

The Revealing Of The Church's Future

Part 4

God is at this moment preparing us in a small way for our future work within the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 5:9-10 [NIV] *“And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. **You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.**”*”

Here is a **future** work for those who have been purchased [ransomed] by the blood of Jesus Christ, rulership with Christ over earth. This statement is of a future position of authority.

Revelation 1:4-6 [NIV] *“John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and **has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.**”*

Here a similar statement is made but note it is **present tense**. Addressed to the seven churches, all Christians. Our present job is to be priests who serve the Creator God, by bringing people to God.

We as Christians have greater authority than we know, and greater authority than we ever exercise.

Mark 1:21-22 [NIV] *“They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, **Jesus** went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because **he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.**”*

Christ spoke with authority. Who now speaks for Christ?

His Body here on earth the Church.

Do we speak with the same authority that amazes the general public?

Luke 9:1-2 [NIV] *“When Jesus had called the Twelve together, **he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.**”*

Authority of Christ given to those who were disciples, who as yet had **not** received the Holy Spirit.

How much more must be that of those who have the active presence of the Holy Spirit in them?

Matthew 28:16-20 [NIV] *“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**”*

Let us examine this statement carefully.

“But some doubted”

Why did some doubt even with the visible proof of Christ's resurrection?

Two possible answers to this:-

a) The pre-conceived idea of what they had been called by Jesus to become and do.

Acts 1:6 [NIV] *“So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”*

Their concept of the Messiah was to save Israel from the dominion of Rome.

b) As yet the Holy Spirit had **not** come to reveal to them their future commission.

John 16:13 [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

It is the Holy Spirit who was to reveal their future work.

This work of the Holy Spirit covered three areas.

John 16:8 [NIV] *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

Sin, righteousness and judgement.

“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me ... I am with you to the very end of the age.”

The authority to continue the work Jesus Christ had been given by the Father was extended to the eleven disciples.

How and when was this given?

Acts 1:8 [NIV] *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

The Greek word translated “power” [duna mis] is synonymous with the “authority” [ēxōusia] that Christ had been given.

How is this power/authority extended to us?

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will be in us with the authority He has been given by the Father to continue the work on earth that He the Father initiated.

Acts 2:1-4 [NIV] *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*

The disciples were given this power to speak on behalf of Jesus Christ, His words were on their tongues.

Without this indwelling power of the Holy Spirit understanding of spiritual concepts is impossible.

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 [NIV] *“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”. but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

The Holy Spirit and this understanding only come to those who obey Christ.

Acts 5:32 [NIV] *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”*

And this obedience is linked to the Great Commission.

“Teaching them to obey”

But who and what are those who are to be taught to obey?

The people whom the original disciples were commanded to make disciples.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations”

The disciples were to reproduce themselves by making more disciples.

This is how the Church was to grow and multiply.

Matthew 16:13-17 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” Jesus replied, “**Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.**”*

The understanding of who Jesus Christ was had been revealed by the Father to Peter.

What was the outcome of this revelation?

Matthew 16:18 [Living Bible] *“You are Peter [a disciple of Christ] a stone [Greek “petros”] and upon this rock [Greek “petra”] a huge rock like the Rock of Gibraltar, I [Jesus Christ] will build my Church and all the powers of Hades [power of death] shall not overpower it, or hold out against it.”*

It was the revelation of who Jesus was, given to Peter by the Father, that would be the rock foundation on which the Church would be built.

Ephesians 2:19-22 [NIV] *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with **Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”*

Christ the cornerstone [key stone that holds the foundation together] on which all the Church is built by the Holy Spirit.

How do we build on the foundation that is Jesus Christ?

1 Peter 2:1-12 [NIV] *“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for. **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”***

We, the Church, which Christ said He would build have to put our total trust in what Christ has done for us, as Peter did. Accept Christ as our Messiah [Saviour].

Note we have in these verses certain things we are to do to become the “living stones” out of which this Church is to be built.

“Get rid of all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander.”

Why?

Ephesians 4:30-32 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

Such an attitude of mind grieves the Holy Spirit, and prevents Him being active in our lives.

Philippians 2:1-5 [NIV] *“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, **if any fellowship with the Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:**”*

To develop the mind of Jesus Christ, that is to become His disciple.

“Offering spiritual sacrifices.”

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

It is the result of our surrendering our total life [“bodies” – Greek “sōma” the whole instrument of life, body, mind and human [Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11] spirit] to the Holy Spirit [God] that our mind is totally remade.

For this sacrifice of our live to be accepted by God it has to be without blemish.

How can this happen?

Only by trust in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:8-9 [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins**, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Confessing our sins we will be purified by the blood of Christ.

Romans 4:18, 21-25 [NIV] *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ... “being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom **God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”*

Christ’s righteousness is credited to us as a result of our faith [trust] in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We then become an acceptable sacrifice to offer to God.

1 John 1:5-7 [NIV] *“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. **But if we walk in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

Walk with Christ in the light.

How?

Galatians 5:16-18 [King James] *“This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be **led of the Spirit**, ye are not under the law.”*

Walk, that is be led by the Holy Spirit.

What will then happen to us?

Galatians 5:22-25 [King James] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. **If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**”*

These very fruits will begin to grow within us as our mind is made new.

All of the above is the basic training we receive as disciples of Christ to enable us to become disciple makers ourselves.

Note one other analogy that Christ gave us to understand the disciple making.

John 15:1-17 [NIV] *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **Remain in me, and I will remain in you.** No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. **This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my***

disciples. “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.** You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”

When we allow Christ [by the Holy Spirit] to remain in us we bear fruit.

Who will benefit by this fruit?

When we look at the physical example it is those who come to the fruit bearing tree and gather the fruit who benefit.

They benefit in two ways:

- a) They are nourished by the fruit;
- b) They have available to them the seed within the fruit which they could use to start to grow like the plant from which they gathered the fruit.

This is how we become disciple making disciples.

This is the very reason we have been called by God and given, on request, the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

Note one final thing, the essential fruit in the whole of this process in love, a love that is willing to sacrifice all for others to come to know our Creator God, worship Him and eventually come to love Him.

The end product is that God is glorified, and He glorifies us.

Romans 3:22-26 [NIV] “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished, he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

By bearing fruit as disciple making disciples of Jesus Christ we will bring glory to God and **not** “fall short of the glory of God!”

Proverbs 22:20 [New King James] “Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge,”

The final warning given to the Church in God’s Word.