

## **A True Disciple of Jesus Christ**

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"*(MAT28:19-20) The above statement was made by Jesus to His apostles shortly before He ascended to heaven, commonly called "The Great Commission". The word "disciple" literally means "a learner". It denotes "one who follows another's teaching" A disciple is a follower, one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ. Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit, who resides in our hearts, to overcome the pressures and trials of this present life and become more and more Christlike and in so doing models and teaches Christians. This process requires disciple to respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting to examine their thoughts, words and actions and compare them with the Word of God. This requires that we be in the Word daily-studying it, praying over it, and obeying it. In addition, we should always be ready to give testimony of the reason for the hope that is within us *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord: and be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you, but do it courteously and respectfully"*(1PE3:15) That each believer should aspire to be used by the Holy Spirit as a "witness", and as a "disciple" of Jesus Christ and also to disciple others to walk in His way. A disciple on the other hand is a student who has the goal of becoming like his teacher. *A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher*(LUK6:40)To be Christ's disciple, then is to strive to be like Him! According to the apostle Paul, this agrees with God's goal in the redemption of mankind, that they be conformed to the image of His Son. (ROM8:29) There are some "identifying marks" of discipleship given by Jesus to identify a true disciple of Jesus. **a)** One who abides in Jesus words. *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.*(JOH8:31) This would imply being a diligent student of the teachings of Christ. It also requires one to be a "doer" of the Word.(MAT7:21-JAM1:21-) In view of this, a true disciple would not fail to study the Bible diligently. **b)** One who loves the brethren *"A new command I give unto you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"* With a love patterned after the love of Jesus(as I have loved you). Therefore, a true disciple would make every effort to get to know his brethren, take advantage of occasions to encourage them. **c)** one who bears much fruit *"When you bear much fruit, My Father is glorified, and you show yourselves to be my disciples"*(JOH15:8) Jesus is not talking about an occasional good deed, but a life and character which prompts people to glorify God!(MAT5:16).This is so important, that failure to bear much fruit will result in being severed from Christ.(JOH15:1-2) How can one be a disciple if he or she is cut off from Christ? Are you a disciple of Jesus? More than likely you believe in Jesus! You might even be one to attend church services regularly! To be a disciple of Jesus Christ means more than just a casual church member. It requires commitment, especially in regards to the teachings of Christ, the love of brethren, bearing fruit to the glory of God. The kind of commitment involved is seen further when we consider the "high cost" of discipleship demanded by Jesus in Luke 14:25-33. In other words, Jesus must be King and Lord of our lives. Nothing can take precedent over Him and His Will for us. Putting it simply, we must forsake all to follow Christ. Do you have a strong desire to follow Jesus and become like Him? Unless you do, it cannot be said that you are truly His disciple! *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and humble in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.*(MAT11:29) A disciple is a learner and a follower.

### **The beginning of a disciple**

But how does one begin? According to Jesus, it involves Baptism (MAT28:19) The first step we take, receiving Christ by faith through His grace, is the entrance into the faith and Christian life. This grace makes it possible for men to become disciples and to live a new life in harmony with God's will. Remember the goal of discipleship is to be like Jesus. He was holy and sinless, yet we are to be like Him. Fortunately, baptism is described as an act of faith which puts us in contact with the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ so we can be forgiven. It is an act of submission which must be preceded by faith in Jesus and repentance for our sins(ROM6:3-4) It is also an act of submission which involves a burial in water, in which one then rises to walk in newness of life through the power of God.(ACT8:38;ROM6:3;-COL2:12) It is truly a "rebirth" involving both water and the Spirit.(JOH3:5) It is also the means by which one "puts on Christ" (GAL3:27) So, Baptism is the starting place for true discipleship! And with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, they receive power, authority, wisdom and grace. But teaching and obedience must follow. In this way we embark on a life devoted to learning and doing all that Jesus has commanded us to do. Only those baptized and demonstrating the marks of discipleship, despite the costs, can truly be called disciples of Jesus! Only they can realistically look forward to the rewards of discipleship, and take consolation in the promise of Jesus. They will stand on mount Zion with the Lamb of God. *These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.*(REV14:1-5)

## Discipleship

- 2 -

Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. God does not ask us to seek converts, He simply asks us to do Discipleship. Discipleship is modeling and teaching Christians the precepts of the Bible—mainly prayer, doctrine, Christian living, service and worship. Yes, we are still to evangelize, but that is not our main mission and call! When we evangelize, we must realize that it is the role of the Holy Spirit to bring people into an intimate relationship with God. This is an act of divine intervention and grace. A call is extended to you and a response is required! You have been given a precious and wondrous call with passion and conviction. “Follow me.” We all are called to make disciples! There are only two kinds of people who cannot disciple, and that is one who is not a follower of Christ and/or one who disobeys God’s command. Discipleship means that the Christian is totally surrendered to Jesus and follows His teachings. Examples of discipleship can be found in the Gospels. When Christ said to Peter, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” there was action. “And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.” Jesus then saw two brothers, James and John, mending nets and called them. They immediately left the ship and their father and followed him.(MAT4:18-22) Jesus passed “Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him”(v.9:9) According to Luke, Jesus said to him “Follow me. And he left, and rose up, and followed him”(LUK5:27-28) Jesus said “*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*”(JOH15:4-5)

### Hindrances to True Discipleship

When a man asked Jesus, what he had to do to inherit eternal life, He said, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,” and He enumerated some of them. Then the man responded, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” Jesus then said, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” This grieved the man and he did not follow because he was wealthy. In response to his action, Jesus pointed out to his disciples that it was hard for those with riches to enter the kingdom. When told this, the disciples thought this was a hard saying, and wondered if they could ever enter the kingdom. Jesus said, *With men this is impossible, but with [grace of] God all things are possible.*(MAT19:16-26) As Jesus and His disciples were traveling along the road, they encountered three half-hearted followers.(LUK9:57-62) The first man was quite sure that he wanted to follow Jesus anywhere and everywhere. He was self-confident, unduly eager, and unmindful of the cost. He said to Jesus in verse 57, “I will follow You wherever You go.” But from the answer Jesus gave to the man who expressed eagerness about following Him, we can sense that the man’s intentions were not altogether honorable. He saw the crowds, and the miracles, and the enthusiasm of the people. It seemed good to him to be closely associated with the One who was at the center of all this action. Thus, he wanted to be a disciple of Christ, but he failed to understand the self-denial, the sacrifice, and the reproach that went along with serving Christ. Jesus said, *“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head”*(v58). But there is a clear message in what Jesus said to the man. Jesus was saying, “Do you really know what it means to follow Me? Are you aware that it often involves forsaking the comforts and conveniences of life?” Those who think only of a shallow commitment to Jesus, may as well not apply! About the same time, Jesus saw potential in another man who was standing close by. Jesus spoke to Him—and tried by saying, *“Follow Me”*(v59) The man however wanted to delay becoming a disciple, because he claimed to have commitments to his parents. After his parents were dead and buried (which could have been many years later), then he would follow Jesus. Jesus told the man that his first duty lay with serving God. In verse 60, Jesus was saying, “Let the (spiritually) dead (that is, those who reject God’s grace), let them take care of burying the physically dead.” Jesus was not suggesting that we dishonor our parents, but only that we do not permit our love for family to weaken our love for the Lord. The third incident centers around a man who said, *“I will follow You, Lord; but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house”*(v 61) This man had a reasonable and proper request, but even the common courtesies of life must not interfere with complete dedication to the cause of Christ. Jesus said to the man, *“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”* (v62). To plow in one direction while looking in the opposite direction will never do! Once we put our hands to the plow in the Master’s field, we must not look back, longing for the things we left behind. Jesus in essence says that service in God’s kingdom requires staying with the task at hand. No distractions are allowed. No diversions from focusing on loyalty to Christ are permitted. It is easy enough to start out well, and to burst forth in a blaze of glory, but the test of a real decision—is to endure to the end! Jesus saw more deeply into the three responses. He knew whether the commitments were real, or only half-hearted. He saw the heart attitude which prompted the responses. The first man professes utmost willingness to follow Christ but material comforts hinder. The second man indicates a degree of unwillingness to follow Christ—because a task (or a job) is hindering. The third man seeks permission to delay following Christ—he has trouble leaving his family and friends. Each of the above responses is typical of the kinds of excuses that are sometimes given today. Jesus also said that a believer who was unwilling to be a disciple was as useless to God as salt that had lost its savour.(LUK14:34-)

### The Cost of True Discipleship

- 3 -

Discipleship is not to be entered lightly. In Luk14:25-35 reveals the conditions of discipleship very clearly. The theme of God's kingdom, and its demands on potential disciples is mentioned. There Jesus spoke about a man who had laid a foundation for a tower, but couldn't complete it, because he was unable to pay the cost of construction. That proves that it does cost something to be a disciple. Jesus told us to sit down first and count that cost before even starting to build. The parable of the king planning a military campaign, is an example of a leader who underestimates the strength of his enemy, and must therefore submit to the enemies' terms of peace. The lesson of the parables is this: It's important to count the cost before making significant decisions in life. The alternatives to counting the cost are embarrassment, loss of time, and loss of money. And so it is with discipleship. We must sit down first and count the cost—and be certain that we are willing to abandon our lives wholeheartedly to Christ. If we start out, and then fizzle along the way, onlookers will tend to mock. Half-hearted Christians do not make a favorable impression on their associates. To take a vow to follow Christ is an important step; we must not be unfaithful and insincere in our decision. Jesus told people about the cost of discipleship as soon as they came to Him. This kind of "high cost" of discipleship demanded by Jesus caused many people to turn away from following Him. It soon dwindled down to a handful of only eleven disciples. The others found the message too hard, and left Him. But it was with those eleven disciples who stayed on with Him, that God accomplished His purposes in the world finally. *From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."*(JOH6:66-71)

There were, among the crowds followed Jesus, some who were sincere disciples, some who were selfish followers, and some who were obvious enemies. But Jesus was looking for people who had a wholehearted interest in His cause. He knew that some wanted only to see miracles and healing. Others heard that He had fed the hungry. A few hoped He would overthrow Roman empire and set up a new kingdom. Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and He turned and said to them: Discipleship calls for sacrifice, discipleship calls for forsaking all one has. For a convert to become a disciple, he must first of all cut off any attachment that hinders him from following the Lord. Secondly, he must be willing to deny himself and put his self-life to death daily. Thirdly, he must give up his love for material possessions. These are the three minimum requirements for anyone wanting to be a disciple. The first condition of discipleship is that we must cut off the natural, undue love that we have for our relatives. Jesus used a figure of speech to urge His followers to leave everything behind! Jesus said *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be My disciple"* (v26). What does it mean to "hate"? To hate is the same as to kill.(1JO3:15) What we are asked to put to death here is the natural affection that we have for our relatives. When we give up our human affection for them, God will replace it with divine love. Our love for our relatives will then be pure - in the sense that God will always be first in our affections, and not our relatives. We must first love Jesus Christ. Every other relationship must be submissive to that. And it may appear that we hate those around us because of decisions we have to make out of our love for our Lord. No concern about family ties must ever be allowed to cause us to deviate from full obedience to the Lord Jesus. Many don't obey God because they are afraid to offend their father, mother, wife, etc. The Lord demands the first place in our life. And if we don't give Him that place, we can't be His disciples. Jesus must be Lord of all in our lives, or He will not be Lord at all. Look at Jesus' own example when He was on earth, He never allowed relatives to influence Him away from the perfect will of His Father, even in small matters. We see an example of this at the marriage at Cana where He refused to act on His mother's promptings (JOH2:4) Jesus also taught us how to "hate" our brothers. When Peter tried to turn Him away from going to the cross, He turned around and rebuked him. He said, *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to Me"* (MAT16:23). Peter had made his suggestion with a lot of human love. But Jesus rebuked him, because what Peter had suggested was contrary to the Father's will. The Father was always supreme in Jesus' affections. He expects us to have the same attitude towards Him too. After His resurrection, the Lord asked Peter whether he loved Him more than everything else on earth, before making him a shepherd in the church(JOH21:15-17) Only those who love the Lord supremely are given responsibilities in His church. The leader of the Ephesian church was in danger of being rejected because he had lost his initial devotion for the Lord(REV2:1-5) If we can say, like the psalmist, *"Whom have I in heaven, Lord, but Thee? And besides Thee I desire nothing on earth,"* Then we have truly fulfilled the first condition of discipleship. (PSA73:25) The second condition of discipleship is that we must hate our own self-life. Jesus said *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own life, he cannot be My disciple"* (LUK14:26,27) He amplified that further by saying, *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple"* We must be willing to suffer for Christ. Trying to live godly lives in an ungodly world, we may find that following Christ sometimes involves ridicule and persecution.(2TI3:12) The "cross" which Jesus talks about, is the suffering that is ours because of our relationship to Christ. The "cross" is the reproach and contempt we receive from others because we try to follow Bible standards in daily life. *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude,*(1PE4:1)

**Is the cost worth it?**

- 4 -

Remember that to "take up the cross daily" as stated in the parallel passage in Luke 9:23, "deny himself and take up his cross daily" means that it is a daily duty to humble ourselves, to renounce sin, and to submit to the law of Christ. And therefore submission to the law of Christ which is the law of the cross.(JOH15:20-21) One must count the cost and not look back after taking up the cross (LUK9:57-62;MAT16:24-25) To deny our self is the same as to hate our own life - the life that we have inherited from Adam. To take up the cross is to put that self-life to death. We have to hate that life first, before we can slay it. Our self-life is the main enemy of the life of Christ. The Bible calls this 'the flesh'. The flesh is a store-house of evil lusts within us that tempts us to do our own will at all times - to seek our own gain, our own honour, our own pleasure, our own way, etc. If we are honest, we'll have to admit that even our best actions are corrupted by evil motives that arise from our corrupt lusts. Unless we hate this 'flesh', we will never be able to follow the Lord. This is why Jesus spoke about hating(or losing) our life.(MAT10:39;16:25;MAR8:35;LUK9:24;14:26;JOH12:25) To hate our own life is to give up seeking our own rights and privileges, to stop seeking our own reputation, to forsake our own ambitions and interests, and to stop seeking our own way etc. All that self-denial can say is: "He leads the way, keep close to Him." "and take up his cross" Only when we have become completely oblivious of self are we ready to bear the cross for His sake. If in the end we know only Him, if we have ceased to notice the pain of our own cross, we are indeed looking only unto Him. If Jesus had not so graciously prepared us for this word, we should have found it unbearable. The third condition of discipleship is that we must give up all our own possessions, Jesus said, "No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions"(V33) Peter said, "we have left our own homes and followed You"(LUK18:28) Our possessions are what we possess as our own. To give them all up means that we no longer consider anything as our own. We see the life of Abraham. Isaac was his own son - his possession. One day God asked him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. And Abraham laid Isaac on the altar and was ready to slay him. But God intervened and told him that the sacrifice was not necessary, because he had proved his willingness to obey(GEN22). After that, Abraham recognized that even though he had Isaac in his house, he no longer possessed him as his own. Isaac now belonged to God. All that we have must be laid on the altar and given up to God. Have we done that with all our possessions? Only then can we love God with all our heart. This is the 'pure heart' that Jesus spoke of in Mat 5:8. It's not enough to have a clean conscience. A clean conscience only means that we have given up every known sin. A pure heart means that we have given up everything! So, True discipleship involves a radical change of attitude towards: (a) our relatives and loved ones; (b) our self-life; and (c) our possessions. Jesus is exhorting each disciple to surrender body, soul and spirit to the task of serving Him whole-heartedly. Whole-hearted devotion, all-out loyalty, and complete self-denial—these are requirements for discipleship of Christ! Jesus wants people to know that toil and danger, self-sacrifice and suffering—are all part of being a discipleship. Before people decide to become followers of Christ, they must realize that being a Christian is not "a bed of roses" Jesus says, "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life"(MAT7:14) The way to life is narrow and few are those who find it. "many are called, but few are chosen"(MAT22:14) It is discouraging to note that many people who seem to cast their lot with Jesus, sometime later lose interest and fall away.(Demas and Judas) The disciple of Christ must continue to run the race, keeping on day after day seeking to do what is right in accord with God's Word. If any of us wants richness of experience, meaningful living, and a sense of being in the will of God—and then living eternally with God after this life—we must choose to become disciples of Jesus. It will require walking contrary to the way of the crowds, but in the end, it will be worth it all. The hymn writer says "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

It costs everything! However, the rewards of being discipleship are limitless as we are entrusted to a Savior who loves us more deeply and rewards us more completely than we could ever comprehend. He desires the best for us, He has a plan and purpose for us in the kingdom of God, and He wants us to spend eternity with Him. Crowns are given as rewards for faithfulness to appropriate God's grace and Christ's victory in the Christian life. They remind us of our responsibility to abide in the vine. The Crown of Thorns.(MAT27:29) speaks of Christ's work on the cross and stands for His victory over sin, Satan, and death. The Incorruptible Crown.(1CO9:25). It is also a special crown given for faithfulness in running the race and exercising self-control in order to serve the Lord and finish the race. The Crown of Rejoicing.(1TH2:19;PHI4:1)This crown is a reward given for witnessing, follow-up, and ministry to others. The Crown of Life.(JAM1:12;REV2:10) This crown is given for enduring testings(trials) and overcoming temptation. The Crown of Righteousness(2TIM4:8) This crown is a reward given for faithfulness to use our gifts and opportunities in the service of the Lord and for loving His appearing. The Crown of Glory.(1PE5:4) This crown is a reward promised to Elders for faithfulness in the discharge of their responsibilities in shepherding the people. The Casting of Crowns.(REV4:10-11). Because Christ alone is worthy and because we can only be fruitful when we abide in Him allowing His life to fill ours, we will all cast our crowns before Him in recognition that all we have done is by His grace.The Many Crowns (REV19:12). The crowns of royalty which stand for Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords who alone has the right to rule and judge the world. All should remember it is by God's grace that we become disciples of Christ.

**Know your enemy**

- 5 -

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers"(LUK 22:31,32) Satan, the Devil, is a real... a spirit being, with intelligence, tangible characteristics, and whose goal and ambition is to "steal, kill, and destroy"(JOH 10:10) Of the three great enemies of the Christian, the world, the flesh, and the devil, the last is the most dangerous. There is nothing that makes an enemy so dangerous as the fact that he remains hidden or forgotten, therefore little known. The devil has the power of darkness: he blinds the eyes, so that men do not know him. He surrounds himself with darkness, so that he is not observed. Yes, he has even the power to appear as an angel of light.(MAT 4:6;2CO4:4;11:14) that he is called the deceiver of the whole world.(REV12:9) It is by the faith that recognizes things unseen that the Christian is to endeavor to know Satan, even as the Scripture has revealed him. When the Lord Jesus was on earthly ministry, His great work was to overcome Satan. He was filled with the Spirit; this fullness of the Spirit brought him into contact with Satan as of the world of evil spirits, to combat him and to overcome him.(MAT4:1,10) He saw the enemy of God and man.(MAT12:28) His whole work in living and in dying was to destroy the works of Satan, as He shall also at His Second Coming utterly bruise Satan himself.(LUK10:18;ROM16:20;COL2:15;2TH2:8,9;1JO3:8) His word to Peter, the Lord, gives us a fearful insight into the work of the enemy. `Satan has eagerly desired you, says Jesus. He sifts and sifts continually, and all that falls through with the chaff he endeavors to take for himself. And many a Christian is there who does fall and who were if not for the intercession of his Lord, would perish for ever. (1CO5:5;1TI1:20) Our only security is in the intercession and guidance of Him who overcame Satan.(EPH 6:10,12,16) Satan was defeated on Calvary by our Lord Jesus. Our calling now is to register that victory over the forces of darkness everywhere we go. The Bible says "*Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you*"(JAM 4:7)

"*Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*" (1PE5:8) One of the most important principles of warfare is to know your enemy. If you are fighting a war and you have a lot of information about your enemy, it makes the battle so much easier. It is exactly the same with the Christian life. If you know your enemy, you can overcome him and be more than a conqueror in every temptation. There are many Christians who struggle throughout their whole lives trying to follow Jesus, but fail. The main reason is because they know nothing about their enemy. Recognize that we are engaged in a spiritual battle/warfare. *Thou therefore endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*(2TI2:3) Satan and demons(evil spirits) are our enemies. The Bible tells us that Satan came into that garden and brought sin and confusion, leading Adam and Eve away from God. The cause of all the sin and violence and evil that there is in the world today is found there in Satan's entry into Eden(GEN 3) Once you know what the Bible teaches about Satan, you will be careful. And you won't be afraid of him any longer. Many are afraid of people doing black magic or witchcraft on them, because they don't know that our Lord Jesus defeated Satan on Calvary. When Jesus died he made the devil powerless.(HEB2:14,15) So that we might be forever free of Satan and the bondage of fear that he had put on us throughout our lifetime. He does not hold the power of death over those who are in Christ Jesus, who have been redeemed by Christ's blood. You will never again be afraid of Satan, once your eyes have been opened to what the Lord has done for us all on the cross. There is power in the mighty Name of Jesus Christ Who defeated Satan on Calvary's cross. He cannot touch you, if you allow Jesus to be Lord of your entire life - Jesus died not just to forgive you your sins but also to deliver you from the power of Satan that has enslaved you. Remember that the head of Satan has been thoroughly crushed by our Savior. Hallelujah! God will always be on your side against Satan. This fact has brought so much encouragement and comfort and victory to many saints. You have been given power over the Devil! By submitting to God, and exercising your authority in the name of Jesus, you are more powerful than the enemy.(1JO4:4) The Bible tells us to not "give place" for the Devil(EPH 4:27) That is, provide no area of your life where Satan can be comfortable or establish strongholds. The enemy can always be found working in those who entertain sin, disobedience, rebellion or a self-willed nature. Unforgiveness toward others is another area which Satan flourishes.(2CO2:11) Therefore these should be confessed, renounced and forsaken. "*in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*"(2CO2:11) His method of operation is almost always undercover. Subtly, he manipulates hindering circumstances and inspires evil thoughts or temptations, disguising his activities behind the shroud of people or things. He will always seek to divert attention and blame for his actions upon others. But make no mistake, he is the real enemy, not your husband, wife, employer, government or Christian brethren!(EPH6:12) Pray: "Lord Jesus, open our eyes to know our enemy and his schemes".

"*Because God's Word is dwelling in you, you are strong and have overcome the evil one*"(1JO2:14) Remember that Satan can even misquote Scripture if he can lead you astray thereby. And if you are ignorant of what the Scriptures really teach, he will deceive you. Jesus replied quoting God's Word in answer to all the three temptations that Satan came with. Let the Word fight its own fight. It'll whip the devil every time and you will always overcome Satan, like Jesus did. The devil is always tempting people to do something foolish, something that is contrary to the spirit and teaching of God's Word, and something spectacular. It is by humility, by humbly submitting to God, and by not seeking any glory for ourselves, that we overcome Satan. Lifting up Jesus in praise will send the devil running!

Believers often ask, "What is God will for me?" In everyday situations of life, believers are constantly making choices which determine whether or not they will do the perfect will of God. We want to know His general plan for our lives. We want His guidance in specific decisions so we can make wise choices. The question we should be asking is, "How can I know the voice of God?" Knowing God's voice results in finding the will of God, and makes right decisions. Man must make choices in relationship to God's will. This plan was instituted by God when Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden.(GEN1:3) The Bible verifies that believers can know the voice of God. Jesus said: *I am the good shepherd and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . 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. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*(JOH10:14,16,27) God has a plan for intimate relationship with mankind. "Knowing God's Voice," implies that there is a God. He communicates with man, that man can recognize His voice when He speaks. We are warned: *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*(HEB3:7) There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world.(ICO14:10) The voice of man is easy to recognize. The voice of Satan was first heard by man when he spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden.(GEN3:1,4,5) Satan's voice lies, deceives, and always attempts to lead man into sin away from God(MAT4:1-13) Believers are compared to sheep. Jesus said His sheep would know His voice and follow Him instead of the voices of man, self, or Satan. *And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left*"(ISA30:21). The Lord is teaching us what it means to walk by the Spirit. With respect to God's Voice and guidance, as a child we learn to listen and God does lead us along as little sheep. But when we are older in Him and have some experience with His ways then He expects us to rely more upon the Spirit and less upon experience. *"Speak, Lord, For Your Servant Is Listening"*(ISA3:9) We may think of prayer as just talking to God, rarely stopping to wonder if He might want to talk to us. How does God speak to us? (1) Through His Word. A familiar verse jumps off the page and takes new meaning. (2) Through people. Sometimes the voice of man may give wise advice, but anytime the voice of man conflicts with the voice of God. (3) Through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads, rebukes, encourages, comforts, and stretches us. The Bible is full of accounts of God speaking to His children. When God Speaks: The Greek word "Logos" refers to the written Word of God. "Rhema" refers to the living or life-giving Word of God. *in that they received the word(rhema) with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures (logos) daily.* A "rhema" Word from God usually applies to a specific situation, meets a personal need and provides individual guidance, it becomes a life-giving Word to you. This may be through a sermon or a verse from the Bible. It may also be spoken in your inner spirit by the Lord. The Bible speaks of two main divisions of listeners:(MAT7:24,26) A foolish listener hears the voice of God, but does not act upon it. A wise listener hears and acts upon the message of God. Let us ask the Lord for a hearing ear and a receptive heart.

*If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*(JOH7:17) If you meet these prerequisites, then you will come to know God's voice and His will for your life. Because of sin, you have difficulty hearing and responding positively to the voice of God. But the Holy Spirit will continue to reveal God's will and guide you. As you mature spiritually, you will come to recognize this voice within your spirit.(ROM8:14) The milk and meat mentioned in verses refer to the written Word of God(HEB5:13-14) When you are first born again you start learning some of the simple truths(milk). As you mature, you are able to master the deeper truths(meat) of the Word of God. As you continue to study God's written Word, your spiritual senses will mature. You will be able to exercise them to discern good and evil. Your(renewing) mind is transformed as you develop the mind of Christ. You will be determined to do the will of God. Jesus said: *For I came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.*(JOH6:39) The meaning of the word "will" is to determine or decide on the basis of the will. In Greek there are two terms used for the word "will" in reference to the will of God. One word is "boulema" which refers to God's sovereign will. This is His predetermined plan for everything that happens in the universe. The other word "thelema" refers to God's desire for man to experience and live in His will. It refers to His individual plan or will for each man and women. In order for God to fulfill His "thelema" will, it requires your cooperation, which refer seeking God's will. One other type of God's will is the "moral" will of God, commands revealed in the written Word of God which teach how believers should live. God's will was the chief concern of Jesus during His earthly ministry (JOH4:34) The purpose of Christ's life was to fulfill God's will. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* (LUK2:49) Jesus was willing to die if it was God's will for Him to do so(MAT26:39) This reveals His concern with finishing God's work through His life and ministry. The life of Jesus is a perfect example of absolute conformity to the sovereign, moral, and individual will of God. *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*(EPH5:17:6:6) Spiritual blessings are promised if you do God's will.(HEB10:36) You must know God's voice and be led by the Holy Spirit. The Perfect Will of God is accomplished when a believer is in perfect harmony with the moral, sovereign, and individual wills of God for his life. *Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.*

## The way of obedience

- 7 -

*Therefore be imitators of God [follow His example], as well-beloved children.*(EPH5:1) To imitate God in your daily life is to make Jesus your pattern for living, that is to say, doing the things that Jesus did and not doing the things that Jesus would not do. In this way you are putting on the new man. Since making Jesus the pattern for our living is the way to put on the new man, we then need to look at the things Jesus did, His works, so that we can imitate them. Now the works of Jesus had their beginning and can be said, that they flowed out of an attitude of obedience to the will of His Father. Jesus' attitude toward life was one of desiring to always do the will of His Father and to please Him. Jesus says, "*My meat (that which fills me up, my desire) is to do the will of him that sent me*"(JOH4:34) I (Jesus) do always those things that please Him(the Father)(JOH8:29) How did Jesus know the will of the Father and how to please Him? Jesus gives us the answer and is to be our example. *the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.*(JOH5:19) Jesus never did anything on His own, He was not an independent thinker or doer. Rather than thinking and doing for Himself, He watched His Father and did what He saw His Father do. An attitude of obedience, total submission of His own will to the will of the Father and it will work for you. Being obedient to the Father, that is doing the things He tells us to do, without question is being a follower(imitator) of Jesus. And as we imitate Jesus we are becoming more like Him in our daily life. As we become more like Jesus, we will begin to enjoy a deeper and closer relationship with our Father. Being obedient to the will of the Father is to place yourself under the authority of God. It means to submit to God's authority. This means having absolute trust and confidence that God's way is the right way and that God has your best interest at heart. To be submissive is to have an attitude of obedience. Let us look at an example of obedience from the Bible which results in the best and then an example of disobedience that brings bad results. In John 2:6 we hear Mary the mother of Jesus saying to the servants "Whatsoever he(Jesus) saith unto you, Do it" In v.7, Jesus says to the servants "fill the water pots with water" The servants with unquestioning obedience, "filled them up to the brim" In v.8 "And he (Jesus) saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. The obedience of the servants resulted in that the governor of the feast was pleased with the fine taste of the water made into wine and the bridegroom was praised for having saved the best wine for the last. Being obedient is the key to receiving the best from our Father God. In 1Samuel 15 says to King Saul, "Now go and smite Amalek utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not;(ISA15:3) Saul is instructed to destroy all- there was to be no spoils of the battle. But what did he do? v.14-15 show that he allowed the men to spare the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice on God's Altar. In v.20 we see that King Saul had taken Agag the king of Amalek as a prisoner instead of killing him as he was told to do. Saul did not have an attitude of obedience. His attitude was, "I'll do what God wants me to do, but I will do it my way. We must interrupt God's word in the light of the circumstances, in light of the situation. God didn't really mean for us to destroy all those perfectly healthy sheep and oxen it will please Him(God) when we offer them to Him as a sacrifice. Now comes v.22 "*To obey is Better than sacrifice*" Saul's disobedience cost him the privilege of being King of Israel. Let us understand that disobedience will always cost us something. And that giving an offering to God can not make up for an act of disobedience. Only repentance will blot out the sin and bring us into that place of the refreshing presence of our Father God. When can we know that we are moving into the realm of obedience? When we are wanting to do something and have made up our mind that we are going to do it. When we are set on a course of action or going in a certain direction –and God says, don't do it or Says, go this way, and we listen to God, rather, than to our own wants; then we are moving into the realm of obedience. We are developing an attitude of obedience. We must become sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit - open minded to whatever the Lord would have us do. We must be willing to obey. We are to do things the way God wants them done, not the way we think He wants them done, or the way we want God to want them done. We are told of Jesus in Hebrews 5:8, "*though He (Jesus) were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things he suffered*" Thank you Jesus that you learned the way of obedience. That you learned it so well, and was so submissive to the Father, that you humbled yourself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Here in the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus in agony, praying: "*Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done*"(LUK22:39-46) Jesus was looking ahead to the torturous death of the cross which was before Him and He was pleading with His Father to remove it. Thus we see here Jesus as our example in the putting down of the desires of the soul and becoming obedient to the will of the Father even unto the death of the cross."*He that doeth the will of God abideth forever*"(1JO2:17) Here then, we see the purpose behind our Father God allowing Adam and Eve, Jesus and us to be tempted by Satan, that we might learn to say no to sin through obedience. Now we who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we who are new creations, like Jesus are able to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus. Christ himself set the example of obedience to the Father's will, even as He learned obedience, we too can learn obedience. We can learn total & complete submission to the Father and be an imitator of God as children of God. In this way we will be walking the ways of the new man. *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.*(HEB5:7)

*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* (ROM14:12;1CO4:2) The word “steward” defines as a person entrusted with the management of the affairs of others. “Entrust” means to commit something or someone to one’s care for use or speaking. A steward manages the possessions of another. We are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and each of us must one day give an account for how we have used them. He will only be concerned with what you did with your gift and talent. The basis for reward is faithfulness.

Consider for a moment that everyone on earth has the same amount of time in every day. They all have exactly 24 hours in each day. What differentiates people isn’t the amount of time available to them, but the manner in which they exercise their gifts and talents within the available time. We can waste time; we can spend time; or we can invest our time wisely. That’s what stewardship is about: faithfully developing and using our gifts, talents and resources within the amount of time God has allotted to us. In every stewardship relationship there are two parties involved: the master who hands out the resources and will one day ask for an accounting; and the steward who is entrusted with the resources and must eventually answer for how they were invested. God is the master; he distributes gifts at his discretion. We are stewards, accountable to him for all that we do with all that we have. Herein the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship –We own nothing. God owns everything; we are simply managers. The Bible says, *“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me. But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth’”* (DEU8:17-18) As humbling as this sounds, we don’t bring anything to the table. *“In the beginning God created”* (GEN1:1a). He owns everything that he has made, and he made everything that is. It’s all God’s. *“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”* (PSA24:1) Since God owns it all, he has the absolute rights of ownership over all things. Since we only have what we have been allowed to have, then we operate primarily in the realm of responsibilities. God has rights; we have responsibilities. God has entrusted us with certain resources, gifts and abilities. These things rightfully belong to him. Our responsibility is to live by that trust by managing these things well, according to his design and desire. Another implication is that since God owns everything and expects us to manage things according to his plan and purpose, every decision is a spiritual decision. Whether it’s buying, how we use our time and money matters a great deal to God. God demands to be in the loop on every investment, purchase and decision. Our answer to this question will determine how we manage the time, abilities, money, truth and relationships God has placed under our care.

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus taught about his second coming, he drove one important lesson: Only faithful stewards will be prepared for his return (MAT25:14-30) The parable involved three servants who each received a sum of money from his master before that master departed on a long journey. This is not just an act of generosity; this is an act of trust. The master gave each of these servants the opportunity of a lifetime. This was their chance to prove themselves, test their skills and possibly rise to positions of greater influence and responsibility. Upon his return the master discovered that two of the servants had invested the money, and that one had buried it. He took the greatest gift he would ever be given and buried it in a field, forgetting or choosing not to believe that the master would return. Finally, master returned. When the servant who had buried the money began offering excuses, the master refused to accept them. Instead, he rebuked the lazy servant and punished him severely. Meanwhile, the faithful servants enjoyed the rewards they had received for their diligent labor. The master is generous, but he is also going to hold his servants accountable. He will reward diligence and faithfulness; he will punish laziness. Sloth was listed as one of the seven deadly Sins. Running around in a lot of extracurricular activities (stay busy as a cover up for laziness) is sometimes a way to avoid important responsibilities. They have never learned to say “no” which is important to our ability to keep God’s priorities before us. All our work should honor the name of God. To fail in this is a form of stealing from God.

In Luke16:1-12, Jesus tells the parable of the Shrewd Manager. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus is talking to His disciples, in preparing to be steward-leaders. He tells them the parable of the rich man who had a steward. The steward was accused of wasting his lord’s possessions. When this was told to the rich man, he called the steward to himself. All of his privileges were taken from him, and his lord demanded to know everything he had done. The steward had to give an account of his stewardship. The steward contacts all of the people who owe his lord and fixes their bills. *“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly.”* The Bible says that even the lord of that steward commended him on what he did because it was wise according to the world’s standards. This parable appears at first glance to encourage dishonesty. But Jesus enjoins the steward’s shrewdness, not his dishonesty. Jesus commends the man’s ability to use his present and temporary power and resources to make preparation for what was coming. Stewards are expected to realize the maximum possible return on the resources which the master has entrusted to their care. We are afraid that if we are shrewd, we are being unchristian. But Jesus said, *“Be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves”* (MAT10:16) Stewards work hard and “smart” to please their master. But some go the extra mile and work “shrewd” possibility to serve God well! *“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness”* (MAT25:21,23)



## Consecrated to God

- 9 -

*'Maketh the Son (Jesus); who is consecrated forevermore'* (HEB7:28;10:20) Consecration means to be "devote, set apart or separated, and dedicate for use by the Lord". It is the act of setting apart anything or person to the worship or service of Mighty God. It is the giving ourselves up to Christ forever as one bought with a price- I am no longer my own. *"Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"* (1CH29:5) Service is definitely an aspect of consecration. It should also be an act of worship. Who is willing... God presents an excellent opportunity to us to offer ourselves unto Him, willingly. Consecration is a definite act of our will before God. I must make the decision. God will never cross the threshold of human responsibility or will. Consecration is abdicating the rulership of our lives in favor of the King, our Lord Jesus Christ. The 'I' yields to the authority of Christ as Master. There is a point of time in the experience of every Christian when he will face the challenge of the total consecration of his life to the Lord.(JOS3:5;1PE3:15) - the challenge to take on the attitude that everything he is, has, or ever wants to be, is now in the Lord's hands. It is the giving of our whole being to God. *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*(PHI1:21).

The Law of Moses ordained that the firstborn, both of man and beast, should be consecrated to Lord; also that all the race of Abraham was in a peculiar manner consecrated to his worship, while the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron were more immediately consecrated to the service of God.(EXO13:2;NUM3:12) The ceremony of the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood is a picture for us of the presenting of our lives to the Lord(LEV8:18-28) Three parts of Aaron's body were touched by the blood of the sacrifice. They represent the consecration of our total being: The Ear: hearkening to the word of the Lord, The Thumb: doing the will of the Lord, The Toe: walking in His paths. For every Christian is now a priest to God.*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"* (1PE2:9). We could not consecrate our sinful lives to God, but because Jesus has set us free through His work on the Cross and has made us no longer slaves to Satan and our old sinful nature we can now offer ourselves to God. *"because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death"*(ROM8:2;6:13). Consecration is not a putting to death of the old life. The Lord wants the new creation(2CO5:17) to be offered in consecration to Him, not the old one.(1PE4:2). *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy[consecrated]and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.*(ROM12:1) This can only refer to the New Creation Jesus has made us, for it's only in Him that we are holy and acceptable to God. We can learn from Abraham's experience.(GEN22:1-19) Isaac was God's special gift to Abraham - a miracle son - the fulfilment of God's promise to him. And it was Isaac that God asked Abraham to sacrifice. In the same way, the Lord wants us to consecrate the new life He has given us to Him. The Burnt Offering of the Old Testament law is a picture of our *"living sacrifice"* to the Lord.(LEV1:1-17) The entire animal (representing the believer) was placed on the altar. The fire under this particular offering was kept burning continually - day and night. It was not an offering for sin, but spoke of the entire surrender and dedication of the worshipper to God. Once the initial act of consecration is made to the Lord, it is followed by a continual attitude in our daily lives. When Paul said, "I die every day"(1CO15:31) he meant that he laid his life on the line each and every day.(2CO11:23-28). Paul encourages the Philippian church to look at Jesus as our great example of daily consecration.(JOH4:34;5:30) Now we are to show the same attitude as the Lord Jesus Himself as we consecrate our lives to serve God. Our part is "Consecration" - the surrendering of our new lives totally to the Lord. God's part is "Sanctification" - the separating in holiness, by His Spirit, of those consecrated to Him. "The New Testament also recognizes special consecrations, as to the work of the Christian ministry, or to some particular service connected therewith *"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away"*(ACT13:2-3) What is the result of consecration? A life that is good, beneficial to others, A life that is happy, joyous, victorious, because it was lived in the perfect will of God, the One who created me and redeemed me with His precious blood. Consecration is a process. It is a daily moment by moment yielding in the daily crisis. The daily renewal of our consecration is not by flesh but by the indwelling Spirit as a supreme act of worship. Even now, consecrate your all to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is your Saviour.

*For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.* (MAT19:12)It is good for a man not to touch a woman{but} to remain unmarried.(1CO7:1,7) But not everyone has been gifted by God with the ability to remain single. If he or others ever burn with passion it would be better to get married rather living in the sin of lust and desire. *Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh*(1CO7:28) And some have personally chosen to live like a eunuch so that they might devote themselves, free from worldly cares, focus wholeheartedly on the Kingdom of Heaven.(ECC5:5,6;HEB10:38) God gives gift of grace to those who to serve Him unmarried. Apostle Paul was an example. Paul teaches that a person unhindered by marriage can focus their undivided attention solely on the Lord.(1CO7:32-35) In ISA56:3-5 blessings from the Lord to eunuchs who are faithful to the LORD.

## The High Calling

- 10 -

*Therefore, holy brothers [consecrated and set apart for God], who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.*(HEB3:1) God is now calling forth His people to come out of obscurity into the light so that we can each become the light to the world that we are called to be.(MAT5:14-16) Our light shines brighter and brighter as we serve Jesus with our life. He can shine through us. Jesus said in order to serve Him you must follow Him, and where He is there His servant will be also.(JOH12:23-26) Lord says "*Peace to you! [Just] as the Father has sent Me forth, so I am sending you*"(JOH20:21) After the Lord had fulfilled His mission on earth He ascended into heaven. And now He has given over His heavenly mission to his priesthood, having entered into them in mighty spirit power to perform it. They must so represent Him. Every Priest must so be the image of Jesus and exhibit in his person and conduct the same love, grace, and power. The purpose of the Royal Priesthood is to reveal glory and minister the work of the great High Priest of the heavens. Jesus is our forerunner, which indicates that others are expected to follow on into the same realms of glory.(HEB 6-19-20) Priesthood is ministry to God and to men, reconciliation. Priesthood is the spirit of the High Priest. It is caring, loving, interceding, forgiving, healing, transforming, teaching, and doing all necessary to bring lost and dying, sick and sorrowing, tormented and hostile men back to God. Priesthood is praise and worship and consecration and holiness unto the Lord. He is making many to be Priests after the order of Melchizedek that He and they may stand in ministry unto the Father. Christ was made a High Priest forever.(HEB7:20-21) The church shares in the priesthood of Christ and the resurrected saints will, like Him, forever be kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek.(REV5:10). How great it is to serve a living God!

God calls people in this age for the specific purpose of preparation for the Kingdom of God. As Paul mentioned in Eph 2:20, these apostles and prophets laid the foundation for the church to be established. The church then becomes God's instrument in preparing for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth. Do you long to fulfill God's purpose for you? Do you want His will to be fulfilled in your life more than anything else? If you were told that only one out of a hundred thousand fear God and seek to be found pleasing to Him in all aspects of their lives; if you were advised that His will would lead you to walk differently, speak differently, dress differently, and in very profound ways to simply live differently than all in the society around you, as well as the vast majority in the church, would you yet desire to obey? *Therefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you will never fall*(2PE1:10) The servants of God offer the highest form of service, worship and praise to God. The call of God to service is absolutely and exclusively a matter between God and His servant. Moses(EXO3:10), Samuel (ISA3:19-20), Isaiah(ISA6:8-9), Jeremiah(JER1:5), Ezekiel(EZE2:3-8), John the Baptist(JOH1:6) all bear clear witness to the same fact that Paul expresses concerning himself in Galatians 1:1, that he was an apostle "sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father" Mary was the mother of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. She was a willing servant. She trusted God and she obeyed His call.(LUK1:28,38) Being a servant is a great honor! It is the Lord Christ(the Messiah) you are serving! Paul, "a bond servant of Christ Jesus"(PHI1:1;REV1:1;JAM1:1;JER7:25;COL3:23-)

Apostle Paul says "*One star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead*"(1CO15:41-42) In Revelations chapters two and three John speaks of seven levels of overcoming. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt there were millions of Israelites; and only one Moses who spoke to God face to face. The 'shekinah' glory of God, the manifest radiance of God's glory was seen by Moses(EXO23:21-23) The Glory is seen from the Rock! The Rock is a picture of Jesus.(1CO10:4) We too have the promise of 'the hope of glory' but, like Moses, we need to be standing upon and dwelling in our rock—the Lord Jesus Christ. Desire to see the character of God manifest in your life. All through the Bible it speaks of varying and different levels of God's people according to what they were willing to achieve. The pathway to Glory was referred to as a ladder to Jacob(GEB28:12)Nathaniel(JOH1:51); as a stairs to the Shulamite maiden(SOS2:14); and as steps of overcoming.(REV2&3) Every Child of God is on some level of achievement whether Jew or Christian. Paul writes of the High Calling of God(PHI3:14); the high calling of God is available to all God's people. Paul writes of his qualifications under the law and as a natural Jew(PHI3:4-6); but in verses 7, 8 he casts it away and counts it as rubbish that he may win Christ. He was interested in the very highest places in Christ; you must attain unto and win those places. We are called to take step upon step till we reach Glory. Paul says, "*Forgetting those things behind and reaching for those things before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*". John says the highest calling of all is to sit with Jesus on His throne.(REV3:21) Jesus told James and John to sit with Him on His throne they must drink of His cup of suffering and receive of His baptism(MAR10:38). In Rev14:1-5 we see a group of saints the first to be redeemed from the earth. They are 144,000 symbolic as firstfruits of your harvest to the priest for the Lord. Therefore their resurrection is before the rapture of the rest of God's people, followed by Harvest.(1CO4:1-4) God is able to change our vile body into the likeness of His Glorious body(PHI3:21) The gates of Zion await you, and inside is the glory and fulfillment and satisfaction and everlasting joy. "*The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*(ISA51:11-12) Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon! Amen.