

Unveiling... Lessons From Life

Does it sound like we're
our credentials... asserting
do we need letters of endorse-
ment as we can

3
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Christ himself for God, are our letter of
a letter. His letter authorizes us to help carry
The Plan wasn't written out with ink on paper, with
footnotes, killing your spirit. It's written with Spirit
lives!

LIFTING THE VEIL

7-8
The Government of Death, its constitution chiseled on stone tablets, was so
a dazzling inaugural, Moses' face as he delivered the tablets was so bright
that day (even though it would fade soon enough) that the people of Israel
could no more look right at him than stare into the sun. How much brighter
dazzling, then, the Government of Condemnation was impressive, how about
Government of Affirmation? Bright as that old makeshift arrangement

9-11
look downright dull alongside this brightly shining government, makeshift
impressed us, how much more this brightly shining government, makeshift
for eternity?

12-15
With that kind of hope to excite us, nothing holds us back. Unlike
Moses, we have nothing to hide. Everything is out in the open with us. We
wore a veil so the children of Israel wouldn't notice that the glory was fading
notice it now, don't notice that there's nothing left behind that veil, know
today when the proclamations of that old, bankrupt government are read
out, they can't see through it. Only Christ can get rid of the veil so they can
see for themselves that there's nothing there.

16-18
Whenever, though, they are — face-to-face! They suddenly recognize that
the veil and there they are — face-to-face! They suddenly recognize that
God is a living, personal presence, not a piece of chiseled stone. And when
God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is
recognized as obsolete. We're free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and
God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are trans-
figured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and
more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.

Lynette Woods

Unveiling... Lessons from Life

by Lynette Woods



Other titles:

Unveiling... Vignettes of Life
Unveiling... Portraits of Life
Unveiling... Being Full of Life
Unveiling... Life, But Not As We've Known It

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Published as an E-book by Unveiling.Org
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Hear Him!

Things are hidden temporarily only as a means to revelation. For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything kept secret except in order that it may be made known. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear. Mark 4:22,23.

One thing about us humans which is very "natural" and yet of very real concern is our propensity to give our attention and our time to humans instead of, or as a substitute for, Jesus Christ Himself. This is an age-old temptation for us. We just naturally prefer to listen to and worship someone we can see here and now rather than "hearing" and "seeing" the Unseen Invisible One for ourselves.

Many today seem intent on looking at, listening to, reading from, quoting, praising and loving substitutes for Christ; whether that be books, blogs, podcasts, or the authors and preachers themselves. So many seem to prefer to hear what some person thinks and has to say about God rather than seeking to listen and hear what HE thinks and has to say to them personally or even what He has said historically in the Bible! There seems to be not only a lack of knowing the Living Word Himself, but also His written words as well. How absolutely vital it is in these days that we know both! God says that His people are destroyed and cut off through lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6) and we are seeing the truth of that statement today. While it is very true that mere intellectual knowledge gets us absolutely nowhere spiritually, it is also true that heart knowledge of both Christ *and* the Scriptures gets us where our Father desires us: in union with Christ and His Purpose.

There are many voices these days which can be heard, many "anointed" men and women who can be seen. Is our attention and focus on them, or on Christ? It doesn't matter how godly or spiritual we think they are, or even how we feel about what we see and hear. Our emotions, our soul, can so very easily lead us astray!

Jesus said, "Be careful that no one misleads you, deceiving you and leading you into error. For many will come IN MY NAME saying I am the

Christ and they will lead many astray." (Matthew 24:4,5). This isn't warning us about those who are obviously false, but those *who come in His name!* I know that our English Bibles put in commas to read: "For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray." But since there is no punctuation in the Greek, I believe it can with equal validity be read as: "For many will come IN MY NAME saying that I am the Christ..." after all, we would not give someone the time of day if they stated that they themselves were Christ, would we? That would be no deception, it would be obvious that they were false for there is only one Christ; why would Jesus bother warning us about that? But if someone comes along *in His Name*, as one of His followers, saying that Jesus is the Christ, that is far more deceptive because we agree with them on that vital point. These words of Jesus are warning us of people who come in His Name, agreeing that He IS the Anointed One and yet they will lead MANY astray!

Deception would not be deceiving if it were obvious error. No, deception is more likely to have a lot of truth and be very appealing to us as humans. It will make a lot of sense to our reasoning and to our minds. To the contrary, so often God's ways CANNOT be understood and do not make sense to us! But oh, how we love it when things make sense and fall into place and appear to be so clear to us! As Paul wrote, "The time is coming when people will not tolerate sound and wholesome instruction but having ears itching for something pleasing and gratifying, they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, and will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions." (2 Timothy 4:3,4).

Why is it that we so often, almost without even thinking, rave about this or that book and tell our friends they MUST read this book... yet we hardly ever recommend someone simply read the Bible? *Why* is it that we often suggest to someone that they listen to this or that podcast or this or that speaker who are SO good... yet we hardly ever suggest that they simply listen to Christ for themselves? Perhaps the mouth speaks what the heart is full of...

It is a fact that you cannot be looking up at the heavens, and down at the earth at the same time. As soon as you move your focus to the earthly,

you are no longer focusing on the heavenly. Perhaps this is why Paul said, "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2). As soon as you stop looking into the Person and Face of Jesus Christ, you are looking elsewhere.

Jesus warned us very solemnly: "False christs (anointed ones) and false prophets will arise and show signs and work miracles to deceive and lead astray, if possible, even the elect, those God has chosen out for Himself. *But look to yourselves and be on guard; I have told you everything beforehand.*" (Mark 13:22,23). Of course we would not be deceived if these ones were obviously leading us astray! We must always keep our eyes fixed on THE Anointed One and realize that even miracles mean nothing.

One great need today is discernment... not necessarily to discern errors, but to discern and see Truth Himself, to hear and see Jesus Christ, and in so doing to know when we do not see or hear Him. It is when we make judgment calls from our natural reasoning and faculties that we get ourselves into trouble...

Even the disciples of Jesus had this problem. When Jesus was revealed in His glory to Peter, James and John (in Matthew 17:1-8) Peter's response upon seeing Jesus with Moses and Elijah was the desire to construct and make something for all three men, in honour of them. He said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah". That was human reasoning and relying on human ability. The Greek word for "good" as used by Peter in the phrase "good for us", means something that appeals to our senses, something beautiful to look at, genuine, honourable, and, interestingly: affecting the mind agreeably, comforting and confirming.

Many of us today do exactly the same thing with those we perceive to be true men and women of God. We delight in looking at them, they are beautiful to us and honourable. We love to listen to them and what they say is comforting and confirming. While we may not physically build a tabernacle for them, in our hearts we may effectively do the same thing and without realizing it, be worshiping them instead of the Son of God.

Obviously Moses and Elijah were genuine, great men of God, but God's

response to Peter (and to us today) is: "*THIS is My Son*, whom I have chosen; *HEAR HIM!*" The narrative goes on to say, "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and do not be afraid. When they had lifted up their eyes, *they saw no one but Jesus only.*" Through their seeing of Christ being glorified, and in hearing God's admonition to listen to Him, and even through their fear, the end result was that they saw *no one but Jesus only.*

We desperately need eyes to see Him and ears to hear Him, for it is only when we truly do hear and see Him, that all substitutes will disappear and we will "see no one but Jesus only". Oh, that we would desire and seek *only* Him! And in hearing and seeing only Him, be set free from the bondage of looking at man and making places of worship for them in our hearts; for who can ever compare with Him? If we are still captivated and impressed by a mere person and what a person says, then surely we have not yet had an unveiling and revelation of Jesus Christ!

May God in His grace reveal His Son to us in His glory, and may we have hearts that desperately desire and seek only Him... May we have ears to hear what our Father is saying to us: "HEAR HIM!!!" May we have the attitude that causes us to fall on our faces in repentance and humility before Him... and may we be those who lift up our eyes and "*see no one but Jesus only.*"

When He received honor and glory from God the Father, the voice from the majestic glory of God said to Him, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:17-19.



A Temple Made by Human Hands

God who made the world and all that is in it, being Lord of both Heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, nor is He ministered to by human hands, as though He had need of anything - seeing that He is the One who gives to all men life and breath and everything else. Acts 17:24,25.

It is one of our natural, human desires to want to do something for those we love, and this obviously includes doing things for God; we desire to please Him with whatever we can do for Him. This was clearly demonstrated by Peter when he saw Jesus revealed (Matthew 17). Peter's natural response upon seeing Jesus, Moses and Elijah was the desire to *do* something: to construct and build something for all three men. He said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make three shelters (or tabernacles) one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah". This was his natural, human reaction without even needing to think about it!

So many of us today do exactly the same thing as Peter with those we perceive to be spiritual men and women - and without thinking about it. We delight in them, they are awe-inspiring, they are our heroes. We love to listen to them and while we may not physically build a tabernacle or temple for them, in our hearts we may effectively do so without realising it, and end up worshiping them instead of the Son of God. Moses and Elijah were great men of God, but God's response to this suggestion of building something was, and still is: "*THIS is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy; listen to HIM!*"

When God breaks our mindsets and opens our eyes to see and hear His Son, our response is the same as that of the disciples: "When the disciples heard the voice, they were so afraid that they fell flat on the ground. But Jesus came over and touched them. He said, "Get up and don't be afraid!" When they opened their eyes, *they saw only Jesus.*" Through what they saw, and in hearing God's admonition to listen to *Him*, and even in spite of their fear, the end result was that "*they saw only Jesus*". When we experience seeing and knowing Jesus Christ in an

earth-shattering, revealing way, no longer will we idolise the earthly, because we will have eyes for One only. No longer will we see building churches and temples as being something good for God and "good for us" but quite the opposite, for we will see God's intention and that He has only One in view: "I saw **no temple** in the city, for the Lord God Omnipotent and *the Lamb Himself are its temple*" (Rev. 21:22). This Temple (Christ) is not a physical building that we can see or go to, nor can He be constructed by us - it is ludicrous and presumptuous to think that we could do so! But that in itself can present a challenge and an offence to us.

The Temple - Made with Hands

Oh how we do love to do things and make things which we (and of course others) can see, hear and touch on this earth! As Stephen said in his speech:

"Our ancestors carried the Tabernacle with them through the wilderness. *It was constructed according to the plan God had shown to Moses.* Years later, when Joshua led our ancestors in battle against the nations that God drove out of this land, the Tabernacle was taken with them into their new territory. And it stayed there until the time of King David. David found favor with God and *asked for the privilege of building a permanent Temple* for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who actually built it. However, *the Most High doesn't live in temples made by human hands.* As the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Could you build Me a temple as good as that?' asks the Lord. 'Could you build Me such a resting place? Didn't My hands make both heaven and earth?' You stubborn people! *You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth.* Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That's what your ancestors did, and so do you!" (Acts 7:44-51).

What was Stephen referring to that was 'heathen' and resisting the Holy Spirit? In the context of what he'd just been speaking about it seems to speak of one thing that all religions had in his day and still have today: **temples**. Or, in Christian terms: churches. The temple was a very sacred thing to the Jews (just as the church is to many Christians) and the significance of what Stephen said was not lost on them. They were very

angry with him for saying that God didn't need or want their sacred buildings and promptly killed him; thinking they were doing God a favour. And that is what is still often done today because the truth that God doesn't need or want these structures that we build, hits right at the very heart of idolatry.

But wasn't the temple God's idea in the first place? No, it was the *tabernacle* that God asked Moses to make, and the tabernacle was a tent and not a building. The tabernacle was in use right up until the time of King David and then it disappeared... David thought he had a better idea: a permanent building, a temple like other religions had. If you read the passage above again, you will see that it was *David* who asked to build the temple, and not God who asked for it. This fact is made even clearer in the Old Testament accounts, one given in 2 Samuel 7, the other in 1 Chronicles 17 (from the NKJV):

Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under tent curtains."

I had never realised until reading that verse, that building the temple was *David's* idea. God didn't ask David to build the temple, nor did He want him to (which He clearly tells David shortly thereafter). Apparently it didn't seem fair to David - from his earthly, human perspective - that he lived in a beautiful palace while the ark of the Lord was in a tent. That, of course, sounds very noble and good to us humans, and when he told the prophet Nathan about his idea, Nathan's response to David was:

Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you."

One question needs to be asked here: *had God been consulted?* Had He said *anything* to either Nathan or David about a temple up to this point? Apparently Nathan thought the idea of building a temple sounded like a good idea too, so it appears that he presumptuously endorsed it on God's behalf although the following verses make it clear that he hadn't yet asked God what HE thought about the idea. Just because God is with us and has blessed us, doesn't mean we can go and "do all that is in your heart" - not even for the man who was said to be a man after God's own

heart. And just because we see something that we think God needs us to do for Him, doesn't mean He wants us to do it.

That very night God came to Nathan with a strong message:

But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: **"You shall not build Me a house to dwell in.** For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another."

So God said the opposite of what Nathan had told David on His behalf; instead of God telling David to "do all that is in your heart" He told him through Nathan that he was NOT to build a temple. The tabernacle or tent is significant here because it was a temporary dwelling, entirely adjustable, and would move on easily. Whenever the pillar of fire moved in the wilderness, the tents were packed up and the people moved with God leading them on. But you cannot move a temple building; it is firmly attached to the earth, it is earthly. A temple's foundations are fixed on this earth and *not* in the heavens. God did not want to be stationary, He is a God Who moves. He went on to say,

*"Wherever I have **moved about** with all Israel, **have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'** Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Moreover **I will appoint a place** for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies."*

It sounds as though God was reminding David WHO was in charge and that He was quite capable of asking David or anyone else to build Him a

temple if that had been what He had wanted. God was satisfied with the tabernacle, even though man might despise it for being so temporary and unimpressive. He continued,

"Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build **you** a house."

God's House - Made Without Hands

David appeared to have had things around the wrong way; instead of him building a house for God, God wanted to build *him* a house. But was this promise to David fulfilled, did God build David a house? No, not on this earth, and not in David's lifetime. We can now see that this promise was fulfilled in Christ and that God was speaking of Him: "*Destroy this temple,*" *Jesus answered, "and in three days I will build it again!" ...But Jesus was talking about His body as the temple. (John 2:19-21).* And God had something far greater than Solomon's temple in mind: Christ, "Something greater and more majestic than the temple is here!" (Matt. 12:6).

God's message for David continued along these same spiritual lines:

"And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your Seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish His kingdom. **He shall build Me a house, and I will establish His throne forever.** I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son; and I will not take My mercy away from Him, as I took it from him who was before you. And I will establish Him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and His throne shall be established forever."

Was this literally fulfilled? No, even though David thought God's words were about his son Solomon and it was partially fulfilled through Solomon. However, Solomon's throne was *not* established forever on this earth. The temple that Solomon built lasted in all its glory for a mere 34 years before being ravaged and spoiled, beginning a cycle of restoring the temple only to have it ravaged again and again, until it was eventually destroyed. God in His grace did inhabit that structure for a short time, but when He inevitably moved on, the temple could not move with Him and it was left behind; an empty shell for man to maintain. They would continue

to hold their meetings and perform their rituals in it, but they would not meet God there, they would meet only each other.

The temple had replaced the tabernacle, but Solomon's temple was to be replaced with a new Temple, which Ezekiel saw very clearly. This House is God's creation and God's Way: Christ! "When God speaks of a "new" covenant, it means He has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear... By these regulations *the Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place was not freely open as long as the Tabernacle and the system it represented were still in use.* This is an illustration pointing to the present time... For that old system deals only with... physical regulations that were in effect only until the time of reformation and setting things straight." (Heb. 8:13, 9:8-10).

Jesus said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again," meaning Himself. But this was extremely offensive to those whose lives revolved around the temple, just as it is offensive today to those whose lives revolve around the church, because so much of this temple mentality continues today as though God is inhabiting it and pleased with it.

The tabernacle (and the Sanctuary of the temple) were simply a picture of what was to come, they were symbolic of Christ in this world. The outer courts of the temple were a busy and noisy place where animals were tethered, slaughtered and sacrificed on the altar. But the Sanctuary consisted of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place had very little activity compared with the outer courts; it was where the lampstand, the table of showbread and the altar of incense (all symbolic of Christ) were kept. The Holy of Holies was only entered into once a year and the priest did very little in it - a big contrast to the daily, busy activity of the outer courts of the temple.

It is significant that Jesus did not say that the whole temple would be destroyed and rebuilt; only the Sanctuary itself. John used *two different words* for "temple" in John chapter 2. The first two instances of the word "temple" is *hieron* and means the whole of the temple including its outer courts. But the word which is used three times at the end of the chapter (including the one Jesus used in reference to Himself) is a different word - "naos" - which means ONLY the Sanctuary itself, consisting of the Holy

Place and the Holy of Holies. Matthew and Mark bear this out as they used exactly the same words for what Jesus had said. All other writers in the New Testament also used this word "naos" in reference to the Body of Christ instead of "hieron" (Acts 7:48, 17:24; 1 Cor. 3:16,17, 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:21, Rev. 3:12, 21:22 to name a few). It is significant that our English word "hierarchy" is derived from the root of the word "hieron" meaning temple.

The secular Greek definition of this word "naos" or sanctuary, was "inmost part of a temple, containing the image of the god" and interestingly, "a portable shrine" - reminiscent of the tabernacle or tent of the Lord. This word is also used of us as the 'temples' of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 3:16. There are no instances of the word "hieron" (the temple) being used in reference to Christ or His Body in the New Testament at all. Instead the word meaning a sanctuary or holy place is used, but our English translations don't differentiate between the two.

The fact is that there is only One who fully satisfies God, and we share in God's pleasure and delight in His Son when we are in Him - when we are living stones being built into this House which is Christ. As I said, it is one of our natural, human desires to want to do something for those we love, and this obviously includes doing things for God; we desire to please Him with what we do and with whatever we can make for Him. But, in the words of T. Austin-Sparks, "It is not what is done for God, but what is done *by* God that will last." And that is a very important distinction.

Kings and Kingdoms

I think it is beyond refute that it was never God's intention for us to have buildings or temples on this earth in which to worship Him like the religions of this world who have temples for their gods. Most of us are aware of the fact that the Israelites having a king was not God's idea either (1 Sam. 8:4-7). Their reason for wanting a king was so that they would "be like all the other nations" and have a king who would lead them and defend them (1 Sam. 8:19,20).

God warned the Israelites that the result of their demanding a king would be that they would be in bondage and subjection to their king and that he would use them and abuse them. He told Samuel to say to the people, "If

you have a king, this is how he will treat you. He will force your sons to join his army. Some of them will ride in his chariots, some will serve in the cavalry, and others will run ahead of his own chariot. Some of them will be officers in charge of a thousand soldiers, and others will be in charge of fifty. Still others will have to farm the king's land and harvest his crops, or make weapons and parts for his chariots. Your daughters will have to make perfume or do his cooking and baking. The king will take your best fields, as well as your vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to his own officials. He will also take a tenth of your grain and grapes and give it to his officers and officials (*the tithe*). The king will take your slaves and your best young men and your donkeys and make them do *his* work. He will also take a tenth of your sheep and goats. You will become the king's slaves." (1 Sam. 8:9-17). All of this is so clearly evident in churches today where there is loyalty to the system, to the building, to the meetings and to the pastors or religious leaders, instead of a loyalty to God. God took this decision very personally; He saw that the people were rejecting Him as their King (1 Sam. 8:7). He wanted to be their only King just as He wants to be our only Meeting Place...

Our common ground is not meant to be whether we go to church or what denomination we are part of, or what doctrines we believe, or what teachers we listen to; our common ground, our communion (common union), our Place of Meeting is simply Christ! When He is both King and the Meeting Place in a person's life, we find that we have instant communion and fellowship with them because Christ IS our Place of meeting! In this Holy Place we find ourselves in union with God and with His Family.

Today the majority of Christians are no different than the Israelites who wanted a temple and a king, just as Stephen said in his speech. We have built "temples" and we have wanted "kings" to look up to and to tell us what to do and what not to do, what to read and what not to read, what to believe and what not to believe, where to go and where not to go - the list is endless - instead of asking, and hearing, and knowing God for ourselves. The result of all these kings and temples are many religious kingdoms which are sustained by man and not God and which often abuse and exploit people. Jesus gave us the example of true leadership Himself by being a servant and *running away* when the people wanted to make Him their King (John 6:15). The Kingdom of God is NOT of this

world: "My kingdom," said Jesus, "doesn't consist of what you see around you. If it did, My followers would fight so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. But I'm not that kind of king, not the world's kind of king." (*John 18:36*).

We each need to honestly answer the question: "WHO is king in my life?" A kingdom is a place where the king governs and decides everything. Even though we may not yield to another person as king, often we fail to realise that the one person who may be acting as king by reigning and ruling supreme in our lives, stares back at us every time we look in a mirror! In speaking of who is king in our lives, we are talking about what our heart loves above all else, for the heart is the throne where whomever we love and admire the most resides. When Christ is our King we find ourselves lovingly yielding to Him and seeing His Way, His Truth, and His Life established in our lives as we become like the One we love....

While I saw all this years ago as relating to kings in our lives, it was only recently that Father showed me how this also related to the temple when reading an article entitled "The Tragedy of the Temple" (located at <http://www.austin-sparks.net/mags/ttm17-2.html#33>). I saw that building a temple/church reveals that inherent desire of ours to *do* something for God, and wanting a religious leader to tell us what to do and how to do it reveals our inherent desire to have a king here on earth to govern us. But both a king and a temple are focusing upon what is seen here on earth rather than spiritually perceiving what is unseen (2 Cor. 4:18). They are substitutes for the Real and the True and we often idolise them - allowing them to become the centre of our lives instead of Christ. Whatever we idolise very effectively blinds us from seeing Truth because our eyes are on our idol so we can see nothing past that. We need to be shaken out of our idolatry by hearing God's words deep in our hearts: "*THIS is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy; listen to HIM!*" May God continue to shatter our idols and open our eyes so that we will see and worship "*only Jesus*".

"Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation." Heb. 9:11



Being God's Temple

Do you not discern and understand that YOU are God's temple and that God's Spirit has His permanent dwelling in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16.

There are many verses like this one that I had grown up hearing and yet did not comprehend. Like all truth, it requires God to open our eyes to see and to open our ears to hear. Christ symbolically destroyed the old temple and the old system through His death; it DIED, it was finished! He said "Destroy the temple and I will rebuild it in three days" but He was not speaking of reforming or rebuilding an earthly religious system or building; He was referring to *Himself*, His Body which was resurrected as the new House of God and of which WE are each a part! *"Now you are Christ's Body and you are members of it, each part distinct (each with his own place and function)" 1 Cor 12:27. "IN HIM the whole structure is joined and welded together harmoniously, and it continues to rise and grow into a holy temple IN THE LORD. IN HIM you yourselves also are being built up into this structure with the rest, to form a fixed abode or dwelling place of God IN, BY, THROUGH the Spirit" Eph 2:21,22.*

God did not resurrect a dead building, or resurrect the old system of priests, rituals and sacrifices in the temple - Christ was resurrected as a living, breathing Body! Instead of God's presence being in the holy of holies in a physical temple, by His Spirit (Breath) He now lives in each person's holy of holies (spirits). Jesus said: *"Something greater and more majestic than the temple is here!" Matt 12:6.* People no longer needed to GO to a temple or attend the synagogue to meet God; THEY themselves were the temples and vessels containing the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16*)! God was dwelling in THEM and was with them constantly. They were now a house of prayer in the true meaning of the word; true, daily communion with God, any where at any time. Instead of needing priests in a physical building, we are all made into priests to serve our God in His House (Christ) day and night (*Rev 1:6, 5:10*). Pretty amazing, and yet total heresy and very threatening to the priests in their temples built by man, right down to this very day.

We usually get spiritual things around the wrong way, we think that the physical will bring about the spiritual, that outward things will have an inward effect. But the outward will result naturally only if/when the inward has already happened (*eg been brought about by God*)! IF it were the other way around, then WE would be in control. WE could make things happen by ourselves, WE would be as God, WE would have a method! This way there is NO method, NO relying on ourselves or other people, only relying on God to supply our needs. One way relies on ourselves and others; the other relies solely on God. Doing something physically in order to try to cause something spiritual to happen, is the very essence of being earthly rather than heavenly.

The Old versus the New

There was a major change between the old covenant and the new covenant which was why the religious people were so upset with Jesus and killed Him. Under the old covenant the temple (or place of worship) had been built for God to inhabit and for His people to meet Him in, and it was called the house of God. An intermediary (*pastor or priest*) would speak to the people on behalf of God. However with the arrival of the Messiah and the new covenant, all of this changed!

In speaking of the physical temple building and its rituals here on earth, the writer to the Hebrews said that it was "by this the Holy Spirit points out that the way into the true Holy of Holies is not yet thrown open *as long as the former tabernacle remains a recognized institution and is still standing*, seeing that that first tabernacle was a PARABLE, a visible symbol or picture of the present age..." (*Hebrews 9:8-9 AMP*). The prophets of the Old Testament knew and wrote of this:

Thus says the Lord: Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. *What kind of house would you build for Me? And what kind can be My resting-place?* Isaiah 66:1.

But will God actually dwell with men on earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; *how much less this house (temple) which I (Solomon) have built!* 2 Chron 6:18.

He (the Messiah) shall grow up in His place and He shall build the

true temple of the Lord. Yes, you are building a temple of the Lord, but *it is HE Who shall build the true temple of the Lord... Zech 6:12,13.*

The old covenant was external; the new covenant is internal. The old covenant had an external tabernacle, priests, rituals, sacrifices and had the laws of God engraved on tablets of stone within the ark; the new covenant is internal, each one is a living sacrifice with the laws of God engraved on their hearts and each one is a priest to God and hears and knows God for themselves (*Jeremiah 31:33-34 & Hebrews 8:8-12*).

When Christ was crucified He fulfilled the requirements of the Law of sin and death and ushered in the Law of Life and liberty; when He cried "It is finished" the veil in the Holy of Holies was ripped in two because the Way to the throne of God was now open and unveiled: *"Destroy (undo) this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again. Then the Jews replied, It took forty six years to build this temple (sanctuary) and will You raise it up in three days? But He had spoken of the temple which was HIS BODY" John 2:19-21.*

Christ's Law of Life

We can unwittingly allow ourselves to remain under the old covenant; the laws and traditions and religions and works of men which say you must do many things in order to please God. Jesus declared that He is Lord of the Sabbath. He broke the rules of the religious Jews and they wanted to kill Him for it. He became a stumbling block to them as was prophesied (*Isaiah 8:14,15 & Romans 9:33*). He was illustrating the difference between the old covenant and the new. Under the new covenant it is not important that we DO religious things but that we ARE a holy and sanctified thing because we are in Him and He is in us! If we ARE a holy thing then what we do will be holy also.

Christ is truly our Sabbath rest because He has done all the work for us; He has completely fulfilled the law's requirements. We can no longer please Him by trying to do what is right; we please Him by recognising, accepting and resting in Him and what He has already accomplished for us through His death and resurrection!

"What can we attain without effort? How can we ever get anywhere if we do not move? But Christianity is a queer business! If at the outset we try to do anything, we get nothing; if we seek to attain something, we miss everything. For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE." 1

This is the Law of Life which brings freedom rather than the law of sin and death which brings bondage. I am not saying that we do nothing at all, but that the source of all our doing must be from who and what we ARE in Him, rather than from our own works or efforts. Our flesh delights in doing things and we waste much time in fleshly activity just as Martha did; but God delights in seeing us waste ourselves at His feet as Mary did.

We need to differentiate clearly between life and actions. Life is bound to express itself in actions, but actions are no substitute for life. Many Christians put forth a tremendous amount of effort in their desire to be Christ-like; but the Life of Christ is always spontaneous. Even natural life functions spontaneously... Excessive effort indicates sickness. The movements of a healthy body are spontaneous and often unconscious. 2

First and foremost of the unwritten laws of the church is that you must attend a building (or meetings!) every Sunday - this seems to be a difficult mindset to break through because our security is often in IT instead of in God. The Body of Christ in Acts initially met not only at the temple (as was their custom and culture), but daily in each other's homes, sharing meals and the Bread of Life together. They understood that something had changed: THEY were now the temple of God! Initially some went to the temple to evangelise the Jews and tell them of this radical new Way, but they got kicked out of the synagogues or put in prison for their trouble. By the time the book of Hebrews was written things had changed significantly:

Although we can watch the steady advance of divine purpose through the book of Acts, yet even at its close we find that the Christian concept has not completely clarified. However, when we read the letter to the Hebrews, we see that the Christian has emerged from a transition stage and his personality has become

thoroughly integrated. In the Acts he is both Jew and Christian. He meets for fellowship with other Christians outside the temple; nevertheless, he still visits the temple. But when we come to the book of Hebrews we find that he is no longer both Jew and Christian; he is simply Christian. And he no longer meets with his fellow Christians at times inside the temple, at times outside the temple. What he could do when the Spirit was newly poured out in Jerusalem, he cannot do now that the tide of the Spirit is sweeping onward to the ends of the earth. In Hebrews we find that he has forsaken the temple for "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man", and he has forsaken the many sacrifices for the "one offering" by which the believer is "perfected forever".... Therefore the writer to the Hebrews explains that the realization of God's purpose in establishing the New Covenant involved the complete abolition of the old order to which the Jewish believers clung so tenaciously. 3

Religion Brings Death

One of the reasons why Stephen was stoned to death by the religious people was because he understood this truth and the religious leaders did not like it or want to hear it. He said to them: *"It was Solomon who built a house for Him. However, the Most High DOES NOT DWELL in houses and temples (buildings) made with hands; as the prophet says" (Isaiah 66:1,2). "Heaven is My throne, and earth the footstool for My feet. What kind of house can you build for Me, says the Lord, or what is the place in which I can rest? Was it not My hand that made all these things?" Acts 7:47-50.*

The believers grew and thrived as a living Body rather than a religion for the first couple of centuries. Eventually the Emperor Constantine decreed that Christianity was a valid religion and that buildings and regular meetings were necessary. This meant it became like pagan religions with their temples, priests, pulpits and holy days and so the church as we know it was birthed. Effectively the people were being put back under the law from which Christ had paid such a dear price to set them free. *"Therefore, I do not treat God's gracious gift as something of minor importance and defeat its very purpose; I do not set aside and invalidate the grace of God. For if justification comes through observing the ritual of the Law, then Christ died groundlessly and to no purpose, His death was*

then wholly superfluous. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit as the result of obeying the Law and doing its works or was it by hearing the Gospel and believing it? Was it from observing a law of rituals or from a message of faith?" Galatians 2:21, 3:2.

Many people worldwide are now hearing God call them out of the doing and busyness of religion and church and are instead finding Christ Himself as their Sabbath Rest and Life. "Has the Lord as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices (*religious activity*) as in OBEYING the voice of the Lord?" We must each have (*and give each other!*) the freedom to hear, listen and obey God for ourselves. We are each responsible for our own decisions and actions. If He has not told us to leave the church, we need not feel condemned for staying. Conversely we must not condemn those who HAVE heard Him call them out and who have obeyed Him, often at great personal cost to them and their families.

Every age has its own characteristics. Right now we are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, and that servile imitation of the world which marks our promotional methods all testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the the peace of God scarcely at all. If we would find God amid all the religious externals we must first determine to find Him, and then proceed in the way of simplicity.... When religion has said its last word, there is little that we need other than God Himself. The evil habit of seeking God-and effectively prevents us from finding God in full revelation. In the "and" lies our great woe. If we omit the "and" we shall soon find God, and in Him we shall find that for which we have all our lives been secretly longing. 4

Ah, but what about not forsaking assembling together, I hear someone cry! We are a Family and families do not usually have to organise a meeting in order to relate to one another, we get together whenever we can in a more real and natural environment than within a religious building once a week. We love to have fellowship (*which means the*

intimacy and joint participation of our shared Life in Christ) with brothers and sisters wherever and whenever we meet up with each other! As we share one another's lives we find that we are sharing His Life within each of us and we have communion with Him and one another. The focus is again on real relationships rather than religious rituals. Looking at this verse in its context we see that this is what "assembling together" is supposed to be about, because you cannot watch over one another or admonish one another if there is not a friendship and close relationship there to begin with: "Let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up to love and helpful deeds, not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together as is the habit of some people, but admonishing, warning, urging and encouraging one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching" Hebrews 10:24,25.

What Jesus is Building

This worldwide City, the New Jerusalem that Jesus is building, has only one Architect and Builder, it has only one High Priest. These children of God have only one Father, these sheep have only one Shepherd and they hear and know His voice and follow only Him. And this Body has only one Head which directs, governs and controls it: *"If we are one with the Head, we are one with the Body, even if we are not gathered together. But, if we are not one with the Head, we are not one with the Body, even if we are gathered together."* (Chip Brogden)

We simply ARE the temple of the Holy Spirit no matter where we are or who we are with. We are a part of the Body regardless of where our Head takes us! We are the children of God, born from above, members of God's Family - we are heavenly rather than earthly. Our life source is not from religion and ritual on this earth, but from vital relationship with the One who IS Life! *"Do you not know that your body is the temple, the very sanctuary of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price, purchased, paid for, and made His own. What agreement can there be between a temple of God and idols? For we ARE the temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* (1 Cor 6:19,20 & 2 Cor 6:16).

The Greek word "ekklesia" is the word translated incorrectly as 'church' in English (I explain this in the next chapter). Ekklesia means those called to an assembly or gathering, and did not ever mean a religious building! It is a composite of two Greek words, "ek" (out of or away from) and "kaleo" (called). So what are we called out of and away from? We are called away from the world and called out of its system which includes man's religions and man's attempts to reach God; especially through organised religion. Religion has always attempted to reach God and please God by what WE DO. It is fleshly, it is relying on ourselves and our programmes instead of on God - it is in the place of Christ, it is idolatry, the way of Babylon. *"I then heard another voice from heaven saying, **Come out from her** (Babylon), my people, so that you may not participate in her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).*

WE are now the living stones being built into the Temple of the Living God; Jesus said that HE would build and assemble His called out ones together, this is something spiritual which cannot be built by man. Men like conformity, we like to build with bricks instead of stones because we can make bricks be all the same shape and size so they are easy to fit together. We may make our own bricks of mud from this earth (*by insisting on conformity or man-made "unity"*) and build with those bricks, but we may also end up building a religious tower of Babel to try to reach God ourselves. HE will build and add to His City, not man. Living stones cannot be incorporated into a building of bricks; it won't work! His Temple, which He alone is building, is alive and well and victorious so that He, and He alone receives all the glory and honour for the work of His Spirit in us!

We have an altar from which those who serve and worship in the tabernacle have no right to eat. Let us then go forth, from all that would prevent us, to Him outside the camp, bearing the contempt and abuse and shame with Him. For here we have no permanent city, but we are looking for the one which is to come. Hebrews 13:10,13,14

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Leaving Church

We consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting. 2 Cor. 4:18.

When God first called us out of religion in 1996, we didn't understand exactly what He was asking us to leave. Over time we saw that He was not just calling us to leave the church we were part of, but anything and everything that was a substitute for Him. Thankfully He did not reveal this to us all at once, but has been leading us on a journey, through a process, one step at a time...

Recently Father brought me to another step which involved my use of the word "church". Until this point, I believed that although He had called us out of religion, we were part of the church which Jesus was building; we were called to BE the church because the church was the people rather than the building. I felt I needed to constantly correct the common "misunderstanding" of the word, both to myself and others, and yet saying "we are the church" was very open to misunderstanding too. Some would think we were saying "we are THE church" or "WE are the church" or thought it was just semantics. Unbelievers couldn't fathom it at all. They understand what the word church means in English: It is a religious place where religious people go to do religious things!

Whether we like it or not, the church is a religious system which not only substitutes itself in place of Christ in people's lives, but also actively prevents them from knowing Him outside of the construct of itself. Jesus is building something heavenly and not earthly; He is NOT building the religious, institutional, compromising, man-created mixture that is the church. While editing a book for a friend, Father suddenly opened my eyes to see all of this and simultaneously gave me the freedom to leave the word "church" and stop trying to redeem it. I sensed that there had been a season for that, but now I felt released to simply use the word "church" for what we know it to mean.

When I saw this, I realized we could no longer say we are the church or part of the church. While the world will be able to accept this without much trouble, those who consider themselves part of the church may not find it so easy. To me now though, it seems like saying we were part of the church was a justification to those who were church-goers - a way of reassuring them that although we were not attending a church, we *were* still part of the church because the church was the people of God... It made them, and us, feel a little bit better about it all!

But now we have left not only the buildings, the meetings, the system; we have also left the word. And just because we have left those things, doesn't mean that we don't have more religious sacred cows that need to be slaughtered and barbecued! Our religious mindsets blind us regardless of whether we are in the church or not. We have met people who consider themselves outside of the church system and yet are just as religious as anybody in a church. This is not about where we go or do not go, what we do or do not do, what we say or do not say - religion is an affair of the *heart*, and the heart belongs to only One. Seeing our religious prejudices how God sees them is an unveiling which begins in the spirit, and then brings change to the heart, mind and body. But change is often not easy for us to accept...

The Word: Church

English is a language which is evolving and constantly changing. There is nothing sacred about the word "church" although some may feel like there is due to their mindsets and what they have believed. The words we use *are* important. To use a word which means one thing to most people but something different to you and a few others, is to ask for misunderstanding. For instance, with the word "gay", we don't see many people trying to redeem the word to mean happy or insisting that *they* will use it by its original definition regardless of what it now means. Instead most people accept that the definition has changed and know what others mean when they use it. It is the same with us and the word "church"; why use a word which doesn't mean what we think it should mean?

Most of us have thought of church as being Biblical; after all, didn't Jesus say He was building His church? That is what our Bibles say He said and

although we can go back to the original Greek and look back in time to see how we got this word "church", it won't achieve anything unless we have been given eyes to see things spiritually. Only God can open our eyes to see and accept Truth... so what is shared here is not for convincing you or condemning you if you don't see what I have seen, but is given in the hope of watering the seeds which have been planted in the hearts of those who know they are called out of religion.

Most linguists agree that the word "church" is derived from the Greek word "kuriakos" which simply means "the Lord's". The word was used only twice in the Bible: in 1 Cor. 11:20 for "the Lord's supper" and in Rev. 1:10 for "the Lord's day". It did not mean anything like what the word "church" means today! By the time the Roman Emperor Constantine had legalized Christianity in the year 313, another word had been added: *doma*. *Kuriakos doma* meant the Lord's house or domicile, a building that was the Lord's. When the Emperor declared Christianity to be Rome's religion, he gave tax exemptions to the leaders of it, appointed Christians as high ranking officials, supported the church financially, and... built churches - "kuriakos doma". However, the phrase "kuriakos doma" is not in the original Greek Scriptures at all.

The word commonly translated as "church" in the Bible was the Greek word "ekklesia" which simply meant a gathering or assembly. It was not a religious word, it was an every day word used in ancient Greece - see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesia_\(ancient_Athens\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesia_(ancient_Athens)). However, in the Greek language now, ekklesia means a church. Today derivations of "ekklesia" such as "iglesia" and "église" also mean "church" in Spanish and French.

The word "ekklesia" is a composite noun made up of two Greek words - "ek" meaning "out of or away from", and "kaleo" meaning "called". But just as composite nouns in English can't be broken apart but instead make up a new word with a new meaning, so it was in the Greek. The meaning is changed from the individual parts of the word, into a new composite word with a new meaning and definition. For instance, we can't take the word "outcome" and take it to mean "come out". In the same way we can't take "ekklesia" and think it means "called out". The word meant a gathering of people, or an assembly of people. It didn't mean a church building or a temple.

Obviously we do have this word "church" in our Bibles and this is because in 1611 when the officially sanctioned English version of the Bible was produced by King James (who was the head of the church in England at the time) one of the 15 rules the translators were given by him was:

The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, viz.: as the word "Church" not to be translated "Congregation" etc. (The rules can be read [here](#))

The reason he had to mandate this departure from the Greek meaning of the word "ekklesia" was because there had been a previous translation of the Bible into English by William Tyndale in which the word "ekklesia" was not translated as "church". Instead "ekklesia" was translated as "congregation" even though there were churches around when Tyndale was alive. But the translators for King James were specifically commanded to translate ekklesia as "church" and also to not contradict the traditions of the established church of which he was the head. This accounts for many of the mistranslations still in our Bibles today.

Interestingly, William Tyndale did use the word "church" twice in his translation; in relation to pagans and their places of worship. This is what he wrote (obviously in old English): "Then Iupiters Preste which dwelt before their cite brought oxe and garlondes vnto the churche porche and wolde have done sacrificise with the people." (Acts 14:13) "For ye have brought hyther these me whiche are nether robbers of churches nor yet despisers of youre goddes." (Acts 19:37). This was written in 1525, 86 years before the King James version and it seems quite clear that in those days churches were places associated with idolatry and pagans (some would say they still are). Not once did Tyndale associate the word "ekklesia" with a building.

The House of God

Some people call the church "the house of God" and this phrase occurs in the New Testament six times and is from two Greek words: "oikos theos". The word "oikos" (*translated as both house and household or in some more recent translations as "family"*) means an "inhabited house" or the "household of a house", which obviously refers to people. The instances where the phrase "oikos theos" occurs in the New Testament

are interesting. The phrase refers to people in 1 Timothy 3:15 and 1 Peter 4:17 and refers back to the temple of the Old Testament in all the other instances (Matt. 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4; Heb. 10:21). The writer of the book of Hebrews had been comparing the Old Testament temple to what we now have in Christ Who is the unseen, spiritual, heavenly House and Temple of God, NOT built with man's hands here on earth.

The Scriptures make it very clear: the Temple of the Old Covenant was an example and parable *until Christ came*: "When God speaks of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete (out of use). And what is obsolete (out of use and annulled because of age) is ripe for disappearance and to be dispensed with altogether. Now even the first covenant had its own rules and regulations for divine worship and it had a sanctuary, *but one of this world...* Into the second division of the tabernacle none but the high priest goes... *by this the Holy Spirit points out that the way into the true Holy of Holies is not yet thrown open as long as the former tabernacle remains a recognized institution and is still standing. Seeing that that first tabernacle was a parable (a visible symbol or type or picture of the present age)...* But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the better things that have come and are to come, *then through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not a part of this material creation, He went once for all into the Holy of Holies, not by virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but His own blood, having found and secured a complete redemption (an everlasting release for us). For Christ has not entered into a sanctuary (building) made with human hands, only a copy and pattern and type of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.*" (Heb. 8:13; 9:1,7-9,11,12,24 TAB).

Stephen, who was accused of saying: "this Jesus the Nazarene will tear down and destroy this place, and will alter the institutions and usages which Moses transmitted to us" (Acts 6:14) further enraged the Jews when he said, "It was Solomon who built a house for Him. However, *the Most High does not dwell in houses and temples made with hands; as the prophet says, Heaven is My throne, and earth the footstool for My feet. What house can you build for Me, says the Lord, or what is the place in which I can rest? Was it not My hand that made all these things?*" (Acts 7:47-50).

These verses mention a Building "not made with hands". This was a radical and offensive shift from the earthly buildings and systems of Judaism (which were seen and made by man) to the heavenly which is spiritual and made by God. He had originally given the design for the temple but it had become an end in itself and had served its purpose; now Christ was in full view: "In Him the whole structure is joined (bound, welded) together harmoniously, and it continues to rise, grow and increase into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you yourselves also are being built up with the rest, to form a fixed abode (dwelling place) of God in (by, through) the Spirit." (Eph. 2:19-22 TAB). This House is *spiritual* but we humans delight in having something which WE can make, feel, touch, see, hear, name, go to and worship in here and now on this earth; so we have churches.

The Assembly of God

You may well wonder why, if "ekklesia" means something different to church, the word has not been ammended in subsequent translations of the Bible. Perhaps because few people today would buy a version without the word "church" in it! It would be unthinkable. The church has deep roots in our society, traditions, beliefs, and culture. Two versions of the Bible *were* subsequently published without the word church in them though: Young's Literal Translation in 1898 and earlier, in 1826, a translation of the New Testament called "A Living Oracle" by Dr Alexander Campbell. In the preface entitled "An Apology for a New Translation" is written the following:

"A LIVING language is constantly changing. Like the fashions and customs in apparel, words and phrases, at one time current and fashionable, in the lapse of time, become awkward and obsolete. But this is not all. Many of them, in a century or two, come to have a signification very different from that which was once attached to them. Nay, some are known to convey ideas not only different from, but contrary to, their first signification... that the common version [KJV] was made at a time when religious controversy was at its zenith; and the tenets of the translators whether designedly or undesignedly, did, on many occasions give a wrong turn to words and sentences bearing upon their favorite dogmas... But some are so wedded to the common version, that the very defects in it have

become sacred; and an effort, however well intended, to put them in possession of one comparably superior in propriety, perspicuity, and elegance, is viewed very much in the light of 'making a new Bible' or of altering and amending the very word of God. Nay, some are prepared to doom every attempt of the kind, to the anathema, in the conclusion of the Apocalypse, upon those who add to the word of God, or subtract from it."

<http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/oracles1st/preface.html>

If you look in the Bible for the church as we know it, you cannot find it. The closest you will find is the temple system which Jesus said He would destroy and replace with Himself. That is incredibly significant and yet many continue to unknowingly believe in and support a Judaistic type of an earthly temple, admiring churches that are large and impressive and even calling them "the house of God". Those things appeal to our human senses and to our image of what we think is worthy of God. They appeal to our mind and emotions and so people confuse the emotional, cultural and intellectual with the spiritual; the soul with the spirit, and end up thinking that it is all of God when it is one unholy mixture. We desperately need Discernment... to discern not only Christ, but also to discern when something is simply appealing to our mind and emotions.

Substitutes for Christ

The focus of the church is on Self rather than on Christ: Salvation is for us, Heaven is for us, Fellowship is for us, Ministry is for us, Healing is for us, the Anointing is for us, Teaching is for us, Christ is for us, etc etc. Church is a place to go and get your needs met; whether it is your need to minister or your need to be ministered to, or your need to simply belong. SELF is the centre and circumference with God being presented as being like us - made in our image instead of us being transformed into His image.

"Since the Fall, blinded man has ever continued to make himself central. From his point of view, even in the religious realm, concepts and resulting methods become twisted until it often seems the church is presenting a God whose entire working is for man - his benefit, welfare, blessing and bliss. Some will admit they frankly feel this is the true work of the church. Who else is important? What else

should we preach? Who else but man is important to God? Does not God Himself expend all His energies and purposes *for man*? Yes, until man has had a major rectification he will, even as a believer, be the very center of his very small universe - seeking to make all things serve himself." (DeVern Fromke, "*The Ultimate Intention*").

While I am not saying that everybody in the church is like this, many do cling religiously to the mistaken beliefs, teachings and traditions of man instead of allowing God to break through and shatter those and instead lead them to Truth Himself. While that breaking is very costly and uncomfortable, surely we don't want to be holding onto things which WE think are sacred and yet which are simply the traditions of man! Otherwise we may be in danger of making void the Word of God for the sake of our traditions as Jesus said in Mark 7.

Often church is a substitute for Christ in people's lives. Church is their focus, their identity, what they live for, what they work for, what they love and fight for and they cannot comprehend leaving it. Ever. It is their life! We are the assembly of those who have been *called out* by God - called out of all substitutes to know and experience the Reality and Truth of Christ and His Life! There is only One Who is our Life and Love and through Him God has provided the Way to free us from Sin, Self, Satan AND from all Substitutes. A substitute is a diabolical way of keeping us from the real and true because we are usually satisfied and quite happy with the substitute - that is exactly what it is designed to do. It is only when you have encountered the Real, the Most Excellent, the Truth, that the substitute is shown to be a lie, a counterfeit and a very poor imitation.

Called Out

After reading this some may concede that even if the word "church" isn't Biblical, the institution is still obviously of God because look at how people can find Jesus there and all the good it does in the community etc. I would say to just look at how it *takes the place of Christ* and not only turns people off, but *away* from God. The fact is that He not only can, but does, use many people and many things which do not even acknowledge Him or know Him. We see this in the Bible and we see it now: He is God and He can utilize anything and anyone to reveal Truth! Just because He spoke through a donkey yesterday and uses a

Hollywood movie tomorrow doesn't mean those things are suddenly holy or sacred. Just because God uses something or someone in a church to touch people's lives doesn't mean He either approves of it or is blessing it. I have heard Him speak through believers and through unbelievers; but what is more uncommon is holiness... God is holy, and every one who is wholly His, will have the same character.

Being "out of the institutional church" is an accepted and researched phenomena now, but the fact is that while many have heard the call to leave the church, very few have had the church leave them. Many have heard the call out, but not many have heard the call in. Most of us have years and years of deeply rooted religious beliefs that still need to be uncovered and pulled out. While I can no longer say that I am part of the church (which to me is wholly temporal and earthly), I can say that I am part of Christ and His Body (which to me is wholly eternal and heavenly).

There is a danger that we will stop and camp out with the last thing God showed us and not go on. Leaving church is only *one* step! We must KEEP listening, KEEP seeing, KEEP walking, KEEP on leaving all those things which God reveals as earthly and which are mere substitutes for the reality of Christ in our lives.

"The implications of any movement of God are not always recognized at the beginning, but if we go on with Him we shall find that much that is done here and is of time is - and has to be - left behind. The spiritual and the heavenly is pressing for a larger place and becoming absolutely imperative to the very life of the instrumentality and those concerned. It is spontaneous and just happens. We wake up to realize that we have moved into a new realm or position, and no amount of additional earthly resource can meet the need... The great pity is that so many just will cling to the old framework or partial vision. God presents His *heavenly* pattern in greater fulness and demands adjustment... But because it is 'revolutionary' or not 'what has been in the blessing of God' etc., etc., it is rejected and put aside... God in sovereignty will run the risk of shattering, or allow the shattering, of so much that He has used of scaffolding or framework in order to realize the fuller purpose... So, things may be taking a new and different shape, but the purpose of God is the same. We may be presented with His vision in new and

further-on aspects, but it is only what He originally meant. Can we adjust? Can we leave "the things that are behind"? Without raising any questions as to the right or wrong of what has been, can we "go on" and "grow up", "attain"?" (*T. Austin-Sparks, "Vision and Vocation"*).

God is delivering, separating, purifying, setting free and establishing what the enemy has always sought to destroy. Jesus IS building His called-out ones into an unseen, holy, heavenly Building of His design and making; He is calling us out of Sin, Self and Substitutes into Himself as The Place where God is... in Life, in Freedom, in Peace, Rest, Love and All that Christ Himself is!

Come and, like living stones, be yourselves built into a spiritual house, for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable and pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 2:5.



"Assembly Required"

Moses is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness.... He received living truths to give to us. (Acts 7:38 ISV)

It is quite common these days to buy something that says "Assembly Required" on the box. Some see this as an enjoyable challenge, while others view it as a necessary evil! The process of assembly can go very smoothly if instructions are followed AND, very importantly, if all the parts are present. However, it can also be very frustrating if there are no instructions or if there are parts missing.

Spiritually, we too "require assembly". However, when most Christians think of "assembly", instead of thinking of God putting people together, they almost immediately think of assembling *themselves* together by attending a church meeting of some description. Assembly, in a church or religious context, is usually assembling in a structure made by man, for man, led by man, and instigated by man. And attending regularly *is* a requirement (whether voiced or not!) that is imposed on all those who are part of these structures.

In contrast to that, the assembly of God's people are being gathered and assembled together into an *unseen* structure, *unseen* company, and *unseen* family by our *unseen* Father - what is spiritual and heavenly is not immediately visible to the earthly. It is very important that all the parts for this assembling are present and accounted for. Every single person/part is essential for this assembly. And there is a Greek word in the New Testament that means "assembly". This word is: "ekklesia".

Ecclesiastical Words

The Greek word "ekklesia" is mistranslated as "church" in most English Bibles. Several years ago I wrote about leaving the word "church". However, I felt at the time that simply replacing the word "church" with the word "ekklesia" was not ideal for a number of reasons:

1. Ekklesia is a *Greek* word and not an English word, and as such, it

needs defining and carries the risk of misunderstanding. Instead of making things clearer, it can make things esoteric, cryptic and unclear.

2. We are already given a number of descriptive words in English without needing a "new" word that is not part of our language.

3. It is already an ecclesiastical word - it is associated with the church and with religion and therefore tainted. See for example:

http://www.ecclesia-ministries.org/common_cathedral.html

<http://www.eklesia.co.uk/CommonWealthStatement>)

4. The word has been transliterated into Spanish and French as "iglesia" and "église" and the word means "church" in those languages. Also, in spoken Greek today, the word "eklesia" means a church. And "Ekalesia" means "church" in a number of Pacific nations (eg Samoa, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Niue).

On a recent trip to Samoa we saw these churches/ekalesiae everywhere:



There were so many churches/ekalesiae in Samoa, even on the remote island that we were on. They were quite large, ornate buildings in stark contrast to the thatched fales/houses that were often without walls. It was clear that these buildings are important to the people and therefore lots of money is spent on them. As my son wrote, "Fales (Samoan thatched

houses) and elaborate churches. That was about all the buildings you would see. Lots of churches, and even more fables. Tourism was a miniscule business compared to religion it appeared..."



Whether we like it or not, the Greek word "ekklesia" is tainted with religion and with the business of religion. Instead of being translated, the word was transliterated into Latin as "ecclesia" and from there became an ecclesiastical word, associated with religion and the church. And although the word "ekklesia" is the Greek translation of the original Hebrew word "qahal", "ekklesia" is translated in most English Bibles as "church" even though the original word "qahal" is not *once* translated as "church". Instead "qahal" is translated as congregation, assembly and company.

In William Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English he translated the word "ekklesia" as "congregation" even though there were churches around when Tyndale was alive. William Tyndale *did* use the word "church" twice in his translation; in relation to *pagans and their places of worship*. This is what he wrote (in old English): "Then Iupiters Preste which dwelt before their cite brought oxe and garlondes vnto the churche porche and wolde have done sacrificise with the people." (Acts 14:13 in modern English reads, "And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds"). The second instance was: "For ye

have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches nor yet despisers of your goddess." (Acts 19:37 now reads, "For you have brought here these men, who are neither robbers of temples, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess").

Tyndale completed his translation in 1525 (86 years before the King James version) and in those days a church was a building associated with idolatry and pagan religions (some of us would say that is still the case). Not once did Tyndale interpret either "qahal" or "ekklesia" as a building or as "church".

Called Out

Many of us believe that this word "ekklesia" means "called out ones". It is true that the word "ekklesia" is a composite noun made up of two Greek words: "ek" meaning "out of" or "away from", and "kaleo" meaning "called", and as a result, many conclude that "ekklesia" means "called out ones". However, I've had a nagging sense for some time that this was not entirely correct; language is more complicated than simply seeing the root words and thinking that is what a composite word means. Just as composite nouns in English cannot be broken apart but instead make up a *new* word with a *new* meaning, so it is in the Greek.

The meaning of a composite word is *changed* from the individual parts of the word, into a new *composite* word with a new meaning and definition. Some assembly is required in order to become a new word. You cannot take apart the new word. For instance, we can't take the word "outcome" in English and take it to mean "come out" - the composite word does not mean that. In the same way we can't take "ekklesia" - out called - and say that it means "called out" because *it did not mean that in the Greek*, so it is rather disingenuous for us to suggest that it did.

The words *ek* and *kaleo* were used separately in Greek, but the composite word *ekklesia* meant a gathering of people called together for a purpose. It was not a religious word, it was an every day word used in ancient Greece; see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesia_\(ancient_Athens\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesia_(ancient_Athens)). The closest words we have in English for "ekklesia" are assembly, gathering, company.

In 1889 a Greek scholar wrote the following:

"The reason why I have chosen the term Ecclesia is simply to avoid ambiguity. The English term *church*, now the most familiar representative of *ecclesia* to most of us, carries with it associations derived from the institutions and doctrines of later times, and thus cannot at present without a constant mental effort be made to convey the full and exact force which originally belonged to *ecclesia*...

"There is no foundation for the widely spread notion that ἐκκλησία (ekklesia) means a people or a number of individual men called out of the world or mankind. In itself the idea is of course entirely Scriptural, and moreover it is associated with the word and idea 'called,' 'calling,' 'call.' But the compound verb ἐκκαλέω (ekkaleo) is never so used, and ἐκκλησία (ekklesia) never occurs in a context which suggests this supposed sense to have been present to the writer's mind. Again, it would not have been unnatural if this sense of calling out from a larger body had been as it were put into the word in later times, when it had acquired religious associations. But as a matter of fact we do not find that it was so. The original calling out is simply the calling of the citizens of a Greek town out of their houses by the herald's trumpet to summon them to the assembly and Numb. 10 shews that the summons to the Jewish assembly was made in the same way."

(Pages 1, 5, "*The Christian Ecclesia*" by Fenton J A Hort, 1889)

If we say that "ekklesia" means "called out ones", it loses some of its emphasis because it is not just a matter of being called out (although that is a *very* important aspect) but it is also vital to recognize that we are *called into being gathered together*. We are not called out to be individual "ones" isolated and alone; we are called out to be part of a heavenly *company* and *community* that is being *assembled and gathered together* in Christ.

Some may remember the "not forsaking assembling together" verse that is often used completely out of context to try to convince people that attending church meetings is essential and Biblical: "Let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying

how we may stir up to love and helpful deeds, not forsaking or neglecting to *assemble together* as is the habit of some people, but admonishing, warning, urging and encouraging one another, and all the more faithfully *as you see the day approaching*" (Heb. 10:24,25 TAB). The Greek word used in this verse for "assemble together" is not "ekklesia", but "episynagoge". This word means gathering together in one place and is used only in one other verse in the Bible: "concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our *being gathered together* to Him" (2 Thess. 2:1). Here it is clear that the assembling or being gathered together is a *future* event.

The verse in Hebrews is talking about the future "day approaching", so *both* uses of the word in Greek are linked with the second coming of Christ. This means that Heb. 10:24,25 may be interpreted as saying that we're not to leave or abandon our being gathered together into Christ. Perhaps this verse was referring to some of those who had given up and had abandoned their faith.

If, as many people do, you take those verses in Hebrews to apply to a literal, physical assembly, then how is it possible for us all to be *episynogoge* - gathered together in one place - when we are scattered all over the world? The answer is that it is speaking *spiritually*: we ARE being gathered and assembled together in One Place: CHRIST! This is the "new and living Way" that the writer of Hebrews had just mentioned. If you're not being gathered into Christ spiritually, then you're also not being assembled and gathered together with one another - regardless of whether you meet together physically or not.

From the very beginning, God's intention has been a collective, a family, a company of people. He promised Jacob, "A nation and a community (qahal/ekklesia) of nations will come from you" (Gen. 35:11). In Isaac's blessing to Jacob he said, "May God Almighty bless you, make you fertile, and increase the number of your descendants so that you will become a community (qahal/ekklesia) of people" (Gen. 28:3). Most of us have an innate desire for community, family, friendship, fellowship, but most of us fulfill that desire through going to one another instead of gathering in One Place: Christ.

It is a fact that when we are being assembled in Him, we are also being

assembled together with all the others who are in Him. Will that be expressed through us physically on this earth? Yes! But it must be an assembling, a gathering together that is brought about by, and for, Christ and as such may not look like what we would expect.

What Are We Called?

We have already been given quite a number of word pictures of what God is assembling that express and explain who we are without needing to use a Hebrew, Greek, or Latin word. The danger with using a foreign word that is not part of our language is not only of misunderstanding the word, but also of creating a "special" religious and ecclesiastical term that only those "in the know" will use; in short, it becomes a religious buzzword.

Some of the word pictures that are given to us in the Scriptures, besides an Assembly, are: Christ's Body, Kingdom, Family, Wife/Bride, Household, Temple, Grapevine, Light, Salt, Bread, a City, and Nation. Each of these express an element of truth about this unseen construction that Christ is building and we can use any one of them to describe who we are.

Word pictures are packed full of meaning... and while not one image contains the whole picture, and in some ways may even be a paradox when compared with the other images, if we take the primary elements of each, we begin to see what this Community of God's people is about. What I have extracted and shared here is obviously incomplete, there is so much more to be gleaned from these examples...

As Christ's Body (1 Cor. 12:12-27) we are intimately part of one another and Him - we simply cannot be separate units. My fingers are either part of my body, or they are not; if they are no longer joined to my body, then they are no longer part of me and do not function as part of me. All of my body works together being directed by my head without even realizing it or thinking about it; we are one. So it is with Christ! It does not matter whether you are physically with another part of Him here on earth, because IN Christ you simply *are* joined inseparably with every other part of Him, whether you are with them physically or not, because this is a spiritual and heavenly Body!

As both heirs and subjects of the King and His Kingdom (Col. 1:13) we know and love our King and we live for Him in a community known as a kingdom. He is the One we worship and serve, not ourselves. We are aware of our responsibility as His heirs, and we treasure our inheritance.

As a member of God's Family (1 John 3:9) we are conceived and born into this very large Family. We are born from above, of heaven, and as such, we do not belong down here on this earth, our real life is above: with Christ, seated in the heavenlies. We have only one Father and many, many siblings. No matter how large a family gets, each child is unique and part of the whole. As children, we trust our Father and know Him as our Provider, Protector, Comforter, Teacher and so much more...

As the Wife and Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9) the imagery is of two becoming one unit. Christ is, and always will be, separate from us in His Deity just as a husband retains his identity and personality apart from his wife, and vice versa. But we are joined with Him through choosing to be married, the two becoming One in love and commitment to one another. Companionship and friendship is an important part of this relationship. And the ultimate goal of marriage in God's plan was reproduction, and it is the same in His spiritual plan also. He desires to see His Son reproduced through us and others...

As the Household of God (1 Pet. 4:17) we live in His House. The House and its occupants are one unit. The House protects and contains all that is needed for the inhabitants. The people living there are viewed as one household. This is where they eat, work, rest, sleep and live...

As the Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16,17) we are being built and joined together as living stones; not bricks (for conformity) but individual stones formed and fitted together with one another. A temple is a place of worship, and historically was a place made for God to live in. He now lives in us as His Temple and we worship Him in our spirit, in the holiest place.

As branches of the Grapevine (John 15:5) we bear fruit without trying, simply because of the Life that flows through us. As the Light of the world (Matt. 5:14) we are joined with the One Fire that illuminates, exposes, and cannot be hidden. As He is, so are we in this world. Our flame is fed

by the oil of the Spirit. As Salt (Matt. 5:13) we are used to preserve, purify and add flavour in this world. As Bread (1 Cor. 10:17) we are part of one Loaf for others to feed from and gain strength and energy for their journey.

As the City of God (Heb. 12:22) we are many houses united as one City. Houses in a city are there permanently; they don't suddenly lift themselves off their foundations and move to another city! A thriving city is constantly being built, constantly expanding. It is a busy place of industry. It is also a place that visitors will come to and either remain, or leave.

As citizens of God's Nation (1 Pet. 2:9) we are literally: "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all" and I am not for one moment thinking of the USA - I am not an American citizen. As citizens of this new Israel, this new Nation, we leave behind all other loyalties and citizenship. We defend and fight for *this* Nation. We are patriots of *this* Nation. We are many individuals who have left our countries and loyalties and are now formed into a new Nation, but not one that can be seen on this earth....

Jesus said, "On this rock I will build and establish My Household..."

"Here there is no question of a partial or narrowly local Ecclesia. The congregation of God, which held so conspicuous a place in the ancient Scriptures, is assuredly what the disciples could not fail to understand as the foundation of the meaning of a sentence which was indeed for the present mysterious. If we may venture for a moment to substitute the name Israel, and read the words as 'on this rock I will build my Israel,' we gain an impression which supplies at least an approximation to the probable sense. The Ecclesia of the ancient Israel was the Ecclesia of God; and now, having been confessed to be God's Messiah, nay His Son, He could to such hearers without risk of grave misunderstanding claim that Ecclesia as His own."

(Page 10, "The Christian Ecclesia" by Fenton J A Hort, 1889)

We do require assembling, we are part of one another, and we are being assembled into the City and Nation that God as our Architect is building.

Regardless of those we see or do not see physically around us, we are being gathered together and assembled in Christ - we are placed in Him and we are seated with Him in heavenly places! Let's endeavour to recognize this assembling work of God among us, and co-operate with Him in it, and delight in our being gathered together into Him!

You *have come* to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. You *have come* to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. (Heb. 12:22,23 NLT)



Judging and Discerning

"Do not judge and criticize others so that you may not be judged yourselves. For just as you judge others you will be judged, and in accordance with the measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt out again to you. Why do you stare from without at the very small particle in your brother's eye but do not become aware of the timber in your own eye? You hypocrite, first get the beam of timber out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the tiny particle out of your brother's eye." *Matthew 7:1-3,5.*

Are we ever required to judge others? Are we to judge ourselves? In regard to judging, Jesus said *"I am able to do nothing from Myself. Even as I hear, I judge; I decide as I am bidden to decide. As the voice comes to Me, so I give a decision; and My judgment is right and just because I do not seek or consult My own will but only the will and pleasure of the Father Who sent Me. Even the Father judges no one, for He has given all judgment and the whole business of judging entirely into the hands of the Son."* *John 5:22,30.*

From the things that Jesus said to people, it certainly seems as though He judged others: *"You are of your father the devil... Whoever is of God listens to God. This is the reason you do not listen to Me: because you do not belong to God and are not in harmony with Him. But I know you and understand that you have not the love of God in you."* *John 8:44, 47; John 5:42.*

There seems to be a deeper teaching here than simply 'don't judge others' because Jesus DID judge others! In the context of the verses above from Matthew 7 Jesus seemed to be saying don't judge **unless** you have first been dealt with yourself in that area or you won't be of any help and will be a hypocrite. When the thing has been dealt with in you, then you can help another with the help you yourself have received (2 Cor 1:3-5). It is difficult to see anything with a beam of wood in your eye! A speck is irritating but at least you can still see something! When the beam is out of your eye; THEN you are able to SEE to take the tiny speck out of your brother's eye and you will be a help and a blessing to him

because of it. If you are trying to get a speck out of someone's eye when there is a beam in your own eye, even if you have the best of intentions and are trying to be helpful you're still likely to cause severe damage to your brother or sister's eye instead of dealing carefully with one small speck; because you cannot see well enough to help. Eyesight is a very precious thing both in the physical and in the spiritual.

Judgments and words bring either death or life. Sometimes God allows judgments and words to bring death to what is of the flesh in us so that Christ's Life will be increased in a person. But because words have the potential to bring either death or life, we must be very careful with them. It is so easy to pass judgment on others and to think that we are judging righteously and yet we may be completely wrong and may be judging through our flesh and not through the Spirit at all.

We usually make our judgments based upon what we think we see and perceive, but what we often don't realise is that what we are focusing on and seeing may be just what we know (our knowledge!) and not God's Knowledge. We ought to discern whether a person is full of the fruit of Life from the tree of Life and know that this is the ONLY thing which is vital - Christ and His Life. We typically misjudge by instead judging from our own knowledge of good and evil - thus we make our judgments and decisions based upon what WE believe to be either good or evil.

Our enemy still deceives us in the same way as he deceived Adam and Eve: by tempting us to make a judgment about something, and then deceiving us into believing our judgments and perceptions are correct and that they will not bring death! The Truth will only bring Life when it is given IN the Life and IN the Way - Christ. In giving any judgments, we have to be very careful and sure that we are sharing only what HE wants us to and thus allowing His Spirit to bring further revelation in His own time and way to the person. Otherwise we may be stepping ahead of Him and taking over the role of the Holy Spirit in a person's life and bringing unnecessary offense and division as a result. We need to be looking for Christ's Life in one another and uniting on that One Thing instead of nitpicking over 'many things'.

When we judge one another based upon our knowledge, we are likely to be unintentionally judging God's work. For example, we may see

someone who appears to be open and trusting. We may decide that they are naive and have never had their trust betrayed but the exact opposite may be true - the trust may be the result of the Life of Christ which has triumphed in enabling them to continue to trust in spite of that trust having been abused! Or we may know someone who is strong and unshakeable. We might come to the conclusion that they are proud, stubborn, arrogant and unteachable. But we may be completely wrong, what we may not see is that this strength is the result of the work of Christ which has come about through much weakness, humbling and brokenness - it is His Strength which we have mistaken as being natural strength. In judging these things incorrectly based upon our limited knowledge, we have in fact judged the fruit and work of the Tree of Life in their lives. And who are we to criticise and judge God and His work in someone? We need to instead discern and know LIFE! The Hebrew word for Life means something which is flowing, fresh, active, alive, sustaining and maintaining. His Life must be what we discern, perceive and focus upon.

Righteous and Unrighteous Judgment

The way I see it at this point in time is that we may only be given authority to judge others in the areas in which we ourselves have already been judged/dealt with. You won't be so likely to point out a speck with an attitude of pride but humility and love when you know what a huge beam you just had in your own eye! We must come from a position of knowing that we will all stand before God and that we are all sinners.

"Therefore you have no excuse or defense, O man, whoever you are who judges and condemns another. For in posing as judge and passing sentence on another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge are habitually practicing the very same things that you censure and denounce." Romans 2:1-3. We frequently find that people will accuse us of something we clearly see they themselves are guilty of! We can so easily spot the inconsistencies, contradictions and problems in one another's life, but are often blind to them in our own life.

The issue seems to be righteous versus unrighteous judgment and judging by the Spirit of Life rather than by outward appearances or what WE think is right or wrong. So often we are just so completely wrong or deceived in our judgments because we don't know people's hearts.

Instead of judging from heart knowledge, we judge from head knowledge of what appears to be either good or bad to us. Our personal judgments of what is good can be just as wrong and dangerous as our judgments of what is bad! The whole deception of Satan was to get Adam and Eve to rely upon themselves and THEIR knowledge and reasoning rather than simply relying on Life and Knowledge from God, and this deception still works with us as descendants of Adam.

We must be careful never to judge by the external and by what we think we see, but by what we are shown by the Spirit of God. *"You set yourselves up to judge according to the flesh and by what you see. I do not set Myself up to judge or condemn anyone. Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in making it, but there are two of us, I and the Father Who sent Me. I have much to say about you and to judge and condemn. But He Who sent Me is true and I tell the world only the things that I have heard from Him.*" John 8:15,16, 26. We cannot justify judging our brothers and sisters by what we observe in the natural as if the Bible gives license to that; but balance is required because by the same token we must not avoid having to judge when it is necessary and required.

According to Paul, we are not required to pass judgment on the world, but rather on those who are *part of us!* We normally do the opposite; we judge those who are of the world who are "so much worse than us" (such pride, self righteousness, and hypocrisy on our part!) but we wouldn't dare speak out against the sin that is in the Body; yet Paul seemed to do the opposite: *"I'm not responsible for what the outsiders do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers? God decides on the outsiders, but we need to decide when our brothers and sisters are out of line and, if necessary, clean house."* 1 Cor 5:12,13 TM.

Paul appears to have judged others; even from a distance: *"As for my attitude, though I am absent from you in body, I am present in spirit, and I have already decided and passed judgment as if actually present, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the man who has committed such a deed."* 1 Cor 5:3,4. Righteous judgment is something that is necessary but not often practiced today. Paul seemed to have an understanding of this whereby he knew that God would hold him personally responsible if

he did not give the WHOLE counsel of God to the people. (Acts 20:26-27). His understanding of this may have been from the prophet Ezekiel who was told by God: *"If I say to the wicked, You shall surely die, and you do not give him warning or speak to warn the wicked to turn from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood will I require at your hand. Yet if you warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered yourself. Again, if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and some gift which I lay before him he perverts into an occasion to sin and he commits iniquity, he shall die; because you have not given him warning, he shall die in his sin and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered but his blood will I require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned; also you have delivered yourself from guilt."* Ezekiel 3:18-21. This is quite a responsibility indeed.

Many people have already judged themselves simply by accepting or rejecting the Word of God. *"Anyone who rejects Me and persistently sets Me at naught, refusing to accept My teachings, has his judge; for the very message that I have spoken will itself judge and convict him at the last day."* John 12:48. *"Jesus said, I came into this world for judgment, as a Separator in order that there may be separation between those who believe on Me and those who reject Me, to make the sightless see and to make those who see become blind. Some Pharisees who were near, hearing this remark, said to Him, Are we also blind? Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no sin; but because you now claim to have sight, your sin remains. If you were blind you would not be guilty of sin, but because you insist, We do see clearly, you are unable to escape your guilt."* John 9:39-41.

We must ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us those areas in our lives where we do not see clearly or are blind. This is one area in which our brothers and sisters can be very helpful in helping get the speck (or beam!) out of our eye. When we are looking in the mirror of the Word we can only see one side of ourselves; sometimes others can show us things which they can see that we are not able to see ourselves, BUT it must be in the Way, Truth and Life of Christ or it will bring destruction to a person. Our enemy delights in accusing and condemning us by pointing out all our faults and getting us occupied with analyzing ourselves and trying to

make Self better or more acceptable. It cannot be done. There is NOTHING in us naturally that is right and holy which is why we so desperately need Christ to redeem us; not only from sin but also from Self!

May He give us Grace to be willing to see and receive His judgment on our own flesh and to exercise righteous judgment from Him.

"For if we searchingly examined ourselves detecting our shortcomings and recognizing our own condition, we should not be judged and penalty decreed. But when we fall short and are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined and chastened so that we may not be condemned to eternal punishment along with the world." 1

Corinthians 11:31,32.



The Anointing... but not as we've known it

For some time I had wanted to study the subject of anointing to find out how it was used and what it was for in the Bible. In so doing, I discovered that the application and use of the words "anoint", "anointing" and "anointed" today seem to be often used outside of the context of the Bible and in an extra-biblical way. The best way to discern the false is to know the true, so I attempted to lay aside my own personal understanding and mindset of what anointing was from teachings I had heard and read, in order to more clearly see what the Biblical meaning was and to allow the Anointed One to teach me Himself.

The anointing as portrayed by many today is usually made out to be something that makes you feel good. The anointing will indeed bring joy and gladness, but it can also bring tears. Will the truth of God sometimes make you feel uncomfortable and convicted? Without a doubt! The Truth of God is anointed for that! *Let the righteous man smite and correct me - it is a kindness. Oil so choice, let not my head refuse or discourage... Psalm 141:5.* It is only when we comprehend the truth of how holy God is and how sinful we are, that we can truly repent and be personally revived and breathed on by the Holy Spirit (*breath*) of God!

"The issue of anointing is the issue of truth - the issue of authentic relationship with God, because if we are not authentically related to Him in truth moment by moment, how can we relate to men? And if we're not authentic with ourselves, with those of the same race, same religious persuasion, what shall we be expressing to those who are outside of our orbit and to whom we need to bring a greater reality? The challenge is to bring to them a greater reality than what they themselves know and esteem and you cannot fabricate that. There's something about the nature of that which is holy, that if it's not jealously guarded, and watched over, becomes the cruelest of deceptions and cliches. It becomes the introversion, the negation of what is holy - it becomes, in a word, "religion". Something is

profoundly amiss. It raises some very serious questions about truth, integrity, righteousness, our relationship with the Lord. What we have been exaggerating and building up in a kind of phraseological Christianity in key words that evoke certain responses, is in fact not truth; and God is the God of Truth and the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth before He's the Spirit of power. And so we need to return to reality - to a God who is truth and in truth or we're going to find ourselves painfully deceived." (Art Katz)

We are not told to seek after the anointing anywhere in the Bible but to seek Christ, THE Anointed! We are simply told, "As for you, *the anointing which you RECEIVED (past tense) from Him ABIDES in you; so then you have no need that anyone should instruct you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning everything and is TRUE and is no falsehood, so you must abide, live in and never depart from Him, being rooted in Him and knit to Him just as His anointing has taught you to do". 1 John 2:27.* This true anointing will always teach you to remain vitally united to the source of anointing, Jesus the Christ!

The first time anointing with oil is mentioned in the Old Testament is where Jacob poured oil on the stone that he'd been using as a pillow to dedicate it. *And Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had put under his head and he set it up as a pillar and he poured oil on its top in dedication. And he named that place Bethel (the house of God). Genesis 28:18,19.* He anointed the pillar or stones in dedication, naming the place the house of God. The house of God, where He lives, is US - we are the temples and houses of the Holy Spirit so this may have been symbolically speaking of The Anointed One (*the Rock*) and His anointed ones (*living stones*) as we are being built together into the living house of God.

Light for Revelation

The oil in the Old Testament was symbolic of the Holy Spirit. However there were TWO uses of oil in the temple, oil for the anointing oil and oil for light. *The priest shall have charge of the oil for the light... and the anointing oil. Numbers 4:16.*

The anointing oil, I believe, is symbolic of He who has it's name,

Mashiach, Messiah which means, Anointed One. It represented Christ. But oil was used not only for anointing in the temple but also for light and illumination and THIS is the Holy Spirit's specialty: *When He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, the whole, full truth... John 16:13.* HE is the One who guides us into all truth, who reveals His Word (Christ) to us. The truth is hidden, it is a mystery until the Holy Spirit shines His Light, revealing and illuminating Truth to us. *The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding, discernment and comprehension to the simple. Psalm 119:130.*

The lampstand in the temple had to have a continual supply of oil, the light was not allowed to go out (*Exodus 27:20*). We too must be filled continually with the Holy Spirit. Especially in these days, it is absolutely vital that we KNOW God! If we don't know Truth, we will easily believe the false because we will have no standard of truth, no point from which to discern the false.

I believe this is one interpretation of the oil that the ten virgins accumulated in their lamps - the Holy Spirit. To have just the Word and not the Spirit, is like having the lamp with no oil in it or like trying to read and understand the Bible in a room with no light on! The foolish virgins had not stored up the revealed Word of God in their hearts, it had not been revealed and illuminated by the Spirit to them and so their oil was not sufficient to last the distance. The wise virgins or bridesmaids had allowed the Holy Spirit to illuminate and reveal the Word, His teaching had become a vital part of their lives. They had stored up the Word, but perhaps they had stored it as head knowledge rather than knowing Him in their heart as a Person. They knew Christ as the Groom but He was not THEIR Groom, they didn't LIVE or dwell with Him in intimate relationship after the wedding where He would be their Life. The person that is hidden in this parable is the Bride. There would be no Groom or Wedding or Bridesmaids without the Bride and we are called to be His Bride, not bridesmaids.

Then he said to me, this addition of the bowl to the candlestick, causing it to yield a ceaseless supply of oil is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit (of Whom the oil is a symbol), says the Lord of Hosts. Zechariah 4:6. These are symbols to give us insight into what their function ought to be in our lives. He is the

Spirit of Truth and when He shines the Light for illumination, we may not like what we see revealed that was previously hidden and out of sight in the darkness. This is why Truth is often rejected, Truth is absolutely essential and yet often rejected (*John 3:19-21*).

We need the Light in order to see, otherwise our eyes are of little use in the dark! Sometimes when the Light shines on someone, it is so bright and revealing that they tightly close their eyes in order NOT to see. Jesus spoke in parables and mysteries so that man would not rely on natural knowledge and perception but rely on Him for spiritual illumination and unveiling (*Matthew 13:13-15*).

Deception leads to blindness, we cannot or often DO NOT want to see Truth. *For you say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy and I am in need of nothing; and you do not realise and understand that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to PURCHASE FROM ME gold refined and tested by fire, that you may be truly wealthy, and white clothes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nudity from being seen, and salve (anointing) to put on your eyes, that you may see. Revelation 3:17,18.* This anointing or healing salve we are told to PURCHASE from Him so we can see; it comes with a cost. To admit Truth is to see Him as He is and to see ourselves as we really are and repent. Dying to ourselves and our desires and being wholly dedicated to Him is costly, but very, very precious...

Perfumed Oil

The odor of your ointments is fragrant; your name is like perfume poured out. Therefore do the maidens love you. Draw me! We will run after you! Song of Solomon 1:3.

The anointing oil, as opposed to the oil for the lamps, was perfumed and fragrant. The perfume and fragrance of the anointing oil is specifically symbolic of Christ, He was anointed with perfume for burial. There are two instances in the New Testament where Jesus Christ was perfumed, *A woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment perfume of pure nard, very costly and precious; and she broke the jar and poured the perfume over His head. Mark 14:3.* A similar incident is in Luke 7:37 where His feet were anointed with perfumed ointment. This ointment is a different

Greek word than that used for anointing oil, this was an embalming, burial ointment and so was heavily perfumed for obvious reasons!

The Hebrew word for anoint is 'mashach' and means 'to smear with oil' and the Hebrew word for Messiah is 'Mashiach' and means Anointed One! Christ (*Christos*) is the Greek word for Anointed. HE is our Anointing and only HE can impart His fragrance to us through our close relationship with Him. When you hug someone who has perfume on, it rubs off on you and you too become fragrant with that perfume. Christ is the Head of His Body, we are simply members of His Body and anointed by our association and contact with Him who is our Head and Anointing. It was the HEAD that was anointed, not the flesh or body which is simply under submission to the Head.

When we are close and intimate with Him, His fragrance, the anointing which is upon Him, will permeate our lives and will rub onto us (which is how the anointing oil was put on, it was rubbed or smeared on). We then are also 'perfumed' and anointed by our association and relationship with Him (Christ's ones).

The fragrance and anointing of Jesus on our lives will be easier to sense the more time that we have spent with Him, intimately with Him. A perfume will not be rubbed onto you if you just sit chatting with someone across the room, you need to be in close, intimate contact such as a hug! This fragrance of anointing on our lives will point those attracted by the perfume to its Source, THE Anointed One and the Father. When you smell someone with perfume on, you know that they have been perfumED (anointED), but they are NOT the perfume (Anointing) themselves and they cannot give you the perfume because they aren't IT, they have to refer you to the Source - the Perfume: Jesus the Anointed.

But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere, for WE are the sweet fragrance of Christ (the Anointed One) which exhales unto God, discernible alike among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: to the latter it is an aroma from death to death, a fatal odor, the smell of doom; to the former it is an aroma from life to life, a vital fragrance, living and fresh. 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. Many who have been anointed by God have noticed

the effect described here - some don't like the fragrance of Christ - it brings either Life or death.

There is always a counterfeit or false replica of the true, the fact that this is so proves all the more clearly that there is also the true and that we must discern between the two. Christ dwells in us through His Holy Spirit. It is interesting that the Hebrew word Ruach which means Spirit, originates from the Hebrew word 'ruwach' which means to smell a scent, or perceive an odour of delight!

Consecration

The whole act of anointing with the holy anointing oil was primarily one of cleansing, consecration, dedication and being set apart for a purpose for God. *But it is God Who confirms and makes us steadfast and establishes us with you in Christ, and has consecrated and anointed us; putting His seal upon us and giving us His Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee. 2 Corinthians 1:21,22.* We are now anointed as kings and priests to serve God, we are consecrated and dedicated to Him. We have to be clothed by Him, and hidden IN Him through death before we can be anointed and consecrated by Him. *The holy garments of Aaron (High Priest) shall pass to his descendants who succeed him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. Ex 29:29.* The Hebrew word for "holy" is the same word (*kadesh*) as for sanctify; it means to set apart, separate out as holy. What is the ultimate in separation? Death. We must die to self in order to have His resurrection life flowing through us.

The anointing of a king and priest was a one time event, and so also Jesus (our High Priest) has anointed us as His priests once and for all. Some churches and "ministries" encourage people to come up and 'receive the anointing' week after week. But what kind of anointing is it that they have to keep going back to man as the source of it? The things that were anointed in the Bible were priests, prophets and kings (one time events), lepers (for cleansing - one time event once again), furniture and things in the temple (that's everything in us as His temple), clothes (our robes of righteousness), and food. Our food is the Bread of Life (Jesus - John 6:48-51) the Living Water (Jesus - John 4:13-15) and the Meat - The Lamb of God (Jesus - Hebrews 13:9,10) - Christ the Anointed again!

When we claim that we are anointing someone, do we claim to be making them a priest, prophet or king? Or are we cleansing them? Or dedicating all of their 'temple' to God? Or feeding them with ourselves? NO! These are personal things that only an individual can ask CHRIST to do for them and ONLY He can do as The Anointing! He is the only Mediator between God and man. We can point people to The Way, but we cannot walk out their journey for them. We cannot and must not presume to be Christ, we are simply Christ's ones in submission to Him. HE is the One to point people to and they can then personally receive these things from HIM. Anything else is anti-christ (in place of Christ) and therefore idolatrous.

Anti-christ simply means anyone who sets themselves up in place of Christ or instead of the Anointed!!! 'Anti' in Greek means:

- 1) opposite to, before
- 2) for, instead of, in place of (*something*)

The spirit of antichrist is that which opposes or places itself instead of The Anointing (The Christ), usurping the role and function that is His alone. There have always been those around who will put themselves in place of Christ, which is why John wrote that there were many antichrists and said that the spirit of antichrist was already in the world.

Anointing Ourselves

Woe to those who are at ease in Zion and to those on the mountain of Samaria who are careless and feel secure, the notable men of the chief of the nations to whom the house of Israel comes! Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the midst of the stall, who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and invent for themselves instruments of music like David's, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved and sick at heart over the affliction and ruin of Israel! Therefore, now shall they go captive with the first who go into exile and the revelry and banqueting of those who stretch themselves shall be ended. The Lord God has sworn by Himself, the Lord, the God of Hosts, says: I ABHOR, REJECT AND DESPISE the pride and false, futile glory of Jacob (Israel), and I hate his palaces and strongholds; and I will deliver up the city with all that is in it. Amos 6:1,4-

8.

God is not impressed when we manufacture the anointing and anoint ourselves or pretend that we are anointed when we are not. This was strictly forbidden under the Old Covenant. The anointing oil was to be HOLY, set apart. *And you shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer; it shall be a sacred anointing oil. And say to the Israelites, This is a holy anointing oil sacred to Me alone throughout your generations. It SHALL NOT BE Poured UPON A MAN'S BODY (flesh) NOR SHALL YOU MAKE ANY OTHER LIKE IT IN COMPOSITION; it is holy, and you shall hold it sacred. Whoever compounds any like it OR puts any of it upon an outsider shall be cut off from his people. Exodus 30:25,31-33.* It wasn't ever to touch the flesh (draw attention to the flesh or person) it was poured or smeared on the Head only.

The Israelites did anoint themselves daily as a part of their cleansing and dressing, they would wash themselves, anoint themselves with perfumed oil and dress themselves. But this was a DIFFERENT oil to the holy anointing oil; remember that God had told them that they were to manufacture no other oil like it, it was to be sacred. The holy anointing oil was for dedication and consecration. We cannot anoint ourselves with it, that is the role of our High Priest - Christ.

This is a "dangerous" subject. We must not play games with the Holy Spirit and His Holy Anointing; pretending we 'own' it or can give it away whenever someone wants it. That is equivalent to "making" and manufacturing it. We cannot just "impart" the anointing to anyone whenever we choose; if you did those things under the Old Covenant as a priest, you were cut off from the people. To claim that we have the anointing of God to give to all and sundry when we feel like it or when someone wants it, is not supported by the Bible.

We do not have God's power to use at will; to do so would be akin to practicing witchcraft. In witchcraft there has to be someone through whom to 'transmit', a channel to pass something on and they can often use this power at their will; they claim or believe that it is available whenever THEY want to use it. With God He WILL use people for His purposes because we His Body, but He will only give us power when HE

wants to; not always when WE want Him to. We are priests in submission to God through our High Priest; we do only what He tells us to.

Another way of looking at being anointed in more modern day terms is that being anointed with the holy anointing oil was like a qualification; they weren't qualified or appointed as a priest, king or prophet until they had been anointed/qualified. For us, when we graduate we receive a 'qualification' which then qualifies us to do that which we're qualified for. It is the same with the anointing oil - it is a dedication and setting apart of a person for a purpose. If you're qualified as a Doctor and try to be an electrician; you get into trouble! The Holy Spirit can anoint us for any particular thing; He qualifies and enables us to do what He requires of us. So if He's anointed/qualified me to draw a picture of something and I decide I'd rather paint instead of drawing and have not been anointed/qualified by the Holy Spirit for painting; it would be a waste of time and effort on my part! When something is anointed/qualified by God, it will perform what it is meant to. *The Spirit of the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor, and afflicted; He has sent me to bind up and heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound. Isaiah 61:1.*

When a person is qualified, say as a surgeon, they have the necessary skills and qualifications to do surgery; the person who was operated on would KNOW the person had been qualified as a surgeon, they would have experienced first hand that person's qualification for their own benefit. They wouldn't then jump up and down and say "I've been qualified; I experienced that qualification!" yet this is what some people do with the anointing: "I've been anointed, I experienced the anointing!" So when a person is anointed/qualified by God to heal for example, they have the necessary skills/qualifications to do that work and the person who has been healed through that person, has experienced that the person was indeed anointed/qualified by God for that work. They wouldn't then jump up and down and say "I've experienced the anointing", they'd say "I've been HEALED" because the person was anointed TO heal! The anointing oil was a means; NOT an end in itself!

In a broader sense than just a professional qualification, God can and does anoint and qualify us for many small, every day things also. It is a

bit like a boss asking his secretary to go and deliver a letter from him, the secretary is qualified and authorised to hand that message on. In the same way He may ask us to send someone a note, and will inspire us with what to write, and because we are qualified or anointed by Him for this little job, it will DO that which it is anointed for in the person receiving it. I think we need to be very careful in what we define as having the anointing and authority of God, because if that little anointed message were read by someone other than who it was intended for; they may sense no anointing upon it at all because it had not been anointed for any purpose for them, but rather for someone else.

Oil for Healing

In James we are told to anoint with oil for HEALING, and the disciples anointed with oil for healing; not for some powerful anointing to be imparted, but to be anointed with oil FOR healing! The oil used was not the same as the holy anointing oil of consecration in the temple, but was medicinal. Jews used oil to cleanse wounds like in Luke 10:34 when the good Samaritan *"Went to him and dressed his wounds, pouring on oil and wine"*. We seem to have combined a symbolic medicinal use of oil with the spiritual use of holy oil.

"James 5:15 Anointing him with oil— That St. James neither means any kind of incantation, any kind of miracle, or such extreme unction as the Romish Church prescribes, will be sufficiently evident from these considerations:

- 1. He was a holy man, and could prescribe nothing but what was holy.*
- 2. If a miracle was intended, it could have been as well wrought without the oil, as with it.*
- 3. It is not intimated that even this unction is to save the sick man, but the prayer of faith, James 5:15.*
- 4. What is here recommended was to be done as a natural means of restoring health, which, while they used prayer and supplication to God, they were not to neglect.*
- 5. Oil in Judea was celebrated for its sanative qualities; so that they scarcely ever took a journey without carrying oil with them, (see in the case of the Samaritan,) with which they anointed their bodies, healed their wounds, bruises, etc.*

6. Oil was and is frequently used in the east as a means of cure in very dangerous diseases; and in Egypt it is often used in the cure of the plague. Even in Europe it has been tried with great success in the cure of dropsy. And pure olive oil is excellent for recent wounds and bruises; and I have seen it tried in this way with the best effects.

7. But that it was the custom of the Jews to apply it as a means of healing, and that St. James refers to this custom, is not only evident from the case of the wounded man ministered to by the good Samaritan, Luke 10:34, but from the practice of the Jewish rabbis. They had, therefore, recourse to this as a natural remedy; and we find that the disciples used it also in this way to heal the sick, not exerting the miraculous power but in cases where natural means were ineffectual. Mark 6:13. On this latter place I have supposed that it might have been done symbolically, in order to prepare the way for a miraculous cure: this is the opinion of many commentators; but I am led, on more mature consideration, to doubt its propriety, yet dare not decide. In short, anointing the sick with oil, in order to their recovery, was a constant practice among the Jews. Mark 6:13. And here I am satisfied that it has no other meaning than as a natural means of restoring health; and that St. James desires them to use natural means while looking to God for an especial blessing. And no wise man would direct otherwise."

(From CLARKE'S COMMENTARY, THE NEW TESTAMENT, VOLUME 8 by Adam Clarke)

Christ is the ONLY One who can impart His anointing because He IS the Anointing. The apostles didn't pray specifically for the anointing to come upon someone! They obviously had a different understanding of the anointing than many do today. They knew the Old Testament far, far better than we, and had a much more practical understanding of all its symbols.

Did something change between the Old and the New Testaments that would have given them a new understanding of the anointing? Definitely! The Holy Spirit of whom the anointing oil had been a symbol of in the Old Testament, was now LIVING within them through Jesus the Christ, as He also does with us! So why did they not need to pray and ask for anointing to be given? Because THE Anointed One HAD already been given and was now dwelling within them through the Holy Spirit so they were already anointed and they knew that He was the High Priest who would

anoint! Why would they pray for someone to receive an anointing when they understood it to be simply a symbolic act of the Holy Spirit who was now living as the Anointing within them and the other person? We seem to have developed a wrong understanding of what the anointing is. There is no reference in the Bible of praying for the anointing to be given to others.

Anointing Points to THE Anointed One

The TRUE anointing of God will never draw attention to itself but will always point to THE Anointed One, not just ANY anointed one! After all, many have been anointed and have stayed anointed even when the favour of God is no longer upon them and He has in fact rejected them. Our examples of this are King Saul, Balaam and many kings in the Old Testament who were anointed by a prophet or priest of God to be king and yet were wicked kings. Many today lift up any apparent "anointed one" that happens to come along as if THEY were the source of the anointing! This is idolatry and can lead us away from Jesus Christ especially if these ones were once anointed, yet are now rejected by God. Remember that Saul ended up involved in witchcraft.

Saul got tied up in who HE was. He still had the title of king and he didn't want to let that go, so he felt threatened by David, God's replacement for him. Not much has changed, many today are enamoured with titles and with themselves. But what's more important, the title or the function? We need to simply forget the titles, and just DO whatever job God has anointed us to do. We sometimes spend far too much energy and time trying to work out which nice little "label" or "5 fold ministry" we might fit into (maybe because of an insecurity in who we are in Christ?) instead of simply listening to the Holy Spirit and being obedient to what He says without concerning ourselves with what the 'name' or 'title' of what we're doing might be... What is important is knowing the Father and His will (what He's told you to do or say) and getting on with the job and DOING it.

Some herald the arrival of this or that anointed prophet or apostle. When you have to TELL someone what your title or role is instead of simply BEING what you are, then you are likely false. *But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire*

an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15 (NKJV) Maybe if we as humans weren't so quick to put people in boxes and give them titles, we wouldn't be in the situation we are in today with people idolising the "titled" and many of the "titled" being blind and proud as a result. Titles appeal to people's pride.

In fact, were a genuine prophet or apostle to really come along, they would often be rejected because people would not take kindly to what they were saying. They will not only reject the message, but also the messenger. Many actually use the messenger as a reason to reject the message. A true spokesperson of God will bring God's Truth, and truth reveals and illuminates what was nicely hidden away. Jesus was like this, He exposed the hypocrisy of the religious people without apology (*Matthew 23*). People like to have their ears (and maybe egos?) tickled. It's not always nice to see things how God sees them, but it is absolutely vital that we see.

The anointing in churches today is often portrayed as a feeling, power, or something that is sensed and makes people feel good. The term 'anointing' when used in this way, is not Biblical. At best, it is wrongly termed; at worst, it is simply false.

Counterfeit Anointing

The coming of the (antichrist) is through the activity and working (energeia) of Satan and will be attended by great power (dunamis) and with all sorts of miracles and signs and delusive marvels - all of them lying wonders - and unlimited seduction to evil and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WELCOME THE TRUTH but refused to love it that they might be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a misleading influence, a working (energeia) of error and a strong delusion to make them believe what is false, in order that all may be judged and condemned who did not believe in and who refused to adhere to, trust in and rely on the Truth, but took

pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

We would be naive and gullible not to recognise the fact that there is the false or counterfeit of the true. The Greek words "energeia" and "dunamis" are words for "power" that are used of both God AND Satan and we are warned very clearly in the Word to beware. So what would a false anointing or anointed one look like? Like the true anointed ones.

The Israelites were not the only ones who anointed people and things in the days of the Old Testament. It was also a practice in pagan religions. Why are we warned so much to beware of deception in the New Testament? Because the false is very LIKE the true, it is in place of and INSTEAD OF the true Anointed One (anti-christ)! A counterfeit has to be almost exactly like the genuine in order to fool people, it is not something that is obviously wrong at first glance, it is a very clever copy in order to deceive.

This is why we are warned to be very careful, because Satan wants to deceive even the chosen ones of God. *False christs (anointed ones) and false prophets will arise and show signs and work miracles to deceive and lead astray, if possible, even the elect, those God has chosen out for Himself. But look to yourselves and be on guard; I have told you everything beforehand. Mark 13:22,23.* Satan is cunning, it would be no deception at all if these false anointed ones were obviously evil and of Satan! We must always keep our eyes fixed on THE Anointed One.

Jesus said, *Be careful that no one misleads you, deceiving you and leading you into error. For many will come IN MY NAME saying I am the Christ and they will lead many astray. And many false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead many into error. Matthew 24:4,11.* This warns us of people who come in the Name of Jesus, agreeing that He IS the Anointed One (or will say "I am the anointed" themselves) and yet they will lead people astray! We must be those who know and are obedient to the voice of our Good Shepherd and trust in and rely on the Truth which is Jesus Christ so that we will not be deluded or deceived.

It is when we deny or refuse to accept Truth that we are already on the road to deception. *For the time is coming when people will not tolerate sound and wholesome instruction but having ears itching for something*

pleasing and gratifying, they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, and will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions. 2 Timothy 4:3,4.

Unction for a Function

The anointing in the Bible was always for a purpose. When someone was anointed in the Bible it was either for commissioning or for a purpose; to DO something eg The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me TO preach the gospel to the poor, TO heal the broken hearted etc. *How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with strength, ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by the devil for God was with Him. Acts 10:38.* This anointing enables and pushes us out where no man has gone before!

Yes, individuals are still anointed today for whatever work God desires for them. But who is it that appoints, ordains and anoints them to do these things? I found no instance of the apostles in the New Testament anointing or appointing ANY "ministries", they only recognised those who were older and those who would distribute food. This is because if they did anoint and appoint any people to heal etc, they would have been presuming to take the place of God, because the Word says; *So GOD HAS APPOINTED some in the assembly: first apostles; second prophets; third teachers; then wonder-workers; then those with ability to heal the sick; helpers; administrators; speakers in different tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:28 And His gifts were varied; He Himself appointed and gave men to us, some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. Ephesians 4:11.* It was not their job to appoint or anoint but simply to discern and recognise the function or outworking in a person's life. I did not find record of anyone being anointed by another person in the New Testament for a function. There is no record of Paul being anointed by a person as an apostle and teacher, or Agabus being anointed as a prophet, or Philip being anointed as an evangelist etc. These ministries were recognised as gifts from God and appointed by Him, not man. The apostles DID lay hands on people and pray for them to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and healing, though.

There is one case of a person being commissioned as an apostle, this was when Matthias was selected in Acts 1; but this was BEFORE the gift of the Holy Spirit had been given! The only instance that looks as though men were appointed and anointed (in the sense of being set apart and dedicated for a purpose) by men is, *Now in the assembly at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate now for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying, they put their hands on them and sent them away. So then being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia... Acts 13:1-4.* We have to note that they had already been anointed as prophets and teachers, what they were setting them apart for was being sent away from themselves for a purpose. They were simply following the instructions of the Holy Spirit, and the men knew very well that they had been sent out by Him because the instruction to do this had originated from the Holy Spirit and not from man.

This one Scripture has often been emphasised without balancing it with the fact that it is the only record of anyone being 'set apart' by man in the New Testament, and that the rest of the time the Holy Spirit did this work sovereignly Himself! Even in this one case it was very clearly the Holy Spirit Who sent them. Ministries which appoint men in this manner, often use this one verse as their justification for doing it while neglecting the many examples in the New Testament where the Holy Spirit sovereignly anointed and appointed. In teaching and practicing this, they put the focus on themselves instead of Christ as being the One who approves, appoints and anoints and sends people out, thus giving themselves a position of great control and power over people. For instance, Paul was sent away by God to be taught by Him alone for several years, rather than being approved or even taught by the apostles.

An interesting thing to note is that the New Testament speaks of the anointing as something which had already been given or done for a person. *But YOU HAVE BEEN ANOINTED by the Holy One, and you all know the truth... 1 John 2:20.* The anointing of the priests, prophets and kings, gave them the authority to do and to be that which they had been anointed for, and it is the same for us today! As His priests, we represent Him and we do what He requires and sometimes this will mean we

minister to others as He leads us because WE are His Body here on earth.

Conclusion

From what I personally have witnessed, it seems almost as though some people rely on receiving an anointing from some anointed one instead of relying on their own personal walk with THE Anointed One. We're not encouraged or told to seek the anointing, but THE Anointed One. We are told to also seek love and to desire the gifts, (1 Corinthians 14:1) but there does not appear to be any Scriptural precedent in the New Testament for a person praying for someone to be anointed, or 'imparting' the anointing.

It is certainly true that we are anointed, but WE are not the source of the anointing, Jesus the Christ is, and we must make people aware of this when He touches them through us. He can and does minister to people through us because WE are His hands and feet here on earth, WE are His Body and we are anointed as His priests to do what He tells us to as our Head. But, and it is an important but, we must be sure to do what He says, no less and no more. Even Jesus Himself said, *I am able to do nothing from Myself, independently and of my own accord, but as I am taught by God and as I get His orders. I decide as I am bidden to decide. Even as I hear, I judge and My judgment is right and just because I do not seek or consult My own will, I have no desire to do what is pleasing to Myself, My own aim, My own purpose, but only the will and pleasure of the Father Who sent Me. (John 5:30).*

Through studying anointing in the Bible I found that:

- nowhere are we told or encouraged to seek the anointing
- nowhere are we encouraged to impart or give the anointing to others
- the anointing is not referred to as some thing we need to receive from man, but is Christ the Anointing within us
- the Holy Spirit Himself will anoint and consecrate us for that which He would have us do and say.

I'm aware that I need to be very careful as I don't want to encourage anyone to be against the anointing of God or the Holy Spirit in any way.

However, I strongly suspect that in some cases seeking the anointing has become like a ritual or a man-made doctrine and there is no purpose or outworking of it (which is the Biblical meaning of an anointing; anointed to do...) It appears as though the anointing itself is sought, (or some sort of spiritual experience) instead of seeking the Anointed One Himself. We're not to seek the anointing but the Anointed! True anointing would normally be done (since it is an act and NOT a mystical power) by Him sovereignly as opposed to when we want it or by our own self-will, so actively seeking an impartation of anointing would be an exercise in futility!

There are only a few references to anointing in the New Testament, there are FAR more references to Jesus the Anointed, HE is the One we must seek!



Testing Fruit

Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. You will fully recognize them by their fruits. You will fully know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. *Matthew 7:15,16,21,21*

Jesus clearly warned us to beware of the false and the best way of discerning the false is to know the True! When we know Christ as Truth, we will not so easily be deceived.

Jesus said we would fully know the false by their fruits and it is an interesting thought. How do you test fruit? Not just by looking at it (or going by the face value as we naturally tend to do), and yet this seems to be the way many of us "test" so called fruit! Fruit is tested by opening it and partaking of its contents. In the case of some fruits, this only happens when great pressure is applied (ie a coconut) and it is cracked open. In fact, if we judge fruit merely by looks and not content, we can easily be misled. Some fruits look awful and smell bad (for example the tropical fruit Durian has prickles all over it and smells like rotten onions yet if you can get past the offense of the looks and smell and actually taste what's inside, it is a delicacy)! We need to rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal the contents and often He will do that through stress and pressure on a person which causes their true character or fruit to come forth. Jesus didn't go by how people appeared to be, He perceived their hearts and their motivations. Fruit is never tested simply by looking and judging it by how it appears to be but from actually biting into it and tasting it.

It is important to see that the fruit that Jesus spoke of was not what people had done, it was not their deeds but who they really WERE. Inside these 'sheep' were devouring wolves. They may have seemed very good if we were testing their fruit by their outward deeds, but this is not what counts as Jesus went on to say: *Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and DONE MANY MIGHTY WORKS in Your*

name? And then I will say to them openly, I never knew you; depart from Me you who act wickedly. Matthew 7:22,23.

When Jesus was talking about the vine yielding grapes in John, there was no effort on the part of the branches to produce the grapes; it happened naturally, simply because they were part of the vine, the Life/Sap of the Vine was flowing through them. Without it, they would be dead. There is no point in striving in our own strength to produce fruit, fruit comes naturally when we are living and relying upon the Source of Life - the Vine, Jesus.

The fruits of the Spirit are not primarily for either ourselves or others to delight in, they are from and for God. *"My beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lillies. I am my beloved's garden and my beloved is mine! He feeds among the lillies which grow there." Song of Solomon 6:2,3.* CHRIST is the Fruit of the Spirit! Father desires to see this Fruit of Christ in our lives: *Live in Me, and I will live in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in and being vitally united to the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much, abundant fruit. However apart from Me, cut off from vital union with Me, you can do nothing. John 15:4,5*

What we term as fruit can be misleading sometimes. Many people who do not know God are very loving, joyful, peaceful, gentle etc. Yet these cannot be fruits of the Spirit in their lives as they do not yet know Him. The good fruit which we see in their lives originates from the flesh, from the tree of the knowledge of both GOOD and evil, but not from the tree of Life; it is not supernatural, heavenly fruit. Unfortunately, this is what we usually see and judge in one another. Rather than discerning whether a person is full of Life from the tree of Life and knowing that this is the ONLY thing which is important, we typically misjudge by instead eating only the fruit from the tree of the knowledge (discernment, perception) of good and evil and make our judgments and decisions based upon that. Our enemy still seeks to distract us by showing us the fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, getting us to taste it and make a judgment about it and then deceiving us into believing our judgments and perceptions are correct and that our actions will not bring death!

The children of Israel were warned about testing people and for them the false was given to test them, see Deut 13:1-5. *If a prophet arises among you or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder he foretells to you comes to pass, and if he says, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all you mind and heart and with your entire being. You shall walk after the Lord your God and reverently fear Him and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and cling to Him.*

Jesus warned several times for us to test and beware. In speaking of the end times He said, *And many false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead many into error. For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and they will show great signs and wonders so as to deceive and lead astray, if possible, even the elect, God's chosen ones (US!). See, I have warned you beforehand. Matt 24:11,24.* Many of the things we've heard or learned aren't necessarily biblical and can actually be lies intended to deceive (and sidetrack) us and keep us in bondage and from becoming more intimate with Christ. The Bible tells us that satan is the father of lies and even a half truth is intended to deceive, in fact the closer to the whole truth something is, the more deceptive it actually is if it also contains a lie. Matthew 15:6-9 says, *So for the sake of your tradition, the rules handed down by your forefathers, you have set aside the Word of God - depriving it of force and authority and making it of no effect. You pretenders - hypocrites! Admirably and truly did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said: This people draw near Me with their mouth and honour Me with their lips, but their heart holds off and is far away from Me; uselessly do they worship Me for they teach as doctrines the commands of men.*

We are all susceptible to error or wrong thinking and what we see and understand is only a small part and we will receive a fuller understanding as the Holy Spirit continues to reveal Himself and His Way, Truth and Life to us and we can trust Him with that work! We need to always remain open to receiving more understanding. God has given us His Word (Christ) and His Holy Spirit within us who will guide us into all truth. We're not just to glibly accept whatever we hear or read that sounds good or spiritual and yet to balance that we are also not to be so dogmatic in our

beliefs that God does not have any opportunity to reveal new things to us.

We need to beware that we ourselves are not guilty of spiritual prejudice, self righteousness and religious traditions which will make us do the very same thing as the Pharisees... *Then some of the Pharisees said, This Man Jesus is not from God, because He does not observe the Sabbath. John 9:17* They totally missed their Messiah because they stumbled over a rule and expectation and they made their judgment based on that. Jesus was a stumbling block! The Holy Spirit sometimes seems to deliberately offend us (or is it our attitudes and self righteousness that get offended?!) such as feeding Elijah with "unclean" birds (*1 Kings 17*), David eating the forbidden shewbread (*1 Samuel 21*), and Peter having to preach to the "unclean" Gentiles (*Acts 10*) to name but a few!

The best way to know the false is to know the True. When we have Christ living in us as Truth and are eating from the Tree of Life, He will lead us and show us what we are to accept and what we are to reject and we can rest in that and trust Him. It is not about exposing error so much as revealing Truth! When we test fruit we are simply looking for Life or death. Our enemy is so deceitful that he will not hesitate to use truth as well as lies to accomplish his purposes but he cannot create Life. And one of his prime purposes is to bring division among the Body. In fact using truth to achieve this is far more deceptive to both us and others because we get caught up in the truth which we are speaking or hearing and sometimes lose sight of He Who is Truth personified! Truth given as a law brings death.

The Truth will only bring Life when it is given IN the Life and IN the Way - Christ. When Truth is shared in His time and in His Way then it is Life. Sometimes I can get so caught up in the passion of the truth that I so clearly see that I can run with it in the flesh instead of waiting on my Life for His Way; but the three aspects must go together, the Truth, Life and Way. In exposing things contrary to Truth, we have to be very careful and sure that we are sharing only what God wants us to and thus allowing His Spirit to bring further discernment in His own time and way to the person. Otherwise we may be stepping ahead of Him in our crusade for truth (as we currently see it) and taking over the role of the Holy Spirit in a person's life and bringing unnecessary offense and division. Telling

people truth as we see it can encourage them to depend on us for things as we see them whereas the other way encourages individual responsibility and discernment so the person relies on Christ instead of mere man... and trusts God to expose and reveal what is necessary! We need to be looking for Christ's Life in one another and uniting on that One Thing instead of disagreeing on 'many things'.

May God give us Grace to see the fruits of the Tree of Life!

The spiritual person tries all things - that is, he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions and discerns all things. 1 Cor. 2:15b



Lessons from Life

I cannot learn anything until I unlearn what I have already learned.
I cannot be real and genuine until I have been disillusioned.
I cannot do anything until I've stopped everything.
I cannot be wholly in Christ until I am totally out of religion and its ways.

I cannot wash another's feet while standing on my own two feet.
I cannot walk in another's shoes unless I first take off my own shoes.
I cannot offer anyone a helping hand if my hands are already full.
I cannot speak words of Life to another until I have experienced being brought out of death into Life.

I cannot see through another's eyes while looking at myself.
I cannot hear through another's ears while listening to the throb of my own heartbeat.
I cannot share another's heart if I am consumed with the passion and pain in my own heart.
I cannot truly love another if I am still in love with myself.

I cannot give anything of worth to anyone until I have nothing of myself to give.
I cannot experience real Life until I am dead and buried.
I cannot know Freedom until I am content to be locked away.
I cannot know Rest until I can completely give up on myself and my plans.

I cannot live in the Light if I cannot bear the exposure of being seen.
I cannot know Truth unless I stop deceiving myself with lies.
I cannot walk in the Way until I quit studying the map.
I cannot know Hope until I'm convinced of how hopeless I am.

I cannot enjoy Peace without going through many storms.
I cannot experience amazing Grace if I secretly believe I deserve it.
I cannot receive Mercy until I stop trying to save myself.
I cannot completely trust Another until I no longer trust myself.

I cannot really pray until it is not me that is praying.
I cannot truly cry until it is not me that is crying.
I cannot really sing until it is not me that is singing.
I cannot truly laugh until it is not me that is laughing.

I cannot truly live until it is not ME that is living...

**For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.
I can do all things through Christ Who empowers and strengthens
me.**

Phil 1:21; 4:13.



Other titles:

Unveiling... Vignettes of Life
Unveiling... Portraits of Life
Unveiling... Being Full of Life
Unveiling... Life, But Not As We've Known It

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