

The  
*Ministry*  
of sons of God  
*is to destroy Satan and his power*

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WITH PETER HAY AND DAVID BAKER

# THE MINISTRY OF SONS OF GOD

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# Chapter I

## The elect scattered abroad

Following His physical resurrection from the dead, Jesus presented Himself alive to the disciples with 'many infallible proofs'. Over a period of forty days, He taught them about the kingdom of God. Act 1:3. At the end of this period, He instructed them to stay in Jerusalem until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as 'the Promise of the Father'. Act 1:4-5.

Speaking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said to His disciples, 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' Act 1:8. Jesus was clear that the elect would be scattered to the four winds of the earth *before* the Father will take His seat to establish His kingdom on the earth in the time of the end.

It is significant that the final statement that Jesus made to the apostles before His ascension into heaven was about the scattering of the elect to the ends of the earth. It is this final word that defines the nature of the entire church age. With this in view, the apostle Peter addressed his first letter to 'the pilgrims of the dispersion'. 1Pe 1:1. Likewise, James addressed his letter 'to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad'. Jas 1:1. Both Peter and James were writing to the true Israel of God in lampstand churches.

## Behold, He is coming with clouds

We continue to read in the book of Acts, 'Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight'. Act 1:9. When Luke recorded this account of Christ's ascension, he was not referring to a physical cloud that is made up of water droplets. Jesus Christ was received into heaven by *a great cloud of witnesses*.

The cloud of witnesses who received Christ into heaven would have included all the men and women of faith whom Christ had taken with Him to heaven on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul referred to this cloud of believers in heaven when he said that 'we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses'. Heb 12:1.

As the disciples continued to look steadfastly toward heaven, two men in white apparel stood by them. It is likely that these two men were Moses and Elijah. We recall that it was Moses and Elijah who talked with Jesus about His offering journey when He was transfigured on the mountain. Mat 17:1-5. The two witnesses said to the disciples, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.' Act 1:10-11. The two witnesses announced to the disciples that Jesus Christ will return with clouds.

It is important to understand that Jesus Christ will not *physically return from heaven*, accompanied by the clouds of heaven, until He comes to defeat Antichrist and his armies in the battle of Armageddon. The apostle John described the physical second coming of Christ when he wrote, 'I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war ... His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, were following Him on white horses.' Rev 19:11-14.

The physical return of Christ at the end of the age will coincide with the general resurrection for all believers. The resurrection at the last day is the time when we will receive an incorruptible and immortal resurrection body that has been fashioned like Christ's resurrection body.

1Co 15:50-54. Php 3:20-21. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul explained, 'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and

remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.' 2Th 4:16-17.

Significantly, the Scriptures reveal that Jesus Christ will be seen *coming with clouds* before His physical return on the day of resurrection at the end of the age. We read in the book of Revelation, 'Behold, He is coming with clouds'. Rev 1:7. He is coming, and will continue to come, through 'the clouds' of His living witnesses on the earth. We will recall that Jesus said to the disciples, 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses.' Act 1:8. His witnesses include all the sons of God who have been raised to sit with Christ in the heavenly places, who are now revealing Him by the anointing of the Spirit of God, as members of His body on the earth. Col 3:3-4. The clouds of witnesses are *the elect* in each generation.

Jesus Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God in heaven. However, He is also walking among His lampstand churches through the seven stars whom He holds in His right hand. Rev 1:16. Rev 3:4. 'The seven stars' are the presbyteries of His lampstand churches. In this respect, there have been seasons of visitation throughout the church age. Jesus Christ has been coming to His lampstand churches with clouds in each generation, while still seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus declared that this would be the case when He was questioned in the court of Caiaphas. He said to the high priest, 'You will see the Son of Man *sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.*' Mar 14:62.

When the Father takes His seat at the beginning of the time of the end, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne and will come with the clouds of heaven to be presented before the Ancient of Days. Dan 7:13. At that time, He will move, with His entire administration, to the centre of the Father's throne. When the first seal is opened, the season of Christ's coming with clouds *to the world* will begin. Rev 1:7. Rev 6:1-2. The opening of the first seal will not be the physical return of Christ. Rather, Jesus Christ will be coming with clouds to the world as the gospel of the kingdom is preached, by His witnesses, as *a testimony in all nations.* Mat 24:14.

Jesus highlighted the importance of understanding the difference between this season of His coming with clouds, and His physical second coming on the day of resurrection. He warned the disciples, concerning the time of the end, 'If anyone says to you, "Behold, here is the Christ" or "Behold, He is there"; do not believe him, for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show great signs and wonders, so as to

mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So if they say to you, "Behold, He is in the wilderness", do not go out, or "Behold, He is in the inner rooms" do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.' Mat 24:23-27.

The climax of the season of Christ's coming with clouds during the opening of the seals will happen at the opening of the sixth seal. Jesus described this climax to His disciples by saying, 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.' Mat 24:29-30. The tribes who mourn in the time of the end will include one-third of the Jewish nation, along with a great multitude from every tribe, nation, people and tongue. Rev 1:7.

## The Day of Pentecost

Following the ascension of Jesus Christ from the Mount of Olives, the next major waypoint that is recorded in the book of Acts is the Day of Pentecost. Act 2:1. The first manifestation of the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, was seen on the Day of Pentecost. Rev 21:2. We know that this is the case, because the foundations of the wall of the city are the twelve apostles of the Lamb. We read in the book of Revelation, 'Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb'. Rev 21:14.

Including the twelve apostles, one hundred and twenty disciples were gathered in the upper room when the Lord poured out the anointing of the sevenfold Spirit of God upon them on the Day of Pentecost. Act 1:15,2:1. The anointing of the sevenfold Spirit of God, through the Holy Spirit, was the supply of oil that was necessary for the disciples to minister, collectively, as the first lampstand church. It is recorded that 'divided tongues, as of fire' rested upon each of the one hundred and twenty disciples. Act 2:3.

A lampstand church is a temple, or dwelling place, for the Holy Spirit. The purpose of a lampstand church is to manifest, before all men, the sevenfold Spirit of God, which is the light of the fellowship of Yahweh. Rev 4:5. Isa 11:1-2. As the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in foreign languages as the Spirit gave them utterance.



Act 2:4. They proclaimed 'the wonderful works of God' to the diverse crowd who had gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost. Act 2:11.

The apostle Peter then stood up, with the other eleven apostles, to proclaim, from the prophetic Scriptures, the gospel of sonship to the crowd. Act 2:14. All of those who received the word of Peter were 'cut to the heart' as they turned to look upon Jesus Christ whom they had pierced. Act 2:37. On the Day of Pentecost, three thousand people were born as sons of God, baptised into Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Act 2:41. Significantly, all of those believers were immediately built, by the Father, into the walls of the New Jerusalem upon the foundation of Christ and the twelve apostles. Act 2:42-47.

We read in the book of Revelation that the length of each wall of the New Jerusalem is 12 000 furlongs. Rev 21:16. This is a remarkable point. On the Day of Pentecost, the area that was included within the walls of the New Jerusalem was *already greater* than any of the world kingdoms that had preceded it. The crowd who had gathered in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost included people from all six world kingdoms, including the city of Rome, which was the capital of the then present world kingdom. Act 2:8-11. Since the Day of Pentecost, the walls of the New Jerusalem have continued to expand in all four directions to the ends of the earth!

The apostle John also saw that the finished height of the walls will be 144 cubits. Rev 21:17. This brings us to an important point. Since the Day of Pentecost, the walls and gates of the New Jerusalem have been built according to 'the order of seventy-two'. The walls will be built to full height when the 144 000 believers are sealed by Christ, just prior to the opening of the seals in the time of the end. Rev 7:1-8. The 144 000, who comprise the finished wall of the New Jerusalem, are the firstfruits who will gather in the fullness of the great multitude which no man can number. Rev 7:9. The height of the city that describes the fullness of the great multitude is not 144 cubits - it is 12 000 furlongs! Rev 21:16.

### The order of seventy-two

During His earthly ministry, Jesus established the order of seventy-two, for the church age. We recall that Jesus first sent the twelve disciples out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luk 9:2. He gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure the diseases caused by unclean spirits. Luk 9:1. The Gospel of Luke recorded that Jesus then sent out *seventy-two* other disciples. He sent them two by two before His face, into every city where He was about to go. Luk 10:1.

It is interesting that this account was recorded only in the Gospel of Luke. We know that Luke wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts in fellowship with, and on behalf of, the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul was sent by Christ in the same mode as the seventy-two disciples.

In relation to the number of the disciples, some Greek manuscripts recorded that Jesus sent seventy disciples, while other Greek manuscripts reported that He sent seventy-two disciples. The older manuscripts support that it was seventy-two. The modern translators have generally favoured the number seventy, although it is often noted in the margin that the alternative translation is seventy-two. It is understandable why many translators favour the number seventy. However, the significance of it being seventy-two disciples becomes clear as soon as we recognise that it is one-half of 144. That is, the order of 144 in the time of the end is *a double portion* of the order of seventy-two for the church age.

Luke recorded that the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' Luk 10:17. Significantly, Jesus responded to their testimony by saying, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Luk 10:18. This is a most remarkable statement. In the first case, Jesus was speaking about the ministry of the seventy-two at that time. As they ministered in weakness, and in obedience, they were overcoming Satan in relation to finding worthy houses. Notably, it was only after sending the seventy-two to look for worthy houses that Jesus came to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Luk 10:38-42.

However, when Jesus said, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven', he was also referring to the ministry of the order of seventy-two *for the entire church age*. Significantly, when Jesus commissioned the seventy-two disciples for *a second time*, he was giving authority to the order of seventy-two, as a remnant, to overcome Satan in each generation. Jesus said to them, 'Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' Luk 10:20.

### **The appointment of the seven deacons**

The first example of the ministry of the order of seventy-two in the church age was the appointment of the seven deacons. After the Day of Pentecost, the early church in Jerusalem continued to grow quickly. A complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews. The Hellenists

were the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. The nature of the complaint was that their widows were being overlooked in relation to the daily food distribution. Act 6:1.

The twelve apostles called the congregation together and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' Act 6:3-4.

The seven deacons were recommended by the congregation, and then appointed by the twelve apostles, to the work of serving tables. This means that they were appointed to oversee the entire coordination of the daily *agape* fellowship of the church in Jerusalem. Act 2:42,46. Act 4:34-35. The *agape* fellowship of the church included the practical care of the congregation.

The seven deacons were appointed by the apostles to a specific work. In the context of this work, it became clear that some of the deacons had also received ascension gift grace from Christ. For example, Philip had evidently received the grace to be an evangelist. The evangelistic ministry of Philip initiated a great revival in the region of Samaria. Act 8:1-8. Philip also baptised the government official who had charge over the entire treasury of the nation of Ethiopia. Later, as recorded in the book of Acts, Luke called him 'Philip the evangelist'. Act 21:8.

In a similar way, it is evident that Stephen had also received ascension gift grace from Christ. Soon after the seven deacons were appointed, we read that 'Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people'. Act 6:8. It appears that Stephen had received grace from Christ as an ascension gift prophet. Interestingly, he immediately encountered opposition from 'the Synagogue of the Freedmen'. Act 6:9. This most likely included those Jews who had formerly been taken captive by the Romans, and were then allowed to return to Jerusalem.

This group of Jews were zealous for the Law and for their national customs and traditions. When they were unable to cope with the spiritual wisdom of Stephen, they dragged him away and made false accusations about him before the Jewish council. Act 6:10-12. They accused him of preaching that Jesus would destroy the temple and would alter the Jewish customs. Act 6:13-14. We recall that the destruction of the temple was the primary accusation that was also made about Christ before the

same council. Mat 26:61. The Jews could not accept that Jesus Christ was the chief Cornerstone of a new temple.

### Stephen's sermon

Luke recorded that the Jewish council saw the face of Stephen to be 'like the face of an angel'. Act 6:15. Indeed, he had been sent as a messenger of Christ to them. When Stephen was asked by the high priest to speak, he began his response by saying, 'Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, "Leave your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you".' Act 7:3.

Stephen began with the Lord's word to Abraham because the gospel of sonship for all nations, including the Gentiles, was preached to Abraham. Gal 3:8. His aim was to show the unchanging nature of God's covenant purpose. The same gospel was proclaimed by the prophets of old, and has been recorded in the prophetic Scriptures. Stephen then used the prophetic Scriptures to preach the gospel of sonship in his day. Likewise, we should be using the prophetic Scriptures to preach the gospel of sonship in our day.

The sermon of Stephen is one of the most profound and impacting sermons that is recorded in the New Testament. It is far more than a selective record of Jewish history. Stephen highlighted the principle of 'the first and the second time'. He particularly focused on the first and the second time for Abraham, for Joseph, and for Moses. He was building toward the point that there is a second time for the Jews who turn to Christ in repentance and become part of the true Israel of God in the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the true temple that belongs to God. Eph 2:19-22. Rev 7:15.

The first and the second time is a major principle in the Scriptures. We observe that the first time includes the *promise* of the inheritance, but the inheritance is not *received* until the second time. Gen 22:15. The key point for every believer is that the cross of Christ stands between the first and the second time. That is, the promised inheritance is received only *through overcoming* by participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. The inheritance that is received in the second time is always the outcome of overcoming by resurrection life.

### *Abraham, Joseph, Moses*

Stephen began his sermon by saying that the God of glory appeared to Abram while he was still in Mesopotamia, and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' Act 7:3. Stephen highlighted the fact that Abram received the word of promise in relation to the land, but that he did not receive it as an inheritance *in the first time*. Act 7:5. Rather, the Lord said that He would give the land to his descendants as an inheritance, *in the second time*, after they had spent 400 years in bondage in a foreign land. Act 7:6-7.

Further to this, Stephen also identified 'the second time' for Abraham, personally, in relation to the promised seed. He proclaimed, 'Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac.' Act 7:8. The covenant of circumcision was given to Abraham after the Lord said to him, 'Walk before Me, and be blameless.' Gen 17:1. The covenant was the sign that Abraham had been joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, by faith. Rom 4:11. In the fellowship of Christ's offering, Abraham and Sarah received a remnant of the Spirit in their marriage, and the grace of resurrection life to bring forth Isaac as the promised seed. Rom 4:19-20.

Stephen then identified the first and the second time for Joseph. We know that Joseph was a type of Christ as the suffering Messiah. When he was a young man, Joseph was left to die in a pit and was then sold into slavery by his brothers. Gen 37:20-36. He was rejected by his brothers, and then suffered unjustly in Egypt. The psalmist explained, concerning Joseph, that 'until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him'. Psa 105:19. In the second time, the Lord raised him up and made him the ruler over the entire land of Egypt, including the house of the Pharaoh. Act 7:10. Psa 105:20-21.

Notably, Stephen declared, 'And *the second time*, Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh.' Act 7:13. We know that this happened during the brothers' second visit to Egypt. However, more significantly, Joseph was made known to his brothers during the second time of his life and ministry, when he had been made the ruler over all Egypt. Having been rejected by his brothers the first time, he was now recognised by his brothers, in the season of the second time, as the one who had been sent ahead of them by God to preserve and save their lives. Gen 45:5-7.

Stephen also identified the same principle of the first and the second time in the life of Moses. After growing up in the house of Pharaoh,

Moses was carnally provoked to defend an Israelite by killing an Egyptian. He presumed that 'his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand'. Act 7:25. Moses subsequently fled Egypt and dwelt in the wilderness for forty years. The Lord then initiated the second time for Moses when He spoke to him from the burning bush and sent him back to Egypt to deliver the nation of Israel from their bondage. Exo 3.

Significantly, when the Lord revealed His name to Moses as 'Yahweh-Elohim', from the burning bush, He also said, 'I am the God of your fathers - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Act 7:32. The gospel that was revealed to Moses was the same gospel that was revealed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Stephen summarised the principle of the first and the second time, in relation to Moses, by saying, 'This Moses whom they rejected, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?" is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.' Act 7:35.

### *The prophecy of Moses*

During this remarkable sermon, Stephen also addressed the accusation that had been brought against him by the Jewish council. We recall that Stephen had been accused of undermining Moses, the Law, and the temple. Act 6:11,13-14. In relation to Moses and the Law, Stephen noted that Moses led the people out of Egypt with great wonders and signs, and then received the Law, as 'the living oracles', on Mount Sinai. He highlighted to the council the truth that the *same Moses* who gave to them the Law, also prophesied that God would raise up Jesus Christ – and they needed to listen to Him! Stephen declared, 'This is *that Moses* who said to the children of Israel, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear".' Act 7:37.

We note that Stephen was making the same point as the apostle Peter made when he preached to the men of Israel in Solomon's Porch, after healing the lame man. Peter declared in that sermon, 'Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people". Yes, and *all the prophets*, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your Seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed". To you first, God, having *raised up His Servant*

*Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities.’ Act 3:22-26.*

### *A temple not made with hands*

In his sermon, Stephen also addressed the subject of the temple. He recalled that the nation of Israel had ‘the tabernacle of witness’ in the wilderness. Act 7:44. The tabernacle was brought into the promised land by Joshua. Many years later, King David pitched a tent for the ark of the covenant, on Mount Zion. Stephen highlighted the reality that David had found grace in the sight of God and had asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. Act 7:46. It is significant that David pitched his tabernacle on Mount Zion in faith for a dwelling place for the God of Jacob; that is, the God of all the elect. The mountain of the Lord’s house is the house of the God of Jacob. Isa 2:2-3.

We know that Solomon did build a physical temple for God. However, when he dedicated the temple, Solomon said, before all the assembly of Israel, ‘Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. How much less this temple which I have built.’ 1Ki 8:27. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Stephen proclaimed, ‘The Most High God does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me?” says the Lord, “Or where is the place of My rest? Has my hand not made all things?” ’ Act 7:49-50. Isa 66:1-2.

Stephen highlighted this important point because, like the twelve apostles, he was proclaiming Jesus Christ to be the Cornerstone of the true temple which belongs to the Father. The true temple is the body of Christ. The Father is the Builder of the true temple that is ‘made without hands’. When we come to Christ, as sons of God, the Father is building us together as living stones in the true temple. 1Pe 2:5. We are being ‘built together for a dwelling place of God [the Father] in the Spirit’. Eph 2:22. In the context of the true temple, Jesus Christ is making us to be a kingdom, and to be priests, to His God and Father. Rev 1:6.

Jesus Christ is the chosen and precious Cornerstone, the Foundation Stone, and the Capstone of the true temple. Isa 8:13-14. Isa 28:16. However, for the leaders in the Jewish council, who were listening to Stephen, Jesus Christ was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. The apostle Peter summarised this principle by saying, ‘Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious, but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief Cornerstone” and

“a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence”. They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.’ 1Pe 2:7-8.

Stephen boldly proclaimed that, even though the Jews professed to be followers of Moses and keepers of the Law, they, like their fathers, had rejected Moses and had not kept the Law. Rather than obeying Moses, they were idolaters who rejoiced in the work of their own hands, and worshipped demons. Act 7:39-43. Stephen concluded by saying, ‘You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you have received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.’ Act 7:51-53.

### Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God

When Stephen said this to the council, they were cut to the heart by the Holy Spirit. However, instead of turning to meet Christ eye to eye, they hardened their hearts by resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They began to gnash their teeth at him. Act 7:54. Rather than focusing on their response and fearing for his life, Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit, and he gazed into heaven. He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Act 7:55. When Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, we know that He *sat down* at the Father’s right hand. Psa 110:1. So why did Stephen see Christ *standing* at the right hand of God?

This was a profound revelation. In the first case, Stephen saw Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God because he had fully joined the fellowship of Christ’s finished work for him, and he was personally overcoming Satan in the heavenly places. In the second case, Stephen was also looking into the future, under the anointing of the Spirit of God, to the beginning of the time of the end. He was looking at the time when Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne, where He is presently seated at the right hand of God, and will then move His entire administration to the centre of the Father’s throne. The prophet Daniel also described this time by saying, ‘Behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.’ Dan 7:13.

As we have already considered, ‘the clouds of heaven’ are the witnesses of Christ who belong to His administration in the heavenly places. A witness of Christ is a son of God who has been raised to sit with Christ in the heavenly places and is now revealing Him, by the Spirit of God, as a



member of His body on the earth. Furthermore, in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, a witness of Christ is overcoming the power of Satan in the heavenly places. They are overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their life to the death. Rev 12:11.

This brings us to an important point. When Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, the Father said to Him, 'Sit at My right hand, *until I make Your enemies* a footstool for Your feet.' Psa 110:1. An obvious implication of this statement is that Christ will only stand up from His throne to move into the centre of the Father's throne, once Satan has been overcome in the heavenly places. We know that Jesus Christ has already overcome Satan on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. However, He is now *waiting* at the Father's right hand until Satan is also overcome, in the heavenly places, by the overcomers in the church. Heb 10:12-13.

The Father's focus during the church age is to build sons of God into the fellowship of Christ's body as a living temple that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Likewise, the Father's work is to plant sons of God into the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings so that they become *overcomers*. 1Co 12:18. This explains how the Father is making the enemies of Christ to be a footstool for His feet. He is doing it through the overcomers in the church. The primary enemies of Christ include Satan, the messengers of Satan, and all those who belong to the synagogue of Satan. Rev 2:9. Rev 3:9.

## A footstool for Christ's feet

Significantly, the Father said that He will make the enemies of Christ to be *a footstool* for His feet. What does this mean from a scriptural perspective? In the broadest sense, the whole earth is described as being the Lord's footstool. Isa 66:1. In the first case, the enemies of Christ are made to be a footstool for Christ's feet when they are cast from the heavenly places to the earth. The book of Revelation recorded that once Satan has been overcome, he will be cast out of heaven to the earth, and then his head will be crushed as he is trampled under the feet of Christ and the church, in the time of the end. Rev 12:7-9. Rom 16:20.

There is also another more specific interpretation of 'the Lord's footstool'. The Lord's footstool is also *the altar in the true temple*. King David declared, 'Let us go into His tabernacle; let us *worship at His footstool*.' Psa 132:7. The altar in the true tabernacle is the place of worship. It is also the place of judgement and atonement. We also read in

the psalms, 'Exalt the Lord our God, and *worship at His footstool* - He is holy. Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; they called upon the Lord, and He answered them ... You answered them, O Lord our God; *You were to them God-Who-Forgives, though You took vengeance on their deeds.* Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.' Psa 99:5-9.

The period of birth pains that precedes the time of the end will be a time of judgement in the Lord's house. Jesus Christ, who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished brass, will take vengeance upon the deeds of the synagogue of Satan within the seven lampstand churches. During this season of judgement, there will also be an overcoming remnant within the seven lampstand churches, who are overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives to the death. Rev 12:11. Like the presbytery in Philadelphia, the overcoming remnant will keep the word of Christ's perseverance all the way to the time of the end, when the Father takes His seat. Rev 3:10.

Stephen was one of the firstfruits of this overcoming remnant. He personally overcame Satan in his generation, and he also looked forward, in the Spirit, to the time when the remnant within lampstand churches will fully overcome Satan in the end of the age. When His enemies have been made to be a footstool for His feet, Jesus Christ will stand up at the right hand of God, and will then move His entire administration into the centre of the Father's throne. Rev 5:6. Rev 7:17. Remembering that the Lord's footstool is the place of worship, Jesus identified the beginning of this major transition when He said to the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie - indeed I will make them come and *worship before your feet*, and to know that I have loved you.' Rev 3:9.

### The prayer of Stephen

As we have considered, Stephen overcame Satan, in his generation, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of his testimony, and by not loving his life to the death. Rev 12:11. In prayer, he asked the Lord to receive his spirit. He also fell on his knees and prayed for those who were stoning him, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them!' Act 7:60. Stephen received the grace to pray in this manner because he was joined to the fellowship of Christ's crucifixion. When the soldiers drove the nails through the hands and feet of Jesus, He prayed for us, and on our behalf, by saying,

'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'  
Luk 23:34.

The prayer of Stephen illustrates our threefold connection to Christ, who is 'the anchor of our soul' within the veil. Heb 6:19. He is seated in the mercy seat of the true tabernacle. The mercy seat is also the throne of grace. The threefold chord is the testimony of Christ that is being progressively confirmed in us as those who are overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimony, and by not loving our lives to the death. 1Co 1:6.

Stephen washed his priestly garments in the blood of the Lamb as he participated in the offering of Christ. Furthermore, the works that belonged to Stephen's sonship and priesthood were enabled as he was anointed with the oil of the Spirit. This anointing upon his head enabled him to see Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. The oil also flowed onto his garments, enabling his priesthood. He was serving as a priest in the Father's temple.

Ministering as a priest, Stephen knelt before Christ in prayer, asking Him to forgive those who were stoning him to death. After Stephen prayed in this manner, he fell asleep as the Lord received his spirit by calling him up out of his body. Act 7:59-60. In this way, the stone that finally crushed his head did not take his life from him. His life ended in the fellowship of Christ's prayer.

## From Stephen to Paul

Significantly, as Stephen prayed and laid down his life in the fellowship of Christ's offering, Satan was cast from the heavenly places, and his power over the Gentile nations was broken. Specifically, the prayer of Stephen opened the door for the conversion of Saul. We know that Luke wrote the book of Acts on behalf of Paul. Paul ensured that Luke recorded an important detail about the death of Stephen. We read that all of the witnesses who were responsible for the stoning of Stephen laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. Act 7:58.

Saul was in hearty agreement with the death of Stephen. Having been cast from heaven, it appears that Satan then personally possessed Saul. The book of Acts recorded that '*from that day* a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles'. Act 8:1. We also read that 'Saul *began ravaging the church*, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women' and putting them into prison. Act 8:3.

Manifesting the murderous spirit of Satan himself, Saul breathed threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. Act 9:1.

Saul was not in Jerusalem to see the crucifixion of Jesus and to look upon Him whom he had pierced on that day. However, Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified before the eyes of Saul when he watched the stoning of Stephen, who died as a witness of Christ. Through the martyrdom of Stephen, the Lord began to lay hold of Saul by his heart. The offering of Stephen overcame and disempowered Satan in relation to Paul's ministry. Stephen's prayer was answered when Paul was converted and began his ministry to the Gentiles.

The conversion of Paul was also the answer to Rachel's prayer concerning the loss of her children. He was 'the reward' for her travail. Jer 31:16. We recall that Rachel died as the result of giving birth to Benjamin. Paul belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. Php 3:5. Rom 11:1. Notably, Jacob prophesied concerning Benjamin that he was '*a ravenous wolf*; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil'. Gen 49:27. This prophetic statement concerning the tribe of Benjamin was certainly an accurate description of Saul's carnal nature. As we have already considered, following the death of Stephen, Saul *ravaged the church* as he went from house to house, dragging off men and women and putting them in prison. Act 8:3.

Following his conversion, Paul was no longer a ravenous wolf. He became an ascension gift messenger in the right hand of Christ. Significantly, the prophetic meaning of the name Benjamin is 'son of my right hand'. Gen 35:18. As the answer to Rachel's prayer, the Lord appointed Paul, from the tribe of Benjamin, to recover the tribe of Ephraim as the fullness of the nations. We recall that the ten northern tribes of Israel, under the leadership of the tribe of Ephraim, have been scattered among all Gentile nations. Paul testified that the Lord had made him to be a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Act 13:47.

We have made the point that it was the priestly ministry of Stephen that disempowered Satan in relation to the ministry of the apostle Paul. In turn, it was the priestly ministry of Paul that disempowered Satan in relation to the remnant of Ephraim who have been scattered among the nations. Paul ministered the gospel of God to the Gentiles as a priest in the Father's temple. He did this as a messenger in the right hand of Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God. The sufferings of Paul, as a witness of Christ, were for the sake of gathering a remnant from among the Gentile nations into lampstand churches. Col 1:24.

## The tabernacle of David

At the end of Paul's first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. They gathered the church together and reported that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. Act 14:27. Some time later, a group of men came from Judea to Antioch, and began to teach the believers that, in order to be saved, they needed to be circumcised according to the custom of Moses. Act 15:1. It is recorded in the Scriptures that Paul and Barnabas had a major dispute with this group of Judaisers concerning this matter. It was determined that Paul and Barnabas should travel to Jerusalem to discuss the issue with the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church.

The sect of the Pharisees within the church of Jerusalem believed that it was necessary to be circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses. There was much dispute when the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. Act 15:6-7. However, the apostle Peter stood up among them all and proclaimed, 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and *made no distinction between us and them*, purifying their hearts by faith ... we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved *in the same manner as they.*' Act 15:7-12.

The apostle Peter proclaimed that there is no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles in the body of Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles are saved by hearing the word of the gospel, believing, and then receiving the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. The statement of Peter's faith before the apostles and elders laid the foundation for Paul and Barnabas to share their testimony. They declared how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. Act 15:12.

When Paul and Barnabas had finished speaking, James declared that this was the beginning of the restoration of the tabernacle of David. He quoted the prophetic Scriptures from the book of Amos by saying, ' "After this I will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; *so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles* who are called by My name", says the Lord who does all these things.' Act 15:16-17. Amo 9:11.

The tabernacle of David comprises all twelve tribes of the true Israel of God. Rom 9:6. Gal 6:15-16. The true Israel of God includes the remnant of

the ten northern tribes who have been scattered among the Gentile nations. The Lord declared through the prophet Amos, concerning the ten northern tribes, 'For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.' Amo 9:9.

Prior to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD70, the Jewish believers were also scattered among the Gentiles, in lampstand churches. For this reason, the apostle Peter addressed his first letter to 'the elect sojourners of the dispersion'. 1Pe 1:1. Likewise, the apostle James wrote his letter to all twelve tribes of Israel who were scattered abroad. Jas 1:1. The elect will be scattered abroad in lampstand churches until the time of the end.

We have considered that Stephen overcame Satan in relation to the conversion of Paul, and Paul overcome Satan in relation to the salvation of a remnant in lampstand churches, for the church age. In the same way, the overcoming remnant in lampstand churches, who belong to the last generation, will overcome Satan in relation to the harvest that belongs to the end of the age. The harvest in the end of the age will include a great multitude from every tribe, nation, people and tongue.

## Chapter 2

# Paul's gospel from Hosea

The Lord appointed the apostle Paul to be a light to the Gentiles. Act 13:47. He was sent by the Lord to the Gentiles to preach the gospel of sonship and to establish lampstand churches. Paul's letter to the Romans was written at the conclusion of his third missionary journey. It is the most systematic of all Paul's letters to the Gentiles.

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul proclaimed the mystery of God from the prophetic Scriptures. 'The mystery of God' is the gospel of sonship. Col 1:27. Eph 6:19. It is also the mystery of Jews and Gentiles united in the one body of Christ. Eph 2:11-22. Eph 3:1-7. When we consider Paul's introduction and conclusion to his letter to the Romans, we observe the emphasis that he placed upon the gospel that is contained 'in the prophetic Scriptures'.

For example, Paul began his letter by saying, 'Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before *through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures*, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' Rom 1:1-4.

Paul concluded his letter by saying, 'Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and *by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations*, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith - to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.' Rom 16:25-27.

Paul declared that the prophets proclaimed the gospel of God in the holy Scriptures. On this basis, Paul himself proclaimed the gospel of God, which is the gospel of sonship, using the prophetic Scriptures. He particularly used the Scriptures that were written by the prophet Isaiah and the prophet Hosea. In this chapter, we will focus on the gospel that is contained in the first three chapters of the book of Hosea.

### The prophecy of Hosea

Paul specifically quoted from the book of Hosea concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles in the kingdom of God. We read, 'As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people', there they shall be called sons of the living God".' Rom 9:25-26.

It is important to recognise that Paul did not simply use an isolated quote to support his point. He used this quote to direct our attention to the central proposition that is contained in the entire book of Hosea. The book of Hosea is a significant prophetic book. In many ways, it is a condensed summary of the book of Isaiah.

The prophet Hosea certainly had a unique participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. At the beginning of Hosea's ministry, the Lord asked him to marry a harlot. Hosea's relationship with his wife then became a type of the Lord's relationship with the nation of Israel. The Lord told Hosea that the entire nation had committed great harlotry. Hos 1:2.

The name of Hosea's wife was Gomer. The name Gomer means 'completion'. It means 'to bring to a complete end'. Remembering that Hosea's marriage was typical of the Lord's relationship with the house of Israel, this was a fitting name for Hosea's wife. The Lord did bring the whole house of Israel to *a complete end* because of their idolatry and unfaithfulness. However, because 'the complete end' was in the cross, the



prophet Isaiah declared that it would 'overflow with righteousness'. Isa 10:22.

In the same way that Gomer represents the house of Israel as an unfaithful harlot, Gomer's children represent all the individuals and families who had been brought forth and nurtured by Israel's motherhood. The Lord instructed Hosea to give each of Gomer's children a particular name. The name of each child demonstrated the nature of the Lord's relationship with the people who had rejected Him.

### *Jezreel*

When Gomer bore their first son, the Lord instructed Hosea to call his name Jezreel. The name Jezreel means 'God scatters' or 'God sows'. The Lord explained the reason for this name by saying to Hosea, 'Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.' Hos 1:4-5. In the symbolism of the weapon that belongs to an archer in the army, 'the bow of Israel' refers to its capacity to overcome, or conquer, its enemies.

It will be helpful to briefly consider some background to this prophetic statement concerning the Lord's judgement in the Valley of Jezreel. The Valley of Jezreel was the plain that was situated between Jezreel and Megiddo. It was part of the territory that had been given to the tribe of Ephraim as their inheritance, when the nation of Israel entered the promised land. The Valley of Jezreel became an important place for the nation of Israel.

In the first case, the Valley of Jezreel was the place where the strength of the bow of Israel was demonstrated. It was the place where the Lord sovereignly destroyed the vast army of the Midianites before Gideon and his three hundred men. Notably, in this instance, the Lord ensured that the strength of the bow of Israel was demonstrated in weakness. We recall that, for this reason, the Lord kept reducing the size of Gideon's army. Furthermore, his army was not equipped with bows and arrows, or any natural weaponry. The remnant army in that day was equipped with trumpets and lamps. Jdg 7:19-21.

Much later in the history of the nation of Israel, the Valley of Jezreel changed from being a place of miraculous deliverance to being the place of God's sovereign judgement upon them. The city of Jezreel, which was

at one end of the valley, was the place where King Ahab had his royal palace. The Scriptures recorded that 'Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all of the kings of Israel who were before him'. 1Ki 16:33. Ahab's wife was Jezebel. She was a worshipper of Baal and known to be a sorcerer. 2Ki 9:22. In the days of Elijah, Jezebel persecuted and killed many of the prophets of the Lord.

Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, which was next to his royal palace in Jezreel, and offered to purchase it from him. However, Naboth was unwilling to sell it to the king because it was the inheritance that his family had received in the promised land. Seeing how upset Ahab had become because he was not able to have this vineyard, Jezebel arranged for Naboth to be falsely accused by worthless men, and then murdered. She then instructed her husband to go and take possession of the vineyard. 1Ki 21:7-16.

### *The bloodshed of Jezreel*

In response to this great sin, the Lord sent Elijah the prophet to say to Ahab, 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.' 1Ki 21:19. Furthermore, the Lord said, concerning Ahab's wife, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' 1Ki 21:23. The word of the Lord concerning Ahab was fulfilled after he was killed by a random arrow in a battle with the Syrians. His blood ran from the wound and onto the floor of his chariot. When the chariot was washed by a pool, the dogs licked up the blood. 1Ki 22:38.

The word of the Lord concerning Jezebel, and the rest of Ahab's household, was fulfilled after Jehu was appointed by the Lord to be the king of Israel in the place of Ahab's son. Jehu had previously served in the army of Ahab and had become a commander in the army of his son, Joram. Under the instruction of Elisha, the young prophet who anointed Jehu said to him, 'You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel.' 2Ki 9:7.

Jehu shot King Joram, the son of Ahab, straight through his heart, with an arrow. He then cast his body into the field that had belonged to Naboth. 2Ki 9:24-26. Following this, he commanded that Jezebel be thrown out of her window. He trampled her body under the feet of his horse, and then went inside to eat and drink. When he later asked for her body to be buried, the servants discovered that most of her body had already been eaten by wild dogs. This event was the direct fulfilment of

the word of Elijah concerning the death of Jezebel. 2Ki 9:30-37. After the death of Jezebel, King Jehu also organised the slaughter of Ahab's seventy sons. 2Ki 10:6-7. All of this bloodshed occurred in Jezreel, at the hand of Jehu.

With this background in view, we will return to the Lord's word to Hosea. We recall that the Lord said to him, 'In a little while, I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.' Hos 1:4. Jehu had been an instrument of judgement in the Lord's hand. The Lord commended him for his obedience. The reward for his obedience was that his sons would sit on the throne of Israel for four generations. 2Ki 10:30. Nevertheless, Jehu was not a righteous king. Even though he killed all the prophets of Baal at that time, he did not turn away from the idolatry of Jeroboam, who had placed the golden calf in Bethel and the golden calf in Dan. 2Ki 10:31.

Notably, in the days of Jehu, the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel. 2Ki 10:32. All of Jehu's sons did evil in the sight of the Lord. Hosea prophesied during the reign of Jehu's great-grandson. The Lord avenged the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, in the fourth generation of his sons. Jehu's great-great-grandson reigned for only six months before he was openly assassinated before all the people. 2Ki 15:10. When the Lord judged the house of Jehu, He broke the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel. Approximately thirty years after the end of the house of Jehu, the Lord brought an end to the whole kingdom of Israel. 2Ki 17:7-23. The ten northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians and were scattered among the Gentiles.

We are reminded that the name Jezreel means 'God scatters'. The ten northern tribes of Israel, under the leadership of Ephraim, were scattered by the Assyrians. This was the sovereign judgement of God upon them. From that day, they have been assimilated among the Gentile nations of the world. Any genetic connection to Abraham has been completely lost. It is not possible to trace the lineage of any modern nation, or group of people, to the ten lost tribes of Israel. Likewise, the ten northern tribes of Israel will never be regathered as a definable national group of people.

### *Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi*

The Lord further illustrated the nature of His judgement upon the house of Israel when He named Gomer's next two children. When Gomer bore a daughter, the Lord said to Hosea, 'Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them

away.’ Hos 1:6. The name Lo-Ruhamah means ‘no mercy’. Until this time, the Lord had continued to extend mercy to the house of Israel because of the covenant that He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 2Ki 13:23. Despite their idolatry, He had not yet destroyed them or cast them away from His presence. However, through the naming of Gomer’s second child, the Lord proclaimed that this mercy had come to an end.

When Gomer bore another son, the Lord said to Hosea, ‘Call his name Lo-Ammi, for you are not My people, and I will not be your God.’ Hos 1:9. The name Lo-Ammi means ‘not My people’. This means that the northern kingdom of Israel had completely lost the blessing of adoption. There were no longer any believing families within the house of Israel who were walking in the faith of their father, Abraham. Rather, all of the people served Baal and practised sorcery. They had *sold themselves* to do evil in the sight of the Lord. 2Ki 17:17. The time had now come for the Lord to ‘remove them from His sight’. 2Ki 17:18,20,23. Every child in the house of Israel, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, had become no different from the unblessed heathen. Hos 2:4. Hos 4:6. Hos 5:7. Hos 9:12.

### In the place where it was said

We soberly recognise the comprehensive nature of the sovereign judgement that was proclaimed upon the house of Israel. However, remarkably, the prophet Hosea then continued, ‘Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, “You are not My people”, there it shall be said to them, “You are sons of the living God”.’ Hos 1:10.

The first and foremost application of ‘the place’ in this prophetic statement is *the cross of Christ*. Significantly, when the house of Israel was *scattered* by the Assyrians among the nations of the world, they were also *sown* into the judgement of the cross. The cross is the full revelation of God’s mercy and His judgement. It is the place of blessing and cursing, and of remembrance and forgetfulness. On His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, Jesus Christ gathered up the whole human race and took us out into the sea of God’s forgetfulness. However, at the same time, He brought us back from the land of forgetfulness, by the power of His resurrection life, to be remembered by God as His sons.

Speaking about the place of judgement where Christ suffered the full wrath of God upon our sin and uncleanness, the psalmist asked the question, ‘Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your

faithfulness *in the place of destruction*? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

Psa 88:11-12. The cross is the place where God proclaimed to the whole human race, in the offering of Christ, 'You are not My people.' In this same place of judgement, He also proclaimed to every person who is willing to repent and to lay hold of His mercy, in the fellowship of Christ's offering, 'You are sons of the living God.'

The second application of 'the place' in this prophetic statement is *in all nations*. That is, the house of Israel was scattered among the Gentiles in all nations. The remnant of Ephraim is being recovered, as part of the Gentiles, in the fellowship of lampstand churches in all nations. This has been true for the whole church age. Writing to the elect who had been scattered abroad in lampstand churches, the apostle Peter declared that we are 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people ... who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy'.  
1Pe 2:9-10.

### Judgement overflowing with righteousness

The prophet Hosea concluded his first summary of the gospel by saying, 'Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel! Say to your brethren, "My people", and to your sisters "Mercy is shown".' Hos 1:11-2:1. In these summary verses, Hosea identified that the threefold judgement of God upon the house of Israel would overflow with righteousness through the offering of Christ on the cross. When the judgement of God overflowed with righteousness, through the offering of Christ, the meaning of the names given to Hosea's three children were reversed.

The name Jezreel, which means 'God scatters', was reversed when God *gathered together* both Jews and Gentiles in His physical body through His offering on the cross. Eph 2:14-18. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the true Israel of God would be brought forth from the wellsprings of Judah. Isa 48:1. This prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus Christ, who was born in the lineage of David, from the tribe of Judah. The true Israel of God is the 'one new man' that was created by Jesus Christ on the cross. Gal 6:15-16. The 'one new man' is the body of Christ, which includes both Jews and Gentiles.

Having removed the middle wall of separation, and united Jews and Gentiles in His physical body on the cross, Jesus Christ has become the 'one Head' of the true Israel of God. Hos 1:11. He is the Head of His many-membered body. The body of Christ is the true temple which belongs to God the Father. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul declared to both the Jews and the Gentiles, 'Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.' Eph 2:19.

Speaking to both the Jews and the Gentiles in the body of Christ, the Lord said, 'Say to your brethren "My people", and to your sisters "Mercy is shown".' Hos 2:1. We observe that the name Lo-Ruhamah, which means 'no mercy', was reversed by the command to say to one another, 'Mercy is shown'. The name Lo-Ammi, which means 'not My people', was reversed by the command to say to one another, 'My people'. When a dispute arose on this matter because of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, the apostle Peter boldly declared to his Jewish brethren that they needed to embrace the fulfilment of this prophecy in the early church. That is, the believing Jews needed to embrace the believing Gentiles as their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peter testified that he had personally witnessed the salvation of the Gentiles when he was sent by God to proclaim the gospel of sonship to Cornelius and his household. Act 15:7. Act 10. He recounted that the Holy Spirit had sovereignly fallen upon them, clearly demonstrating that God no longer made any distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles. Act 15:8-9. As we mentioned in our previous chapter, the apostle James also proclaimed that the gathering of the Jews and the Gentiles into the body of Christ was the restoration of the tabernacle of David. Act 15:14-18. 'The tabernacle of David' describes the dwelling place of all twelve tribes of the true Israel of God, on Mount Zion.

In summary, the Lord declared through Hosea, 'For great will be the day of Jezreel!' Hos 1:11. As we have considered, 'the day of Jezreel' was the day of Christ's offering. We know that the offering of Christ is a finished work. However, we also know that everything that Christ has already accomplished for us on the cross has not yet been revealed in our lives. Heb 10:14. The finished work of Christ is progressively revealed in our lives as we continue to embrace our unique participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Heb 5:9-10. Significantly, we observe the same principle in relation to the fulfilment of the day of Jezreel for the house of Israel among the Gentile nations.

Since the time of the early church, God's promise to the house of Israel has been fulfilled for *a remnant* of sons of God in the fellowship of lampstand churches. However, in the time of the end, there will be a further manifestation of *the day of Jezreel* when God's promise will be fulfilled for *the fullness of the Gentiles*. Once the Father has taken His seat, the evangelistic ministry of the remnant will gather a great multitude which no man can number, from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, into the kingdom of God. Rev 7:9. This will be the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy concerning Ephraim. Jacob prophesied that the seed of Ephraim would become the fullness of the nations. Gen 48:19.

### **Bring charges against your mother**

Having concluded his first summary, the prophet Hosea began another summary by saying, 'Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; for she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts.' Hos 2:2.

We can apply this statement to the house of Israel. Following the split between the house of Israel and the house of Judah, the ten northern tribes became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord. The Lord likened their unfaithfulness to harlotry. The prophet Jeremiah declared, 'Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.' Jer 3:6. The Lord continued to say, through Jeremiah, 'I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce.' Jer 3:8.

Significantly, we can also apply this statement to the unclean daughters of Zion during the church age. The church is the bride of Christ. When Jesus Christ addressed the seven lampstand churches, He was sanctifying and cleansing His wife with the washing of the water of the word. Eph 5:25-26. This initiative of Christ had a polarising impact within the seven lampstand churches. We know that there would have been a remnant in each lampstand church who heeded the word of Christ, embraced their participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, and became overcomers within their generation. Rev 2:7.

However, most of the believers in the lampstand churches rejected the word of Christ. They did not recognise the need to be washed by Him. They did not turn from their idolatry. Rather, they continued to embrace the various doctrines that were promoted by the synagogue of Satan.

In this manner, the daughters of Zion became like unfaithful harlots. The prophet Isaiah said, 'The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet.' Isa 3:16.

The prophet Hosea continued, 'For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has behaved shamefully. For she said, "I will go after my loves, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink".' Hos 2:5. Rather than remaining faithful to the Lord, the harlot church has chased her lovers. Her 'lovers' include the secular nations of the world. The unsanctified mixture between the church and the state is one of the symptoms of this harlotry.

The Lord declared that He will bring the harlot church to judgement. The corruption of the harlot church will be exposed before the eyes of the world. The Lord said, 'I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall deliver her from My hand. I will also cause her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, her sabbaths - all her appointed feasts.' Hos 2:10-11. The Lord's judgement upon the harlot church will include bringing all her sacramental, religious practices to an end. The Lord summarised His judgement by saying, 'I will punish her for the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her earrings and jewellery, and went after her lovers; but Me she forgot.' Hos 2:13.

When we recognise the Lord's judgement upon the idolatry and harlotry of the daughters of Zion, we understand why the Lord said to the people, 'Bring charges against your mother.' Hos 2:2. The charges will include the reality that the unclean daughters of Zion have replaced the gospel of sonship with doctrines of men; and they have replaced the fellowship of the *agape* meal with sacramental practices. The Lord was clear that a harlot church will not bring forth sons of God. He said, 'I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry.' Hos 2:4.

### The Lord's mercy – the Valley of Achor

In the context of this sovereign judgement, the Lord also promised that He will cleanse a remnant from among the daughters of Zion. Speaking about the harlot church, He said, 'I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her vineyards from there, and *the Valley of Achor as a door of hope*; she will sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.' Hos 2:15. The Lord will speak comfort to those who turn in



response to His rebuke and begin to mourn as they look upon Him whom they have pierced.

The expression of the Lord's comfort will be to give her the Valley of Achor as *a door of hope*. This is a significant statement. The Valley of Achor is the place where the nation of Israel sanctified themselves by dealing with the sin of Achan, who had hidden things in his tent which were devoted to destruction. The Scripture recorded that once this corruption was removed from among the people, 'the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger'. Jos 7:26. The place of God's judgement became the door of hope when the people removed the idolatry from their midst.

The nation of Israel had to deal with the idolatry in their midst before they could possess the promised land, in the same way in which Jacob needed to deal with the idolatry in his family before they could return with him to Bethel. Jacob said to his family while they lived in Shechem, 'Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.' Gen 35:3.

In a similar way, the overcoming remnant who belong to the true Israel of God will instruct the daughters of Zion to remove all idolatry from their midst so that they can be recovered and restored as part of the bride of Christ. Jesus declared to the presbytery in Philadelphia that He had set before them an open door. Rev 3:8. Notably, when the Lord places *an open door* before an overcoming presbytery to proclaim the gospel of sonship to the unclean daughters of Zion, He will also be placing *a door of hope* among the daughters of Zion, for those who are willing to turn from their idolatry. We will consider further the meaning of 'the open door', in our next chapter.

Referring to the restoration and cleansing of the daughters of Zion as we approach the time of the end, the Lord said, 'And it shall be in that day ... that you will call Me "My Husband", and no longer call Me "My Master".' Hos 2:16. The name 'My Master' can equally be translated as 'My Baali'. We note the difference between being *married to Christ*, and simply addressing Him in the same way that the Canaanites worshipped Baal, whom they believed to be the son of their chief god.

Addressing the Lord in the same manner as Baal is an expression of idolatry; not the simplicity of devotion to Christ. Referring to the

judgement at the last day, Jesus said, 'Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "*I never knew you*; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!" ' Mat 7:22-23. This judgement will be the outcome for all believers who have not been cleansed from sin and uncleanness, in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

In contrast to this eternal judgement, the Lord proclaimed, concerning all those who have been cleansed from sin and uncleanness as part of the heavenly Jerusalem, '*I will betroth you to Me forever*; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.' Hos 2:19-20. In a similar way, the Lord promised the overcomers in the presbytery of Philadelphia that He would write upon them, 'the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God'. Rev 3:12.

When the name of the New Jerusalem is written upon the 144 000, as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God, it will signify that they have been betrothed to the Lord forever. Rev 7:1-8. Furthermore, they will be sanctified to be 'the walls' and 'the gates' of the New Jerusalem, during the time of the end. The great multitude that no man can number from every nation, which comprises the fullness of the bride city, will come in through the 144 000, who are 'the gates' of the city. When the great multitude come into the city, they will also be betrothed to the Lord forever. The fulfilment of this promise for the great multitude is recorded in Revelation Chapter 7. Rev 7:15-17.

### **I will answer Jezreel**

The Lord further summarised 'the day of Jezreel' in the time of the end, by saying, 'It shall come to pass *in that day* that I will answer ... I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; they shall answer Jezreel.' Hos 2:21-22. This is an interesting passage. The first point to note is that the Lord refers to the firstfruits of the true Israel of God who have been cleansed and betrothed to Him forever, by the name Jezreel. We have considered that the name Jezreel means 'God scatters'. However, it equally means 'God sows'.

We know that the name Jezreel was used in this passage to describe those who already belong to the Lord and will be sown by Him into the

world, because the next verse notes, 'Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth'. Hos 2:23. Since the beginning of the church age, the Lord has sown sons of God in lampstand churches that comprise the bride of Christ, among all the nations of the world. For example, we know that the apostle Peter led a large company of sons of God from Jerusalem down to Babylon. Writing to the elect, who had been sown into other places, he concluded his first letter by saying, '*She who is in Babylon*, elect together with you, greets you.' 1Pe 5:13.

In the time of the end, the elect will be sown into the world as they proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, which is the gospel of sonship, as a testimony in all nations. When the first seal is opened, the 144 000 will be sent into the world like *the vanguard of an army*. We recall that the Lord broke the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel when He judged the house of Jehu, before He then scattered the entire nation of Israel among the nations. In a similar way, the Lord will restore the firstfruits of the true Israel of God as the bow of Israel, before He regathers the whole house of Israel as the fullness of the nations.

As we have said, 'the bow of Israel' represents the nation's capacity to overcome and conquer its enemies. The key point is that the remnant from the lampstand churches who have overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and laying down their lives for one another, will be sealed as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God. Rev 12:11. The firstfruits will become the bow of the true Israel of God in the hand of Jesus Christ, as the rider of the white horse. When the apostle John saw the opening of the first seal, he said, 'I looked, and behold, a white horse. *He who sat on it had a bow*, and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.' Rev 6:2.

When the firstfruits of the true Israel of God are sown into the world, in the time of the end, the principle of the Valley of Jezreel will be established in all nations for the great multitude to come into the kingdom of God. Bearing witness to the Valley of Jezreel in all nations, the Lord will then say, concerning the great multitude, 'You are My people!' The multitude will respond by saying, 'You are My God!' Hos 2:23.

## The redemption of the bride

We have considered the summaries of the gospel that are contained in the first two chapters of the book of Hosea. The third chapter contains *a third summary* that focuses on the redemption of the house of Israel as

part of the church, the bride of Christ. The unfaithfulness of Hosea's wife, Gomer, was a direct parallel to the unfaithfulness of the house of Israel, to the Lord. To illustrate the way in which He would recover His unfaithful bride, the Lord said to Hosea, 'Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.' Hos 3:1.

Hosea obeyed the Lord, and recorded, 'So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.' Hos 3:2. One and a half homers was the equivalent of fifteen ephahs of barley. The fifteen ephahs of barley was most likely worth the same as fifteen shekels of silver. Amo 8:5. Hence, half the payment for the woman was made in silver and half the payment was made in barley. The total payment was the equivalent of thirty shekels of silver. Under the Law Covenant, thirty shekels of silver was the value that was placed upon the life of a slave. Exo 21:32.

### *Thirty pieces of silver*

The thirty pieces of silver is significant because it was the amount that the Jewish Sanhedrin was willing to give to Judas for the betrayal of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew recorded that Judas asked the chief priests, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' They responded by counting out to him 'thirty pieces of silver'. Mat 26:15. In this transaction, they rejected Christ as their King and Shepherd. They valued His life as that of a lowly slave. In the first case, the payment of the thirty pieces of silver demonstrates that Jesus Christ was despised by men. He was not esteemed. Isa 53:3. He was the Stone which the builders rejected. Psa 118:22.

Speaking on behalf of the Lord, who is our great Shepherd, the prophet Zechariah said to the people in his day, 'If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.' The people responded by giving 'thirty pieces of silver' to the prophet. Zec 11:12. This value was a reproach upon the Lord. It demonstrated that the people spurned His love and care toward them as their Shepherd-King. The Lord then said to Zechariah, concerning the money, 'Throw it to the potter - that princely price they set on Me.' Zec 11:13. We know that this prophecy was fulfilled when Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver into the temple, and the priests used the money to buy a potter's field. Mat 27:5-10.

Jesus did die as a slave, but not as a slave of sin. He died as the willing and obedient Slave of the Father! Jesus Christ is Yahweh the Son. In the fellowship of the Everlasting Covenant, He emptied Himself to become the Father's Son and Slave for the purpose of revealing the Father and accomplishing His will for mankind. Php 2:7. As the Son of Man, He then humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Php 2:8. His slavehood revealed His kingship. As Jesus Christ descended to the lowest parts of the earth, in obedience to the Father, He conquered all of His enemies, and redeemed us from our slavery to sin and death.

The key point is that the prophet Hosea redeemed his wife with the equivalent of thirty shekels of silver, because it was 'the value of the life of a slave'. From the perspective of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the thirty shekels of silver was *the miserly value* that they placed upon the life of Christ as a slave. However, at the same time, Christ's death as the Slave of the Father was *the great value* that He placed upon the redemption of His bride, the church. Jesus Christ redeemed the church by laying down His own life, *not* with thirty shekels of silver. Eph 5:25. The apostle Peter declared, 'You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' 1Pe 1:18-19.

### For many days

Having redeemed his wife, Hosea said to her, 'You shall stay with me *many days*; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have [love] a man - so, too, will I be toward you.' Hos 3:3. The simplest interpretation of this verse is that Hosea instructed his wife to abstain from all immorality and to remain faithful to him. In turn, he promised to remain faithful to her. In the same way, the apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, 'I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' 2Co 11:2.

Speaking about the remnant of the house of Israel in lampstand churches, the Lord said, 'For the children of Israel shall abide *many days* without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.' Hos 3:4. 'Many days', in this instance, refers to the church age, during which the elect are scattered in lampstand churches among the nations of the world. The Lord said that the remnant would not have a king or a prince, because the church is separate from the state in every

nation. The church is the heavenly Jerusalem, and it is not represented on the earth by kings or civil authorities.

The Lord also said that the remnant in lampstand churches would be 'without sacrifice or sacred pillar'. Hos 3:4. We know that the offering of Christ brought an end to all sacrifice and offering in the temple. Dan 9:27. However, more broadly, 'a sacred pillar' is any man-made idol in the household of God. The Lord said to the nation of Israel before they entered the promised land, 'You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the Lord God. You shall not set up *a sacred pillar*, which the Lord your God hates.' Deu 16:21-22. The sacramental practices that have become religious traditions in the church are 'sacred pillars'. They have been established by man as alternatives to fellowship at the tree of life.

Finally, the Lord said that the remnant would be 'without ephod or teraphim'. Hos 3:4. Under the Law Covenant, the 'ephod' belonged to the high priest, who entered the Presence of the Lord on behalf of the people. Exo 39:1-7. In the New Covenant, there is no priesthood that functions as an intermediary between the Lord and His people. Rom 10:5-8. Every son of God must receive the word that is publicly proclaimed by the messengers in the right hand of Christ. They must then, *personally, draw near* to join the fellowship of the *agape* meal. In contrast to this, the presumption of a priest, or any minister, to bless the Eucharist is an example of holding on to a form of 'ephod' in the church.

The 'teraphim' refer to *the household idols* that were used for divination and the worship of ancestral spirits. We have considered the significance of the teraphim in the publication, *Becoming the true Israel of God*. In relation to our consideration of the book of Hosea Chapter 3, the key point is that the Lord promised to remove all of these forms of idolatry and uncleanness from His lampstand churches during the church age. The cleansing and purifying initiative of Jesus Christ, as He walks among His lampstand churches with eyes like a flame of fire, has been received and embraced by *a very small remnant* of overcomers in each generation of the church age. Isa 1:9.

As we approach the end of the 'many days' that belong to the church age, the Lord will sovereignly judge all the daughters of Zion who have persisted with their unfaithfulness, and have not forsaken these various forms of idolatry. Isa 3:16-26. The Lord will make a complete end of the sacred pillars, the spiritual ephods, and the household idols among the daughters of Zion. This will be a profound manifestation of the

judgement of Jezreel upon the church. However, for all those believers who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and turn from their idolatry, the day of judgement will also be the day of their cleansing and deliverance.

### *The last days*

We read in the final verse of Hosea Chapter 3, '*Afterward* the children [sons] of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.' Hos 3:5. 'The latter days', or 'the last days', refers to the time of the end. After the 'many days' of the church age, the Father will place His throne in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem, and will spread His tabernacle over all the citizens who belong to Mount Zion. Isa 4:4-5. Jesus Christ will also stand up from the right hand of God and will move His entire administration into the centre of the Father's throne. He will stand in the middle of the Father's throne as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Rev 5:5-6.

Jesus Christ will stand as the Son of David to rule over Jews and Gentiles in the one kingdom of God. In the time of the end, the firstfruits of the true Israel of God will gather the fullness of the nations into the kingdom. The great multitude from every nation will seek the Father, and Jesus Christ, who is 'David their king'. Hos 3:5. The prophet Isaiah declared, 'In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious ... He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.' Isa 11:10-12.

Hosea concluded by saying that, when the great multitude come into the kingdom of God in the time of the end, they will 'fear the Lord and His goodness'. Hos 3:5. Having been saved in the day of God's wrath upon the nations, in the day of Jezreel, the great multitude will be God-fearers who have beheld the goodness and the severity of God. The apostle Paul understood the salvation and the judgement of the day of Jezreel as it applies to every generation. He admonished the Gentile believers in lampstand churches, during the church age, by saying, 'Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness.' Rom 11:22.

## The Valley of Jehoshaphat

We have considered that the house of Israel will be recovered in the Valley of Jezreel as 'the fullness of the nations'. The Scripture also teaches that one-third of the Jewish nation will be recovered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The Lord declared through the prophet Joel, 'For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter in judgement with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.' Joe 3:1-2.

The name Jehoshaphat means 'Yahweh judges'. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is the place where the Lord sovereignly judged the nations who had gathered against the Jews in the days of King Jehoshaphat. In those days, a great multitude, who included the people of Moab and the people of Ammon, gathered against the Jews. Having become a God-fearing king, Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast throughout Judah. 2Ch 20:3-4. The whole nation came together to seek the Lord.

During this sacred assembly, King Jehoshaphat prayed in the midst of all the people, 'O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.' 2Ch 20:12. When the king had finished praying, the Spirit of the Lord fell upon one of the prophets. The prophet declared, 'Thus says the Lord to you: "Do not be afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's ... you will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!" ' 2Ch 20:15,17.

In response to this prophetic word, King Jehoshaphat and the entire nation bowed before the Lord and began to worship. The Levites stood up to praise the Lord God with voices 'loud and high'. 2Ch 20:18-19. The following day, the king led the people out of Jerusalem. He encouraged them all by saying, 'Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.' 2Ch 20:20. After consulting with the people, Jehoshaphat appointed specific men to sing to the Lord and to praise the beauty of His holiness. 2Ch 20:21. This group of singers went out before the army, singing, 'Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.' 2Ch 20:21.



The singers were the vanguard who went before the army. Remarkably, 'when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated'. 2Ch 20:22. The enemies of Judah turned against each other until they had destroyed one another. After this great victory, the king and all the people gathered together to bless the Lord in what they called 'the Valley of Berachah', which means 'the valley of blessings'. 2Ch 20:26. Revealing the two sides of the cross, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which means 'the valley of judgement', became 'the valley of blessings', for the Lord's people.

As we have already considered, the 144 000 will be the vanguard who go into the world with Christ. Their weaponry will be their prophetic song. The 144 000 will be singing a new song that they have learned in the fellowship of Christ's offering, which only they can sing. Rev 14:3. It will be a song of sovereign judgement upon the nations of the world while, at the same time, it will be a song of miraculous deliverance for a great multitude of Jews and Gentiles to come into the kingdom of God. In relation to the Jews, when the Lord sovereignly judges Gog and Magog on the mountains of Israel at the opening of the sixth seal, He will also bring one-third of the Jewish people into the kingdom of God. Eze 38.

The prophet Joel prophesied concerning the opening of the sixth seal, ' "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow - for their wickedness is great." Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.' Joe 3:12-16.

In the prophetic 'Valley of Jehoshaphat', two-thirds of the Jewish nation will be cut off for judgement, as part of the harvest of the ungodly nations. However, one-third of the Jewish nation will be delivered from this judgement and will come into the kingdom of God. The Lord declared through the prophet Zechariah, concerning the Jews, 'I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, "This is My people"; and each one will say, "The Lord is

my God”.’ Zec 13:9. We note that this is the same confession of faith that belongs to the fullness of the Gentiles.

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul declared, ‘I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so *all Israel* will be saved.’ Rom 11:25-26. We know that there will be a remnant of the Jews in lampstand churches, who will belong to the 144 000 as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God. Rev 7:5. Zec 9:13. However, by the time that the sixth seal is opened, there will also be a great harvest from the Jewish nation, who will join the fullness of the Gentiles in the mountain of the Lord’s house as it fills the whole earth. Isa 2:2.

## Chapter 3

# The ministry of the lampstand

When the apostle John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, he heard the sound of a loud voice behind him, like the sound of a great trumpet. When he turned to see the voice, he saw Jesus Christ seated in the middle of seven lampstand churches. Rev 1:10-16. He is presently seated upon His throne at the right hand of God, as our great High Priest. Psa 110:1. Heb 8:1. Zec 6:13. Jesus then instructed the apostle John to write to the seven churches. The seven letters contain Christ's personal admonition to every lampstand church for the entire church age.

Jesus concluded His admonition to each presbytery by saying, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Rev 2:7. The purpose of a lampstand church is to be a temple for the Holy Spirit, manifesting the light of the sevenfold Spirit of God. Rev 4:5. In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul explained that the body of each individual son of God is to be a temple for the Holy Spirit. 1Co 6:19. However, the church, as the body of Christ, is also a temple. Joh 2:21. The temple belongs to God the Father, and is the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

In the tabernacle of Moses, there was one golden lampstand. Exo 25:31-40. The lampstand was the light-bearer in the holy place of the

tabernacle. The lampstand was fashioned like a blossoming almond tree in the Spring. The fully formed lampstand had seven branches. It contained twenty-two flowers, or almond blossoms, that had the potential to be the receptacles for the lamps. The seven lamps represented the fullness of *agape* fellowship within the local congregations that belonged to that lampstand.

The fully formed lampstand also contained twenty-four bulbs, or knops, which had the capacity to generate the flowers, or almond blossoms. The knops represented the emergence of eldership as the beginning of local congregations within the fellowship of the lampstand. 1Co 16:15-16. This is an important point. It highlights that the origin of the order of twenty-four is in the fellowship of the lampstand. The full manifestation of this order of twenty-four will be seen when the twenty-four thrones are placed around the throne of the Father at the beginning of the time of the end. Rev 4:4. Dan 7:9.

Significantly, the lampstand had ten knops as a cluster in the middle of the lampstand. We know that each of the seven branches of the lampstand began with a calyx and a knop, but there was also an additional knop under the junction point of each pair of branches. Exo 25:35. The ten knops in the middle of the lampstand represented the fellowship of the presbytery that belonged to the fellowship of the entire lampstand.

The central cluster of ten knops in the middle of the lampstand in the tabernacle of Moses was multiplied to become ten lampstands, in Solomon's temple. The Scripture recorded, 'And he made then lampstands of gold according to their design, and set them in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left'. 2Ch 4:7. The single lampstand in the tabernacle of Moses was the light in the holy place. The ten lampstands in Solomon's temple signify that the fellowship of lampstand churches will multiply to become the light of the house of God for all nations. Mat 5:14-15.

Jesus likened the ten lampstands to five wise and five foolish virgins. Mat 25:1. In this parable, each virgin represents a lampstand church who has been betrothed to Christ as part of His bride. For example, we recall that the apostle Paul said to the church in Corinth, 'I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' 2Co 11:2. This parable teaches us that each lampstand church needs to remain connected to the supply of fresh oil from Jesus Christ, who is our great High Priest seated on His throne at the right hand of God. The work

of each lampstand church is to continue to shine the light of the sevenfold Spirit of God through the night of the church age.

The *midnight hour* is the time when the coming of Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom will be announced to the lampstand churches. Mat 25:6. The wise virgins will be ready for His coming. When the Bridegroom returns, they will accompany Him through *an open door*, into the next phase of the wedding feast in the kingdom of God. Mat 25:10. Rev 3:8. Rev 4:1. 'The midnight hour' is also the time when the Father will take His seat, and will spread His tabernacle over all the citizens and the congregations who belong to Mount Zion. Isa 4:6.

### I have set before you an open door

The presbytery and lampstand church in Philadelphia is typical of the wise virgins who are walking blamelessly and are ready for the coming of Christ. Jesus Christ addressed the presbytery in the church of Philadelphia, as the One who 'has the key of David, who opens and no-one shuts, and shuts and no-one opens'. Rev 3:7. 'The key of David' is the key that belongs to Jesus Christ, as the Son of David, who is seated upon His throne on Mount Zion. It signifies that He has the authority to establish the kingdom of God on the earth once the Father has taken His seat.

Jesus said to the Philadelphians, 'I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.' Rev 3:8. The presbytery in Philadelphia had *a little strength* because they had embraced the mode of Christ's weakness in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. 2Co 13:4. In this mode of weakness, they had learned to overcome Satan by the resurrection power of God in Christ's blood.

Jesus also commended the presbytery in Philadelphia because they had *kept His word*. He later described this as 'the word of His perseverance'. Rev 3:10. They had endured through the night of the church age by receiving His word as the supply of fresh oil in each season. They had overcome the temptation of Satan to become the source of their own word of doctrine. The word of their testimony revealed that they had kept Christ's word in their heart and in their mouth. Rom 10:8.

Finally, Jesus also commended the Philadelphian presbytery because they had *not denied His name*. This means that they did not love their own lives, or their own reputations, more than they loved Christ, when faced

with persecution from the world. We know that, as we approach the midnight hour, the church will be hated by all nations. Mat 24:9. The church will be a very small remnant in the middle of a godless and secular society. The Philadelphian presbytery had learned to overcome Satan by choosing to bear reproach for the name of Christ. 1Pe 4:14.

Jesus had set an open door before the Philadelphian presbytery because they had overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives to the death. Rev 12:11. This means that Satan was disempowered in relation to their ministry. In the first case, the open door was into the heavenly places, giving the presbytery in Philadelphia their participation in the administration of the Father's throne for the time of the end. The apostle John was referring to this aspect when he said, 'I looked and behold an open door in heaven.' Rev 4:1.

In the second case, it was an open door of faith or an open door for the word. We recall that the apostle Paul testified that an open door of faith had been opened to him among the Gentiles. Act 14:27. Likewise, he asked the Colossian church to pray 'that God would open to us a door for the word'. Col 4:3. As we approach the midnight hour, the Lord will open a door of faith for a Philadelphian presbytery to proclaim the gospel of sonship among all the daughters of Zion.

### The daughters of Zion

'The daughters of Zion' describes all of the churches who have been betrothed to Christ as part of the heavenly Jerusalem. The first manifestation of the heavenly Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God was seen on the Day of Pentecost. The early church in Jerusalem was 'one woman'. However, following the conversion and ministry of the apostle Paul among the Gentile nations, the one woman multiplied to 'seven women'. In the book of Isaiah, the seven women are described as 'the daughters of Zion'.

The apostle Paul addressed the Corinthian church as a daughter of Zion when he said to them, 'I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' 2Co 11:2-3. Paul was concerned that the Corinthians would believe the lie that was proclaimed by messengers of Satan, and would become part of what Jesus called 'the synagogue of Satan'.

In the book of Revelation, 'the daughters of Zion' are described as being seven lampstand churches. The seven lampstand churches in the book of Revelation are representative of all lampstand churches. We know that seven is a symbolic number. It is the number of fullness. Jesus identified various elements of the synagogue of Satan within the presbytery of each lampstand church. Significantly, it is the idolatry that is promoted by the synagogue of Satan within the heavenly Jerusalem which has given Satan access to the heavenly places for the entire church age.

### *The doctrine of the Nicolaitans*

In the book, *Becoming the true Israel of God*, we have considered the abominations in the heavenly sanctuary which the Lord showed to the prophet Ezekiel. First, he saw 'the image of jealousy' that caused the Lord to go far away from His sanctuary. Eze 8:3-6. Following this, Ezekiel saw the elders of Israel who were presuming to minister in the house of God, while they were living in uncleanness in the darkness of their own households. Eze 8:7-13. The Lord then showed him a group of women who were weeping for Tammuz. Eze 8:14. Last, Ezekiel saw twenty-five men between the altar and the porch, with their backs to the temple, facing the east and worshipping the sun. Eze 8:16.

Notably, when Jesus addressed the presbyteries of the seven lampstand churches, He drew their attention to these same abominations. He identified that these abominations had developed to become specific doctrines, within the church, that belonged to the synagogue of Satan. For example, as we have considered in *Becoming the true Israel of God*, Jesus described the abomination of the women who were weeping for Tammuz as being the doctrine of Jezebel. He particularly addressed the doctrine of Jezebel within the presbytery in Thyatira. Rev 2:20-24.

We could also compare the abomination of the twenty-five men who were worshipping the sun, with the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. We know that this was the greatest of all the abominations that the Lord showed to Ezekiel. Eze 8:15-16. Similarly, Jesus said that He 'hates' the deeds of the Nicolaitans. He said to the presbytery in Ephesus, 'I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested *those who say they are apostles and are not*, and have found them liars.' Rev 2:2. Further to this, Jesus said to them, 'You hate *the deeds of the Nicolaitans*, which I also hate.' Rev 2:6.

There is little biblical or historical information regarding the Nicolaitans. Some scholars have speculated that this group may have derived their

name from Nicolas the deacon. Act 6:5. However, it is most likely that Jesus used this term to identify a particular theology and mode of ministry, rather than to describe the followers of any specific person. The name 'Nicolaitan' means 'ruler, or conqueror, of the people'. In this regard, it could be used to describe any mode of ministry that 'lords it over' the people of God. Mat 20:25. It could also be applied to any mode of ministry that prevents the access of believers to God.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans is fundamentally hierarchical in nature, because it is built on a hierarchical view of the Godhead. Those who teach this doctrine do not understand the fellowship of offering between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit within the fellowship of Yahweh. Similarly, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans is built on the proposition that there is an unbridgeable gap between God as the Creator, and man as the creation. They teach that a person can be forgiven and adopted as a son of man, but not *born as a son of God* and included in the fellowship of Yahweh. Such a doctrine denies the gospel of sonship and excludes people from the kingdom of heaven. Mat 23:13.

Those who teach the doctrine of the Nicolaitans may presume to be great scholars and theologians. They will also include some messengers who falsely claim to have an apostolic mandate toward the Gentile churches. Jesus commended the presbytery in Ephesus for testing such men. A false apostle will presume to be the source of their own word and ministry. In the same manner as Satan, they will speak and function from their own resources. A false apostle will not reveal Christ and the mode of His ministry. They do not understand the fellowship of Yahweh, so they will not lay down their life within the fellowship of a presbytery.

In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described false apostles as being messengers of Satan. He said, '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.' 2Co 11:13-15. As a messenger of Satan, the ministry of a false apostle will be a trading exercise. It will be an identity-verifying mechanism.

A Nicolaitan messenger will often rely upon the submission of others in order to substantiate the projection of authority that they have created for themselves. Rather than ministering in weakness as a servant of Christ, they presume to take dominion and to 'lord it over' the faith of



others in the church. Of course, this mode of ministry is not limited to those who claim to possess an apostolic mantle. It is the mode of ministry that is employed by every elder, deacon or leader who functions from an empowered position.

Writing as a fellow elder, from the perspective of his own testimony, the apostle Peter exhorted all elders in his first letter by saying, 'Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.' 1Pe 5:2-3.

In addition to recognising the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, Jesus identified the doctrine of Jezebel and the doctrine of Balaam. He also addressed other issues such as *the blasphemy* of those who 'say that they are Jews and are not'; *the laziness* of those who have not washed their priestly garments; and *the arrogance* of those who presume to be rich and in need of nothing. Rev 2:9. Rev 3:4. Rev 3:17. Significantly, the outcome of any of these doctrines or issues will be the loss of first love, which causes a presbytery to fall from the heavenly places.

Notably, it was only the Philadelphian presbytery that had fully overcome the synagogue of Satan in relation to all of these elements. The presbytery in Philadelphia had full access to the tree of life in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem because they had fully recovered the fellowship of first love.

### The fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah

Jesus preached in parables during His earthly ministry, in order to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah. Mat 13:13-15. He concluded the parable of the sower, which is the foremost of all the parables, by saying, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear!' Mat 13:9. The ministry of Jesus brought illumination to those who were willing to receive His word while, at the same time, it invoked the judgement of blindness upon those who rejected His word.

Continuing to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah, Jesus admonished each of the lampstand churches from His seated position at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He concluded His admonition to each lampstand church by saying, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!' Rev 2:7,11,17,29. Rev 3:6,13,22. The prophecy of Isaiah

concerning *the polarising impact* of the word has continued to be fulfilled during the church age. Isa 28:9-13.

The word of the cross that is proclaimed by the messengers of Christ, under the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit, is a polarising word. The remnant in each generation who have received the word of Christ, and have joined the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, have become overcomers. However, at the same time, those who have rejected the word of Christ in each generation have stumbled backwards and been taken captive by Satan to do His will. 2Ti 2:26. They belong to the synagogue of Satan among the daughters of Zion.

Since the admonition of Christ to the lampstand churches through the apostle John, the overcomers among the daughters of Zion have been *a very small remnant*. Isa 1:9. In contrast to this, the synagogue of Satan among the daughters of Zion has been *the majority*. Mat 24:12. In the early part of his ministry, the prophet Isaiah declared that there will come a day when the Lord will sovereignly judge the daughters of Zion because of their uncleanness and idolatry. Significantly, this judgement within the house of God will happen before the Father takes His seat to judge the world. 1Pe 4:17.

Isaiah declared, 'Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet, therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts. *In that day* the Lord will take away the finery ... and so it shall be: instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty ... her gates shall lament and mourn, and she being desolate shall sit on the ground.' Isa 3:16-26.

The outcome of this judgement upon the daughters of Zion will be desolation and reproach before all men. Isaiah continued, 'And *in that day* seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach".' Isa 4:1. Initially, the daughters of Zion will seek to lay hold of Christ because they want to be vicariously delivered from the reproach of their own judgement. At the same time, they will want to maintain the right to 'eat their own food and to be clothed with their own apparel'. Their 'own food' refers to all of their religious doctrines. Their 'own apparel' refers to all of the religious projections

that they have created for themselves to cover the shame of their nakedness.

Significantly, in *the same day of judgement*, 'the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious.' Isa 4:2. 'The Branch of the Lord' is also the rod of an almond tree which is a lampstand. Jer 1:11-12. The glorious Branch of the Lord describes a lampstand church that has overcome and prevailed as part of the true Israel of God in the manner of Philadelphia. As we have considered, the purpose of a lampstand church is to be a temple for the Holy Spirit, and is to manifest the light of the sevenfold Spirit of God.

Jesus said to the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie - indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.' Rev 3:9. The Lord will not allow the daughters of Zion to continue to eat their own food and to wear their own apparel. He will cause those who desire to be delivered from the synagogue of Satan to submit themselves to 'a Philadelphian presbytery'.

In submission to a Philadelphian presbytery, the daughters of Zion will begin to meet Jesus Christ who has eyes like a flame of fire. His eyes reveal the spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning. Isa 4:4. When they meet Christ in this manner, they will cease from asking Him to vicariously remove their reproach. Rather, they will begin to mourn with godly sorrow when they see the impact of their reproach upon the Father and upon Jesus Christ. Furthermore, rather than eating their own food and wearing their own clothing, they will ask to be fed with the fruit of the tree of life and to be clothed with white, priestly garments.

### **The promises to Philadelphia**

Jesus said to the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.' Rev 3:10. When the Father takes His seat, He will spread His tabernacle over all the overcomers from the lampstand churches. Isa 4:5-6. The overcomers who receive the seal of the living God in their foreheads will be protected from the judgement of God upon the world during the opening of the seals, the blowing of trumpets, and the outpouring of vials.

Further to this, Jesus promised the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.' Rev 3:12. We note that there are four *integrated elements* that collectively comprise the promise to the overcomers in Philadelphia.

The first element of the fourfold promise is that the *overcomers will become pillars in the temple of God*. Following his vision of the house of God and the gate of heaven at Bethel, Jacob set up the stone upon which he had slept, as a pillar, and he anointed it with oil. Gen 28:18. He said, 'This stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house.' Gen 28:22. We know that Jesus Christ is the chosen and precious Cornerstone of the true temple. Since the Day of Pentecost, the Father has been building sons of God together as living stones in the true temple, which is the body of Christ.

The nature of our participation in the temple of God reveals the fellowship of offering between the Father and the Son. The Father is committed to *revealing Christ* by building us together as members of His body. 1Co 12:18. At the same time, the Son is committed to *revealing the Father* by making us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father. Rev 1:6. The temple belongs to the Father. It is the Father's house. Specifically, the overcomers will become the pillars that belong to the Father's house, when He takes His seat and spreads His tabernacle over every household and assembly that belongs to Mount Zion.

The second element of the promise to Philadelphia is that Jesus Christ will *write the name of His God upon the overcomers*. The name of the Father is 'the seal of the living God'. Rev 7:2. We know that our name has been written in the tree of life which is in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev 22:19. When we are born of the Spirit as a son of God, our name is also written upon the fleshly tablet of our heart. This does not mean that we have the capacity to live independently as a son of God. Rather, we continue to receive the substance of our name as we continue to eat the fruit of the tree of life.

Significantly, Jesus promised the overcomers in Philadelphia that the name of the Father will also be written on our foreheads. Rev 14:1. This is not the outcome of new birth. It is the outcome of *overcoming*. The name of the Father that will be written upon our foreheads is called 'the seal of the living God'. Rev 7:2. This seal will identify that a son of God has

overcome, or prevailed, in the same manner as Jacob prevailed. Hos 12:4. Gen 32:28. It will signify that they belong to the firstfruits of the true Israel of God, and that they have been set apart for their unique ministry in the time of the end.

We read in the book of Revelation that the firstfruits of the true Israel of God will be 144 000 overcomers. Rev 7:1-8. The 144 000 will comprise 12 000 from each of the twelve tribes that belong to the true Israel of God. Since the Day of Pentecost, the elect in each generation have been built into the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem according to the order of seventy-two. However, when Jesus seals the 144 000, it will be a double-portion anointing upon the elect. It will also signify that the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem are complete. The full measure of the walls is 144 cubits high. Rev 21:17.

The third element of the promise to Philadelphia is the name of the city of God, the New Jerusalem. We know that we are already citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem which is on Mount Zion. Heb 12:22-23. Php 3:20. However, when Jesus writes the name of the city of God upon the overcomers, it means that the 12 000 from each of the twelve tribes of the true Israel of God will also be sanctified as the gates within the wall. The name of the city includes the names of the gates of the city. The 12 000 from each tribe are the gates, and they are also the corporate messengers, or angels, that stand at each of the twelve gates. Rev 21:12.

When we consider the nature of these promises to the overcomers in Philadelphia, it highlights an important point concerning the protection of God in the time of the end. Speaking of the time when the Father will take His seat, and Jesus Christ will stand up in the middle of the Father's throne, Isaiah proclaimed, 'Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. *A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*' Isa 32:2-3. This is an amazing statement!

We know that when the Father takes His seat, He will spread His tabernacle over all the inhabitants and congregations that belong to Mount Zion. Isa 4:5-6. When Isaiah prophesied, 'A man shall be as a hiding place', it means that the protection of the Father's tabernacle will be a tangible and incarnate reality. The elect will become the hiding place as a sanctuary. A sanctuary is a place of protection. The protection of the New Jerusalem will be the 144 000 overcomers who comprise the pillars,

the wall, and the gates of the city. It is helpful to remember that the wall of a city, with its gates, is an active protection for that city.

The fourth element of the promise to Philadelphia is *Christ's new name*. This is the name that belongs to Jesus Christ as the rider of the white horse in the time of the end. When the apostle John saw Christ riding the white horse, He recorded that 'He had a name written that no-one knew except Himself'. Rev 19:12. This is not 'the name above every name' that was given to Jesus Christ when He ascended from the Mount of Olives and sat down at the right hand of God. Php 2:9.

'The name above every name' was declared before all men by the apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Act 2:36. 'The name that no-one knows except Christ' is evidently 'a new name'. It belongs to Him as the rider of the white horse. When Jesus promised to give this new name to the overcomers in Philadelphia, He was saying that they would be set apart and equipped to ride with Him at the opening of the first seal. The apostle John wrote, 'And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses'. Rev 19:14.

Significantly, the outcome of the fulfilment of the promises to Philadelphia, along with the fulfilment of the promises to all seven lampstand churches, will be one lampstand burning before the throne of the Father at the beginning of the time of the end. The apostle John saw 'seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God'. Rev 4:5.

### The midnight hour

We have likened the Philadelphian lampstand to a wise virgin who is ready for the coming of Christ. In contrast to this, we could liken the Laodicean lampstand to a foolish virgin who is not ready for the coming of Christ. We know that the coming of Christ in the parable of the five wise and the five foolish virgins does not refer to the physical second coming of Christ, to defeat Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. Rev 19:11. It refers to the first phase of the coming of Christ, *with clouds*, at the conclusion of the church age.

When the Father takes His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up at the right hand of God. He will then take all of the overcomers from His lampstand churches *with Him* into the place of protection in the Father's tabernacle, for the time of the end. Rev 3:10. We learn from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that the five wise virgins will accompany Christ into

this new phase of the wedding feast at *the midnight hour*. Mat 25:6,10. It will happen in the depths of the night, at the darkest hour, when the world has become almost completely secular and godless.

The prophet Daniel described the coming of Christ at the midnight hour by saying, 'I kept watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, *coming with the clouds of heaven!* He came near to the Ancient of Days [the Father], and *they brought Him near* before Him.' Dan 7:13. The presentation of Christ before the Father, accompanied by the overcoming remnant from lampstand churches, will occur during the first phase of Christ's coming with clouds, at the beginning of the time of the end.

When we consider the events of the time of the end, it is important to understand the different phases of Christ's coming with clouds. In *the first phase*, Christ will not be coming with clouds to the world. He will *first come to His lampstand churches* for the purpose of bringing all overcomers with Him to the Father's throne. He will come to His lampstand churches to reward those who are *watching expectantly* and are ready for His coming. The reward for Christ's servants who have faithfully endured 'the night' of the church age will be the privilege of reigning with Christ in the Father's kingdom. Mat 25:21,23. Luk 19:17,19. 2Ti 2:12.

The opening of the first seal will commence *the second phase* of Christ's coming with clouds. Rev 6:1-2. During the opening of the seals, He will come with clouds *to the world*, when the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed by His witnesses as a testimony in all nations. Mat 24:14. We read in the book of Revelation concerning this phase of His coming, 'Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pieced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.' Rev 1:7.

The second phase of Christ's coming with clouds, for the salvation of the nations, will finish *before* the final reign of Antichrist. The final harvest of believers will happen during 'the last hour' that immediately precedes the reign of Antichrist for the final three and a half years. Rev 14:14-16. Rev 11:1-2. At the conclusion of the three and a half years, Jesus Christ will *physically return* from heaven. Rev 19:11. As we considered in Chapter 1, the *physical return* of Christ from heaven will coincide with the day of resurrection for all believers. 1Th 4:16-17.

Returning to our consideration of *the first phase* of Christ's coming to His lampstand churches, the key point is that it will occur at *the midnight hour*. Mat 25:6. That is, it will occur in the depth of the night, at an hour when many will not expect it. Using various parables, Jesus repeatedly highlighted the unexpected nature of His coming, for those who are not watching and ready. He said to His disciples, '*Watch therefore*, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.' Mat 24:42. He concluded the parable of the wise and foolish virgins by saying, '*Watch therefore*, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.' Mat 25:13.

### Purchasing the oil

As we have said, Jesus addressed the lampstand church in Laodicea as being typical of the five foolish virgins during the church age. The Laodicean presbytery believed that they were rich and that they did not need a supply of oil for their lamps. They had no connection to the apostolic administration of Christ. As 'an unclean daughter of Zion', the Laodiceans were content with their own food and their own clothing. Isa 4:1. They were like a foolish virgin who had been bewitched by Satan. Gal 3:1. They did not know that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Rev 3:17.

In the parable of the ten virgins, when the coming of Christ was announced at the midnight hour, the five foolish virgins suddenly realised that they needed oil for their lamps. They were not ready for the coming of Christ. They said to the wise virgins, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' Mat 25:8. This was an arrogant and a presumptuous request. The foolish virgins were demanding that others compensate for their own laziness, and for the longstanding contempt that they had shown toward Christ and His messengers.

The demand by the five foolish virgins was also an *ignorant* request. They evidently thought that the supply of oil was some kind of 'resource-sharing' arrangement among friends or between churches. The foolish virgins did not understand that every lampstand church must be directly connected to the administration of Christ in His right hand. Notably, the wise virgins instructed the foolish virgins to go to those who supply oil, and to 'buy for yourselves'. Mat 25:9. It is the work of the apostolic administration of Christ to proclaim the word of present truth as *the supply of fresh oil* in every generation of the church age.



Importantly, in relation to acquiring oil, it is not enough for a believer to hear the word of present truth proclaimed. The oil must be purchased! When the word of present truth is proclaimed, it is the invitation for every believer to join the fellowship of the *agape* meal at the tree of life. A son of God *purchases the oil* by embracing their unique participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In a similar way, there will be *a unique cost* for each lampstand church, in the various nations around the world, to purchase the oil from Christ.

Jesus explained the full meaning of the oil that needs to be purchased when He said to the Laodiceans, 'I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.' Rev 3:18. The evidence that we are purchasing oil as sons of God will be that we possess gold that is refined in a fire, white garments, and eye salve. These three things, together, are necessary for us to be ready for the coming of Christ.

'Gold that is refined in a fire' is the outcome of *the trial of faith*. 1Pe 1:6-7. 1Pe 4:12. Jas 1:2-4. The trial of faith for a believer is the result of their making *a choice of faith*. For example, when a son of God chooses the culture of godliness, they will turn from the fallen nature of their former lifestyle and relationships. As they choose the culture of godliness, it will invariably lead to conflict with the culture of idolatry and ungodliness that they have left behind. This conflict causes tribulation and affliction for those who are choosing to abide in the fellowship of the tree of life. This trial of faith has a purifying effect upon the believer, and galvanises their resolve to live as a son of God. Tit 2:14. Mal 3:3. It produces the fruit of sonship, which is more precious than gold.

'The white garments' are *our priestly garments* that have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev 7:14. We first receive our priestly garment when we are baptised into Christ. Importantly, our garment is our mandate *to serve as a priest* in the Father's temple, which is the body of Christ. 1Pe 2:5. Rev 1:6. Rev 7:15. A person who is not willing to serve their brethren in the Father's house is not clothed in a white garment. Equally, we must continue to wash our priestly garment in the blood of Lamb, by embracing our participation in His seven wounding events; otherwise it will become soiled and polluted with the flesh. Jud 1:23. Rev 3:4.

'The eye salve' is *the anointing oil* that gives us illumination and spiritual understanding. We 'buy eye salve' by forsaking our own understanding and religious traditions which have become a veil over our eyes; and by embracing the fellowship of the *agape* meal at the tree of life. Pro 9:4-6. 2Co 3:16. When we lift up our voice for understanding in this fellowship, the word of present truth becomes a lamp to our feet and a light to our path so that we know how to walk as a son of God in this world. Pro 2:3. Psa 119:105. Furthermore, in this fellowship, we receive the grace to watch and pray with Christ as one who is alert and ready for His coming. Luk 21:36. Mar 13:32-37.

### The door will be shut

Jesus mercifully rebuked the Laodicean church for becoming a foolish virgin. Rev 3:19. He admonished them to forsake their foolishness, by buying gold that is refined in a fire, white garments, and eye salve, *while there was still time for them to do so*. Rev 3:18. Jesus declared to every person in this church, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.' Rev 3:20. He promised to include in the fellowship of the *agape* meal, every household that responded to His word with repentance and faith.

This was a profound season of visitation for every household within the church at Laodicea. However, the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins also teaches us that the season of Christ's merciful visitation to the foolish virgins will come to an end! It will come to an end when the Father takes His seat, and Christ comes to take 'the wise virgins' with Him into the place of protection in the Father's tabernacle. Jesus said, 'And those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and *the door was shut*. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you".' Mat 25:10-12.

The key point is that we must respond to the Lord *during the season of His visitation*. The season of the Lord's visitation to His lampstand churches is *now*! If a believer refuses to respond to Christ now, while He patiently knocks on the door of their house, they cannot expect Him to open the door of the Father's house for them in the time of the end. Rev 3:20. This is an important point. The opportunity for the recovery of the foolish virgins is during the church age. Once the Father has taken His seat, the focus of Christ's visitation will shift toward the unbelievers

## The ministry of the lampstand

in the world. The door will be closed for the foolish virgins who have rejected Christ's administration while, at the same time, it will be open for a great multitude from every nation to come into the Father's house.



## Chapter 4

# The final fall of Satan

Immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve, the Lord God addressed the first prophecy in the Scriptures to Satan. He said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.' Gen 3:14-15. In the first case, the Seed of the woman is Jesus Christ. On the cross, He disempowered and crushed the head of Satan. Joh 12:31.

However, in his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul declared that we also have been given a participation in the fulfilment of this prophecy. He said to the overcomers in Rome, 'The report of your obedience has reached to us all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. The God of all peace will soon *crush Satan under your feet*. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.' Rom 16:19-20. In the fellowship of Christ's offering, the head of Satan will be crushed by sons of God, who are the seed of the woman, the church.

The final fall of Satan from the heavenly places is recorded in Revelation Chapter 12. We know that the book of Revelation comprises a number of visions. Some of the visions that are recorded in the book of Revelation cover considerable periods of time. For example, the vision of the church, which is recorded in Revelation Chapter 12, begins with the church bringing forth children on the Day of Pentecost and it concludes with the church being protected and nourished by Christ in the wilderness for three and a half years during the reign of Antichrist.

The apostle John began this summary vision by saying, 'Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.' Rev 12:1. The woman is the church, the bride of Christ. She is clothed with the sun because, as the Lamb's wife, she reveals the glory of God in the order of the headship that proceeds from God to Christ, and then to the church.

In a later vision, John saw the Lamb's wife as 'the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having *the glory of God*. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal'. Rev 21:10-11. The light of the jasper stone refers to the glory of God the Father. John described the Father sitting on His throne by saying, 'He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance.' Rev 4:3.

The first manifestation of the bride city coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband was on the Day of Pentecost. Since the Day of Pentecost, the church, as the woman clothed with the sun, has been in travail to bring forth spiritual sons of God. John said, concerning the woman, 'Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth.' Rev 12:2. Speaking to all sons of God who have been born under the New Covenant, the apostle Paul declared that the Jerusalem from above 'is the mother of us all'. Gal 4:26.

### **The seventh world kingdom**

The vision of the church in Revelation Chapter 12 is applicable for the entire church age. However, when we consider the next sign that John saw in heaven, it immediately narrows the context and sharpens the focus of the vision to the time of the seventh world kingdom. John said, 'And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.' Rev 12:3. The great red dragon is Satan, who is the ruler of the seventh world kingdom.

In previous writings, we have considered that the seventh world kingdom is the United Nations, which was formed in the aftermath of the second world war. The seventh world kingdom has seven heads and ten horns. We observe that there is a diadem, or a crown, on each of the seven heads. The rulership of Babylon is exercised over the nations through seven administrative headquarters that belong to the United Nations. The ten horns represent the ten most powerful nations, or groups of nations formed by alliances, in the world.

John saw Satan, who is the ruler of the seventh world kingdom, in the heavenly places. Rev 12:3. He is in the heavenly places because of the idolatry that is present among the Lord's people. It was revealed to the prophet Daniel that this idolatry is an abomination which causes desolation. It causes the Lord's messengers, who are likened to 'the stars of heaven', as well as the heavenly sanctuary, to be trampled for a period of 2 300 years. Dan 8:12-14. Following the offering of Christ, the heavenly sanctuary became the true temple that belongs to God the Father. It is the body of Christ.

Since the days of the early church, there have been false messengers, who are messengers of Satan, preaching and teaching false gospels. 2Co 11:13-15. However, it is during the seventh world kingdom that the ministry of the messengers of Satan will reach its peak. John saw that, while Satan is in the heavenly places, as the ruler of the seventh world kingdom, his tail will draw *one-third of the stars* and will throw them to the earth. Rev 12:4. The prophet Isaiah declared that 'the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail'. Isa 9:15.

The falling from heavenly places during the seventh world kingdom is not limited to the 'stars'. That is, the falling away is not limited to those leaders who should belong to presbyteries in the right hand of Christ. Jesus said that, during the seventh world kingdom, and particularly during the period of birth pains, lawlessness will increase, and the love of most believers will grow cold. Mat 24:12. There will be a great falling away before the Father takes His seat. However, at the same time as this great falling away occurs, there also will be an overcoming remnant in lampstand churches.

### The overcoming remnant

In Revelation Chapter 12, the overcoming remnant that belongs to the last generation is likened to 'a man child'. John said, concerning the church, 'She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of

iron.’ Rev 12:5. Jesus addressed the presbytery in Thyatira as part of this corporate man child when He said, ‘He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - “He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels” - as I also have received from My Father.’ Rev 2:26-27.

The overcomers belong to the order of seventy-two in the seven lampstand churches that are part of the administration of the throne of the Son in the heavenly places. However, when the Father takes His seat, and Jesus Christ stands up at the right hand of God, He will move His entire administration with Him to the Father’s throne. At that time, the overcoming remnant will be ‘caught up to God and *His throne*’. Rev 12:5. This will also be the transition from the order of seventy-two to the order of 144, signifying that the walls and gates of the New Jerusalem are complete. Fulfilling His promise to the overcoming presbytery in Philadelphia, Jesus Christ will seal the 144 000 with the name of the Father, the name of the New Jerusalem, and with His new name. Rev 3:12.

The next verse in Revelation Chapter 12 reads, ‘Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days’. Rev 12:6. We note that this verse jumps right to the end of the age when the church will be protected in the wilderness for 3½ years, during the reign of Antichrist. The companion to verse 6 is verse 14. We read, ‘But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent’. Rev 12:14.

When we place verses 6 and 14 alongside each other, we recognise that the events that are recorded from verses 7 to 13 all happen *before* the church will be protected in the wilderness for the final 3½ years. When the Father takes His seat, one of the first major events that will take place is ‘war in the heavenly places’. The time will arrive for the heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed. John said, ‘And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.’ Rev 12:7-8.

### War in the heavenly places

This war in heavenly places highlights a major waypoint. It signifies that Michael and his angelic host have been able to stand up again to be active in the heavenly places. Michael is the commander of the Lord’s



angelic host. He was the archangel who met Joshua before the nation of Israel entered the promised land. Jos 5:13-15. However, the 2 300-year prophecy in the book of Daniel reveals that Michael and his angelic host have been inactive since Satan regained access into the heavenly places. Satan regained access into the heavenly places at a time during the reign of the Seleucid Empire, because of the corruption of the Jewish priesthood at that time. Dan 8:10-11.

Since the Day of Pentecost, it has been the work of the remnant in lampstand churches to overcome Satan, and the synagogue of Satan, in the heavenly places. When Jesus addressed the presbytery of each lampstand church, He identified specific elements of the synagogue of Satan that they needed to overcome by repentance and faith. Jesus concluded His admonition to the presbytery of each lampstand church with a promise to the overcomers. In summary, Jesus said to the presbytery in Ephesus, 'To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.' Rev 2:7.

The believing remnant overcomes Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by laying down their lives for one another in the fellowship of first love. Rev 12:11. The key point is that, as the fellowship of the *agape* meal is being restored among lampstand churches, Satan's access to the heavenly places is also being removed. We know that Satan works only by advantage or by misappropriation. 2Co 2:11. Significantly, when Satan is overcome by the remnant in lampstand churches, it will enable Michael and his angels to stand on their feet again in the heavenly places.

Michael will stand again before the opening of the seals. He is the mighty and strong angel who will proclaim with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?' Rev 5:2. We read in the book of Daniel, 'At that time *Michael shall stand up*, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time'. Dan 12:1.

Notably, the *time of trouble* will begin in heaven, and will then shift to the earth. It will begin in heaven when war breaks out between Michael and the Devil. The Devil and his angels will not prevail against Michael and his angels. Rev 12:8. The Devil will not prevail, because he will already have been disempowered by the overcomers in the heavenly places. It is the elect from lampstand churches who disempower and overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and by laying

down their lives. Rev 12:11. It is Michael and his angels, however, who will finally cast Satan from heaven, to the earth. Rev 12:9.

## The kingdom of our God has come

Having seen Satan cast from heaven to the earth, the apostle John immediately heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and *the kingdom of our God* and *the authority of His Christ* have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.' Rev 12:10. First, the loud voice will announce the coming of the kingdom of our God. 'The coming of the kingdom' is the time when the Father places His throne, and takes His seat, in the middle of the heavenly Jerusalem. Dan 7:9. Rev 4:2. This will be the answer to the prayer of the elect, in each generation of the church age, who have prayed, 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name, *Your kingdom come.*' Mat 6:9-10.

Second, the loud voice will announce the coming of 'the authority of His Christ'. Rev 12:10. The coming of 'the authority of Christ' is the time when Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne at the right hand of God to come before the Father who is seated upon His throne. Rev 5:6-12. Daniel saw the coming of the authority of Christ in a prophetic vision. He said, 'Behold, One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him.' Dan 7:13-14.

## Great persecution

Once Satan has been cast out of heaven, he will no longer stand before God accusing the brethren day and night. Rev 12:10. However, when Satan is cast to the earth, this will contribute to an unprecedented time of trouble on the earth. Jesus also described this time of trouble by saying, 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.' Mat 24:21. In the first case, we know that this trouble will be the outcome of God's judgement upon the world. When Jesus Christ opens the first four seals, it will reveal the beginning of the judgement of God upon the world, in a quarter measure. Rev 6:1-8.

The opening of the fifth seal also reveals that there will be intense persecution during this time of trouble. This persecution will occur immediately after Satan is cast out of the heavenly places. We continue to

read in the book of Revelation, 'Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he *persecuted the woman* who gave birth to the male child'. Rev 12:13. There is a notable parallel between this persecution and the persecution of the early church. We recall that when Stephen, who belonged to the order of seventy-two in a lampstand church, overcame Satan in the heavenly places, he was cast to the earth. When Satan fell from the heavenly places, it precipitated widespread persecution of the early church.

We read in the book of Acts, 'At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles'. Act 8:1. The great persecution was led by Saul of Tarsus. It is most likely that Satan possessed Saul, who then began to ravage the church, dragging off men and women and putting them into prison, until he was converted by Christ on the road to Damascus. Act 9:1-18. However, having noted this parallel between the two seasons of persecution, we also need to identify the major difference. In the time of the end, the church will be given the two wings of a great eagle to escape the persecution of the serpent. Rev 12:14.

### *The wings of a great eagle*

'The wings of a great eagle' describes the same miraculous protection and provision that the nation of Israel enjoyed when they escaped from Pharaoh and his army after their deliverance from the land of Egypt. Exo 19:4. When the Father takes His seat, He will spread His tabernacle over all of the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem who have been washed from their uncleanness and idolatry, in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Isa 4:4-6. Significantly, this cleansing occurs during the phase of lampstand churches. We know that the 144 000, who stand before the Lamb on Mount Zion as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God from lampstand churches, have been cleansed from idolatry and have overcome Satan. Rev 14:1. The Scripture recorded that 'no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless'. Rev 14:5.

Satan's persecution of the church during the time of the end will have no power to hurt the overcoming remnant from lampstand churches. Jesus foreshadowed this protection when He said to the seventy-two disciples, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.' Luk 10:19. We note that Jesus made a distinction between serpents and scorpions. Satan is 'the serpent

of old', who is the ruler of the *seventh world kingdom*. In contrast to this, the demonic horde that is released from the bottomless pit, at the blowing of the fifth trumpet, are likened to scorpions. Rev 9:3,5,10. Notably, they will not have power over all those who have the seal of God on their forehead. Rev 9:4. The fifth trumpet is when the *eighth world kingdom* will begin to emerge in the world. Rev 9:1-2. Rev 13:1-3.

Significantly, Jesus continued to say to the seventy-two disciples, concerning this protection, 'Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but *rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.*' Luk 10:20. This is precisely the same proclamation that is recorded in Revelation Chapter 12! The apostle John heard a loud voice in heaven saying, 'For this reason, *rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!*' Rev 12:12. This is the command to rejoice, which is directed to all those who have overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives to the death. Rev 12:11.

### *The flood from the mouth of the serpent*

When there is rejoicing for the overcomers in the heavenly places, there will also be a time of great trouble for the inhabitants of the earth. The loud voice continued, 'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.' Rev 12:12. The Devil will know that he has a short time once the 144 000 have been sealed and Michael has cast him from the heavenly places. He will seek to destroy the church on the earth by 'spewing water out of his mouth like a flood'. Rev 12:15. We could liken the flood that flows from the mouth of the serpent, to a river of lies!

The entire church age has been littered with the ministry of false apostles who have been messengers of Satan. Jesus warned the disciples that the ministry of false prophets would increase as the time of the end approaches. Furthermore, it will increase again, for a short period of time, after Satan has been cast out of heaven, to the earth. Jesus said, 'False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See I have told you beforehand.' Mat 24:24-25. The flood of lies will pursue the woman, but the book of Revelation clearly shows that the flood will not overtake her. The elect who choose to remain in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is under the shadow of the Father's wings, will not be deceived.

## The great multitude with white robes

When the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed by the witnesses of Christ, as a testimony in all nations, a great multitude which no man can number will come into the kingdom of God. They will come from every tribe, nation, people and tongue. Rev 7:9. This great multitude will be the fruit of the evangelistic ministry of the church. The firstfruits of the true Israel of God comprise the gates of the New Jerusalem, through which the fullness of the nations will come! It is likely that as much as half of the world's population will come into the kingdom of God in the time of the end. In Revelation Chapter 12, the great multitude is called 'the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus'. Rev 12:17.

Having been enraged with the woman, but unable to deceive or harm her because she is under the shadow of the Father's wings, Satan will turn his attention toward *making war* with the great multitude who respond to the evangelistic ministry of the church. Rev 12:17. The opening of the seals will be a time of great persecution for those who are coming out of the world and into the kingdom of God. When the apostle John witnessed the opening of the fifth seal, he said, 'I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained.' Rev 6:9. The Lord will give each of these martyrs a white robe. They will join the great company of overcomers, from every generation, by not loving their lives to the death. Rev 12:11.

Most of the believing multitude who come into the kingdom of God in the time of the end will not die as martyrs. John saw the rest of the great multitude standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb, clothed in white garments and with palm branches in their hands. Rev 7:9. One of the twenty-four elders explained to John, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Rev 7:14. Evidently, this great multitude will also overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. They will also overcome him by the word of their testimony. John heard the summary of their testimony when they cried out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' Rev 7:10.

The great multitude who will come into the heavenly Jerusalem in the time of the end, will join the firstfruits of the true Israel of God as priests in the temple of God. Rev 7:15. Having overcome Satan, in their specific

and unique hour of trial, the great multitude will also come under the shelter and protection of the Father's wings. The elder said to John, 'He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to the springs of the water of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' Rev 7:15-17.

### **Satan will be overcome, cast down and crushed**

Returning to our consideration of the fall of Satan, we have identified that he will be disempowered by the overcomers in lampstand churches. This has been the case throughout the church age, beginning with the ministry of Stephen. However, he will be fully overcome by the remnant in lampstand churches in the last generation. Jesus said to the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie - I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.' Rev 3:9. Satan will then be cast from heaven by Michael and his angels after the Father takes His seat to initiate all of the events that belong to the time of the end.

When Satan is cast from the heavens, the final cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary will commence. Dan 8:14. Having been cast from heaven to the earth, the head of Satan will then be crushed by the 144 000 as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God, and by the great multitude which no man can number. His head will be crushed as the great multitude turn from darkness to light and from his dominion to the kingdom of God. Act 26:18. This will be the final fulfilment of Paul's prophetic word to the Romans, 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.' Rom 16:20.

The final crushing of Satan's head, as the ruler of this world, will begin with the opening of the first seal. Rev 6:1-2. It will reach a climax at the opening of the sixth seal when Gog and Magog are sovereignly judged upon the mountains of Israel. Rev 6:12-17. At that time, the power of the seventh world kingdom will be completely shattered. One third of the Jewish nation will join the Gentiles from every nation in the kingdom of God. The mountain of the Lord's house will fill the whole earth. We recall that Daniel prophesied, 'The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another

people; *it will crush and put an end* to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.' Dan 2:44.

Following the opening of the sixth seal, Satan will no longer be the ruler of this world. Rather, the sons of men will look upon him with bewilderment. Isaiah prophesied, 'Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?" ' Isa 14:16-17. When Satan gives his power, his throne, and his great authority to Antichrist, the ungodly will worship him again very briefly. Rev 13:4. However, this empty adulation will be short-lived. When Jesus Christ returns to judge Antichrist, Satan will be bound with chains and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Rev 20:1-3. At the end of the thousand years, he will be released for a short while, only to be cast into the lake of fire forever. Rev 20:7-10.