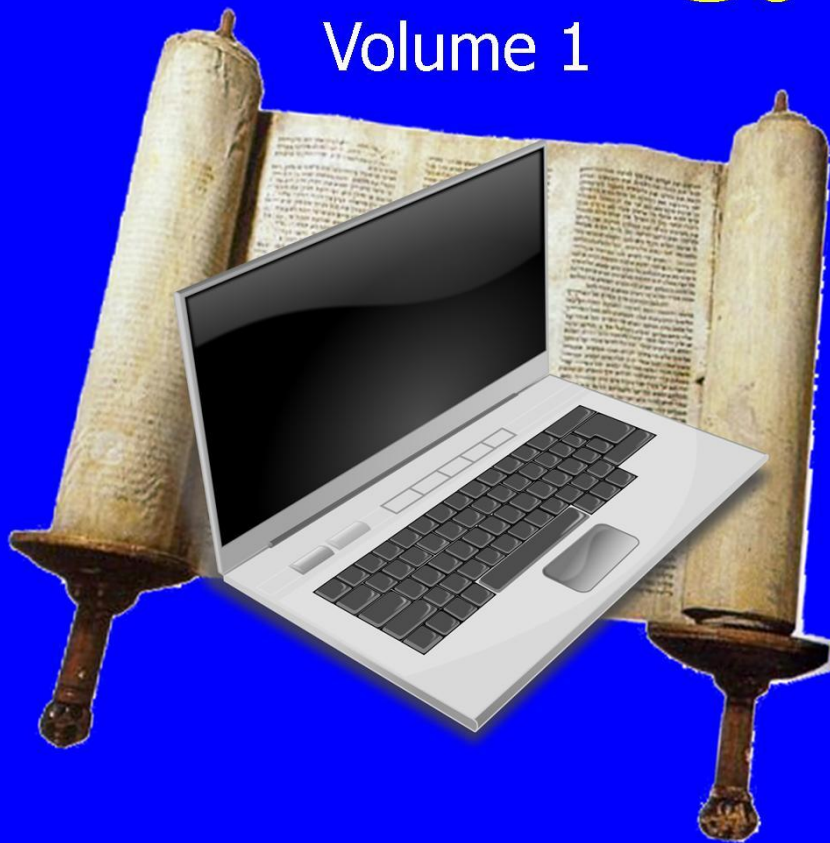


The Scrolls Anthology

Volume 1



A collection of writings
by Peter McArthur

A collection of spiritual writings by Peter McArthur

issachar.org

The Issachar Scroll Writings Volume 1

These writings, and the Volumes that will follow, are some of the many monthly teachings that have appeared on The Issachar Ministry web site (issachar.org) over the past 10 years or so.

I felt it helpful to compile the writings into easy-to-access volumes rather than just have them listed on the web site and singularly at other sites. So, here they are. I hope they may help you grow in the Messiah and the Father's grand purpose for us all.

Peter McArthur

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Discern the Excellent Things



Peter McArthur

(Philippians 1:9-11) “**And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**”

A key area of spiritual growth will be in the gift of DISCERNMENT. The word means to make a right judgement by spirit, to divide, to perceive correctly. I believe this will be a much needed gift in order to make good, decisive and accurate choices in the days to come. Watch! Discernment will increasingly be talked about.

“Knowledge” about many spiritual issues has been rapidly increasing in the last 20 years or so, through so many ways, particularly the Internet (See Daniel 12:4). The decade of the “Teachers (of the Word)” was generally seen to have been in the 1970’s. However I believe we are yet to see the coming forth of what I call “Teachers of Revelation”.

I am definitely NOT talking about those who have flaky off-the-wall mystical experiences, angelic visitations that are not Biblical, or visits to Heaven which are so subjective it’s almost impossible to correct the protagonists. Some of these “visitors” to those celestial realms have been found to be outright frauds and spiritual imposters in recent months. It’s surprising to see how many believers were drawn into those delusions and didn’t listen to discerning voices that gave warning early on.

Despite all that, the coming teachers of Revelation will be those who stick to the Word, not experiences, and who are given great insight to the meaning of what is already written in the Word.

Most believers today probably “know” much more (in terms of accumulated understanding) than Christians of 50 years ago. Yet where is the supposed accompanying wisdom and maturity? So there are two things that arise out of this; (1) Discernment and (2) Knowledge.

It's been said that discernment and knowledge without love is nothing more than human suspicion. I think I agree. That's why Paul says "love" must abound – to hold these two things in check.

Verse 9: **"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment."**

To put it the positive way: Love, Knowledge and Discernment are all linked. You've heard people say "I just want to love God; I just need Jesus, not all this other stuff". Well frankly, and Biblically, that isn't solid enough.

Love grounded without knowledge and discernment actually DISAPPROVES us to God. A strong passion for God without proper biblical knowledge and experienced discernment will only make us zealous, which is a soul thing, not a spirit thing.

The Jews of Jesus' day certainly had zeal for God, but not according to accurate scriptural knowledge. Paul writes: **"...so that you may approve the things that are excellent..."** (verse 10a)

"Approve" means to discern. That is, to know by experience the good things of God and test everything else by that standard. In other words, learn to act out of such spiritual discernment as a regular part of your daily walk in Christ.

Isaiah 11: 3 **"And He will delight in the fear of YHWH, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear..."**

This is a messianic text about how Jesus lived. It is a model and pattern for us to seek after. When we allow two different standards to be side by side in our life, we dishonour God.

Scripture encourages us to DEVELOP our inner character with a "sincere" heart. The word "sincere" means "without hypocrisy, without fault". It refers to how ancient potters would attempt to disguise imperfect vessels by putting wax into the crack to trick the unwary buyer. But when the object was lifted up in the light of day the defect could be discerned, seen for what it really was - flawed.

So too our inner character is to be flawless, without hypocrisy. It is to be inwardly "sincere".

Let us therefore strive, not by the flesh or soul, but by the Holy Spirit who enables our spirit to discern well in all things.

Peter McArthur

Teachers of Revelation



Peter McArthur

Introduction

Some time ago the Lord showed me that the teachers of 'the Word' would be enriched by the coming forth of 'the Teachers of Revelation'.

This doesn't mean that "revelation" will supplant the Word of God. Never! But it does mean that revelatory insight (entirely in agreement with the Scriptures) will begin to come into play in a very rich way as a blessing for the Body of Christ. Of course there have always been 'teachers of revelation' throughout the ages, but there seems to be a time coming when great understanding will erupt bringing forth deeper insight of the Word through the process of revelation. May I put out quickly now, that I am NOT referring to any New Age, heretical or "emerging church" teaching.

Let me continue: Not long after I received this from the Lord I had a very powerful dream.

I was looking at a man standing before me. All I could see was his torso, not his face or feet. He was quite a tall, large man dressed in some sort of nondescript white robe. He spoke no words. He was holding an open book with its pages in front of me to see. He flicked through the book until he came to a particular chapter, and then held it open for me to see the heading which simply read: "Truth Re-visited". I instinctively knew that the 'man' was a messenger angel. The dream abruptly finished having only lasted about 20 seconds.

From this dream I knew that the Holy Spirit would begin to teach me the truths of Scripture that I had either become complacent about, or misunderstood. Since then I have been alert to study the Word carefully, slowly and with fresh revelation.

It's been an exhilarating time and challenged much of my traditional thinking. I realise that I had "learned" things from a mixture of different sources, and pieced together my views of Scripture in a very ad hoc manner.

Like most of us I had taken a bit of teaching from one preacher, some from another, some from a conference, a little from this book and that book, etc. Gradually I had collected views, opinions and ideas from all sorts of ministries, and amalgamated them with Scripture.

Generally this worked out OK and as time passed I began to sieve out what was not in line with Scripture and I managed to fine-tune my knowledge. The only thing was that I had relied more on Man than the Holy Spirit to teach me. I had also accumulated much "knowledge" but failed to integrate it successfully into my life. On top of that I had many stops-and-starts in the learning process, and didn't consolidate very well what I had learned. I believe the dream came to adjust my thinking in these areas and put me back on track.

This writing is to help us understand how revelation might come forth, and how we as the Body might begin to appreciate in a fresh way, having a more Biblical approach to learn the wonderful truths of our God.

Chapter 1

By Revelation

There are sufficient texts in Scripture that highlight how important revelation is in God's grand purposes. Note these examples:

"...the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, having been unvoiced during eternal times..." (Rms 16:25)

"For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it except by a revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal 1:12)

"...that by revelation He made known to me the mystery..." (Eph 3:3)

"A revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to declare to His servants things which must shortly come to pass..." (Rev 1:1)

It's only through revelation that truths come to us. Understanding this principle will save us much heartache when we don't see people respond to teaching the way we think they should.

Because truths do come to us in the form of revelatory light, it's fair to assume that not everyone is going to enter into the revelation at the same time. We only have to look at Scripture to see this (Acts 15:1-6). In fact some will be recipients of the revelation first and then given a ministry to inform others about it, e.g. Paul. In such cases we find that revelation normally precedes calling. It's fascinating to see how the Lord uses one person, or a small group, to bring in a new revelatory truth or move of the Spirit. This is a common factor right throughout Scripture, and in Church history. The Lord looks for those with receptive hearts and usually finds such among a willing minority.

“And they came, everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing...” (Exo 35:21)

“And every man and woman whose hearts were willing, to bring for all the work which YHWH commanded to be done by the hand of Moses...” (Exo 35:29)

“And Moses called to Bezaleel, and to Aholiab, and to everyone wise of heart, to whom YHWH had given a heart of wisdom, everyone whose heart had been stirred to come near the work, to do it.” (Exo 36:2)

Here's another principle worth considering:

**The more people, the less truth;
the more truth, the less people.**

What does that mean? Reflect for a moment on a large church with say 5,000 members. By its very size that church is going to have a very wide number of opinions. There will of course be much common ground of doctrine, especially over the fundamentals of salvation, but sadly, not always! But you can be certain there'll be divergent views on things like the “rapture”, can a Christian have a demon, is it possible to lose your salvation, etc.

Any honest pastor will acknowledge this to be so and usually this great divergence of views is accommodated within the larger group through some form of healthy tension. But I've always wondered if this should be the case. Should it be that the People of Truth have such different views about the truth? And of course right there you have the issue of denominationalism. Some churches even name themselves after their favourite doctrine: Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Pentecostals - you can easily think of others I'm sure.

Why is it that we, who have the Spirit of Truth resident within, should have such different opinions about the truth? Something is obviously wrong, very wrong. The Holy Spirit was sent to lead us into all truth (Jhn 1:11) yet somehow we haven't allowed that to happen as fully as it should. No doubt part of the problem is due to our “opinions.”

Opinions can often be more entrenched within us than Bible doctrines. Have you noticed how often believers will hold onto an opinion like grim death, and if you confront it you'll quickly find out what's what! People become animated, accusative, their voices rise, the eyes become fixed and defiant, and you receive a tongue lashing. Well maybe that's a little exaggerated, but not too much I dare say. As the saying goes: **God offends the mind to reveal the heart** (e.g. Jhn 9:16).

We value our opinions highly don't we, and will defend them strongly. This is a good thing when our opinions have been formed by the Word AND the Spirit of God; but when they are opinions of Self, watch out.

There's one thing I've especially learnt over the years; not everyone actually wants Truth! And I'm not talking only about the unsaved, but about believers as well. Many say they want truth and deeper insight, but when the crunch comes they back off or defend some privately held opinion. We've all been there, we've all done that, and God is wonderfully gracious and long-suffering with us, more so than we are with each other. But it's time we grew up into He

who is Truth and started walking the walk He's purposed for us.

This disinterest in truly wanting Deeper Truth is particularly a condition of large groups. That's why it's been said: "Crowds lie." Pretty blunt, but probably correct. The more people you have, the more compromise you're likely to allow as a leader. This is why smaller sized churches are probably better, numbers around 80 to 150 individuals. Even then you'll still find differences of view points, but at least it's workable.

For the life of me I can't see how a church of 5,000 can easily have unity of mind - unity of faith, yes, but not necessarily unity of spirit! It would be better for such a large group to divide into 100 smaller assemblies of about 50 people. One of the usual arguments against this is the logistics; e.g. how can we find 100 extra pastors? All such 'problems' can be overcome, after all this is where the New Testament ministry of local elders can so easily help. ①

It would be exhilarating to have a large church break up into much smaller assemblies each with two or three local elders having the oversight, and they being responsible to an Apostle or group from the Ephesians 4:11 style ministry. Imagine the difference? Lord, may that day arrive soon!

Now back to truth and revelation. It would be most unfair to say that all large churches compromise issues; there may well be some who have both unity of faith AND unity of spirit, but they would be rare. Biblically speaking it was the smaller intimate gatherings that produced mature saints, thus the strength in today's house churches and small assemblies.

Generally speaking, the small assemblies are the places where revelatory truth is easier to teach and impart. When the numbers get too big, a different dynamic enters in. The normal way of dealing with this in large congregations is to have small study groups, or mid-week home meetings. While this goes some way in addressing the problem of a very large church, it falls short of allowing other dynamics to operate well.

Certainly people from a large congregation can, and do, grow through small group meetings, but the error is to think that a once-off mid-week meeting will suffice. The Biblical concept is actually much more frequent, and has a special core to it. That core element is what we can call **Lamad Teaching**. To strengthen this idea we can look at how the early church grouped together. The church in Jerusalem was basically a network of interrelated "house churches" probably numbering in their thousands. But we also know that the very early believers regularly attended the Temple (Acts 3:1 / 21:26-27).

Historical records show that the Temple area was filled with many porches in which groups of about 20 to 50 people at a time could be accommodated for teaching. So there's a clear Biblical underpinning for the small church concept, whether in a house, or in small groups at a larger gathering such as the Temple. It's in both that we find the lamad style of teaching operating in early Christianity. So what is this lamad learning?

①The New Testament pattern is quite straightforward: leadership of the local assembly is plural, not singular. A plurality of elders is responsible for overseeing the local brethren, not a single leader ruling from the top, like a "Pastor". We have the latter operating purely out of man's tradition.

Chapter 2

The Hebraic method of learning

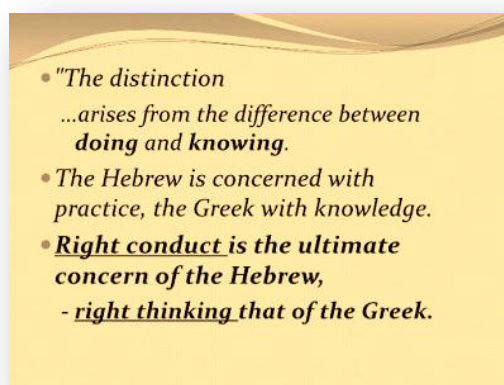
We find in the Hebrew language there's one root word for the two words "to teach" and "to learn", that is the word *lamad*. It derives from the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and has particular helpful insight (see page 18). In the Hebrew culture, the teacher has not truly 'taught' unless the student has learned. This is a fundamental principle, and the teacher will continue to go over and over the same truth, often expressing it in different ways, until the student has learnt it (e.g. see the parables of Jesus). Only then is it deemed that the pupil has truly understood and appropriated the truth for himself.

We know that the Rabbis used this method and we can see the pattern also expressed in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, with this normally occurring in either a one-to-one situation or a very small group, such as the Twelve. As the teacher taught, the learner would gradually become aware of the reality of the truth and the source of that truth. This would bring forth a great respect for both the Source of Truth, and the Deliverer of that Truth. In the Biblical understanding this is reflected in what we call 'the Fear of the Lord' (meaning, respecting and honouring the source of the truth).

"The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge; it is fools who despise wisdom and instruction." Prov 1:7

So Biblically speaking, all learning and teaching are ultimately to be found in this honouring of the Lord as the source of all truth. The Hebrew mindset holds that all truth emanates from the Lord God; He and His truth are the standards by which we are to measure all things pertaining to life. However in the Western mindset, which is based on Greek philosophical concepts, "Man has become the measure of all things". Sadly the church hasn't clearly discerned this and has allowed this concept to dictate to us in such a way that we've fallen prey to the spirit of the age.

The views of the Greek and the Hebrew mindsets are greatly at odds with one another. One declares that man's understanding of reality should be imposed on life; the other states that the sum of all knowledge is found only in God whose ways are certain and sure. So in the Hebrew thought pattern it is "Knowing God" that's all important, while in the Greek thought pattern the goal is to "Know Thyself".



One has Man as its object; the other has God as its all-consuming focus. One starts with Man, and one starts with God. One says Man is able to rise up and know truth (through academic ability or secret knowledge), the other declares that truth will come down to you (“Unless you are born again from above...” Jhn. 3:3).

- Hellenism/Greek mindset
→ ‘Know yourself’ rather than ‘know God’
- **In contrast to the Greek view that the highest human experience was knowledge, to a Hebrew scholar like the Apostle Paul, moral beauty and righteousness was the highest human experience.**
- In today's common view influenced by Greek dualism, **faith is a mystical, non-rational thing, not related to reason.**

According to Scripture we cannot know who we are and why we are in this world until we first know the Lord God and submit to His will. The Biblical view is that we require a birthing from above by the agency of the Holy Spirit in order to know truth and live by it. This brings wisdom and knowledge into our lives.

“...that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, for you to walk worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work and growing into the full knowledge of God.” Col 1:9-10

Unlike the West, the goal of teaching in the East is not the impartation of facts, but the transforming of lives. For the Hebrews, knowledge (*yadah*) involves a personal encounter with God and a specific response to Him.

If there's an encounter but no response from the pupil, then truth has not been successfully implanted in the learner. And if there's some kind of response forthcoming that's not accurately founded on truth, then the result will be less beneficial than it should be. There is to be a harmony, a link between the encounter and its appropriate response. The result of this dynamic is a transformation; a transformation into the likeness of the Son of God (Eph 4:13 and 15). This style of teaching was used both by the Lord Jesus, and by Paul; it was thoroughly rabbinic. So in the lamad method of learning, we are returning to the Hebraic concept of education, which includes this Encounter and Revelation concept. And it's to be a personal encounter at that, not a second-hand experience or a vicarious one.

The time of instruction is meant to become a time of transformation, not one simply of imparting knowledge. The classroom is to be a place of impassioned discussion and the sharing of real life experiences. It becomes a place where we meet God through the sharing of real life experiences of other believers. If you've ever seen a Jewish yeshiva in action, and heard the noise level, you'll know exactly what we're talking about here.②

② **Yeshiva** or **yeshivah** (Hebrew ישיבה literally meaning “sitting down” or in modern Hebrew “meeting”) is an institution for Torah study and the study of Talmud primarily within Orthodox Judaism attended only by males. Yeshiva is also the “generic” name for the entire system of education that teaches all age levels.

The Jewish students debate, throw ideas around, challenge each other, all with much gusto, action and noise. Certainly it's a cultural thing that might not work exactly the same way in our western culture, but the basis of the yeshiva is still one of sharing experiences, and learning to relate those to Scripture in order for transformation to occur. And while there may be much disagreement between various views, it rarely reaches the point where deep division occurs.

Compare this attitude with what so often happens in many churches, where one brother will set himself against another over even small doctrinal differences. The result from this is the formation of yet another church! In fact the modern western church is highly fractured due to the inability of brethren to stay together even though they might hotly differ over Scripture. We could well learn something from the yeshiva method and the Jewish mentality. The modern church is far too individualistic and has forgotten its corporateness.

So, in the Hebraic (and Biblical) view the classroom becomes a place where we practice truth, not just talk about it. The classroom is not separated from life but is actually part of our lives. It's in the classroom environment where we begin to "walk the talk." If someone should have a different slant on a certain truth, then we are to lovingly listen, really listen, to what they're saying. This is more than just being polite, it's preferring one another and being willing to learn something fresh from a different perspective. And, it will take much humility!

The "classroom" becomes a place where we can model what we're learning. For example, say we're looking at what the Word says about patience, forbearing, loving the brethren, etc. - as we throw ideas back and forth, open the Word, share ideas and feelings, it probably won't take long before somebody crosses swords with someone else.

What transpires will test whether or not we're learning truth at that moment. Should someone get short or uptight with another of the brethren, then the very lesson we're supposed to be learning (about patience, love, etc) will quickly be seen to have failed. Love and patience was not shown by one brother to another, and the lesson was not learnt, and the truth of it wasn't personally appropriated.

Now not only wasn't the lesson received and believed, everyone in the group saw it! So this immediately brings in another dynamic. Imagine the scene for a moment: the lesson is about patience, love, and preferring the brethren. Somebody presents an idea, but someone else wants to push their view forward without really listening to the other brother. Tension fills the room, the body language changes, the pitch of voices rises, eyes narrow, and every one feels on edge. They all see what's going on. They know they're supposed to be talking about "brotherly love" but little is being shown between the two brethren concerned.

Not only does everyone see and feel what's going on, the one who's causing the tension now feels more tense because he's instigated it. Then it occurs to him that the lesson is supposed to be about "brotherly love" and he's not really showing it - but he wants to stick to his guns. What does he do now? Does he back off? Does he abruptly leave the room? Does he pull back and hide in himself? Or does he show humility and say sorry?

If he does apologise, he's actually showed he's learning the lesson, simply by apologising for offending both the brother and the group. If he doesn't apologise, he's actually dug another hole for himself, for not only has he caused a stir, now he's added to it by refusing to apologise!

This is why group settings like a lamad study can be so exhilarating – and sometimes so difficult. In the case above, we have one lesson that was to be learnt, but out of it arose another (whether to apologise or not). In the end both lessons can be learnt, or one, or none!

Those who choose to utilise lamad teaching soon find that study and life interact quite dynamically through such a method. A concept like this will reveal the state of our heart very quickly, and publicly. We see this of course in the gospels where the Lord Jesus in his teachings revealed what was truly in the hearts of the Pharisees and scribes - and it was done in public!

So, clearly in the Biblical concept, learning is meant to be about life, and it's meant to be life-long. Even though we begin to learn from an extremely early age in childhood, we all know it's unrealistic to think we can cram education into the first 20 years or so of our lives. The process of accumulating information, learning how to use it, letting it transform us, and finally becoming creative with it, are all life-long issues.

Chapter 3

Adjusting to the truth

There are many differences between the two great competing cultures of the West and East, but it's in the area of education that we find one of the most marked divergences. The Greek or Western idea of education emphasizes what we might call "detached information," while the East or Hebraic idea stresses something akin to "a personal encounter." This of course is a generalisation, but nevertheless is basically true.

Biblically speaking it was important to the Hebrews that each learner should have a personal encounter which would transform them. It's obvious that having an encounter and responding to God are the central dynamics of Scripture. For the Hebrews all of life became a classroom.

Should we choose to use this method today we need to ensure that our "classrooms" are where we practice truth and love (Eph 4:15) ③, and be willing to adjust to it where needed. One of the key factors about participating in a Lamad-style encounter is understanding the need for each participant to have love from a pure heart, have a good conscience, and a sincere faith (1 Tim 1:5). Each of these are *heart* issues, and anyone participating in Lamad will soon come "undone" if they have a bad attitude or selfish motive.

I recall one time some years ago when someone was asked to share a personal reflection at one of our lamad-style meetings. The person utilised the occasion to attack the policies of our Church, as well as me as the Minister, taking us all by surprise! It wasn't long before it became clear she had a major grudge and seized the moment to deliver it, virtually wrecking that Lamad encounter. Unfortunately this just happened to be our first meeting, and it turned many people off from coming again. It took some months of careful preparation and the binding-up of hurt souls before we could initiate another attempt. I learnt a significant lesson that day.

③ "**Being** the truth in love" is a more accurate translation of the Greek than "speaking the truth in love".

While this kind of thing isn't at all uncommon in congregations, it does show how many believers allow the mind to subjugate their spirit. Biblically speaking the mind is made to serve the spirit. All spiritual instruction and training is to be focussed on the spirit (or heart), so it's important that a healthy Lamad group should have participants who have already dealt with many of their soul issues, or at least are attending to them for adjustment.

Now this doesn't mean you can only have a Lamad group if you have "mature" people, but it does mean that those in the study group should be willing to strive for maturity. Being open and teachable is something vital to Lamad experiences. There's a helpful adage that goes like this:

**The spirit is king;
the soul is a servant to the spirit;
and the body is a slave to the soul.**

As we adjust more and more to the Word of God, we find that our personal encounter demands a teaching style of Holy Spirit guided discovery. Lamad learning encourages the flow of revelation within the hearts of the students. Discovery often happens best in a lively interchange within the classroom. Therefore, effective group interaction must be promoted by the *lamad* teacher.

However we do need to be aware of those who might hijack the encounter for their own purposes, as in the case mentioned above. Also, the leader or facilitator will need to carefully but firmly address inerrant doctrine. I find the best way of doing this is to encourage the person who's spoken by affirming their right to speak to the group, but then to let Scripture adjust the issue by saying something like: "Now let's reflect on what Mike said by seeing what the Word says about that." If the comment was unscriptural then the Word will show it to be so. It's very hard to disagree with the Word, but they might well disagree with the leader!

So it's helpful to keep the focus firmly on what the Word clearly says. Certain things are central to life and eternity, others are not. Anger, fear, and doubt are temporary and will be swallowed up by the realities that abide forever: faith, hope, and love.

The Lamad curriculum constantly emphasizes the abiding, eternal realities, instilling these into the lives of the students. For this reason it's vital to conclude a lamad meeting with prayer; praying for one another in small groups, asking the Holy Spirit to bring about a reality in our lives based on what's been discussed.

Man is to live in the constant flow of God's grace and purposes. This is accomplished by lifting up our eyes in worship to the King, and becoming consumed by His presence. While we are in the Lord's presence, we acknowledge that we no longer live, but that Christ is our life, and the life we now live is by faith (Gal 2:20). We live out of daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit, recognizing that everything done outside of divine flow is a dead work. Such is the joy, the thrill and the aim of a Lamad style encounter. An encounter with our brothers and sisters, an encounter with our God, and an encounter with those things that are eternal.



Lamad encounters will bring us into confrontation with the thoughts of others, and especially with our own ideas and thoughts. Have you ever noticed how we as humans react rather than respond to new ideas? Very few people “respond to”; most of us “react against” what might be presented. This isn’t such a huge problem because it’s natural that we would defend long-held opinions. But it does become a problem when, after due consideration, we begin to actively resist what’s being shared.

In a lamad style encounter we don’t set out to neither pull down the views of others, nor do we attempt to exalt our own. What we do is to listen, and then measure everyone’s views against the standard of Scripture.

For some years now I’ve wondered what it would be like to have a group of believers meet together for one purpose: to methodically go through all the fundamental doctrines of “church teaching” and to be scrupulously honest in seeing how they measure up against the plain teaching of Scripture. I wonder how many of us would be so brave. To test how you might react, I’ll throw something your way right now.

As Christians we commonly speak about the New Covenant; when we share communion we usually refer to that whole event as the inauguration of the New Covenant; and some groups even call themselves “New Testament churches.” Now - here we go, so get ready! Scripturally speaking what group of people are associated with the “New Covenant”?

Some might answer, “All who have faith in Christ”, others might say “Those who are born again”, and others might boldly declare “Only true Christians are members of the New Covenant.” Now, what does Scripture simply and plainly say? Read it slowly and out loud to yourself.

“Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” Jer 31:31

“Listen! The days are coming, says YHWH, and I will establish a new covenant over the house of Israel and over the house of Judah.” Heb 8:8

Now please read it just once more before we go on, asking yourself that one question, ‘With whom is the new covenant made’? Note what the Word says, in two different places (“two” for witness - Deut 17:6); “...**with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...**”

Not a mention of the gentiles here! No mention of any other group except the houses of Israel and Judah. The Word plainly says the new covenant will be established with Israel and Judah. Let that sink in for a moment. Now please, I’m not trying to stir you up and get you all agitated, but I do want to ask you a question.

What are you feeling right now? Are you stunned by what you plainly read from Scripture? Are you agitated that I should throw you a curly one? Are you angry with me because you conclude I have some weird doctrine? Is your mind already racing ahead and making certain deductions about me and my opinions?

Well, that’s OK because I’m not going to defend myself about what I’ve asked you to read through. What I would like you to consider is ‘How do you feel? What emotions has this

brought forth in you?’ What has just happened is what happens when we share in a lamad encounter. Issues will definitely come up that will test whether you’re going to respond to or react against something.

I’ll let you mull over those two Bible verses for a while; the Word and the Spirit will be the only ones that will work it out for you. Besides, my point in doing this little exercise was NOT to try and change your doctrine, or to make you run to other verses to support your entrenched views (and by that I don’t mean to be demeaning). I’m not making any judgement on you, truly! All I wanted to do was to see how you felt about something that would challenge your understanding. That’s all.

Let’s move on. If you can tap into your feelings about being challenged and begin to assess them, then we’re off and running. What will happen as we further investigate our opinions, is that the Word will open new ways to us. We’ll begin to see how long-held understandings can’t always be supported by the direct reading of Scripture. Gradually the Holy Spirit will enlighten us about some of our views, even dearly held ones.

It’s not that we’ve believed a lie and exalted it as truth, but that we’ve simply taken on-board some teaching in good faith, often from a respected preacher or established doctrinal stance. If the Word shows us that our view point isn’t quite accurate, all we need do is to adjust to the truth.

This is a regular feature in Scripture, but often we overlook it. Revelation is progressive, and so too should be the formation of our mind. We are to conform to the mind of Christ and to His Word, not to what our favourite preacher said or what the latest best-selling book propagated.

I prefer to not try and “change” a person’s mind; that rarely works. And actually it’s not the way of Scripture either. What is needed, and what works best, is allowing our opinions to be re-evaluated against the standard of Scripture. This is what I prefer to call “adjustment”. It’s a less confrontationist word and encourages us to re-think our ideas by testing them solely against Scripture and no other source. Quite exhilarating really!

So let’s look at some examples from the Word.

“And going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. And He called them.” Mtt 4:21

In this verse the word “mending” (or “repairing”) is where we start in considering adjusting to the truth. In Greek it’s *katartizō* (G2675) and a more accurate meaning is “*to adjust, to put to rights, to articulate, to mend if needed, to get ready, to equip thoroughly, to fully train, to render fit, to make complete again, to make sound, to restore, to mend what has been broken or torn*”. What rich insights are here! You can probably already see where we’re going with this.

Here we have James and John “restoring” their fishing nets because they needed to be made *sound* again, they needed to be *adjusted* and *put to rights* so that they’d be useful, *equipped* and functional at sea. Now transfer that kind of concept to a believer who needs

their doctrine re-aligned so that it comes back into harmony with Scripture, and there you have it - adjustment to the truth. Other supportive texts in Scripture are:

“(Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And Aquila and Priscilla heard him, and they took him aside and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly.” Acts 18:26

Here we find a believer called Apollos, fervent in spirit and who taught boldly about Jesus as Messiah (vs. 25), but who was nevertheless limited because he only had John’s baptismal understanding. So Aquila and his wife take Apollos aside and *adjust* this thinking so that it more accurately reflects the complete truth about Jesus. Apollos is thus *rendered fit, made sound and put to rights*.

Aquila and Priscilla did it the Biblical way, and re-aligned a new believer so that he’d be equipped for further ministry. They didn’t chastise him, run him out of the synagogue, confront him rudely or criticize him - they simply took him aside and explained things more accurately to him. There was a re-alignment of received truth. This should be a good model for us. Let’s continue with this vein of thought:

“But I exhort you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same purpose.” 1 Cor 1:10

Here we have the same Greek word *katartizō* as found in the text about repairing the fishing nets (Mtt. 4:21). Paul is exhorting the Corinthians to be like minded and wants them to be adjusted in their thinking so that they all have “*the same mind and same purpose*”. If only today’s churches would sit down and do this, what single-minded purpose we would have as the joint Body of Christ! (see 2 Cor 13:11).

Paul gives us a clue towards the adjustment process when addressing the brethren in Galatia.

“Brothers, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you the spiritual ones restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.” Gal 6:1

Here is the use of a metaphor taken from the idea of a skillful surgeon restoring a dislocated limb and putting it back in place. Notice that Paul says it’s to be the “spiritual ones” who are to do the restoring. Those believers who are still carnal, loose in their minds, untested by the Spirit, and not been through the adjusting themselves (i.e. unskillful), will not be able to properly adjust others. Leaders in the Body need to take notice of this, and implement it well. Failure to do so has taken a drastic toll through the years.

Should a person considering themselves to be “spiritual” Paul throws in a warning about pride. His exhortation is addressed to the conscience of each believer as if to say, ‘Before you deal severely with your erring brother, consider your own weakness and susceptibility to temptation first, and only restore him in view of that fact.’ This is a good antidote for spiritual pride. An old saying makes the point rather well: “Satan loves a shining target.”

So far we've looked mainly at the how to adjust others, but now it's time to bring the matter closer to home and take stock of ourselves. In His discourse to the disciples on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gives this exhortation:

"Therefore you also be ready, for in that hour you think not, the Son of Man comes." Mtt 24:44

The phrase "be ready" (G2092 *heteos* / *hetoimos*) means *fitness, adjusted, made ready, accomplished*. It also has an added meaning that is quite striking: *to receive One coming* (Thayer's Bible definitions). Here the Lord Jesus is exhorting in very strong terms, the need for believers to be *adjusted*, and *spiritually and mentally fit*. And notice how this is linked to being aware of the times and seasons relating to His return.

Further on in the same discourse Jesus tells the parable of the Ten Virgins; and notice what He says about the state of those welcomed into the wedding feast:

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they who were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." Mtt 25:10

Only those who were "ready" went in to the wedding feast! Guess what that English word means in the Greek? The same as in Matthew 24:44, *hetoimos* meaning *fitness, adjusted, made ready, accomplished*. So we have Jesus warning us to be *adjusted*, for if we don't bend to it, and if we're alive at His Return, we will not be welcomed into His wedding feast. Let that sink in!

Hence we find the disturbing truth that adjusting to truth is not simply something for new believers; it's not just something that needs to happen to those with wrong doctrine or misplaced sympathy for unusual teaching; it's also got something to do with an issue as large and important as being welcomed into the Lamb's wedding banquet!

How vital then is it that we give ourselves over to the adjusting work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. This is not an option. It's a Biblical requirement associated directly with our maturing. Dare we hesitate to not bend to this great adjusting? I think not, and I sincerely pray not.

Paul saw this as a major component of his ministry, and he made a very bold declaration stating that the joint ministries of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher would continue to exist until the Body came to the **"measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"** (Eph 4:13).

Adjusting to the truth, being *made internally fit* for ministry, *put to rights*, and all the other words that we've looked at so far; all these come together when Paul says that individually you and I need this to happen to us. For when that process is underway within us, then the Body corporate, the "Church" will begin to mature. Then and only then. And it will be the on-going ministry of Ephesians 4:11 that will enhance that maturing. This stirs me; this excites me; this makes me jealous to be part of that great day; this is what our purpose is to be as the Body...

"...with a view to the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting up of the body of Christ." Eph 4:12

“For the perfecting” (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν). This phrase is only used once in the entire New Testament. In non-Biblical classical Greek writings it referred to the idea of *re-fitting* or *equipping* a ship, or the *re-setting* of a bone. This radical idea of *adjustment* we’ve been looking at is forcefully brought out in the next verse.

“...that we all may come to the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph 4:13

You can’t get better than that. This is what the Word tells us the Father wants of us; this is what the Word tells us will actually happen in His timing. Fear not that you might die before that day arrives, for Paul encourages us that...

“...we the living who remain at the coming of the Lord will not go before those who have fallen asleep.” 1 Thess 4:15

We go together; we arrive together; we are glorified together, as a Body! Now whether our joint maturing happens all at the same time, or whether it happens to individuals throughout history and accumulates on the Great Day - I don’t know. But logically it would seem that this exhortation by both the Lord Jesus and Paul, indicates that it’s our personal obligation and duty throughout all periods of “church history” to *get ready*, to *be adjusted*, to be *rendered fit*. May it be so, individually and corporately.

Chapter 4

The importance of the letter “Lamed”

The tallest letter in traditional Biblical Hebrew is the *lamed*. This letter is at the very centre of the Hebrew alphabet towering over all other characters. If you draw a horizontal line touching the high point of each Hebrew letter you’ll see that the *lamed* is the only letter that rises above the top line.

ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
Tet (T)	Chet (Ch)	Zayin (Z)	Vav (V/O/U)	He (H)	Dalet (D)	Gimel (G)	Bet (B/V)	Alef (Silent)
ס	ן	נ	מ	מ	ל	ך	כ	י
Samech (S)	Nun (N)	Nun (N)	Mem (M)	Mem (M)	Lamed (L)	Khaf (Kh)	Kaf (K/Kh)	Yod (Y)
ת	ש	ר	ק	ץ	צ	ף	פ	ע
Tav (T/S)	Shin (Sh/S)	Resh (R)	Qof (Q)	Tzade (Tz)	Tzade (Tz)	Fe (F)	Pe (P/F)	Ayin (Silent)

So in looking at the letter, it literally stands above all the rest. For this reason alone the *lamed* has been the cause of much interest by Jewish scholars, and they've reasoned that because God does all things with a purpose there must be some wonderful significance in the fact that it's so tall.

The ancient Phoenician/Hebrew language consisted of 22 basic letters, each one written like a picture with a certain representation depicting a tent, a door or even an animal. These pictographic letters each have a specific meaning that enables us to gain a significant insight into the Hebraic, and therefore Biblical, culture.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate this is to look at some examples of ancient pictography. Bear in mind that all these examples are merely pictographs, and that Biblical and modern Hebrew often bears little resemblance to the more ancient form. Therefore the "early" or "primitive" letter form will serve best as indicators.

The second letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet (alphabet) is **beyt ב** having a "b" sound. Pictographically the letter is depicted in various forms and looks like the graphics seen below. It thus represents a tent or the floor plan of a dwelling, and so indicates to us what is found inside a tent (house) - a family. So the meaning of this letter Beyt can be "tent" or "that which is within".



Let's look at another example. The **mem מ** has a "m" sound. We see in the graphics below that it looks like a picture of waves on water (in its primitive and foundational form). It can also mean the flowing "water" of man and animals, that is, blood. Because blood is passed from one generation to another (in both humans and animals) it can also mean "from".

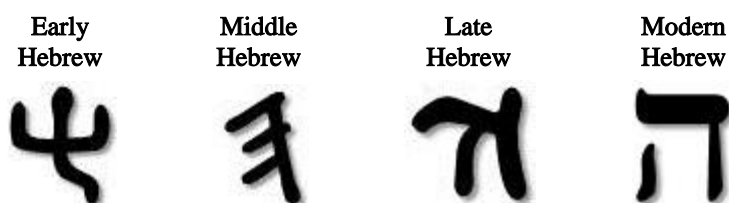


So we're beginning to see how the ancient letters, using pictographic representations, have some very interesting meanings. One more example then before we get to the special insights about the letter *lamed*.

The letter **hey** ה has a “h” sound and its ancient depiction is of a man standing with raised arms as if he’s yelling “look at that”. We still do this today when we want to catch someone’s attention and call out “hey you!” using the very same Hebrew letter, *hey*.

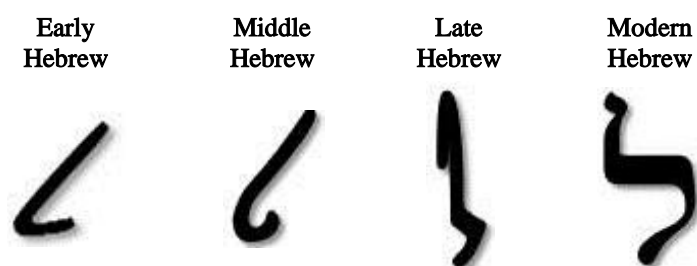
So this letter is used in the sense of directing our attention to something important.

hey ה



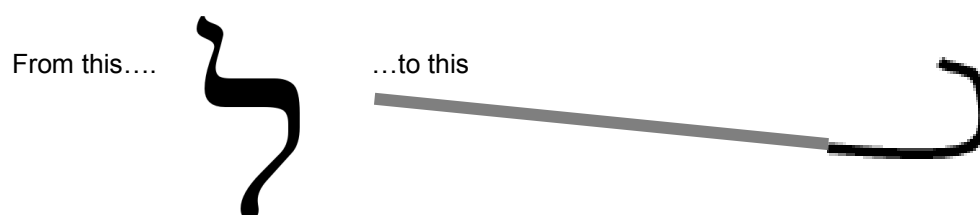
So, now to our special letter *lamed*. The *lamed* (or “*lam*” in ancient Hebrew) has a “l” sound and is depicted as a shepherd’s crook or staff. Traditionally the staff was used to direct sheep toward a certain area, e.g. towards water, a pasture or to safety. So this letter is used to mean “toward”.

lamed ל



Originally *lamed* was depicted as a goad, the main instrument for training and directing oxen in primitive agricultural societies. It was basically nothing more than a wooden pole or stick about 2 or 3 metres long, with a pointed tip.

So now if we turn the pictorial graphic of *lamed* on its side and imagine an extension to its arm, we’ll see something akin to a goad or staff.



You can see that already it’s beginning to look more like what we know to be a traditional shepherd’s crook or staff.



Putting all this together we start to see why *lamed* is used as a fitting designation for “teaching” and “learning”, for this is precisely what a shepherd did in caring for his sheep. The shepherd wasn’t simply a “carer” of the flock but an educator as well. He knew his sheep intimately, they knew his voice; trust was paramount, and a good shepherd knew the limits of his flock’s endurance, as well as how to educate the young lambs new to it. His staff was truly a *lamed*.

In fact it’s the very foundation of the word *lamad* which again means “to teach and learn”. The simple form of the verb means “to learn” and the intensive form means “to teach.”

The Hebraic understanding of education requires that teaching and learning go hand in hand, and that each one of us should be both a learner and a teacher - for the rest of our life. When learning ceases, teaching will also cease.

Lamed, the ox (or sheep) goad has come to represent “education” partly due to the insight that traditionally the teacher would goad his student into acquiring knowledge. In some cultures the teacher would instruct his students with a goad in hand.

For example in Asia, should the aspiring religious student drift off to sleep during instruction or meditation, he will soon be awakened by a sharp hit on the shoulders with the teacher’s goad! Perhaps we who are older will remember only too well the sting of the teacher’s cane at school - the goad. Whether it made us learn any more efficiently is another matter!

Another form of *lamed* is the word *limud* which means “learner” or “disciple”. A disciple is one who is taught and who’s been subjected to the discipline of learning, sometimes through the use of a goad. There’s an obvious connection between the words “discipline” and “discipleship”. The discipline of study produces the disciple, and of course this isn’t confined to gaining intellectual knowledge; it’s also to do with “life knowledge”.

We find the Hebrew word *limud* first used of disciples in 1 Chronicles 25:8.

“And they cast lots for duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher as well as the pupil (*talmid*).”

The word *talmid* has *limud* as its root, with *talmid* originally meaning what we call a “scholar”. As time went on this eventually became the common Jewish term for a student, learner or disciple.

When we come to the New Testament we find the Greek word *mathetes* (Strong’s G3103) being used for “disciple”. Interestingly this Greek word *mathetes* is the root for our word “mathematics”, and we’re all aware of the discipline that’s required in that field of study.

Jesus’ disciples (*talmidim*) were instructed to:

“...go, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you”. Mtt 28:19-20

So we see that the foundation of discipleship is learning and teaching, and the foundation of this learning and teaching is the commandments of Jesus. What we commonly call “Christian discipleship” is meant to be a real life exercise of learning through the discipline of

being instructed into the specific teachings of Christ. It's like submitting to the goad of training, permitting oneself to be pricked by the pointed *lamed*.

With the *lamed* imagery in mind, we now get a rich insight into Jesus' words found in Matthew 11:29-30.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light".

The metaphor used here is really the same as the *lamed* insight. In ancient Biblical times a young ox was yoked to an older more mature one. In that way when they were sent out to plough the younger "disciple" could learn from the older "master". Being yoked together meant that the mature ox could instruct at very close quarters. It must've been rough on the young animal being so closely tethered to one who knew the ropes and had learnt the tricks of the trade. But it paid off, and the younger animal learnt the necessary life skills.



Being yoked together with Jesus means learning at very close quarters - and learning "on the job". Jesus said the yoke would be there, but by submitting to it and to Him, it would prove to be "easy". I wonder how many of us have really learnt that lesson. The Messiah's yoke gives us just enough discomfort to nudge and goad us onto the right pathway.

Like the two oxen, the Biblical learning process requires us to learn on the road, to walk the talk, to imitate the elder amongst us. Hence Jesus said:

"It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher." Mtt 10:25

And Paul is bold to state: "...**be imitators of me.**" (1 Cor 4:16) and "**Be imitators of me as I am also of Christ.**" (1 Cor 11:1)

This imitating of one who was held in awe and reverence depended entirely upon a willingness of heart to be taught. The imagery we have over and over in Scripture is one of walking with the master, whether it is Elisha walking with Elijah, or the disciples with Jesus. This learning process was intense, demanding and certainly not optional if you truly wanted "to know". But once you had set your mind to it you would be expected to walk the road with the master no matter where it went and what was at the end.

It was a dynamic in which one followed the teacher and thereby was engaged in the great lessons of life, these being learnt by the day-to-day events that all people encountered. What made the common daily things different was how the master instructed you to look beyond them and to see in them something of God.

If only today's Church still practiced this, what a difference it would make to new believers! "But the cost is too high" men say. And certainly many would also complain that such a process is far too inconvenient for today's modern life. But look what we're missing!

Chapter 5

The Point of studying the Word

The long term relationship formed between the teacher and the student (rabbi and *talmid*) was one of ongoing interaction, deliberately fostered by the teacher as he saw fit, when he saw fit. Jesus did this in a special way, not using His own initiative to instruct, but waiting on the Father to "show" him what was to be spoken and acted upon, and when it was to happen.

Jesus replied, I assure you, the Son is not able to do anything on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way." Jhn 5:19

"...the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me to speak." Jhn 12:50

For disciples, two of the greatest honours they could receive from their teacher was to be instructed in the his unique prayer, and to be "covered in his dust".

You might recall in the New Testament that one of the disciples asked Jesus, as a rabbi, to teach them all how to pray. For us today this might seem a little strange, but there was a peculiar Biblical reason for doing so. Each rabbi was known for his own style of teaching, and his students could be readily identified by others through the way they incorporated this teaching into a unique prayer. When this specialized prayer was used by the rabbi's followers, other people could identify them with that rabbi simply by listening to the content of the prayer.

"And it happened as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples." Luk 11:1

Evidently Jesus' disciples heard how John the Baptist had instructed his disciples in prayer, and now Jesus' followers felt it was time that they too were identified with the Lord by knowing His kind of prayer. It was then that Jesus taught them how to pray by incorporating His own heaven-sent doctrine into what we generally call "the Lord's Prayer".

"Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven..." Mtt 6:9

As you read through this prayer you'll quickly see that Jesus' declaration about the kingdom, about forgiveness, and about God being a Father, are uniquely His.

Allied to knowing this kind of prayer was to be known as a follower of a rabbi by his type of teaching. The word "dust" in Scripture is a metaphor for "teaching". As we've seen in Biblical times, to be pupil of a teacher required you to follow him, literally. You would walk with him,

eat with him, serve him, etc. So as you walked the unpaved roads of Israel you would literally be walking in his dust. Therefore to follow a teacher and to be his disciple was like being “covered in his dust”.

This kind of life-instruction goes to the very heart of a lamad-style encounter. Such teaching focuses directly on the teacher-pupil / rabbi-disciple model of inter-relatedness and accountability. It was, and is, the teacher’s role to bring the disciple to a place of self-discovery. Of course in the end it’s not at all a journey of “self” discovery but one of discovering Christ, who is “far above all” (Eph. 4:10).

The disciple’s role is to submit, question and search and having arrived at truth, to stand by it and for it. This is why Paul instructed Timothy his *talmid* to...

“...be diligent and present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth...” 2 Tim 2:15

One of the most vital aspects of discipleship requires the *talmid* to “know God’s Word” and to “know the God of the Word”. Sadly in modern Christian discipleship, particularly in western churches, the former is elevated above the latter. We often esteem the written word above the living Word.

Any “study” of the Scriptures must be done with a view to “do” what the Word says, and to adjust to what the Word declares us to be. The *talmid* must set his heart to study the Word in order that he might do it. Only then can a *talmid* truly have the Biblical and divine right to teach it to others (see Ezra 7:10).

Scripturally speaking, learning without actually doing, is akin to sin. The Word declares that:

“To anyone knowing to do good, and not do it, for him it is sin.” Jms 4:17

This is like believing without decision or action. Any theory without practice is ultimately meaningless and even deceptive luring the person into believing that they really “know” something. We could even go so far as to say that Biblically speaking, anything that’s not practical is not truly spiritual. The proof of our belief is action based upon knowledge, understanding and wisdom. And remember that wisdom is applied spiritual knowledge, that is, it’s practical. Without such proof in our lives as disciples, discipleship is never truly established within us.

Any true disciple of Jesus Christ will be a student of God’s on-going and living instruction. They will have a hunger for the Word, and give time to meditate on it, allowing the Holy Spirit as teacher to bring forth revelation and conviction. Studying God’s Word is essential to true and transforming discipleship, for it’s the Word and it’s Author that imparts life, not the teacher or rabbi, no matter how gifted or anointed they be.

Such is the importance of correctly studying the Word, that the Jews have long believed that study is the highest form of worship. Now this is an astonishing thought. The Jews link studying the Word of God with worshipping Him! On the other hand, the Greek philosophical and educative concept is that “knowledge” should be worshipped. If you want some simple proof of this just look at how “education” is so highly esteemed in modern western society. In fact people are often looked down upon simply because they haven’t been to university or don’t have a degree: the “blue collar” versus the “white collar” syndrome.

So how is it that the Jews link study with worship? The words for worship both in Hebrew (*segad*) and Greek (*proskunéo*) mean to “prostate oneself before God”. For the Jews the ultimate form of prostrating before God is to submit to His will, which is found recorded in His Word.

Quite straightforward really. The study of the Scriptures has an intrinsic truth attached to it, namely, we study in order to do what God has said should be done! For the Jew the logic is impeccable; the study of God’s Word is a form of worship or submission to God because in it we find God’s will.

In fact the word “worship” in English means “to give worth to, to esteem highly”. So when we worship God, whether at a “worship” service in church, or in the prayer closet, or in studying the Scriptures, we are “giving worth” to that which we esteem most highly. This is why we need to adjust our lives to the Living Word of God, Jesus, as we find truth revealed in the written Word about Him.

With sincerity of heart, teachability of mind, and devotion of spirit, when as disciples we follow Christ, obey what He has said, do what He wants done, we ascribe worth to Him as our Master - we esteem Him highly and worship Him!

So we find at the end of all this, that the “highest” and most esteemed letter, the *lamed*, brings us to a realization that it holds a very special place in the Hebrew mind. It is the goad of our learning and the staff of our Shepherd that prods us onward and upward to truly “know” (Eccles 12:11a). We will find that as wisdom grows, learning continues to ever increase, for it was written by a wise man that:

“The wise man will hear and so will increase in learning...” Prov 1:5

Yes, true disciples are *talmidim*, yielded to that easy *lamed* with which the Lord Jesus gently prods those with whom He is yoked. By a willingness to submit and learn, we experience much knowledge, understanding and wisdom. This will bring forth an abundant life within our hearts, and the world shall see to Whom we belong and that we are covered with His dust.

“The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life.” Jhn 6:63

Chapter 6

The Harmony of Revelation and Teaching

Revelatory teaching comes in various forms, some of which are depicted metaphorically as dew, rain, raindrops and showers.

“(Moses said) My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall drop down as the dew, as the raindrops on the tender plant, and as the showers on the grass.” Deut 32:2

There appears to be a sequence here - rain, dew, raindrops, and showers. The difference between the types are interesting when considering how revelation interacts with doctrine, or teaching. Let’s look at this passage in some depth.

“My doctrine” (H3948) in Hebrew means *to carry away, to attract or gain over the heart* by eloquence or persuasive speech. The Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) translates the word as *apophthegm* which means a *weighty saying*. Moses is saying he has something of extreme importance to impart to his hearers. He is desiring that his message would gain authority over men’s hearts, attracting them and influencing them to produce lasting fruit. The phrase “my doctrine” actually means *something received* and alludes to *instruction received by insight* (revelation).

- ♦ **“Rain”** (H4306) means simply that, rain. Neither a downpour, heavy showers or wild weather. Moses declares that his insightful doctrine shall indeed *drop as the rain* - it shall come drop by drop as rain, beginning slowly and distinctly but eventually increasing more and more until all is poured down and the whole divine revelation is complete. Some say this refers to the coming of the Gospel and its spread across the globe.
- ♦ **“Dew”** (H2919) means a *covering* over vegetation; a *night mist*. Moses’ speech shall descend gently and softly on the ear and the heart of his hearers (and later readers), like the dew which moistens and refreshes all that it touches.
- ♦ **“Raindrops”** (H8164) from a word that means a *shaggy* or *rough goat* (H8163). What’s the connection? Perhaps it refers to the inconsistent falling of rain that is *rough* in its manner.
- ♦ **“And as the showers”** (H7241) means to *multiply, abundance, to increase greatly, copious showers, heavy showers, shower after shower*, or rather a *continual rain* whose drops are greatly multiplied on the earth beyond human calculation.

Notice that dew, rain, raindrops and showers are those things that connect the heavens and the earth. These are fitting metaphors to describe how revelation comes down to us, not at man’s bidding but at heaven’s command. We cannot manufacture nor demand any revelation; the Lord will send it when He knows the time.

In verse 31 we find Moses calling on heaven and earth to bear witness to what he’s saying. This was no ordinary speech or sermon, this was truth being prophesied. Moses was in fact bringing an admonition to the people because of their rebellious nature, and what he has to say comes directly from heaven as revelation (Deut. 31:19). In fact it’s a song!

“Now then, write this song for you, and teach it to the sons of Israel. Put it in their mouths, so that this song shall be for a witness to Me against the sons of Israel.” Deut 31:19 (see also verses 21-22 and 30)

It’s an interesting insight that revelation can often come as a song, and that typologically speaking songs are revelations. Compare the Book of Revelation; there are a two definite songs in it (5:9 and 15:3) with the possibility that other sayings (like 11:17f) were in fact song-like too. So instead of calling this book the *Revelation of Jesus Christ* we could call it “the Song of Jesus Christ”.

Think then how this relates to the *Song of Songs* in the Old Testament. Change the metaphor for that book and you get *the Revelation of Revelations*, and what revelations there are in that song book!

Back to the rain! In Jewish tradition words of admonition (as in Moses' speech/song) are analogous to *rain*. When rain falls on trees, plants and crops, growth isn't noticed immediately. It takes time for the rain to have an effect. So too with admonition. It takes time for us to listen and respond to an admonition. Generally we react against being told off, but God calls us to listen, really listen to His song and to respond accordingly.

This song then is an admonition to Israel of which heaven and earth are called to bear witness (two for witness). In fact that same song will be sung again at the end of the age when it becomes the Song of the Lamb (Rev 15:3-4). So in all of Scripture this song will be sung twice, as a witness and as a completed prophecy. Let's pursue the imagery of dew, rain and showers just a little further.

Dew and rain never form together, and note that dew doesn't have the life-sustaining power that rain has. Dew is usually perennial, unlike rain which comes and goes according to seasons. "Rain" comes down from above, in the atmosphere. "Dew" can come from either the humid atmosphere or the humidity held within the soil. So in the case of "dew" the water can be formed by a coming down and a going up. This is a wonderful metaphor for how truth both comes down to us from the Lord, and comes up from us after it's done its covering work.

"Dew" in the natural is often referred to as a covering, and in fact only covers those things that are somewhat out of direct contact with the ground (earth). Dew forms when radiant heat from an object drops low enough to draw vapour from the surrounding atmosphere or the soil. In many cultures "dew" stands for purity and freshness, so how fitting that Moses should sing a song with such wonderful freshness about it.



Revelation is that which comes down to us at times chosen solely by the Lord. Insight that comes out of such revelation is often presented by the prophets, and sometimes apostles. This would seem natural as the Word declares that the church is built upon the foundation of these two ministries (Eph 2:20). But I sincerely believe that a generation of revelatory teachers is coming forth who will give fresh understanding to such revelations, and anchor them firmly to Scripture.

Sometimes there exists a conflict between the joint apostolic/prophetic ministries and the teaching ministries because of how the two groups tend to function. Apostles and prophets are the foundation-layers and often move in wider revelation than teachers of the Word, who primarily feed the Body. But as mentioned at the beginning of this booklet, I believe that the time is fast approaching when teachers shall begin to receive great revelation that may well astound even the prophets.

All five ascension gift/five-fold ministries are necessary and are to work together (some scholars hold it to be a Four-Fold calling, not five). Each comes from a different aspect, but none is better than the other. Rather than competing, each is to work to build as God has anointed him or her.

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up.” Eph 4:11-12

We are to appreciate and draw from each anointing, while not entering into idolatry by exalting one over another. Clearly apostles are only servants sent by the Lord to equip us. The resulting fruit in our lives is a result of God's grace.

For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe, as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” 1 Cor 3:4-7

As a demonstration of His grace, God chooses whom He will. It is God's choice who will serve as an apostle or pastor, etc. God has both learned and unlearned apostles; for example Paul the pharisee and Peter the fisherman. A brief look at this diversity is helpful to avoid exalting one over the other.

Paul was a theologian, the highest educated of all the apostles of his day. His theological training helped him convince others of the soundness of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, as well as to combat erroneous doctrine. He had received powerful supernatural revelations, and not only was his conversion a supernatural encounter but this theologian was caught up into the third heaven. The natural tendency of most of us would be to be conceited.

Yet after receiving such revelation Paul studied them solely in the light of Scripture (the OT) for years. Then, in humility, he submitted his revelation to those who were apostles before him, regardless of his intense theological training. He respected the insight and understanding of those who were older than he in the Lord, even if they were less educated than he in theology. Paul was the highest educated of all the New Testament apostles and probably had the deepest revelation – a contradiction by today's standards.

“Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.” Gal 2:1-2

Peter, one of these “leaders” who could've asserted his authority in pride as being the premiere apostle, actually affirmed Paul's revelation. Peter was willing to submit to the revelation of another brother. Yes, and even learned men such as Paul, need to be teachable. They can learn from the unlearned, like Peter. The reverse is also true. All need to be teachable. Please note that being teachable doesn't mean you're gullible!

“Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he

spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."

Acts 18:24-26

Paul taught that there is no conflict between true prophetic revelation and good Scriptural doctrine. We would do well to remember that the Bible was an experience before it was written down! Sometimes the understanding of Scripture follows a supernatural experience. For example, following the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, Peter explained that only in the light of that supernatural experience did Scripture become clear to them: **"This is that..."** (Acts 2:16).

We find in the Bible that the apostles' doctrine was a uniform body of teaching; a consensus of both the prophetic ones and the teaching ones. They recognized the need for one another. The apostles' doctrine was in harmony with one another and was clearly communicated to the brethren. The highest-educated ministers of today still need to speak in a way that the common person can understand.

The gospel is actually quite simple and straightforward; this doesn't of course mean it's "simplistic." Even so-called "deep teaching" can be understood when communicated in a simple and clear manner. True apostles are concerned for the building up of the Body of Christ, not for their scholarly kudos or approval.

Having self-sacrificial love is more important than revelation or miracles or a formal education. Character is more important than gifting. Maturity is more important than anointing. Christian maturity is being like Jesus in character - that is, the Word becoming fleshed out in our individual lives (see 1 Cor. 13:2).

So we find that apostles are to proclaim the mystery of Christ which has already been revealed, beginning as far back as Genesis 3:15. Therefore all subsequent apostolic-prophetic revelation is to retain Scripture as its one foundation and plumb line of truth, with Christ as the Head of the Body. There is to be no deviation in this. Christ must remain pre-eminent (Col. 1:18) and the Word must remain our standard of truth (1 Thess 2:13 / 2 Tim 2:15).

Good students will receive all God has to say, whether it be through teaching or revelation, rightly discerning and judging the content of the message. None of us individually knows it all, or has perfect understanding, no matter how many diplomas we have or how many trips to heaven we've had. We need each other. Apostles need pastors, and teachers need prophets. Together we are to grow up into Christ.

"...in whom all the building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." Eph 2:21-22

Chapter 7

The Four Levels of Biblical Understanding

Obviously there are many ways we learn truth from Scripture, however most of the ones we're used to are "western" methods based on Greek educational concepts. There is though an interesting Hebraic way of understanding, known as *pardes*.

While not all scholars believe the whole four aspects of it are valid, certainly the first three are generally agreed upon. In some quarters the fourth view (*sod*) has less support as a valid interpretation of Scripture, but nevertheless should be considered - especially since we're looking at the role of 'revelation.' Discernment is always a factor here.

Pardes (Strong's H6508) is a Hebrew word used in Scripture that means "a forest, orchard or park" and is generally referred to as Paradise. It corresponds with the Greek *paradeisos* (G3857) which also means "a park or paradise" (Eden).

The English transliteration of the Hebrew word *pardes* is spelled as PRDS - which is also an acronym for the Hebrew words **P**shat, **R**emez, **D**erasha, **S**od. Each of these four words represents one of the four different levels of understanding the Scriptures. Each level of understanding becomes deeper as we press in, starting with *pshat* and moving right through to *sod*.

The journey into *pardes* also represents our journey into deeper levels of intimacy with our Father, based on the example of Adam and Eve walking in paradise (*pardes*) with God (Gen 3:8). It represents our journey into the relationship we once had in the Garden of Eden, hence the word *pardes* = Paradise. Based on this concept of PRDS the four levels of Biblical understanding are:

P	Pshat	Literal, simple	Breadth	→	Orthodox
R	Remez	Parable, allegorical	Length	→	
D	Derasha	Seek, search	Depth	→	
S	Sod	Inner, mystical	Height	→	Heterodox

Some Jewish thought teaches that these four levels are actually four dimensions of meaning, or interpretation. These dimensions are the measurements of Breadth, Length, Depth, and Height as revealed in the following New Testament text.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God." Eph 3:18

The word “*comprehend*” (Strong’s G2638 / G2596 / G2983) means to “find, obtain, or perceive *down* in opposition, position or intensity.” It means to seek, search out, look at, and obtain what is *beneath* the surface of the Scriptures.

Could it be that Paul was encouraging us to come to truly know by seeking the breadth, length, depth, and height of truth? Was he encouraging us to take a journey into *pardes* (paradise) taking a path from *pshat* to *sod*? Perhaps.

Interestingly enough we see these four dimensions being used by the Lord Jesus. Note that He rarely used the *pshat* (literal) level to teach the masses of the people. He usually expressed the literal interpretation of the Scriptures only when He addressed the Pharisees. But when He did address the masses He tended to use the *remez* (parable) level.

And notice that when Jesus chose the Twelve apostles from among the masses, He used the *derasha* (seek, search) level to reveal to them the deeper understanding of those parables. In the *sod* (inner) level He chose three from among the twelve apostles, and on the Mount of Transfiguration the Father revealed something special to them about Jesus.

So we find that the use of these different levels or styles can be used at different times appropriate to different seasons, and even for different individuals. This gives us a clue to how we perhaps can use the different styles in our own ministries. There are certain styles that are called for in certain circumstances. May we learn from this how to listen to the Father for His direction, just as the Lord Jesus did.



Paul the apostle had to learn, or re-learn, how knowledge at one level could interact with knowledge at another level. Despite his intense religious education and knowledge of the Torah, he needed a spiritual encounter. His conversion experience on the Damascus road followed by some time in Arabia and then Damascus (Gal 1:17-18), would’ve been a tremendous realignment to truth. Interestingly enough, this was similar to Moses’ forty years in the desert, with the spiritual encounter for him coming at the end of it rather than at the beginning, like Paul.

Both of these great men were trained by the Spirit “on the job” which is still the best way to truly learn something. However even on-the-job training can still lack spiritual input and leave a person relatively untouched by eternal things.

So what’s desperately needed is learning that’s firmly founded on what Scripture has already revealed, plus that revelatory knowledge that comes to enhance what the Word discloses. Exactly what this “enhancing” is can be difficult to put into words, but it does rely on what seems to be a direct, spontaneous insight that has an immediate effect on the mind, and which causes an inward readjustment. Let me try to explain if I can.

An example of this kind of dynamic happened when I first realised that Biblically speaking (in context) the New Covenant only involved the houses of Judah and Israel without any

participation of the gentiles (see page 13). I had read the relevant verses often during the past 30 years, but one particular day as I was “just reading the Bible” I abruptly stopped. My mind raced; my posture changed as I sat up; my eyes actually opened wider; and I “saw” a truth!

No, I didn’t let out a yell of exclamation or shout “eureka.” I simply sat looking at something that intensely grabbed my attention. Outwardly I was stilled, but inwardly everything was racing around in my mind. Yet strangely one part of my mind was perfectly at peace, resting in what I had just perceived, and strangely content with it. At the same time I was struck by the consequences of it all. In a matter of a split second my doctrine and theological education began to move aside, and I “saw” something I had never “seen” before. This wasn’t something I was searching for, nor had I been challenged by someone to consider the idea; I was simply reading a portion of Scripture as part of my daily devotions.

But strangely it didn’t threaten me, nor did it drive me to make a rash decision like to immediately confront others with it. I didn’t rush out and preach it - in fact I didn’t decide to do anything about it! I just sat there looking at the text and let it sink in, very deeply. I felt as though I had been exposed to something lost but now found, and I wanted to revel in the enjoyment of the moment.

But I knew that I would “awaken” from the revelation of it and have to test it against the rest of Scripture, work it through, and reason it out from the Word of God. This proved to be more tedious than I expected, as I re-read Scripture, re-thought doctrine, and re-worked my theological position. At times when doing this I wondered if what I had perceived (or strictly speaking “received”) was valid, because my logic and reasoning kept trying to “block” it out of my mind. On many occasions I wished I could just go back and enjoy the moment of the revelation, rather than ponderously work it through theologically.

But somehow I “knew” I’d been given a revelation. Now all this sounds very subjective and I fully realise that many believers, particularly Bible scholars, would say I’ve allowed my subjectivity to override the objectivity of Scripture. I’ve been around long enough to be aware of how that works, and how certain groups and cults use the very same excuse to formulate their new teachings. Take Joseph Smith of the Mormons or any cult for that matter; they all say they’ve had a personal revelation of new truth.

Please be assured that I’m not attempting to change your views about the New Covenant. Nor am I trying to bring forth some new truth. I’m simply trying to show how revelatory insight operates as a dynamic. All I’m saying is that I read the Word and found it said something quite plain actually; it said that the New Covenant was to be made with the Houses of Israel and Judah. Fact.

Where you take it from there, or where I go with it from there isn’t the point. The point is that we can read the Bible for years and years before suddenly having some insight that trips us up and we “see” a new revelation. It doesn’t destroy Scripture; it doesn’t take away any of the truth, beauty or uniqueness of it, but it does cause us to re-think what we think we know. That’s all.

Revelatory insight enhances what is already True; it doesn’t change truth, and it doesn’t introduce anything new in the sense that it didn’t exist before. Revelatory truth does introduce fresh ideas in the sense that what has been popularly believed was probably stale

and had wandered away from truth, usually by the doctrines of men (and sometimes by the doctrine of demons).

Revelatory teaching comes in many forms not commonly associated with what we call teaching. Take for example some of the ways the Lord communicated truth in Scripture:

- ✦ He spoke thunderous words from heaven
- ✦ He sent supernatural beings with messages
- ✦ He gave dreams, visions and trances
- ✦ His finger wrote on tablets of stone and on palace walls
- ✦ He even made animals talk
- ✦ He personally confronted people without their permission
- ✦ He opened spiritual eyes to see what the natural eyes couldn't see
- ✦ He became flesh
- ✦ He altered the laws of nature
- ✦ He gave insight into the future
- ✦ etc.

All of these are valid methods of imparting truth, but they are far from what we today refer to as "teaching." Here the supernatural or spiritual component far outweighs the normal mode of education. Many of us would even say that the greatest moments of our own spiritual growth have come via such encounters rather than through learning in the formal sense.

Of course it's true that some subjective spiritual experiences may not be as valid as we think. Yet it's strange that while we might readily accept such experiences because they're in the Bible, we're pessimistic about them when someone says they've had such an experience today! What's the criterion for that?

Clearly revelatory insight isn't something we conjure up; it's given by the Lord. This means He knows when and who is predisposed to such revelation, and even how to deliver it. To one He gives a dream, to another He sends an angel, and to another He does whatever He knows is best!

It's an old adage that "pupils only learn what they set out to learn." Yet we can take great assurance that the Lord of heaven and earth knows the heart of each man and so knows precisely what our mental and spiritual makeup requires. We might be going about our daily business totally unaware that heaven is about to confront us; but in God's good and perfect economy He intervenes and shows us truth.

Truth is seasonal, and we can only bear so much of it at a time (Jhn 16:12). Too little and there's no impact, leaving us floundering; too much and it simply overwhelms us and brings confusion. How wonderful it is then that He knows just how to meet us, when and with what!

That's fine for He who is the greatest of all teachers, but what about us as we teach and disciple others? We need to know the ability of each disciple, taking into consideration their emotional state, their educative ability, their age, spiritual development so far, etc. We should not throw everything we can at the disciple or student. Often it's assumed by us in the west that we can simply teach "truth" and think that they disciple is going to apply it to life. Ask any preacher worth their salt and they'll tell you that having preached the truth of the Word they know that most of their hearers will not apply it to themselves. Sad, but true.

Time must be given allowing the disciple or student to assimilate it into their own life. The danger I see in rushing truth too fast is that people just get confused. And even if the teacher should methodically and patiently impart truth it still doesn't mean it's going to "take". Something else is needed, and that something is prayer, very specific prayer.

When Paul instructed the believers in Ephesians and Colossians he spent the first three chapters outlining doctrinal truth, and then three chapters showing how to apply it to life. But doing what he did is no different from what thousands of preachers do today. What made Paul different was that he "bridged" the doctrinal section to the practical section with prayer - specific prayer that asked God to make it "take" in the lives of the believers.

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named, that He may give you, according to the riches of His glory, by His power to become mighty in the inward man through His Spirit, that through faith Christ may dwell in your hearts, having been rooted and founded in love, that you may be given strength to grasp, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the surpassing knowledge and love of Christ, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God." Eph 3: 14-19

It doesn't take too much to see how specific Paul's prayer was. This made all the difference. He taught the doctrine, he exhorted them to live it, and most importantly he prayed for them that they would get it. This is a fine model for any teacher or preacher of the Word.

I would think this is precisely what the Lord Jesus did when He had taught, either directly or by parable. After He would go aside to some secluded place and pray about what He had taught and for those whom He had taught. Any so-called "successful" ministry will probably tell you that this is their secret. Prayer, specific prayer, fervent prayer, continuous prayer, asking that the truth would find receptive hearts in which to dwell.

While some of us do this some of the time, most of us need to do it most of the time. Our failure to establish mature disciples is proof of this.

*Peter McArthur
The Issachar Ministry*

Images of the Hebrew alphabet on pages 18 and 19 are from <http://www.ancient-hebrew.org>

Having a Love of the Truth



Peter McArthur

“His coming is according to the working of Satan in all power and miraculous signs and lying wonders, and in all deceit of unrighteousness in those being lost, because they did not receive the love of the truth in order for them to be saved. And because of this, God will send to them a working of error, for them to believe the lie, that all may be judged, those not believing the truth, but who have delighted in unrighteousness”. 2 Thess. 2: 9-12.

Note the phrase **“love of the truth”** mentioned in verse 10. In His own time and way the Holy Spirit will **guide** us **into all truth** (Jhn 16:13). There are two requirements laid on us if we would come into **all truth**.

First, **we must become yielded to God’s Spirit as Teacher**, and Second, **we must love His written Word with a passion**. A strong conviction is also needed, that **“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God”** (2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Pet 1:21).

We can see that there’s a parallel between what we find in **2 Thessalonians chapter 2** and what happened in Eden when the Satan beguiled Eve. It was there in the **Garden** that **“the mystery of iniquity”** (2 Thess 2:7) began its work that’s continued through the ages till this very day.

“Mystery” is from the Greek **mustérion** which means “a secret” that will remain under cover until its time of revelation has come.

“Iniquity” is from **he anomía**, which means “the lawlessness” and has reference directly to the utter disregard for God’s Law. The small word **he** (pronounced “hay”) is a Greek Definite Article meaning “the” and it specifies the word it precedes as distinct. (All a bit technical I know, but there is a point to it all).

Hence it is ***“the mystery of THE iniquity”*** - which is an attitude toward God that denies He has any right to rule. THE iniquity began with an assault on the mind of Eve in Eden. It has continued through the ages with its hold on all humanity. This will continue on till its final completion when all its poison will be released toward the minds of those who have found redemption through the **Seed** of the Woman (Gen 3:15) - those who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The wicked one” (Mtt 13:19) will fix his strategic gaze on us who are set in the earth to ***“withstand”*** him (Eph 6:13). As the age winds down, he’s working to throw our minds off kilter with the goal of disabling us for function with Christ in His Kingdom.

In **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** Paul makes it clear what will come in our counter strategy when we realize that the main end-time battlefield is our mind. See some of the powerful insights of the following passage in 2 Thess 2: 1-2.

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

Paul’s exhortation was with regard to the ***“coming”*** of the Lord. This word ***“coming”*** is from the Greek word ***parousía***, meaning Christ’s return to earth to reign. At that time all true believers will be gathered together unto Him with no walls or divisions. This grand ***appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*** is the end toward which this age is now moving.

Paul’s concern for this was that believers ***“be not soon shaken in mind.”*** Note where the attack is aimed! The deception of the enemy, coupled with the trauma of the age ending, could throw the mind of even a true believer into turmoil so that it lacks all sound judgment or understanding. It was Paul’s concern that this not be so.

There are 3 ways by which spiritual revelation may come. By **spirit**, by **spoken word**, or by **written word**.

True and pure revelation comes by the Holy Spirit, but there are also other spirits at work mimicking God’s Spirit. It is here we need that operation of the Holy Spirit called ***discerning of spirits*** (1 Cor 12:10). This is the ability given to us by God’s Spirit through which we put spiritual revelation to the test and discern whether it’s from the Lord or not.

There are 3 fundamental criteria by which we seek to judge any revelation that comes to us.

1. **Is it in line with God’s Word?**
2. **Does it bring exaltation to the Lord Jesus Christ?**
3. **Is the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon it?**

Our concern should be that no matter what happens or how it happens or when it happens, believers will not be thrown into tumult, drowned by discouragement, or lost to Christ's Kingdom because they lose the stability of their minds. Teaching mixed with error can cause this, but revelation that is pure always brings stability. One is holy; the other is not.

The following verses (2 Thess 2:3-4) are heavy with revelation as Paul writes to the saints he loved so dearly.

"Let no man deceive you (beguile you from the path) by any means: for that Day shall not come, except there come a falling away (THE apostasy) first, and that man of sin (that man of THE sin) be revealed, the son of (THE) perdition (the one who wastes all things; the one who is set in the earth to mastermind a final great destruction); Who opposes (sets himself in opposition to) and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God (a god)."

The Lord Jesus referred to this same thing in Mtt 23:11-12. ***"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many*** (lead many down the path of falsehood). ***And because iniquity shall abound*** (the iniquity shall be multiplied), ***the love of many shall grow cold"***.

That we may abide in the truth in this trying time is our desire and the purpose of any true Berean! Paul used the word ***náos*** for ***Temple*** in the above Thessalonian passage. It means the Most Holy Place in the Temple. Another word ***hiéron*** also means "temple," but it always signifies the Temple as a building.

Paul was clear in his conviction that it was not a building of stones, but of living members, redeemed people, believers. (See Acts 17:24; 1 Cor 3:16-17; 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 3:21).

The anti-Christ's scheme is to spoil this Temple so it cannot be useful in Christ's Kingdom. But this activity will only push us to learn more of what is called *prevailing grace*! The grace and power of God will far exceed the determination of anti-Christ to ruin us for the Kingdom.

Take note of the statement ***"he as God sits in the Temple"***. The little word ***in*** comes from the Greek ***eis***, which means "into, or unto". This presents a picture of the ***"son of perdition"*** pushing in toward the ***Temple***, contending for the Holy of Holies. But it does not say he becomes seated ***in*** it.

At the very instant it seems the enemy might accomplish this grand feat and make his ***parousía*** on the world's scene, the Lord Jesus makes His ***glorious appearing*** and consumes Satan. Paul was clear in warning the people that spirits of deception would keep an eye on believers to get them away from the Lord and His purpose for them.

(2 Thess 2:5) ***"Don't you remember that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"*** The Greek word in this verse from which we get ***"I told"*** is a Greek phrase spelled in a way to let us know it was Paul's practice to speak time and time again of these important matters. He deemed the issue so important that he repeated it often, and kept on stressing the value of understanding it.

We can see that the energy of the wicked one has been in operation in the world as **“the mystery of iniquity”** ever since the deception in Eden. But there has remained a restraint on the iniquity until the antichrist himself, not just his spirit, is on the scene.

“And then shall that Wicked (the wicked one) be revealed (uncovered; disclosed), whom the Lord shall consume (use up; destroy) with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy (render powerless) with the brightness of His coming (the glorious manifestation of His presence)”. 2 Thess 2:8

Following the long period while iniquity has been under restraint, it will make a final breakout on earth. The destruction to which this verse points comes when sin has come to its full. Then, a final act of rebellion against God calls for the return of the Lord Jesus.

The wicked one will determine to take the Throne of Christ’s Kingdom by mimicking the Lord Jesus, and will attempt a glorious burst on the scene to make his presence known in all the earth. He will be energized in his own **parousía** by Satan himself. See the following revealing statement in 2 Thess. 2:9-10.

“Even him (the anti-Christ himself), whose coming is according to the working (energetic power) of Satan with all power (dynamic power) and signs and lying wonders (terrifying lies), and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish (them that are perishing); because they received not (laid not hold on) the love of the truth, that they might be saved”.

The word **parousía** occurs 18 times in the Greek New Testament. Every time it is with reference to the Lord Jesus. This word describes the appearance on the scene of a majestic ruler. What a brazen insubordination the devil will attempt this with his man, the antichrist!

Let us stress this again: antichrist’s plan is to win the throne belonging to the Lord Jesus. His only hope is to deceive the followers of Jesus as he deceived our parents in Eden. His aim is to capture our minds and our hearts.

According to the teaching of Scripture those who would lose their way in the final days would be those who **received not the love of the truth**.

Let’s not be deceived; let’s be the ones who receive a love for the Truth. There’s a powerful statement in **2 Cor 10:4-5** that lays out the very principle of renouncing THE LIE and releasing our minds for the Truth that is in Christ.

“...for the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful to God to the demolishing of strongholds, the demolishing of arguments and every high thing lifting up itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ...”

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to usher truth into your inward parts. This is a strategy by which we bring our own minds under subjection to Christ. It is very effective as hearts become open to the Word of God's Kingdom. Now let these things of prime importance be settled with us.

- **We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is our Lord**
- **We choose to believe the Word of God**
- **That it is inspired by the Holy Spirit**
- **That its truth abides**
- **That the Holy Spirit is ready to bear witness to it, and**
- **That we must neither add to it nor take from it.**

Brethren, let us be committed to these things above all. The days are drawing darker, while His glory beckons us onward ready for His return!

Grace to you in our Messiah,

Peter McArthur

The Voice of God



Peter McArthur

Hearing the voice of God

So many times believers have difficulty in discerning the Voice of the Lord. Over the years I've noticed some fundamental principles that can prepare our hearts to hear His voice. There are many fine books and teachers that can offer deeper insights than outlined here, but I feel the following principles can be helpful in establishing a pattern or grid upon which we can build. May they prove beneficial to you!

1. PREPARING TO HEAR

In order to clearly hear the Voice of God we must clean up our inner thoughts and take control over our mind. We need to take captive our own thoughts and imaginations. (2 Cor 10:5).

The best preparation to hear the Lord's voice is to stop the incessant chattering away in our own mind first.

This can be done by having a single-minded focus on the Lord and eternal things. Learn to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17) and by beholding the Lord. This will quieten the wandering thoughts of the mind.

Next, learn to act immediately on a convicting word from the Holy Spirit. Whenever you feel a conviction of sin, deal with it immediately. Do not allow it to fester into something worse particularly apathy. Rebellion follows!

We need to acquire the habit of allowing our actions to link up with our thoughts. Harmony of spirit and soul is an important step in clearly hearing the Voice of God.

2. IS THERE ANY PATTERN?

Experience and history shows a clear pattern of how men and women through the centuries have come to know the voice of God without confusion, struggle or deceit. The most common denominator of all such mature Christians has been this: spend at least one uninterrupted hour a day sitting in the presence of the Lord.

This is apart from a time of intercession or supplication when you might be asking God for something. And it's apart from your time of devotional reading time or study time.

Having given prime time to sitting in the presence of the Lord, these mature Christians then practice the art of "on and off praying" speaking to the Lord throughout the day in short uncomplicated prayers (often called arrow prayers). This kind of prayer was used often by such men as Wesley, Moody and Finney.

The fruit of living in the Spirit like this is seen in their lives and ministries even down to the present day. Doing this will make you very receptive to the Holy Spirit and you will begin to find the Voice of God to be much more distinct.

This is a two-fold approach in preparing to hear His Voice.

First, spend some time (perhaps one hour) in which you quietly focus in on the Lord and just learn to sit and relax at His feet.

Second, learn to extend that atmosphere of being with Him into your daily life. This is done by continually keeping your focus God-directed.

Both of these will gradually prepare your heart to clearly hear the Voice of the Lord. It does work! I would warn you here that what I am talking about is **NOT** to be confused with mysticism, or passivity. There is a growing tendency even amongst Christians to use this practice. Beware!

3. LEARN TO IDENTIFY THE VOICE

Think back on some occasion when you thought you heard God speak, and when you then saw the situation come to pass. Think now: what were you feeling at the time when you thought you heard God speak? Learn to pick up the sensations you were having when the voice came. Next time you think you hear God's voice use this past experience as a kind of litmus test. Was the feeling or sensation similar to your previous experience? If it was it's most probably God speaking again.

I'm not saying you are to simply go by feelings, but they can assist you to make a correct diagnosis when attempting to identify His voice. You know the past experience proved to be of God's making, thus validating the voice you had heard. So when that "sensation" comes again accompanied by a similar voice it may well be the Lord speaking to you.

This might seem a strange way to identify His voice, but it's surprisingly common. It's just that a lot of people don't link the two God's voice, and what they were

feeling or sensing at the time. My own experience has proved this truth over and over. Eventually you become so fine-tuned to the Lord's voice that you no longer pay attention to the sensation that accompanies it. This is a sign of spiritual growth. Identifying the sensation is solely to help you be confident about what voice you're hearing.

Remember too that God's voice might be urgent but never pushy. The Lord might hasten you to do something, but Satan will drive you! Learn to know the difference.

4. A RECEPTIVE HEART

While there is no formula for hearing God's voice or making Him communicate with us, there are some basic ground rules that will make us more sensitive to His voice.

First, love Him more deeply and intimately.

Second, desire to know Him more intently and personally.

Third, seek Him above everything else and spend time with Him.

If we keep these 3 attitudes in our heart we'll become much more sensitive to the voice of the Spirit. Taste and see!

5. STEPS THAT MAY IMPROVE YOUR SENSITIVITY

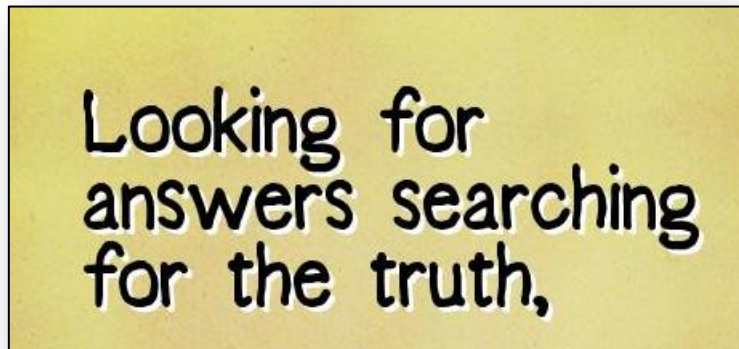
- ✦ Approach Him with an open heart, willing to listen to whatever He might speak.
- ✦ Don't approach Him with your mind already imaging what He might say.
- ✦ Don't ask God to speak to you about something that's already quite clear in Scripture. He's already spoken in the Word. So read it regularly.
- ✦ Don't limit God to your viewpoint. He's not confined to answer you according to your view. It might be quite different! It usually is I find.
- ✦ When you do hear God speak, obey Him quickly. God works in seasons.
- ✦ Show your love to Him through worship and serving others.
- ✦ Work at deepening your trust and faith in the Lord, no matter what. A genuine Spirit-led lifestyle is the greatest asset in knowing His voice. (Gal 5: 25 and 1 Cor 10: 31).
- ✦ Live a holy (separated) lifestyle. "In the world, but not of the world".
- ✦ Honour and love God above everything and everyone else.

Grace to you in Jesus,

Peter McArthur

Truth Re-Visited

This is a shortened version of the teaching "Teachers of Revelation" (page 4)



Peter McArthur

Teachers of Revelation

Some time ago the Lord showed me that the teachers of The Word would be enriched by the coming forth of the Teachers of Revelation. This doesn't mean that revelation will supplant the Word. Never! But it does mean that revelation insight (entirely in accordance with the Word of God) will begin to come into play in a very rich way. Of course there have been teachers of revelation all through the ages, but there seems to be a time coming when great insight will erupt bringing forth wonderful understanding of the Word.

THE DREAM

Not long after I received this from the Lord I had a very powerful dream. In the dream I was looking at a "person" standing before me. All I could see was his torso, not his feet or face. He was quite tall and large, dressed in some sort of nondescript garment or robe. No words were spoken by either of us.

He was holding an open book with its pages before me so I could see them. He flicked through this book until he came to a particular chapter, then held it open for me to see the heading. It simply read: **Truth Re-visited.**

I instinctively knew this was a messenger angel. The dream abruptly finished having only lasted about 20 seconds or so. From this dream I knew that the Holy Spirit would begin to teach me the truths of Scripture that I had either become complacent about, or misunderstood. Since then I have been alert to study the Word carefully, slowly and with fresh revelation. The results for me personally, and the Fellowship, have been as dramatic as my conversion and Baptism in the Spirit.

I would like to share some of this insight with you now.

TRUTH BY REVELATION

Revelation-truth is actually a form of light. “Revelation” is the supernatural imparting of truth that sheds light on something that was previously either partially obscured, or totally hidden from view. The concealing of truth may be due to man’s inability to understand and receive that Truth at a particular season, or it may be because God had a pre-determined moment for that Truth to come to light, and hence withheld it until the appropriate time frame.

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...” Heb 1:1-2

“When the time had fully come” would a suitable phrase to bear in mind.

Note also these other examples. Jesus said, “Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.” Jhn 7:8.

And “when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place”. Acts 2:1

Revelation comes to us by God’s chosen moment of intervention, not by man’s methodology or twisting the arm of God. So it’s only by revelation that truths come to us, and this is dependent on God, not us. Understanding this principle will save us much heartache when we don’t see people respond to certain teachings the way we think they should. How often have we longed to see someone grasp a truth that’s revolutionized our own life, yet they don’t seem over excited about it.

Note the texts that highlight a principle here.

- ✦ “...the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, having been unvoiced during eternal times ” Rms 16:25
- ✦ “For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it except by a revelation of Jesus Christ.” Gal 1:12
- ✦ “...that by revelation He made known to me the mystery ” Eph 3:3
- ✦ “A revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to declare to His servants things which must shortly come to pass ” Rev 1:1

The inspiration that accompanies such revelation enables the recipient to proclaim the truth as something directly received from God and therefore infallibly correct. It’s often this factor, along with the dramatic experience of receiving the revelation itself, which drives the recipient on his quest to impart the truth. This takes on a life of its own, so to speak. However, here lurks a subtle danger. As we receive a revelatory truth we are captured by it, often become entirely taken up by it. It can consume us.

That however isn’t so much the danger, although caution should apply here. The greater danger lies in discriminating against other believers who haven’t (as yet) received this truth. Judgmentalism, and finally elitism, so easily set in to the undiscerning.

The process works like this: We receive a revelatory truth (often after much searching and prayer). It captivates us; we see the light and are thoroughly changed by it. Our thoughts and

minds are transformed by this truth. It grips us and we cannot help but share it. Sometimes there's an acceptance by others; more than not there's rejection, or at least suspicion. Then comes the temptation to separate from those who have not, or will not, receive this truth.

This can be a literal, physical separation ending up in a church split. In moderate cases a sectarian group is established; in extreme cases a cult rises up. Or, the recipient of the truth remains within their congregation (for a time), physically part of the assembly but mentally (if not spiritually) separate. There's a kind of spiritual divorce happening. It's a bit like a married couple who are physically together but emotionally divorced. They stay together, technically "married", but inwardly divorced from one another. I mention this because this role has been played over and over throughout church history.

As we delve into the wonder and excitement of the Mystery in this study, it can so easily grip and move us. We can be fascinated by it, consuming it, even seeing it as the final Truth of all Truth! A simple reflection of some of the events of church history, let alone our own spiritual journey and that of others, will show this attitude to be dangerous. We will require a wisdom borne out of maturity to keep balanced here. It's natural to desire to share something new and exciting.

But spiritually speaking we need discernment when coming to share revelatory truth. Passing it on before it's done its deep work in us first can be disastrous. So often Truth has been injured by the recipient declaring it too soon. Our soul will want to rise up, proclaim the message (often with more soulish zeal than spiritual wisdom), and wonder why others don't rush forward to embrace it!

Like Paul, let's humbly pray that spiritual enlightenment for others will come according to God's timing. And be extremely wary of speaking and acting as if you have Truth others don't have. Humility was a key-mark in the life of the Lord Jesus. Only after the work of Truth had done its work in Him was He called forth by the Father to begin His public ministry.

We see the same pattern at work in so many others recorded in Scripture. Let's imitate them! Remember the principle: Revelatory Truth is granted by God according to His timing. You didn't work it up. You didn't make it happen. It was given, granted, offered and graced upon you by the Lord to you as a beloved one.

So be humble and act wisely. Paul had received many revelations during his sixty or so years of ministry. Yet at the end of his earthly life he received the revelation of a Mystery that totally realigned his purpose as an Apostle. He remained humble in this. He didn't run off and start a new movement. When he met others who couldn't fathom out what he was preaching, he didn't separate himself but prayed for them to have the eyes of their heart enlightened.

Let's be excited about our bible studying by all means, but please be discerning and let the Mystery as found in Paul's prison Epistles do its work deep in your heart first before indiscriminately force-feeding it to whoever you meet.

I may sound strong here but I do desire you to act wisely, and with maturity.

In Him,
Peter McArthur

The Prophetic in Leadership



Peter McArthur

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE PROPHETIC?

The term "prophet" and "the prophetic" these days has come to mean virtually the same thing – something to do with giving correct words to encourage and build up. But there's a vast difference between the two terms.

"Prophet" quite correctly has a fairly narrow term of reference, but "the prophetic" covers a much greater area. It basically means an anointed ministry, which in revealing divine direction during a given season, points you to new life in Christ.

It may not even include a single Prophetic Word! And the person giving the counsel of God may not even have the calling of a Prophet! Rather, it is a person who is open to the voice of the Holy Spirit and who knows how to offer a Rhema Word of counsel from the throne room of heaven without taint.

Note that I say counsel and not advice. Avoid Christians who give you advice. That is man's view of a matter, and it may sound reasonable, logical, sensible and even a little spiritual. But it's still Man and not God.

So the Prophetic Person speaks from God's mind, thereby avoiding the advice of the human mind and experience (Prov 16: 1 and 9).

THE ROLE OF THE PROPHETIC PERSON

Let's look at my definition of "The Prophetic" - (1) an **anointed ministry**, (2) **that in revealing divine direction** (3) **during a given season** (4) **opens you to new life in Christ**.

There are four points in this that are vital to understand:

- 1 an anointed ministry
- 2 revealing divine direction
- 3 during a given season
- 4 that opens you to new life in God.

First, the ministry or person needs to be Anointed. The word means to be enchristened and refers to being Christ-like. [Strong's G5548 *chrío*: it has the idea of contact, to smear or rub with oil, and by implication to consecrate].

In other words the person needs to be in contact with The Christ, to be smeared and covered with the same anointing that Jesus had, and to be set aside (consecrated) to that calling and work. We need to look for such a heart attitude in the person we are intending to trust, minister or allow us to lead.

Second, the prophetic person will not give advice, but reveal to you God's direction for that moment or next stage of your life. They will reveal (take off the cover, disclose) what God wants you to see and know.

They will not add their bit to it nor attempt to direct you they will take off the cover over your mind, life and spiritual eyes, allowing you to see what God alone wants. The Prophetic Person must never be tempted to give direction or voice their own opinion, but must allow God to speak, and God alone.

Third, the revealing of God's ways comes during set seasons, and rarely as regular occurrences. The Lord has given us the natural seasons, the seasons of one's life, and even the seasonal feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, as parables of how He works in us. He uses seasons or stages to instruct us because the in between times are meant for us to learn how to apply the teaching and lesson presented by Him.

A wise person will take advantage of these seasons of God and draw as much as possible from them. To ignore them brings us into disobedience and stunts our spiritual growth. Each season has its own spiritual character just like the natural seasons can be identified by how much heat, cold, rain, snow etc is in them.

The Prophetic will speak revelation into these seasons of our life. It's vital that we listen to the Rhema Word and act on it. We will not advance to the next season of our spiritual development until we've lived through the season God gives at that appointed time. We cannot short circuit God's dealings with us!

Have you noticed that prophetic ministries have the knack of turning up at just the right season and imparting a Word that brings change? This is a noticeable feature of their calling.

Fourth, the ministry of The Prophetic will always lead you into a new realm in God. It imparts life and it transforms. This is one way you can gauge the validity of a prophetic ministry: have they deposited truth and change in you?

LEADING WITH THE PROPHETIC

Don't be tempted to see the prophetic as some sort of wonder tool that will bring instant revelation and guidance to those you're shepherding. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not the prophetic, no matter how anointed and effective it might be.

Allow others to see that you model this lifestyle by sharing your own experiences of how the prophetic has helped you. They need to know they can trust this type of guidance.

Once a person has received counsel from you on a matter, you will need to re-adjust them from time to time as they begin to apply the Truth in their situation. This may happen a number of times before it clicks. Be patient.

Keep humble in all this. Often those you re shepherding will perceive your prophetic guidance as great wisdom, and may be tempted to idolize you.

Some pointers from my own experience:

- ✦ Speak and minister with authority, but not pride.
- ✦ Try to bring the person to a place of accountability regarding the counsel you've given.
- ✦ Be wary of their words as they're often couched in spiritual jargon, but behind it can be self-interest, ambition and a hasty spirit.
- ✦ Look for the motives behind their heart.
- ✦ Don't be afraid to be bold in declaring what you know God is saying to the person.
- ✦ Check your own spirit so you know it's not your advice you're giving but what God wants to say.
- ✦ Use the occasion to teach and impart God's ways to the person (Psa. 25:4).

May the Lord and His teaching Spirit guide us into ALL of His wondrous ways!

Blessings and grace to you,

Peter McArthur

The Issachar Ministry

Sixteen Reasons why Jesus was Sent



Peter McArthur

We are told in the Word that the reason John the Baptist came was to reveal the Messiah Jesus to the nation of Israel.

“On the morrow, John sees Jesus coming toward him and said, Behold! The Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world! This is He about whom I said, After me comes a Man who has been before me, for He was preceding me. And I did not know Him; but that He be revealed to Israel, for this reason I came baptizing in water.” Jhn 1:29-31

It’s interesting to note how the ministry of the Lord Jesus is a re-run of John’s ministry in the early stages. For instance, John’s first message was “Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matt 3:2).

Some of Jesus’ earliest recorded words of His ministry were identical (Mtt 4:17).

Then we have John coming out of the desert (Mk 1:4), and Jesus going into the desert (Mk 1:12). There is an identification and link here, and just as John’s purpose was to reveal, so too we can expect that Jesus of course would do much revealing.

In mainstream church teaching THE reason that Jesus came is given as “to save us” – or variations on the same theme (deliver us, free us, forgive us, restore us to the Father, etc.) All are valid, but simply don’t do justice to the wide breadth of WHY HE CAME.

In fact by talking about “why He came” may give us the wrong end of the stick. The scriptural focus is more on the idea that Jesus was sent! There’s a world of difference.

When we speak of why Jesus came we are seeing it from an earthly perspective: He came to us. But when we speak of Jesus being sent we are then talking about it from a heavenly perspective. He was sent from the Father’s presence as part of the Father’s purpose. Can you see the important difference?

One is an earthly perspective; the other a heavenly view point. One is man's perspective, the other is the Father's. It's this latter one that is the most common in Scripture.

Look at these verses about Jesus being sent.

Mtt 10: 40 **"The one who receives you receives me, and the one who receives me receives the one who sent me."**

Mk 9: 37 **"Whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."**

Luk 4: 43 **"I have to proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God in the other cities also, for that is what I was sent to do."**

Luk 9: 48 **"Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."**

Jhn 5: 36-38 **"But I have a greater testimony than John's, for the works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. Moreover, the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his appearance, nor do you have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe in the one whom he sent."**

Jhn 6: 29, 39 and 57 **"Jesus answered them, This is the work of God: to believe in the one whom he has sent." "And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything that he has given me, but should raise it to life on the last day." "Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will also live because of me."**

Jhn 7: 28-29 **"At this point Jesus, still teaching in the temple, shouted, "So you know me and know where I have come from? I have not come on my own accord. But the one who sent me is true, and he is the one you do not know. I know him because I have come from him and he sent me."**

Jhn 8: 18 **"I am testifying about myself, and the Father who sent me is testifying about me."**

Jhn 14: 24 **"The one who does not love me does not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine, but comes from the Father who sent me."**

Gal 4: 4 **"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law."**

1 Jhn 4: 9 **"This is how God's love was revealed among us: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him."**

1 Jhn 4: 14 **"We have seen for ourselves and can testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world."**

So now let's look at the 16 Biblical reasons the Word gives for "why Jesus was SENT".

1. To save His people from sin

- ✦ "And she will bear a son and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Mtt 1:21
 - ✦ "Save" = here the word means to deliver and protect, to heal and preserve; to make whole
-

2. To proclaim

- ✦ "And He said to them, Let us go into the neighbouring towns that I may proclaim there also. For it was for this I came forth." Mk 1:38
 - ✦ "Proclaim" = this word means to herald a divine truth; to declare good news; to show good tidings
 - ✦ "But He said to them, It is right for Me to proclaim the gospel, the kingdom of God, to the other cities, because for this I was sent." Luk 4:43
 - ✦ "Proclaim" = it means to herald a divine truth; to declare good news; to show good tidings
-

3. To save the lost

- ✦ "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost." Mtt 18:1
 - ✦ "Save" = means to deliver and protect (literally or figuratively); heal; preserve; do well; to make whole.
 - ✦ "Lost" = the word means perish; to be lost; ruined; destroyed.
-

4. To stop us from perishing, and to have everlasting life

- ✦ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jhn 3:16
 - ✦ "Perish" = this word means to destroy fully; to lose; to destroy; die; mar; to put out of the way entirely; abolish; put an end to ruin.
-

5. To give us life abundantly

- ♦ “The thief does not come except that he may steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly.” Jhn 10:1
 - ♦ “Life” = the state of one who is possessed of vitality; the absolute fullness of life which belongs to God.
 - ♦ “Abundantly” = superior; super-abundant; may keep on having; exceeding abundantly above; more abundantly; exceedingly; very highly; beyond measure.
-

6. To be light

- ♦ “I have come a light to the world, that everyone who believes into Me may not remain in the darkness.” Jhn 12:46
 - ♦ “Light” = the word means to make manifest, to reveal, especially by rays.
 - ♦ “Remain” = this means to continue; abide; to endure; stay in.
-

7. Not to judge but to save the world

- ♦ “And if anyone hears My Words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come that I might judge the world, but that I might save the world.” Jhn 12:47
 - ♦ “Save” = this means to save; deliver and protect (literally or figuratively); heal; preserve; do well; to make whole. In the Greek the word “save” here means THE purpose why He came.
-

8. To deliver us

- ♦ “...who gave Himself for our sins, so that He might deliver us out of the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father...” Gal 1:4
 - ♦ “Deliver” = this important word means to choose and tear out; select; rescue; pluck out; to root out.
 - ♦ “...and to await His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, the One delivering us from the coming wrath.” 1 Thess 1:10
 - ♦ “Delivering” = the idea of a current of water; caught up in a rush; to draw away to rescue.
 - ♦ “Coming wrath” = that given by a judge; the wrath that is definitely coming.
-

9. To redeem and purify

- ✦ Gave Himself on our behalf, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify a special people for Himself, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14
 - ✦ "Redeem" = this word means to release on receipt of a ransom; buy back what was originally owned; liberate; to release someone to oneself.
 - ✦ "Purify" = it means to purge; cleanse; to consecrate by cleansing; pronounce clean; to make free from defilement of sin or fault.
-

10. To confirm promises

- ✦ "And I say, Jesus Christ has become a minister of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers." Rms 15:8
 - ✦ "Confirm" = to make firm and establish; to make stand the Messianic promises.
-

11. To save sinners

- ✦ "Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." 1 Tim 1:1
 - ✦ "Save" = to keep safe and sound; to rescue from danger or destruction; to deliver and therefore to protect; to preserve and make whole; to reveal mercy and restore favour.
-

12. To take away THE sin (literally in the Greek)

- ✦ "And you know that that One was revealed that He might take away our sins (THE sin), and sin is not in Him." 1 Jhn 3:5
 - ✦ "Take away" = to lift away; to weigh anchor and sail away; to lift up and loose; to bear away; to take away by force; to take from another what is his; to remove what is attached.
 - ✦ "He has been manifested for putting away of sin through the sacrifice of Himself." Heb 9:26
 - ✦ "Put away" = this means to set aside; to make void; to cancel; to cancel.
-

13. To destroy the devil's work

- ✦ "The one practicing sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. For this reason the Son of God was revealed, that He might demolish the works of the devil." 1 Jhn 3:8
 - ✦ "destroy" = loosen; break up; destroy; to dissolve into parts something that is solid and compacted; unloose; put off; overthrow; to demolish.
-

14. To give understanding

- ✦ "And we know that the Son of God has come, and He has given to us an understanding that we may know the true One..." 1 Jhn 5:20
 - ✦ "Has given" = this exciting word means to give something to someone solely for his advantage; to bestow upon another; to grant.
 - ✦ "Understanding" = to see through a thing; to exercise deep thought not in relation to any new faculty of understanding but rather new light of truth about Him – AND to exercise it!
-

15. To abolish death

- ✦ "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death..." 2 Tim 1:10
 - ✦ "Abolish" = it means to render entirely useless; bring to nothing; vanish away; to make void; to be done away with; to make of no effect; to annul; to take away the power of.
-

16. To be the propitiation

- ✦ "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation relating to our sins." 1 Jhn 4:10
 - ✦ "Propitiation" = to appease; conciliate to one's self; Christ being the manner by which reconciliation is made to God the Father through the sacrifice on the cross.
-

All these texts provide a broad and expansive number of reasons “why Jesus was sent”.

It would do us well to declare and teach ALL these truths when we evangelize or witness to others.

The simple statement of saying to the unsaved that “Jesus came to save us”, or similar words, is not at all totally biblical, nor helpful.

Let us be more accurate, and more biblical in what we declare to be the reason/s for the revealing of the Messiah to mankind.

Peter McArthur

The Issachar Ministry

The God of Seasons



Peter McArthur

POSSESS YOUR SOULS

"In your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:19)

A more accurate translation could read: "In your cheerful and hopeful constancy you shall win and acquire your souls."

Vines Bible dictionary says this: "To gain mastery over your souls instead of giving way to adverse circumstances."

In other words, seasons are given to test us on lessons we should have already learned!

In fact we could say that the real test is not the Test itself, but our response to it. Because the Father is always BEYOND TIME we should be able to rest and relax in trusting Him. However the truth is most of us struggle in the dry times.

Yet the Father has surrounded us "in time" right from the beginning of Creation. Note this text.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." (Gen 1:1-5)

The Word says that the Father has APPOINTED "times and seasons" for us (Gen 1:14)

The point is that **Time – Festivals – Appointments – Cyclic experiences – Seasons** is how the Father deals with us.

He stands OUTSIDE of time, He orders it, controls it, and then “incarnates” it, working WITHIN time. The Father “fleshes” time out.

There is this principle we can focus on: The longer we take to learn a lesson from Him, the longer we delay our maturing – and moving into fullness of ministry.

Someone said: “Sometimes God reveals Himself – at other times He hides Himself.”

When the Father reveals Himself, He is blessing us. When he hides Himself He is building us.

Hiddenness is about preparation. Note the examples of David, Moses and Jesus. Thinking like this should free us from regarding “dry” spiritual times as bad. But this is how we usually think isn’t it?

We often fail to understand the Father’s SEASONS and the various APPOINTMENTS He has for us.

It would be helpful to realise that we are on a journey. This is why it’s important to confess. (Here the word “confess” means to agree with God about).

"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own." (Heb 11:13-14)

Note also what Isaiah says about this principle.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Isa 55:8-11)

The Father uses time/cycles/seasons to test our understanding, but we usually just see this as a “desert” experience.

Many of us feel as though we’re in a time (appointment) of being purges, waiting a re-filling. Hopefully we would see this as a positive thing and a negative one.

When we do it together, corporately, we are likely then to agree that indeed “God is at work in us.”

But when it happens to us individually suddenly we feel all alone, deserted by God, and it becomes a negative thing. We are then prone to think that God is hiding from us.

I recall reading a story about the initiation rites of one North American Indian tribe. When the time for a young boy to become a warrior, he would be taken into the deep woods, where he was told he would have to remain alone all night, without weapons, and without anyone to be with him.

As the dark night went on all sorts of fears began to encompass him. He knew if he gave in and fled the forest, he would fail. But if he remained alone all night until the breaking of dawn, he would pass. The young man fought his inner fears and stayed on through the night. As day broke, he saw a figure dimly in the woods not too far from him. As he peered closer he was astonished to see it was his father. He had stood on watch for his son all through the night, out of sight, but there nevertheless.

Such wilderness tests (“dry times”) are for us a TEST not to be endured like the young warrior, but for us to REST in. When we have learnt to rest in the test then we shall advance in our maturity with the Father.

Such occasions seem to come in waves or patterns or cycles. I find that they usually follow a revelation of some kind. Notice how Moses and the Israelites receive a revelation from the Lord and then are put to the test. Or Jesus, when after the revelation and confirmation of His messiahship, He is tested in the desert. (Luk. 4:1)

It seems to me that revivals have this same pattern. After a revival has hit there will often follow a “quiet” time when the move seems to slacken. Some people then claim it’s the fault of the revival leader. But not necessarily. It may often be the Father testing what we should have learnt through a revival outpouring.

There are definite times when so-called desert experiences are GOOD. The soul basically hates the desert, but by and large the spirit thrives on it.

It may well be that there is a place of Promise and Blessing just ahead for the Body of Christ. If this be the case, then please don’t rebel during the wilderness period.

“In your patience possess your souls.” (Lk 21:19)

Peter McArthur
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His Purpose Governs All



Peter McArthur

Heavenly Purpose and Vision

There is one outstanding factor we see again and again just prior to a revival or spiritual awakening: and that is, God-given vision returns to the Church!

The absence of true heavenly vision accounts for so much that is dead and lost in the church today. However the presence of heaven's vision brings a clear and definite transformation. There is, as-it-were, a swallowing up into God. When we see again what God sees, when we again have confidence in heaven and no longer pander to the things of earth, when we begin to stand, rather than wilt at the knees then, all things work together for good in a most remarkable way.

God's purpose for us upon the earth is that we be governed by His Holy Spirit. You can call it by other names such as being led by the Spirit or Sonship or Walking worthy of the Gospel , but whatever we choose to call it, it's neatly summed up in the phrase "being governed by the Spirit".

The Father calls us to be a people who live under the Holy Spirit's government. That governing is to do with the Father's eternal purpose. But it's simply not enough to be led by the Spirit (under His governing) unless we also love God AND know our calling.

Notice what Paul had to say: **"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"**. (Rms 8: 28).

When we love God and respond to Him by being subject to the Holy Spirit's governing, then indeed all things will work together for us! Hence we need to have a vision of the Father's purpose, for His purpose governs all things, both animate and inanimate.

What is that purpose, that vision? Can we see it totally and fully? No! God does not divulge His purpose or vision completely in any one-given season. It's a principle in Scripture that God-given vision simply isn't given in totality at any one time. When the Book of Revelation finishes we are still left wondering, What happens next?

God's vision is most definitely imparted to us, but in seasons of His choosing.

However, His vision is always subject to enlargement when and how He chooses. He doesn't arbitrarily change it to fit the circumstances; rather He reveals it when He sees hearts and minds receptive to the moving of His Spirit.

When this factor is present, God's vision begins to be fulfilled through the next stage.

In order for this to happen it's most likely that the vehicle used previously to bring in the prior part of His purpose will be succeeded by a new vehicle or means. God is indeed a God of enlargement, as it were. He's always on the increase, blessing His people with an ever-expanding revelation of His person and purpose.

This actually means that men's hearts need to accommodate for the enlargement of vision. The heavenly will constantly press in on us, and we need to accommodate for that increased spiritual knowledge.

The danger of any one period in the church age is that we hang back holding onto previous moves of God, making them our modern-day traditions. God is a God of Life and to hold back from moving on into further life will bring us into a death of sorts. God's grand purpose and vision for His people is one that is heaven-centred, and it moves further and further away from temporal things.

This is one reason why a true saint of God will find less and less satisfaction in the things of the world, and more and more desire for the heavenly. Paul expressed it wonderfully when he wrote: **"For this cause we do not faint; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day"**. (2 Cor 4:16).

This tells us that no matter what faces us in the earth realm, no matter what tragedy should befall us, no matter what crisis we are faced with, no matter what.

Keep the heavenly vision central and you will not wilt under the things of the temporal realm. God is not One who is limited whatsoever; He is not a God of reduction, limitation, incapacity or anything like that. He is the One who is Great beyond measure, the One who fills all things.

If limitation or reduction should come our way on earth, it is His pruning back in order that we might see clearly again. There is always a purpose to His work, and it is never, never limitation as the human mind would see it. Note for instance how Paul was limited from his travelling ministry and incarcerated in prison. Was this limitation? In the earthly sense, yes. In the greater, heavenly sense, absolutely not! Some of Paul's greatest and most spiritually insightful letters were written when he was in chains.

Certainly we're aware that the Adversary will attempt to limit us, reduce us, and even rob us. Yet even when this should happen does that make him lord? Not over us it doesn't! We have One Lord who is seated in the heavenlies at our Father's right hand. Even the schemes and moves of our Adversary cannot limit what is limitless within us. Christ in us cannot be suppressed. When we submit to the Holy Spirit's governing over us we find the most

wonderful place of safety and security. We have learned God's purpose, for we know our calling and have seen the vision.

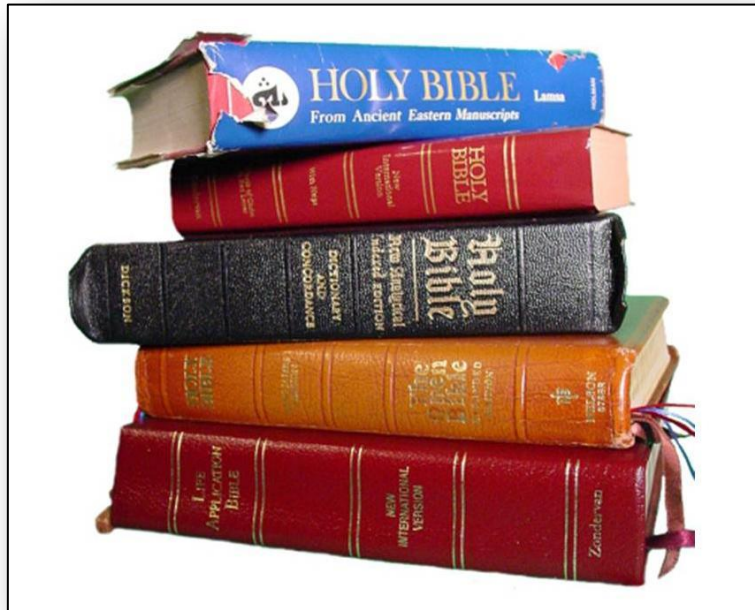
This kind of thing makes us people of prayer, people of vision, and a people of great testimony. The heaven-sent vision of God's grand purpose becomes a dynamic thing within us. In this hour of the modern church how we need saints who have seen what heaven sees, who know the Father's purpose, and who are willing to be governed by His glorious Spirit. At this stage in the earth's history we see Islam rising up in its attempt to force the world, particularly the West, to submit it to its rule. How shall this battle be won?

Most especially within the hearts and minds of the saints of God who know what it means to be submitted to God's purpose first and foremost. Whatever the outcome is with Islam, it can never succeed, for it is a desert religion that can only make men thirst more and more for Truth. As God's Word so wonderfully puts it: **The truth is in Jesus** (Eph 4: 21)

Blessings and the Lord's favour upon you,

Peter McArthur

The Overthrow



Peter McArthur

Have the translators got it wrong?

This is a study on the word “**overthrow**” instead of “**foundation**” as found in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. “**According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.**” Eph 1: 4.

“**Overthrow**” (Grk *katabole*: see Strong’s G2602 and 2598). Traditionally Christian translators use the word “foundation” in this verse whereas in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the “Old Testament”) the very same Greek word is translated by Jewish scholars as “**overthrow, break down, cast down, felled, tear down**” etc.

Why is it that Jewish scholars, translating the OT into Greek consistently translated *katabole* as “overthrow” but that Christian scholars, using precisely the same word, ignore this and put “foundation” in its place? No doubt it has much to do with ‘translators following translators’ and ‘doctrine building on doctrine’, as the sayings go.

However, to replace “foundation” with the legitimate word “overthrow” brings into focus a doctrine that most scholars have been loathed to accept. For if you dare translate this verse accurately you have to concede that there was some kind of “overthrow” or “tearing down” of the earth in its earliest ages.

What is this all about? There is a view which states that God did indeed created all things perfect but that there was some kind of pre-Adamic race of beings on earth before the creation event mentioned in Genesis 1: 2 onward. The notion of another creation prior to that detailed in Scripture, together with the idea of an earlier race before Adam is obviously extremely controversial!

In following this line of thought for a moment (even if you're not disposed to believe it), we get the following argument for the use of the *katabole* as "overthrow".

The initial creation was perfect (Gen 1:1). This was a creative act of God formed "out of nothing" (*bara* Strong's H1254). There were created human beings (as well as animals, plants, etc) upon the face of the initial earth. But after this early creation an event took place in which the earth passed into a state of chaos and desolation, probably due to some form of angelic, and possible, human rebellion (the Hebrew word to describe earth at this point is *tohu* meaning "wasteland, chaos, confusion, void" – the earth was *tohu*, Gen 1:2).

Between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis chapter 1, it seems we have an undisclosed period of time between the original creation and this ruin. The word "and" in some, but not all, English translations may not be accurate and can be rightly left out. By doing this verse 2 is not a direct follow-on from verse 1 as normally thought.

The second verse of Genesis therefore would describe a later period in which the earth had become a wasteland (Strong's H922) through God's intervention and judgment due to the rebellion.

After a time of the earth laying "void" the Lord brought forth another populating of the earth (Gen 1:2 onward). Taking all this into account it's possible to conceive that God brought forth a "good" creation but one nevertheless in which some form of rebellion took root.

This after all is not controversial for it forms the very basis of our orthodox doctrine in relation to the fall of Adam and Eve. Nothing new or startling here. What is different in this respect is that this took place before the creation of Adam, although it occurred once more again in his time.

This earlier pre-Adamic rebellion was so evil, possibly involving the rebellion of angelic beings, that God had to overthrow His first creation as a judgment on those beings, thus leaving the earth still there, but empty and as a wasteland.

You may or may not be inclined to accept this alternate view of creation, although it has been debated now for some centuries. There are additional passages that hint at this possibility (see Isa. 45: 18 and Jer. 4: 23-27). And of course in no way does the acceptance or rejection of this encroach upon our salvation. So what has all this got to do with the passage in Ephesians?

If *katabole* is not translated as "foundation" but as "overthrow", as the Septuagint uses the word, we have in Ephesians a supportive text for a pre-Adamic world. Not only this, Ephesians would then show that even before the initial creative act of God, we were chosen!

We will find it very telling, if we read it correctly translated. "Chose us in Him before the overthrow of the world" is quite different from "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world".

In order to help understand the depth of this we need to recognise that Scripture gives us a glimpse of two distinct time periods; those things associated with an age declared to be "since (or from) the *katabole* of the world" and those things associated with a time before the *katabole* of the earth.

Note these texts with reference to the phrase “from (or ‘since’) the foundation”.

- ✦ “...so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret **from the foundation of the world.**” Mtt 13: 35
- ✦ “Then the King shall say to those on His right hand, Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you **from the foundation of the world**“. Mtt 25: 34
- ✦ “...so that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed **from the foundation of the world**, may be required of this generation“. Luk 11:50
- ✦ “For we who have believed do enter into the rest, as He said, “I have sworn in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest;” although the works were finished **from the foundation of the world**“. Heb 4:3
- ✦ “...even as the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies every year with the blood of others (for then He must have suffered often **since the foundation of the world**), but now once in the end of the world He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself“. Heb 9: 25-26
- ✦ “And all dwelling on the earth will worship it, those whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain, **from the foundation of the world**“. Rev 13:8
- ✦ “...and those dwelling on the earth will marvel, those whose names were not written in the Book of Life **from the foundation of the world**...” Rev 17:8

All the be passages refer to people and events related to circumstances associated with a time period “from the *katabole* of the world”.

However there are also passages that mention a period “before the *katabole* of the world”, specifically in relation to Christ and His elect.

- ✦ “Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me, that they may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me, for You have loved Me **before the foundation (overthrow) of the world**“. Jhn 17:24
- ✦ “...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; indeed having been foreknown **before the foundation (overthrow) of the world**, but revealed in the last times for you...” 1 Pet 1:19-20
- ✦ “...according as He chose us in Him **before the foundation (overthrow) of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...” Eph 1:41

Note that Christ was loved before the foundation of the world (Jhn 17:24), and without spot before the foundation of the world (1 Pet 1: 19). We can now see that Christ’s elect, chosen before the *katabole*, are associated with Him through these same concepts of love and blamelessness (Eph 1:4).

In other words, what Christ had before the *katabole*, we the elect also shared before the *katabole*. So we have three facets of this beautiful jewel. Christ was before the *katabole*, He was loved before the *katabole*, and He was blameless before the *katabole*.

Ephesians 1:4 says that His elect also share in this same three-fold identification. **“...according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...”**

This shouldn't surprise us at all, for Christ is the Head and we the elect, are His Body. As He is, so we are. What could be simpler to understand? And what a wonderful exciting revelation and truth!

My point here is not to either defend, or otherwise, the doctrine of a pre-Adamic race. Whether there was or not such a race is clearly still conjecture. The issue here is really the accuracy of the Word as first penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We need to be correct AND accurate in our translating so that we can build a proper understanding of the knowledge God has imparted to the Body.

What revelations may we have missed out on by not conceding that our translations may have been the product of favoured doctrine or misguided sentiment! So let's be humble enough to re-visit Truth, take stock of what we've been taught before, and be willing to be re-adjusted by the Holy Spirit as our Teacher.

Here are some supportive texts from the Greek Old Testament, commonly called The Septuagint (LXX) for the translation of *katabole* as “overthrow”.

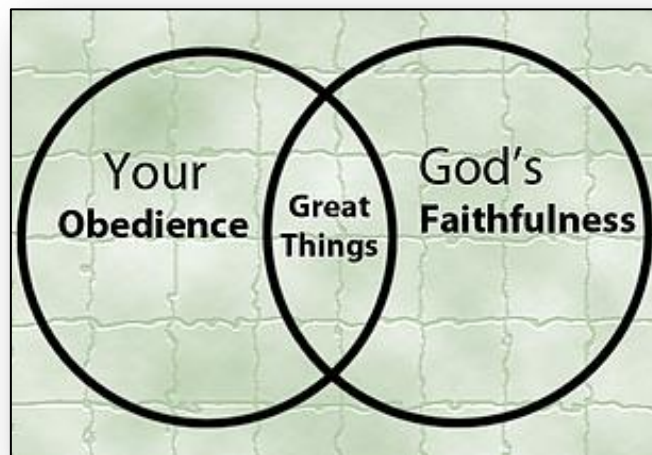
- ✦ 2 Sam 20:15 Joab battered the wall to throw it down
- ✦ 2 Kgs 3:19 and 25 They shall cut down every good tree
- ✦ 2 Kgs 6:5 As one was felling a tree
- ✦ 2 Chron 32:21 They struck him down with a sword
- ✦ Job 12:14 He breaks down and it cannot be built again
- ✦ Job 16:9 He tears me in His wrath
- ✦ Job 16:14 He breaks me with wound upon wound
- ✦ Psa 37:14 To cast down the poor and needy
- ✦ Psa 73:18 You cast them down to destruction
- ✦ Psa 106:27 To overthrow them in the wilderness
- ✦ Prov 7:26 For she has cast down many wounded
- ✦ Prov 25:28 Like a city broken down without walls
- ✦ Isa 26:5 The lofty city, he lays it low
- ✦ Ezek 6:4 I will cast down your slain men
- ✦ Ezek 26:4 Destroy the walls, and break down the towers
- ✦ Ezek 32:12 I will cause your multitude to fall

- ♦ Dan 11:12 He shall cast down tens of thousands

Notice that every single reference is for the translation of *katabole* as “overthrow” and not one is for “foundation”. Let us be like the Bereans and test all things holding to the truth and form of the sound words of Scripture!

Peter McArthur.

Are we doing these things?



Peter McArthur

- ♦ The Lord has told us to “be” about a number of things that are for our spiritual and physical benefit. In some cases ignoring them will be to the detriment of our lives.
- ♦ Possibly the greatest threat to today’s Church is the laxity with which we treat the Word. For example, how many of us are habitually watching and praying to escape the things that are coming? (Luke 21: 36). Are we serious about this?
- ♦ **“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers”.** (1 Peter 4:7)
- ♦ Here we are quite specifically told to do something: be watchful, be at prayer, be serious about it. Are we?

PAYING ATTENTION

- ♦ There are a number of scriptures that urge us to be alert. Each one of these texts insists that we pay attention to what the Spirit is saying through the text. Meditate on these verses.

- ✦ **“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)**
- ✦ **“Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless” (2 Peter 3:12-14)**
- ✦ **“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13)**
- ✦ **“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2)**
- ✦ **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20)**
- ✦ **“So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do’.” (Luke 17:10)**
- ✦ Are we doing these things?

ACTING ON OUR BELIEF

- ✦ The Word is given for our edification (= building up). If we don’t act out what it clearly says, we will not grow to our full stature (Ephesians 4: 13).
- ✦ For instance, we might fully believe in a literal, personal and physical return of Jesus to earth. But if we’re not “looking for it” and “eagerly awaiting” His return, then we are NOT fully believing the Word! To “believe” in Greek means more than to give mental assent; it also means to “act on”.
- ✦ In fact 2 Peter 3: 12 says that we should be looking for the return of Jesus and in doing so we actually hasten His coming. Now that’s challenging theology! But that’s what the Bible says.
- ✦ If we’re actively looking for the Lord’s return, eagerly desiring it, and looking forward to it happening, then we’re helping it to come about. I don’t understand all the meaning behind it but that’s what the Word of God says – we hasten His return.
- ✦ So on this level alone we can see that we’re being commanded by God to do something. So there must be other verses that are “directive texts” that we’ve probably overlooked as well.
- ✦ Paul encourages us to keep a right focus, on heavenly issues not on earthly concerns. Even on this level, if we did this and acted on the Word we’d be a whole lot better off. How many times a day do we lose our focus and let the world redirect our gaze? The Word is giving us the antidote – set your mind on things above (Colossians 3: 2).

NEXT STEP

- ✦ Most of the difficulties we face revolve around not bridging the gap between “doctrine” and “application”.
- ✦ We believe alright but often find it hard to act out that belief and apply it to our daily walk.
- ✦ This is one of the most glaring omissions in training and equipping today’s saints. We know an awful lot about doctrines and teachings, but not so much on how to apply them so that they bring us to maturity.
- ✦ The Jewish (and therefore Biblical) concept of equipping was to teach “on the job” – hence Jesus’ statement “Come follow me” and see what I do. There is plenty out there who will teach you, but not so many who will show you how to apply that teaching.
- ✦ I believe that this will be rectified in the coming release of the Ephesians 4:11 ministries. But even if we didn’t have the Biblical concept of leadership (ie. local Elders and trans-local Five/Four Fold ministry), we still have the Word to instruct us.

As seen earlier, there are a number of texts that insist that we “perform” them. Doing what they say. I encourage and challenge you to re-read those Scriptures and begin to do what they say. The rewards come only when we do what the Word says should be done.

Peter McArthur

The Foundation of Grace



Peter McArthur

(Col 2:18) Let no one who delights in humility and the worship of angels cheat you out of the prize by boasting about what he has seen. Such a person is puffed up without cause by his carnal mind.

There's a principle here. "Don't intrude into those things which you have not seen for yourself."

Only when you have personally "seen" (= had revealed to you) deep truths are you free to speak about them.

This is a warning to teachers and preachers.

Prov 5:15 Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well.

Notice this is how Jesus worked.

Jhn 8:38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.

Jhn 5:19-20 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

We are entering a special time when we must PERSONALLY KNOW truths as a reality — and not by second-hand knowledge via some other source (e.g. Pastor's teachers, books, etc). Too many believers today live off second-hand truths! Drink from your own well.

Revival will not come until we are personally preparing ourselves. The old saying is "Revival starts closest to the heart of God and furthest from the eyes of men."

Because many of us desire to aim for **“the prize of the upward call”** (Philp 3:14) there's a great, great danger of deception. Not just of wrong doctrine, but also of wrong participation. We won't participate in the higher things if our foundation is not secure.

The foundation needed to “go higher for this prize” (this is better term than “deeper”) is to know (experientially) what GRACE is! Grace will be the springboard that will propel us into the higher things. Note that Jesus grew into the “deep things” of the Father's will with GRACE attending Him.

Luk 2:40 The child continued to grow and was strengthened in spirit, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

It will be our safeguard when the deep things of the Father's will begin to be revealed. Grace! Without this solid foundation the seeking for “the prize of the upward call” will always keep luring us on — but we'll never touch it. Then some believers will actually pretend to understand this realm — but when the moment arrives, their deception will be plain to all.

I'd like to relate two dreams I experienced if I may. These are certainly not to validate what I'm saying, but it did provide me with some understanding.

Both dreams were about waves.

In one dream I was standing next to a wall, not feeling any threat or danger. Suddenly I turned and saw an enormous wave of heavy water heading toward me. It was terrifying, but then instead of trying to escape I simply stood still, and faced the mammoth wave encroaching me. As I stood facing the onslaught I felt a strange calmness. There was no fear or even a hint of anxiety. I simply let the wave come to me. As it came upon me it just dissolved over me. There was no forcefulness in it, no pain, not even wetness on my clothes. The wave came forcefully, but then just dissolved as though it were a fine mist. Then it was gone.

In the second dream, I saw another wave similar to the one related above, only this time there was no wall. As the wave came toward me, racing with a thunderous noise, I found myself lifted up through it (without getting wet) and then I flew higher and over the crest of the wave. I rose higher and higher over the entire wave of water. I was safe, secure, not even wet, and had an elated feeling as I looked down and perused the awfulness of that mountainous wave beneath me. I had been delivered.

The symbolism of this is quite straight forward. The waves were encroaching troubling teachings, dangerous doctrines bent on overtaking me. As I turned and faced the danger, putting my trust in the Father, then when the potentially threatening moment arrived — it either dissolved, or I was lifted above it.

In both cases I was safe from the destructiveness of the issue. Grace had delivered me from the moment of succumbing and being overwhelmed.

Let us go back to grace and let it be ingrained deep within us. I believe it (and the accompanying wisdom) is the antidote for spiritual deception. So let us examine ourselves.

2 Cor 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test?

The word “examine” means “to scrutinize, to discipline.”

The word “test” means “with purpose of approving.”

Therefore we are to test ourselves with the idea of approving who and what we are, and to scrutinize our beliefs and then discipline ourselves to lean on grace and grace alone. What a day that will be for us personally. What a day that will be when the Body corporate arrives at this mature stage.

Grace, grace.

Zech 4:7 What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” Amen to that!

Peter McArthur

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