

Being Perfect in Christ

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection [spiritual maturity]; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.(Heb.6:1-3) Two spiritual objectives are set forth in this verse: The first objective is that of building your spiritual life on the right foundation. The second objective is to go on to perfection. There are two reasons for failure to live a victorious Christian life. First reason is that some who are trying to live like Christians have never been born again. They do not understand basic doctrines of Jesus Christ, failed to make proper response to God. Second reason for failure is not going on to spiritual maturity.

The word "perfection" means complete, finished, and mature. A perfect Christian is one who has achieved spiritual maturity. This means his body, soul and spirit are under the control of the Holy Spirit. The word perfection is similar to word sanctification means holiness and consecration means to be set apart in righteousness. Believers who have not completed their spiritual foundations will have difficulty under stress. They will live up and down lives spiritually. Their spiritual building will not weather the storms of life. They cannot go on to perfection because their foundation is incomplete. Apostle Paul spoke of these spiritually immature Corinthian believers that it was time they should be teaching others the Gospel. Instead, they were having to be taught the foundational principles of God. He compared them to babies who only could drink milk. By milk he meant the first principles of God. Milk is very healthy brings growth, but there comes a time when a baby goes on to solid foods: Spiritually mature believers are able to feast on the meat, not just the milk, of the Word of God. Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant ... *But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish morally good from evil.*(Hebrews 5:12-14)

Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.(Mat5:48) In our review into the teaching of the Word as to perfection, we have a new way opening up to us the hope, giving us the assurance, of what we have seen to be our duty. It links all that we have seen of God's call and claim, with all that we know of Christ in His grace and power. Being Perfect in Christ is the open gateway into an abundant entrance into the life of Christian perfectness.

The Bible teaches us that we are credited with Jesus righteousness and are made perfect before God, when we believe in Jesus and become Christians.(Rom 3:21-24, 2Cor 5:21) Jesus credited us with His righteousness when we believed in Him and our sins are covered by it but it is clear that we are also waiting for what we do not yet have redemption of our bodies! We need to be righteous if we are to be able to see God and have a relationship with Him. However this righteousness does not mean that we are living perfect lives today. Hebrews 10:14 says *by one sacrifice He has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy*, and this clearly shows us our situation. Jesus death on the cross has made us perfect forever, but in this time before Jesus return, we are being made holy every day. The Bible teaches that we were made perfect forever when we believed in Jesus, and yet we are still in the process of being made holy every day. There is clear call to Christians throughout the New Testament to turn from sin and live a holy life. Paul tells us not to gratify the desires of the sinful nature, but to live by the spirit (Gal 5:16, Ephesians 4:17-5:2, 5:11, 5:15) And set our hearts and minds on Christ and put to death our earthly nature.(Col3:1-6) *let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.*(Heb12:1) In 1 Peter 1:13-15 tells us not to conform to our evil desires, but to be holy, and arm ourselves with the attitude of Christ, and to be finished with sin.(1Pe4:1) The writers of the New Testament clearly understood that sin is a real problem for Christians, and one which we must actively fight against if we want to move on in the faith. In 1John 3:9-10 says *No-one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.* This is how we know who the children of God are – they are the ones who do not want to continue in their sin, but repent, seek forgiveness and receive purification by the Holy Spirit. When we first believed we were given Jesus righteousness and a part of us is already seated with Christ in God. However, today we still live in earthly bodies that are not perfect. Instead, we are being made holy day by day. Initial perfection from sin at the time of salvation is the start of progressive life of sanctification. After salvation you are to live a new life in Christ:(Gal2:20) Paul described progressive perfection in his own life: *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*(Phi3:12) Part of the process of perfection is learning self-control. *...cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*(IICo7:1)) Control of the tongue is a key to self-control of your whole life: *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*(Jam3:2) Fervent Prayer results in perfection. (Colossians 4:12) Suffering will be leading to our cleansing and perfection. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered.

The purpose of Gospel Ministry among believers is to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The perfect that: admonish, encourage, teaching every man in daily life and walk. Paul wants every believer to grow in maturity, means spiritual growth, which includes increases in the fruit of the Spirit and our love for both God and others. The end goal is to be the measure of stature of "fullness of Christ". Heavenly Father, we want to live our mission and calling from You. We ask that we may be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Amen!

Doctrines of Baptisms: The word "baptize" means to entirely immerse in water or submerge in something. The Bible mentions four different baptisms. These are: Christ's baptism of suffering, The baptism of John, Christian baptism, Baptism in the Holy Spirit. There is one baptism in the New Testament which we will call the baptism of suffering. *But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!* (Luk12:50) Jesus speaking of the suffering awaiting Him through His death for the sins of all mankind. He was to be immersed in suffering, that the pouring out of a drink offering is a symbol for the blood Jesus spilled on the cross. Paul took the symbol further, using the image of a drink offering to describe his own service. (2Ti 4:6; Phi 2:17) The baptism of John the Baptist was baptism in water connected with the message of repentance. (Luk1:76-77) Christian baptism is to refer to water baptism of a person who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ. The biblical pattern for this baptism is immersion in water. *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.* (Mat.3:13-17) Jesus was baptized to complete all righteousness, setting a righteous example of behavior which He wanted all believers to follow. Baptism in water is a command was given by Jesus. (Mat28:19-20) Requirements for Christian baptism in water are: First, Repentance: Repenting from your sin "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized.*" (Acts 2:38) Second, Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and confessing Him as Savior. (Mark16:15-16) This requirement of believing is illustrated by the story of Philip and eunuch who he met on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. (Act8:36-38) *And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. "So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.* Person desires Christian baptism first must confess to faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Third, Instruction: New believers should be taught meaning of baptism before they are baptized. They should receive enough teaching, knowledge the basic facts of the Gospel centering on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. After baptism they should continue to receive instruction in order to become mature Christians. (Act2:41) Babies can be presented to the Lord for dedication and blessing by the laying on of hands. (Mat.19:13) but a person should not be baptized until they understand meaning of the act and have met the Biblical requirements. There is no set age at which this understanding comes. It depends on the mental, spiritual development of each individual. Fourth condition for Christian baptism is a good conscience toward God. (1Pe3:21) Once verified understanding, repentance and confession of faith in the new believer, then baptism in water followed immediately. Peter compares Christian baptism in water to the experience of Noah and his family who were saved from judgment as they entered into the ark. (1Pe3:20-22) Baptism is a public confession that you have been saved, you are dead to the old life, and risen to new life in Christ.

Water baptism is usually done by a pastor or spiritual leader. According to the Bible, baptism in the "Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" to be spoken at the time of Christian baptism. The following scripture reveals spiritual significance of Christian baptism: *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.* (Rom6:1-4) That you are following the Lord's example by making a public confession of faith after accepting Christ as Savior, and baptized by immersion in water. Christian baptism in water is a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus. *Going under the water was a burial of your old life, it symbolizes death to sin as you are immersed in that grave of water and as you coming up out of it was a resurrection into a new life lived for God in righteousness.* The believer is to live this new life by the power of God, the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. We are baptized into Jesus Himself, *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* (Gal.3:27; Col2:12; 1Co10:2)

Laying on of hands: *granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands* (Act14:3) is an act in which one person places his hands on the body of another person with a definite spiritual purpose. This accompanied by prayer or prophecy. Laying on of hands in the Old Testament was used for the following purposes: Transference of spiritual blessing or authority (Transference means that something spiritual flows from the one laying on hands to the one he is touching), Public confirmation of a spiritual blessing or authority received from God. Commitment to God for a special ministry. Genesis 48:14 is the first record of the laying on of hands for spiritual benefit. Blessing of Jacob was transferred to his two grandsons by laying his hands upon their heads. (Num8:10; Deu34:9) The New Testament records five general purposes for the laying on of hands. Supernatural signs, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Imparting spiritual gifts, Commissioning Christian workers, Dedication of infants. Laying on of hands was combined with the gift of prophecy to direct, encourage and strengthen. Jesus practiced laying on of hands in His ministry: He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. (Mar6:5; 10:16) One of methods God uses supernatural signs was the laying on of hands through which God would heal the sick and perform other miracles. The laying on of hands in the name of Jesus is used to minister physical healing to the sick. The person who lays his hands on one who is sick transfers the supernatural healing power of God. The laying on of hands is an act of faith and obedience to God's Word. *they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.* (Mar16:17-18; Act5:12; 10:44) Word of caution: Do not be hasty, (1Tim 5:22)

Our God is the awesome and Almighty God-the Creator of the heavens and earth. He would testify to you the things He would do for you and of what He expects of you, so that, what He wants to do will become a reality in your life. He wants to rid our lives of strange gods and the worship of them. The strange gods in our lives which we are every thing or every one who has first place in our lives. God wants to demonstrate His power in us. He is the One who upholds this universe by the Word of His power and nothing is impossible with Him. He wants to quickly defeat our enemies. In Lord Jesus Christ, God has already made provision for this. Cross of Calvary tells that, He has rendered Satan useless and set the captives free. *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.* (1Joh3:8) God desires to completely and quickly subdue our enemies; bring the unrighteous into submission to Himself; to give you, His children, the very best; completely satisfy you. (Read Psa 81:8-16) What does our Father God expect of us? Hearken to Him, listen carefully, diligently and attentively with an attitude of obedience. Walk in His ways, direct the course of our lives according to ways which He has revealed in His Word. If we will order the course of our lives living according to God's plan, all that we do will be successful. Our Heavenly Father wants us to live in victory. Foundation and beginning for ordering one's life according to God's Plan is faith towards God. Faith is the basis and foundation of our relationship with our God. Romans 1:17 says, "*The just shall live by faith*" (the just-those whose sins have been washed by the blood of Jesus, who born by His spirit, shall live - life as opposed to death) That the faith by which we are to live is faith that is activated, energized by selfless, self-sacrificing acts of love. (Gal.5:6) A love which will allow you to deny, crucify the self and follow Jesus. A love that keeps your God and His ways first and foremost in your mind and living. This love which activates faith toward God will be evident in our lives as we deny ourselves and let Jesus in us live His life through us. You make the determination to submit to God's ways and begin to order your life accordingly and the greater blessings and truly abundant living will come through agape love. The God's plan according to which you are to live is Christ living through you: *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.* (Galatians 2:20) God's plan for you is the way of the cross which will bring victorious living. (Matthew 16:24) Thus who will be blessed by the anointing is to defeat all the enemies and they will enter and possess Zion. (Psalm. 135:21) God's ways for you, His children has the purpose of accomplishing His goal for their lives. This goal of God for you is that you "*grow up into Him in all things*" (Eph.4:15) God's desire for us is that we grow-up and become spiritually mature. And He is at work "perfecting the saints" and to accomplish this He has outlined for us in His Word the plan which He in His grace and mercy has designed to accomplish His purposes in our lives. Our Father God is handling us with skill, molding us, restoring us, conforming into the image of Jesus. (ROM8:29) Praise God and thank Him that He is a God of order and has a plan for our lives. The Word is Truth. (JOH17:17) *As for God, His way is perfect;* (PSA18:30

Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, the Jordan

There is a story in the Old Testament about Elijah the prophet and his disciple, Elisha continuation. *And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.* (2Kings 2:1-15) We see that Elijah was about to be raptured by a whirlwind into heaven, so he told Elisha to stay in that place where they were because God called him to go to Gilgal. Elisha said, "*As Lord lives and as your soul lives, I will never leave you*" – so he joined him on his trip to Gilgal. The same thing happened again: God called Elijah to go to Bethel, then Jericho, then to cross the river Jordan. At each step of the journey Elijah was testing Elisha to see if Elisha would stay with him and how much Elisha wanted to follow him and to be with him. Elisha passed the test by saying "Look, there's no way, no way at all I am leaving you. I am staying with you, I don't want to be anywhere else." Eventually, after he passed through the river Jordan, God raptured Elijah while his disciple Elisha, looked on. Elijah is a type of Old Testament age and Elisha of the New Testament age. All these four places Elijah visited are significant and they are symbolic of stages in the Christians life – and praise the Lord for the ministry of the age which opens up the Word of God for us to understand, enjoy, pray and enter into its reality! As we consider these four places and meanings in relationship to our spiritual maturity we need to keep in mind progression journey from Gilgal to the Jordan is important. You cannot in your spiritual growth cross the Jordan until you have come from *Gilgal*-means a whirlwind which represent to us the filling and moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, to *Bethel*-means House of God, representing to us the local church which is the place where healing begins, where restoration takes place, where believer is unwrapped from his death wrapping and is a training center for ministries, the ways of God are learned, to *Jericho*-means a delightful fragrance, walk by faith. Here the maturing process in operation; becoming a disciple, dying to self so that sweet fragrance of Jesus comes through. It speaks of being seasoned in the foundation truths of the Christian faith and letting these truths direct his life and conduct. Jesus is growing up in him and then to the *Jordan* - means descender - one who flow down. ... submission to spiritual father. In God's plan for spiritual maturity the Jordan speaks of disciple submitting to his spiritual father, in order that, he might receive the double portion of his spiritual father's anointing.

Gilgal – Separation, Being led by the Spirit

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The first camp of the Israelites after they crossed the Jordan into the Holy Land was at a place called Gilgal.(Deu 11:30) Gilgal, was the base camp from which Joshua and his army conducted their initial conquest when they entered the Promised Land, Canaan. So the first stop on the journey was Gilgal which represents the basic truths that introduce us to the spiritual life. Now there are two important things in Gilgal. The first are twelve stones are associated with the twelve tribes of Israel were set up as a monument and a reminder so that anyone that looked at them would remember that God is a living God and that He acts on behalf of His people.(Jos 4:19-24) And the second thing in Gilgal, which means a wheel or something that rolls or 'roll-away' and God was saying to them I have rolled away the past, reproach of Egypt. Gilgal symbolical stands for 'separation' - being separated from the past and being separated unto God.(Jos 5:2,6-9) At Gilgal all of the Israelite men who had grown up during the forty years of wandering in desert were circumcised. Thus renewing the Israelites covenant of circumcision with God. They were now a separated people which is a sign that they had made a covenant with God. We should in our lives be separated from which would seek to draw us away from God, and be separated as living sacrifices, unto the living God. God is never far away.

Gilgal means a whirlwind, a moving wind and represents the moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that is the beginning of our journey to the Jordan. God's plan according to which His children are to live is a plan of living, being moved, of being motivated by the Holy Spirit. Our life is to constantly to be led, guided, directed by the Holy Spirit. This active leading and directing of the Holy Spirit has its beginning in being filled with the Spirit (being baptized with the Holy Spirit) and in the continual filling of the Spirit. Spiritual maturity cannot begin without the initial infilling of the Holy Spirit. It does not matter how much knowledge you have of the Bible. For emphasis, to help us see the need to be filled with the Spirit, we want to look at the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life and activities of Jesus: We see that Jesus from His conception to His death and resurrection was led, moved, directed and motivated by the Holy Spirit.(Isa11:2,3; Luk1:35;1Pe3:18) Conceived by the Spirit, Baptized by the Spirit, Led by the Spirit, Empowered by the Spirit, Resurrected by the Spirit. Jesus as the Anointed One (the Messiah) is made Prophet, King and Priest. We are called to be kings and priests to know and to do the perfect will of God. We have been set apart, consecrated by God with a purpose that we may preserve life in holiness and worship God in spirit and truth. We are anointed for Master's service in spiritual ministries.(Lev14:14;1Jo2:20) We need to be strengthened with power by the Spirit to resist the devil. We must move from Gilgal of a basic understanding of spiritual life to a more advanced of mature spiritual life. *Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship.*(1Samuel 11:14;10:6)

Our journey to spiritual maturity; that is, moving from being little children spiritually to becoming young men and women spiritually to becoming spiritual fathers and mother (1John 2:12-14) has its beginning at Gilgal with being filled with the Holy Spirit. This initial filling of the Holy Spirit is known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Gilgal which is a whirlwind, a moving wind speaks of more than just being baptized with the Holy Spirit, it speaks of being moved, led, directed, motivated by the Holy Spirit. Therefore Gilgal represents the active leading and directing of the Holy Spirit, having its beginning in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and in the continual filling of the Spirit. Jesus gave important instructions to His followers: *Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.*(Luk 24:49) The promise to which Jesus referred was the Holy Spirit has many purposes in the lives of believers, but the main purpose and true evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit is to make the Christian a powerful witness for the Gospel.(Act1:8)The evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit was present immediately in the life of Apostle Peter. He stood and gave a powerful witness to the Gospel that resulted in the salvation of 3,000 people. *For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*(2Ti1:7) It was the power of the Holy Spirit in the early church that resulted in the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. Bible gives other purposes. The Holy Spirit is to: comfort believers:(Joh14:16-18), Fill and baptize him:(Act2:4) Dwell in him:(ICo6:19) Unite him in one spirit with God and other believers:(ICo6:17) Show the love of Christ:(Rom5:5) Conform him to the image of Christ:(IICoR3:18) Reveal Biblical truth:(ICo2:10) Pray:(Rom8:26) Guide:(Joh16:13)Teach:(Joh14:26) Strengthen:(Eph3:16) Inspire him to true worship:(Joh4:24) Quicken:(Rom8:11) Sanctify:(IITh2:13-14) Convict him when he does wrong:(Joh16:8-11) Give assurance of salvation:(Rom8:16) Give liberty:(Romans 8:2) Speak through him:(Mark 13:11) Demonstrate God's power:(ICor2:4)

The Holy Spirit came down from Heaven on the disciples on day of Pentecost and completely immersed [baptized] them in the Holy Spirit. Peter said this experience was the fulfillment of God's promise: *"In the last days.I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh."*(Joel 2:28) God moves in our world through the ministry of the Holy Spirit: *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.*(Zec4:6) We see that the Spirit's baptizing work does continue and available to us. God in his wisdom wants the believer to ask for the Holy Spirit.(Luk 11:13) The promised Spirit comes after one repents of his sins.(Act 2:38) One must hunger and thirst for the fullness of God in their lives.(Mat5:6) Believe you have received the Spirit.(Mar 11:24) Allow the Spirit to have full control. We need to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.(Ro15:16) Jesus commanded disciples to tarry for what the Father had promised, the Holy Spirit.(Act1:4)

Let us understand that without the power dimension which the Baptism with the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian Walk, the child of God will remain a child or baby spiritually. If you are not walking in the Spirit, under the Spirit's power, you are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh which means you are not being "Perfected". You are not growing up spiritually and will not grow up in Christ and be an overcomer. In Galatians 5:16 says if we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. It is the way to overcome our negative attitudes, criticism of others, hatreds, anger, frustrations, strife, jealousies, bitterness or any other of the sins that so easily beset us. If you walk in the Spirit, you will show Love - self-denying, self-sacrificing, selfless acts of love to your brothers, sisters in Christ. And continually full of the joy of the Lord; always at peace even in the midst of chaos; to be patient and tolerant of faults and weaknesses of others; to be gentle, kind, full of faith; to have self-[under]control. Now if the person has a strong, stubborn character he may be able to walk in the basic principles of Christ but he will become legalistic; he will become locked into one way of thinking and stubbornly hold to his opinion; he will interpret the Scriptures to fit his way of thinking and according to his experiences. Let us understand that if we do not walk in the Spirit, our lives are being directed by lusts of our flesh. *Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh (your own efforts)* (Gal3:3) You must know that you need the Holy Spirit and the power dimension which he brings to your life, then be continually filled with the Spirit. Then our lives will be led, directed, motivated, moved by the Holy Spirit and we will be walking by the Spirit. When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior is one experience (a deposit of the Spirit), while Baptism with the Holy Spirit is subsequent experience receiving the Holy Spirit without measure. The power of the Holy Spirit working in a persons life is something that should be desired. (Acts 2:4,33,38)

The Holy Spirit is invisible to the natural eye. He was compared by Jesus to the wind: (Joh3:8) Although the wind is invisible, the effects which it produces can be seen and heard. Acts 2:2-4 is record of what happened when people were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Acts 10:44-46 records when Peter preached the Gospel to a man named Cornelius and his family, those who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit spoke with other tongues. Speaking in tongues means speaking miraculously in a language unknown to the speaker, as the Spirit gives utterance. (1Co14:2) This physical sign of speaking in tongues through the power of the Holy Spirit confirms that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues plays a very important part in the life and maturing process of the child of God. (Rom8:26) In a "tongue", the disciples are speaking directly to God— not man. They are declaring the wonders of God. *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. (1Co14:2) And by him we cry, "Abba, Father.* (Rom8:14,15) Apostle Paul said: *I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ..and do not forbid speaking in tongues.* (1Co14:18;39) I Cor. 14, identifies the purposes for the manifestation of tongues in the lives of believers: Praying and praising to God, Self-edification: promote spiritual growth, as a manifestation of divine power

The Gifts of the Spirit: Jesus left His followers with a responsibility to extend the Gospel message to the ends of the earth. The power of the Holy Spirit would help them fulfill this task. Purpose: Perfecting of the saints. Promoting the work of the ministry. Edifying Christ and the church. The end objectives of these gifts are that we will: be united in the faith. Develop our knowledge of Christ. Develop in perfection with Christ as our model. Become stable, not deceived by false doctrines. Mature spiritually in Christ. Gifts of the Spirit are manifestation of presence of the Holy Spirit. (1Cor12:6,7) We are to seek earnestly best gifts according to the discretion of the Holy Spirit. (1Co12:1-31) Word of Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of Healing, Working of miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits. Praying in Spirit allows our prayers to bypass our mind, intellect and communicate our needs directly to the Father. Speaking in tongues with interpretation of is God speaking to the Church either in prophecy, words of wisdom, knowledge, revelation, doctrine. The purpose of the spiritual gifts is to edify (build up), exhort (encourage) and comfort the church.

Fruit of the Holy Spirit: The fruit of the Holy Spirit refers to the nature of the Holy Spirit being evident in the life of a believer. God desires that all the fruit be evident in the life of each Christian. Galatians 5:22,23 lists the fruit of the Spirit, which we are to nurture and cultivate. Love - agape love, selfless, self-sacrificing love: (1Co13:1,4-8) Love never seeks its own. Love is always doing something for others. Joy - Jesus came that we might have joy. *"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."* (1Jo1:4) Peace - the peace of God. *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom5:1) Longsuffering-being patient, without complaint, murmuring; Gentleness-means kindness, tender-heartedness. Goodness - which means being kind but firm; Faith - faithfulness; Meekness - means a calm temper, who is not easily provoked. ie. not proud, not arrogant, not abusive; Temperance- which is self (under) control. These qualities are function of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Emblems of the Holy Spirit: The dove: (Joh1:32); Oil: (Luk4:18); Water: (Joh7:37); A Seal: (Eph1:13); Wind: (Joh3:8); Rivers: (Joh7:38-9) Fire: signifies presence of the Lord: (Exo3:2); Protection: (Exo13:21); Purifying: (Isa6:1-8); The Cloven tongues: (Acts2:3-11); Judgment: (Heb.12:29); Approval: (Lev 9:24); Rain and dew: (Psalm72:6) *I shall be anointed with fresh oil.* (Psalm 92:10) *And the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.* (ISam.10:27; Heb.1:9)

The next stop on the journey is Bethel. It was Jacob who called the place Bethel. And Bethel means the House of God. The original name was Luz. That Bethel was named so by Jacob after he sees his famous vision in which a ladder reaches into the heavens. After Jacob had amazing dream of a stairway to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it, and God standing above, he made this vow to God. And he called it the House of God because he'd had this wonderful time with the Lord. He had been in the very presence of the Lord.(Gen28:10-22) Later in Israel's history, during the time of Judges, Bethel was where the Ark of the Covenant was kept where priests offered sacrifices and inquired of God. Bethel is the place where God appeared to Abraham and he built an altar, signifying the absolute consecration to God and intimate communion and fellowship with God. After he did this, Abraham called on the name of Lord! *There he set up an altar to God, and God spoke to him.*(GEN35:1) We need God's appearing, we need to build an altar, we need to consecrate ourselves to the Lord and put everything on the altar, and we need to call on the name of the Lord! This is the life of Bethel—living in continual fellowship with God, an intimate fellowship and communion with the Lord and in a fresh consecration every day for His purpose! So this is the second stage. The first stage is to do with separation, led by the Spirit. The second stage is to do with a desire for God and a desire for His presence. This early encounters with God happened at Bethel, signifies our first beginnings of knowledge, understanding about God, heaven, and spiritual truth. Since this early knowledge of heavenly things comes of our spiritual journey.

A house of God is an earthly, physical place that is seen as the dwelling place of God. This speaks of the church, which is the Body of Christ. *"the church, which is His body"*(Eph1:22,23) Bethel, speaks of the need the believer has to be in and part of a local church if the child of God is to grow up and become a mature Christian. It is significance that the children of God are referred in Bible as sheep, speaks of his helplessness. Sheep are the most helpless and vulnerable of the animals which God created. If they are not watched over and cared for they will scatter and become prey to the beasts of the field. They have to be led to food and water. If left to themselves they would soon scatter from the fold and perish at the hands of enemy, Satan. As you come into and become a part of a local body of Christ, you come under the covering of God. You are abiding under the shadow of God the Almighty. You enter into the Ark of His safety and protection. Secondly, the believer needs to be a member in a local church for here is where the perfecting process begins. Here as the believer submits himself to leadership - the Elders in the local Body - healing and restoration begins to take place. *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as men who must give an account"*(Heb13:17) We need the guidance and counsel of the elders in the church. We need help with the oversight of our souls. Our soul, is not competent to oversee, watch over itself. Also here at Bethel as the believer submits himself to the leadership in the body (primary element in submission is trust, not agreement) He then begins to learn the ways of God from those who God has ordained and set in as teachers in the local church. The local church to be and is a training center for ministry. Here the child of God, is taught, disciplined under the anointing of the Holy Spirit as he submits himself to those whom God has anointed to teach His Word. Here, believer under the direction, guidance and counsel of the Elders begins to grow up as: healing and restoration takes place; transforming process of the Word becomes a reality; a new way of life is learned; he begins to walk in this new way of life. Here in the church the Holy Spirit is at work in all His power and glory. Being House of Prayer, so that they can be nurtured, fed, have fellowship and pray one with the other. *"My house will be a house of prayer", Praise and Glorifying God in Worship. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"*(Acts 2:47)

The church as established by God is of such a nature as to provide the child, having been called out of the world, a place where not only his spiritual needs can be met, but also where his social needs could be met.(Psa92:13-15) Let us understand the church as to what it is and what our relationship is to be to the church. The Greek word "Ecclesia" means the assembling the called-out ones. The church is composed of people who respond to God's call. Thus the assembling, gathering, congregating together makes the church local in nature. The Church is the body of Christ, made up of citizens of the Kingdom of God who are gathered together to carry out the designated purposes. It is a living organism(not just an organization) whose life is provided by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.(Rom 8:9) Christ is the head; the Church is the body, and the believers are member of the body(1Co12:20,27; Col1:18) One(unity) with the body.(Eph5:30,32) Jesus promises to build His church (Mat16:18) Jesus Himself being the corner stone. (Eph2:20-22) Jesus serves as an intercessor in Heaven. He sits at the right hand of God and intercedes for believers. (Heb7:25) The believers responsibilities in his relationships with the other members of the Body are love one another (Heb13:1;Rom13:8), submission to one another(Eph5:21), favoring one another(Rom12:10) esteem other better than themselves(Phi2:3) exhorting/encouraging one another(Heb3:13,10:25) regular and faithful assembling with the members of the body for worship, partaking of Holy Communion, fellowship, teaching and praying. It speaks of brothers and sisters in Christ loving and caring and encouraging and helping one another. God says of the church, *I will be their God, and they will be my people.*(2Cor.6:16;Heb8:10) God has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His Son.(Col1:13-14) The Church is called, Christ's kingdom, Bride of Christ.

The next stop in Elisha's journey was Jericho. Jericho was the first battle that Joshua and the people of Israel had to defeat when they have in the Promised Land. (Jos5:13) Jericho signifies the head of God's enemy, Satan. (Eph6:12) As we stand with the Lord, eventually the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet. (Rom16:12) *We are living in days of battle and spiritual struggle. We need to know how to fight. We need to know that our God is able to give the victory. We need to know how to follow Him to that victory. Just as Israel faced the mighty walls of Jericho, you must face walls and obstacles in our lives as well.* Joshua and the people of Israel marched around the city, with blowing the trumpets by carried out, and the people shouted with a great shout praising the Lord and conquered Jericho. God gave them victory over enemy through faith that obeys the God! *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down"* (Hebrews 11:30)

Jericho means a fragrance. When a person is born-again the stink of death is still on him. (Joh11, Lazarus) "filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2Cor.7:1) They had to separate themselves from the pleasures in the world, and pagan lifestyle. They need to guard against being contaminated by the sin in the world. We had to deal with filthy pasts involving demonic influence, sexual immorality, drunkenness, and other sins, as new creations in Christ. These old things God had graciously forgiven, now to be characterized by a new way of life, free from domination of habitual sin. Jericho is the process of getting rid of the stink of death and taking the sweet swelling fragrance of Jesus, it is growing up into Christ. How to of the maturing process of the believer is stated "put on the new man" (Eph4:24) **a**) Putting on the new man has it's beginning in getting an attitude adjustment. That is attitude from one of independence (I am going to do my own thinking, my way) to I am going to watch and see the way my Lord thinks and acts. I am going to adjust my attitude to one of knowing, I can do it because the ways of God are my ways, for I am a son/daughter of God. I have the nature, character of God because He is my Father. *"God works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* (Phi2:13) **b**) Now having made the proper attitude adjustment of submission and obedience to the will of the Father, the next step in the putting on of the new man is developing good, godly thinking habits, thinking patterns. *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things"* (Phi4:8) *"bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2Co10:5) *"be transformed by the renewal of your mind"* (Rom12:2) Therefore we are to replace all bad thoughts (thoughts Jesus would not think on) with good thoughts. If Jesus would not think on it then we are not to think on it. In this way you are developing godly thought habits and patterns. **c**) The third step in the putting on of the new man is that of developing good habits of doing good deeds. Ephesians 5, equates this developing, putting on of Godly habits of doing as walking. - walking in love (vs 2) -walking as children of light (vs 8)- walking circumspectly(vs 15) Look carefully then how you walk! which means abiding or remaining in Jesus.

Taking a Spiritual bath: Jericho is the process of getting rid of the stink of death which a believer brings into his new life as a child of God. It speaks of the believer in the local church submitting himself to the teaching ministry of the elders/teachers. Jericho, thus, speaks of the believer becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, a learner of Word of God. It is placing yourself under the mirror of the Word of God, letting God's Word reveal to you, expose ungodly attitudes in your life; expose your bad, sinful, habits of doing. These bad attitudes, stinking thought patterns are the ways of the flesh, world, satan. The stink which attaches itself to the person who has been living in the world. It is a "stink of death" that is quite noticeable to everyone. Let us understand that our individual faults and weaknesses (bad attitudes, our stinking thinking and our ungodly ways) are seen and noted by those around us. It is so important for us to love one another, see Jesus in one another, to accept our brothers and sisters as they are without being critical and judgmental. However, there are believers who under the deception and lies of satan, who says "that's just who I am, so you have to accept me like I am". This attitude is such that they can't, really, they don't want to change. We are to accept our brothers, sisters and love them in spite of their faults, weaknesses but that acceptance of others does not apply to our accepting the sin and stink of the world in our own lives. Our responsibility is to begin getting rid of stink of sin in our lives and not to be satisfied and accept the way we are. We are children of the light, so put off the old man and put on the new man which is after the image of God created in righteousness and holiness. Our spiritual maturity depends on getting rid of the stink of death (ie, world's attitudes, thinking pattern and habits of doing) and taking on the sweet fragrance of Jesus. *"For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light"* (Eph5:8-14; Rom12:1,2) We are called by our Father God to be "imitators of Jesus." Jesus is to be our pattern and model for our living. Jericho, speaks of the process of taking on the sweet fragrance of Jesus, becoming a sweet-smelling savor to God and those around us. Jericho speaks of denying oneself, taking up your cross & following Jesus. Jericho is next step in the Christian walk. It is becoming a disciple, a learner, a follower of Jesus. Therefore, Jericho speaks of sitting under, submitting to the teaching ministry in the church, letting the Word bath us and cleanse us of all our unrighteousness. The believer who is now a disciple is learning ways of God and is beginning to apply godly principles in his life. He is learning the need to die to himself. Learning to become an imitator of Jesus. For we are to God a sweet savor of Christ, and among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. (2 Corinthians 2:15)

The final test for Elisha came with the Jordan. The Jordan, is what the Israelites had to cross to pass into the Promised Land. So would Elisha go as far as the Jordan. The Jordan separated the land of Canaan from their wanderings in the wilderness were God miraculously separated waters as the Israelites passed through on dry ground. God commanded Joshua to take 12 stones from the midst of the Jordan and to set them as a memorial for the sons of Israel forever so that no one would forget what God had performed there. The background for II Kings 2:1-15 is the ministry of Elijah as recorded in I Kings and the call of Elisha in I Kings 19:19-21. Elijah threw his cloak (loose outer garment) upon Elisha. Elisha's following Elijah was a decision he made. Elisha slew the oxen with which he was plowing and used the plow and yokes as fire wood. He was burning his bridges behind him. Elisha had forsaken all to follow Elijah. He was willing to submit himself to the will of Elijah and follow him wherever he went. Then Elisha went and ministered unto Elijah, who became his spiritual father. But with our Master, the Lord Jesus, we arise, count the cost, leave the past behind, and follow Him! That we must give up everything, forsake all we have to follow Jesus. And what's more, we are called to minister to Him as well. The eternal principle of the wheat falling to the ground and dying principle applied to be His servant. It sacrifices everything and is lost, Elisha knew this, when the call of God came his way, he readily let go of his own life, his own hopes, dreams, and followed the call of God to wherever that would lead him!

The goal of spiritual maturity is to cross over the Jordan and return in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. However, many believers the receiving of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit becomes their goal and once they receive it and begin to walk in some of the gifts of the Spirit, spiritual pride and independence sets in. The result being they either neglect or refuse to take the next step in God's Plan for their spiritual maturity. They stay at Gilgal instead of going to Bethel. Bethel speaks of the believer in submission to the Elders, the overseers of his spiritual life. Here in Bethel, the local church under the teaching ministry, the believer studies and learns the Word of God, which is the power of God unto salvation. This brings us to Jericho, the next step in the maturing process. Here, the believer, who is now a disciple, a learner, a follower and imitator of Jesus is becoming a sweet-smelling savor to His Father God. Now, who is a disciple, abiding in Jesus and His Word, with the result being that much fruit is coming forth in his life. At this point in the follower's life there is the danger of spiritual pride setting in, the attitude of, see how God is using me, bringing with it independence. Here God's plan for spiritual maturity brings disciple to the banks of the Jordan.

Jordan means the descender. It speaks of the disciple in submission to a spiritual father, under which Father God has placed this believer, so that, in Father God's timing, he can himself become a spiritual father, receiving the double portion of his spiritual father's anointing. Let us by the grace of God, see and understand the need for spiritual fathers in the body of Christ. *"Even though you have ten thousand teachers in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel"*(1Co 4:15) Let us see the need to be in submission to the one the Lord leads us to be under. Submission on the part of the disciple who has reached the banks of the Jordan in his journey to spiritual maturity takes on a deeper and more complete meaning than at the beginning of his Christian walk. For this reason it was necessary for him through faith to trust God and to trust those whom God had placed in the local church as Pastors and Elders. Now, the disciple at the banks of the Jordan, has through his submission to the apostolic ministry of the church and by his submission to the teaching ministry of the church has reached a high level of spiritual maturity in the Lord Jesus, the fruit of this maturity is evident in his life. He has spiritual stability; he has become in reality an overcomer; he is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; perhaps he has become a teacher, or a deacon, or an elder in the local body; he has grown-up in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord; he is chewing and digesting the meat of God's Word; he is being used greatly by God in the work of the ministry. Now, because, he is being used by God; because he does have discernment and understanding of spiritual things, through his knowledge of the Bible and the ways of his Father God; because of his strength in the Lord – he is faced with the greatest danger of his Christian walk. He is in danger of spiritual pride and spiritual independence. As stated, crossing the Jordan and coming back across under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit is the goal of God's plan for spiritual maturity. If he is to receiving the double portion of the Spirit, his submission must be more complete than at the beginning of his Christian walk. He must understand that of himself he can do nothing and must not lean on his own understanding. He must submit to the fact and confess with Jeremiah, *"O Lord, I know that the way of a man is not in himself; it is not in man to direct his steps"* He must humble himself under the mighty hand of God; submitting himself to his spiritual father, knowing that he is not yet ready to go out on his own, but that he still need to listen to and accept the wisdom and counsel of his spiritual father. This total submission to God and his spiritual father takes him across the Jordan, where he is now ask for and receive a double portion of the Spirit's anointing. His return to other side of the Jordan is in a demonstration of the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Those disciple and believers on that side of the Jordan on his return will acknowledge that the spirit of Elijah does rest on him. They will come to meet him and bow in submission to him, acknowledging him to be in fact their spiritual father. *"The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha" And they went to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him.*(2 Kings 2:15)

Jesus tell people that they needed to repent and believe the gospel, and “Follow me” was a constant proclamation in His message. At the beginning of His ministry, he called first disciples with the command, “*Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.*” As his ministry progressed, he told the crowds, “*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me*”(MAR8:34) “*If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, then come, follow Me.*”(LUK18:22) At the end of his ministry, He made to order repentant Peter with words, “*Follow me*”(JOH21:19)

The word “follow” means to carefully follow after someone with the goal to imitate and to do whatever he does. This is a picture of true discipleship. This call to imitate the life of Jesus in our own lives. Peter went on to say that we should follow “in his steps.” We must zealously follow Him with the goal of replicating His life in ours. We must be so committed to follow Him that we step in His very footprints. This means we must learn to walk in Jesus’ steps—His standard, His example, His way of living, loving and forgiving. This must have been encouraging for the early followers. By following the footprints of Jesus, it made it easier for them to know what to do, how to act, what to say. Following Jesus begins when we respond to his call to repent, believe the gospel and moves us to want to live for Christ and follow him. When we turn our attention to follow Jesus in daily life; understanding, obeying his teaching and following his example stands. For his first disciples, hearing, obeying Jesus’ teachings were ultimate to following Him. We have to give up everything we have to follow Jesus. God does require absolute surrender and obedience. Jesus called fishermen from their nets to “come follow me.” They dropped their lifelong work to follow after Jesus.

In Matthew 5:48, God’s children are called to be perfect. God’s children ought to imitate their Lord and reflect His perfection in the way they live. “*Be imitators of God, as beloved children*”(Eph.5:1) Followers of Jesus are encourage to seek perfection:(Jam1:4) Paul said that he had not yet obtained perfection but had made it his goal.(Phi.3:12) Perfection is a gift that believers receive through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:(Heb.10:10–14) Through the grace of God, Christians are perfected in weakness; through participating in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, they are conformed to His image. *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*(1Pet 2:19–25) Peter reminds us that Jesus left us a path to follow. Why follow Jesus? Because only Jesus knows the way to the Father in Heaven, the place where God dwells! Jesus wants us to grow so we can walk in His steps; he wants us to mature spiritually. He wants us to have a relationship of trust, dependence on Him. He wants us to have faith in Him so we will not falter when the way is hard. The truth is, no one was ever more mistreated than Jesus. When soldiers spat on Him, Pilate scourged Him, religious leaders mocked at Him, and even betrayed by His own disciple, He continued to walk in love and forgave them all. He set the example about how we should respond when we find ourselves in circumstances beyond our control. Therefore, in moments when we feel injustice is being carried out against us, it is imperative that we remember the example Jesus set for us. So, instead of frustration when you’re having a hard time, look to Jesus’ example and strive to walk exactly as He walked. You can do what He did, you can say what He said, you can walk how He walked, and endure suffering for Christ, if you will let Holy Spirit help you, He will show you how to keep Master’s step through every challenge along the way to victorious outcome!

Is Jesus your Master and Lord? For Jesus to be Lord of your life means that He is the ruler, the master of your whole life. Following Jesus involves following his example. In the Upper Room, after washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus said, *For I have given you an example, that you should also do just as I have done to you*”(JOH13:14) The lesson Jesus was teaching is the importance of serving one another in humility of heart and of becoming servant leaders. The followers of Christ are to walk humbly because Christ himself did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant.(Phi.2) That end or goal of discipleship is to become like Jesus himself: to think as he thought, feel as he felt, act as he acted, desire what he desired. *Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked*”(1JO2:6) Because Jesus is the image of God in human form, as we become more and more like him, the image of God is increasingly restored in our lives. If we want to become like Jesus, faith and love must become defining characteristics of our lives. Jesus lived with an unshakable trust in heavenly Father and wholehearted love for God and others. When He agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, wanting to be spared but submitting to His Father’s will on the cross. Jesus not only lived a life of faith before his disciples, He called them to live a life of faith in the affairs of everyday life. Whether for daily bread, power to heal the sick and cast out demon or to overcome the perils of countryside, they were to live by faith and to grow in faith. Growing in faith is important part of maturing as a disciple. He expected them to grow in faith as they saw his mighty deeds and he expected them to trust God to answer their prayers, even to move mountains to advance His kingdom. The other major characteristic of Jesus’ life was love. Following Jesus means loving without condition. He loved others, sought their good and it is essential to living a Christian life. Jesus told: “*Love one another*”(JOH15:12) *And walk in love, as Christ loved us.*(EPH5:2)

It is thru indwelling Holy Spirit; we can obey teaching of Jesus and follow Him. He transforms us from glory to glory, into the likeness of Jesus. As we walk in faith and obedience daily, the Spirit will produce in us the character of Jesus. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000,(REV14:1-4)

Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.(Col.1:27-29) God planned believers to be conformed[be made like] Jesus who is our example of perfection:(Rom8:29) Work in faith, labor in love, and have endurance in hope, all found perfect in Jesus Christ. We need to look at the truth of our being perfect in Christ as it is prepared for us in Him our Head. Christ came and wrought out a new nature for all the members of His body. His perfection, His perfect life, is ours. It is an actual spiritual reality, in virtue of our real and living union with Him. *And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*(Col 2:10) All Christ's members are in Him, fulfilled in Him. Then there is our perfection in Christ, imparted to us by the Holy Spirit in uniting us to Him. The life which is implanted in us at the new birth is a perfect life. The seed of God within us is the perfect life of Christ, with its power to grow, and fill our life and bring forth fruit to perfection. It is through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God's standards. As a believer you fight your enemy Satan, a spiritual battle which takes place in your mind and through the circumstances of life around you. You may temporarily go down in defeat but through confession of your sins you can rise again in righteousness to continue on to perfection. The purpose behind our Father God allowing Jesus and us to be tempted by Satan that we might learn to say no to sin through obedience. We children of God, like forerunner Jesus overcame are able to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus daily. Disciple of Christ is he who believes His doctrine, rests on his sacrifice, imbibes his spirit, and imitates his example. *Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert.*(LUK4:1)

Four Faces of Expressing Christ: Ezekiel saw in a vision four living creatures bear the appearance of a man that were around the throne of God.(Ezekiel 1:5-6,10;26) The significance of this awesome scene is the expression of the Lord Jesus, the One on the throne, is manifested in His fine humanity. The more we mature spiritually in the Christian life, we become likeness and image of Jesus. God needs and uses our uplifted, transformed humanity for His expression.

Face of a Man – The man represents humanity, love, intelligent. This typifies the Lord's normal human life as seen throughout the Gospels. On one hand He performed miracles, on other He was so ordinary that people wondered, "Is not this the carpenter's son?(Matt. 13:55) Our conduct, speech and expression should all be authentically human, by the humanity of the Lord Jesus. We need to realize, that is we should be the same as common, ordinary human beings.

Face of a Lion– As king of the animals, lion signifies reigning, victory, boldness, strength and vigor. To have face of a lion is to aggressively stand against anything sinful or worldly. Though tender and lowly in His humanity, the Lord also expressed the face of the lion at the appropriate times. Whether it was driving the money changers out of temple (John 2), or lambasting the scribes and Pharisees as "Serpents! Brood of vipers!"(Matthew 23:33) When it comes to Satan, sin, and the world, we also should live and express Christ as the bold, kingly lion. Lion stands for kingship.

Face of an Ox – The ox is a beast burden, work, sacrifice. An ox is one who is willing to bear the burden, to do the work, and even to sacrifice himself. We all must have such an appearance, such a reality of serving others, bearing the burden, caring for the responsibility, even sacrificing our life. This is the Lord's as seen as servant attitude in Mark 10:45 *The Lord Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve others by giving His life as a ransom for many.*

Face of an Eagle – The eagle signifies the soaring, transcendent, powerful divine life of God, the divinity of Jesus. The face of an eagle, is hidden in the rear. In a sense the eagle's face is a secret, a mystery to those around us. Abide in Christ, we can overcome so many earthly frustrations by hidden divine life within us. We need to be like an eagle, not allowing anything to hold us, to suppress us, or to depress us. This means that we should be able to overcome both persecution and praise. Whether we are persecuted or praised, we need to be able to fly away on eagles' wings.

Summary – The four living creatures in Ezekiel express the life of Christ in four aspects: as a man, as a lion, as an ox, and as an eagle. Moreover, these four faces correspond to Christ portrayed in the Gospels: In Matthew we see the Messiah-King (the lion), In Mark we see Jehovah's Servant (the ox), In Luke we see the Son of Man (the man). In John we see the Son of God (the eagle). All the living creatures are the corporate expression of Christ. Today as Christians, we must be the living creatures who are a corporate entity, expressing Christ exactly as He was on earth.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, grant us Your expression at work, and dealings and wherever we are for your Glory! Give us the experiences we need to be genuinely human, bold as a lion, submissive as an ox, and divine life as an eagle! Amen

Being confident of this very thing; that He which has begun a good work in you will perform (continue to perfecting) it until the day of Jesus Christ.(PHI1:6)We should continue to learn the ways of God so that we can walk in them and receive God's full blessing in our lives.that the accomplishment of God's plan for the Perfecting of the Saints. Phi 1:6 describes the plan of salvation as: Salvation which God in Jesus has begun; Salvation He is continuing to complete; Salvation which will be completed by Him in the day of Jesus Christ,(glorification).(ROM 13:11), redemption of the body, rapture which will take place when Jesus returns. When the last trumpet sounds all followers in Jesus, living and dead, will be transformed into the glorified bodies to meet the Lord in mid-air. If we continue in the faith the day and hour will come when we stand together with Jesus in heaven, that could happen at any moment.(1TH4:13) Hallelujah!