



New Wine will Drip
from the Mountains



John and Elaine McLachlan

**"The days are coming", declares the Lord, "when
the reaper will be overtaken by the ploughman
and the planter by the one treading the grapes.
New wine will drip from the mountains
and flow from all the hills.
I will bring back...they will rebuild...
they will plant vineyards and drink their wine...
I will plant...never again to be uprooted..."**

Amos 9:13-15

FOREWORD

This prophecy has always fascinated us because God has called us to be evangelists and we have responded to His call. Amos has previously written, (Amos 3:7) "Surely the Sovereign does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets". We are always inquiring of Him what His current plan is as the world's attitudes change, so that we know His heart in a matter of His concern. Amos was a simple man, a shepherd, yet this particular occupation (like David experienced before he became king) gave insights about leading and gathering the naïve. It seems that God likes to teach us His ideas and plans Himself, rather than us running after more learning. Sitting quietly and meditating and talking to God, as the shepherds did, even asking Him the hard questions, seems to please Him.

The message of Amos is hard; so much about judgment, first on the neighbours of God's chosen people and then on His own people too. Amos visualises the Lord as thundering out His words. The Lord seems to be exploding with exasperation. For "three or even four sins" indicates "a few at least", and then the offences are named. God declares He will not reverse the punishment or revoke His word. NIV Bible inserts the word "wrath", in brackets (ie, not in text), trying to convey the revulsion that God feels because of the named sins.

There is not much written on these "pictures" that are painted by the prophets because they are not "theological" but required to be seen and understood with the imagination. Since God has blessed us with very good imaginations we are intending to write our own meditations on these words.

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1. THE DAYS THAT ARE COMING

All the prophets refer to the last days, that day or the days that are coming. There is a definite time in the history of the world when God acts. He has planned everything from the beginning and only He knows that time, yet He is always warning and waiting for His people to seek His wisdom and His will, and He wants us to speak it out. He does not want anyone to be caught unawares, yet we see and hear, on a daily basis, stories of people who have been caught out as tragedies struck.

Isaiah begins his message with the words, "Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One...and turned their backs on Him". (Isaiah 1:4) These words define **sin** – spurned the Holy One and turned their backs on Him. Later he writes, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way". (Isaiah 53:6) Paul writes, quoting the Old Testament, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless, there is no one who does good, not even one...there is no fear of God before their eyes". (Romans 3:10-18) God made each one of us. "You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb", writes David. (Psalm 139:13) Yet He has watched us go our own way without any reference to His plans and purposes for us, the very reason we were created with all our innate gifts. God has seen these plans destroyed when the devil has tempted us into his physical, mental and spiritual destruction of God's

children. Jesus defines his work as "only to steal, kill and destroy".
(John 10:10)

But Isaiah is the most encouraging of the prophets and consistently writes about the good days that are coming. "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord'". (Isaiah 2:2&3)

However, Isaiah also writes about many "that days" too. At a time fixed in God's schedule God will snatch away luxuries and finery and people will be desperate for someone to give them "ownership and a name". (Isaiah 3:18-4:2) This day is already designated as the day of the Branch of the Lord, who is beautiful and glorious. Even such a positive prophet has to warn about other "that days", days of judgment and horror. Then there are these **little jewels of God's love grace and mercy** in between the many words of warning. After the horrors the remnant will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 10:20) "In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious". (Isaiah 11:10) "In that day you will say: 'I will praise You, O Lord...You have comforted me'". (Isaiah 12:1) "In that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God; we trusted in Him, and He saved us'". (Isaiah 25:9)

Jeremiah's warnings to return to God are much stronger. "In that day, declares the Lord, the kings and the officials will lose heart, the priests will be horrified, and the prophets will be appalled". (Jeremiah 4:9) "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will punish all who

are circumcised only in the flesh...for all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart". (Jeremiah 9:25&26) Paul explains this further. "You have been given fullness in Christ, who is the Head over every power and authority. In Him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ". (Colossians 2:10-12) The outward act of obedience that the Jewish people submitted to by God's command was a sign of something greater and spiritual – the triumph over sin and death that had been brought into people's lives by the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Jeremiah has prophesied this over 600 years before. "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up David's righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In His days Judah (praise) will be saved and Israel (God strives) will live in safety. This is the name by which He will be called: the LORD Our Righteousness". (Jeremiah 23:5&6)

Most importantly Jeremiah prophesies, "the time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant...it will not be like the covenant I made with ...forefathers...this is the new covenant that I will make...I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people...for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more". (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Ezekiel, too, has an "on that day". "I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give

you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws". (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

Daniel finishes his book – "there will be a time of distress...but at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered". (Daniel 12:1)

Hosea acted in the place of God towards an adulterous people, enduring an unfaithful wife and then redeeming her. His "in that day" (declares the Lord) you will call Me "my Husband". (Hosea 2:16)

Joel's message speaks of the day of the Lord as: "great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11) But, "afterwards, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days...and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved". (Joel 2:28-32)

These "day of the Lord" examples from the prophets are not the same day in our time but each of these days is very significant in God's plan and therefore to us.

2. THE GATHERING INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The first significant day was the day Jesus was conceived. He is the Branch of the Lord and the Root of Jesse. (Isaiah 4:2 and Isaiah 11:10) He was born to be Saviour of the world – to save people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21) Jesus demonstrated the true heart of the Heavenly Father, who saw our helplessness and took it upon Himself to sort out the mess. Instead of obedience to hundreds of laws which do not

change attitudes or hearts, God decided to sacrifice His Own Son to satisfy His decree that the soul that sins will die. "Every living soul belongs to Me...the soul that sins is the one who will die". (Ezekiel 18:3) But God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall **not** perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16) He really does not want to lose a single precious soul.

So another of God's days is the day Jesus died on the Cross. YHWH Nissi, the Lord our Banner, our victory sign, lifted high; a day of shame yet such a triumph! "God forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross". (Colossians 2:13-15) Jesus Himself cried out, "It is finished". (John 19:30) There is now no sin committed that is not paid for. The way into the presence of the Heavenly Father is open.

Another of God's days is the day Jesus ascended into Heaven. This day was so important because Jesus took His physical presence from the earth so that the promised Holy Spirit could not only come "on" people, (eg, 1 Samuel 10:6) but would come "into" people and abide forever. (John 14:16&17) It is the risen and ascended Jesus who sends this wonderful gift from Heaven into our hearts so that we have God's seed growing in us. This is why Jesus told Nicodemus (and all who want and need to know) that we must be born again. (John 3:3-8) John has already explained (John 1:13) that God's children are not born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. Jesus plainly states that no one can enter the Kingdom of

God unless he is born of water (that is by being born naturally into the world) and the Spirit. "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit". We have to be living in this world to make a choice to receive God's Spirit and enter the Kingdom of God, before we leave this earth again. Yet, extraordinarily, by the grace of God, He longs, yes really longs to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. (Luke 11:13)

Unfortunately men and women do not seek to receive this generous and life-enhancing offer. God was grieved that His chosen people, the Israelites, did not desire His presence, His fellowship and His power in their lives. He was very angry with their disobedience because He was relying on them to be Light to the other nations, to attract people to Himself. Instead they copied the idolatrous behaviour of the nations they were supposed to be drawing to Him, even inventing worse customs and exaggerating the bad customs they had copied. This has continued to the present day, where things that used to be considered by God's decree to be an abomination are now considered to be a valid way to live.

Nevertheless, God is always patient, kind, and not easily angered and rejoices with the truth. He protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres because He is LOVE. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) He remembers that a man's days are like grass, he flourishes briefly, the wind blows and he is gone. (Psalm 103:15) We are born for a purpose but many lives are never fulfilled. Some are truly wasted. But God still gathers people into His Kingdom because of His persistence that His plan is good. He longs for it even more because of the high price Jesus paid to make it possible. In these days, still before the days that are coming, He is using workers to bring in the people, those who are being sent

by the Holy Spirit, as illustrated by the story of the wedding banquet.

(Matthew 22:8-14)

3. THE WORKERS IN THE KINGDOM

Jesus' Holy Spirit inspired ministry was only 3 years but in that time, beginning with the 12 chosen disciples, He taught and demonstrated how the Kingdom of Heaven was to grow. He said that it had been forcefully advancing from the days of John the Baptist. (Matthew 11:12) Then He added that forceful or passionate men lay hold of it. Just as He only did the will of the Father He expected His brothers and sisters to do just that – to passionately lay hold of the principles He demonstrated, and do the will of the Father. (Matthew 12:50)

He began His "training course" by teaching the "be-attitudes".

- We are to be poor in spirit – practising humility, knowing we lack wisdom and seeking it from God.
- We are to mourn – understanding that we cannot deal with our own sins and failings.
- We are to be meek – letting God rule our lives gladly and willingly.
- We are to hunger and thirst for righteousness – repenting, turning away from temptations and sin because we value the presence of the Holy Spirit so much.
- We are to be merciful – as our Father in heaven has been merciful to us.
- We are to be peacemakers – an indication that we are children of God.

- We will be persecuted for our righteousness – but this is the sign that we are indeed members of God's Kingdom.
- We are to rejoice when we are persecuted for the sake of Jesus – because our reward will be great in Heaven.
- We are to be salt – to bring the "flavour" of the Presence of Jesus, by His Holy Spirit.
- We are to be light – to bring "colour", the brightness and joy of the Presence of Jesus.

Jesus calls His workers when He will. Some are called early and some later in the "day". The "pay" is the same for all but some have the privilege of longer service. (Matthew 20:1-15) He says the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (Luke 10:2) He sends and commissions, first His twelve and then 72, giving them His authority so that they can continue His works. (Luke 10:19) Jesus is delighted when they are successful in their mission. This sending of the 70 is significant because this number is often connected with God's administration of the world. (New Bible Dictionary page 898) This indicates that Jesus meant this "sending" to continue to the close of the age.

There are many kinds of workers, servants of the Lord. Some plant the seed, others water, so that people can come to believe. Paul writes that the one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to the labour that has been put in, but it is God who makes the seed grow. (1 Corinthians 3:6-8) However when the plant is fully in fruit harvesters are needed too. (Matthew 9:37)

Each worker who is called is entrusted with talents which he/she is to use faithfully. Since it is God who gives the authority, power and

increase, the worker is required to act according to his/her ability and God will be honoured and pleased. (Matthew 25:14-23) We have been appointed to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. (John 13:16) Our faithful obedience releases God's power to touch the hearts of people that we meet. It is God who works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose. (Philippians 2:13) We are to shine like stars to a "crooked and depraved generation" because Jesus has delegated to us His power and authority which will change lives.

Jesus spoke more about these workers. The primary message was "the Kingdom of Heaven is near". (Matthew 10:7) These words were to be followed by acts of God's mercy and grace; healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing those who were unclean, and driving out demons. When Jesus first sent them it was in His conferred power and authority that the disciples acted, but after Pentecost it was to be in the indwelling power of God, by the Holy Spirit, that these things were to be done. (John 14:12) The Holy Spirit is the power of God and He sends the Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus. (John 14:26) It is important to God that we do the work in His way and with His wisdom. James makes it very plain why. "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom...The wisdom that comes from Heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere". (James 3:13&17)

4. NEW WINE and OLD WINE

To understand the picture of new wine dripping from the mountains and flowing from the hills it is helpful to also understand that new wine is unfermented, being only just pressed. It is fresh from the grapes but, in a warm climate, will begin fermentation very quickly. "Old" wine is what most drinkers prefer because its alcohol content gives a pleasurable sensation, rather than quenching thirst.

Noah was the first man recorded to have pressed wine from grapes. (Genesis 9:21) Perhaps, before the flood, people had only eaten the grapes or drunk their juice fresh. Some think that Noah got drunk because he did not understand how potent fermented grape juice is. There are many warnings against drunkenness in the Scriptures, yet no blame was attached to Noah's state. Owning a vineyard was an honourable occupation and God uses this as an analogy of His own care and nurture of His chosen people. "My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well". (Isaiah 5:1&2) If God said He dug a winepress He must be OK about wine. Wine is meant to be a blessing but it can become a curse if it is consumed according to fleshly desires.

It is therefore interesting that Jesus calls workers into His vineyard. (Matthew 20:1-12) It is also interesting that Jesus wants His disciples to drink from the cup, God's covenant representing the blood of Jesus, which was poured out for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:27&28) Unless we drink it we have no life within. (John 6:53) There is an intriguing scripture where Jesus appears to His disciples after His resurrection, and asks them to look at His hands and feet, then invites

them to touch Him – a ghost does not have flesh and bones. (Luke 24:37-40) His blood had been FULLY poured out! He gave every drop – as much as was possible!

Jesus told a parable about old wineskins and new wineskins. This was in the context of the bridegroom having been taken from them. (Luke 5:36-39) New wine must be put into new wineskins so that as it ferments and gives off bubbles, the new skins will expand to accommodate, whereas old skins which have already stretched will burst and the wine will be wasted. Yet He finishes with the comment that people much prefer the old wine. Jesus came to bring in a new covenant, a new way of relating to God, through the indwelling Holy Spirit. "You must be born of water and the Spirit." (John 3:5) Paul writes, warning us to keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25) Jesus assures us that when the Spirit of truth comes He will guide us into all truth. (John 16:13) He will take all the store of knowledge and experience of Jesus and make it known to us. (John 16:14) This is the only way we can know the will of the Father and His strategies to bring in the lost from outside the Kingdom.

The new wine then could be the fresh strategies of the Holy Spirit and the old wine the traditional ways that the workers in the Kingdom have always used.

5. THE MOUNTAINS and HILLS

The first mountain of significance is Mount Ararat where the Ark came to rest after the flood and God made a covenant with Noah. (Genesis 8:4 & 8:21&22) Another mountain of significance is a mountain in

the land of Moriah where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac and where YHWH revealed Himself as "The LORD will provide". (Genesis 22:2-9) Again God made a covenant, this time with Abraham.

After the Israelites left Egypt (slavery) God wanted to make a covenant with them. He called them to Mount Sinai. He told Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so the people will hear Me speaking with you". Then He added, "Make them wash their clothes and be ready...because the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of the people...only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain". But though the trumpet sounded the people did not meet with God, because they were afraid and told Moses they did not want God to speak to them. (Exodus 19 and 20:19). Only Moses and Aaron went up the mountain to meet with God. We have a choice to fear God or to reverence and honour Him, and they chose rather to be afraid of Him. "Cherished" sin (Psalm 66:18) does this to our spirits, yet God had revealed from very early about sacrifice of an animal to shed its blood for atonement for sin. (eg, Genesis 3:21; Leviticus 4:4&15; 6:25)

A writer of the Psalms learned the secret of receiving God's grace and mercy. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord". (Psalm 121:1) Though God's people failed to understand, there were some who sought God on high in reverence and trust.

David wrote a meditation as he thought about God in His sanctuary. "Who may live on Your holy hill? (Psalm 15) In another place (Psalm 18:16) David is conscious that "God reached down from on high and took hold of me".

Solomon referred to the "mountains" as the giver of prosperity, the "hills" the fruit of righteousness. He is referring to God by the place in which He dwells. (Psalm 72:3)

Ezekiel was asked by God to prophesy to the mountains of Israel, "You, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for My people Israel...I am concerned for you and will look on you with favour; you will be ploughed and sown, and I will multiply the number of people upon you...the towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt...I will make you more prosperous than before. Then you will know I am the Lord". (Ezekiel 36:8-11)

The devil had no understanding of the significance of the mountains and hills to God. He thought he could seat himself above God, enthroned on the mount of the assembly. (Isaiah 14:13) Later he thought to take Jesus to "a very high mountain" and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. The devil thought that he could tempt Jesus to bow down and worship him, by promising to give Him what He could see. (Matthew 4:8&9) But Jesus was there at the creation of the mountains and hills. He did know the significance. "Jesus is the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created...all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...so that in everything He might have the supremacy". (Colossians 1:15-18)

A very important time on a high mountain was when Jesus was transfigured before His disciples and God spoke aloud to honour Jesus. (Matthew 17:1-8) The words have been recorded, so although the disciples were terrified, they must have actually heard God speak. Peter admits as much. "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For

He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, this is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this voice that came from Heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain".

(2 Peter 1:16-18)

There is one more mountain to mention – the Mount of Olives where Jesus prayed before His crucifixion. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22:44) But on this occasion there was no answer from the Father, although angels came and ministered to Him. God's wrath was already being poured out for the final solution to deal with the sin of the world. Mountains had been significant places where God makes Covenant – He initiates with those He loves an agreement which is legally binding. His agreement with Jesus was done as soon as Adam and Eve sinned. (Genesis 3:15)

So why would Jesus suggest that we can speak to a mountain, by faith, and tell it to move? (Mark 11:22) From the very beginning God created man in His likeness, in the context of speaking things into being. (Genesis 1:27) "No matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ Jesus. And so through Him the 'amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God". (2 Corinthians 1:20) Everything that comes against us is inspired by the devil, yet permitted by God. It is our faith in God and His promises that enable us to overcome. (1 John 5:4) Paul writes to the Thessalonians, "the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way". (2 Thessalonians 2:7) These words are considered by scholars to refer to the Church who restrains the devil. "Raise a banner on a bare hilltop...Listen, a noise

on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The Lord Almighty is mustering an army for war". (Isaiah 13:2&4) These words are a prophecy against all those who choose worldliness, as represented by Babylon. God's ways are higher; God's thoughts are nobler and pure. (Isaiah 55:9)

6. OVERFLOW

"Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive". (John 7:38) It is not known to which Scripture Jesus was referring. Moses was commanded to strike the rock to provide water for the Israelites to drink after they left Egypt. (Exodus 17:6) Later he was told to speak to the rock to receive the water but he struck it as he had done before and the Lord was angry with him. (Numbers 20:2-11) Jesus is the Rock. (Psalm 144:1) The first time was before God came down at Sinai but the second time God was with them and He wanted Moses to speak to Him, but Moses acted in anger and exasperation.

Maybe Jesus was thinking about the river from the Temple. (Ezekiel 47:1-12) The water flowed deeper and deeper; first ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, then it was deep enough to swim in, to overwhelm those who tried to cross the river. But this water flows into the Dead Sea and will bring life back so that swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows.

There are a few other prophecies about overflow. "The mountains will drip with new wine, and all the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines...will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the Lord's house and will water the valley of acacias (Shittim)". (Joel 3:18) This place was formerly a place of immorality and idolatry and also where Joshua sent out the 10 spies, 8 of whom were faithless. These evil things will be washed by the flow of life-giving water.

The symbolism of Jesus changing water into wine is part of this picture. As the wine flows down the mountains and hills it refreshes and brings new life. In the last days when the mountain of the Lord's Temple is established as chief among the mountains it will be raised above the hills and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths...we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever". (Micah 4:1-5)

Jesus' heart was overflowing with the love of God. As we are also filled with His love it will flow out to others. It is by this that people will know we are His disciples. (John 13:35) The time is coming and perhaps it now is when the reaper will be overtaken by the ploughman, and the planter by the one treading the grapes. People will be brought into the Kingdom even before the soil is prepared, and the new wine of the Holy Spirit is produced before the vines are established (or people join a church). Jesus, from heaven and at the right hand of God, gives His Holy Spirit to anyone who will ask Him. (Luke 11:13) It seems though that we must ask, since God will never force Himself on anyone. This Scripture does not talk of joining a church or a group, but simply of

asking the Heavenly Father for the good gift which Jesus offers. In another place the angel states on behalf of the risen Jesus, "Here I am! I stand at the door (of our hearts/ lives) and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me". (Revelation 3:20) Another promise that Jesus made is that if we ask it will be given; if we seek we will find; if we knock the door will be opened to us. God longs to give good gifts to us to show how much He loves us. (Matthew 7:7-11)

"The Lord will be jealous for the land and take pity on His people...I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully. (Joel 2:19) The vats will overflow with new wine and oil. (Joel 2:24) It is clear that God is extraordinarily generous and loves to bless His people if only they will seek Him and receive.

7. RESTORATION

"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten...you will have plenty to eat, until you are full". (Joel 2:25&26)

God speaks to His people in pictures. The only way He could get His displeasure and their dangerous situation into their stubborn heads was to devastate the land which He had promised would be "milk and honey" if they obeyed Him. This was the report that Joshua and Caleb gave when they returned from Canaan. (Numbers 13:27) The story of the Old Testament is of God's pleading to what He called an adulterous people because they preferred any God except YHWH. Ezekiel writes on God's behalf, "I poured out My wrath on them

because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols". (Ezekiel 36:18)

Paul writes that "the whole creation has been groaning...up to the present time". (Romans 8:22) But even from when Paul wrote those words, people, even some who call themselves Christian, have gone their own way and not sought after God, their Creator. At the present time the groaning of the creation is called "climate change", and God waits for His people to turn back to Him. His mercy, grace and generosity is so great that He still continually pleads, with promises of restoration and offers of the good things that are on His heart to give.

The prophecies to the Israelites hold true also for all time. Paul wrote, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". (2 Timothy 3:16&17) So what will it mean for the mountains to drip new wine and for it to flow from the hills? We believe God wants to pour out His life-giving flow from His own dwelling place, through His faithful family members who have sought Him and found Him on His holy hill. (Psalm 15) The infilling of the Holy Spirit will revive and empower us to do the work Jesus left for us to do. Once we begin to obey Him, as He speaks His instructions into our hearts, God says he will restore the fortunes of His people. They will rebuild, they will plant and harvest, they will prosper as God always intended.

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation". (Isaiah 52:7) Jesus came to seek and to save what was lost. (Luke 19:10) Sin had disconnected mankind from the presence

of the Father and Jesus came to make the way back. This work of restoration is to continue until He returns, and it is always in His power. Paul exhorts his readers to be filled continuously with the Holy Spirit. He compares it with getting drunk. (Ephesians 5:18) Drunks never know when to stop so he must mean his readers to be seeking the infilling of the Holy Spirit without stopping – a continuous dripping from the Presence of God.

The rebuilding is not a physical house but a spiritual one and spiritual sacrifices are required. (1 Peter 2:5) Paul writes that we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. (Romans 12:1) We are blood-washed and wearing our robe of righteousness which has been conferred on us. The anointing touches those we meet so we can sow the seed of the gospel and "harvest" them for the Kingdom. God is relying on us to do this in the "natural" so He can make the "plant" grow strong and productive. Our prosperity is in the fruit. All this was prophesied because God does nothing without revealing His plans to His prophets. (Amos 3:7)

Jesus came to restore what was lost because God had it spoken out by the Prophets. This restoration is important to God. "Suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple, the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire, will come". (Malachi 3:1-4) "He will be like a refiner's fire...He will purify...and refine...then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness...acceptable to the Lord". God really wants a family who bring Him honour and praise.

8. JOYFUL PARTICIPATION

The relationship between God and Adam and Eve was carefree and joyous before they disobeyed. (Genesis 2) God walked with them and talked with them just like any good father would do. But disobedience broke this communion, and it is this communion which Jesus has restored if we will receive it.

Yet God cannot associate with us if we cherish sin in our hearts. (Psalm 66:18) The writer to the Hebrews exhorts us – "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God". (Hebrews 12:1&2)

God is good and what He does is good. (Psalm 119:68) His heart is always wanting our good too. Sometimes He disciplines us because when that time is done it will produce a harvest of righteousness and peace for us. (Hebrews 12:11) Some do not understand this and misjudge God's training and lose the child-like trust that we need in our communion with God. But if we are willing, God will help us to acquire holiness so that we can know Him intimately. He will begin to share His secrets with us as He did with Abraham who was called a friend of God. This relationship with God is the most privileged and satisfying – God trusts us!

Trust and honour are the basis for relationship. Just as in any human relationship where the more we trust and believe the other person the more we understand where they are coming from, their motives and their wisdom, so also it is with our relationship with God.

Paul explains that the natural comes first. (1 Corinthians 15:46) We see the way the natural works so we can understand the spiritual, and how to relate to God whom we cannot see in the natural, but is nevertheless even more real than we are.

Paul reminds us that when we have received the Spirit we have also received the joy of the Lord. (Galatians 5:22) Nehemiah knew the joy of the Lord is our strength. (Nehemiah 8:10) Isaiah has a very beautiful message to the "thirsty" – "come to the waters...eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare...come to Me; hear Me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you...you will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands...this will be for the Lord's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed". (Isaiah 55:1-13)

This joyful participation is in the work God wants to continue to the close of the age. This is the great privilege that Father God extends to all His family; to be His ambassadors; God making His appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20) Indeed, David acknowledged that the Lord will fill him with joy in His presence. (Psalm 16:11) (Psalm 43:4) When David sinned he begged God to restore to him the joy of his salvation. (Psalm 51:12) He was also filled with joy when God did great things for His people. (Psalm 126:3)

There are many references to joyful participation even during Jesus' time on earth. When Jesus sent the seventy to do His work they returned with joy. (Luke 10:17) Paul described the Kingdom of God as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17) Because the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit they were also filled

with great joy, even though they were persecuted. (1 Peter 4:13) The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus endured the Cross with joy because He obeyed His Father and trusted Him and all the promises He had made, written in His word. His suffering would indeed fulfil the salvation of the world. (Hebrews 12:2) This emotion is a God-given gift which is really God saying to our souls "well done". This is why all those who say they are Christian should be seeking and experiencing the flow of God's power and love in and through them. Thus joyful participation in God's work makes us aware of the presence of God with us.

9. THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Jesus came to the earth as Immanuel – God with us. (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23) He also came to make God known to us. (John 1:18) This does not mean to know ABOUT God, although this is also important. But Jesus says that knowing God as the True and Only God is eternal life. (John 17:3) Our lives come from God and we are made "alive" by His breath. (Genesis 2:7 and Acts 17:25) "In Him we live and move and have our being". (Acts 17:28) Yet no one can come to Jesus unless the Father enables him. (John 6:65) Jesus came as God in the flesh so we could see what God is like, but His presence is so glorious that we cannot see Him as He really is unless the Father opens our inner eyesight. At the same time God asks us to draw near into fellowship with Him. What a paradox! He actually waits on our submission, our desire for His presence! But the submission is necessary because God will not override our will and His presence is a holy fire that burns

up all our sins and purifies us. (Malachi 3:2&3) This is the real glory of His presence – the sense of cleanness, the robe of righteousness in which He dresses us.

So many of the Psalms express the longing to be in God's presence, and after David sinned he begged God not to cast him out of His presence. (Psalm 51:11) We live in a world where evil things happen often because the enemy has heavy influence through those who choose against God and so have become puppets of the devil, who has always aspired to be the god. He even had the gall to ask Jesus to fall down and worship him. (Matthew 4:9) Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation, was there at the beginning. "For by Him all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by Him and for Him". (Colossians 1:15&16) Jesus saw Satan fall from heaven. (Luke 10:18) But the devil certainly has tempted many to worship him and to give his deceptive and lying words value that they do not deserve. Then when we are unclean we do not feel worthy to come to God.

But because of what Jesus has won for us on the cross we can come boldly into God's presence. Our "High priest" is sympathetic to our weaknesses and knows how to resist the devil. He is infinitely merciful and gracious and will help us. (Hebrews 4:14-16) Where David begged God, now Jesus begs us to come. "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden light". (Matthew 11:28&29)

As the new wine drips from the mountains, to fill us afresh and to revive and strengthen us, we will be able to comfort others with the comfort we have received. (2 Corinthians 1:4)

A psalm expresses it like this. "Send forth Your Light and Your Truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to the place where You dwell. Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise You". (Psalm 43:3&4)

The writer of this psalm did not know that Jesus would be the Lamb of God on the altar of sacrifice, that He would make the way into the presence of God, and that Jesus would be the Light of the world and the Way, the Truth and the Life, but his soul and God's Spirit spoke these powerful words.

When Peter was preaching after the crippled man was healed he told his hearers to repent and turn to God so that their sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. (Acts 3:19 Amplified) It is as we seek the presence of the Lord that we receive the anointing, the infilling of the Christ, the Anointed One.

10. THE FAMILY OF GOD

Just as God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the Garden, He desires to walk and talk with His forever family. His family is His Kingdom and we are learning how to rule and reign with Him. Jesus has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father – to Him be glory and power for ever. (Revelation 1:6)

Peter writes that God has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. Even though we do not see Him now, we believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. (1 Peter 1:3-8) This joy is the Holy Spirit within and it overrides any troubles and persecutions because it is a gift from God.

God has always had wonderful plans for His family, just as any good father would. He will nurture, train, discipline and then empower us as soon as we are ready. Some of His family remain childish because they still want to go their own way instead of learning how to achieve their God-given role in the family. However, like the son who repented and went into the vineyard to work, (Matthew 21:28-31) we can begin to seek God's plan for our lives. Jesus said that His family are those who hear God's word and put it into practice. (Luke 8:21) Since this is always a personal word as each of us has a different role in His family, we need to come to Him every day for "instruction". The fresh infilling of His Holy Spirit quickens the anointing and empowers us to do His work in His strength.

Being in the family of God is not only a great privilege, as brothers and sisters of the King of kings and Lord of lords, but it is a great delight because God is so generous, gracious and affirming. This is the testimony of the authors of this book.

And He makes us such wonderful promises.

- In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

- Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)
- He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)
- If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and **purify us from all unrighteousness**. (1 John 1:9)
- God would fulfil every good purpose and every act prompted by our faith...so that the name of Jesus may be glorified. (2 Thessalonians 1:11&12)
- He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us. (Ephesians 3:20)
- Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. (John 14:12&13)
- I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. (Matthew 18:19)

These are only a few and there are thousands more in the Bible, to be found and believed. Being in the family of God qualifies us for all these and more, just because God is love and pours His love into our hearts. So we come back again and again to the holy mountain, the presence of God. His wine drips from His place to the thirsty. It is so satisfying that the reaper is drinking before the ground has been prepared, and the wine is ready before the vines are planted. It is the Lord Himself who is this life.

OUR PRAYER

O Lord God,

We look to You to be filled afresh with Your mighty power. Please fill us to overflowing so that Your life-giving water flows to those we meet, so that their lives will be blessed by Your Presence. Just as servants filled the jars at the word of Jesus so that it could become the best wine, may this life-giving water which flows from us become the best wine for the refreshment and healing of all who will receive from us. May this wine from the mountain of the Lord rebuild lives and plant into Your Kingdom those for whom You have died.

If you have found this book interesting or helpful please contact us on
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