has ordained for His Church.

The Church is ordained to be the Body of Christ

Speaking of New Testament glory, it is worth noting that Ephesians 1:23 refers to the Church as the fullness of God. The Lord Jesus is the only other entity that is referred to in such a manner. Colossians 2:9 says: “For in Him (Jesus) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”. As such, it is quite remarkable that scripture would refer to the church as the fullness of God. From verse 15, Ephesians 1 reads:

“[15] Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, [16] Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; [17] That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: [18] The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, [19] And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, [20] Which He wrought in Christ, when He

raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, [21] Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: [22] And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, [23] Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”
(Ephesians 1:15-23, KJV)

See what verse 23 is saying — that the church is the body of Christ and is “the fullness of Him who fills all in all”. Him that fills all in all is God. So the passage is saying that the church is the body of Christ and is the fullness of God.

“Body of Christ” means that just as, physically speaking, the body is the means by which the head performs its intended actions (e.g., pick up something, walk to a place, demonstrate something, hug someone, etc.) so also the Church is to be the extension of the Lord Jesus Christ — the means by which He (as God) will carry out His actions in any community.

Think about that. The body of an ant only needs to be able to do what the ant’s head can imagine to do, which is nothing when compared to a human; the body of a baby human only needs to be able to do what the baby’s head can imagine to do, which is not much when compared to

an adult; the body of an adult human only needs to be able to do what the adult's head can imagine to do, which is limited when compared to an angel; and the body of an angel only needs to be able to do what the angel's head can imagine to do, which is little when compared to the Son of God. Now imagine what the body of Jesus needs to be able to do. He is God, and all things are possible for Him; nothing is too difficult for Him. Meaning, His body needs to be able to do all things without any difficulty, no matter the complexity or power level required.

Having this in mind, we can better appreciate the weight of the title “Body of Christ”. It means that the Church must be able to do absolutely anything that the Lord Jesus wants to do, which can be anything from creating, to judging principalities, to healing, to establishing the Kingdom of God in a territory, and many more. As such, it makes sense that the Church is also ordained to be the fullness of God (which means that all of God's glory will also be expressed through the Church), because that glory is the means by which we would be able to fully function as the Body of Christ.

This is the glory that Jesus has secured for the New Testament Church (to be the body of Christ and the fullness of God), and in this book, we would, by the help of the Holy Spirit, discuss how a fellowship of Christians

can arrive at a local expression of this glory in their community.

The Church is to operate on the foundation of the teachings of the apostles

Revelation 21 shows a vision of what the Church would be like when she is established in the fullness of the New Testament glory. From verse 2, it reads:

“[2] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband. [3] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. ... [9] And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. [10] And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, [11] Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear

as crystal; [12] And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: [13] On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. [14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:2-3,9-14 KJV)

There is a lot to learn about the glory of the New Testament church from this vision, and we would do so through the course of the book (to obtain the landmarks of the pathway); but for now we want to point out that “the Lamb’s wife” (mentioned in verse 9) is “the bride of Christ”, which is the symbolic name for “the Church”. Ephesians 5:25-32 establishes this, saying:

“[25] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; [26] That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, [27] That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. [28] So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. [29] For no man ever yet hated

his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: [30] For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. [31] For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. [32] This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:25-32 KJV)

From this passage, we can appreciate that the Lamb’s wife in Revelation 21:2-14 (quoted earlier) is actually the Church. Meaning, it is the church that is referred to as: the holy city (in verse 2 of Revelation 21), the new Jerusalem (in verse 2), the tabernacle of God (in verse 3), and the holy Jerusalem (in verse 10).

Verse 14 confirms this (that it is the church that is being referred to as the new Jerusalem) by saying that the wall of the city has twelve foundations in which are written the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. This is a symbolic way of saying that the labour and teachings of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ make up the foundation on which the church is built, which is what Ephesians 2:19-22 also says:

“[19] Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; [20] And are built upon the

foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone ; [21] In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: [22] In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

So we see indeed that the Church is the one shown as the New Jerusalem (the Jerusalem of the New Testament) built on the foundation of the labours and teachings of the twelve apostles, with the Lord Jesus being the chief cornerstone.

Meaning, anytime we examine a local expression of the Church in any community, their operations must be in agreement with the principles documented in the epistles written by the apostles, as that is the scriptural reference point for all New Testament Church operations. And because of how it is shown in Revelation 21:14 that the Church in her glorious estate has twelve foundations named after the twelve apostles, it is clear that any fellowship of Christians seeking to fully express the New Testament glory that God has ordained for the church must of necessity operate according to the apostles’ doctrine.

By God’s grace, through the course of the book, we would yet share on what it means to operate according to

the apostles' doctrine, as that is a key factor that defines the way.

The Church is ordained to be the New Jerusalem

The Revelation 21 passage (quoted earlier) reveals that Jerusalem (New Jerusalem) is a name for the Church. In other words, the Church is the Jerusalem of the New Testament. Paul reiterates this in Galatians 4:26. From verse 22, it reads:

“[22] For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. [23] But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. [24] Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. [25] For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. [26] But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

Paul is saying here that there are two covenants: the Old Testament (from Mount Sinai) and the New Testament (in Christ), and that these two covenants are represented by the two women that bore children for Abraham — Agar (the

slave woman) representing the covenant of the law (which led to bondage), and Sarah (the free woman) representing the covenant of grace by the promise in Christ Jesus (which leads to freedom from sin).

Paul is explaining that these two covenants produced two Jerusalems (keep this in mind throughout this book: that there are two Jerusalems): the physical Jerusalem (representing physical Jews) that are in the bondage of the law, and the heavenly or spiritual Jerusalem (representing the Christians that make up the Church — the spiritual Jews) who are not under the law but are under grace (they are free). And Romans 2:28-29 helps to define a spiritual Jew (a Christian). It says:

“[28] For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: [29] But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

They (the spiritual Jews — Christians) are the Jerusalem who are free (those who are not under the law), as Romans 6:14 testifies, saying:

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

This is the experience of those who are saved in Christ Jesus as Galatians 3:13 says:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”

So indeed, in prophetic language, we see that the Church is the New Jerusalem — the Jerusalem of the New Covenant (the Jerusalem that is free from the curse of the law and bondage to sin).

Why is the Church called Jerusalem?

The fact that the name “Jerusalem” is also used to refer to the Church is prophetically deliberate. It is to indicate that the physical Jerusalem (and the events surrounding it) are a prophecy to give insight into some occurrences that relate to the Church.

That is, calling the Church Jerusalem is an indication that the Church is prophetically linked to the physical Jerusalem, such that some of the things recorded about the physical Jerusalem (the Jews) are actually a prophecy concerning the Church. 1 Corinthians 10:11-12 hints to this effect (after describing the experience of the Israelites). It says:

“[11] Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. [12] Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

In other words, the things that happened to the Israelites (physical Jerusalem) were written, not just to be historical information, but more so to serve as examples for us, especially as we navigate through prophetically similar circumstances — in the case of this passage, the prophetically similar circumstance is the journey to the Promised Land.

Keeping this in mind (that the Church is prophetically linked to Jerusalem), in this book, we will be considering the pathway that a fellowship of Christians in a community is to take towards obtaining **the promise** of presently being a local expression of the glorious body of Christ and the fullness of God. One of the ways we will do this is by considering how the Israelites journeyed to their Promised Land (their Jerusalem). Like we mentioned earlier, the Israelite journey to their Jerusalem is relevant because the Church is also called Jerusalem (New Jerusalem).

The motivation for considering this is so that gatherings of God’s people can be equipped to obtain the favour of heaven and the grace necessary to be relevant to Jesus

Christ (as effective helpers) to establish righteousness and to cause the Kingdom of God to come to their communities.

The three lenses of the pathway

By the help of the Holy Spirit, we would be considering this pathway through three lenses:

1. The return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem,
2. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land (through the wilderness), and
3. The departure of Lot from Sodom to the mountain (before Sodom was destroyed by God's judgment).

As can be observed from these three lenses, the context of the pathway includes a return from a non-ideal scenario. Babylon, Egypt and Sodom were non-ideal scenarios that the Old Testament people of God had to depart from; and as we would soon see, they (Babylon, Egypt, and Sodom) also prophetically represent non-ideal scenarios that the New Testament people of God (the Church) need to return from.

What are these non-ideal scenarios? At the time of the early disciples, the non-ideal scenarios were summed up as the backslidden Jewish religious system which ought to have been alert to discern the coming of their expected

Messiah but rather was so corrupt to the point of being the ones to orchestrate His crucifixion.

In other words, the Jewish religious system had become an “Egypt” that the early disciples needed an exodus out of as they embarked on this way (the Christian Way). Revelation 11:8 confirms this, saying:

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

We would discuss more on what this verse is saying later. But for now, we came to pick the fact that, prophetically speaking, our Lord Jesus was crucified in Sodom and Egypt.

Of course, we know that, physically speaking, He was actually killed in Jerusalem (at Golgotha). But spiritually speaking, the people (or the system) that orchestrated His killing (that is, the Jewish religious system) are the ones referred to as Sodom and Egypt. They are the “city” in which our Lord Jesus was crucified.

Remember that we had mentioned earlier that the Church is also referred to as New Jerusalem (the Jerusalem of the New Covenant), which is called “holy city” in Revelation 21:2, so it is no surprise that the people (that make up the Jewish religious system) are referred to as a city.

As such, from God's perspective, the backslidden Jewish religious system (governed by the priests, the Pharisees and the Sadducees) was a city that is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt — the one responsible for orchestrating the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus in collaboration with the Roman Empire (the beast of that time); which is why Revelation 11:8 (quoted above) said He was crucified there. They (the backslidden Jewish religious system) were the non-ideal scenario that the early disciples departed from as they embarked on this way; and as it was then, so it is now.

There is yet a non-ideal scenario for the people of God in these end times to depart from in order to return to the scriptural path of this way.

In other words, there is yet a Babylon to return from; an Egypt to experience an exodus out of; a Sodom to depart from. Albeit, compared to the time of the early disciples, when it was the backslidden Jewish religious system, the non-ideal scenario has taken on a different form; and as we discuss through the three lenses, it would give us an opportunity to see what the current nature of the non-ideal scenario is and how the mercy of the Lord has prescribed that we navigate out of it towards the ideal expression of this way (the form of expression that was originally delivered to the saints) especially as the return of the Bridegroom draws near.

We would later understand that this departure from the present non-ideal scenario is what the Lord Jesus spoke of in Luke 17:28-37. For reference, it reads:

“[28] Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; [29] but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. [31] "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. [32] Remember Lot's wife. [33] Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. [34] I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. [35] Two will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. [36] Two will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." [37] And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."”

It would become clearer when we properly discuss this passage later that the days of Lot spoken of in verse 28 is a

prophetic reference to these days when people shall be coming out of the current expression of Sodom and Egypt (the non-ideal scenario).

Verses 34 to 36 reveal that those who would be taken out of Sodom (like Lot was) are the ones Jesus was referring to when He said: "... two shall be ... one shall be taken ...".

As such, based on the question the disciples asked in verse 37 (to where Lord?), and the answer they received (where the body is there the eagles will be gathered), we also know that these ones that are taken (out of Sodom, like Lot was) are the ones Jesus referred to as eagles — eagles that will be gathered to where the [slain but alive] body of the Lamb is available, to feed on.

We would still discuss these things in greater detail later, but as we proceed to the next chapter, ask yourself: Am I an eagle? Will I be taken? Isaiah 40:31 describes an eagle as:

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Does this describe you? Because, as the coming of the Lord Jesus draws near, it is those who have wings to mount up with the wind of the Spirit (those who can yield to the

leading of the Holy Spirit) that will be taken out of the non-ideal scenario.

It is like how Lot and his family (except his wife that looked back) were the only ones taken out of Sodom, because Lot was the only one who discerned that the two men that came into the city were angels of God and he yielded to their guidance to leave Sodom.

So also it is those in these times who can discern the direction of God's migration for His people that would be like Lot to be taken out of Sodom (and be like the eagles to be gathered to where they can be nourished). Genesis 19:1-17 describes what happened to Lot. It reads:

“[1] And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; ... [15] And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. [16] And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. [17] And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth

abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”

We would yet discuss this passage in detail through the course of the book. But our prayer is that the Lord would help us in these last days to be able to discern the non-ideal scenario we are to depart from (the Sodom), as well as discern the provision (like the two angels) that God is putting in place to guide us out of the non-ideal scenario to safety. Amen!

Prayer points from Chapter 1

From Acts 19:4-12, we listed the following attributes as characteristics of this Christian way: (1) believe on the Lord Jesus, (2) water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, (3) Holy Ghost baptism, (4) speaking in tongues, (5) prophesying (or the flow of the prophetic gifts of the Spirit), (6) having an evangelical disposition to reach other believers who are not of the same understanding, (7) preaching the Word of God (the Gospel of the Kingdom of God) boldly to as many people as possible (within the city or even to the whole continent), (8) fellowshiping together separate from persons who don't believe, (9) contending diligently for the truth and disputing false doctrine, (10) God working special miracles, (11) healing of sicknesses and disease, (12) casting out of evil spirits.

1. Let us pray that our lives would have all of these elements; that our Christian experience would not be substandard, but would have all of the attributes of the Christian way.
2. Let us pray that, having all these qualities of the Christian way, we would be profitable additions to the fellowships of God's people that we find ourselves in.

We learnt that God's intent for the Church is that we should be the Body of Christ and the fullness of God. We also saw in Jude 1:3 that we should always contend for the original texture of the Christian faith as it was initially delivered to the saints by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, we saw that we should be able ministers of the New Testament (not of the letter, but of the spirit).

3. Let us pray that the Lord would help us to know the original texture of the Christian faith as it was initially delivered to the saints, and let us pray that the Lord would give us a heart to prefer that texture above what we may have been used to, and help us to press towards it.
4. Let us pray that God would help us to be able ministers of the New Testament (in the multi-dimensions of the power of the Holy Spirit), so that the things we see written in scriptures that were the experience of the early Christians would also be our Christian experience and much more.

We learnt that the Church is the New Testament Jerusalem of God (the New Jerusalem), and we understood that part of the reason the name Jerusalem is used for the Church is because there is a prophetic link between the experience of the physical Jerusalem (the Jews) and the experience of the

Church. We saw that a key example of this prophetic link of experiences is the journey to the promised land. Meaning, just as the physical Israelites journeyed to the promised land (where Jerusalem was located), so also the Church is journeying towards the promise of arriving at the glorious picture of the New Jerusalem shown in Revelation 21. Then we saw that this way is the journey towards this promised reality, and that it includes returning from the non-ideal scenario - a return that can be viewed from three lenses (three prophetic allegories): (1) The return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem, (2) The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land (through the wilderness), and (3) The departure of Lot from Sodom to the mountain (before Sodom was destroyed by God's judgment).

5. Let us pray that God's Church (the gatherings of His people all over the world) would indeed arrive at the promised point of having the exact corporate Christian expression that is symbolized as the glorious New Jerusalem in Revelation 21.
6. Let us pray that all of God's people would be strengthened to embark on the return journey from the non-ideal scenario to the promised reality (just as the Jews led by Zerubbabel were strengthened to return from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem, and the

Israelites led by Moses were powerfully enabled to experience an exodus out of Egypt to the promised land, and Lot was supernaturally assisted by the two angels to depart from Sodom to the mountain).

The following chapter is a bit technical, not because we want it so, but because we are carefully navigating through scriptures to identify accurate interpretations to scriptural symbols. Kindly read patiently and with attention to detail. The Lord bless and strengthen you as you do so.

Chapter 2

What is the non-ideal scenario?

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, this question (what is the non-ideal scenario?) can be restated as: what is the Babylon, or the Egypt, or the Sodom that the people of God in these times are to flee from?

To answer, we can begin from the Revelation 11:8 passage that we briefly looked at earlier. For more context, we would read from verse 1 to 12:

“[1] And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. [2] But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. [3] And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. [4] These are the two

olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. [5] And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. [6] These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. [7] And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. [8] And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. [9] And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. [10] And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. [11] And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw

them. [12] And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”

This passage talks about the ministry of a people symbolically referred to as “two witnesses”. We would not be going into the subject of the two witnesses just yet. We would do that in a subsequent chapter. For now, we can mention that their ministry is synonymous to the role that the two angels played towards Lot (that is, being the means by which Lot and his family were taken out of Sodom).

Our current purpose, however, for coming to the Revelation 11 passage (particularly verse 8) is to begin to gain an understanding of the Babylon, Egypt and Sodom that the people of God in these times are to depart from.

In the previous chapter, we had discussed that the backslidden Jewish religious system was the manifestation of the “Sodom and Egypt” in the time when the Lord Jesus was physically on the earth (and the time of the early Christians). We saw that the backslidden Jewish religious system was the “Sodom and Egypt” where the Lord Jesus was crucified (as Revelation 11:8 says). This is because it had become full of many abominations and rebellions against God (like the physical city of Sodom), and was also holding God’s people in bondage (like the physical city of

Egypt) — bondage to the rule of men (the Pharisees, Sadducees and Priests) — to the point that they could not identify that the Son of God was among them, but rather went ahead to submit Him to the Romans to crucify Him.

Matthew 23:27-28 gives an example of their Sodom (abomination) state. It reads:

“[27] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. [28] Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

And Matthew 23:1-15 gives an example of their Egypt (bondage) state. It reads:

[1] Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, [2] saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. [3] Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. [4] For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. [5] But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their

garments. [6] They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, [7] greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' [8] But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. [9] Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. [10] And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. [11] But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. [12] And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. [13] "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [14] Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. [15] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."

This passage (Matthew 23) is an example of where the Lord Jesus enumerated the "Sodom and Egypt" qualities of the backslidden Jewish religious system (which was led by the

Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Priests). So, indeed, the backslidden Jewish religious system was the “Sodom and Egypt” at the time when the Lord Jesus was physically present on earth (and the time of the early Christians).

Now, however, the Sodom and Egypt (the non-ideal scenario) has taken on another form in these days (as has been prophesied in scriptures), and we want to know what the current form is, so that we are enlightened to know what we are to flee from in these days (as the early Christians needed to flee from the Jewish religious system in order to embark on the Christian way and be what God had ordained them to be).

The current form of the “Sodom and Egypt”

Reading Revelation 11:8 again, it says:

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

This verse talks about a great city, and says that the great city is also spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. What is the great city? In the context of the book of Revelation, the great city is Babylon. Revelation 14:8, for example, says:

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made

all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Another passage, Revelation 18:21 says:

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”

These passages and more reveal that in the context of the book of Revelation, the great city is Babylon.

Why is this important to know — that the great city is Babylon? It is because it helps us to understand the entity that is described in Revelation 17. Revelation 17:18 says:

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

So here the great city (Babylon) is now symbolically shown as a woman. You may wonder: why? But as you would soon see, calling her a woman (and seeing the way this woman is described) gives further insight into what the Babylon is in our time (as well as why the backslidden Jewish religious system was the Babylon in the time of the early disciples). Verses 1 to 5 of Revelation 17 tell us more about this woman. It reads:

“[1] And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the

judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: [2] With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. [3] So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. [4] And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: [5] And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. [6] And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

In this passage, the woman (that is called a great city in verse 18) is now referred to as a great whore (in verse 1). This reference (great whore) gives us a lot of information about who this woman is (and as such, what Babylon is).

The great whore

Physically speaking, a whore (which is another word for harlot) is a woman who indulges in unlawful sexual activity — that is, with someone who is not her husband.

Why is this woman called a whore? Or what does it mean that she is called a whore? We can get a clue from the Old Testament prophetic usage of the word “whore”, keeping in mind that the book of Revelation communicates information using signs (symbols) as said in Revelation 1:1. Revelation 1:1 says:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John:”

The word “signified” means to show by signs (symbols). As such, the use of the word “whore” is in a symbolic context. Meaning, it is not referring to a physical woman that is a whore. So, to get a scriptural clue to what “whore” means we can examine other scriptures where the same word is used prophetically. One example is Jeremiah 3:1-22. It reads:

“[1] They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly

polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord. [2] Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. [3] Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. [4] Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? [5] Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest. [6] The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. [7] And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. [8] And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went

and played the harlot also. [9] And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. [10] And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord. [11] And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. [12] Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord ; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. [13] Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. [14] Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord ; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: [15] And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. ... [19] But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts

of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me. [20] Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. [21] A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God. [22] Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.”

In this passage, we see that God used the words “whore” and “harlot” to refer to the people of Israel because they backslid from Him to worship idols made from stones and stocks (trees). This is what verse 9 meant when it said they committed adultery with stones and stocks.

We also see in this passage that God referred to them as “backsliding Israel”. This is the reason why we had been including the word “backslidden” when referring to the state of the Jewish religious system (in the time when the Lord Jesus was physically on earth), and we would still use it to describe the current form that the great whore (the Babylon, Sodom and Egypt) has taken in our time.

Another important thing we see in the passage is that the context of the use of the word “whore” or “harlot” is to

refer to a woman that is married but deals treacherously with her husband by going after other men. We can see this from the use of the words “adultery” in verse 9 and “married” in verse 14. They both clearly imply that a marriage covenant exists between God and the people of Israel. This marriage covenant is the one we generally refer to as the “Old Covenant” or “Old Testament”.

In other words, in the old covenant (where the marriage was between God and the people of Israel), the word “whore” was used prophetically to refer to the Israelites when they backslid and turned away from God (either by worshiping idols or by putting their confidence in men rather than God).

Ezekiel 16:1-38 gives an example of another instance for which God referred to the people of Israel as a woman that is a whore. It reads:

“[1] Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, [2] Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, [3] And say, Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. [4] And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee ; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. [5] None eye

pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. [6] And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. [7] I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. [8] Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. [9] Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. [10] I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. [11] I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. [12] And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears,

and a beautiful crown upon thine head. [13] Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. [14] And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God. [15] But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. [16] And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so. [17] Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, [18] And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. [19] My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord God. [20]

Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, [21] That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? [22] And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood. [23] And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord God ;) [24] That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street. [25] Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms. [26] Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger. [27] Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way. [28] Thou hast played the

whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. [29] Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. [30] How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord God, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman; [31] In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; [32] But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! [33] They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom. [34] And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary. [35] Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord : [36] Thus saith the Lord God ; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with

all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; [37] Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. [38] And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.”

This passage gives another account of when God called His people a whore (an adulterous wife).

Verse 17 says “Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,”.

Verse 20 says “Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter”.

Verse 32 says “**But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!**”

And verse 38 says “And I **will judge thee, as women that break wedlock** and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy”.

The passage shows that the people of God made idols and worshipped them and offered their children as sacrifices through the fire to the gods of other nations. God saw this as them being like a woman that leaves her husband (God) and goes after others (idols).

Another passage that shows this usage of the word “whore” relative to the backslidden people of Israel is Ezekiel 23:1-27. It reads:

“[1] The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, [2] Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: [3] And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. [4] And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah. [5] And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours, [6] Which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young

men, horsemen riding upon horses. [7] Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself. [8] Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her. [9] Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted. [10] These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her. [11] And when her sister Aholibah saw this, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms. [12] She doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. [13] Then I saw that she was defiled, that they took both one way, [14] And that she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, [15] Girded

with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity: [16] And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. [17] And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them. [18] So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister. [19] Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. [20] For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. [21] Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth. [22] Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side; [23] The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and

Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses. [24] And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments. [25] And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. [26] They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels. [27] Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.”

At this point, we get the idea of why God used the word “whore” to refer to the people of Israel at different times. He used it when they backslid from Him to worship idols and when they put their confidence in men (and armies of nations) rather than on Him.

That being the case, what is the context for the use of the word “whore” in Revelation 17?

We have learnt that God used it in a marriage context, because in the Old Testament, the marriage covenant was between God and the people of Israel. Jeremiah 3:14 that we read earlier says: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord ; for I am married unto you: ...”. As such, since the book of Revelation is in the New Testament, we know that the context of the use of the word “whore” in Revelation 17 refers to a backsliding from the marriage covenant that is established in the New Testament, which is the marriage between Christ and the Church (as we had seen earlier in Ephesians 5). Ephesians 5:22-32 says:

“[22] Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body. [24] Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. [25] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; [26] That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, [27] That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy

and without blemish. [28] So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. [29] For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: [30] For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. [31] For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. [32] This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

As such, since the marriage covenant in the New Testament is between Christ and the Church, **the prophetic use of the word “whore” in the book of Revelation refers to a church that has backslidden from Christ** and turned to something else, just as Israel did in the Old Testament.

Meaning, whereas the whore in the Old Testament was backslidden Israel (which at the time when the Lord Jesus was physically on earth had become the backslidden Jewish religious system), **the whore in the New Testament is the backslidden church system.**

Also, since the whore is called Babylon (and also spiritually called Sodom and Egypt), we can understand that **the backslidden church system is the Babylon, Sodom and Egypt that God’s people are to depart from**

as they embark on this way (the pathway to being an overcomer church) in these times.

Let that sink in for a moment, and reflect on how we arrived at this, keeping in mind that the goal is not to sound harsh, but rather, a sober realization that this is how God sees the church system at large — as a whore, as a Babylon, as a Sodom, as an Egypt.

In summary, remember that just as Israel was God's symbolic bride in the Old Covenant and God called them a whore (an adulterous bride) in Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16, and Ezekiel 23 because they backslid from Him, so also, in the New Covenant, God used the symbol of the Great Whore in Revelation 17 to point to the fact that there will rise (and has risen) a backslidden church that will kill many saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ (as said in Revelation 17:6).

Now in case this still seems strange (that the whore in Revelation 17 is a backslidden church), more descriptions are given in subsequent verses that help to affirm it. Revelation 17:3 says:

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet

coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

What does this mean? What does it mean that the whore is sitting on a beast that has seven heads and ten horns? What is the beast that has seven heads and ten horns?

The beast

Daniel chapter 7 provides very good insight into what the beast is. Verse 1 to 7 reads:

“[1] In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. [2] Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. [3] And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. [4] The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. [5] And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

[6] After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. [7] After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”

In this passage, we are told of the four beasts that Daniel was shown in a dream. Upon receiving the dream, Daniel did not understand what it meant. But in verse 23, an explanation was given to him. It reads:

“Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.”

By saying that the fourth beast is the fourth kingdom, this passage tells us clearly that a beast represents a kingdom. Meaning, the first beast is the first kingdom, the second beast is the second kingdom, the third beast is the third kingdom, and the fourth beast is the fourth kingdom.

What are these four kingdoms?

They are the same kingdoms that were shown to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream in Daniel chapter 2. In that dream, Nebuchadnezzar was shown the full statue of a man. The head was made of gold, the chest and arms were of silver, the belly and thighs were of brass, the legs were of iron, and the feet were of iron mixed with clay. Nebuchadnezzar did not understand what this dream meant, but God gave Daniel wisdom to interpret it. From verse 31, it reads:

“[31] "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. [32] This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, [33] its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. [34] You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. [35] Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. [36] "This is the dream. Now we will tell the

interpretation of it before the king. [37] You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; [38] and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all - you are this head of gold. [39] But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. [40] And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. [41] 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. [42] And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. [43] As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. [44] 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. [45] Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold - the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

In this passage, from verse 37, Daniel began to interpret the dream. He explained that the gold, silver, bronze and iron represent kingdoms. He mentioned that Nebuchadnezzar (and His Babylonian Empire) was the gold, and that after his kingdom shall arise another lesser kingdom (represented by the silver), after which shall be another (represented by the bronze), then another (represented by the iron), and then a final (represented by the iron mixed with clay).

If we read through Daniel chapters 3 to 10, along with some history research, we would be able to track and identify the kingdoms that took over from Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian Empire. But the Amplified Bible Version has made it easier for us by simply stating them in their rendition of the Daniel 7 passage (the initial

passage we looked at before Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2). From verse 2 to 7, it reads:

“[2] Daniel said, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea (the nations). [3] And four great beasts, each different from the other, were coming up out of the sea [in succession]. [4] The first (the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar) was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind was given to it. [5] And behold, another beast, a second one (the Medo-Persian Empire), was like a bear, and it was raised up on one side (domain), and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much meat.' [6] After this I kept looking, and behold, another one (the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great), like a leopard, which had on its back four wings like those of a bird; the beast also had four heads (Alexander's generals, his successors), and power to rule was given to it. [7] After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, [I saw] a fourth beast (the Roman Empire), terrible and extremely strong; and it had huge iron

teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that came before it, and it had ten horns (ten kings).” (Daniel 7:2-7, AMP)

As such, from this rendition of the Daniel 7:2-7 passage, we can see that the four kingdoms represented by the four beasts are:

1. The Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar, which was the gold in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream,
2. The Medo-Persian Empire that overthrew the Babylonian Empire, which was the silver in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream,
3. The Grecian Empire of Alexander the Great that conquered the Persians, which was the bronze in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and
4. Then the Roman Empire that emerged from one of the four sections that the Grecian Empire broke into after the death of Alexander. It was the iron in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Notwithstanding, there is still the iron mixed with clay (the fifth and last kingdom before the Kingdom of God is established, according to the dream given to Nebuchadnezzar).

Whereas Daniel’s dream in Daniel 7 shows four beasts (which are four kingdoms), Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2 shows 5 kingdoms. This is because the fourth

beast in Daniel 7 represents both the fourth and fifth kingdoms (the iron and the iron mixed with clay). Even the symbols “iron” and “iron mixed with clay” show a link between the fourth and the fifth kingdom.

As we would soon see, the seven heads of the fourth beast were the era of the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire as we know it in history), while the ten horns of the fourth beast are the era of the fifth kingdom (the evolved Roman Empire as we would soon know it in the near future). This is because the ten horns of the fourth beast are synonymous to the ten toes of the feet of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel 2. Keep in mind that the feet of the statue represent the fifth kingdom (iron mixed with clay). But we would make reference to it later.

Why do we care about all these?

It is because the fourth beast (in Daniel 7) is the same beast that the great whore was sitting on (in Revelation 17) — the beast with ten horns. As a reminder, Daniel 7:7 says:

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with

its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.”

And Revelation 17:3 says:

“So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

Revelation 17:3 gives a fuller description of the beast as “... having seven heads and ten horns”, while Daniel 7:7 just says “... and it had ten horns”; but it is the same beast — the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

Now, from what we have understood so far, we know that this fourth beast (the beast with seven heads and ten horns) represents the fourth kingdom (the iron) which is the Roman Empire; and we also know that the great whore represents a backslidden church.

As such, when Revelation 17:3 says the great whore was sitting on the beast with seven heads and ten horns, we can understand that it simply means “a backslidden church was sitting on (or riding on the strength of) the Roman Empire”.

Think about that for a moment and how this understanding came about — a backslidden church was sitting on (or riding on the strength of) the Roman Empire.

If this understanding is correct, then when we scan through history, we would find an entity that fits the description of being a backslidden church that rode on the strength of the Roman Empire.

True to it, when we scan through history, we find that there was a church (a backslidden church) that rode on the strength of the Roman Empire.

*This backslidden church is none other than **the Roman Catholic Church.***

Even the name further confirms that they were indeed associated with the Roman Empire — that their popularity and influence was driven by the strength of the Roman Empire (beginning from the time of Emperor Constantine to the time of the Holy Roman Empire).

Then, as a witness to the fact that they are backslidden, we find that they were responsible for promoting many false doctrines and doing many wicked things.

Some of the things they did involved killing persons who translated the Bible from Latin to the local language of the people. They killed them because they did not want the people to know what is actually written in the Bible, so that the people could not confirm if the church's teachings were true. They also killed persons that publicly refuted

their unbiblical teachings; and they did this because they wanted to maintain control of the people through false teachings that promote their agenda. It is these people that they killed that are referred to as the martyrs of Jesus in Revelation 17:6 which reads:

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

They turned people that they considered a threat to their religious influence into martyrs by killing them — people that resisted their false teachings. Some of these false teachings include:

- **The establishment of the papacy (the pope):**
 - **As the vicar (the instead) of Christ** — whereas no one should ever seek to take Christ’s place;
 - **As the high priest (the pontifex maximus) of God to the church** — a title that is reserved only for Jesus as is explained in the book of Hebrews in the Bible;
 - **As the head of the Church** — a role that belongs only to Jesus. This establishment of the pope as the singular leader of the church is not biblical as Jesus reserved that spot for Himself (the Husband of the Church). He rather

appointed twelve apostles (not one) to lead the Church as a plural leadership that takes direction from Him (the one and only Head); and this revealed that God's template for Church leadership is a plural body of leaders (that is, elders — spiritually mature believers). But unfortunately, this establishment of the pope set the precedence for other church denominations that came out of the Roman Catholic Church to still follow the same pattern of having one man as the leader of the church — a pattern that cannot be seen in the scriptural example of the apostles of Jesus Christ — a pattern that creates the scenario where men become like kings and begin to commit spiritual fornication with the Bride of Christ (as is symbolically mentioned in the book of Revelation) which is part of why God considers part of what should be the Bride of Christ as a whore (because they allow men who operate as kings and idols to take the place of Christ as Head and Husband of the Church).

- **The worship and adoration of Mary**, which was the Christianized version of the pagan mother-son worship of the so-called queen of heaven. This “queen of heaven” worship is part of why God

referred to the people of Israel as a whore (in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel), because they rebelled from Him to worship Baal (the supposed son of the queen of heaven). It is therefore ironic that the Roman Catholic Church continued as the first New Testament expression of the whore by also promoting this queen of heaven worship in the form of worshipping and praying to Mary (which is clearly not supported in the Bible).

- **Praying to departed saints**, which is a practice carried over from paganism where people pray to their dead ancestors and believe they have a connection to dead people who can be of help to them on earth. It is a highly unscriptural practice and is a form of polytheism (having many gods). This is because, just as praying to Mary is a cover for worshipping the so-called queen of heaven (who is called Semiramis or Ashtaroth or Ishtar or Venus or Diana), so also praying to departed saints is a cover for praying to many demons.

There are many more false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church that we could begin to mention, but that's not our emphasis in this book. We just wanted to list a few of the false teachings to serve as a witness to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church that rode on the strength

of the Roman Empire is indeed a backslidden church (a great whore) from heaven's viewpoint; and as such, they are the initial New Testament version of the backslidden Jewish religious system that comprised the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Priests.

Now we could stop here, as the things discussed so far are sufficient to understand what Revelation 17 means when it says "the great whore sat on the beast with seven heads and ten horns". Nevertheless, we will press a bit further as an investment for future sections of the book where we will need to refer to the full scope of the things we are told about the beast in order to appreciate the environment in which some key end time events relative to the Church will take place.

As such, kindly pay close attention in this next section as it might seem a bit technical but is quite easy to understand if we follow the details.

So far, we have understood that the Great Whore sitting on the beast with seven heads and ten horns represents a backslidden church that sat on (rode on the strength of) the Roman Empire, and we have identified that this Great Whore is the Roman Catholic Church (the beginning of the non-ideal scenario). Albeit, in the next section, we want to further establish this by discussing what the seven heads of the beast represents.

The seven heads of the beast

We will proceed to discuss this by considering the following:

- What do the heads of the beast represent?
- What does it mean that the beast that John saw in Revelation 17 is the eighth head (when there are supposed to be seven)?
- What does it mean in Revelation 13 that the head of the beast was healed and all the world wondered at it?

Remember that we are looking at these things so that we can better understand the environment in which some key end time events relative to the Church will take place and what God would have us do at such times.

So far, based on the explanation Daniel was given in Daniel 7:23, we have understood that a beast, in prophetic context, represents a kingdom. Therefore, the question to ask is:

If a beast represents a kingdom, then what does the head of the beast represent?

The intuitive answer is government — the head of the beast represents the government of the kingdom.

If so, then the next question would be:

If we are told that a beast has seven heads, what does it mean?

The reasonable answer again is: the seven heads represent seven governments (since the head of the beast represents the government of the kingdom).

But then that leads to another question:

Did the seven governments operate at the same time, or one after the other?

The answer is in Revelation 17:9-14. It reads:

“[9] And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. [10] And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. [11] And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into

perdition. [12] And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. [13] These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. [14] These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

In this passage, in verse 10, by saying “... five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come ...” it tells us that the seven heads did not operate concurrently at the same time, but rather, one after the other.

Meaning, the beast having seven heads indicates that the kingdom (the Roman Empire) phased through seven governments (or more accurately: seven forms of government).

If this is accurate, when we examine the history of the Roman Empire we would find that it actually phased through seven forms of government. True to it, when we check, we find that the Roman Empire actually phased through seven forms (or types) of government. These seven forms of government are the seven unique heads of the beast.

Meaning, when the vision was shown to Daniel in Daniel 7 and the fourth beast was shown as having ten horns (which Revelation 17 shows more completely as seven heads and ten horns), it was a prophecy that the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire) would phase through seven types of government; and they actually did. The seven forms of government (as recorded in history) are:

1. An elected monarchy
2. A republic [led by the Senate]
3. A principate empire
4. A dominate tetrarchy
5. A united dominate [under Constantine]
6. The Holy Roman Empire [the period when the popes crowned the German kings as inheritors of the Roman dominion, which (as a result) is the time when the great whore sat on the beast — the time when the Roman Catholic Church (through the pope) exercised influence over the Roman Empire]
7. The confederation of the Rhine [the least of the seven — when Napoleon, the French, ruled the former Roman dominion].

Knowing each of these seven forms of government is important because it helps us to identify the one that is

prophesied to return as the eighth expression of the beast in these last days.

Each of these forms of government were pioneered (that is, introduced) by a person. It is these seven persons that were instrumental in initiating or transitioning the empire into each of the seven forms of government that are the seven kings mentioned in Revelation 17:10: “And there are seven kings ...”. That is, for each head (for each form of government), there was a king (a man) that introduced it to the Empire.

During the period when the form of government established by each of the “kings” existed, the king is seen as being in operation, even if the person had died. In other words, the duration of a king is the duration in which the form of government he initiated lasted. These are the seven kings that initiated the seven forms of government:

1. The first was Romulus (he established Rome and its monarchy form of government in 753 BC).
2. The second was Lucius Junius Brutus (he established the Republic form of government in 509 BC).
3. The third was Caesar Augustus, also known as Octavian (he established the Principate Empire form of government in 27 BC).

4. The fourth was Diocletian (he established the Dominate Tetrarchy in 284 AD).
5. The fifth was Constantine (he established the United Dominate when the Tetrarchy was destroyed in 324 AD).
6. The sixth was Charlemagne (he established the Holy Roman Empire in 962 AD).
7. The seventh was Napoleon (he established the Confederation of the Rhine over the Roman dominion in 1806, which is largely present-day Europe).

But what about the eighth? What does verse 11 mean when it says: “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition”?

The clue is in verse 8 which says: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, ...”.

Pay attention to the first phrase: “The beast that thou sawest ...”. In other words, if a question is asked: which beast was and is not and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit? The answer from verse 8 is: “The beast that thou sawest ...”; which is: the beast (or the state of the beast) as John saw it in verse 3. What did John see in verse 3? Verse 3 reads:

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet

coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

This is the state in which John saw the beast, and that is what was referred to in verse 8 as “The beast that thou sawest ...”. It is the state where the great whore was sitting on the beast (and we have identified that the great whore began as the Roman Catholic Church). Meaning, this state that John saw the beast (this state that is referred to in verse 8 as “The beast that thou sawest ...”) is the state where the Roman Catholic Church was sitting on the Roman Empire.

This period where the Roman Catholic Church sat on the Roman Empire was the era of the sixth head. Revelation 17:10 confirms this by saying:

“And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.”

Meaning, at the point that John was seeing the great whore (the Roman Catholic Church) sitting on the beast with seven heads and ten horns (the Roman Empire), five heads (five forms of government) had passed, one was in operation (which is the sixth: the Holy Roman Empire), and one was still to come (the seventh, that lasted for the shortest period).

The sixth (the Holy Roman Empire) was when all emperors-to-be (which were solely German kings after the end of the French (Charlemagne's) dynasty) needed to be crowned by the pope before they could take on the role and title of Holy Roman Emperor (over the Western European nations). This was the head (the sixth) that was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. Meaning, it will return (it will rise again).

As such, when verse 11 says: “And the beast that was, and is not, **even he is the eighth**, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” it means that the era of the sixth head will return as an eighth expression of the beast.

Also, by verse 8 saying: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; **and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, ...**”, it gives us a clue that the references to the beast in Revelation 11:7 (which is described as having ascended out of the bottomless pit) and the beast in Revelation 13:1-8 (which is said to arise out of the sea after one of its head was healed) are both speaking of the time when the sixth head returns as the eighth expression of the beast — in other words, when a modern-day version of the Holy Roman Empire is established. For reference, Revelation 11:7-8 reads:

“[7] And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the

bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. [8] And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

And Revelation 13:1-3 reads:

“[1] And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. [2] And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. [3] And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. [4] And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”

These two passages (Revelation 11:7 and Revelation 13:3) are basically saying the same thing but in different ways. The re-emergence of the beast from the bottomless pit is the same as the healing of the wounded head of the beast. It is when the sixth head is healed that it returns as the

eighth. But that return is described as an ascendance from the bottomless pit because it is a return that will be orchestrated by occult and demonic forces.

In other words, the re-establishment of the Holy Roman Empire (albeit a modern-day version that will exert world-wide influence) will be in league with spirits of darkness; which is why Revelation 13:3-4 says that the dragon (satan) gave power unto the beast and the whole world marveled at the beast.

In addition, since Revelation 17:12-13 says that the ten horns will rule as kings during the eighth expression of the beast (and we remember that the ten horns are the same as the ten toes of the fifth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream), we know that this "modern-day version of the Holy Roman Empire" (the fifth kingdom) will be such that one of the leaders of the European nations (likely France or Germany, based on the pattern of the Holy Roman Empire) would lead a global alliance of ten heads of state (the ten horns) which would include both European and non-European nations (because the fifth kingdom is iron (Roman Empire) mixed with clay (others) — that is, the ten heads of state would be made up of leaders of nations that were members of the original Roman Empire (since iron was used to represent the Roman Empire) mixed with

leaders from other nations that were never part of the Roman Empire).

Now one may wonder: **why did we need to go into all these details about the beast and end time things when it is “this way” (the ideal pathway for the Church) that we are talking about?**



The reason is that the two are intertwined in a sense (“this way” and “the end times”). The people who yield now to walk the path of the Christian way (having returned from the detour) are being prepared like Moses who fled Egypt into the wilderness (ahead of the rest of Israel) and got new training, revelation and power, and was later sent back to the pharaoh in Egypt to say: Let My people go (so that they also can leave Egypt into the wilderness and together they all can head towards the Promised Land).

Those who yield now to return back to this way (the ideal Christian way) are going to be empowered to play a major role in neutralizing the effect of the advancement of darkness in the time of the rise of the beast. In fact, they will play a role like the two angels that God used to bring Lot out of Sodom in the same era when the beast will be at the peak of its operations. It is this work that many are unknowingly prophesying about as the final revival. But these would become clearer as we go on.

The harlot daughters of the great whore

Now returning to the original reason we looked into the matter of the beast, we understood that the scenario of the great whore sitting on the beast with seven heads and ten horns basically meant: a backslidden church riding on the strength of the Roman Empire, and looking into history, it is quite clear that the church that sat on (or rode on the strength of) the Roman Empire is: the Roman Catholic Church.

It therefore means that in God's view, the Roman Catholic Church is a great whore (a Babylon, a Sodom, and an Egypt) — a backslidden church that His people should depart from.

There is a whole lot that can be said about why the Roman Catholic Church is a backslidden church, many of which you are probably aware of and some of which we mentioned earlier; but for now, we would focus on the scriptural pathway we have taken to arrive at this prophetic understanding.

Notwithstanding, the Roman Catholic Church is not the only one that makes up the Babylon, Sodom and Egypt that God's people are to flee from in these days. We know this because one of the names of the great whore

mentioned in Revelation 17:5 is that she is not just a great whore (harlot), but also the mother of harlots.

What does this mean? It means that just as she is a backslidden church, so also there are others that have come out of her that have also become backslidden churches.

Who are these harlot daughters? They are the different denominations (all the way to including some Pentecostal and Evangelical churches) that though they are no longer part of the Roman Catholic Church, still maintain some parts of the ways that she introduced — ways that are not consistent with the apostles' doctrine and thus not present in the early church (from what we see written in scriptures).

A key point to note regarding how these harlot daughters emerged is that they generally began with a momentum of faithfulness towards God (with a goal of recovering the truths that had been lost), but then settled for being a slight modification of the denomination that preceded them.

For example, the Lutheran denomination began with Martin Luther pushing for a restoration of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus alone and not in the vain rituals and idols that the Roman Catholic Church had set up. This was a great recovery in the Christian faith, but unfortunately, it

was not complete. There were many other things that the Roman Catholic Church had introduced that were not rejected, and as such, by accommodating these things, the Lutheran movement unavoidably declined into being an adjusted version of the Roman Catholic Church, which (in the language of scripture) means they became a harlot daughter (one of the first daughters) of the Roman Catholic Church (the great whore).

This is the same story for the other denominations that exist in Christianity. They set out at different times in the history of the church to correct somethings that the Roman Catholics had introduced but did not do a complete job and rather carried over some of her ways and thus also became her harlot daughters (adjusted versions of herself).

Some of these ways include men establishing themselves as “popes” over the bride of Christ; receiving the honour due only to Christ; parading themselves with titles such as Reverend, Archbishop, General Overseer, etc.; subtly taking the place of Christ as Head of His church; operating as vicars of Christ (one working as a substitute of Christ); turning the souls of men into business commodities with which they generate income and build empires for themselves in the disguise of doing the work of God.

It is for reasons like these that the name Babylon is prophetically befitting for the current state of most of the church system. In Genesis 11, we are told of how the city of Babylon and its tower were built. From verse 1 to 9, it reads:

“[1] And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. [2] And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. [3] And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. [4] And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. [5] And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. [6] And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. [7] Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. [8] So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

[9] Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

Here, we see that a core aspect of the inspiration behind the construction of Babel (Babylon) was to have a tower whose top reached unto heaven. This character is also manifest in the church system which is part of why she is called Babylon the Great. Meaning, just as Babylon had the tower of Babel, so also the church system has a “tower”. This tower is the hierarchy within the church organizations that operate after the pattern of the church system, and the top of the tower represents the leader of the organization (the pope, General Overseer, Archbishop, Reverend, etc). As was the inspiration in Genesis 11:4 (to cause the top of the tower to reach unto heaven), so also is the character of most church organizations — to exalt their leader so high that he becomes like God to them.

These persons that occupy the top position of this hierarchy system are the kings of the earth (mentioned in Revelation 17:2) that commit fornication with the great whore and her harlot daughters. Revelation 17:1-2 reads:

“[1] ... Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: [2] With whom the kings of the earth have

committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

They are called kings of the earth because they have kingly positions and rule over earthy christians that make up their congregation. **In the book of Revelation, there are three categories into which people are divided.** They are: the heaven, the earth, and the sea. We can see this in Revelation 12:12 which says:

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitors of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Here, we see those three categories: heaven, earth and sea.

The sea represents the ungodly (those who are not saved). Isaiah 57:20 says: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt”. And Jude 1:4 & 13 says: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. [13] Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

The earth represents Christians who are still carnal (earthly). We know this because Jesus referred to the process of saving people as fishing them from the sea, which is why He said He would make His disciples fishers of men. So those in the earth are people who have been fished from the sea. They are saved. But they remain on the earth, instead of ascending to be properly seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. They have not given diligence to heed the instruction in Colossians 3:5 which says: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”. They still have works of sin as core members of their being. They are the earth category.

The heaven on the other hand are those who have been saved, have given diligence to lay down the works of the flesh, have set their affections on things above (as Colossians 3:2 says), are pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (as said in Philippians 3:14), and are thus properly seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (as said in Ephesians 2:6). They are the heaven category.

As such, with this, we can understand that the kings of the earth are Christian religious leaders. They are kings over earthy Christians, and they fornicate with the bride of

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Christ. Meaning, they take the place of Christ as the Husband of the Church, which is why churches that operate according to this template (of having “kings”) are symbolically referred to as harlots.

Together, the Roman Catholic Church, and all other churches (or denominations) that maintain some portion of these her ways, make up the backslidden church system (the New Testament version of the backslidden Jewish religious system) — the Babylon, Sodom and Egypt that the eagles are being taken away from in these days, as “ones” out of “twos”, to where they can be properly nourished.

Prayer points from Chapter 2

In this chapter, we considered the question: “What is the Babylon, Sodom and Egypt that the people of God in these times are to flee from?”.

We saw that the Babylon, Sodom and Egypt is the Great Whore shown in Revelation 17:1-6. We understood this because the great city called Sodom and Egypt in Revelation 11:8 is the great city that is also symbolized as a woman in Revelation 17:18; and we saw that this woman in Revelation 17:18 is referred to as a Great Whore (in Revelation 17:1) that has three names, one of which is Babylon the Great. Selah!

We understood that the name Great Whore indicates that the woman is a symbol for a people who are to be in a covenant relationship with God but have turned aside from Him. We saw that this is the name God called Israel in Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16, and Ezekiel 23. And we understood that since the context of use in Revelation 17 is the New Testament, then the church is the woman that God is in a covenant relationship with through Christ. Meaning, this woman that is called a Great Whore is referring to a people who ought to be the Bride of Christ (the Church) but have turned away from Him to be a backslidden Church.

To further establish this, we went on to examine the fact that this woman is shown to be sitting on a beast with seven heads and ten horns. We looked at Daniel 7 to understand that a beast represents a kingdom (as Daniel was told in Daniel 7:23), and we identified that in the vision that was shown to Daniel, the beast that has ten horns is the fourth kingdom which is the Roman Empire.

This helped us to see clearly that the picture in Revelation 17 of a woman (that is a great whore) sitting on a beast with ten horns represents a backslidden church sitting on (or riding on the strength of) the Roman Empire. We were able to identify in history that this description points to non-other than the Roman Catholic Church (even as her name shows). She is the one that rode on the strength of the Roman Empire, and we saw that she did this during the era of the sixth head (the Holy Roman Empire), as the angel also alludes to in Revelation 17:10.

In addition to this, we took note of the fact that the woman (the great whore) is also called Mother of Harlots. Meaning, just as she is a backslidden church, so also out of her have come out other churches that have maintained some of her backslidden characteristics. We understood that most of the time these daughters began as a genuine attempt to correct some things in the previous

denomination they pulled out from but end up settling down to being a modified version of the great whore.

We saw that many of the harlot daughters are expressed as Pentecostal and Evangelical churches (amongst others). As such, we saw that from the mother harlot (the Roman Catholic Church) down to all her daughters (including those who are expressed as Pentecostal Churches) can together be referred to as the Church System (or the backslidden church system).

We understood that this realization does not mean everyone in the church system is a bad person, but rather, there are many faithful persons there who just don't see or understand the nature of what they are part of. Many have a sincere heart of carrying out the ministry they believe God has laid in their hearts, while others are just faithful believers in Christ. With these in mind, let us pray:

1. That God will open our eyes to appreciate the wisdom and severity of His instruction in Revelation 18:4 "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.". *We will discuss this scripture more in the next chapter.*

- That we will see that this is not just saying: "Come out of the world and a life of sin", but

also and more particularly, “Come out of the backslidden church system” — a Babylon system whose design originated from the Roman Empire structure and was first introduced into the Church by the Roman Catholic Church — a system that is different from the examples of plural leadership that we see in scriptures — a system that exalts man and gives room for all manner of abomination to flourish unchecked.

2. That we will see that the things in the system that look like good sensible initiatives are actually worldly influences that the faithful bride of Christ (the one mentioned in Revelation 19:7) is to separate herself from.
3. That we will see that just as Nehemiah was still having a good relationship with God while in Babylon, though God’s desire was for His people to return back to rebuild Jerusalem, so also God will still show up in churches that are in the system if they are faithful, though His desire is for His people to depart from the church system and operate according to the standard of scriptures.
 - That they will see that His presence in their midst is not necessarily a validation of the system.

Chapter 3

Why are the eagles taken?

The eagles are taken because God has said "... come out of her, My people ...", and Jesus has said "... flee into the mountains ...".

God said: "... come out of her My people ..." in Revelation 18:4 which we would look at shortly, and Jesus said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation ... flee into the mountains ..." in Matthew 24:15-16 which we would also look at subsequently.

When we look at Matthew 24, we would see that Jesus' instructions to "... flee into the mountains ..." is similar to what the two angels said to Lot as they brought him out of Sodom. They said:

"... Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Genesis 19:17)

We would yet examine this passage in the next chapters, but for now, we would begin with the call that God has

made (come out of her My people) as we seek to understand why the eagles are taken out of the backslidden church system (the great whore and her daughters).

Come out of her

Revelation 18:4 reads:

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Which “her” is this? It is the great whore mentioned in Revelation 17, who ought to be a faithful bride to Christ, but has become a backslidden church system (a great adulteress).

The eagles are taken from there because God has made a call for His precious ones, saying: “... Come out of her, My people ...”. Why? So that you do not partake of her sins, and so that you do not receive of her plagues.

Partaking of her sins simply means gradually becoming corrupt to a point of spiritual coldness where the fervency of your Christian life reduces because of the lack of life in the religious activities you may be engaging in despite how Christian-like the activities may appear; and receiving of her plagues simply means being judged along with her (just

like physical Egypt was judged with plagues to release the people of God into the wilderness).

What is the judgment that will come upon her? It begins with a complete overrunning by unbelievers (those who are not Christians). It is a kind of judgment similar to what is said in Romans 1:26-32 (NKJV) which reads:

“[26] For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. [27] Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. [28] And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; [29] being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, [30] backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31] undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; [32] who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice

such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”

Verses 26 and 28 show that the people chose to not retain the knowledge of God in their hearts. That is, they refused God; and as such, God let them alone to be overrun by unclean spirits who drove them further into darkness, in such a manner that guarantees that they will surely be judged. They refused God, so God refused them, and by refusing them, demons (spirits of sin and darkness) took them over.

Likewise is the judgment of the great whore (the backslidden church system). Just like Israel did, they have turned away from God (though still putting on a religious show of belonging to Christ) and have become full of things that did not originate from Him. As such, God will let them alone and give them up, which will result in them being overtaken by the ungodly, till they become thoroughly backslidden (at which point it will be too late to come out). That is the nature of the judgment that God wants to save His people from, which is why He has said: “... come out of her My people ...”.

The mention of the “image of the beast” in Revelation 13, as well as Jesus’ statement that “Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies ...” in Luke 21:20-21 are examples of

God's attempt to save His people by showing them what will become of the backslidden church system.

Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies

This is a prophecy that Jesus gave when He was physically on earth — that Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies. As we proceed to understand what this means, keep in mind, like we had discussed earlier, that there are two Jerusalems. Luke 21:20-24 (NKJV) reads:

“[20] But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. [21] Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. [22] For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. [23] But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. [24] And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

There are nine important elements to take note of in this prophecy:

1. Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies
2. Those in Judea, the outskirts of Jerusalem, should flee to the mountains
3. Those in Jerusalem should depart out
4. Those in the country [surrounding Jerusalem] should not enter in [to Jerusalem]
5. It will not be a good time to be pregnant or be nursing a baby (because of the inability to run quickly)
6. There will be great distress (tribulation) in Jerusalem
7. The people [of Jerusalem] will fall by the edge of the sword
8. They will be led away captive into all nations
9. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles.

Now imagine how scary this would be for you if you were in Jerusalem when Jesus was saying this, or if you were there when it was being fulfilled. It would be quite grim — surrounded by armies, slain by the sword, taken away captive, etc.; these are unpleasant scenarios for those in Jerusalem.

But the fact is that you are in Jerusalem, and as such, you should be concerned about these things; because, like we had discussed earlier, there are two Jerusalems:

1. The Jerusalem of the Old Testament (which are the physical Jews), and
2. The Jerusalem of the New Testament, also known as New Jerusalem (which are the spiritual Jews — the Christians that make up the Church, as Paul explained in Romans 2:28-29).

So, when Jesus said “Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies”, it was a prophecy that points to both Jerusalems.

Meaning, these things that Jesus prophesied concerning Jerusalem will also happen to the Church (the New Jerusalem), and they will happen because of the Church’s backslidden state — a state that is symbolically called: “Babylon” or “a Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem (the Church)”.

That is why God has called, saying: “... come out of her, My people ...”, which is the same thing as saying: “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon” (Zechariah 2:7).

Zion is the capital of Jerusalem, and as such Zion is also used interchangeably to refer to Jerusalem. Meaning, the counsel: “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon” is simply the same as “Come out of

Babylon, My People”; and the reason for coming out is so that the New Jerusalem (the Church) can arrive at the fully restored and glorified state where she is referred to as the holy city (as shown in Revelation 21 that we read earlier).

Therefore, to really appreciate the weight of these things that Jesus foretold and how they relate to these end times, it is important to note that the “Jerusalem” in the Luke 21:20-24 passage is referring to both “the physical Jerusalem” and “the New Jerusalem”.

Meaning, this prophecy is a dual prophecy: it has two fulfillments — one fulfillment to the physical Jerusalem (which has already happened) and another fulfillment to the New Jerusalem (which is about to happen in these last days).

The fulfillment to the physical Jerusalem took place in 70 AD when the Romans (under General Titus) surrounded Jerusalem after a Jewish revolt. The Romans surrounded Jerusalem to desecrate and destroy it in a bid to claim that the Roman Empire (and the Roman gods) are superior to the Jewish people (and their God), which is obviously not true, but God allowed it because of the backslidden state of the Jewish people.

About 1.1 million Jews were killed in that Roman assault, which included people who had gathered to keep the feast of Passover instead of fleeing to the mountains

when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by Roman armies like Jesus instructed His disciples — “... when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, ... flee to the mountains ...” (Luke 21:20-21). As such, it was a great slaughter.

That was the fulfillment of the prophecy to the physical Jerusalem (the Jews), and it happened because they had backslidden significantly. Jesus lamented their backslidden condition in Matthew 23:37-38 where He said:

“[37] O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! [38] Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

This was their backslidden state that led to the judgment, and as such, they were surrounded; their walls were broken down; people were killed with the sword; an ox, a sheep, and a pig were sacrificed in the temple to Roman gods (which is an abomination), the holy place was plundered and the great menorah (the golden candlestick which is in the holy place) was carried away to Rome (along with all the gold and treasures in the temple), many of the Jews that remained were carried away as captives into several nations, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed (made desolate).

Matthew 24:15 is another record of when Jesus prophesied about these things, especially about the abomination that took place in the temple (the plunder of the items in the holy place and the sacrifice to Roman gods). From verse 15 to 25, He said:

“[15] "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), [16] "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17] Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. [18] And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. [19] But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! [20] And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. [21] For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. [22] And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. [23] "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. [24] For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [25]

See, I have told you beforehand. [26] "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. [27] For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

One version of these things has been fulfilled to the physical Jerusalem. Notwithstanding, the wording of this prophecy clearly shows that there is yet going to be another fulfillment in these last days before the coming of the Lord. In fact, the prophecy and other things that Jesus said in Matthew 24 (or Luke 21:21-24) were in response to the question asked in verse 3: what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world? Matthew 24:1-3 (NKJV) reads:

"[1] And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to Him for to shew Him the buildings of the temple. [2] And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. [3] And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

This is the conversation and questions that triggered all of what Jesus said in Matthew 24, and as such, they provide a context of how to understand the prophecy that Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies.

Jesus told them that the temple (the beautiful temple that they admired) would be destroyed, so much that not one stone would be left upon another. And in response, the disciples asked in verse 3: what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world? Then Jesus began to answer, and His answer included the things He prophesied about Jerusalem being surrounded by armies.

Meaning, although a version of these things has been fulfilled to the physical Jerusalem in 70 AD (such that, in a sense, their world came to an end), the true sense of the question regarding the coming of the Lord and the end of the world indicates that there is yet going to be another fulfillment in the times close to the coming of the Lord Jesus and the end of the world, and that fulfillment will be towards the New Jerusalem (which is the Church).

It is the period of this fulfillment (towards the Church) that Jesus referred to as the great tribulation. That is, although the fulfillment to the physical Jerusalem was quite severe (and as such, was indeed a tribulation), that severity was actually just a clue to the greatness of the real

tribulation that is about to take place (such that has never been, nor ever shall be again, as Jesus said).

Why would God allow this? It is because of the backslidden state of His people. Meaning, as it was for the physical Jerusalem, that the first fulfillment of the prophecy (of Jerusalem being surrounded by armies) came upon them because of their backslidden state, so also the fulfillment to the Church will be because of the backslidden church system that most of the Church (the people of God) are part of.

But if anyone in physical Jerusalem had heeded Jesus's warnings to “flee to the mountains” and “not enter in”, they would have been spared. That is the same thing for the Church. All who heed Jesus’s warning [to flee to the “mountains”] and God’s call [to come out of the backslidden church system] would be spared, while others would suffer desolation and forced corruption of their faith, just like the 1.1 million Jews that were killed by the Romans because they did not flee on time. Jesus warned in Luke 21:24, saying:

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

What does it mean to fall by the edge of the sword?

For the physical Jerusalem, it obviously meant that they were physically killed by the sword of the Romans. But for the New Jerusalem (the Church), the “killing by the sword” is not necessarily physical; rather, it is spiritual. The whole armour of God in Ephesians 6:12-18 gives us a clue to what a spiritual sword is. Verse 17 says:

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”

This passage shows us that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Meaning, spiritually speaking, words are like a sword. For the Holy Spirit, His sword is God’s word, while for the enemy, their sword are their words. Psalm 64:1-4 (KJV) confirms this, saying:

“[1] Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. [2] Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: [3] Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: [4] That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.”

This passage, in verse 3, shows that the tongue is like a sword or a bow; meaning, the words spoken by the tongue

are like “the swinging of a sword to slay” or like “the shooting of an arrow”.

As such, when Jesus said: “... they shall fall by the edge of the sword ...”, whereas for physical Jerusalem He meant [many Jews who still continued to associate with the temple despite the fact that He had said “... flee to the mountains ...”] shall be killed by the sword of the Romans, for the Church, He meant [many Christians who are still part of the church system despite the fact that God has said “... come out of her, My people ...”] shall have their true Christian faith killed (that is, they shall be completely deceived) by the words (the antiChrist ideologies) that would be forcefully promoted by the forces that would surround the church, which are: the beast (the coming one world government), and the image of the beast (the coming one world religious system).

What does it mean to be led away captive into all nations?

For the physical Jerusalem, it meant that they were taken away as slaves into other nations, which meant that they were going to learn other cultures by force and live in a manner different from how they would have if they were free at home.

But for the Church, it doesn't mean a physical relocation into other nations, but rather a forced mental and spiritual relocation. Meaning, Christians in the church system would be forced to learn new beliefs as a replacement to their faith in Christ Jesus and the authenticity of the Bible. Christians would basically be slaves in other religions (or the one-world antiChrist religion) by forced conversion.

These things may seem far-fetched, but the reality is that it has already begun in various ecumenical efforts that seek to merge religions together; for example, the COEXIST and Interfaith movements, etc. Christians (particularly those who remain in the church system) shall be led away captive into other faiths, ideologies and religions.

What does it mean that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles?

For the physical Jerusalem, it meant that Jerusalem would be destroyed and overpowered by the Gentiles (the Romans), while for the Church, it means that the Church (as we know it, that is, the backslidden church system) would be destroyed by the secular global powers (the beast of this end time: the one world government).

Destroyed means that just as the city of Jerusalem was physically razed to the ground and was no longer habitable, so also the church system would no longer be reckoned as existent, as it would be destroyed and the people would be absorbed into the antiChrist religious system (the image of the beast).

It is possible that you still doubt that God will allow these things to ever happen to the Church as we know it. The disciples could also not believe it initially that such desolations would come upon Jerusalem and the glorious temple. But Jesus assured them that it will. Matthew 24:1-3 (NKJV) reads:

“[1] Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. [2] And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." [3] Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"”

Here, we see that at some point, Jesus walked out of the temple, just like He has walked out from many churches in the church system. But the disciples came to him to

advertise the beauty of the temple. Then Jesus told them that it will be destroyed. They couldn't imagine how God's temple would be destroyed. But the issue was that Jesus had departed from it and the people did not know; they still continued in all their religious activities. Likewise also, it would seem difficult to comprehend that God would allow His Church to be destroyed? But what is His Church? It is His people. What will be destroyed is a system of church operations that is not consistent with His will or scriptures (but was first pioneered by the Roman Catholic Church).

Churches as we know it will be overrun by ungodly forces, just like Jerusalem was; and Jesus' counsel is: flee to the mountains, just like God said in Revelation 18:4: Come out of her My people! If you come out, you will not partake of her judgments; you will not be taken captive into the image of the beast!

The image of the beast

In the course of appreciating the need to heed God's call to "... come out of her, My people ...", we mentioned that Jesus's prophecy that "Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies" in Luke 21 and the mention of "the image of the beast" in Revelation 13 are two key clues for the need to obey and come out of the backslidden church system.

So far, we have talked about “Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies” as a prophecy that the church system will be invaded by the global government (the beast). Now, by God’s grace, we would talk about “the image of the beast”, which is what would be the result of the invasion of the church system by the beast. For full context, Revelation 13:1-18 (the whole chapter) reads:

“[1] And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. [2] And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. [3] And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. [4] And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? [5] And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. [6] And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to

blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. [7] And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. [8] And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. [9] If any man have an ear, let him hear. [10] He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. [11] And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. [12] And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [13] And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, [14] And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. [15]

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. [16] And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: [17] And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. [18] Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”

From verse 14, we begin to see a reference to the image of the beast.

What is the image of the beast? We have already discussed the beast and understood it to represent a kingdom, based on Daniel 7:23 that says “... the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom ...”. Meaning, “image of the beast” means “image of the kingdom”.

What does “image” mean? The word translated to English as “image” means “a likeness”; that is, a replica. Meaning, “image of the beast” simply means “a replica of the kingdom” — that is, another kingdom that is like the beast kingdom.

What kind of replica is it? A religious replica! Meaning, whereas the beast is a kingdom (a secular kingdom ruling over nations as a one world government), the image of the beast is a religious replica (a religious kingdom ruling over religious organizations as a one world religious system).

How do we know this? Because we have a reference to something similar in the book of Daniel. Daniel 3:1-7 reads:

“[1] Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. [2] And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [3] So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [4] Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples,

nations, and languages, [5] that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; [6] and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." [7] So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up."

Here we see that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Babylonian Empire (the first beast shown in Daniel 7) set up an image. What was the purpose of the image? It was to be worshipped. It was to be the new definition (or expression) of religion in the empire — a religion that reinforces the authority of the king over the people, such that when the sound blew, everybody was expected to bow down and worship the image.

Likewise is the case with the image of the beast mentioned in Revelation 13. It symbolizes the religious system of the beast kingdom.

We have another clue to this — that the image of the beast symbolizes the religious system of the beast (the

religious replica of the beast kingdom). This clue is in Revelation 13:11-15 which tells us who is responsible for setting up the image of the beast. It reads:

“[11] And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. [12] And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [13] And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, [14] And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. [15] And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

In verse 1, we were told that the beast with seven heads and ten horns arose out of the sea, while here, in verse 11, we are told that this other beast came up from the earth. These words (earth and sea) are not referring to literal earth and

sea, but are prophetic references to spiritual categories of people. Remember that the book of Revelation is a book of signs as is stated in Revelation 1:1:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John:”

The word “signified” means to show or indicate by signs. Meaning, the things written in the book of Revelation are mostly signs and symbols that need to be interpreted using keys from other scriptures by the help of the Holy Spirit.

As such, the use of the words “earth” and “sea” in Revelation 13 are as symbols. They are not referring to physical earth and sea.

What do the “earth” and “sea” represent?

Beginning with “sea”, Isaiah 57:20 says:

“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

Also, Jude 1:13, when describing the ungodly men mentioned in verse 4, says:

“[4] For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of

our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. [13] Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

From these two passages, we see that (in prophetic context) the sea is used to represent the wicked (the ungodly). Who are the wicked and ungodly? Jeremiah 17:9 says:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Meaning, everyone is wicked, except those who have become new creatures in Christ Jesus. As such, in summary, the sea represents those who are not saved in Christ Jesus; which is why Jesus referred to those who engage in the process of preaching and bringing men to salvation as “fishers” of men; because they are “fishing” men out from the “sea” of ungodly humanity.

Closely tied to this idea of “fishing men from the sea” is the “earth” category. The “earth” refers to persons who have been “fished” from the sea but remain earthy (carnal). Meaning, they are Christian religious persons who still live sinful lives. They are people who have not yielded themselves to the counsel in Colossians 3:5 which says:

“Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness,

inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”

In other words, the works of the flesh are still prevalent in them, and they have not given diligence to take their place in heaven like Philippians 3:20 and Colossians 3:1-2 say:

“For our conversation (our citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:” (Philippians 3:20). “[1] If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. [2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2)

These passages, in addition to explaining the earth category, help us to see that in addition to the “sea” and “earth”, there is a third category — the “heaven” people — which is also mentioned in the book of Revelation. They (the heaven people) are the ones who are truly seated with Christ in heavenly places as Ephesians 2:6 says.

Revelation 12:12 is a verse that mentions all three categories in one verse. It says:

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Why did we go into all these?

It was to pick out that “earth” (as used in Revelation 13) refers to persons who are Christians (or part of Christianity as a religion), but who are not really consecrated in their manner of life. They have not given diligence to get rid of the works of the flesh and a life of sin. So, when we are told of a beast that arose from the earth, we know that it is referring to people who are carnal Christians.

That is, the beast of the earth will emerge from among carnal Christians; or put differently, the beast of the earth would be made up of carnal Christians. It is therefore no wonder why in Revelation 16:13, the beast of the earth is referred to as “the false prophet” (because they are carnal Christians). Revelation 16:13 reads:

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”

This verse indicates the three angles of the enemy’s operations:

1. The dragon (the spiritual forces of darkness led by satan)
2. The beast (the secular global government), and

3. The beast of the earth, also called the false prophet (the religious leadership over the global religious system).

These persons that shall make up the false prophet (the beast of the earth) are high ranking church leaders within the backslidden church system who shall be in league with high ranking leaders of other religions. As verse 14 shows, they are the ones who shall be responsible for wooing the people of the world into the image of the beast. Revelation 13:14 says:

“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

This is how we know that the image of the beast is not just any replica (not just any image) of the beast, but particularly, is a “religious” replica of the beast; because its origin shall be driven by the beast of the earth (backslidden church leaders of the backslidden church system seeking to be part of the ruling class in the antichrist one world religious system).

True to it, many church leaders have already begun to realign in allegiance to the pope and his ecumenical efforts

to merge all church denominations and all religions together into one global religious system.

As such, we can appreciate that this image of the beast is indeed a prophetic symbol pointing to a global religious system that is gradually being formed and shall take over all religious organizations, including (especially) church organizations.

In fact, we can say that the image of the beast is a core aspect of the “army” that shall surround Jerusalem (in the Church’s version of the fulfillment of the Luke 21:20 prophecy that says that Jerusalem shall be surrounded by armies). This is of course part of the reason why God deemed it necessary to show it ahead of time as part of the prophecies in the book of Revelation.

As such, if you chose to remain in the church system, you will likely be overtaken by the fulfillment of this prophecy — that is, you will become absorbed into the image of the beast — except you yield to God’s instruction to “... come out of her, My people ...” and Jesus’s counsel to “... flee into the mountains ...”.

Prayer points from Chapter 3

In this chapter, we examined the question: Why are the eagles taken? We saw that it is because God has said “Come out of her My people”, and Jesus has said when we see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, we should “Flee to the Mountains”. Let us pray:

1. That God will help us all to heed this call to flee to the mountains, by both ascending in the quality of our Christian life as well as departing from the system that will be destroyed (or taken over) just as the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in the quest to take it over.

We discussed that there are three categories into which all human beings can be symbolically categorized: heaven, earth, and sea. We understood that the sea represents those who have not yet been saved (unbelievers); we saw that the earth represents those who have been saved (out of the sea category) but still remain earthy (carnal) — not living in consecration (holiness); and we saw that the heaven represents those who have set their affections on things above, and have destroyed (are actively destroying) their earthly lusts (Colossians 3:1-5). With these, let us pray:

2. That God will help us to always be part of the heaven category at any time of inspection.

THIS WAY—*Securing your place in the Final Revival*

*This is a long and interesting chapter.
Please read patiently and prayerfully.*

Chapter 4

Where are the eagles taken?

In chapter 1, we mentioned that our Lord Jesus spoke of a time that shall be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot — a time that shall be close to when He will return to receive a people as His symbolic bride.

We mentioned that when He spoke of this (the time that shall be like the days of Lot), He was actually referring to a time when there will be a mighty move of God to bring His people (His Lots) out of the backslidden church system that had spiritually become a Sodom, Egypt and Babylon like we had discussed earlier.

In other words, by likening it to “the days of Noah”, Jesus was referring to a time when just as Noah built the Ark according to God’s specified dimensions and was later preserved in it when the world was destroyed by a flood, so also, His Church (His people) will be built according to His due order and then be preserved in the time when this world as we know it would be destroyed by fire.

Similarly, by likening it to “the days of Lot”, Jesus was referring to a time when just like Lot and his family were brought out of Sodom by the two angels, so also many will be brought out of the Sodom that the church system has become by the ministry of the two witnesses (which we would discuss later).

We understood that these many that shall be brought out (like Lot was brought out) are the ones Jesus referred to as “taken” when He said: “two shall be ... one shall be taken ...”. We understood from Luke 17:37 that when Jesus said this (two shall be ... one shall be taken ...) His disciples wanted to know where the “taken” would be taken to and so they asked “Where, Lord?”. Then Jesus replied saying: “... Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together ...”, which is a prophetic semblance to the call in Psalm 50:5 that says:

“Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

In other words, the eagles are those whom God acknowledges as “My saints”. They are also the ones He refers to as “My people” in Revelation 18:4 where He said “Come out of her, My people”.

Let’s read the Luke 17:26-37 passage again as we begin to consider the question: where are the eagles taken? It reads:

“[26] And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. [27] They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. [28] Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; [29] But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. [30] Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. [31] In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. [32] Remember Lot's wife. [33] Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. [34] I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. [35] Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [36] Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [37] And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the

body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

In verse 37, the disciples asked the question that is the central theme of this passage: where are the eagles taken to? And Jesus answered by saying: “... Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together”. But what does this mean? What is the body? And where is it?

The body is the body of the Lamb (the Lord Jesus who was crucified for us), and we are invited to symbolically feed on Him for nourishment. John 6:53-57 says:

“[53] Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. [54] Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. [55] For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. [56] He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. [57] As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.”

How do we eat His flesh and drink His blood? We have a clue in the fact that He is called the Word of God. John 1:14 says:

“And the Word was made 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.”

In other words, Jesus is the Word of God, and as such, we eat His flesh and drink His blood by taking in the Word of God which is documented in the Holy Scriptures (the Bible).

We take in the Word of God as we expose ourselves to sound teachings and preachings, as we read, study and meditate on Bible passages, and as we use verses of scripture to pray. That is how we eat His flesh and drink His blood. That is how we partake of the body of the Lamb.

So now we know what the body is. The next question is: where is it? Because Jesus said: “whosoever the body is there will the eagles be gathered together”. So where is the body?

Keeping in mind that the body is the body of the Lamb (which is Jesus who is the Word of God), this question — where is the body that the eagles are gathered to? — can be rephrased as: where is the Word of God that the eagles are gathered to? Or put differently: where are the gatherings where the eagles will receive the Word of God?

Ideally, the simple answer to this question should be: a Christian Church. But with the current state of the majority of gatherings in the church system, we would

need to pay closer attention to what scripture says about where the eagles would be gathered for nourishment. As we do so by the help of the Holy Spirit, we would find that there are four ways in which scripture describes where the eagles would be gathered for nourishment. They are:

1. Outside the city
2. Jerusalem
3. The Wilderness
4. The Mountain

By discussing these four subjects, we would gain a better understanding of where the Lord is gathering His eagles for nourishment.

Section 1: Outside the City

The Lord is gathering His eagles “outside the city”. He is taking them there to feed on Jesus. Hebrews 13:11-14 gives us a clue to this. It says:

“[11] For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. [12] Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. [13] Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp,

bearing His reproach. [14] For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.”

This passage sheds light on the prophetic language Jesus used in Luke 17:37 when He said “... Wheresoever the body is ...”. It helps us understand that the body Jesus was referring to is the body of the animal that is slain as a sin offering to take away the sins of the people. That is the context of the “body” in “... Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together”.

As such, because Jesus is the sin offering of the New Testament — the Lamb that was slain to take away the sin of the world — He is actually the one that is the slain body to whom the eagles are gathered; and they eat of Him by taking in the Word of God (as we discussed earlier).

Also, because the context of the “body” in “... wheresoever the body is ...” is that it is the body of the animal slain for the sin offering, and because the Hebrews 13:11-14 passage tells us that “... the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp ...”, it means that the “wheresoever” in “... wheresoever the body is ...” prophetically points to “outside the camp”. In fact, verse 12 clearly says:

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”

As such, given that the body that the eagles are gathered to for nourishment is the slain body of the Lamb (Jesus), it becomes clear that the place where they must go to find the body is “outside the gate of the city”. Meaning, for the question — Where are the gatherings that the eagles will receive the Word of God? — the answer is: gatherings that are “outside the gate”, because that is where we can find Jesus, based on Hebrews 13:12-14 that says:

“[12] Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. [13] Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. [14] For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.”

Prophetically speaking, at this time, Jesus is not in the city. He is outside the gate, and to find Him, we too must go outside the gate. We must have the attitude described in verse 14 that says:

“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.”

It is an attitude that is dissatisfied with the city and rather wants to be part of what Jesus is doing. It is such a move

that the disciples needed to make in Matthew 24:1 when Jesus went out and departed from the temple (and the city) to the mount of Olives. They were busy describing how beautiful the temple was, not realizing that Jesus had written it off and said it would be destroyed.

The people of God in these crucial times need to also sense the departure of the Lord from the church system and go to gatherings “outside the gate” (outside the church system) to meet Him.

What does it mean that a gathering is outside the gate?

Simply put, a gathering being outside the gate means that the gathering is not in the city. To appreciate what it means to “not be in the city”, remember that when we looked at Revelation 11:8, we understood that, symbolically speaking, Jesus was crucified in the great city Babylon which is also spiritually called Sodom and Egypt; and we understood that this great city was physically manifest in the Old Testament as the backslidden Jewish religious system, and is now manifest in the New Testament as the backslidden church system.

In other words, the backslidden church system is the city that we are to go out of and be dissatisfied with (as Hebrews 13:13-14 says: “Therefore let us go forth to Him,

outside the camp, ... For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come”).

Remember that God has said in Revelation 18:4-5 — “... Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

As such, in answering the question — what does it mean that a gathering is outside the gate? — it means that the gathering does not operate according to the church system, but rather operates according to the pattern established by Jesus and His apostles — the original pattern (the Way) that the Christian faith (especially Church operation) was conducted in the days of the early disciples, before the corruption (the detour) set in. Such is the kind of gatherings that the eagles are taken to, as an answer to the question of this chapter (where are the eagles taken?).

Notwithstanding, there is more we can learn about these gatherings (or fellowships) that are outside the city — the gatherings where the eagles are being taken to — and we can learn them by considering the three lenses.

As a recap, we had mentioned earlier (in chapter 1) that there are three lenses from which we can discuss and understand the pathway that an individual (or a fellowship of Christians in a community) is to take towards obtaining

the promise of being the glorified body of Christ and being the fullness of God. These three lenses are:

1. The return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem,
2. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the wilderness to the Promised Land, and
3. The departure of Lot from Sodom to the mountain.

In prior chapters, when briefly talking about these three lenses, we had focused more on understanding the place we are to come out of (the place the eagles are gathered out from) — Babylon, Egypt, Sodom. But as we begin to re-discuss them now, our emphasis will be on the place where we are to go to (the place the eagles are being taken to) — Jerusalem, the wilderness, the mountain.

We trust the Lord for insight as we begin to look into these three symbols for where the Lord is taking His people to in these times.

Section 2: Jerusalem

The Lord is gathering His eagles to “Jerusalem”. He is returning them to His vision of what and how His church should be.

Although, ideally, Jerusalem is what the Church is already supposed to be. Revelation 21:9-10 says:

“[9] And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. [10] And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,”

Like we had discussed earlier, the Lamb's wife is the Church, and in this passage, we see that she is referred to as Jerusalem. So Jerusalem is the Church's identity. Notwithstanding, Jerusalem (that should be the Church's identity) becomes a destination (that we should return to) when there is a departure from the true identity. It is such departure from the true Jerusalem identity that informs the need for a verse like Jude 1:3 that says:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Jude said “... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”.

The faith that was once delivered to the saints refers to the pattern of Church operations, the truthfulness of

scriptural doctrines, and the abundance of the manifestation of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit that characterized Christianity in the time of the apostles and early disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that there is a need to contend for a re-establishment of this texture of the Christian faith indicates that there was a departure from it. Thus, the effort to return to it can well be referred to as a journey back to Jerusalem (in her uncorrupted, uninvaded, and pure state).

That said, we can gain a sound appreciation for this need to return to the Church's Jerusalem reality by recalling the record of how the Jews left Babylon (where they were captives) to return to rebuild Jerusalem (their promised land).

Remember that we had mentioned that part of the reason the Church is prophetically called Jerusalem is as a clue that some of the occurrences relating to the physical Jerusalem are an allegory for occurrences relating to the Church (the Jerusalem of the New Testament). That is why scripture is diligent to record some of the historical events relating to the people of Israel in the Old Testament.

As such, by paying attention to what is written concerning how the Jews came out of Babylon (in the time of Persian rule) to return to Jerusalem, we can gain

prophetic insight into some key elements of the Church's return from Babylon to her Jerusalem identity.

Ezra chapters 1 and 2 give us a record of what inspired the exodus out of Babylon back to Jerusalem. From verse 1 of chapter 1 to verse 2 of chapter 2, it reads:

“[1] Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, [2] Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. [3] Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. [4] And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. [5] Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house

of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. [6] And all those who were around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. [7] King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; [8] and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. [9] This is the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, [10] thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar kind, and one thousand other articles. [11] All the articles of gold and silver were five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem. [2:1] Now these are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his own city. [2] Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua,

Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah. ...”

From this passage, we see that the exit out of Babylon to return back to Jerusalem was triggered by the need to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple in it that were destroyed by the Babylonian invasion. Verses 2 and 3 say:

“[2] Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. [3] Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.”

In other words, irrespective of the beauty of any Jewish synagogue in Babylon — that is, irrespective of the effort that may have been put into maintaining a worthy Jewish expression in the land of captivity — God was more interested in rebuilding the temple and Jerusalem (the Promised Land) that were destroyed by the Babylonian invasion.

As such, those whose hearts God had stirred to do His will yielded to this call and came out of their comforts in Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild it. They responded positively to the request in verse 3: “Who is

among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel ...”.

There were two waves or batches of people who yielded to this call by coming out of Babylon and returning to Jerusalem to rebuild it. The first batch was those who departed along with Zerubbabel (as shown in Ezra 2), while the second wave were those who departed along with Nehemiah many years later (as mentioned in Nehemiah 1 & 2).

Ponder on this for a moment, because it is a most important allegory that we need to understand in these times. It reveals that irrespective of how much of a Christian expression has been accomplished within the current framework of the Babylonian Church System, God is more interested in a full restoration of the Church's Jerusalem identity (after the order of faith that was initially delivered to the saints, as Jude said). Which is why, just as the call was made in verse 3, so also it is resounding now in the spirits of all who have ears to hear:

*Who is there that is willing? May God be with such a person.
Let that person depart from Babylon and return to Jerusalem
to build the house of God.*

Are you such a person?

At any point in time, those who have yielded to this call of God (come out of her My people) — that is, they have come out of the current church system template and are being rebuilt as an assembly with a restored Jerusalem identity (as in the times of the apostles) — such people that have already come out can be symbolically referred to as the Zerubbabel company; while those who have not yet come out, but will come out later, can similarly be referred to as the Nehemiah company.

It is such Nehemiahs that are currently the faithful ones within the church system (Babylon) — just as the man Nehemiah was a faithful Jew who still served in the king's palace after Zerubbabel (the first wave) had left, until he later left Babylon when the burden of God's house weighed heavily on his heart (despite the goodly synagogue they must have been operating in Babylon).

Are you part of the Zerubbabel company,
or are you part of the Nehemiah company?

That is, prophetically speaking,
Are you a Zerubbabel or a Nehemiah?

Whichever it is, by the mercy of the Lord all the Nehemiahs will also come out and contribute fruitfully to the work of rebuilding the Church's Jerusalem identity by becoming part of fellowships all over the world who operate according to the due order that God has ordained for the Church.

In some cases, they will become part of such fellowships by leaving the places where they used to be to join such fellowships. While in some cases, they will need to start a fellowship and trust God to add to it if there are no existing fellowships around them. And in some cases, the mercy of God can cause that the leadership and people in the places they used to be will be willing to be reconfigured away from the Babylonian template to the Jerusalem template, so that they do not need to leave.

But regardless of the scenario, the Nehemiahs will yet join the Zerubbabels in fellowships that operate according to the due order (the Jerusalem template) that God has ordained for His Church.

We can learn more about this due order (that is the destination of the return from the non-ideal scenario) by considering the things described in Revelation 21:9-14 where the Church is symbolically shown as a glorious holy city called New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:9-14 reads:

“[9] And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. [10] And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, [11] Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; [12] And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: [13] On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. [14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. [15] And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. [16] And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. [17] And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits,

according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. [18] And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. [19] And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; [20] The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprusus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. [21] And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. [22] And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. [23] And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. [24] And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. [25] And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. [26] And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. [27] And there shall in no wise enter into it

any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

In this passage, we are shown that, as part of the Church’s Jerusalem identity, the Church has:

1. Twelve gates that are pearls (on which are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel) and twelve angels at the gates
2. Twelve Foundations (in which are written the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ)
3. The same length, breadth and height (that is, it is a cube)
4. A wall measurement of one hundred and forty four (144) cubits
5. A street that is pure gold like transparent glass
6. No temple because her temple is God and the Lamb
7. No need for the light of the sun or the moon because the glory of God and the Lamb lightens her

These are symbolic details that describe what the Church should look like from God’s perspective of the final picture. As such, any fellowship that will be a true local expression of the Church must possess these qualities.

Meaning, a person is said to have embarked on the journey to return to the Jerusalem identity when he or she seeks to be part of a fellowship that has these qualities; or,

an entire assembly is said to have embarked on the journey to the Jerusalem identity when the leadership of the Church labors to guide the Church into having these qualities.

But what do these qualities mean? By God's grace, we would proceed to discuss each of them so as to understand the kinds of attributes God is expecting His Church to have.

1. Twelve pearl gates and twelve tribes

The first detail we are told about the Church is that she has twelve gates that are pearls on which are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. In other words, each gate is a pearl, and on each pearl gate is written a name of a tribe, and at each of the twelve pearl gates, there is an angel.

What does this mean?

A pearl is a precious gem that forms in water within living organisms like mussels. They are generally regarded as gemstones along with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, etc. Simply put, they are precious ornaments that people treasure. Matthew 13:45-46 makes reference to pearls. It reads:

“[45] Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: [46] Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

In this passage, we see that the attitude of seeking and treasuring pearls is used to represent the attitude we should have towards the Kingdom of heaven — that is, in order to be part of the full experience of the Kingdom of heaven, we should have an attitude of seeking and obtaining goodly pearls.

It is the Church’s destiny to become the Kingdom of heaven. Simply put, the Kingdom of heaven is the heavenly kingdom where the citizens are a heavenly race — a race made up of the sons of God. 1 Peter 2:9 describes them (the citizens of the Kingdom) as:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:”

A holy nation! A peculiar people! That is what God is building the Church into, and the passage (Matthew 13:45-46) is saying that the pathway to arriving at this glorious destination involves seeking after and obtaining goodly pearls.

The pearls represent precious realities — dimensions of God that are revealed in the water of the Word. In other words, just as physically speaking, a pearl is formed in the water inside a living organism, so also pearls are formed in us as we immerse ourselves in the Word of God. In Ephesians 5:25-26 water is used to represent the Word of God. It reads:

“[25] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; [26] That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”

As such, immersing yourself in the Word of God symbolically means immersing yourself in water (the water of the Word of God). You then become the living organism (like the mussel) and God forms the pearl in you. Meaning, the process of seeking goodly pearls involves soaking yourself in the water of the Word of God. That is the way to press towards the full holy and peculiar experience of the Kingdom of heaven — the Church’s destiny.

The picture we are shown of the Church in Revelation 21 reveals that there are twelve pearls (twelve precious realities) that sum up to the fullness of the Church’s Jerusalem identity. Meaning, any fellowship of believers seeking to be a local expression of the Church’s Jerusalem identity (that is, any fellowship of believers seeking to make

a fruitful return journey from Babylon to Jerusalem) must labour in the Word to obtain all twelve pearls — not some, not seven, but all twelve precious realities.

What are these twelve precious realities?

They are represented by the twelve tribes of Israel. In other words, just as Israel in the Old Testament has twelve tribes, so also the Church (the Israel of God in the New Testament) has twelve tribes. That is why the New Jerusalem (the Church) is shown as having twelve pearl gates on which are written the names of the twelve tribes. Meaning, as the twelve tribes in the Old Testament were unique and together contributed to produce the full Israel reality, so also the full glory and beauty of the Church is realized by the combination of these twelve precious realities represented by the twelve tribes of Israel.

The name Israel was first given to Jacob by an angel of God in Genesis 32:26-28 when Jacob held unto him in an encounter. It reads:

“[26] And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. [27] And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. [28] And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince

hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

This was the encounter where Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. One of the things we can learn from it is how he held on until he received a change of name. Such an attitude of holding on is a lesson to us all who will be part of the Israel reality — we must have a habit of holding onto the Word of God until we experience a change.

The name Israel (Yis-raw-ale in Hebrew) means “a prince who will rule and prevail like God”. Think about that! The only person who fits this description is actually Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As such, pronouncing that name on Jacob was a foreshadowing of how a people in the New Testament will enter into princely victory and rulership as sons of God through Jesus Christ.

Also, the fact that by God’s divine orchestration, Jacob had twelve sons that became the twelve tribes of Israel reveals that there are indeed twelve subsections (twelve pearls: twelve precious realities) that sum up to the fullness of the corporate Christ reality that is the Church’s destiny.

What are the precious realities represented by the twelve tribes of Israel?

We would go through the things written about each of the twelve tribes to learn about the twelve precious realities that they represent. These twelve precious realities are the New Testament versions of the twelve tribes of Israel. As we proceed to consider each of them, pay attention to find the tribe you were born-again into.

In other words, just like in the Old Testament, where all natural-born citizens of Israel were born into one of the twelve tribes, so also in the New Testament, every born-again child of God is born into one of the New Testament versions of the twelve tribes.

For example, David was a citizen of Israel by being born into the tribe of Judah, while Moses was a citizen of Israel by being born into the tribe of Levi, and Samson was a citizen of Israel by being born into the tribe of Dan. This is because all twelve tribes make up the nation of Israel.

In a similar manner, every person who is born-again into the Kingdom of heaven is actually born into one of the New Testament versions of the twelve tribes. This is because the nation of Israel (in its pure God-ordained form) was actually designed to be a clue to the Kingdom of heaven (which is a divine nation made up of peculiar people who are kings and priests). Exodus 19:5-6 says:

“[5] Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar

treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: [6] And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

This is what God said to the people of Israel. It was an expression of His intent for them. But this intent was to be a pointer to the real kingdom of heavenly priests, which is what the Church is being prepared to become (the Kingdom of heaven). 1 Peter 2:9 says:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:”

This is the New Testament version of what God said to the nation of Israel. But here, the reference is to believers in Christ Jesus who make up the Church. The passage is saying that we are a holy nation (or kingdom) of royal priests; and this is what the Kingdom of heaven is.

God established Israel to be an Old Testament pointer to this truth of what He will build His Church into. As such, the fact that the nation of Israel has twelve tribes is also a pointer to the fact that the Church (in her perfected state as the Kingdom of heaven) has twelve tribes. This is what is shown symbolically in Revelation 21:9-12 that we looked at earlier. As a refresher, it reads:

“[9] And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. [10] And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, [11] Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; [12] And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:”

The Lamb's wife in verse 9 (called the bride) is the Bride of Christ (the Church). So the passage is saying that the Church is a city with twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel. Meaning, people who constitute this city must have become part of it (the Church city) by passing through one of the twelve gates. The gate a person passes is the tribe he belongs to (or was born-again into). As such, indeed the Church has twelve tribes. Do you know your tribe? Try to find out by the help of the Holy Spirit as we proceed to discuss each of the twelve tribes and their New Testament expressions.

Despite this, it is important to note that every one of us (children of God) are priests, which means that each of us has an ephod. An ephod is a part of the priest's official garment that rests on the chest. The breastplate attached to the ephod, has slots for twelve precious stones — a stone for each tribe. Each precious stone represents the precious realities of each tribe. Meaning, the more stones you have on your ephod, the more precious realities God can express through you. The ultimate is to have all twelve, like our Lord Jesus (the High Priest). But we must all know our first (in order to practice faithfulness from there). Your first stone is the stone of the tribe you were born-again into. And as you mature and are faithful and interact with other faithful brethren, the Lord can add more stones to you through such faithful interactions and as you make yourself available in different situations.

A simple way to understand this is to think of physical Israel. Imagine a boy whose father is from the tribe of Judah and his mother is from Gad. At some point they relocated from living in Judah to live in Zebulun. At Zebulun, in the new house they are staying, their neighbor on the left side is from Asher, the one on the right side is from Issachar, and the one across the street is from Benjamin. Not long after, the boy's senior sister gets married to an Israelite from Reuben. By the time this boy is 30, if he has paid attention

to learn from his parents while also picking up valuable traits from those around him, he would have known how to manifest the precious realities of seven tribes.

This is how it also is in the New Testament. As you interact with the Holy Spirit directly and the Holy Spirit in your brethren, over time you will pick up other precious realities beyond that of the tribe you were born into, so that though you may have one now, two years from now you may have seven, and five years from now you may have ten, and so on till you have all twelve stones.

That said, let us proceed to consider each of the twelve tribes and the precious realities they represent in the New Testament. We would do so by looking at the things written about each tribe and interpreting what they point to in the New Testament remembering that the nation of Israel was an Old Testament pointer to the Kingdom that God is building His Church into. As we proceed, ask the Lord to reveal to you the tribe you were born-again into (the first stone on your ephod).

Judah

When Judah was born, a declaration was made over him. That declaration was a prophecy that reveals the destiny of the tribe he represents. Genesis 29:35 reads:

“And she (Leah: Judah’s mother) conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.”

The name “Judah” means “praise” or “celebrate”. The passage says: “Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah ...”. So she called his name Judah because she gave birth to him with a testimony of praising the Lord.

This is a prophetic indicator that the New Testament tribe of Judah represents the ministerial category of praise. In other words, beyond just singing or making melody, there is a ministerial capacity to celebrate God and thus attract His manifest presence in a tangible way. Genesis 49:10 (where Jacob prophesied over Judah) captures this by saying:

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The passage says: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor the lawgiver from between his feet ...”. The Amplified Bible version renders it as:

“The scepter [of royalty] shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,

Until Shiloh [the Messiah, the Peaceful One] comes,
And to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples”

This means that the King will always come from Judah. For us, the King is Jesus. As such, the New Testament implication of this prophecy is that the Church’s tribe of Judah (the ministry of praise) would always be able to provoke the manifest presence of the King, especially when the church is gathered in corporate fellowship.

It therefore indicates that adequate room for expression should be available to this ministry in every service, which is why when the children of Israel were to march in their journeys God instructed that the tribe of Judah should always be the first tribe in the order of the tribes. Numbers 10:11-14 shows this. It reads:

“[11] And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. [12] And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. [13] And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses. [14] In the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies:

and over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab.”

So indeed, in the Church, the ministerial tribe of Judah should be allowed to go first so that the presence of the King would be manifest in the Church.

This ministerial capability to accomplish such a gracious result of ushering in the presence of the King through praise is a precious reality — a pearl — the Judah pearl — and one of the twelve pearls of the Church’s Jerusalem identity.

Do you have the Judah stone on your ephod?

Zebulun

In Deuteronomy 33, we are given a record of the prophecies that Moses declared over the twelve tribes. These prophecies, while having their Old Testament fulfillment, also give us a clue to the New Testament ministerial capacities represented by each of the twelve tribes. Concerning Zebulun, verses 18 and 19 says:

“[18] And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. [19] They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall

suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.”

This prophecy reveals that the New Testament tribe of Zebulun is a going-out ministerial capacity — a capacity characterized by a burden to go out and win souls for Christ. It is a ministerial category that echoes the words of the Lord Jesus in John 10:16 which says:

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”

The burden of Zebulun is to turn ungodly people from sin to righteousness and to add them to the Kingdom of God. That is what Deuteronomy 33:19 says they will accomplish. It reads:

“They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.”

Calling the people to the mountain means the people were initially in the valley, or the plain. As such, symbolically speaking, calling the people to the mountain means to turn them from the lower estate of ungodliness to the higher grounds of holiness — from being earthy (worldly) to being heavenly. Colossians 3:1-5 says:

“[1] If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [2] Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. [3] For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. [5] Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (NKJV)

With this passage, we can further understand that calling the people to the mountains involves directing them to seek those things which are above (a Christ-like life) and not the things on earth (a sinful life of fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, etc.). It is at this higher ground of holiness (Christlikeness) that they can then reasonably offer themselves to God as living sacrifices of righteousness who no longer yield their bodies as instruments of sin. Romans 12:1 says:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Bringing people to this point of presenting their bodies as living sacrifices to God by choosing to live holy lives is how

THIS WAY—*Securing your place in the Final Revival*

the Zebulun ministerial capacity brings people to the mountain and makes them offer sacrifices of righteousness (as Deuteronomy 33:19 said).

Who are the people they shall call?

Deuteronomy 33:19 calls them “the abundance of the seas” and “the treasures of the sand”. These are the people that the Zebulun grace shall call to the mountains. Who are the abundance of the seas and the treasures of the sand? Isaiah 57:20, Jude 1:4-13 and Genesis 22:17 give us a clue. Isaiah 57:20 reads:

“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

Jude 1:4-13 reads:

“[4] For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. ... [12] These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; [13] raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own

shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” (NKJV)

And Genesis 22:17 reads:

“blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.” (NKJV)

From these three passages, we can see that both the sea and the sand refer to people. In particular, the sea is a symbol for the wicked or ungodly (basically, unsaved humanity). As such, when Deuteronomy 33:19 says they shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand, it means that the Zebulun ministerial capacity can harvest men as treasures for God out from among the ungodly. In other words, they can convert people from being unbelievers to being believers in Christ Jesus. Our Lord Jesus, in Matthew 4:19, referred to this kind of activity as fishing men. It reads:

“Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Fishers of men! That is a capacity that the Zebulun ministerial tribe is greatly blessed with — to fish men; and the blessing that Jacob released upon Zebulun also testifies to this. In Genesis 49:13, Jacob said:

“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.”

Haven of the sea simply means the coast. So Zebulun are a people who tabernacle their heart in close proximity to reaching the lost (the people of the sea). Ships are the means by which one travels on the sea. It represents the means by which Zebulun engages the sea. A haven of ships means that when you interact with a person of the Zebulun tribe, you would see in his heart (and thinking) many ships (outreach ideas and means). He is full of ships (ideas and means) to reach the sea (the unsaved).

It is also said that Zebulun’s border shall reach unto Zidon. Zidon means “catching fish”. Meaning, Jacob’s prophecy that “... his border shall be unto Zidon” is a symbolic way of saying that the extent of the reach of the Zebulunic ministry is that they will fish men out from the sea.

As such, Zebulun is the ministerial tribe of fishers of men. In other words, all twelve tribes can fish, but the tribe of Zebulun is particularly graced to do so with remarkable results. They are the Evangelists!

Do you have this stone on your ephod?

Issachar

When Jacob was blessing his children before he died, he prophesied over their lives the things that shall be their lot.

Concerning Issachar, in Genesis 49:14-15, he said:

“[14] Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: [15] And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”

In this passage, Issachar is described symbolically as a strong donkey that couches down between two burdens (loads). Donkeys are naturally known to be able to carry a lot of load. It also says that Issachar bows his shoulder to bear burdens and is willing to become a servant unto tribute (labor). This prophetically indicates that the Issachar ministerial tribe is one that has capacity to bear burdens.

What kind of burdens?

The phrase “couching down” in verse 14 gives a clue. It means to crouch. This points to bowing the knees in prayer. As such, the Issachar grace is one that has the capacity to bear the burdens of the house of God in the

place of prayer. In other words, the people of Issachar (or anyone with the Issachar stone) are strong intercessors. It is by bearing the burden in intercessory prayers that they are able to accomplish the results mentioned in Deuteronomy 33:18-19 which reads:

“[18] And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. [19] They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.”

Verse 18 indicates that, unlike Zebulun who is graced for outreaches, Issachar is a people who dwell in the tent (they operate in the secret place). Yet, in verse 19, both Zebulun and Issachar are grouped together and are said to be a people who call the people to the mountains (a higher walk with God) and suck the abundance of the seas (that is, convert the ungodly to Christ). But unlike Zebulun who accomplishes this by going out as a fisher of men (as discussed earlier in Zebulun), Issachar accomplishes the same result (along with Zebulun) but by staying in the tent.

How?

How does one convert the seas and call the people to the mountain by staying in the tent? It is by their burden-bearing ministry of intercessory prayers. It is by prayers that they affect the nations; such that those who go out (Zebulun) would succeed in ministry as they (Issachar) are faithful in the place of bearing the burden in prayers.

1 Chronicles 12:32 tells us that the people of Issachar were a people who had understanding of the times; that they knew what Israel ought to do at given times. It reads:

“And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.”

This testimony is the same for the New Testament tribe of Issachar. The brethren of the tribe of Issachar, by reason of their fervency in the place of intercession (as they have been graced to do), frequently receive indications from God for individuals and for the house. By such indications, they understand what the church should be doing and the seasons that God is bringing His church into and are able to bless the house by sharing such directions.

That is the tribe of Issachar: the ministry category of burden bearing through fervent consistent intercessory prayers. Every tribe has been called to pray, but the tribe of

Issachar has been ordained with special grace and spiritual strength (as a strong donkey) to bear burdens in the place of prayer (as perpetual intercessors).

This is the kind of testimony that would be observed in the life of anyone who has obtained the Issachar stone (whether as a first stone or as a subsequent stone) — such a person would be strong in the place of intercessory prayers and would experience the mercy of God in receiving directions on what the Church should be doing at any point in time.

Do you have this stone on your ephod?

Levi

Concerning Levi, in Deuteronomy 33:8-11, it was prophesied:

“[8] And of Levi he said, Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one, whom Thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom Thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; [9] Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant. [10] They shall teach Jacob

Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law: they shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar. [11] Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.”

From this passage, in verse 10, we see that Levi’s prophetic destiny was to “... teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law: ...”, as well as “... put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar.” In other words, they were to teach God’s word to the people of Israel and were also responsible for maintaining the statutes of the daily sacrifices. Meaning, in summary, they were responsible for ensuring that Israel remained faithful to God and did not deviate from the things God wanted them to do.

This is the same testimony for the New Testament tribe of Levi. They have received grace from God to be able to teach the Word of God to His people (especially in matters of doctrine) so that the Church (and the individual Christian) does not deviate from what God wants. Those with this stone (that is, those who have received this grace) are the ministry category referred to as Teacher. The grace that they have received is what is referred to as Thummim and Urim in verse 8:

“And of Levi he said, Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one ...”.

Thummim means perfection in terms of the completeness of truth. Urim means light (illumination). The Thummim and Urim were two stones that the priests used like an oracle to determine the will of God concerning different issues and to receive answers to different questions. They were the means by which the priests received inspiration from God to teach His laws to His people.

Likewise is the case for the Teachers (the New Testament tribe of Levi). In order to establish doctrine and to teach the Word of God in a manner that makes it clear to God’s people what they ought to do, God has equipped them with the Thummim and Urim (the grace to have the light of complete truth in all questions relating to the Scriptures). As such, anyone who has obtained the stone of Levi in his ephod (be it as his first stone or as a subsequent stone) would have the Thummim and Urim.

Do you have this stone on your ephod?

Reuben

Speaking of Reuben, Jacob prophesied in Genesis 49:3, saying:

“Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:”

Reuben, in this passage, is referred to as his father’s might and the excellency of his father’s dignity. For physical Reuben, his father was Jacob; but for the New Testament tribe of Reuben, the Father is God. As such, what Jacob said to Reuben is a prophetic clue that the New Testament tribe of Reuben expresses the Father’s might and the excellency of the Father’s dignity.

What is God’s dignity? God said of Himself in Exodus 34:6 that He is merciful and gracious and long suffering. It reads:

“And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,”

And in 1 John 4:8-16, it is said of God that He is Love. It reads:

“[8] He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ... [16] And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

As such, being the excellency of the Father’s dignity indicates (prophetically speaking) that Reuben is a tribe of

love. That is, the tribe of Reuben excels in the capacity to love. True to it, Reuben was the only one of the twelve who had a mind of compassion to save Joseph from the plan to kill him. Genesis 37:18-22 shows this:

“[18] And when they saw him (Joseph) afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. [19] And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. [20] Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. [21] And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. [22] And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.”

So we see that indeed Reuben was a compassionate man. He did not want to kill Joseph but wanted to save him and restore him back to his father again. We see another example in Genesis 42:37. It reads:

“And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.”

This was when they were trying to convince Jacob to let them take Benjamin with them to Egypt (because Joseph who was now prince of Egypt demanded them to do so). Jacob was afraid that he would lose another son (because he thought Joseph was dead), so he did not want to release Benjamin; but Simeon was already detained in Egypt to be released only if Benjamin is brought to Egypt. To resolve the dilemma, Reuben offered that his father can slay his two sons if he does not bring Benjamin back to him. The truth is that it was not really under Reuben's control, but despite the uncertainty of the situation, he selflessly offered to bear the loss of his beloved two sons.

Such is the selfless loving nature of this tribe. They are inclined by the Holy Spirit to selflessly nurture and care for matters of the House of God by deliberately taking interest in people (and the different aspects of their lives) and effectively following up with them to ensure their all-round spiritual and physical well-being, so that the church can grow. They are burdened to selflessly intervene in people's situations so that the weak can be strong and the weary can be strengthened, and the strong can continue to overcome.

In a healthy church, there would be the fulfillment of the prayer that Moses prayed concerning Reuben in Deuteronomy 33:6. He said:

“Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few.”

Indeed, may the Reuben tribe not be few in the Church in Jesus name. It is interesting to note (in Genesis 30:14-18) that it is the love labour of Reuben (he went into the field to pick mandrakes — fruits that helped Leah secure a night of conception with Jacob) which set things in motion for Issachar to be born — those of whom it is said that they have understanding of the times and know what Israel ought to do (1 Chronicles 12:32).

What a blessing Issachar is! But the emergence of such an Issachar reality in the church is a product of the labour of love of the Reuben tribe. In other words, their loving and nurturing nature is what would be used by God to groom persons who would emerge with the Issachar anointing (and more).

Truly, may Reuben not be few in the church in Jesus name. Those with the Reuben stone (either as their first or as a subsequent stone) tend to also function as the ministry called Shepherds.

Do you have this stone on your ephod?

Naphtali

In Genesis 49:21, Jacob declared the prophetic destiny of Naphtali by saying:

“Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.”

This statement gives a clue to which ministry category the New Testament tribe of Naphtali is. It is the one referred to as exhortation in Romans 12:6-8 which reads:

“[6] Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; [7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

This gift of exhortation is a unique ministerial grace. The word “exhortation” is from a Greek word which means “a stirring address”. The gift of exhortation is a grace to speak words that stir people up to align themselves with God’s purposes and instructions, irrespective of how unwilling they may have initially been. It is a gift that is a manifestation of the power of God described in Philippians 2:13 which reads:

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

It is a spiritual ability to cause people to both will and do God's pleasure by speaking goodly words to them.

Another thing that Jacob prophesied over Naphtali in Genesis 49:21 is that he is “a hind let loose”. In scriptures, a hind is generally identified as being upon high places. Psalm 18:33 says:

“He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.”

And Habakkuk 3:19 says:

“The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.”

As such, “a hind let loose” speaks of one whose heart is set upon the high places (of a higher walk with God and a heavenly focus). Thus, a hind let loose speaking goodly words is one who both has a heavenly focus and is graced with utterance to make others willing to do (and to actually do) the will of God in any matter. Such is the person described in Isaiah 52:7, which reads:

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that

publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

They are people of the mountain (the high place of a high standard of relationship and service to God), and a people of utterance (bringing forth good tidings of good). They exhibit the grace mentioned in Colossians 4:6:

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

The speech of anyone with the Naphtali stone is indeed with grace, seasoned with salt. Also, Deuteronomy 33:23 says:

“And of Naphtali he (Moses) said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord : possess thou the west and the south.”

The word “blessing” is from a Greek word “berâkâh” which means benediction, and benediction means “the utterance of a blessing”. Such is the testimony of Naphtali. Their goodly words of exhortation are utterances that release a blessing that stirs people to greater fervency in God by energizing them to both will and actually do God’s pleasure.

Do you have this stone on your ephod?

Joseph

Speaking of Joseph, Jacob (in Genesis 49:22-26) said:

“[22] Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: [23] The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: [24] But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) [25] Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: [26] The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”

Here, it is said of Joseph that He is a fruitful bough by a well who has a strong bough and whose hands are made strong by the hands of the Almighty (to shoot forth arrows). Then Deuteronomy 33:13-17 says:

“[13] And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, [14] And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, [15] And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, [16] And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. [17] His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.”

Here, it is said of Joseph that his land (which speaks of his heritage) is blessed of the LORD with precious things. That is, Joseph’s land (because of the blessing of the LORD) contains: precious things of heaven, good supply of dew, good supply of the deep (the fountains of water), precious fruits produced by the sun, precious things produced by the moon, chief things of the ancient mountains, precious things of the lasting hills, and precious things of the earth.

What do these mean?

For the physical tribe of Joseph in the Old Testament, the land was a physical land blessed with lovely physical attributes, but for the spiritual tribe of Joseph in the New Testament church, their land is representative of their portion of spiritual inheritance — that is, the gifts and graces peculiar to their tribe.

The precious things of heaven are the rain and the dew, which speaks of the revelation of God’s word, while the precious things of the deep are the water basins drawn up through wells, and it speaks of depths of mysteries in the Word of God. We know this because in scriptures, water is used to represent the Word of God. Ephesians 5:26 says:

“That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”

So water (depending on the context) represents the Word of God, and rain is water. Hence, the rain and dew (which are the precious things of heaven) represent the revelations of God’s word, while the water basins drawn up through wells (which are the precious things of the deep) also represent depths of mysteries in the Word of God.

The precious fruits of the sun represent anointing for illumination (light). This is because the sun gives light. In

scriptures, light represents understanding. Psalm 119:130 says:

“The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.”

As such, the light of illumination (the precious fruits of the sun) indicates that those with the stone of Joseph have a unique entrance into understanding the Word of God (especially, in the prophetic context).

The precious things put forth by the moon speaks of the hidden treasures of darkness (a gift of revelation into hidden things: either things hidden in the Word of God, or things hidden in the spiritual or physical realm).

The chief things of the ancient mountains and precious things of the lasting hills speaks of heights of prophetic vision. We can see an example of this in Numbers 23:3-10. It reads:

“[3] And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the Lord will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place. ... [9] For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. [10] Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the

death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”

In this passage, we see that Balaam climbed to a high place (a mountain) to hear from God and to gain a prophetic perspective of Israel. As such, the chief things of the ancient mountains and precious things of the lasting hills represent heights of prophetic vision and insight.

The precious things of the earth refers to a good soil that produces good harvest. It represents a heart that has good comprehension of the Word of God. The Lord Jesus used a similar symbology in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-23. Verse 23 says:

“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

So indeed, “the precious things of the earth” represents a heart that has a good comprehension of the Word of God.

These are the testimony of the tribe of Joseph, and they can be summarized as: a strong revelatory grace both in Word and in Spirit. 1 Corinthians 13:2 is also a good summary of the ministerial capacity of this tribe. It reads:

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and

though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

The phrase “... have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; ...” is a good description of the ministerial capacity of the New Testament tribe of Joseph. They are graced in unveiling mysteries and in revealing things prophetically (through the Word of God, as well as through dreams, visions, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, word of prophecy, etc.). The man Joseph was a good example of this tribe — he manifested these graces of prophetic insight as well as a heart to both understand mysteries and to explain them to others.

In summary, those with the stone of the tribe Joseph are prophets and teachers (or prophetic teachers) — a sort of double portion as was the case with Joseph who received the double portion blessing.

Have you obtained this stone on your ephod?

Dan

In Genesis 49:16-18, Jacob prophesied about Dan, saying:

“[16] Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. [17] Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that

his rider shall fall backward. [18] I have waited for
Thy salvation, O Lord.”

In this passage, in verse 16, it is said of Dan that he is a judge — that he shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Meaning, he is a judge that shall judge according to the standards of Israel.

A judge is one who evaluates a thing to know whether it is good or not; if it is in conformance to God’s purpose or not; if it is from the Spirit of God or from the spirits of darkness. Such is the grace of the New Testament tribe of Dan.

Next, in verse 17, Jacob referred to Dan as “... a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward”.

The analogy of a serpent may seem strange, but the summary of this pronouncement is that Dan is a ministerial capacity that can stop the invading armies of the enemy. The horse and its rider represent foreign enemies who seek to invade the borders of Israel. In the context of the New Testament, they (the horse and its rider) represent the forces of darkness that seek to invade the people of God (either the individuals or the whole Church). But the Dan anointing is well able to stop such attacks. It is a ministerial grace to both be able to judge a matter and to stop an attack.

Then, in verse 18, Jacob said “I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord.”. Which is to say, the tribe of Dan (by the combination of the grace given to them to both judge a matter and to also stop the advancement of the enemy’s attack) causes Israel to enjoy the salvation of God.

In the Old Testament, the kind of spirit upon the man Samson (minus his weaknesses) is a good expression of the grace given to the tribe of Dan to stop the advancement of the enemy’s attack. And indeed, Samson was from the tribe of Dan. He showed forth the spirit of might with which the forces of the Philistines were destroyed, and salvation was wrought for Israel.

In the New Testament context, the grace to judge a matter is captured in the gifts referred to as “discerning of spirits” in 1 Corinthians 12:10, “government” in 1 Corinthians 12:28, and “he that ruleth” in Romans 12:8. 1 Corinthians 12:10 says:

“To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:”

The “discerning of spirits” is part of the grace to judge things. 1 Corinthians 12:28 says:

“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that

miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

The “governments” is part of the grace to judge things. Romans 12:8 says:

“Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

The “he that ruleth” is part of the grace to judge things.

The burden of this category of graces (that judge things) is to accurately judge a matter (no matter how obscure) and to serve as a defence to the church from an intrusion of the enemy.

Moreover, Moses also prophesied about Dan in Deuteronomy 33:22. He said: “... Dan is a lion’s whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.”

Bashan means “fruitful”. As a lion, the ministerial grace of the New Testament tribe of Dan is able to discern the intrusion of unclean spirits of darkness and leap to judge it to save the church from an infection; and just as it is said that Dan shall leap from Bashan, the Dan anointing operates from a place of fruitfulness in the riches of the Spirit (part of which includes a strong capacity for discerning of spirits).

When the persons with the stone of the tribe of Dan have proper expression in a church, the powers of darkness are unable to intrude to infect the church with sin and darkness.

Do you have this stone on your ephod?

Or are people with this stone present in your local
assembly?

Gad

In Genesis 30:11, when Gad was born, the prophetic destiny of the tribe was summarized in the phrase: “A troop cometh”. It reads:

“[9] When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. [10] And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. [11] And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad.”

Indeed, the name Gad in the Hebrew language means “troop”. Leah gave him this name because the impression she had when he was born is that “a troop cometh” — that is, a troop is coming.

In addition to this, in Genesis 49:19, Jacob prophesied over Gad that a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at last. It reads:

“Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.”

Putting the two passages together, we get the picture of a people who are ordained to fight. They are ordained to recover lost grounds and undo the results of enemy troops.

The New Testament expression of this tribe is captured by the gift of healing, gift of working of miracles, and the gift of faith. They are gifts given by God to deal with different scenarios of satanic oppression, some of which include: sicknesses of different kinds, infirmities that require miraculous intervention (e.g. blindness, lameness, leprosy, cripple, missing body parts, and more). It also includes dealing with witchcraft activities, demonic oppressions, ministering deliverance, etc. Such a category of ministry (of undoing the damage caused by evil troops of darkness) is a line of duty that God has graced the New Testament tribe of Gad to be fruitful in. Meaning, when brethren who have the stone of Gad on their ephod are present in a Church and are allowed to function, the oppressions of the enemy would be undone and made to cease.

Furthermore, in Deuteronomy 33:20-21, Moses prophesied about Gad. It reads:

“[20] And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. [21] And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel.”

From this prophecy, we see that God has given the tribe of Gad an anointing of boldness and capacity as a lion to destroy the enemy, tearing the arm with the crown of the head. Isaiah 61:1-2 speaks of executing the vengeance of God to the intent that liberty will be brought to the captives and opening of the prisons to them that are bound.

It reads:

“[1] The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; [2] To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;”

The grace to do this is available to all children of God, because we all have the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, a strong measure is manifest in the Gad ministerial grace. As Deuteronomy 33:21 says, persons who have found the stone of Gad have obtained the ministerial capacity to stand in judgment to “... execute the justice of God ...” by delivering people from the oppression of the enemy (the troops of evil spirits).

Do you have the Gad stone on your ephod?
Or do you know someone who has the Gad stone?

Asher

The prophecies concerning Asher in Deuteronomy 33:24-25 and Genesis 49:20 give insight into the ministry category that Asher represents in the New Testament Church. Deuteronomy 33:24-25 reads:

“[24] And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. [25] Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

This prophecy says that Asher will be blessed with children. It means that the Asher ministry has the capacity to bring

many to the born-again experience — that is, to bring people to the point of making a decision for Christ.

The prophecy also says “... let him be acceptable to his brethren ...”. This is a prophetic declaration indicating that the Asher grace is acceptable to people. That is, when this ministry is in operation, it has the capacity to arouse the interest and attention of people such that they are willing to listen even to the point of deciding to give their lives to Christ.

The next thing the prophecy says is that “... let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass ...”.

The foot and the shoes are symbols for preaching the gospel with an effect of taking over the hearer to become a territory (or dominion) of the King (God). We can see this from Ephesians 6:15, Isaiah 52:7, and Joshua 1:3. Ephesians 6:15 (in describing part of the whole armour of God) says:

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”

And Isaiah 52:7 says:

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

Then Joshua 1:3 says:

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”

From the first two passages, we can indeed see that the feet and shoes represent the preaching (or publishing) of the Gospel (the good tidings of good), and when combined with the third verse we can understand that the symbol of the feet and shoes includes the effect of taking over the places (the people) we preach to by the power of the Gospel. Paul said in Romans 1:16:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

This is the power of the feet and shoes, and it is said of Asher that his shoes shall be iron and brass; meaning, the Asher ministry, in sharing the gospel, shall have a strong effect on people, just like iron is known in scriptures to be strong. Daniel 2:40 for example says:

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things : and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”

And Psalm 2:9 also says:

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

Also, Jeremiah 23:29 says:

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord ; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

Hammer is generally made from iron. As such, these three passages further help us to understand that saying that Asher’s shoes shall be iron indicates that the Asher ministry (of sharing the Gospel) shall have a strong impact of breaking strongholds of error and unbelief in the heart of people.

The prophecy also says “... let him dip his foot in oil ...”. Oil represents the anointing. As such, “... let him dip his foot in oil ...” (combined with what we have understood so far from the other parts of the prophecy) means that the Asher ministerial category is that of an anointed preacher of the Gospel whose preaching has a strong impact on the hearer (like iron) and yields the result of taking over the hearer to become God’s possession (as God said to Joshua) by bringing them to the point of being born-again as a child of God (as the prophecy says that Asher is blessed with the capacity to produce children).

Genesis 49:20 gives more insight into the nature of the grace that the New Testament tribe of Asher has in delivery of the Gospel. It says:

“Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.”

THIS WAY—*Securing your place in the Final Revival*

This prophecy says that the bread that the Asher grace produces is fat, and the dainties (the meals) that this grace produces are royal. The bread being fat means that it is rich with nutrients, and the meals being royal means that it has a certain degree of sophistication to it (that is, beyond the usual). Bread and meals (dainties) represent the Word of God. Hebrews 5:12-14 says:

“[12] For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. [13] For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. [14] But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

And in John 6:48, Jesus (who is called the Word in John 1:1 and Revelation 19:13) said:

“I am that bread of life.”

John 1:1 says:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

And Revelation 19:13 (from 11 to 16) says:

“[11] And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful

and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. [13] And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. [15] And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

So we see from these passages that bread indeed represents the Word of God. As such, the bread being fat means that the manner with which Asher preaches the Gospel is rich with nutritious information (truths), and the meal (dainty) being royal means that there is a certain degree of sophistication to the truths that Asher delivers.

Persons who express the Asher grace (that is, persons with the Asher stone on their ephod) tend to also function as Apologetics, which are deep, detailed and comprehensive evangelical teachers of the Gospel who are

able to pull on truths in scriptures, science, history, archeology, etc, to establish the Christian faith and break to pieces (as iron) strong foundations of unbelief and falsehood to bring people to the born-again experience where they become children of God.

Whereas Zebulun points to an evangelical ministry laced with power, Asher speaks of an evangelical ministry with more emphasis on the quality, depth and variety of information contained in the gospel delivery.

What it shows is that in God's plan relative to evangelism there is room for fruitfulness either through the demonstration of power via miracles and healings or by the qualitative preaching of the gospel. Both are effective pathways of bringing forth children unto the Lord. If therefore you find one of them manifesting in your life (for example Asher, but you seek power like Zebulun), do not look down on it (Asher) and refuse to make use of it. Rather, be fruitful, as it is very powerful to work miracles of internal transformations and healings that change lives. Remember, the Asher feet is strong like iron and brass.

Ability to operate in both the Zebulun and Asher grace (that is, having those two stones on your ephod) will make for an even more potent priestly evangelical ministry.

Do you have the Asher stone on your ephod?

Simeon

Genesis 29:33 tells us of when Simeon was born. It says:

“And she (Leah) conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.”

In this passage, we see that Leah was hated (that is, she was not the favoured wife). This pained her and caused her to cry out to God in prayer, and God responded by giving her a son (so as to increase her value in the eyes of her husband). When she gave birth to this Son, she called his name Simeon (which means “heard”), because she realized that God had heard her prayers and wanted to change her situation of being hated.

This circumstance that produced the name “Simeon” is a prophetic clue to the nature of the ministry that the New Testament tribe of Simeon represents — a ministry that causes the prayers of God’s people to be heard so that their unpleasant situations can be changed for good.

How is the Simeon ministry able to accomplish this testimony of causing the prayers of God’s people to be heard? We have a clue in Joshua 19:1-9 where the inheritance of Simeon is described. It reads:

“[1] And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. [2] And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, or Sheba, and Moladah, [3] And Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Azem, [4] And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, [5] And Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, [6] And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhem; thirteen cities and their villages: [7] Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages: [8] And all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. [9] Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.”

From this passage, particularly verses 1 and 9, we see that the inheritance given to the tribe of Simeon was within the inheritance given to the tribe of Judah. In other words, Simeon’s portion was out of Judah’s portion. Meaning,

Simeon's inheritance shares the same or similar characteristics as Judah's inheritance.

We have previously understood the tribe of Judah as representing the ministry of praise and thanksgiving — not just the singing of songs — but a ministry that truly exalts and magnifies God before His people. And we have also understood that the God-ordained result of this Judaic ministry is that the sceptre will not depart from their ministrations. Meaning, whenever the Judah grace ministers the authority of God is stirred up to be present to bring about help to the people of God and judgment to the enemy.

Having this in mind, we can understand that when we are told that Simeon's inheritance is out of the portion of Judah's, it means that Simeon represents a ministry that is also defined by offering praise, worship and thanksgiving to God (just like Judah).

One of the cities of Judah given to Simeon as inheritance is worthy to take note of. It is the city of Beer-Sheba mentioned in Joshua 19:2 (which we read earlier). It says:

“And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, or Sheba, and Moladah,”

Beer-Sheba means “well of the sevenfold oath” or in short “well of an oath”. Abraham gave it this name in Genesis 21:22-33. It reads:

“[22] And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: [23] Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. [24] And Abraham said, I will swear. [25] And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. [26] And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. [27] And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. [28] And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. [29] And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? [30] And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness

unto me, that I have digged this well. [31] Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware both of them. [32] Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. [33] And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.”

In this passage, we see that Abraham complained to Abimelech that Abimelech’s men forcefully took a well of water that he (Abraham) had dug, and then they both swore not to harm one another onwards. This was the oath for which Beer-Sheba gained the name “well of the sevenfold oath”. Then Abraham built an altar and called upon the LORD, the everlasting God, and of course, he was heard. Meaning, Beer-Sheba represents an oath (a commitment from God) to ensure the preservation of His people’s interests (like Abraham’s interest was preserved). It is an oath that is furnished (or enforced) at the well.

What does a well represent for us?

John 4:14 says:

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall

give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

In this passage, Jesus said He has water to give those who believe in Him — such water that when they drink will spring up in them as a well of living water.

What is the nature of this water?

John 7:37-39 says:

“[37] In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. [38] He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [39] (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

Here, Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit, referring to Him as rivers of living water that shall flow out of those who believe in Him. Notwithstanding, Ephesians 5:26 also used water to represent the Word of God. From verse 25, it reads:

“[25] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; [26] That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”

As such, putting the two together, we can understand that “a well of water” represents words (utterances) that are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Remember that it is at the well that the Beer-Sheba oath was taken, and Beer-Sheba is in the portion of Judah that was given as Simeon’s inheritance. It thus reveals that a key characteristic of the New Testament Simeon ministry is the grace for inspired utterances that are within the context of offering praise, worship and thanksgiving unto God.

What kind of utterances are these?

Ephesians 5:19-20 says:

“[19] Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; [20] Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”

And Colossians 3:16 says:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

These two passages speak of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and inspired melodies offered unto the

Lord. These are the kind of inspired utterances that the New Testament Tribe of Simeon are graced to excel in. It is a grace that the New Testament tribe of Judah also expresses; but in the context of Simeon, we see that it is by offering such praise to God (by inspired utterances) that they are able to yield the result of causing the prayers of God's people to be heard.

This ministry category is truly blessed and is a blessing. When persons with the Simeon stone on their ephod minister in a congregation, the result is that God is magnified and the prayers of God's people are answered, which results in people obtaining breakthroughs and unpleasant situations being taken away (just as Leah's situation of being hated was taken away).

Do you have the Simeon stone on your ephod?

Benjamin

Deuteronomy 33:12 tells us of the prophecy that Moses gave concerning Benjamin. It reads:

“And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.”

In this passage, it is said of Benjamin that he shall dwell between the shoulders of the Lord. The shoulders are the place of bearing burdens. In the case of the Lord, the burden on His shoulder is the governance of His Kingdom. Isaiah 9:6 (speaking of the Lord Jesus) says:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and
His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince
of Peace.”

The passage says “... the government shall be upon His shoulder ...”. As such, when Deuteronomy 33:12 says that Benjamin shall be between the Lord’s shoulders, it indicates that God has given Benjamin the grace to function in a governing capacity in the Church, which implies that God has endued Benjamin with an array of ministerial abilities that enable the Benjamin grace to be relevant in almost all matters of need in the Church.

Genesis 43:34 and Genesis 45:22 are two passages that show the advantage that Benjamin has for dwelling between the shoulders of the Lord. Genesis 43:34 says:

“And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.”

This passage tells us of when Joseph was sharing food to his brothers (when they reunited in Egypt). He sent food to each of them on the table, but to Benjamin he gave five times more food. Similarly, Genesis 45:22 says:

“To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.”

Here, we are told of when Joseph sent his brethren to return home to bring Jacob (their father) and their families to Egypt, so as to escape the famine. He gave each of them a new cloth for the journey, but to Benjamin he gave five new clothes (that is, five times the number of cloths as he gave to others).

What these two events prophetically indicate is that, in terms of dispensing food to the house of God, Benjamin has been given the capacity to bring forth five different kinds of nourishment; and in terms of ministerial capacity, whereas other tribes can function in one ministry, apart from Joseph who has a double portion, Benjamin can function in five different ministerial graces.

That being the case, what kind of ministry does Benjamin represent? It points to the estate of the five-fold ministry; which is why there were frequent references to five.

The best way to appreciate this is to think of the ephod of the priests, while also remembering that, physically speaking, Benjamin was the last born.

What this means is that for every ministerial grace (tribe) that God works into you, a stone is added to your ephod. The Lord Jesus has said in Matthew 10:25 and Luke 6:40 that a servant can be as His master. Meaning, just as the Lord Jesus evidently has all twelve stones on His ephod, we also can mature to such an estate. And just as Benjamin is the final born, so also Benjamin is the final stone that will be assigned to a believer as it marks the height of maturity in priestly ministry — the point when a person can function in all five of the five-fold ministry.

The initial eleven stones can be assigned in any order (unique to each person's destiny and walk with God); but the Benjamin stone (the five-fold ministerial grace) is the final stone that is assigned. Meaning, one person can start with Levi and another with Judah, but their final (their last stone) will be Benjamin.

Interestingly, it is good to note that all twelve tribes can be categorized within the brackets of the five-fold ministry. It's just that particular ministerial emphasis will differ from tribe to tribe, even within the same category. For example: Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali can be categorized as Evangelists (but with different flavours); Issachar, Dan and

Joseph can be categorized as Prophets (but again with different flavours); Levi, Joseph and Asher can also be categorized as Teachers (but with different flavours); Reuben, Gad, Judah and Simeon can be categorized as Shepherds (but each with unique emphasis), etc. However, Benjamin can be categorized as all five: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Teacher and Shepherd.

We can learn more about Benjamin by considering the prophecy that Jacob gave in Genesis 49:27. It reads:

“Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.”

In this passage, it is said of Benjamin that he shall ravin as a wolf. This speaks of the swiftness, purposefulness and capacity with which the Benjamin grace will advance the purposes of God, destroy the works of the enemy and recover the souls of men as holy spoils (victory prizes) to the Kingdom of God. Such is the ministerial capability of one who arrives at this estate.

It is evidently an advantage to a local assembly when there are persons who have the Benjamin stone.

Do you have the Benjamin stone on your ephod?

Remember that we began to discuss the twelve tribes because (in Revelation 21) the first attribute that was described about the New Jerusalem (the Church's Jerusalem identity) is that it has a complete count of twelve pearls (which are twelve precious expressions) — one for each of the Church's twelve New Testament ministerial tribes.

Now that we have discussed them, and also seen that each Christian is a priest (and thus has an ephod in which are to be the stones of the twelve tribes, beginning with the stone of the ministerial tribe that the Christian was born-again into), we can then ask two questions for you to prayerfully reflect on:

1. Do you know what tribe you were born-again into (that is, do you know which is the first stone on your ephod)?
2. So far, through the course of your Christian pilgrimage (like the kingdom seeker who seeks after goodly pearls in Matthew 13:45), how many precious stones have you received on your ephod?

The more you are able to answer these questions with clarity, the more of a blessing you will be to the local assembly God has placed you in — especially for those assemblies that are outside Babylon and are labouring (like

Zerubbabel) to rebuild the local church into the fullness of the Jerusalem identity.

We would now proceed to discuss the second attribute that was described of the Church's Jerusalem identity in Revelation 21.

2. Twelve foundations

The next attribute that is mentioned in the description of the New Jerusalem (the Church's Jerusalem identity) is that it has twelve foundations in which are written the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. We can find this in Revelation 21:14. It reads:

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

What does this mean?

It means that the Church's operations are to be based on the teachings and examples of the apostles of Jesus Christ as documented in the holy scriptures. Paul explains this in Ephesians 2:19-22. It reads:

“[19] Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of

the household of God; [20] And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone ; [21] In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: [22] In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

In this passage, Paul is explaining that we all as children of God are fit together to build a spiritual habitation (tabernacle) for God. And Peter in 1 Peter 2:5 says the same thing, adding that we are lively stones fitted together to build a spiritual house for God. It reads:

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

This habitation that Paul speaks of and the house that Peter speaks of is what is shown in Revelation 21 as the tabernacle (the house) of God. Revelation 21:2-3 reads:

“[2] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

Here, we see that the tabernacle (the spiritual house that we are fitted together to build) is referred to as New Jerusalem, which from verses 9 and 10 is a symbol for the Church (the bride of Christ, as we have discussed already). Revelation 21:9-10 says:

“[9] And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. [10] And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,”

As such, when Paul said “... ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets ...” he was referring to the foundations of the New Jerusalem (the Church).

Meaning, when it is shown in Revelation 21:14 that the city has twelve foundations in which are written the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, it is a symbolic way of saying that the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean for the Church to be built on the foundation of the apostles of Jesus Christ?

It simply means that the teachings and manner of faith set forth (declared and exemplified) by the apostles constitutes the foundation on which the Church is built. An example of this is described in Acts 2:41-47. It reads:

“[41] Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. [42] And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. [43] And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. [44] And all that believed were together, and had all things common; [45] And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. [46] And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, [47] Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Verse 42 says “... they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine ...”. This is the practical expression of a body of believers (a Church) being built on the foundation of the apostles. It simply means that everything about the Church

is done in accordance with the teachings and examples of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

As such, a body of people pressing (like Zerubbabel) towards the Jerusalem identity involves them structuring themselves and operations in full accordance with the doctrines (the teachings) of the apostles of Jesus Christ, which is what is documented in Scriptures.

Meaning, they do not give place to self-generated ideas or non-scriptural ways of doing things, and they also do not accept or promote any doctrines that the apostles did not preach (that is, cannot be learnt from what is written in scriptures). This is how they maintain their purity as a Church and their stability as a spiritual house that God can live in — a palace from where He can affect their community with righteousness and power for salvation.

In addition to this, there is another message in the fact that the New Jerusalem has twelve foundations.

We have already understood that the twelve foundations represent the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. But beyond them, another thing to take note of is that the apostles are twelve — that is, they are more than one.

Think about it:

Why did the Lord Jesus have to pick twelve?

Why not just one apostle?

It is because His template for Church leadership is plural leadership after Himself, not singular. In other words, Jesus is the Head of the Church (and the Head of every local assembly); He is the only singular, and after Him, the next level of Church leadership (according to His design) is a group of elders (a plural leadership), not a single person.

The twelve apostles are an expression of His template and were thus the first elders of the Church; and in every city that they set up a Church, they established it according to that pattern. We see an example in Philippians 1:1. It reads:

“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:”

The Greek word translated as “bishops” also means “elders”. This passage neatly shows the ideal structure of the Church under the Headship of Jesus Christ. In other words, the order is: Jesus (the Head), the bishops or elders (the primary leadership), the deacons (the secondary leadership), and the saints (everyone in the Church). This is the pattern that the apostles set up in every church that they planted, which is consistent with the way the Lord Jesus set them (the apostles) up before His ascension.

Meaning, by appointing twelve apostles (elders) and not one, the Lord Jesus gave us a template that every Church assembly should be headed by a group of elders and not by one man.

But the popular pattern today is a one man leadership, and under that one man is a group of elders (or pastors). Meaning, that one man leader is effectively taking the place that should be reserved for Christ alone (just like the Israelites used a physical king to replace God who was their real King).

This one-man leader system was introduced by the Great Whore (the Roman Catholic Church) who claimed that Peter was the head of the apostles, which is why the popes are called the descendants of Peter. They often make reference to verse 18 of Matthew 16:15-19 which reads:

“[15] He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? [16] And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. [17] And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. [18] And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. [19] And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of

heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Here, Jesus was saying that Peter had obtained a revelation from the Father that He (Jesus) is the Christ (the Son of the Living God); and He went on to say that it is upon the rock of this revelation that He will build His Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail. That is why in Ephesians 2:20 and 1 Peter 2:6, Jesus is referred to as “... Chief Corner Stone ...”. As such, Jesus never intended for Peter to be “head” over the apostles. But they were all to strengthen one another with the different dimensions of the revelation of Christ that they progressively received from God, which is why when Peter was being shy to communicate with the Gentiles, Paul rebuked him openly. This was recorded in Galatians 2:11-14. It reads:

“[11] Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; [12] for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. [13] And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. [14] But when I saw that they

were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

So, it was not a one-man system where Peter was the successor to Jesus and the custodian of revelation. No! There were twelve apostles; each progressively received revelation from God about Christ and carried out ministry with great authority on the strength of the revelation of who Christ is. And as in the case mentioned in the above scripture, they also strengthened one another to remain in the way of Christ and not deviate into error. This was the kind of leadership template that the Lord Jesus setup for the Church, so that no one man's limitation can hinder the Church, but rather a richer supply of Christ is dispensed to the Church through a plural body of elders (mature Christians).

As such, any assembly of believers seeking to journey out of Babylon towards the Church's Jerusalem identity (like Zerubbabel) must restructure themselves away from a one man leadership (leaving that spot for only Jesus Christ) and rather have a plural leadership made up of elders (a group of persons who are relatively spiritually more mature than most in the assembly). This way Jesus alone is exalted, and all loyalty is to Him and not to any man.

3. Same length, breadth and height

This is another quality that is mentioned in the description of the New Jerusalem (the Church's Jerusalem identity) in Revelation 21. Revelation 21:15-16 says:

“[15] And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. [16] And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”

In this passage, we see that part of the characteristics of the New Jerusalem is that it is a cube — the length, the breadth and the height are the same measurement. But what does this mean?

We can gain a clue from 2 Chronicles 3:8, Ezekiel 41:4 and 1 Kings 6:20. 2 Chronicles 3:8 reads:

“And he made the most holy house, the length whereof was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents.”

In this passage, we are told of when Solomon built the temple of God (an upgrade from the tabernacle that Moses built). By the God-given design, the tabernacle (the temple) has three sections: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. And in this description of the temple that Solomon built, we are told that the Most Holy Place section of the temple has the same length and breadth. Ezekiel 41:4 also echoes the same thing. It reads:

“So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, This is the most holy place.”

Here, we are told of a vision that Ezekiel had. In that vision, he was taken to the temple and the angel that was with him measured the Most Holy Place and showed that its length and its breadth are equal. But 1 Kings 6:20 gives an even clearer picture, showing all three dimensions. It reads:

“The Holy of Holies was twenty cubits in length, twenty cubits in width, and twenty cubits in height (a cube), and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the cedar altar [with gold].” (AMP)

This passage says it clearly. It is the 1 Kings rendition of the description of the temple that Solomon built. It shows that the dimensions of the Holy of Holies (or Most Holy Place) is such that the length and the breadth and the height are equal. It is a trademark design for the Holy of Holies.

That being the case, the spirit of prophecy uses these trademark dimensions as a symbol to represent the Most Holy Place. Meaning, when it is said of the New Jerusalem (in Revelation 21:16) that its length, its breadth and its height are equal, it is a symbolic way of saying that the New Jerusalem (the Church) is a Most Holy Place for God to dwell in; or simply put, that the Church is Most Holy.

As such, part of the emphasis for a Zerubbabel people heading towards rebuilding the Church's Jerusalem identity is that they ensure that their assembly (the local Church they are part of) is Most Holy unto God. That is, they should make deliberate effort to not tolerate any form of sin or worldliness (be it at a congregational level or in the lives of individual members of the Church).

By maintaining such a disposition of not tolerating sin, when such an assembly is "measured" in the spirit, they will have the trademark dimensions of having their length, breadth and height equal, and thus be reckoned as a Most Holy Place that is conducive to house the manifest presence of God who is Most Holy.

4. A wall measurement of one hundred and forty four (144) cubits

Another attribute of the New Jerusalem that is mentioned in Revelation 21 is that the wall of the city has a measurement of 144 cubits. We can see this in Revelation 21:17. It reads:

“And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.”

What does this mean?

The first thing we may observe is that it is the wall of the city that has the measurement of 144 cubits. In other words, it is the measurement of the thickness of the wall. But what is the wall of the city and why is its measurement important?

The wall of the city is where all of the stones used to build the city are concentrated on. In other words, when 1 Peter 2:5 says that each Christian is a lively stone fitted together to form a spiritual house for God, this city (New Jerusalem) is that spiritual house and all the stones used to form the city are all in the wall.

We know this (that all of the stones used to form the city are in the walls) because one of the previous attributes of the city that we looked at is that the wall of the city has 12 foundations in which are written the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. Based on what we are told in Ephesians 2:19-22, it is the Church that has the twelve apostles as her foundation (with the Lord Jesus being the chief foundation stone). As such, if we are told that the wall of the city has the twelve apostles as foundations, then it shows that the wall of the city is made up of the Church. In other words, that is where all of the stones used to make the city are located.

This means that we are to envision the city like a box — a box that God dwells in. This is because in a box all the material used to make the box is contained in its walls (its exterior), while its inside is hollow (to be occupied by whatever is to be put inside the box).

Such is the case for the New Jerusalem city (the Church). The city represents the Church and yet the wall is also the Church. It means the city is like a box designed to be occupied by God. That is why in Revelation 21:3, the city is referred to as the tabernacle (the house) of God; because God is the one who is to dwell in it.

It therefore shows that being part of this city means to be part of those in whom God dwells. It is no wonder why

1 Corinthians 3:16 says that each Christian is a temple of God and 1 Timothy 3:15 says that the Church is the house of God.

It means that God is to dwell in each of us (we are to be boxes or containers or carriers of His person and His glory), and when we come together as a Church, together, we make up the complete house of God, such that by looking at the Church, people can see God.

That is why all the blocks of the city (the Church) are in the walls (because we form a house for God to dwell among men), and that is why the measurement of the walls is important, because it reveals the kind of people that would make up the Church (the city) that God would dwell in when God is done perfecting His Church.

So what does the wall measurement of 144 cubits mean?

What kind of people does a measurement of 144 represent? The emphasis is the “144”. What does 144 mean? It means to be both “chosen” and “faithful”; or put differently, it means to be an “overcomer”.

How do we know this?

According to prophetic biblical numerology, the number 12 represents “chosen”. For example, the Lord Jesus chose 12 disciples, who constitute 12 foundations; and God ordained (by divine choice) that there be 12 tribes of Israel (not 11, not 7, but 12).

How does this relate to 144? Mathematically, 144 is derived from 12 times 12 (that is, 12 raised to the power of 2). As such, 144 prophetically means the chosen within the chosen (the 12 within the 12).

Looking through scriptures, we find the passage in Revelation 17:14 that gives description to this “chosen” within the “chosen”. It reads:

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

Our focus is on “... they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful”. Scripturally, we know that all have been called, but those who respond to the call of God then become the chosen. But beyond being chosen, there is a need to be faithful. Those who are faithful are yielding to a higher call and by doing so become “chosen” again, not just as believers in Christ Jesus, but as overcomers. Meaning, 144 represents the Christians that are overcomers.

As such, according to this attribute (of the wall of the New Jerusalem having a measurement of 144 cubits), it indicates that any body of people pressing towards the Church's Jerusalem identity must give diligence by the help of the Holy Spirit, to not just be a Church of mediocre Christians, but be an overcomer Church of faithful Christians that excel in all the will of God.

5. A street that is pure gold like transparent glass

This is yet another attribute that is shown in the vision described in Revelation 21 about the perfected New Jerusalem. We can find it in Revelation 21:21. It reads:

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.”

The passage says “... and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass”.

What does it mean that the New Jerusalem has a street made of pure gold that is like transparent glass?

It is first important to note that the street is singular and not plural. Meaning, the vision showed that the New

Jerusalem has only one street. The street is only one because it is a symbol for the “walk” of the people who make up (or belong to) the city. Physically speaking, a street is a path that people walk on (at least in the olden days before cars were invented). And scripturally, a person’s “walk” represents the person’s “way of life”. The following passages show this. In each of them, the word “walk” can be interchanged with “live”. Mark 7:5 says:

“Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?”

John 8:12 says:

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Romans 4:11-12 says:

“[11] And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: [12] And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”

Romans 6:4 says:

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Romans 8:1 says:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Romans 13:13 says:

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.”

Ephesians 4:17 says:

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,”

Ephesians 5:8 says:

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”

2 Corinthians 5:7 says:

“For we walk by faith, not by sight:”

From these passages, we can see that the word “walk” is used symbolically to refer to “live” or “way of life”. As such,

when it is said of the New Jerusalem that the city has a street of gold (which we have understood to represent a “walk” symbolized by gold), we can now further understand that it means that the people that make up the New Jerusalem (that is, the people that make up the Church) have a way of life that is symbolized by gold.

What kind of life does gold represent?

The following scriptures give us a clue. Malachi 3:3 says:

“And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

In this passage, the phrase “... purge them as gold ...” shows that a key aspect of how gold emerges beautifully is that it is purged. Meaning, for the street of gold to be as beautiful as it is shown in the vision, it must have been purged.

As such, we can understand that the kind of life that the street of gold represents is a Christian life that has been purged of everything that God does not want to see, which is: sin and self and any other kind of participation of unclean spirits (including in the mind). Another passage is Job 23:10. It says:

“But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

Closely related to this is Zechariah 13:9 which reads:

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”

1 Peter 1:7 also similarly says:

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”

These three passages all point to the fact that gold is tried (tested to be verified). As such, with this, we can understand that the street of gold represents a Christian life that has been tested and proven (or verified) to be true.

The Lord Jesus gave an example of such testing in His parable of the sower in Matthew 13. In that parable, he spoke of the seed that landed on the stony ground, that it immediately sprang up and looked like it was making progress, but when persecution came because of the word, such a person (with such a stony heart) became offended and turned aside. We can see this in Matthew 13:20-21. It reads:

“[20] But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; [21] Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”

The persecution is an example of a trial, as the 1 Peter 1:7 passage (quoted above) shows. It serves to verify that indeed, regardless of situations and circumstances, a person would maintain their Christian faith and consecration.

As such, these passages teach us that the street being gold indicates that it represents a Christian life that has been tested through different personal and public situations and has been proven to be true.

Therefore, this attribute of the New Jerusalem (that it has a street of gold that is as pure as transparent glass) indicates that any body of people pressing towards the Church's Jerusalem identity must commit to purging themselves of all forms of sin, worldly lusts, and selfishness, and must also continue to encourage themselves to maintain the purity of their Christian faith no matter the personal, public or corporate trials that they face, so that their Christian walk can be categorized as precious gold in God's sight.

6. No temple in it because God and the Lamb are the temple

We can find this attribute of the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation 21:22. It reads:

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

What does this mean?

Physically speaking, and as we can see in the Old Testament, the temple is the building where God is to be worshipped — the place where God meets with His people. But in the New Testament, we are told that both as individuals and as a Church, we are the temple of God. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

And 2 Corinthians 6:16 says:

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

1 Timothy 3:15 also says:

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

So we see from these verses that as Christians, each of us are temples of God, and as a Church, we are also the temple of God. Meaning, the New Jerusalem (the symbolic picture of the Bride of Christ — the Church) is actually a temple of God, which is why it is called the tabernacle of God in Revelation 21:2-3:

“[2] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

This is important to take note of (that the New Jerusalem is the temple of God), as it helps us to understand what it means when it is said that the New Jerusalem had no temple in it.

In other words, since the New Jerusalem is a temple of God, then what does it mean that there is no temple in it? The verse is saying that rather than the people of the city going to a particular temple to worship God, God is the

temple they are to go to. As such, in order to worship God, one needs to be in God (not go to be in a physical place of worship).

The message therefore is basically what Jesus was explaining to the woman by the well in John 4:21-24. It reads:

“[21] Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. [22] Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. [23] But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. [24] God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

In this passage, Jesus was explaining to the woman that the hour was coming (and indeed has already come) where people need not journey to the physical temple in the physical Jerusalem to worship God, but rather, anyone who wants to worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Meaning, to worship God, one must be in the Spirit — that is, in communion with His Spirit. That is what it means when Revelation 21:22 says that God is the temple

of the New Jerusalem. It means that everyone in the city worships God by having a direct relationship with Him.

As such, for any body of people pressing on (like Zerubbabel) out from being a local expression of the Babylon temple to being rebuilt as a local expression of the Church's New Jerusalem identity, they must emphasize that each person in the assembly have a direct, personal and healthy relationship with the Holy Spirit, as that is how everyone who is part of this city worships God — in Spirit and in Truth.

No need for the light of the sun or the moon because the glory of God and the Lamb lightens her

This is another attribute we are told about the New Jerusalem, and it is recorded in Revelation 21:23 which reads:

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

This is the same testimony as the Most Holy Place of the temple. Whereas, the sun is the light of the Outer Court section, and the golden candlestick is the light of the Holy Place section, the shekinah glory of God is the only source of light in the Most Holy Place section of the temple.

What this means for the New Jerusalem is that her source of illumination comes from God alone and not from any natural sources.

Light represents understanding or perspective. For example, Psalm 119:130 says:

“The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

So light is representative of understanding. When someone understands a matter, it can be said that the person has light concerning the matter. As such, the sun (which the New Jerusalem does not need) represents natural light — that is, understanding that is gained by natural information, analytics, or reasoning. The light of the glory of God on the other hand represents divine light. That is, understanding that comes from the revelation that the Holy Spirit gives concerning every situation.

What this attribute is therefore showing is that the New Jerusalem (the Church) is to be a people that individually and corporately operate according to the light of the understanding and instructions that the Holy Spirit gives, and not by the wisdom of men or the world. Meaning, any body of people who (like Zerubbabel) have departed from Babylon and are journeying towards the Church’s Jerusalem identity must seek to operate only according to

the leadings of the Holy Spirit and not the wisdom or good ideas of men.

These are the attributes that describe the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, and they serve as a guide to any local assembly that seeks to adopt the Zerubbabel posture — the posture of no longer continuing in the Babylon template but rather being reorganized to align with the Jerusalem template — just as Zerubbabel departed Babylon to return to rebuild Jerusalem (the Promised Land) that was in ruins.

Remember that we got into this discussion about Jerusalem in response to chapter 4's question: *Where are the eagles taken?* The first section of the answer was "Outside the city", while "Jerusalem" was the second section of the answer. It therefore means that (keeping all that we have discussed about Jerusalem in mind) the believers who are "eagles" are those whom the Lord will move to go out of the Babylon assemblies where they had been to Jerusalem assemblies (assemblies that have either arrived at or are consciously pressing towards the Church's Jerusalem identity).

We would now proceed to discuss the third section of the answer: "The Wilderness".

Section 3: The Wilderness

This is another angle from which to understand where the Lord is gathering His eagles for nourishment. Whereas the previous section (Jerusalem) was along the lens of “the departure out of Babylon”, this section (The Wilderness) is along the lens of “the exodus out of Egypt”.

Remember that we understood that the backslidden Church system is spiritually referred to as Babylon, Sodom or Egypt.

Section 2 (the previous section) was looking at where God is taking His eagles to from the standpoint of returning from Babylon, and from that standpoint, the destination is Jerusalem.

Section 3 on the other hand is looking at where God is taking His eagles to from the standpoint of coming out from Egypt, and from this standpoint, the destination is the wilderness (and the promised land).

Then Section 4 will be looking at where God is taking His eagles to from the standpoint of departing out from Sodom, and from that standpoint, the destination is the mountain.

Meaning, we can learn about where God is taking His eagles to by looking at Jerusalem (which we have done), the

wilderness (which we are about to do), and the mountain (which we would do afterwards). As such:

What is the wilderness that God is taking His eagles to?

The wilderness, in this context, is symbolic of gatherings (church fellowships) that are outside the city-like structure of the Church System (the Egypt).

“Outside the city-like structure” means that these assemblies are not structured according to the pattern of the church system, but according to God’s structure for the Church, similar to how the Israelites operated according to God’s structure in the wilderness, and no longer according to the Egyptian structure, after the exodus. A scriptural record of this new order that Israel operated with in the wilderness is mentioned in Numbers 24:1-2. It reads:

“[1] And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. [2] And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.”

Balaam saw the people of Israel arranged in their tents, according to their tribes. From above, the view of their arrangement had a unique pattern that was God’s design.

Each tribe had their particular position within the arrangement pattern — a pattern that was visible from God’s perspective. This is what Balaam saw when he climbed the mountain to view the people of Israel from above. It was a kind of order that caused the Spirit of God to come upon him to make him bless them instead of curse; and they began to structure themselves in this order when they got to the wilderness, after the exodus, because they had no inspiration nor opportunity to operate in such order while in Egypt. We see a New Testament version of this in Colossians 2:5. It reads:

“For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”

The passage says “... yet am I with you in the spirit ... beholding your order ...”. Paul was commending the Colossian Church for the spiritual order they operated with. So there is indeed a scripturally approved and commendable spiritual order that a Church should operate with, and there is an unapproved order that is not commendable. The unapproved order of Church operation is what is found in the known Church system (the Egypt), while the commendable spiritual order of Church operation is what can be found in the “wilderness

assemblies” (those who have come out of the Church system).

Nevertheless, these things would become clearer as we begin to consider some scriptures, beginning with Revelation 12:14. It reads:

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

In this passage, a time is one year, times is two years, and half a time is half a year; meaning “a time, and times, and half a time” is actually “three and half years”, which is also “a thousand two hundred and sixty (1260) days” or “forty-two (42) months”, according to the Jewish calendar of thirty days in a month and twelve months in a year.

Why is this important? It is because it helps us to see that the ministry to the woman mentioned in this Revelation 12:14 is the same ministry spoken of in Revelation 12:6 and Revelation 11:3. For reference, Revelation 11:3 says:

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Here, we can see the same three- and half-year period that was mentioned in Revelation 12:14. In this Revelation 11:3

passage, it is referred to as “a thousand two hundred and threescore (1260) days”, while in Revelation 12:14, it is referred to as “a time, times and half a time”. We can also see that the “two wings” of the “great eagle” in Revelation 12:14 are referred to as God’s “two witnesses” in Revelation 11:3. Revelation 12:6 (from verse 1) reads:

“[1] And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: [2] And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. ... [5] And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. [6] And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

Here again, in verse 6, we see the same “a thousand two hundred and threescore (1260) days” that was mentioned in Revelation 12:14. We also see that the “great eagle” with “two wings” in Revelation 12:14 (which are referred to as God’s “two witnesses” in Revelation 11:3) are here referred to as “they” in Revelation 12:6. Who are the “they”? They are the “man child” born from the woman in Revelation 12:5. In other words, the two wings of the great eagle are

the two witnesses and the great eagle is the man child. Meaning, the man child born from the woman (as a great eagle emerging from among a community of eagles) are the ones that will use their two wings to carry out the ministry of the two witnesses.

Who are the man child?

To know who they are, we first need to know who the woman they are born from is. Unlike the woman in Revelation 17 who is called the great whore and is representative of the backslidden church system (as we have discussed previously), the woman in this Revelation 12 represents the collection of all whom God considers as “My people”. Remember that in Revelation 18:4, God said: “... Come out of her, My people ...”, and in 2 Timothy 2:19 it is written: “... The Lord knoweth them that are His ...”. All whom God considers as “My people” (regardless of whether they are still in assemblies that operate after the Babylon template or whether they have already come out of her) are the ones that make up the woman in Revelation 12. She is a symbol for the true bride of Christ in preparation — those whom God considers His own, not those who claim to belong to Him.

That said, what does Revelation 12:2 mean when it says that the woman is pregnant, is experiencing delivery (birthing) pains, and gives birth to a man child (a male child)?

It simply means that among God’s “My people” that make up the woman, there is a subsection of them (a “My people” within the “My people”) who are pressing on in God to emerge into a new category. Their emergence into the new category is what is symbolically referred to as “birth” — that out of the larger category of the woman a portion of them would emerge into a new category. This new category is called “man”, which is why Revelation 12:5 refers to them as “man child”. The “child” in “man child” does not imply that they are immature, it is simply indicative of the fact that they emerged (were “birthed”) out of a larger category.

So why is the new category called “man”?

It is because this portion of the woman has pressed on to become overcomers (individually and corporately) and have the Lord Jesus well established as their head (individually and corporately), which makes them to be a complete man (head plus body). We can see this explained in Ephesians 4:7-15. It reads:

“[7] But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [8] Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. [9] (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? [10] He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) [11] And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: [14] That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; [15] But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”

In this passage, we see that the reason that Jesus has given spiritual gifts to His people — the reason He has made some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some teachers, some shepherds — is so that Christians can be

perfected and so that the body of Christ (the Church) can be nourished.

From the passage, we see that God’s desired end goal for seeking the perfecting of Christians and the nourishing of the body of Christ is so that we can come to the point of being a perfect corporate man that measures up to the stature of the fullness of Christ.

A perfect corporate man that measures up to the stature of the fullness of Christ is a fellowship of people who are headed by Christ Jesus and who operate together as one in unity of Spirit, unity of the faith, and unity of the knowledge of the Son of God, and have matured individually and corporately to the point where every capacity that our Lord expressed when He was on earth can also be found among them because everyone knows their place in the body and functions faithfully in the ministry that God has called each person into. This is to be the goal of every Christian and every assembly of God’s people. It is the reason why Jesus gave spiritual ministerial gifts — so that His Church can arrive at this stature of maturity.

As such, the picture in Revelation 12 of the woman being pregnant and giving birth to a man child is a prophecy that (whereas some of the woman (God’s “My people”) may still be in “Egyptian assemblies” and would later be brought out) there shall be a people within the

woman (God's "My people") who have already come out into "wilderness assemblies" and who will make use of God's provisions of spiritual ministerial graces to press on to this point of together becoming a Church that can be described as a perfect man headed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such Church fellowships that become recognized (or recategorized) by heaven as a perfect man are the ones that become part of the "man child" category — the new Church category that would be distinct from the rest of the woman.

It is this category of Churches that are symbolically referred to in Revelation 12:14 as a great eagle, and they are the ones God will empower and use to bring all of the woman out of "Egyptian assemblies" to be nourished in "wilderness assemblies" in order to be ready for the promised land of marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This exodus-like move to the wilderness to prepare the Church for the marriage supper of the Lamb is the final revival.

Being part of such Church fellowships (that are categorized as perfect man) prior to them being empowered is a key way to secure your place as part of God's agents of the final revival.

It is a scenario like how God used Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt to the wilderness in preparation for the promised land after first bringing Moses out and training him in the wilderness for about 40 years.

Similarly, those whom God will use (like He used Moses) to bring their brethren (the rest of the woman) out of the Egypt Church system are people whom He has already brought out to the wilderness assemblies and is preparing them for the empowerment He is about to release, so that they can carry out a ministry of preparing the woman for marriage to the Lord Jesus — bringing her to the point described in Revelation 19:7 which reads:

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him:
for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife
hath made herself ready.”

This is the point that the ministry of the man child people will bring all of the woman to.

As they (the man child) are referred to as a great eagle, so also, they will lead all of the woman (God’s “My people”) to be eagles; as they have come to corporate unity as a perfect man headed by Christ, so they will lead all of God’s “My people” to operate in unity under Christ; and as they are overcomers, so they will lead all of God’s “My people” to be overcomers. When Revelation 12:5 says that the man

child will rule all nations with a rod of iron — “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: ...” — it is another way of saying that they are overcomers, because in Revelation 2:26-29, Jesus said:

“[26] And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: [27] And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. [28] And I will give him the morning star. [29] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

It is the overcomers that will join the Lord Jesus to rule all nations with a rod of iron — that is what we are shown in Revelation 19:11-16:

“[11] And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. [13] And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and

clean. [15] And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The overcomers are the ones referred to in verse 14 as the armies in heaven. They are the ones that join the Lord Jesus to rule all nations with a rod of iron (as shown in verse 15).

This is what the man child people are — an overcomer church — and they will lead all of the woman (God’s “My people”) to also become overcomers.

We can learn more about how God will use them to lead all of the woman to also become overcomers by looking at what is said in Revelation 11 about the two witnesses’ ministry that the man child church in every city will carry out.

Interestingly, by calling them “great eagle” in Revelation 12:14, it was a clue to the fact that the ministry they will carry out will be like the ministry Moses carried out in bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness in preparation for the promised land. Exodus 19:4 says:

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself.”

The eagles' wings in this passage refers to the ministry of Moses and Aaron (Exodus 7:1, Hosea 12:13), whom God used to bring Israel out of Egypt after smiting it with plagues. So by referring to the man child people as a great eagle with two wings in Revelation 12:14 it is a clue that they will do something similar to Moses, and we can see this clearly in Revelation 11:3-6 which reads:

“[3] And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. [4] These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. [5] And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. [6] These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”

In this passage, we can see allegorical references to things both Elijah and Moses did. We would begin with the Elijah aspect, after which we would continue to the Moses aspect.

1. A ministry like Elijah

Verse 6 tells us that they have power to shut heaven so that it does not rain in the duration of their ministry. This statement is an allegorical pointer to the ministry of Elijah. He was the one in biblical record who shut heaven so that it did not rain as judgement because Israel had followed Jezebel's deception to worship baal instead of God. We can find this in 1 Kings 17-18. Verse 1 of 1 Kings 17 reads:

“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.”

So we see that Elijah was the one who in the days of the Old Testament shut heaven so that there was no rain. As such, by saying that the two witnesses have power to shut heaven so that there is no rain, the passage (Revelation 11:6) is giving us a clue that the two witnesses are ordained to carry out a ministry like that of Elijah — to turn the people of God away from the influence of “Jezebel”.

In the Lord Jesus's letter to the church in Thyatira, in Revelation 2:18-20, He used Jezebel to represent false teachers and false prophets. It reads:

“[18] And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass; [19] I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. [20] Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

Why did the Lord use Jezebel to represent false prophets and teachers? It is because the physical Jezebel (who was married to king Ahab) brought a foreign religion into Israel from her own country, and she taught some of the priests and the people of Israel to worship false gods and engage in practices that are abominable to God.

As such, in the New Testament, Jezebel represents persons who are leaders in the church who teach ideas to the Church that are not inspired by God from the scriptures, or who operate in prophecy or power by a spirit that is not the Holy Spirit.

These are the kind of people that lead in the backslidden church system. They are “jezebels”, and the Elijah-like

ministry of the two witnesses is to deliver the people of God from their systems and influence.

2. A ministry like Moses

In addition to telling us that they have power to shut heaven so that it does not rain, Revelation 11:6 also tells us that they have power to turn waters to blood and to smite the earth with plagues. Again, this is an allegorical pointer; this time, to Moses. Moses was the one God gave power to turn waters to blood and to smite Egypt with plagues for the purpose of delivering the people of Israel out of Egypt and bringing them into the wilderness so that they can advance into the promised land. We can find this in Exodus 7:14-20. It reads:

“[14] And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. [15] Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. [16] And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. [17]

Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord : behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. [18] And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. [19] And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. [20] And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.”

In this passage, we can see that God used Moses and Aaron to turn waters to blood in Egypt, and verse 16 tells us the reason God did it. It was: “... Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness: ...”. This was also the reason for the other plagues that God brought on Egypt through Moses. As such, by saying that the two witnesses

have power to turn waters to blood and to smite the earth with plagues, the passage (Revelation 11:6) is indicating to us that the ministry of the two witnesses would also be similar to the ministry Moses carried out, which was to deliver God’s people from the control of pharaoh and bring them out of Egypt to the wilderness in preparation for entering the promised land.

Indeed, the church leaders that are “jezebels” are also “pharaohs” in the sense that they have a strong controlling influence over their congregations, but God has ordained an exodus of his people out of the “Egypt” church system to the “wilderness” church fellowships through the ministry of the two witnesses.

This is what Revelation 12:14 shows when it says that the woman (God’s “My people”) would be taken to the wilderness by “the two wings of the great eagle” (which is another name for the two witnesses).

“Taken to the wilderness” implies “taken from Egypt” (in the context of the allegory), which is why they are called “great eagle” similar to how God referred to Moses in Exodus 19:4 as an eagle whose wings (ministry) He used to bring Israel out from Egypt (like we discussed earlier).

This is the kind of ministry that God will use the man child (the overcoming church of overcomers) to carry out in these last days to facilitate an accelerated preparation of

the woman (God's "My people") into a Church without spot or wrinkle that is ready for marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

3. A ministry enabled by the latter rain

Another thing we are told about the two witnesses in Revelation 11 is that they are two olive trees and two candlesticks. Revelation 11:4 says:

“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”

There are two messages contained in this symbolic description of the two witnesses. The first message is that the two witnesses will be made up of a mature gentile expression of the overcomer church and a mature jewish expression of the overcomer church. We know this because in Romans 11 the symbol of an olive tree is used to represent the jewish church and the gentile church.

Romans 11:13-25 says:

“[13] For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, [14] if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. [15] For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

[16] For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. [17] And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, [18] do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. [19] You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." [20] Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. [21] For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. [22] Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. [23] And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. [24] For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? [25] For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this

mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”
(NKJV)

To appreciate what this passage is saying, we should keep in mind what Jesus said in Revelation 22:16. It reads:

“I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

Jesus said He is the root of David. The point we came to pick here is that Jesus is the root. Even in the context of the Romans 11 passage that talks about the olive trees, Jesus is the root. He is the root of the good olive tree that represents the Jewish people. This is because their nation began with a covenant with God.

So the Romans 11:13-25 passage is saying that the Jews, because of their unbelief and rebellion, were cut off from the olive tree (of which Christ is the root), while the gentiles who believed in Christ Jesus were grafted in. Then it goes on to say that when the fullness of the gentiles are come in (to Christ), the eyes of the Jews will be fully open and they also would be grafted in again. In other words, Christ is the root of the good olive tree. The gentiles were a bad olive tree. When grafted into Christ, the gentiles

become a gentile branch of the good olive tree; and when the Jews are grafted in back into Christ, they become a Jewish branch of the good olive tree. Each of these branches of Christ (the Jewish branch and the gentile branch) are themselves olive trees. Meaning, Christ Jesus is the root of two olive trees (the Jewish olive tree and the gentile olive tree). That is why Ephesians 2:10-16 says:

“[10] For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. [11] Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— [12] that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13] But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. [14] For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, [15] having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, [16] and that He might reconcile

them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”

Verse 11 says that there was once an enmity (a division) between the jews and the gentiles relative to the inclusion in the covenant of God — the gentiles were initially alienated. But verse 13 says that Christ Jesus has brought the gentiles near; and verses 14 to 15 say that He has made both (jews and gentiles) one and has created in Himself one new man from the two.

This is the same thing Romans 11 is saying, which is why Jesus Christ is the joining point of the two olive trees (the Jewish olive tree and the gentile olive tree). Relative to Him (as the joining point), each olive tree is a branch (or a stem) from the root that He is, though each branch is an olive tree.

As such, the first message contained in referring to the two witnesses as “two olive trees and two candlesticks” is that the two witnesses (globally) would be made up of a mature expression of the Jewish overcomer church and a mature expression of the Gentile overcomer church.

This is important because it reveals that the emergence of the two witnesses (or the man child church) marks the beginning of the provision of the latter rain upon God’s people, with the two witnesses themselves being the first

beneficiaries of the rain. How do we know this? Romans 11:15 says:

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”

This passage shows us two milestones that are connected with God’s work of salvation on the earth. The first milestone is: the casting away of the jews; and the second milestone is: the receiving of the jews. The first milestone took place around the time of the Lord Jesus’s ministry on earth and the early days of the Church after the Holy Spirit was released on the day of Pentecost. The Jews were cast away from being part of Christ because of their unbelief and rejection of Him as their Messiah. But like Romans 11:1-7 says, the eyes of a small portion of them were opened so that they could see and be saved. Romans 11:1-7 says:

“[1] I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. [2] God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, [3] "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? [4] But what does the divine response say

to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." [5] Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. [6] And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. [7] What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

So we see that the Jews were indeed cast away (or blindness came upon them) because of their religion and emphasis on works — they were unable to see and acknowledge Jesus as the Christ (their long-awaited Messiah). But not all of them were blind. God saved for Himself a remnant (a small portion of them) who believed. The apostles and early disciples were part of this remnant, as well as many Jews today who have believed in Christ Jesus — they are the remnant among the Jews.

Notwithstanding, the unbelief of the Jews (and the withholding of advantageous grace from them that would have made them see Jesus as the Christ) created the opportunity where God could declare everyone (Jews and Gentiles) as unbelievers, so that He can have mercy on everyone. This is what Romans 11:30-32 says:

“[30] For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: [31] Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. [32] For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.”

In other words, if the Jews had believed Christ Jesus and yielded themselves to Him, the situation would have just been a continuation of the Old Testament where only the Jews were God’s people and everyone other peoples were gentiles lost in pagan practices. But as they refused Christ, they were considered unbelievers along with the gentiles and because of the covenant God has made with their fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) they would need to be saved; only this time, since they have been grouped along with the gentiles, the gentiles can also be saved along and no longer be a separate people.

This is the phase that is still on-going (though rounding up) — the phase where the Jews are cast away (with only a small portion of them being saved). In this phase, Romans 11:15 explains that the character of God’s work of salvation would largely be described as “the reconciling of the world”, which is why we would observe the power of the Holy Spirit moving through all nations (through available

vessels) to raise believers and disciples of Christ Jesus to the glory of God.

When this phase is complete (or using the language of Romans 11:25, when the fullness of the gentiles have come in to Christ), then God's work of salvation on earth would move to the next phase which is: the receiving of the jews. In this phase, Romans 11:15 shows that the character of God's work of salvation upon the earth can be summarized as: "life from the dead". This is a dimension that the people of God (Christians) have not seen yet but would soon see.

How would we know when things have advanced from the phase of "the casting away of the Jews" to the phase of "the receiving of them"?

It is by the emergence of the Jewish olive tree. The "receiving of them" is evidenced by the emergence of the Jewish olive tree, and this passage (Romans 11:15) is saying that it will result in "life from the dead". When this happens, then the era of "life from the dead" would begin. This is the era prophetically referred to as "the latter rain", while the previous era of the "reconciling of the world" is the era referred to as "the former rain". Hosea 6:3 says:

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning;

and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth”.

And James 5:7-8 says:

“[7] Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. [8] Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

The Hosea 6:3 passage tells us that the Lord Jesus shall come unto us as the rain. The analogy of the rain is in the context of harvest. In other words, “the Lord coming to us as the rain” means that He is coming to enable us to grow and mature as His plants that He can harvest. Isaiah 61:3 says we shall be called “... trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified”. So the coming of the Lord as the rain means He is coming to enable us to mature into the stature He is expecting us to mature into (just like a farmer waters his plants, expecting that they would mature to the stature he is expecting them to). The stature our Lord Jesus is expecting us to mature into is full conformance to His image. Romans 8:29 says:

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His

Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

We are ultimately to become the sons of God (brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King). Meaning, as He is holy, we are to be holy; as He is divine, we are to be divine; as He is totally submitted to the Father, we are to be totally submitted to the Father. This is what Jesus is looking forward to, and His coming as the rain is to enable us get to this point (just as physical rain enables plants grow to their full maturity).

That being the case, the James 5:7 passage (as well as the Hosea 6:3 passage) tell us that in God’s salvation program, there are two comings of the Lord — that is, two eras of the Lord’s enablement upon His people. These two comings are symbolically referred to as the former (the early) rain and the latter rain.

The early rain began when the Lord came on the day of Pentecost to enable His people with His Spirit so that they can rise above fear and human limitations to overcome sin and express the power of God to conquer the works of satan in the lives of men and establish the Kingship of Christ.

From that time until now, as people become born-again and experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they enter the provision of the former rain. It is on the strength of the former rain that the first phase of God’s work of salvation

on the earth (the reconciling of the world) has been advanced. But we look forward to the dawning of the era of the latter rain — the era when the Holy Spirit’s power of life over death will be fully at work in His people (beginning with the two witnesses).

Knowing all these, we can therefore understand that when Revelation 11:3 says: “And I will give power unto My two witnesses, ...”, this power is actually referring to the unleashing of the latter rain — the era of “life from the dead” (because of the establishment of the Jewish olive tree).

The apostles were the first set of people to carry out a ministry on the strength of the former rain. Likewise, the two witnesses (the Jewish and Gentile overcoming church) would be the first set of people to carry out a ministry on the strength of the latter rain. Meaning, they would be the first ministry within the church age to experientially (by their own lives) demonstrate victory over death as part of their testimony of the supremacy of Christ Jesus over the powers of darkness. That is what is shown in Revelation 11:7-13. It reads:

“[7] And when they (the two witnesses) shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. [8]

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. [9] And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. [10] And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. [11] And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. [12] And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. [13] And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

While our goal for quoting these verses is to see how the two witnesses (by their own lives) will demonstrate victory over death (because of the enablement of the latter rain) as part of their ministry of bearing witness to the victory of

Christ over all works of darkness, it is also interesting to note that aside from a couple differences, what we are told in these verses about the experience of the two witnesses resembles the experience of our Lord Jesus Christ (as He finished His physical ministry on earth).

i. Finished the mission

First, verse 7 says: “... when they shall have finished their testimony ...”. In other words, they shall finish their testimony. “Their testimony” means their ministry of prophesying (declaring the word of God) as His witnesses.

According to verse 3, they shall carry out this ministry for 1260 days, and as we discussed earlier, it shall be a ministry to prepare the woman by bringing her out of the “Egyptian” church system to “wilderness” assemblies by turning her away from the influence of “Jezebels” and “Pharaohs” (false church leaders).

Their preaching (testifying) shall accomplish this result (exodus from Egypt to the wilderness). As such, when verse 7 says: “... when they shall have finished their testimony ...”, it means: when they have finished their ministry (the 1260 days ministry) which includes the goal of the exodus and the preparation of the woman (God’s “My people”) as a bride (a Church) ready for marriage to the Lamb (in other

words, bringing the woman to the point spoken of in Revelation 19:7 — “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”).

The idea of finishing their ministerial assignment is like what our Lord Jesus said of Himself in John 17:4 as He prayed to His Father at the end of His earthly ministry (just before Judas betrayed Him into the hands of the religious leaders to be crucified by the Romans). From verse 1, He said:

“[1] ... Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: ... [4] I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. ... [11] And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. ...”

Here, Jesus is saying that as far as His earthly ministry is concerned — that is, as far as His ministry in a natural body on earth is concerned — He had finished it; and it was a three- and half-year ministry.

Him saying “... I have finished the work ...” did not mean that He is now idle, rather, it meant that He had finished the natural phase of His ministry and would be transitioning to another form of ministry, which is what He did after He resurrected — He ministered to the

disciples for forty days with the glorious body (with which He appeared and disappeared at various times), teaching them about the Kingdom of God (by also showing them His resurrected glory). Acts 1:3-4 says:

“[3] During the forty days after His crucifixion He appeared to the apostles from time to time, actually alive, and proved to them in many ways that it was really He Himself they were seeing. And on these occasions He talked to them about the Kingdom of God. [4] In one of these meetings He told them not to leave Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them in fulfillment of the Father's promise, a matter He had previously discussed with them.” (TLB)

This 40-days ministry was the second phase of His ministry, after He had finished the three-and-half-year phase that He did in a natural body. This 40-days ministry was in the glorious body, after His resurrection.

Likewise, for the two witnesses, when Revelation 11:7 says that they finished their testimony, it means that they finished the three and half years (1260 days) phase of their ministry, after which they will transition into another ministry.

It is like what was said of Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4. A vision of olive trees emptying their oil into a candlestick

was shown, and the interpretation that the angel gave in verses 6 to 9 was:

“[6] ... This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. [7] Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. [8] Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, [9] The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.”

In this passage, it is said of Zerubbabel that as his hands have laid the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem that was being rebuilt, his hands shall also finish it. Meaning, by the help of the Holy Spirit, Zerubbabel will accomplish the mission of rebuilding the temple of God.

This is part of the testimony of the two witnesses. They would not only be used by God to begin [the work of nourishing God’s “My people” (the woman), and to bring them out of the Egyptian church system to wilderness assemblies], they would also be used to finish it. Meaning, they will bring the woman to the point where she is made ready for marriage to the Lamb (as said in Revelation 19:7).

This is what Revelation 11:7 means when it says that the two witnesses shall finish their testimony (their ministry). It means that just as Jesus finished the earthly ministry He came to accomplish (which interestingly was also for three and half years, which is 1260 days), so also they will finish their 1260 days ministry by actually accomplishing the task of making the woman ready for marriage to the Lamb (after bringing her out of the Egyptian/Babylonian Church system and nourishing her in “wilderness” (non-Egyptian) assemblies).

ii. Killed in the street of the great city

Verse 8 says: “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

Physically and logically speaking, if you see a dead body on the road, you will conclude that the person was killed there. In other words, it is not common that a person dies somewhere and is then dragged to the street. Rather, if a person’s body is found on the street, then it is most likely that they were killed on the street; perhaps by an accident or by a mob or by some other means; but a body seen on the street can be taken as the person was killed on the street.

As such, when verse 8 says that the dead bodies of (the people that make up) the two witnesses shall lie in the street of the great city, it means that they were killed in the street of the great city. But what does this mean? What does it mean that they were “killed in the street of the great city”?

We first have to remember that the great city is a symbol and not a physical city, and as such, its street would also be symbolic, just like the street of gold in the holy city in Revelation 21 is symbolic.

Remember that when we discussed the qualities of the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation 21, we noted that the holy city (which represents the perfected Church) is described as having one street — a street of gold. We understood that, physically speaking, especially in biblical times when there were no cars, a street is a path that people walk on; and as such, a street can be used to represent a person’s walk (which we understood as a symbol for a person’s way of life). We quoted scriptures like “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16), and “For we walk by faith, not by sight:” (2 Corinthians 5:7), to show that indeed “walk” represents “way of life” or “the way you live”. Meaning, “walk in the Spirit” in Galatians 5:16 can be restated as “live in the Spirit” and “walk by faith” in 2 Corinthians 5:7 can be restated as “live by faith”.

Returning back to Revelation 11:8, it is interesting to note that the great city also has one street, and applying what we understood from the street of gold, we can understand that this street of the great city represents the way of life (or the character) of the people that make up the great city.

Remember that we had discussed earlier that the great city is the great whore (the adulterous bride) mentioned in Revelation 17:1-18 which represents the backslidden Jewish religious system (in the Old Testament), and the backslidden church system (in the New Testament); because, in the Old Testament, the people of Israel were the ones that God was in a symbolic marriage covenant with, while in the New Testament, the Church is the one that Jesus is in a symbolic marriage covenant with.

Knowing this, we can understand that when Revelation 11:8 says that [the two witnesses shall be killed and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city where also our Lord Jesus was crucified], it means that the character of the persons in the backslidden church system (particularly the leaders) would be what will orchestrate the killing of the two witnesses, just like the character of the persons in the backslidden Jewish religious system (particularly the leaders) was what orchestrated the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What was the character of the persons in the backslidden Jewish religious system? It was greed, selfishness, betrayal, lust for power and influence, spiritual blindness, hypocrisy, etc. These were the things at play in them that made them work with the Roman Empire (the beast of their time) to crucify the Lord Jesus.

Revelation 11:8 is therefore saying that the persons in the backslidden church system would basically do the same thing to the people that make up the two witnesses. That is, the persons in the backslidden church system, particularly the leaders (the Pharaohs and Jezebels), because of their carnal character of hypocrisy, greed, spiritual blindness, lust for power and influence, etc., will work with the beast of the last days (the one mentioned in Revelation 13 — the return of the sixth expression of the beast as the eighth (the modern-day version of the Holy Roman Empire) like we discussed earlier in Chapter 2) to kill the people that make up the two witnesses.

But like we mentioned earlier, such an occurrence would only be an opportunity to demonstrate victory over death (just like Jesus did), and it would be possible for them because of the enablement of the latter rain (the era of life from the dead, like we discussed earlier).

iii. Dead for three and half days

The next thing we are told about the two witnesses that is similar to the experience of our Lord Jesus is that they shall be dead for three and half days. Though it is not obvious, three and half days is the same as three nights and three days, which is the time period that our Lord Jesus was physically dead. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus said:

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Indeed, Jesus was physically in the grave for three nights and three days. Meaning, he was physically dead for a total duration of three and half days.

How is three and half days the same as three nights and three days? We are told that our Lord Jesus was crucified in the afternoon. From afternoon to the first night was half a day; from the first night to the second night was the first day; from the second night to the third night was the second day; from the third night to just before the fourth night was the third day. Jesus resurrected before the fourth night, but it was in the morning that it was known that He had resurrected when Mary came to check the tomb. As such, the half day and the three days sum up to three and

half days. Meaning, three nights and three days is the same as three and half days.

So, when we are told that the two witnesses would be dead for three and half days, it is the same thing as saying that they shall be dead for three nights and three days, which is similar to the experience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

iv. Resurrected and ascended in a cloud

This is another thing we are told about the two witnesses that is similar to the experience of the Lord Jesus. Revelation 11:11-12 reads:

“[11] And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. [12] And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”

These verses tell us that after being dead for three and half days (three nights and three days), the two witnesses will resurrect and ascend up to heaven in a cloud. This is basically the same thing that happened to our Lord Jesus. Acts 1:9-11 says:

“[9] And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. [10] And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [11] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

This passage shows us that after resurrecting (and ministering to His disciples for forty days as a heavenly being) Jesus ascended up to heaven and a cloud covered Him out of their sight. The phrase “a cloud received Him out of their sight” in verse 9 is similar to saying “He ascended up to heaven in a cloud”, which is the way it is said of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:12 — “... And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”

The link between Jesus and the man child (two witnesses)

Why did we go into looking at these similarities between the experience of the Lord Jesus and the two witnesses? It was to further highlight how the life our Lord Jesus lived

on earth (particularly His three-and-half-year ministry, His death, His resurrection and His ascension) is a prophecy about the experience that the two witnesses would have.

A reason this link (between the Lord Jesus and the two witnesses) is important is because the life the Lord Jesus lived on earth gives a clue to the kind of life the people that make up the two witnesses will live when they receive the enablement of the latter rain (which would happen when the Jewish olive tree (the Jewish overcomer church) is established alongside the Gentile olive tree).

It is a kind of life that would be evidenced in the kind of powerful and supernatural ministry they will carry out, and the manner with which they will demonstrate victory over death — a manner (and context) of victory over death similar to that of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who refused to worship “the image of the beast” and then had the opportunity to demonstrate power over fire.

Notwithstanding, to fully appreciate this point — that the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus is a prophecy or clue about the man child (the two witnesses) — it is needful to point out that the three and half years (the 1260 days) spoken of in Revelation 11 and 12 (that is, the ministry duration of the two witnesses) is a time period that is within another time period — the 70 weeks of years (the 490 years) spoken of in Daniel 9:24-27. Daniel 9:24-27 says:

“[24] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. [25] Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. [26] And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

In this passage, Daniel is told that seventy weeks are determined to be the duration in which the matter of the salvation of his people shall be accomplished.

Daniel probably thought that the “thy people” referred to the physical Jews, but they actually referred to the spiritual Jews (believers in Christ Jesus, which includes both physical Jews and physical Gentiles). 1 Peter 1:10-12 tells us that the prophets in the Old Testament (which includes Daniel) did not know the time or the people they were prophesying about. They were actually referring to the New Testament saints (except where the context clearly points to the physical Jews). In this Daniel 9:24-27 passage, it is even obvious that it is referring to the spiritual Jews because the things listed in verse 24 are the things that our Lord Jesus has accomplished and shall accomplish for those who become born-again in Him (both Jews and Gentiles).

That said, the passage is speaking of a period of seventy weeks (seventy sevens). The word translated to English as “weeks” actually means a group of seven. So it could be a group of seven days, months or years. In this case, it is a group of seven years. Meaning, seventy sevens is actually 490 years (70 times 7 years). The passage says that in this period, six things will be accomplished:

1. Finish the transgression
2. Make an end of sins

3. Make reconciliation for iniquity
4. Bring in everlasting righteousness
5. Seal up the vision and prophecy
6. Anoint the most Holy

The passage then explains how the years would play out. It says that from the time when the commandment is given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to when the Messiah (which is Jesus Christ) is revealed, there shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks — a total of 69 weeks (which is 483 years).

True to it, from the time when Cyrus (king of Persia) gave the command to rebuild Jerusalem (a command that was later reaffirmed by Artaxerxes) to when the Lord Jesus was declared as the Son of God at the water baptism in Jordan, there was a total of about 483 years.

Then, for the remaining one week (seven years), the passage (in verses 26 and 27) says that Messiah (which is Jesus) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (the final seven years). Which covenant? The one that contains the six things listed in verse 24. Meaning, out of the 490 years, it is actually in the final seven years that Messiah will accomplish the details of the covenant. In other words, the final seven years can be referred to as Messiah's week (Messiah's seven years).

Nevertheless, the passage also states that (though the final week is when Messiah shall accomplish the covenant)

in the midst of the week, Messiah shall be cut off (by “the people of the prince that shall come”). Meaning, halfway into the seven years (which is after three and half years), Messiah will be killed by the ruling world power of the time.

True to it, after our Lord Jesus was publicly declared by God to be the Son of God (which is around when He began His ministry), three and half years later He was crucified by the Roman Empire (the ruling world power of the time). In other words, the Lord Jesus carried out His ministry for three and half years and was then cut-off as prophesied, leaving three and half years remaining in Messiah’s week.

It is this remaining three and half years in Messiah’s week that is referred to in Revelation 11 and 12 as the ministry duration of the man child (two witnesses). Meaning, the two witnesses (the combination of the Jewish and Gentile overcomer churches) are prophetically reckoned as a people in whom Christ Jesus will return to complete His remaining three and half years in Messiah’s week. This is part of what verse 10 of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 refers to when it says:

“[7] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, [8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that

obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: [9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; [10] When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

Verse 10 says that Jesus shall come to be glorified in His saints. Meaning, it would be like what 2 Corinthians 5:19 said about Jesus:

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, ...”

That is, just as God was in Christ, but it was Christ that people were physically seeing, so also Christ Jesus would return to be glorified in a people. Physically, the world would be seeing these people, but it is actually Christ in them that will be doing the mighty things that would bring Him glory. Now, this is something that already began since the early rain that came on the day of Pentecost, but the full measure of it would be made manifest first in the two witnesses when the latter rain comes upon them; and they shall be used as the Lord’s corporate body to complete the last half of Messiah’s week (the final three and half years — 1260 days).

These are the things we learn from the Egypt-Wilderness lens — that is, the provision that God has put in place to gather His eagles out of Egypt to the wilderness, to be prepared for the promised land of marriage to the Lord Jesus (the Lamb of God), as well as the manner of people that God will use (like He used Moses) to accomplish this business.

Remember that we got into this discussion about the Wilderness in response to the chapter 4 question: Where are the eagles taken? The first section of the answer was “Outside the city”, the second section of the answer was “Jerusalem”, while “the Wilderness” was the third section of the answer. We would now proceed to consider the fourth section of the answer — “the Mountain”.

Section 4: The Mountain

This is yet another angle from which to understand where God is taking His eagles to. So far, we have understood that the non-ideal scenario is symbolically referred to as Babylon, Egypt and Sodom; and we have considered where God is taking His eagles to from the lens of coming out of Babylon (to go to Jerusalem), and in exodus out of Egypt (to go to the wilderness and the promised land). But now

we want to consider where God is taking His eagles to from the lens of departing from Sodom (to go to the mountain).

What is the mountain that God is taking His eagles to?

We can begin by looking at the account of how God brought Lot out of Sodom in the book of Genesis; just like we looked at Zerubbabel and Nehemiah (when talking about coming out of Babylon) and we looked at Moses and the Israelites (when talking about the exodus out of Egypt). So, speaking about how Lot came out of Sodom, Genesis 19:1-17 reads:

“[1] And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; [2] And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. [3] And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. [4] But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom,

compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: [5] And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. [6] And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, [7] And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. [8] Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. [9] And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. [10] But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. [11] And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. [12] And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out

of this place: [13] For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord ; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. [14] And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. [15] And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. [16] And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. [17] And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”

In this passage, in verse 17, we see that the two angels that God sent to bring Lot out of Sodom instructed him to go to the mountain after coming out of Sodom. It shows that when one comes out of “Sodom”, the wisdom of heaven is that such a one should “flee to the mountain”.

Meaning, when Jesus, in Luke 17, says that the period around when He will return will be like the days of Lot (and also says in Luke 21 and Matthew 24 that at that time people will see abomination in the holy place and should flee to the mountains) one of the things He means is that God will bring many people out of the Sodom that the church system has become and will lead them to “the mountain” as a final move to make His church ready for marriage to Christ. Luke 17:26-37 reads:

“[26] And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. [27] They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. [28] Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; [29] But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. [30] Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. [31] In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. [32] Remember Lot's wife. [33] Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose

it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. [34] I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. [35] Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [36] Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [37] And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

This gathering of God’s eagle saints will be accomplished via the two witnesses who are referred to in Revelation 12:14 as the great eagle with two wings. They, being a body of mature eagles, shall shepherd the rest of their eagle brethren (the woman) out of Egypt to the wilderness (like Moses did) — in other words, out of Sodom to the mountain (like the two angels did).

So, what is the “mountain” that God is taking His eagles to? Exodus 24 provides insight into what the mountain represents. From verse 12 to 18, it reads:

“[12] And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. [13] And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua:

and Moses went up into the mount of God. [14] And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. [15] And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. [16] And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. [17] And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. [18] And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.”

From this passage, we can see that there is a relationship between the mountain and the cloud. We see that the top of the mountain is covered by the cloud, such that anyone who ascends up the mountain will enter into the cloud; or put differently, if anyone is to enter into the cloud, they must ascend up the mountain.

Keeping this in mind, we can appreciate that God’s goal for taking His eagles out of Sodom to gather them in the mountain is actually to gather them in the clouds and keep them there till the coming of the Lord. This is because 1

Thessalonians 4:16-17 lets us see that it is those who are in the clouds that would be caught up into immortality and incorruptibility to meet the Lord in the air (the spiritual realm) as His glorified bride (a people clothed in the heavenly body). 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 reads:

“[16] For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

In this passage, particularly verse 17, we see that the event to be experienced is “to be caught up” — it is a transition or a change from one state to another. Where would this “caught up” take place? It is “in the clouds”. And where would those who are “caught up” be taken to? It is “the air”. In other words, the port of departure of the “caught up” experience is “the clouds”, and the port of arrival of the “caught up” experience is “the air”.

Understanding this makes it clear that what Paul is talking about is not the literal cloud or air. Especially when the same Paul is the one who used “air” symbolically in Ephesians 2:1-2 which reads:

“[1] And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; [2] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”

Here, Paul referred to satan as “the prince of the power of the air”. The word “prince” means chief, or first in rank, or ruler — that is, principal. Meaning, “prince of the power of the air” is “first in rank among the power of the air”.

Paul then moves ahead to also call satan “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”. This clearly shows that since satan (the prince of the power of the air) is a spirit then the air in which he operates is the spiritual realm of this world and “the power of the air” refers to his fellow fallen angels that serve under him as principalities and powers — they are the ones Paul mentions in Ephesians 6:12 that says “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, ...”, and an example of a principality is the prince of Persia that fought with Gabriel for 21 days in Daniel 10:13.

Moreover, in John 3:8, wind is used to represent the move of the Holy Spirit (who operates in the children of God); and in Daniel 7:2 it is used to represent the move of

unclean spirits (who stir up the unsaved to create antiChrist kingdoms). John 3:8 says:

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

And Daniel 7:2-3 says:

“[2] Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. [3] And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.”.

As such, if wind represents the move of a spirit, and from Physics we know that wind is air in motion, then air (the environment where winds blow), in this context, represents the spiritual realm (the environment where spirits operate).

That being the case, we can understand that the air Paul spoke about in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is the spiritual realm; but not just any spiritual realm — it is the spiritual realm of this world.

There are summarily three spiritual realms (that is, three heavens or three expanses) we should care about. There is the third heaven (which is called Paradise in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4). There is the second heaven (which is the heaven of this world). There is the first heaven (which

is the realm of the air — the area where most human activity takes place). It is because this space is physically filled with air that its spiritual equivalent is symbolically called “air”.

When God created the heaven and the earth physically, He also created spiritual equivalents which then rank as the second and first heaven respectively after the paradise (the third heaven).

So 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is saying that the Lord shall descend from heaven (the third heaven). That is, the Lord shall extend the glory of His Kingdom reign from the third heaven (paradise) to the second heaven (the heaven of this world) and to the first heaven (the realm of the air). And then 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is saying that a people shall be caught up (at the sound of the last trumpet) to meet the Lord in the air.

What is this “caught up” at “the sound of the last trumpet”?

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 explains it as the change from mortality to immortality and from a body that is corruptible (can decay) to an incorruptible body. It reads:

“[50] Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth

corruption inherit incorruption. [51] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. [54] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

And to further establish this, 2 Corinthians 5:1-4 explains that apart from the natural (earthly) body we currently have, we also have another heavenly body; and when we put on that body, it can be said that our mortality has been swallowed up by life. In other words, we would have been changed from mortal to immortal. It reads:

“[1] For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: [3] If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. [4] For we that are in this tabernacle

do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

This is the caught-up experience. And Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 said that it is those who are “in the clouds” that would experience this caught up experience (this change experience), to transit from being physical beings to joining the Lord in the spiritual realm as heavenly spirit beings.

So then what is “the clouds” that God wants to gather His eagles to after bringing them out of Sodom?

It is the environment where God changes His people to be conformed to the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How do we know this? In Exodus 24:12-18 (which we read earlier), God asked Moses to come up to the mountain (into the cloud) and remain there, so that He (God) can give him (Moses) the law on tablets of stone. But Hebrews 10:16 says:

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;”

Meaning, for us in the New Testament (the New Covenant), God wants to put His laws in our heart and mind, not on tablets of stone. What does it mean for God to write His laws in our heart and mind? Or how do we know if His laws are written in our heart and mind? Psalm 19:7 says:

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the
simple.”

This passage shows us that the effect of writing the law of the Lord in our heart and mind is that our souls would be converted.

The soul comprises the will, the mind, the desires and the emotions. They sum together to define each person’s unique personality. Meaning, the effect of writing the laws of God in our heart and mind is that our personality would be converted. Converted to what? Romans 8:29 says:

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.”

As such, it is the image (the pattern) of our Lord Jesus Christ that we are converted to (when the laws of God are written in our heart and mind), so that in our words,

actions, opinions, thoughts, expressions, and personality, we look like Jesus (and thus, we reveal Him to the world).

This is what it means to be in the cloud (the place where God writes His laws in us); and we know that we are in such an environment if we observe that our personality is being converted to be more and more like the Lord Jesus.

That is why God is bringing His eagles out of the church system that He considers to be Sodom and is taking them to simple Church fellowships that He considers to be mountains of His clouds (that is, higher spiritual grounds with His presence) where His eagles can be nourished with His law (sound teachings of the Word of God) — teachings that He can use to write His Word into their heart and mind so as to continually convert their souls till they look like Jesus and are fit for marriage to Him.

Prayer points from Chapter 4

With all that we have discussed in this book, let us pray:

1. That the Lord will enable us to be eagle Christians (people who wait on the Lord to renew their strength and thus are able to mount up with wings to higher heights in God).
2. That the Lord will cause us to be among those (the eagles) who are gathered out of Babylon (to return to Jerusalem); gathered out of Egypt (to go to the wilderness and the promised land); gathered out of Sodom (to go to the mountain top, inside the cloud).
3. That the Lord will favour us to be part of an expression of the overcoming church (those whose souls have been converted).

Luke 17:32-37 says: “[32] Remember Lot's wife. [33] Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. [34] I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. [35] Two shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [36] Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [37] And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the

body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”. Let us pray:

4. That the Lord will help us not to be like Lot’s wife who knew she should depart Sodom but had so many attachments to it that she ended up not making it to the mountain.

Let us pray:

5. That the mercy of the Lord will grant us to be among the “ones” who are taken from among the “twos”. That is, that the Lord will cause us to be among the eagles who are gathered to where nourishment is (in the wilderness, out of Egypt).
6. That the kindness of the Lord will cause us to not just be among the eagles who are gathered, but to be among the great eagle (the man child or two witnesses spoken of in Revelation 12:14, 12:5-6, 11:3-6) who will be used by God to lead all of His eagles (His “My people”) to the promised land of being the glorified holy city unto the Lord (the picture of the church shown in Revelation 21).
7. Finally, that the Lord will cause us to be relevant to His divine purpose in these last days by securing our place among the two witnesses (God’s empowered vessels to orchestrate the final revival — the final

THIS WAY—*Securing your place in the Final Revival*

move to prepare the Church for marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ).

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
Amen.” (Philemon 1:25)*