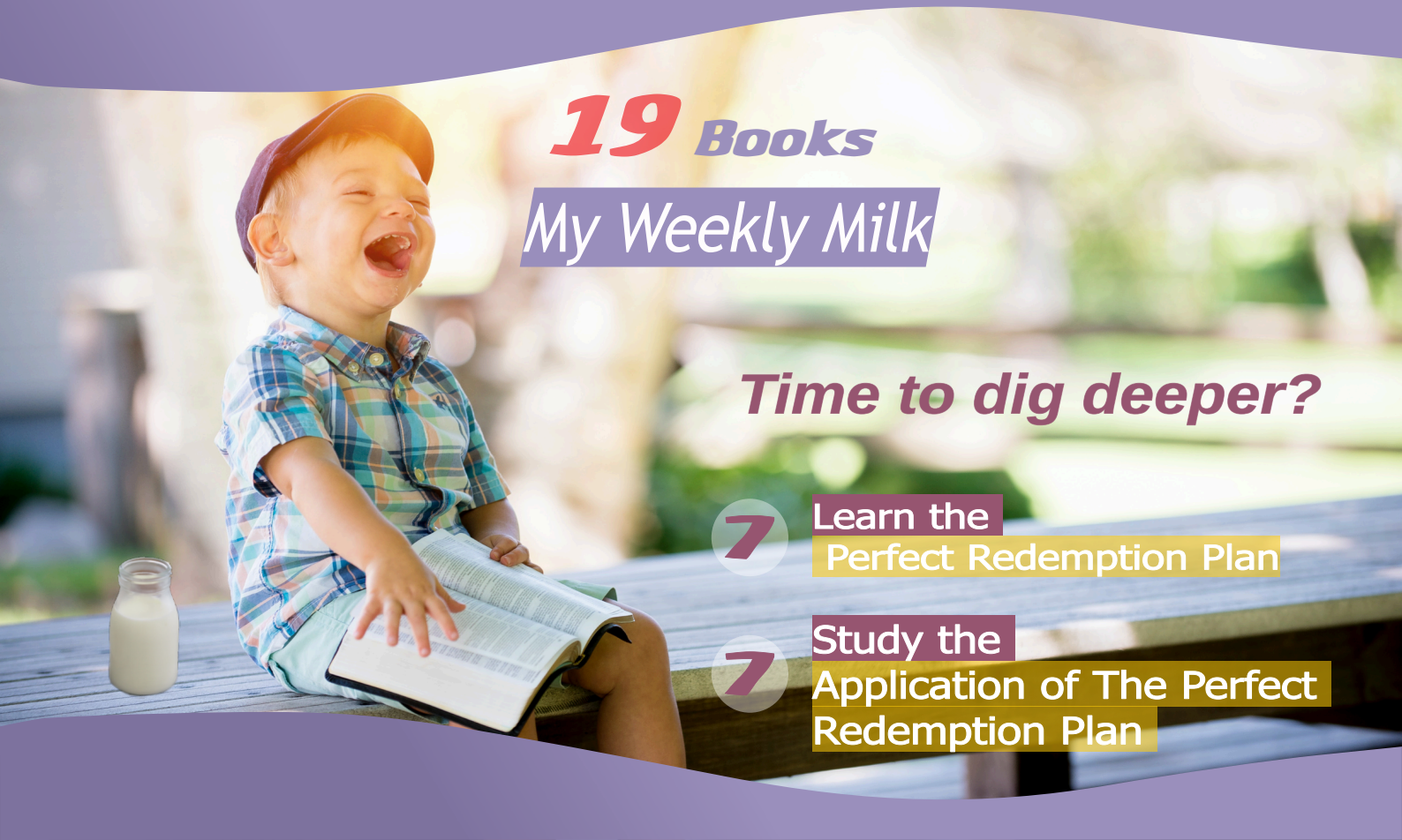
Leaven in Bread

11 my weekly Milk

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19 Books

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Time to dig deeper?

7 Learn the Perfect Redemption Plan

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Contents

CONTENTS

1 The Kingdom of heaven **1**

2 Why proclaim the kingdom of heaven is at hand? **2**

3 Leaven in the bread. **2**

3.1 Leaven of sin, leaven of malice and leaven of wickedness 3

3.2 The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 4

3.2.1 What hypocrite and hypocrisy are? 4

3.2.2 Woe to the scribes and Pharisees 5

3.3 The leaven of Jesus. 11

a Have faith in God. 13

b Our heart established with Grace 14

c Be diligent to enter your rest that is in Christ Jesus. 15

d Who we are in Christ Jesus. 19

d.1 The Sun and the Moon/ Christ and the Church 20

d.2 Lion, Ox, Man, Eagle and Priest 22

e The effect of the Leaven of Jesus in our life. 24



Introduction to My Weekly Milk - Bible Studies

Where one can be fed with the milk of the word of God, be stirred up in the spirit and filled with spiritual strength to face the challenges we might encounter during the week and come out victorious.

We should forward this "My weekly milk" to as many people as we think it might bless.



Remember the Bible has the final authority, therefore brethren, whatever you read in this letter, be like the Christians of Berea who went back and checked in the scriptures if it was so.

These Bible studies are written and recorded for everyone who wants to learn the true Word of God in order to build themselves up in faith, enabling them to stand and not fall when the storms of life come their way. You will be taught what you receive when you become born again by Jesus' death burial and resurrection and the authority you have been given to fulfil the will of God on earth. And as you learn this, you will realise what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. You will be a true disciple by the time you have finished them.

We all read and hear the same promises of God contained in the Bible. But the manifestations or fulfilment of them in our life is based on our obedience to the conditions attached to each one of those promises. Unfortunately, some Christians are disobedient and only think they can "claim it and grab it" and they end up frustrated.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience.

Hebrews 4:1- 2, 6

Truth be told, God can veto your unbelief, provided you obey the conditions attached to the manifestation or fulfilment of that particular promise.

For what if some did not believe (including myself, yet I obey God's commands in spite of my unbelief)? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. Romans 3:3-4.

If we are faithless or unbelieving, (provided we obey what God commanded us to do) He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13

Some Christians think they can twist God's arm with their sacrifices: long fasts, long prayers on their knees, generous and sacrificial giving of money. All those we ought to do, yet as long as we are disobedient concerning the conditions attached to the fulfilment of that particular promise, our sacrifices are in vain.

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams - For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king." I Samuel 15:22-23

In the entire Old Testament, the word FAITH is only mentioned TWICE.

--The first time is in Deuteronomy 32:20

And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is No FAITH.

Here God was referring to the fact that He gave them commands to follow through Moses, and the moment Moses went up onto the mountain, to them it seemed like God had hidden His face, for they could not see Moses physically, so they made a golden calf, thus breaking God's commands. And the moment they had hardship in their wilderness life, they sinned sexually against God, and raised other leaders instead of Moses. God had to send those leaders Dathan, Korah and Abiram to hell in Numbers 16 and 18.

According to Moses, a Child of God has NO FAITH in a particular promise of God, whenever they disobey the commands or instructions of God attached to the fulfilment of that particular promise.

-- The second time is in Habakkuk:

I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am CORRECTED. Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; but the JUST shall live by his FAITH. Habakkuk 2:1-4

Habakkuk was expecting God to give him instructions or commands, and to correct him in his ways and thoughts, as written in Isaiah 55:9-11, so that as he blindly followed those instructions or commands written down, he would see the manifestation or fulfilment of the God given vision.

Therefore according to Habakkuk the just or the righteous has FAITH, or lives by FAITH, whenever they simply obey the commanded instructions and corrections the Lord prescribed, in order to see the fulfilment of that particular promise contained in that vision.

Apart from those two times, no mention of faith is made again in the Old Testament, for they understood that it is simply to do God's word obediently.

That is why Moses told us the secret of having all those blessed promises in our life, saying: - "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God: Deuteronomy 28:1-2

Your confession of the word of God is worth nothing, until you deliberately decide to act on what you have been confessing. You can show God and men that you have faith by what you are doing, not merely by what you are saying.

But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. James 2:18

We show God and people our faith by our works or obedience to the word of God.

Faith is not a feeling or an emotion. In fact you can be crying, trembling and fearful as you are obeying that particular command or instruction from God that conditioned the manifestation of that promise. That's why throughout the Bible God says 366 times - fear not, do not be afraid: for each day of the year God says to you - trust Me, I am not a liar, fear not - only obey and I the Lord will be faithful to watch over My word and perform it Jeremiah 1:12.

FAITH is simple, it has to do with obeying God's word concerning a particular promise. As you read the Bible and the thousands of promises contained in it, you will start noticing a small word: IF- Either before the promise or just after the promise that is the condition to fulfil. Go and obey it and God will do the same thing in your life, stop deceiving yourself, claiming the promise when you do not obey the conditions, nor intend to obey them at any time.

You will also start noticing a second small word : WHEN. You will discover that as far as God is concerned those blessings are already yours, all His promises in Christ Jesus He has already said yes and so be it in your life.
2 Corinthians1:20.

God is not trying to make up His mind to give them to you, He already gave them to you. They will be manifested or fulfilled on earth in your life, when you start obeying God's word, to meet the requirements attached to each one of those promises.

That is the purpose of the My Weekly Milk Bible studies, we tell you your part to play to see the manifestation of the promises of God in your life, so that you stop living a frustrated Christian life, thinking that God has some favourite children. No, He has no favourite according to Acts 10:34-35.

Presented to you by
Gery Malanda

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Leaven in Bread



We will be looking at the leaven in the bread, what it means and what its implications in the life of a born again believer are. Our main scripture is taken from Matthew 13:33.

Matthew 13:33 Another parable he spoke unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

1 The Kingdom of heaven

The kingdom is an undivided territory under the dominion of a king. The message of Jesus was about the kingdom, not an earthly kingdom but a heavenly kingdom. The main theme of Jesus in the four gospels is the kingdom of heaven. Jesus expects it also to be the main theme of our preaching. When Jesus sent His disciples two by two he told them:

Matthew 10:7 And as you go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 10:8 heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give.

The preaching of the kingdom of heaven, being at hand or drawing near, was to be the subject matter of the ministry of the disciples just like it was Jesus'. John the Baptist was in harmony with the preaching of Jesus for he said to the people: repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2). The Jews understood this phrase "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" as the coming of the Messiah is near.

John the Baptist being the one going before the face of the Messiah, was telling the people that the coming of the Messiah was drawing near, therefore they have to amend their ways, they have to repent, he was there to turn the heart of Israel to their heavenly Father (Malachi 4:5-6). Believers have understood that part of the message they are supposed to preach: the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In our time it will be the second coming of Jesus our Messiah is drawing near.

There is one aspect of the preaching of the kingdom of heaven is at hand that we have not understood. While Jesus was on earth with his disciples; why did he have to preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand with His disciples, since he was already on earth? Jesus with his preaching of the kingdom of heaven, was letting the world know that whatever you are going through, there is help from heaven for you. What are you looking for? Is it forgiveness, healing, cleansing, resurrection from the dead, prosperity? I want you to know that there is help from heaven for you, because Jesus, the king of the kingdom of heaven, is in your midst.

When unbelievers hear us telling them the kingdom of heaven is at hand in their mind they think of doom days, the end of the world. They think we are telling them that tomorrow they will die for the world is ending. And they just walk away from us. Of course the world will end one day according to the scriptures and no one knows that day only the Father. As we proclaim the coming of our Lord Jesus to people, let us not fail to tell them that there is help from heaven for them, for the King Jesus over the kingdom of heaven is in their midst.

For once we have responded to the initial call: repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, what further needs from the teaching of the kingdom of heaven do we require? Once we repent and put our faith in Jesus, King Jesus comes and lives in us through the Holy Spirit; the kingdom of God is now inside us (Luke 17:21). But Jesus was still preaching the kingdom of heaven to his disciples, who had already received the baptism of repentance and put their faith in him. Over and over we see Jesus in the gospels explaining the parables of the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God to his disciples. Why did he not stop teaching them about the kingdom of heaven when they believed in Him?

2 Why proclaim the kingdom of heaven is at hand?

For us who are already born again we are not terrified about the second coming of Jesus. We know that we are saved and will reign with Jesus. We want to have a victorious life on earth; we want the will of God the Father found in heaven be done on earth (Luke 11:2). For that to happen we need to discover how the kingdom of heaven operates. After all there is help from heaven for us! But how do we get that help?

Jesus spent his time on earth explaining to his disciples how the kingdom of God operates, because he wanted them to receive help from heaven concerning everything they were facing. The way the kingdom of the world operates is not the way the kingdom of God operates. Therefore we must learn the ways of the kingdom of God in order for us to receive help from heaven. Knowing that we are in the world or in the kingdom of the world but we are not of the world. We belong to the kingdom of heaven. The children of the world, in their generation are wiser than the children of light; they know how the worldly system operates and how to get help from it, but the children of light do not know how the heavenly system operates and how to get help from heaven (Luke 16:8).

Jesus told us that every scribe or scholar, it simply means every student of the word of God, instructed or taught concerning the kingdom of heaven, is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old (Matthew 13:52). In other words there are treasures stored up for each one of us in heaven, old treasures and new treasures. If only we are instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven, how it works, we would be able to have these treasures on earth as it is in heaven (Luke 11:2). God does not want to hide anything from us, it is all written but we need to be instructed.

3 Leaven in the bread.

The word of God is the bread of heaven, we know that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the

mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). The word of God is the bread God is using to feed his people that they may grow thereby. The word of God is pure and there is no impurity in it (Psalm 119:140). This bread is made from an incorruptible seed not a corruptible one, and that incorruptible seed lives forever (1 Peter 1:23). There is nothing wrong with the word of God; it is pure and incorruptible. The problem lies with what we put inside that bread in the process of transforming that pure and incorruptible seed into bread.

The teaching of the word of God and the vessel (the person) used to teach that word of God are the problem. The teaching or doctrine that people make out of the word of God is the leaven they put into the bread. So we have to cross-examine all teachings or doctrines we receive, to find out if they agree with the revelation Jesus gave us in the gospel.

3.1 Leaven of sin, leaven of malice and leaven of wickedness

The first thought that would have come to the disciples of Jesus, being Jews, was leaven in the bread is symbolic for sin. When the Jews came out of Egypt, the house of bondage, on the day of Passover, God instructed them not to put leaven in their bread. And whenever they commemorate the day of Passover they keep it without leaven. They carefully search their houses whether there is any crumb. They thoroughly remove leaven from their houses.

Paul will tell us the same thing God told the Jews: therefore purge out or clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since we truly are unleavened; for Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

When we become born again we should stop practicing sin, malice and wickedness, these are the old leaven. Christ our Pascal lamb has purged out that old leaven that was in us. We should watch out for any teaching or doctrine condoning sin. It is not from God. That kind of teaching or doctrine, in trying to put back the old leaven in us, we are to be unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul will warn us about such teachings that condone sin saying: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Romans 6:1-2)

Many times it is because we are sinning ourselves that we are teaching other people to practice sin. But Jesus Himself will hammer the point home saying: Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19).

There is help from heaven for each one of us; Jesus our Pascal lamb is able to take away our sins. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). May God help us to flee any teaching or doctrine condoning the practice of sin, but furthermore may God purge out of our flesh the leaven of sin, the leaven of malice and the leaven of

wickedness; for our flesh is bread indeed and we want it to be an unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (John 6:51).

3.2 The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

We have already established that we want to have nothing to do with the leaven of sin, malice and wickedness. And furthermore we are asking Jesus our Pascal Lamb to purge those leavens out of our body, and help us to renew our mind from any teaching that promotes those leavens. Just like yeast leavens the whole lump, so will that kind of teaching or doctrine corrupt our body and spread like a cancer in the whole body of Christ.

What are other leavens that God does not want us to have in us? Jesus will tell us to take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:6). The disciples later understood that Jesus was not talking of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine or teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:12). The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is hypocrisy (Luke 12:1). God hates hypocrisy, he told us let love be without hypocrisy or dissimulation (Romans 12:9).

3.2.1 What hypocrite and hypocrisy are?

According to the bible, the Greek word hupokrites, a hypocrite is an actor under an assumed character, he is a stage player. He or she feigns to be that person people are seeing. Let us put it this way: when he or she is in church or with believers, she or he acts like the believers and talks like them, just for that moment, and as soon as they are gone; they are acting in their old ways. Everything they do is to be seen by men, to have the applause of men because it was just an act on stage.

Hypocrisy, according to the bible is the Greek word hupokrisis, is acting under a feigned part, it is deceit, condemnation and dissimulation. So any teaching of condemnation is not of God but of the Pharisees and Sadducees, there is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). God has not sent His Son into the world to condemn it but that the world through Jesus might be saved (John 3:17). Furthermore Jesus is telling each one of us: neither do I condemn you (John 8:11). Condemnation is not of God the Father, nor of Jesus, nor of the Holy Spirit, but of the hypocrites (John 16:8-11).

Jesus will talk to us about the hypocrites:

Matthew 7:4 or how will you say to your brother, Let me pull out the mote out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye?

Matthew 7:5 you hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then you shall see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother’s eye.

Let us not be so quick to judge brethren, but let us examine ourselves whether we are still in the faith or not (2 Corinthians 13:5). Let us not be self-righteous, thinking that we are the only one standing in the faith, the only one with the truth; but let us take heed lest we fall (1 Corinthians10:12). For no one has the whole truth but Jesus who is the truth, we only know in part and foretell events or

prophesy in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). Even when we think we are mature spiritually, let us restore the weak believers in the spirit of meekness or gentleness (Galatians 6:1). We must always speak the truth in love without putting condemnation in the heart of the young believers (Ephesians 4:15).

Jesus, the one we are supposed to imitate, saw the mote in the eye of the Samaritan woman. She had five husbands and the one she was living with was not her husband. Jesus exposed her sin but in love, He spoke the truth in love, and it imparted grace into the life of that woman to receive salvation and go to evangelise in her town (John 4). He did the same thing with the woman caught in the very act of adultery, he did not condone adultery at all, neither did he condemn her, but spoke the truth in love, and it imparted grace to that woman to receive the forgiveness of her sins (John 8:1-12). If anyone needs forgiveness of sins for his or her past life; Jesus forgives sins, there is help from heaven for him or her.

In Luke 13:10-17 Jesus was teaching in the temple of the Jews on a Sabbath day, and there was there a woman who was bound with the spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. Jesus loosed her from her infirmity but the rulers of the synagogue were not happy for it was the Sabbath but Jesus told them: hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead it away to watering?

The message of the kingdom of heaven is at hand; what we said can be contextualized, as there is help from heaven for you. Here was the daughter of Abraham in need of healing but the hypocrites were trying to prevent her from receiving her help from heaven. They were simply envious of Jesus because they could not help anybody and Jesus was helping everybody even on the Sabbath. My friends there is help from heaven for you, let no hypocrite try to cheat you of your reward through man-made religion (Colossians 2:18-23).

3.2.2 Woe to the scribes and Pharisees

We cannot explain better what the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees means, but to read through what Jesus said in Matthew 23. He dedicated an entire chapter just to warn us, of what kind of teaching and behaviour we should not have in the kingdom of heaven; we just have to read it.

Matthew 23:1 then Jesus spoke to the multitude, and to his disciples,

Matthew 23:2 saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

Matthew 23:3 therefore whatever they bid or tell you to observe, that observe and do; but do not do according to their works: for they say and do not do. {In other words they talk the talk but do not walk the walk}

Matthew 23:4 for they bind heavy burdens and grievous or hard to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Matthew 23:5 but all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

Matthew 23:6 and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Matthew 23:7 and greetings in the markets and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. {In other words if you do not put the title before their name they are not happy, do not even dare to call them brother of sister, they love title and recognition of men}

Matthew 23:8 but you, do not be called Rabbi: for one is your Master or Teacher, even Christ; and all you are brethren.

{There is nothing wrong with titles, Jesus was the one who appointed the fivefold ministry: apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist and pastor, and all the other offices of bishop, deacon, etc. Let not the office get into your head, you are first a brother and a sister before being in any of those offices, you are placed there to serve not to lord over the people, to have authority over the powers of darkness and rule over the powers of darkness, that are tormenting the people, but not to lord or be master over the people (Matthew 20:25-28)}

Matthew 23:9 and call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, who is n heaven.

Matthew 23:10 neither be called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

Matthew 23:11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:12 And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he who shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For you neither go in yourselves, neither do you allow those who are entering to go in.

{They know the right teaching of the scriptures but refuse to do it, and do not teach the people the truth of the scriptures; so that the people will never discover what the way God expects them to serve Him is, they are afraid that if they teach the truth to the people, that same truth will expose their evil deeds.}

Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore you shall receive the greater damnation.

{They will never teach you how to pray. They like it when people depend on them, so that if you have a problem, you always call them to come and pray for you. When the prayer is answered, they will take all the glory and not God, they will keep you in bondage and in a sense manipulate you financially: since you do not know how to pray for yourself, you will always be calling them to come and pray for you. They will ask you for money for their services, they want you to tell them everything in your life so that if something good happens to you they take the credit for the promotion God gave you, etc}

Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he

is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 23:16 Woe unto you, you blind guides, who say, whoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

Matthew 23:17 you fools and blind: for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

Matthew 23:18 And, Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

Matthew 23:19 you fools and blind: for which is greater, the gift, or the altar, that sanctifies the gift?

Matthew 23:20 therefore he who shall swear by the altar, swears by it, and by all things thereon.

Matthew 23:21 And he who shall swear by the temple, swears by it, and by him that dwells therein.

Matthew 23:22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him that sits thereon.

{The scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees yoked people, pledges and oaths, do not be deceived it is the same thing: you swear that you will do something. But they come up with tricks how not to pay their vows, oaths or pledges. They will say I only swore by the altar or by the temple, therefore I am not obligated to redeem it. Since they were the leaders, the people could not question their words. There is nothing wrong with oaths, vows or pledges it is biblical. But the Hypocrite leaders of the Jews, wanted to be seen by men when they do their liberalities, therefore they will declare publicly what they have pledged to give to the treasury of the house of God.

So people will be praising them for that pledge, but when the time comes to redeem the pledge, they will give these excuses: that they did not swear by the gift on the altar or by the gold of the temple, so they were not going to redeem it. Meanwhile they have also yoked the people by asking them to vow or pledge or make an oath publicly, but when the people will not be able to redeem it; they will not apply the same rules for the people that they themselves have used in order not to redeem their pledge. They were being hypocrites and using a double standard.

But what is the right teaching about the vow or pledge or taking an oath? In the bible we can see it is a personal thing between the individual and God, no one else knows that a vow or a pledge has been made by that individual. Only God, since it is only that person and God who knows what was vowed or pledged therefore only God can come, can ask that person to redeem his or her vow or pledge.

We see that with Hannah, she vowed in her heart that if the Lord gives her a child, she will give it back to God. Eli the high priest did not even know what she was saying in her prayer, her lips were moving but no sound came out of her mouth. And when God gave her Samuel she brought him back to the house of God, and had to explain to Eli that she vowed to bring the child to God. Eli did not know anything about the vow, from the

time she made it to the time she redeemed it, Eli was clueless (1 Samuel 1).

We also have the example of Jephthah, he made a vow to the Lord that if God delivers his enemies into his hand, he will give him whatever comes out of his house when he returns from the battle. Unfortunately for him, it was his only daughter that came to welcome him when he came back victorious from his enemies. He had to redeem his vow and gave his daughter to God, she was a virgin her entire life (Judges 11). No one knew of the vow of Jephthah, neither the soldiers who went into battle with him, nor his daughter, nor the priests. It was between God and Jephthah.

Our father Jacob had an encounter with the Lord, and God made him a promise to give him the blessing of Abraham and Isaac, in return Jacob made a vow that if God did his part of the bargain he will give God his tithe (Genesis 28). Jacob was fleeing for his life, for Esau wanted to kill him, he was alone when he cried out to God for help and when he made that vow, God kept his part of the bargain and when Jacob had come back to Bethel where he made that vow he gave God his tithe.

Jesus will give us the true teaching about vows or pledges or oaths to help us, so that no one will coerce us into making a pledge that we cannot redeem. To free us from the hypocrites who are always asking us to vow or pledge publicly so that they will be harassing us to redeem that pledge or vow. Do not get Jesus wrong, he is not telling us not to pledge at all or to vow or take an oath at all, He is the God of Jacob and Jacob vowed. But Jesus is helping to remove the burden and the yokes of pledges, and vowed that we have been or will be coerced to take publicly by the Hypocrites. Your vows or pledges must be between you and God.

Therefore Jesus says: you have heard that it was said by those of old time, you shall not swear or pledge or make a vow falsely, but shall perform or redeem your oaths or pledges or vows to the Lord: but I say to you, do not swear at all, do not vow at all, do not pledge at all {publicly when you are coerced} neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God nor by earth for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your Yes be Yes and your No be No. For whatever is more than these is from the evil one (Matthew 5:33-37).

So when we said, in the church setting, we will give something it is enough; our word is enough we have already said Yes we will do it. We do not need to pledge or vow. And when we have said we cannot give that money, our No is enough, people should not coerce us to go and borrow money, those methods are from the evil one, not from God according to Jesus.

James will also tell us: above all my brethren do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath. But let your Yes be Yes, and your No, No, lest you fall into hypocrisy hence receive the same judgment of the hypocrite (James 5:12). You do not have to act before men like the hypocrites, you do not have to say yes to please men, the Pharisees liked the recognition and the praises of men rather that the praises of God. That is why they will always raise their hand to pledge in churches but they will never redeem their pledges. Do not share in their hypocrisy.

God sees first our willing heart, we are willing to give to God, and he accepts our liberalities according to what we have, and not according to what we do not have (2 Corinthians 8:12). You do not have to borrow to try to please men, for a borrower is slave or bondservant to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). God does not want us to be in financial bondage to anyone or any credit card institution. He tells us: owe no one anything except the love of God (Romans 13:8).

For the Lord warns us: alas or woe to him who increases what is not his. How long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges. His creditors will rise up suddenly, those who oppress him will awaken and he will become their booty (Habakkuk 2:6-7).Do not be one of those who shake hands in a pledge, if you have nothing to pay, why should the creditor take away your bed from under you? (Proverbs 22:26-27)}

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the law, judgment or justice, mercy, and faith: these you ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

{Jesus was not telling them not to pay their tithe, in fact Jesus told them: these you ought to have done. To ought to is to be held or bound in duty or moral obligation. We have seen that God spoke the blessing of Abraham and Isaac to Jacob and Jacob paid his tithe, Abraham their Father also paid his tithe to Melchizedek the pre-incarnated Jesus (Hebrews 7:2).

Since they were enjoying the blessing of Abraham their father, because while they were still in the loins of Abraham, they gave their tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham (Hebrews 7:10). And it was long before the law was given to Moses. Almost five hundred years before the law was given to Moses. It was their moral duty and moral obligation to give all these tithes.

The problem Jesus had with the scribes and the Pharisees is that they were not doing the weightier matters of the Law: judgment, mercy and faith. Since they had been reading the Law they should put their faith in Christ for Moses, who gave that Law talked about another Prophet (Jesus) who will come after him and Him they must hear (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). But they could not believe in Jesus.

Righteousness and justice (judgment) are the foundation of the throne of God; mercy and truth go before His face (Psalm 89:14). The scribes and the Pharisees were partial in their justice or judgment and merciless. For instance in the case of the woman caught in the very act of adultery (John 8); they only brought the woman not the man yet the Law said to stone both the Man and the woman. But we also see in the case of David and Bathsheba, David had committed adultery and murder but he repented when Nathan the prophet exposed his sins and God had mercy on David (2 Samuel 11, Psalm 51).}

Matthew 23:24 you blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

{Both the gnat and the camel were unclean things and the Jews were not allowed to eat them (Leviticus 11:41-42, Leviticus 11:4). The Jews had a custom, if they ate a gnat or a flea or a fly falls into the cup of one of them: they will strain it and drink it. But if a gentile or a person they considered unclean, even if

he is a king of a gentile nation, they will throw the drink to the ground and not drink it.

So the Jew had a proverb among them: to strain the gnat and swallow the camel. In other words they had much solicitude, or concern about little things and none about greater things. They will be overly concerned about what you eat and what you wear. For them holiness was an outward thing only. They only associate with people that are clean in their sight.

That is why they were not happy when Jesus went into the house of tax collectors like Matthew to dine with him and with all the sinners and tax collectors that came into Matthew's house, the scribes and Pharisees complained: how is it that Jesus eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners. If it were only for the Pharisee and the scribe none of us would be saved. They wanted us to clean ourselves before being saved. They stumble over the little things. But Jesus told them: those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Mark 2:14-17).

They are self-righteous that is why they do not want to associate with anybody. But Jesus was not self-righteous, he associated with sinners and tax collectors, he talked to the Samaritan woman and allowed unclean people to touch Him: lepers, woman with an issue of blood, etc. God does not want us to be self-righteous and to think that we are better than others. We also were saved by grace through faith; we must bring the message of salvation to the sick, unclean and dying world. Let us not stumble over the little things but let us see the bigger picture: the salvation of their souls.

Peter also was playing the hypocrite at a time in Antioch, he was afraid of what some of the believing Jews would say if they saw him eating and drinking with the gentiles. So when they were not around, he ate and drank with the gentiles, but when those believing Jews came around, he separated himself from the gentiles, and joined the Jews in their hypocrisy. Paul rebuked him publicly, for this is not the way of Jesus (Galatians 2:11-21). This tells us something more, we must be the same person all the time, we must not pretend to love the brethren when in our heart we think they are not as clean or as righteous as we are. There is no such a thing as a second class citizen of the kingdom of God. It is the same Spirit of God that is in the Jews and in the Gentiles, in the apostles and in the rest of the saints, in the free and in the slaves, in the black, in the white, in the yellow, in the red and in the brown.}

Matthew 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Matthew 23:26 you blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like unto whitewashed sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Matthew 23:28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Matthew 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the

tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.

Matthew 23:30 and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Matthew 23:31 therefore you are witnesses unto yourselves, that you are the children of those who killed the prophets.

Matthew 23:32 Fill up then the measure of your fathers' guilt.

Matthew 23:33 serpents, generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?

Matthew 23:34 therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

Matthew 23:35 that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Matthew 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not!

Matthew 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matthew 23:39 For I say unto you, you shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Yes Jesus said it all! There is nothing to add about the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes. Let us not become like them and let us never introduce their teaching and doctrine into the body of Christ. We must do what they tell us to do, as long as it lines up with the teaching and the life of Jesus. The question one might ask is: what is the leaven or teaching allowed in the kingdom of heaven? For Jesus said to us: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened (Matthew 13:33).

3.3 The leaven of Jesus.

If Jesus and his disciples wrote to us at such length, to describe the leaven of sin, the leaven of malice, the leaven of wickedness, the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, all these were not acceptable to God and he urged us to make an utter riddance of these leavens. There must of necessity be a leaven that is acceptable in the sight of God. Since Jesus is likening the expansion of the kingdom of heaven to leaven, which is inserted in three measures of meal; In other words there is a teaching or doctrine of the kingdom of God, which when it is introduced into the life of a believer, causes that believer

to expand his borders and the entire kingdom of heaven to grow.

The bible tells us in Isaiah 9:6-7 that when Jesus Christ was born, the Lord God bestowed a government or empire upon His shoulders, and of the increase of that government or empire, there shall be no end. An empire is a territory of greater extent than a kingdom. For the word translated government in that Isaiah 9:6-7 is the Hebrew word misrah which means empire and also government. Just like once upon a time there used to be a British empire, and it was said that the sun never goes down on that British Empire, because they had lands in the East and in the West. But now it is only the United Kingdom, on only one continent. The Kingdom of Jesus is truly an empire like Isaiah said; for there is not a continent on earth where there are no born again believers.

Jesus did not just come for the kingdom of Israel; no he came to win the whole world back to God. He started his mission in Israel, but he expects you and me, to do like the disciples and enlarge the boundary of the kingdom of heaven on earth, until the entire world is saved. The disciples had the same understanding of the kingdom and the right teaching of the kingdom of heaven. They carried that teaching to the four corners of the world and brought help from heaven to the people in need.

Today Jesus is telling you and me: just as my Father bestowed the kingdom upon me, I have bestowed a kingdom upon you (Luke 22:29). The only way Jesus can expand his kingdom of heaven is through you and I, now that a kingdom has been bestowed upon each one of us. We need to know about that leaven that is acceptable to God, in order to expand the kingdom God's way.

Jesus will give us the understanding of the right leaven or doctrine or teaching of the kingdom of heaven we must have in order to expand it.

Matthew 16:5 and when his disciples were coming to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread (raised bread or loaf).

Matthew 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Matthew 16:7 and they reasoned among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread (raised bread or loaf).

Matthew 16:8 which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves, because you have brought no bread (raised bread or loaf)?

Matthew 16:9 Do you not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up?

Matthew 16:10 neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up?

Matthew 16:11 How is it that you do not understand that I spoke it not to you concerning bread (raised bread or loaf), that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

Matthew 16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven

of bread, but of the doctrine or teaching of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Countless times we behave like the disciples of Jesus, when we read the scriptures. We fail to grasp the true message of Jesus and we think Jesus was talking about bread. The disciples thought that Jesus was talking about the bread, they forgot to take with them, while Jesus was talking to them about the teaching of the kingdom of heaven. While Jesus was feeding the multitudes, he was sending them a double message. It was a message inside a message. Then what was the message inside the message? What is the leaven of Jesus: teaching or the doctrine of Jesus that the disciples were supposed to have with them?

a Have faith in God.

The first thing we must have, is faith in God, without faith it is impossible to please God for anyone who comes to Him must believe that God is the rewarder of those who seek Him diligently (Hebrews 11:6). The first thing we need to have is faith in God. We must believe that what He said to us He will do. God is not a man that he should lie to us. O you of little faith (lacking confidence in Christ), why do you reason among yourselves? We must stop reasoning among ourselves and questioning the word of God.

Jesus does not want anyone to be of little faith, or slow to believe, that is lacking confidence in Christ. We should not have a double mind when it comes to the word of God, trying to be neutral, trying to sit on the fence: one foot in and the other foot out. One is either in or out, there is no neutral. A double minded person will receive nothing from the Lord (James 1:7-8). All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yes and Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20)!

If we do not cast away our confidence in Christ, we will have a great recompense of reward (Hebrews 10:35). Let us not allow our heart to condemn us, for condemnation will rob us of the confidence toward God (1 John 3:21). The hearts of the disciples were condemning them because they forgot to take bread with them. Do not allow condemnation in your heart, it will remove the confidence you have towards God. And whatever Jesus will say to you, you will be thinking: is it because I did not do this or that? Just like the disciples were reasoning among themselves: is it because we have forgotten to take bread?

We must always bear in mind that condemnation is of the devil not of God. When we are in Christ there is no more condemnation (Romans 8:1). Therefore Jesus says to his disciples: why are you lacking confidence in Christ? You think I am condemning you because you did not take bread, but I am not, I am talking about a different subject and you are still dwelling on your past mistakes. The more you condemn yourselves the less confidence you have in Christ.

The devil has been busy trying to put condemnation in us, so that he will rob us of our great recompense of reward. He knows that if our confidence in Christ is intact, we will be able to ask anything according to the will of God and God will hear us (1 John 5:14). And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him (1 John5:15).

Jesus is telling each one of us: do not allow condemnation in your life so that your confidence in Christ will not be affected. But instead have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whoever shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe (have faith) that those things which he said shall come to pass; he shall have whatever he said, Therefore I say unto you, Whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe (have faith in God) that you receive them, and you shall have them (Mark 11:22-24).

b Our heart established with Grace

Jesus asked: do you not yet understand neither do you remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? The disciples answered: we took up twelve small baskets full of fragments and fishes (Mark 6:43). I always wondered: what the message behind the five loaves and the five thousand men was? There were also women and children in that place, why were they not numbered but men?

For the Jews and in the bible the number five is the number of grace, and the number thousand is the beginning of maturity. We have already established that the bread that Jesus multiplied was a raised bread or bread with leaven. We know that the leaven is the teaching or the doctrine; and the bread is the word of God. Jesus is telling us that the leaven of Jesus is the teaching or doctrine of Grace. The word of God we share with people must be a message of the grace of God, from the beginning of our Christian life, even when we mature in the faith it must still be the doctrine of grace. Let us not be carried about with divers (various) and strange doctrines or teachings; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace (Hebrews 13:9).

Paul will tell us. I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him (God) who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel. Some people who trouble you and want to pervert or distort the gospel of Christ, but even if we (the apostles including Paul) or an angel from heaven, preaches any other gospel to you than what we have preached (the gospel of grace), let him be accursed (Galatians 1:6-8).

What is grace then? Grace is that unmerited favour of God, a divine empowerment; it is a divine influence or empowerment on the heart and its reflection in a person's life. The spirit of God moves in us, to do things that are pleasing to God. Our salvation is by grace through faith and not of work lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8). That is why Jesus had to settle the faith issue first. Even to receive our salvation we must put our faith in God. If we doubt God, when He said that we will not even be saved by grace, we will be trying to work to be accepted in the beloved, and Jesus is telling us it is not by work but by grace through faith in Christ.

Everything we do for God and in the kingdom of God is by grace through faith. Let us never have the work mindset, but the grace mindset. Let our heart be established with no other doctrines but grace through faith. If anyone comes with a strange doctrine but grace, reject it. Charge all that they should teach no other doctrine but grace through faith in Christ (1Timothy 1:3). Everything we have, material things, spiritual things, is by grace through faith in Christ. We start off our Christian walk by grace through faith in

Christ. We mature by grace through faith and until Jesus comes back it will still be by grace through faith in Christ.

When Jesus multiplied the five loaves, the disciples collected twelve small baskets, each of the size of a boy's lunch pack, full of fragments. Jesus was telling his disciples, that as long as they are doing God's work, serving the Lord, God will provide for their daily need. They will not lack. Jesus asked us to pray: give us day by day our daily bread (Luke 11:3). We may not have any savings but God will provide everyday for us, it is part of God's welfare package.

There is no lack or want to those who fear God. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing (Psalm 34:9-10).Just like in the wilderness God gave them Manna day by day. They have enough bread to feed their entire household, likewise even when we are in the wilderness of our life we can have faith in God, that He will provide for our need because we are no longer strangers or foreigners, but fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19).

If God cannot feed the members of his own household, He will deny the faith that we have in him, and will be worse than an infidel (1 Timothy 5:8). But we know that the scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35). Heaven and earth will pass away but the word of God will by no means pass away (Luke 21:33). So we can be confident in the fact that our God will not allow the soul of the righteous to famish or suffer hunger (Proverbs 10:3). He shall provide all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). Not according to our bank account or to our employers or anybody but according to his riches in glory by Christ. We can see that God will provide for his own household by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

c Be diligent to enter your rest that is in Christ Jesus.

Jesus asked his disciples another question: do you not remember the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? And the disciples answered seven large baskets or hampers which are large woven baskets for conveying things to the market (Mark 8:8).

The Jews had the understanding of the number seven as the rest of the Lord. God worked for six days to create the world and on the seventh day he rested (Genesis 2:2). We must realize that God never intends for any of us to spend our entire life in the wilderness. He wants us to be diligent to enter his rest, where we also will cease from our work. For we who have believed in Christ Jesus have also entered His rest (Hebrews 4:3). Our works are finished and we must learn to enter the rest that Jesus purchased for us on the cross when he said: it is finished (John 19:30). Everything we will ever need has already been provided in Jesus our rest.

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). For he who enters into the rest of Jesus, he also has ceased from his own work as God did from His (Hebrews 4:10). Let us be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of unbelief of our fathers in the wilderness (Hebrews 4:11). God had a promised land for our fathers: a land of abundance, a land flowing with milk and honey. A land wherein

they have more than Manna, which was a day by day daily bread; but a land of abundance where they will have houses full of all good things, which they did not fill, and wells dug, which they did not dig, vineyards and olive trees, which they did not plant; they will eat and be full (Deuteronomy 6:11). They can leave an inheritance to their children's children in that land (Proverbs 13:22).

In the physical Joshua, whose name means Yahweh, is our salvation, gave the children of Israel that rest when he led them to the promised land. But that rest was just a type of the rest that we have in Jesus for the meaning of Jesus is Yahweh is our salvation. Therefore David talked of another rest; the rest that Joshua gave the children of Israel was only a shadow of the rest which is found in Jesus (Hebrews 4:7-9). So brethren today after such a long time, today if you hear the voice of the Lord do not harden your heart like our fathers in the wilderness, and be content with Manna, for our God has a land of abundance for you and me.

Let us learn to rest in the finished work of Jesus. Let us learn to cast our care upon him, because he cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Let us learn to roll or commit our works unto Jesus, and he will establish our thoughts (Proverbs 16:3). Let us learn to come to Jesus when we labour and are heavy laden, and He will give us rest (Matthew 11:28). For he has a place for us where we cease toiling and working hard but we now dress and keep the garden as He intended for us in the Garden of Eden and we just have to tend the sheep (Genesis 2:15; John 21:16).

God told the people of Israel one very important thing about that promised land. When they get there and receive all the blessings of God they should do one thing. They shall remember the Lord their God, for it is Him who gave them power to get wealth, that He may establish his covenant which He swore to their fathers, as it is this day (Deuteronomy 8:18). In other words if they want to keep enjoying the blessing of Abraham, and all the terms of the covenant that God made with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; they will have to remember the Lord their God and serve Him the same way their fathers did.

The promised land is a land of sowing and reaping, do not be deceived God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that he will reap (Galatians 6:7). While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest shall not cease (Genesis 8:22) and God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so (Genesis 1:11).

We realise that in God's plan, He planted the tree first and the tree yielded fruit. The seed was in the fruit. If you have an apple tree when you eat the apple, the seed is inside the apple. God brought them into the promised land and gave them vineyards they did not plant, they just had to go and eat the fruit. It is our responsibility to plant the seed of the apple, if we want to keep eating apples. If we eat all the peanuts in the barn and sow none, we will have no peanut to sow; therefore we should not expect any peanut for the next harvest because we did not sow any.

God said that the seed will yield after its kind, so if you sow maize do not expect to reap peanut or apple; they are not the same kind of seeds. In other words the man that is friendly will have many friends (Proverbs 18:24), for he has sowed a seed of friendship

and has reaped many friends. If we pray for other people, we are sowing the seed of prayer and God will raise intercessors when we are in trouble.

Those who sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind. It has no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal; if it yields; the strangers shall swallow it up (Hosea 8:7). The allusion here is of idol worshipers, who make a great stir and noise in their worship, like the wind they are boastful, they make a great show of religion and devotion and promise themselves peace, all prosperity and wealth. But God is saying to them, if your seed is the seed of idol worship, you will reap my whirlwind which is the wrath of God. I will destroy idol worshipers. Just like the prophets of Baal when they contended with Elijah and the wrath of God fell on them, or Sodom and Gomorrah the wrath of God destroyed those two cities.

And furthermore even Israel when they become idol worshipers the whirlwind of God, which is his wrath, destroyed their nation and blew Israel away into captivity in Assyria and Judah in captivity in Babylon. Do not have an idol in your heart, neither idolise any man or woman of God, you are sowing the wind in your life and that man or woman of God who wants to be an idol in the hearts of believers, is in danger of reaping the whirlwind of God. God is coming and blowing so hard against his ministry, to expose his or her nakedness, just like the whirlwind lifts the skirt of a woman and exposes her nakedness (Isaiah 47:3, Isaiah 3:17). God disperses his followers just like the whirlwind drives away the chaff (Psalm 1:4).

If we sow the seed of hospitality, we will reap hospitality. If we sow the seed of liberality, we will reap the same liberality. Jesus said: give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom; for with the same measure that you mete [measure in quantity or limit or set boundary] withal [with the same measure in quantity and quality, or limit or boundary you have set] it shall be measured to you again (Luke 6:38).

In other words if we deem that we cannot give people new things, but only second hand things, that is our limit and the boundary we have set; and we shall reap also many times second hand things. If we only give people our used garments or gifts that people gave us which we did not like, we shall reap the same; people will also give us many times gifts they did not like, and their used garment. If we only give to people who can give back to us, then we have limited yourself, only people we know will give to us but no strangers.

The problem is, not is it a new thing or a recycled thing, a cheap thing or an expensive thing. No, the question is what value it has to you. It is a heart thing; we must give with the Agape love of God. What is that? It is simple Jesus said: you shall love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:39). We must always ask ourselves, would I buy such a thing for myself? Would I be happy if someone talked to me like that? Would I be happy if someone was manipulating me? If the answer is no then do not do it to another person.

In the kingdom of God we have all kinds of believers some are rich and some are only rich in the spirit. God is only moved by our heart. If a sister has money to buy a LV purse and gives it as a gift to another sister, praise the Lord! But if a sister does not have money to buy a LV purse, but only a brandless purse and offers it as a gift, God is pleased. Let us

not value gifts by their value according to the world or their price or brand, rather let us be like God who sees the love behind the gift. When the poor widow gave her two mites into the treasury of the house of God, Jesus said she has given more than all the rich people (Mark 12:41-44). Each one of us knows the value of what we give to God or to people, and God knows it too; do not try to impress people but God.

If we give to the poor, who cannot repay us, we are lending to God, there is no limit or boundary with God; God will repay us because we have pitied the poor (Proverbs 19:17). If we give to the poor, things we loved and not the things we were trying to get rid of; God will give us back many times things we love and desire according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. We will not go deep into the teaching of the seed for it is not our main subject. Even when we donate our second-hand clothes to some charities; let us wash them first and if they are already torn in pieces let us just put them in the rubbish.

One must have in mind that when we sow a seed we do not just reap one seed but many seeds or many fruits with seeds in them. On average if one plants an apple seed, the apple tree that comes out of that seed will produce, in its entire life, about ten thousand apples. One olive seed planted will give us an olive tree. The olive tree lives on average five hundred years and some of them live up to two thousand years; and the more they advance in age the more fruitful the olive trees are. So imagine the seed that one can plant and generations after, they are still enjoying the fruits of that single seed their father planted. Is it possible?

Of course, you and I, we claim the blessing of Abraham our father, it was because he believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness and he offered his only seed, his son Isaac, to God that you and I can claim the blessing of Abraham today. For God said in Abraham all the nations shall be blessed (Galatians 3:8). In Christ Jesus who is the seed of Abraham, you and I have become partakers of the commonwealth of Israel. The seed we plant today is not just for us to eat but also generations down the line will enjoy the fruits of the seed we planted.

Father Abraham gave his tithe to the priest Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus, and through him the Levites who were still in the loins of Abraham also gave tithes to Jesus (Hebrews 7:4-5). The Levites and all Israel were enjoying the blessing of the tithe their father Abraham gave to Jesus our Melchizedek.

When Jesus had fed the crowd the disciples collected seven hampers or large woven baskets for conveying things to market. These baskets are big, Paul was put into the same kind of hamper by the disciples, and let down by the wall in Acts 9:25. But when Jesus asked the disciples: how many loaves do you have (Mark 8:5)? They said seven, yes they could have eaten the seven loaves and that was it! It would not even be enough for the twelve of them; but they decided to sow the seven loaves into the hand of Jesus, Jesus multiplied them and others reaped; for one sows the seed and another reaps but it is God who gives the increase or multiplies (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). The crowd enjoyed the food, thanks to the person that sowed the seven loaves.

In the same manner, every day we enter into the harvest of other people. We did not sow anything, but are just enjoying the fruits of the sowing and labour of others (John 4:38). For instance the bible study or the sermon,

someone spent time reading and studying the scriptures and he milks it for us, what we have to do, is to just come and drink the milk. Someone obeyed God's instruction to give and when God has given back to him the whole multitude was being fed because of the obedience of one.

Or we spent time in the word of God to have light, for the entrance of His word gives light and understanding to the simple, therefore we are able to shed some light in the life of others and give them some understanding of the ways and acts of God (Psalm 119:130). Or a well established ministry, which has a good reputation, because of its founders, when we open one branch of that ministry in a new city, people join us even if they do not know us personally, only because they knew the founders of the ministry, and the reputation of that ministry. It is up to us to live up to that reputation, if we want to keep enjoying the favours and blessing of that ministry.

The Lord is the one, who in the first place ministered that seed to you and I, for in his sight we are sowers, it is the same Lord who also ministers bread for our food, and multiplies our seed sown, and increases the fruits of our righteousness (2 Corinthians 9:10). God was the one who gave them the seven loaves, and as they sowed them into the life of Jesus, he multiplied their seed down. They collected seven large woven baskets. It was not the small twelve baskets they had before, but seven large baskets. They had more then enough, they could eat and be filled to the full, and still have more for the next day. They could bring home and feed their household and still have some for the next day.

They gave Jesus seven loaves, and not only they fed thousands of people, but had seven large baskets of leftovers. In other words they rested in Jesus and Jesus gave them His rest. My friend be diligent to enter your rest which is in Jesus; your land of abundance of more than enough; when the floodgates or windows of heaven are opened over your head and the Lord is pouring out a blessing that you do not have room enough to receive such blessing (Malachi 3:10). A land where you and I, priests and priestesses of the Most high God are satiated or filled to the full with abundance, and the people of the Lord satisfied with His goodness (Jeremiah 31:14).

d Who we are in Christ Jesus.

Jesus asked his disciples another question: do you not remember the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? The question is what about the four thousand? Why was it mentioned?

The Jews have the understanding of the number four; we have already seen that a thousand was the beginning of maturity. Have we ever asked ourselves why there are four gospels? Why such a repetition, if we think it is repetition? Some stories and parables are found in other gospels, what is the point of having four gospels? The writers were trying to let us know who Jesus is, and if we know the true identity of Jesus, we will know our identity. Jesus would ask his disciples who do men say I am (Mark 8:27)? And furthermore Jesus will ask his disciple: but who do you say that I am (Mark 8:29)?

These are crucial questions; if we get it right from the beginning of our Christian walk, we

will be powerful believers. Many Christians have an identity crisis. They do not know who they are in Christ Jesus. So how can they be registered in the army of the Lord or how can they know what they are supposed to do in the camp of Israel? When Israel came out of Egypt the house of bondage and came to the wilderness, God asked Moses to register the people by their tribes, clans and father's house. They were to be registered by genealogy; it was also done when the people came out of the captivity of Babylon (Ezra 2:62). If one had a questionable genealogy he was not numbered among the Israelites. In other words God was telling the children of Israel: who are you? Declare your pedigree!

d.1 The Sun and the Moon/ Christ and the Church

What is it about that number four? God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years; And the evening and the morning were the fourth day (Genesis 1:14;19). The great light that rules the day is the sun and the great light that rules the night is the moon.

On the fourth day God created the sun and the moon, the two great lights to rule over the day and the night. The number four talks about the ruler-ship of our Lord Jesus and our ruler-ship. God wants us to know about the ruler-ship of our Lord Jesus who is the Sun of righteousness, who shall arise unto us who fear God with healing in his wings (Malachi 4:2). He is our bright and morning star (Revelation 22:16). When He arises in our life He dispels darkness for He is light and in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). Darkness hides from Him, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are the same to Him (Psalm 139:12).

If we walk in the light of God's word, He sheds more light, so that our highway of holiness is brighter than ever before (Isaiah 35:8); but if we walk in darkness He sheds some more light to expose our works of darkness. Let us therefore walk in the day while the Sun of righteousness is shining, for if anyone walks in the day he does not stumble because he sees the light of the world (John 11:9). And our Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, is the light of the world, if anyone follows Jesus he shall not walk in darkness but he shall see the light of this world (John 11:9).

The great light that God created to rule in the night is the moon. The darker the night is, the brighter the moon is. On the first day of the seventh month of the year, the Jews celebrate the new moon, which also was the feast of the blowing of the trumpets (Leviticus 23:24). It is the celebration of the Jewish New Year. The feast of the new moon is on the first day of the seventh month in the Jewish calendar; it was the type of the church which is the bride of Jesus. The moon in itself has no light, it is not a source of light, it only reflects the light of the Sun of righteousness, and it is fair which depicts the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed to us.

The moon can only arise when the Sun of righteousness has finished his course; when he is no longer shining on earth. The seventh month of the year or the month of Tisri is the month in which the priest makes atonement of the sin of Israel (Leviticus 16:29-31). In that same month Jesus died on the cross to atone the sins of the world, and rose from the dead three days after. Jesus said on the cross it is finished, yes he gave us that rest

on that seventh month of the Jewish calendar. On the seventh month which still talks about entering the rest that is in Christ; the question of our identity in Christ, who we are in Christ, must be settled. It must sink deep into our spirit and mind.

The ruler-ship of the church is the delegated ruler-ship of Jesus. Jesus now tells the church, his fair bride: you are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). You cannot be hidden because the darker the night is the fairer you are. The fairness is symbolic for our righteousness, that is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Just like the normal moon, if you take a picture on the moon, it is just full of dirt and can emit no light at all because it is not a source. Likewise all our righteousness is like filthy rags and the only light we have is the light of the sun, which is the source. If the sun of righteousness is not shining in our life, what people will only see is the dirt in us and our filthy rags.

So Jesus our Sun of righteousness, also our Prince of peace says to his bride the church: rise up, my love, my fair one and come away (Songs 2:10). Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Just like in the book of Songs of Solomon the Shulamite, who is the picture of the church, the bride of Jesus, arose in the night and went after Jesus, likewise the church must arise in the night of the world and shine, that men may see its good works and come to the knowledge of the bright and morning star. For as long as the sun of righteousness is not on earth, the world is in darkness, and the only way they may know that there is a Sun of righteousness somewhere, is when they see his light being reflected through the moon, his church. But if the moon never arises, how will they know that there is the Sun of righteousness somewhere?

In the camp of Israel in the wilderness, the East part of the camp had the banner of the Lion, for Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. And the West part of the camp had a banner of a man. The sun rises in the East and sets in the West, in other words Jesus of the tribe of Judah came down from heaven, to become a man like you and I, and leaves an example to us, of how to live a life pleasing to God.

We, men and women, when we become born again, start our journey to become Christ-like. We are all going towards the East, and one day when Jesus will appear to us, we shall be just like him, with the same glorified body (1John 3:2). We started off our Christian journey with a carnal mind and are walking in the flesh, but every day we must renew our minds, walk in the Spirit, and become Christ-like.

The only Jesus people will see, is you and I in the midst of this dark world. No matter how long the night may last, the day will break again; the Sun of righteousness will come again. When the world sees our light, the light of the moon, they say to themselves: it is only a matter of time and very soon we shall see another breaking of the day. Likewise brethren, we are the moon reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness and one day Jesus will come again and the dead in Christ will rise(1Thessalonians 4:16). He will judge the world. For this reason you and I are commissioned to go into all the world and preach saying the kingdom of God is at hand, or the coming of the Bright and Morning Star is at hand.

d.2 Lion, Ox, Man, Eagle and Priest

When our fathers were in the wilderness they were camping in four positions. Three tribes in the East, three tribes in the South, three tribes in the West and three tribes in the North, and then in the middle of the camp was the Levites. From above, the camp looked like a cross.

In the East they had the banner of the lion, the king, Jesus is the King of kings and he has made you and me kings. The gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the King of the Jews (Matthew 27:37) and the rightful heir to the throne of David. That is why Matthew details the genealogy of Jesus in his first chapter to prove that He is the son of King David. As Christians we must have the understanding of our royalty our authority as kings and our responsibilities as kings.

In the South they had the banner of the ox, a servant. In the temple of the Lord there was a large basin supported by twelve oxen. God was letting the twelve tribes of Israel know, that they are all to serve the Lord. That responsibility does not fall to only one tribe, but all the tribes in one way or the other must put their hands to the plough, and take the yoke of the Lord. Jesus tells each one of us: take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls (Matthew 11:29).

The gospel of Mark portrays Jesus as a servant; nobody needs to know the genealogy of a servant, that is why there is no genealogy of Jesus in the book of Mark. We must be like our Lord Jesus who became a servant, we must study what God expects from his servants.

In the West they had the banner of a man; the Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus as the son of Man. The genealogy Luke gives of Jesus is traced back to Adam the first Man. To let us know that Jesus was fully man, the son of Man. Luke puts more details of the life of Jesus and starts the genealogy of Jesus from the lineage of his mother Mary, Heli or Eli being the father of Mary (Luke 3:23); to fulfil the prophecy that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15). Only a man can redeem mankind and only Jesus the son of Man, the Seed of the woman could redeem us. God cannot violate his own words; he gave dominion of the earth to mankind.

That is why the demons knowing who Jesus was, for He is God were telling him, why he is tormenting them, they knew who he is. He is God, so he cannot operate on earth (Luke 4:34). But Jesus had emptied himself of his deity to be born of a virgin, hence becoming the Seed of the woman to be able to defeat Satan and his cohorts as a Man.

Jesus portrayed for us what a human being can do when he is filled with the Spirit of God. What kind of victorious life a man can enjoy when filled with the Spirit of God; what miracles can be performed through a man filled with the Spirit of God. Jesus told us: the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord the year of Jubilee (Luke 4:18-19).

Likewise the same Spirit of the Lord is upon you and me when we are saved. Jesus did all those things as a man not as God, except when He forgave sins at that time He operated as God for only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:1-13). To let us know that the work that He did we will do and greater works than what He did we will do through the same Holy Spirit that anointed Him (John 14:12). Let us study the life of Jesus as the Son of Man to see how He triumphed over the world and sin.

In the North they had a banner of the eagle; it is the deity of Jesus. The gospel of John has no genealogy of Jesus, because God has no beginning and no end. John presents Jesus as God who was from the beginning with God the Father. In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word was with God and the Word (Jesus) was God. He was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2).

The eagle also represents the prophetic: the ability to see and to hear from God; the ability to see in the past or in the future. We are all prophetic people for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). We have been made in the God class, God created us in his own image and after his own likeness (Genesis 1:26). He gave us dominion over the works of His hand; and in authority we are just a little lower than Elohiym, who is God the creator (Psalm 8:5). In ranking, after the Godhead, we, born again believers, are next; we rank higher than the angels of the Lord for they are servants, but we are sons and are seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven in Christ (Ephesians 1:20, Ephesians 2:6).

Therefore do not worship angels or demons, for they are not created in the image or after the likeness of God, and they are not sons of God. The angels of the Lord are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation (Hebrews1:14). Any angel who demands your worship or your prayer, is not from God but a demon.

And because we are sons, God has sent forth his Spirit in us, so that we may cry out Abba Father. God the Holy Spirit is now dwelling in us. Therefore God told us what will happen in our days: it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on my men servants and maid servants I will pour out my Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28-29). You and I are now sheep of his pasture, we can hear his voice, for his sheep hear his voice (John 10:27).

And finally in the centre of the camp, the priests were camping, the priests were serving in the house of God and they were interceding for the nation of Israel. They were in the centre of the camp. The bible tells us that we are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). Prayer and intercession must be in the centre of our Christian life. Everything we do must be birthed in prayer. Jesus who is our High priest is making intercession for us at the right hand of the Father (Romans 8:34). Not only Jesus must be the centre of our life, but prayer must be also be the centre of our life.

In the camp the people did not move unless they had received the instruction from the priests. And they would not pitch their tents unless they had been instructed by the priests. It does not matter where you are stationed in the camp, either under the banner of the lion or the banner of the ox or the banner of Man or the banner of the eagle, you must wait on the Lord for him to give you

guidance. Then your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, this is the way walk in it, whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left (Isaiah 30:21).

Jesus gave us a great example when he was on earth; he was always praying and communing with the Father. He said: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do: for whatever things he (the Father) does, these also the Son does likewise (John 5:19). I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things (John 8:28). We should be like Jesus who waited for the instruction of the Father. We should wait for the instruction of the Godhead because we are priests. May God help us to always do so!

There is so much to say about our royalty in Christ, our stewardship in Christ, our humanness in Christ, our placing in the God class and our priesthood. But time will fail us because it is not the main subject we are developing. Each of them has to be taken separately, and we need to mature in each of these aspects that is what the four thousand were insinuating (Matthew 16:10); for if we know who we are in Christ Jesus we will live a victorious life.

e The effect of the Leaven of Jesus in our life.

The bible tells us that the people who know the Lord their God will be strong and carry out great exploits (Daniel 11:32). When the proper teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom is introduced into a person's life, it empowers him to carry out great exploits in every arena of his life. For he realizes his true identity in Christ, he no longer has an identity crisis. He knows exactly the ways of the kingdom of heaven, the acts of God and how the kingdom of heaven works; therefore he can receive help from heaven.

Jesus bestowed a kingdom upon us as the Father bestowed a kingdom upon Him (Luke 22:29). He wants us to have his teaching of the kingdom of heaven, in order to expand it. For the prophecy was that: of the increase of His government or empire there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7). Just like that leaven that the woman hid in three measures of meal and leavened the whole lump. Likewise when the teaching or doctrine of Jesus about the kingdom of heaven is introduced into our life, we enlarge our borders.

The Lord promised: I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders (Exodus 34:24). He is saying to each one of us now, just like he said to Father Abraham: Lift your eyes now, and look from the place where you are; northward and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. Arise and walk in the land through its length and its width for I give it to you (Genesis 13:14-17).

The Angel of the Lord who is the pre-incarnate Christ, decided to visit Gideon who did not know who he was. He had an identity crisis. He did not know who he was in Christ therefore he was hiding from his enemies; threshing the wheat in the wine-press in order to hide it from the Midianites (Judges 6:11). Jesus told Gideon: the Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour! Jesus was telling him who he was in Christ a mighty man of valour, not a wimp and a coward. But Gideon asked Jesus, if the Lord was with us, why then has all this happened to us? Where are all the

miracles of God which our fathers told us about? (Judges 6:12-13)

We are like Gideon, we do not know the teaching of the kingdom of heaven and who we are in Christ. I can only hear Jesus telling Gideon. I told you, the righteous are as bold as young lions, the lion of the tribe of Judah lives in you through his spirit, so where is your boldness (Proverbs 28:1)? You are asking me where the miracles of old are but I told you works that I do, you will do and greater works you will do because of My Spirit who is now in you (John 14:12).

I gave you the authority, the legal right, my delegated authority and power to tread on serpents, scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, that includes the Midianites who are oppressing you and plundering you; and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19). You also have the Spirit of the Father in you; all things are possible to you because you have believed in Jesus (Mark 9:23).

Please Gideon, know who you are in Christ, go in this might of yours, now that you know the teaching of the kingdom of heaven, and save Israel from the hand of the Midianites, I the Lord Jesus have sent you (Judges 6:14). As God the Father sent Me, Jesus, even so I send you (John 20:21). Later we see what this leaven of Jesus or teaching of Jesus in the life of Gideon did. It did exactly what Jesus said: it acted like a leaven that a woman put in three measures of meal and leavened the whole lump.

One of the Midianites had a dream, so he said, I had a dream: to my surprise a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed. Then his companion said: this is nothing but the sword of Gideon, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp (Judges 7:13-14). The Lord gave this dream and its interpretation to the Midianites to allow Gideon to know the effect of that teaching of Jesus in His life, and the damage that it would cause in the enemy's camp.

Gideon was now raised bread (a loaf of barley bread) because of the leaven of Jesus. He had been unleavened bread and still is, but it is not enough to just be the unleavened bread. Yes we are born again; we have made a riddance of the leaven of sin, malice and wickedness in our life. But we need now to invade the enemy's camp, to be that gigantic loaf of bread that will tumble into their camp, fall on them, and strike them. The more we have the leaven of Jesus in us, the more we expand our borders and the more damage and killings the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God in our mouth, does to our enemies.

If we read the rest of the story, Gideon defeated his enemies and freed Israel from the oppression of the enemy. Likewise you shall enlarge your borders and do damage in the enemy's camp. Jesus told us that He will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). In other words, we will take the battle to the enemy's gates and not just destroy the gates of the enemy, but also fall on them, overturn and strike their camp. We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loved us (Romans 8:37).

May God Almighty be with you and keep you and help you to remove the leaven of sin, malice and wickedness and then introduce the leaven of Jesus Christ into your life, to empower you on your Christian journey.

God Bless you,

Gery Malanda



About Hopfan

We are a group of born again Christians who humble ourselves in prayer to Abba Father in the name of Jesus to prayerfully set people free from oppression – sickness and disease, through signs and wonders, to bring the unbelieving to the light and freedom that is available in JESUS CHRIST! for the salvation of the 50 nations of Europe, starting in Glasgow Scotland.

We publish many teaching materials, which can all be accessed for free online in ebook format and can be purchased at cost online, in print format. We also host a program on TBN called Voice of Healing. Please visit **hopfan-europe.org** for further details

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17. **I am Searching for my Lost Donkey!**
18. **He Kept The Good Wine For The End**
19. **Sailing With Jesus**
20. **You are the Salt of the World**

After having read and studied these **19** Foundational Bible topics in the **My Weekly Milk** series, preferably in the order given above, then Dig Deeper and progress with the **Perfect Redemption Plan** series, followed by the **Application of the Perfect Redemption Plan**

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