



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.3.3

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF contains chapters 6-9 of the book *SABBATH*.

Being a disciple of Christ requires the most radical commitment a man can possibly make, though looking at Christianity today does not give one this impression. Most people who call themselves Christians are not disciples of Christ.

The word disciple is defined as "one who is a pupil or follower of another." If one follows Christ, one must live as Christ lived. He said that He did not live to please Himself. He lived to please His Father. He did not come

to the world to do His own will. He came only to accomplish His Father's will.

I do not doubt that when you first were introduced to Christianity that no one told you that you would have to give up your life to be a disciple of Christ. This is what Yahshua (Jesus) told all who came to Him.

The cost of following Christ has never changed. We simply live in an hour when the majority who call themselves Christians are walking in deception. There are very few who are truly disciples of Christ. "Many

are called, but few are chosen."

Perhaps God has brought you to your present circumstances to get you to consider what He actually requires of you. Few are willing to pay the price, for the price is exceedingly high.

Do not be deceived, there is no low-cost option to following Christ. Commitment to following Christ is absolute. None who accept the cost will ever come out the loser, however. God has promised an inheritance beyond measure to all who will follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Food for Thought

"God never built a Christian strong enough to carry today's duties and tomorrow's anxieties piled on top of them."

Theodore Ledyard Cuyler

"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important."

C.S. Lewis

Scripture Memory

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.

Parables Newsletter

- Series 1.3..3
- *SABBATH*
- Chapters 6-9

SABBATH

Paul Defines Man's Struggle

Ever since Adam first sinned in the Garden of Eden, mankind has known striving and it has been with great difficulty that he has sought to enter into the Sabbath rest of Yahweh. A great war has raged as the Spirit has made known unto man the mind of Yahweh, yet man's flesh has desired to go a different path, a path of its own choosing. Within the saint of God there is always this struggle present. The spirit of the saint agrees with the revealed will of God, yet the saint's flesh wars against it.

Sabbath rest could be defined as a place where mankind finds contentment with the will and desires of Yahweh. Paul describes the struggle to find this place of contentment in the following scriptures.

Romans 7:18-23

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish...

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Good and evil in this passage are not the same as the good and evil that arose from eating the forbidden fruit. This is not a good and evil of man's own choosing. Paul defines good here as "the law of God." It would be helpful here to define the law of God as His

rule. Yahweh alone has the right of determination. Anything He declares to be good or evil must be so. Any command He issues must stand. He declares His mind and it is made known to man by His Spirit. Paul states that "in the inner man" he joyfully concurs (or agrees) with the law, or rule, of God.

Although the inner man may find perfect agreement with those things Yahweh reveals to be His will for mankind, there is a part of man that does not share this agreement. This is the flesh of man. The flesh of man was cursed when Adam sinned. The flesh of man always desires to seek and to satisfy its own longings. The flesh of man does not want to give up its own will and desires so that the will and desires of God can be fulfilled. Paul further describes this conflict to the Galatian church.

Galatians 5:16,17, 24

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please...

24 Now those who belong to Yahshua the Messiah have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Paul is describing here a state of rest and a state of striving. The Spirit makes known the mind of the Father to the saint. If the saint responds in obedience then he has entered into Sabbath rest. However, the flesh must be overcome to enter into this rest. The flesh must be put to death for it opposes that which the Spirit reveals to be the mind of the Father. As we have seen, this opposition need not take the form of an apparently evil deed. All the flesh needs to do is propose another path other than that which the Father has revealed to be His will.

Many a saint has balked at the will of Yahweh in their life. Perhaps He has revealed that His will is something other than what their flesh desires. Yahweh may

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reveal that it is His will that a man sell all of his goods, give the proceeds to the poor, and embark on a path of faith following the Spirit wherever He leads. A man may say, "This does not appeal to me. I want to have my nice things. I will choose to keep these things. I will attend church regularly. I will give much money to the programs of the church. I will teach Sunday School. I will provide for my family. I will live a moral life, but I will not do this thing the Father has revealed to me." Such a man is walking in disobedience and sin, no matter how righteous he appears on the outside.

How many saints fall into this pattern? There are myriads who appear to be the most faithful of church members, they are good and decent people to all external observation. They are active in their local fellowships. They have set their hands to do many good things, yet they have failed to do that which the Father has revealed is His will for them. They go on year after year in this pattern, finding acceptance within their peer groups and receiving the praise of man. They may even endure persecution due to the moral and righteous activities they have chosen to participate in, but none of it finds favor with Yahweh if it is not that which He has led them to do by His Spirit.

This is the great peril of the flesh. It is not just evil that it sets itself to pursue, but it seeks to define its own righteousness. A man may think that he merely needs to live a *good* life, to live a *godly* life, but it is a false godliness. It is a godliness that derives from Satan's temptation to "be like God," for such a saint has determined for themselves what life they will live and what sacrifices they will make.

The saint of God must crucify his flesh and the desires of the flesh to enter into the obedience the Father demands of him. This is not easy, and for this reason it is infrequently practiced. The masses of Christianity are not content with the Father's will for them. They prefer to choose a path that is more acceptable to their flesh. All the better for them, they think, if they can offer acceptable service to God and not have to deal too harshly with their own flesh. What they have not discerned is that there is only one acceptable service to God, and that is complete obedience to His revealed will.

Paul spoke about coming to this place of contentment where he found Yahweh's will to be perfectly acceptable to him. To come to this place he had to crucify his flesh.

II Corinthians 12:10

Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Philippians 4:11-13

11 Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

How many saints and ministers can make a similar confession today? How many are content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties? How many would be content if in the fulfillment of the ministry Yahweh entrusted to them they had to endure humble means, going hungry, suffering need?

A man may think that he merely needs to live a good life...

It is evident that the church today is not content that these things should be the Father's will for them. They have devised doctrines that proclaim that this will never be the lot of the faithful saint of God. They have devised doctrines that state that it is always the Father's will that saints should prosper, they should have plenty to eat, they should never suffer lack.

SABBATH

Many have gone so far as to accuse any who do endure these same things that Paul endured as lacking faith, or walking in disobedience. Did Paul suffer these things due to disobedience? Did he suffer these things because he did not have as much faith as the “name it and claim it” crowd today?

These doctrines have been devised because the flesh of man does not want to be crucified. It wants to make some compromise with the Spirit. The flesh says, “I should not need to suffer in order to accomplish Yahweh’s purposes.” However, the clear testimony of scripture is that the flesh must not only suffer, but it must be crucified. It must be put to death.

In my own walk of obedience to the Father’s revealed will I have found that it has led to fellow ministers

Many saints have made a decision as to which master they will serve, and they do not even realize they have done so.

separating from me and rejecting me. Those whom I considered fellow laborers have condemned me and turned away. It has led to similar rejection by my own family, and I have found that it has led me to

be placed outside of the main camp of Christianity. In pursuit of obedience I have endured the loss of many physical things. I have not been able to gather to myself houses and lands and many material comforts. I have not been able to seek to satisfy both the flesh and Yahweh. I have had to choose one over the other.

Did not Yahshua clearly foretell that all saints would have to make such a choice?

Luke 16:13

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Many saints have made a decision as to which master they will serve, and they do not even realize they have done so. Many have chosen a course of compromise. They have not said with Yahshua, “I live to do the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Instead they seek to

serve God and to hold onto the things that satisfy the flesh’s longing. In the end they do not satisfy the Father at all, for they have failed to fully count the cost of following Him.

Paul did count the cost. He lived to do the will of Yahweh and he was content with whatever circumstances to which this commitment led him. Paul knew contentment when he had a sufficiency, and when he knew lack. Paul knew contentment when he was well fed, and when he was hungry. Paul lived to do the will of the Father and he did not seek to coddle his flesh. On the contrary, he ruled over the desires of his flesh and put these desires to death.

I Corinthians 9:27

I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Some debate who the author of the book of Hebrews is, but I have little doubt that it was the apostle Paul. There is too much of his other writings in this book. Paul constantly described by his example, his life, and his epistles the great struggle to enter into the Sabbath rest of God. In the book of Hebrews he comes out and clearly defines the issue of Sabbath and he gives the readers a true understanding of its meaning. To Paul it was certainly more than a list of rules and regulations describing a cessation from labor one day out of the week. To Paul it was the great struggle of mankind. It was the conflict between Yahweh’s will and man’s will.

Hebrews 4:9-11

9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.

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Paul learned the secret of contentment. He learned to crucify his flesh that the will of the Father might be accomplished in him. Paul buffeted his body and kept it in subjection to the will of the Spirit. In the book of Hebrews Paul speaks much of the great struggle of mankind to enter into the Sabbath rest of God. He speaks much of the example of the Israelites who came out of the bondage of Egypt, yet they failed to enter into the promised rest of Yahweh. These same people are given as an example to the church today and the saints are warned against following the same example and falling short of their calling.

Paul buffeted his body and kept it in subjection to the will of the Spirit.

Of those over the age of 20 who left Egypt, only two men entered into the land of promise. The church should be warned lest the same percentages apply to them as well. Many have received spiritual salvation and have been loosed from the bondage of the flesh, yet many remain as though they were still enslaved. They seek to satisfy the flesh and to serve God at the same time, not realizing the impossibility of such a proposition.

Paul, by his life and words, demonstrated that the great struggle for the saint of God is to overcome the flesh and find contentment with the will of Yahweh. As we will see, this was the struggle for those Israelites who wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

The Message of the Manna

The apostle Paul speaks much about the Israelites who wandered in the wilderness for forty years. They are given as an example for the church, and their failings are also mentioned as potential pitfalls for the saints today. Those whom Moses led out of Egypt struggled with the same issues that the church must face and overcome if they are to enter into the promised rest of God.

It is often underappreciated that those who have gone before us serve as examples, both good and bad, to today's saints. The people of Israel who followed the

pillar of fire and the cloud throughout their wilderness wanderings are referred to in scripture as "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). Paul clearly states that the church should pay careful attention to their failings, lest their same errors should be repeated.

I Corinthians 10:1-11

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 and all ate the same spiritual food;

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

6 Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved.

7 And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play."

8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.

10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

SABBATH

Paul affirms repeatedly that the things we read about the Israelites in the Old Testament were written for those who are a part of the current age, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. What was the great struggle of the Israelites? It was this very issue which we are studying. Yahweh desired for them to be loosed from the bondage to the flesh, a bondage symbolized by the cruel taskmasters of Egypt. He desired that they should live to follow Him obediently, putting the flesh and its desires to death.

Paul states that the Israelites were not successful in overcoming the flesh, dying to all personal initiative and living only to accomplish the will of Yahweh, and for this reason God was not well-pleased with the majority of them.

We have... defined Sabbath rest as being in a state of harmony with the revealed will of Yahweh.

Could Paul have any meaning other than that the same peril exists for the church today? Is it possible that God might not be well-pleased with the majority of the church as well?

Paul mentions specific instances of failing among these Israelites. They were a grumbling and a murmuring people. Yahweh spoke to Moses of them in the following manner.

Numbers 14:22-30

22 "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice,

23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it."

26 And Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

27 "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me.

28 Say to them, 'As I live,' says Yahweh, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you;

29 your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.

30 Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun."

The sins of the Israelites were threefold: they failed to trust Yahweh; they made idols and declared them to be God; and they were not content with His provision and will for them. I would like to look specifically at this last offense and how it can disqualify the saints from entering into the Sabbath rest of God.

We have previously defined Sabbath rest as being in a state of harmony with the revealed will of Yahweh. It is apparent that the Israelites were not in such a state of harmony. In fact, they were very dissatisfied with Yahweh's will and provision for them. Even when Yahweh's provision came in a miraculous and unheard-of manner, it did not satisfy the fleshly longings of a carnal people.

Exodus 16:2-31

2 And the whole congregation of the sons of Israel *grumbled* against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 And the sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction.

Parables Bookshelf

5 And it will come about on the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, "At evening you will know that Yahweh has brought you out of the land of Egypt;

7 and in the morning you will see the glory of Yahweh, for He hears your *grumbings* against Yahweh; and what are we, that you *grumble* against us?"

8 And Moses said, "This will happen when Yahweh gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for Yahweh hears your *grumbings* which you *grumble* against Him. And what are we? Your *grumbings* are not against us but against Yahweh."

9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before Yahweh, for He has heard your *grumbings*...

11 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

12 "I have heard the *grumbings* of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your Elohim.'"

13 So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

14 When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground.

15 When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which Yahweh has given you to eat...

21 And they gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt...

31 And the house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers with honey.

It seems a most remarkable thing that a people that had spent 430 years in a foreign land, most of the time serving as slaves, should find themselves suddenly delivered in a most spectacular fashion, and yet they should grumble continuously against the One who delivered them. Not only did the Israelites witness the miraculous and terrifying plagues that came against Egypt, but they were protected from the same plagues. Not only were they released from captivity, but they spoiled the Egyptians when they left, taking great wealth from them. Not only were they freed from their cruel taskmasters, but they saw the mighty Egyptian army perish in the Red Sea as Yahweh sent confusion upon them and then covered them with the waves of the sea.

Despite all of these miraculous events and a tremendous change in their fortunes, they grumbled at every inconvenience and they murmured against the good intent of Yahweh, accusing Him of not caring for them. Having barely left Egypt, they began to complain that they did not have all of the appealing things to eat that they had while they were slaves in Egypt. Clearly, knowing the will of Yahweh for their nation and performing His will was not the greatest of concerns to them. Their great concern was to satisfy their own fleshly cravings. Like the majority of Christians, they were concerned for what they could get out of their relationship with God.

They grumbled at every inconvenience and they murmured against the good intent of Yahweh.

In a most spectacular manner, Yahweh provided bread from heaven to meet the physical needs of the Israelites. The bread is even described as having a pleasing taste like unto wafers with honey. The manna that the Father provided had everything in it

SABBATH

necessary to sustain life and to cause the bodies of the Israelites to be strong and healthy, but the flesh is not so easily satisfied. The flesh lusts after many things to satisfy its desires. It wants a rich variety of meats and delicacies. It not only wants to live, it wants to live in great pleasure. It wasn't long before the manna was no longer pleasing to the Israelites.

Numbers 11:1-10

1 Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of Yahweh; and when Yahweh heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of Yahweh burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

2 The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to Yahweh, and the fire died out.

3 So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of Yahweh burned among them.

4 And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?"

5 "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

6 but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna..."

10 Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, each man at the doorway of his tent; and the anger of Yahweh was kindled greatly, and Moses was displeased.

How far removed were these people from the attitude displayed in Yahshua's life. When Yahshua was in the wilderness for forty days without any food we are told that He became hungry. Yet even in His hunger He was content to wait for the Father's provision to be manifested. Satan's temptation to turn the stones into bread was akin to the sin of the Israelites. Satan was in effect saying to Yahshua, "You haven't eaten for

forty days. It is not reasonable that you should be deprived of food. It is a small thing for you to speak to these stones and turn them into bread. Why don't you do so?"

Yahshua, however, saw the heart of the matter. To fail to wait on the Father's provision was no different than the murmuring and complaining Israelites saying that they were not cared for by Yahweh. It was an issue of trust as well as an issue of being content with the will of the Father. If Yahshua had turned the stones to bread

The flesh lusts after many things to satisfy its desires.

He would have demonstrated that He was not content to await the provision of Yahweh. He would be declaring that Yahweh's will for Him in this matter was not acceptable.

Yahshua did not respond as did the Israelites, however. Instead He rebuked Satan with the words, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). Yahshua understood that true life is found in being in harmony with the will of Yahweh. If it was Yahweh's will for Yahshua to wait yet a little longer to be fed, then this was the essence of true life. Life would not be improved by feeding the desires of the flesh. Life would not be any fuller, richer, or vibrant by satisfying the longings of the flesh. The only true life is found in being in complete agreement with the will of God.

When the Israelites came to this same test they failed it. The Father also led them into the wilderness and He allowed them to become hungry. Would they look at all of the signs and miracles they had witnessed and proclaim, "I know the Father must have a perfect provision for us in this matter. He has shown His concern for us over and over. How can we doubt Him now? We will await His provision with patience and thanksgiving."

This would have been an appropriate response, and one that would have found favor with Yahweh. Why did they not respond in this manner? It was because they did not want to have to suffer any inconvenience

Parables Bookshelf

to the flesh. They had been taken out of bondage in Egypt, but they were still in bondage to the fleshpots of Egypt. They still lived to satisfy the carnal desires of their fleshly nature.

Seeking the will of Yahweh was not their aim and desire; satisfying their flesh was. Moses revealed to the Israelites that they were led to these tests to expose what was in their hearts.

Deuteronomy 8:3

"And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh."

Moses was declaring that the true essence of life is to know the will of Yahweh (that which proceeds out of His mouth) and to fulfill His desire and His will. It was this passage that Yahshua quoted when He was tempted. Yahshua knew the purpose of the wilderness testing, both for the Israelites and for Himself. Where they failed, He succeeded. He did not allow Himself to entertain any thoughts of dissatisfaction with Yahweh's will for His life.

This is the message of the manna. Yahweh has a plan and desires for each one of His children. Will we be satisfied with His will for us? Will we be content to know His will and walk in obedience whether our flesh must suffer, or not? Will we resort to murmuring and complaining as the Israelites did? Will we be tempted to alter Yahweh's provision and plan by acting of our own initiative as Satan tempted Yahshua to do?

This is not an easy matter to judge. It would have been a simple matter for Yahshua to turn the stones into bread. In our lives it is also a simple matter for us to seek our own will over the will of God. There are many things we can do to satisfy the longings of our flesh. All we need do is stretch out our hands in an act of our own initiative and we can have what our flesh

desires. Multitudes do so every day, and multitudes fail to enter into the Sabbath rest of God.

If we are to walk perfectly before Yahweh we must seek His will at every turning and we must be ready to accept whatever His will is. We must not grumble or murmur. We must say, "My meat is to do the will of the Father. His will is what I live for. Accomplishing His will is my sole desire. I have no will of my own. I will not allow my flesh to dictate what course I will follow. I will put the flesh to death and follow the leading of the Spirit of God."

The church knows little of such a walk today. The church is full of its own initiative. Few seek to even know the will of the Father in a matter, and should the Spirit make His will known there are even fewer who will willingly follow where the Spirit leads. The church today has conformed itself to the description of the church of Laodicea. The church has not crucified the flesh, but has pursued the fulfilling of the flesh's desires until the following is true of her.

If we are to walk perfectly before Yahweh we must seek His will at every turning...

Revelation 3:14-21

14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this...

17 Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

19 Those whom I love, I reprove

SABBATH

and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent...

21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

A church that esteems the satisfying of the flesh's desire has sought to fill itself with many things to gratify its longings. In gratifying them this church feels that it has gained all that is needed. It declares that it is not lacking in any way, yet Yahshua says that this church is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. What a disparity of viewpoints.

Yahshua overcame the desires of the flesh. He did not love His soul life, not even at the cost of death on the cross. At the height of His greatest struggle between the will of the Father and the desire of His flesh to preserve itself, He declared, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Your will be done." He states that those who overcome as He did will be worthy to sit down with Him on His throne.

As we enter the seventh day of creation, God is looking to find those in the church who will once more

Yahshua overcame the desires of the flesh.

count the cost of following Him. There is no provision for the flesh promised. As Winston Churchill proclaimed to the residents of the English Empire as the threat of Nazi Germany loomed over Europe and

all of the free world, "All I can promise you is blood, toil, sweat, and tears."

The Father calls His children to count the cost and to follow the example of His Son. Those who lose their life will find true life, but those who seek to keep and protect their soulish and fleshly life will lose out on obtaining real life.

Once again Yahweh has brought His people to a wilderness where decisions must be made. Once again He is giving them manna to eat. Will the church be content with His provision, or will they long for the

fleshpots of Egypt?

John 6:32-35

32 Yahshua therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

33 For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."

34 They said therefore to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

35 Yahshua said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

Never has the saying "You are what you eat" been more true. As we eat the Bread of Life we become like Him. As He did not seek to save His life, neither will we. As He sought above all to do the will of the Father, so will we. As He never did anything of His own initiative, neither will we. As He would not stretch out His hand to do anything that was not the will of the Father, neither will we.

Only in this way will we enter into the Sabbath rest set before us. Let us receive the manna that God gives us from heaven with thanksgiving. Let us not enter into the error of the children of Israel. This is Paul's message to us and this is the message of the manna.

The Prodigal Returns

Luke 22:41-42

41 And [Yahshua] withdrew from [Peter, James, and John] about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

42 saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; *yet not My will, but Thine be done.*"

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There are no words that more accurately encapsulate the true meaning of Sabbath rest than these words of the Messiah, “yet not My will, but Thine be done.” We have seen how Lucifer was the first Sabbath breaker as he repeatedly declared “*I will.*” In absolute contrast we see the Son of God proclaiming, “*Not My will.*”

This is the position of rest that was surrendered in the Garden of Eden. Adam went from a place of contentment with the Father’s will, to being dissatisfied with His will. Adam wanted to direct his own path. He wanted to decide for himself how he would lead his life.

Adam was the original prodigal son. As he was abiding in the place the Father had chosen for him, an unrest began to grow until finally it gave vent to action as he set himself to do that which was not the will of God. In a sense, all of mankind is represented in the prodigal son. We have all left the place of rest with our Father and have gone seeking our own fortune. We have lived either riotously or self-righteously. In either case we have directed our own course and have chosen to go a way that was not the Father’s will.

Adam wanted to direct his own path.

The Father has waited for us to come to our senses and to realize that things were better before we left His side. That which we thought was so confining and unbearable begins to look good after we find out how hollow life is apart from the Father. After we endure shipwreck and enslavement, moral destitution and abasement, we begin to consider how far we have fallen. The story of the prodigal son is the story of mankind.

Luke 15:11-24

11 And He said, "A certain man had two sons;

12 and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.'

And he divided his wealth between them.

13 And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

14 Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need.

15 And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

17 But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;

19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'"

20 And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;

23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

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24 for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry."

The prodigal's realization of his status was correct. Mankind is no longer worthy to be called sons of God, yet the Father is still willing to consider us sons. The son goes back to his father with the intent of willingly submitting himself to be a servant. He knows that the righteous thing is for him to live to do the will of his father.

When the saints of Yahweh realize that they too have taken the inheritance given to them and they have spent it as they pleased, according to their own will and desire, they will see that it also leads to a spiritual famine. It is quite possible to gain all that our soul desires and yet to remain destitute spiritually. Like the Laodicean church, we can appear wealthy and lacking in nothing, yet a true appraisal reveals that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

The father's words upon greeting the son hold much meaning; "For this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again." When we are living according to our own initiative, our own will and desires, we are dead. When we are being guided by the innate soulish sense of good and evil we are dead. The story of the prodigal son goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden for it is a retelling of the fall of man and an unveiling of the nature of the two trees that are named in the Garden.

The scriptures are full of contrasts: darkness and light; good and evil; rich and poor; love and hate, etc.. In the opening chapters of Genesis we see many contrasts. The light is separated from the darkness. The dry land is separated from the water. Should we not expect that there should be a distinct contrast between the only two trees named in the Garden of Eden?

Genesis 2:9

And out of the ground Yahweh God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

At first appearance these trees may not appear as opposites, but they are. One tree is called the tree of life, and we have this report concerning the other tree.

Genesis 2:17

"but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

One tree is named the tree of life. The other tree brings forth death. These trees are truly opposites set in contrast to one another. By knowing this we can identify the nature of the trees.

We know that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents man living independent of Yahweh and His rule. This tree brings man to a place where he attempts to govern himself independently of His Creator. By eating of this fruit Adam and Eve had birthed in them an ability to determine right and wrong, good and evil within their own beings. But in gaining this ability they became separated from Yahweh.

The tree of life represents the exact opposite of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life brings one into union with the Father where all knowledge of good and evil finds its source in Him. The tree of life represents man in union with Yahweh. The tree of life is a place of rest where man has his head covered, where man refuses to act or speak of his own initiative, but where he receives every command, every direction from the mouth of God. The tree of life is the Sabbath tree.

In the parable of the prodigal, the wayward son repre-

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sents every man. “All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one of us to our own way” (Isaiah 53:6). When we come to our senses we are able to return to the Father and we determine that we will now live to do His will. We know the righteous thing is to present ourselves as servants, knowing that we are not worthy to be called sons. Yet in His mercy Yahweh does call us sons. He declares, “This son of mine was dead: (he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; he went and lived according to his own will and desires and he walked in death.) Now my son has returned alive: (he has forsaken his own way and he has returned with the heart of a servant to do My will. Now My son is eating from the tree of life.)”

There is great hope for this son that was lost. He has discovered how barren and hopeless life is apart from the Father. He has discovered that living a self-directed life leads to death. He is able to see what true life is. He understands that man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. By experiencing the depths of his own depravity and his inability to govern himself he has seen his need and great dependence upon the Father. There is great hope for this son for he has now come to make a similar confession as did Yahshua; “No longer will I live for my will... I will live for You Father.”

Much of the church has missed the point of this parable of Yahshua. It is not enough to simply realize that you are headed for hell and you are in need of forgiveness for your sins. It is not sufficient to pray a sinner’s prayer if you do not have a similar heart change as did the prodigal son. What is needed is a realization that we are unable to govern ourselves. It is no solution at all to make a confession of Christ and then to continue to direct one’s own life according to the leading of the soul.

Much of the church remains in this place, however. They renounce the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and they proclaim the praises of the tree of life, but even as they do so they are still eating of the tree that brings death. Much of the church proclaims Yahshua to be the Son of God. They know that He alone led a life that was pleasing to the Father, but they have failed to identify what made His life so pleasing. Yahshua said, “Not My will... but Your will be done.” This was the chief characteristic of

Yahshua’s life. He lived to do the will of the Father. Yet many saints continue to live to fulfill their own desires. They look to Yahshua for salvation, but they have not identified what they truly need saving from.

Many saints wish to continue living their lives much as they did before they heard about Yahshua, but they want to know that their sins will be forgiven and they will go to heaven when they die. Little do they realize that the Father wants to conform their lives to the image of the One they look to for salvation. It is no salvation at all to remain in independence from the Father, being led by one’s own soul. Such a saint is still walking in spiritual death. The Father wants His elect to confess, “Not my will... but Your will be done.” The Father wants His elect to forsake the tree that leads to independence that it might be said of them as it was the prodigal son, “This child of Mine was dead, but now they are alive.”

Resting in Ministry

It is a great paradox that most of those who function as ministers today are by their very example demonstrating what the Father despises. Many of these ministers have a sincere desire to labor in service to Yahweh, yet they have failed to distinguish what type of service is pleasing to Him. By doing whatever seems good to them in ministering, they are actually practicing the principle of Satan which is to be governed and ruled by one’s own soul.

What is needed is a realization that we are unable to govern ourselves.

I feel quite safe in stating that the vast majority of men and women in positions of ministry in the body of Christ have not been placed there by God. They have arrived at their position through the work and will of man. The very process that many go through to become “qualified” for ministry is far removed from Yahweh’s methods. Going to Bible College and Seminary to have one’s head filled with the doctrines and methodologies of the church is far removed from the process God would take His true ministers through in order to prepare them for service. (I am not discount-

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ing that there are some true ministers that have gone this path, but their qualifications in the kingdom of God have little to do with the institutions of man.) The common methods today may give one the stamp of men's approval, but they fail in gaining the stamp of God's approval.

The process the Father would take men through to prepare them for ministry is seen everywhere throughout scripture. The Father prepares His chosen ones for service by bringing them to an end of personal ambition, and to a death to seeking anything for self. Only those who are truly emptied of ambition and self-seeking can be effective ministers in the kingdom of God.

The preparation the Father takes His servants through is most grueling. The Father's school of service leads to self-abasement and humility. Quite often

The preparation the Father takes His servants through is most grueling.

it will bring a man to a place where all have turned against him but God; where he is misjudged, evil spoken of, and where he has had his motives and judgment brought into question.

This is a necessary part of the minister's preparation for he must be a man who is dead to his own reputation; where he is quite content with insults, with personal weakness, with distresses, with persecutions and difficulties (II Corinthians 12:10).

Seminaries and Bible Colleges do not bring a minister to this place of readiness. Instead, the student is apt to feel quite welcomed, accepted, and proud that he has earned a degree from a reputable school, knowing that his diploma gains him entry into the good graces of many denominational churches. By completing a course of study and receiving a piece of paper duly signed by those overseeing such programs, the graduate is perceived as being ready for service as a minister.

Yahweh's course of study is much different. Consider Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob. He was given dreams and visions while yet a young man that he would one day be in a position of ruling and reigning.

It would have been nice if Jacob could simply have sent his son to school to receive whatever knowledge was necessary to fulfill his calling. This was not God's way, however.

Joseph's calling was great, and his preparation process was equally awesome. Joseph was to be given tremendous power and authority and the Father needed a man that would not misuse that which was entrusted to him. Yahweh needed a faithful servant that would accomplish all of His desire.

Joseph began his schooling right after having received the vision of how Yahweh would use him. Joseph was sent by Jacob to check on his brothers and to bring back a report. Joseph had formerly done so, bringing back an evil report of the activity of his brothers. Joseph's brothers despised him. They were indignant at the fact that he would be used to report on their activities and that their father favored Joseph more than them. Joseph received a bitter course in human envy, jealousy and hatred. Some of his brothers wanted to kill him, but instead they were talked into selling him into slavery to a foreign land and people.

Joseph cried out bitterly with many tears for his brothers not to abuse him, but they turned a deaf ear to his cries. His brothers then went and reported to their father that Joseph had been killed by wild beasts. In great despondence, Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold as a slave to an Egyptian nobleman.

At this point, many would have been tempted to throw in the towel and to say, "God, if this is your training for future service, then I would prefer not to be a minister in your kingdom." But Joseph was faithful. Even though he had been rejected by brothers and sent far away from the father he loved, he performed every service that was entrusted to him with the greatest of integrity.

Joseph's faithfulness was soon noticed, and it was evident that everything entrusted to his hands prospered. His master took this young Hebrew slave and placed him in charge of his whole household. Everything in this man's house was blessed through the

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faithful service of Joseph.

For a while it seemed that things were going well for Joseph. Although he still was enslaved and rejected by brothers and separated from his father, he was given some honor and he received the benefits befitting his position of service. But Joseph's training was about to be turned up a notch in its intensity.

The wife of Potipher, Joseph's master, was physically attracted to Joseph, for he was a handsome youth. She began to entice Joseph to have sexual relations with her. Joseph knew that to do so would be a violation of his master's trust in him, as well as a sin against God. Joseph resisted her temptations day after day. One day this woman found herself alone in the house with Joseph and she pressed him mightily to lie with her. Joseph fled from her, leaving his garment in her hands, for she had grasped hold of his garment.

Potipher's wife, angry at being rebuffed, called the other servants and reported that Joseph had tried to make sexual advances toward her and that he had left his outer garment with her when she cried out. Joseph was seized and falsely accused. What a grief for this young man who had been completely faithful in the discharge of his duties, even while enduring enslavement at the hands of his brothers. Joseph was placed in prison, but even in prison he was faithful.

Quite often in the training programs of man, a student ascends from one level to another and greater honor is accorded at each level. In God's training program for Joseph he descended, first into slavery, and then into prison. In this position as an imprisoned slave Joseph had no rights and no honor. The temptation must have been great to cry out to God and to find fault with Him due to Joseph's harsh circumstances. The days turned into months, and the months into years as Joseph saw no release from the prison in which he had been placed. In the Psalms we have this testimony of Joseph's trial.

Psalms 105:17-19

17 and he sent a man before them -- Joseph, sold as a slave.

18 They bruised his feet with shackles, his soul was laid in irons,

19 until the time his word was fulfilled, the word of Yahweh tested him.

Yes, Yahweh was testing Joseph. Like metal that is tried in a fire, Joseph was tried and purified and strengthened. Finally, when Yahweh saw that Joseph still remained faithful despite the most grievous of circumstances, when Yahweh was certain that Joseph had as his highest goal to be found faithful and obedient to God, then Yahweh was able to bring Joseph out of prison and place upon him great authority and power.

This is not an isolated example of Yahweh's preparation process. David also went through a similar process. David was faithful in all circumstances, yet he met with the disapproval of his brothers, and the envy and hatred of a wicked king. For years David lived as an exile from his own country, and he even reported that his father and mother had turned against him (Psalms 27:10). David's training process took him from a position of some honor, as he was a servant in Saul's household, only for him to descend lower and lower until the day the Father determined that he should be made king.

In God's training program for Joseph he descended, first into slavery, and then into prison.

Moses went through a similar path of humility on his way to being prepared for Yahweh's purposes. Even Yahshua followed a similar path. Like David and Joseph, Yahshua knew that He had a calling on His life from His childhood, as was demonstrated by the recorded events of His life when He was only twelve years of age.

Luke 2:41-51

41 And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

42 And when He became twelve,

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they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;

43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Yahshua stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,

44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

45 And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him.

46 And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions.

47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

48 And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you."

49 And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in My father's house?"

50 And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

51 And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Yahshua knew that He had a calling on His life from the time of His youth. How anxious He must have been to accomplish all that the Father intended for Him. Yet an important thing is revealed in the phrase "*and He continued in subjection to them.*" Yahshua knew that He must wait until the fulness of time to

begin His ministry. He had to first learn servanthood and humility. He had to await the moment when the Father determined that He should be revealed to the world as the Son of God.

Many ministers today fail in this point. It is difficult to wait upon the will of the Father, but if a man cannot wait for the chosen time the Father has established to enter into ministry, then how can he be expected to wait upon the Father's provision and direction while fulfilling that ministry? If a man enters into ministry of his own initiative, he can expect to continue in the same way, being full of his own direction as he is led by his reason, impulses, and will.

It is difficult to wait upon the will of the Father...

Yahshua waited until He was thirty years old to begin His earthly ministry, and then His ministry lasted only three and a half years. David and Joseph also were thirty years old at the time of their receiving that which had been promised them. Moses was eighty years old when he was called of Yahweh to begin his ministry. Moses had attempted to fulfill his calling forty years previous, but his premature attempt was a dismal failure.

We see that in all ministry men must be at rest. They must enter into the Sabbath of God where they have ceased from their own labors. It is no good trying to fulfill the ministry of the kingdom of God through human effort. It will simply lead to striving, and nothing built through such human effort will last. All our labors will be tried by fire and much of it will be burned up, as the scriptures proclaim.

I Corinthians 3:10-15

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid,

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which is Yahshua Messiah.

12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

It is a difficult thing to bring a man to understand what is being spoken of here. Men want to believe that they are completely qualified for ministry. They look at one another and they say, "I am just as qualified as the next man to be used of God." Much pride is revealed in such an attitude, however. Men often fail to look to God to see whom He has proclaimed as qualified to be a minister in the kingdom. Rather, they compare themselves among themselves and in doing so they act as those who are unwise (II Corinthians 10:12).

A minister must come to a place of rest before he is considered ready for advancement in the kingdom. A man that will not wait upon Yahweh, and a man that chafes at the long and grueling preparation process of a minister; at the abasement and humility that must become a part of his nature, will never come to a place of effectual service in the kingdom. The character of God's workman must be free from ambition and self-initiative. God's workman must understand his complete inability to bring forth anything of lasting value through his own effort. The successful servant of the Lord must live a life of total submission to the will of Yahweh.

The Father's school of preparation exacts a toll upon all those who go that way. Joseph longed to be free of his imprisonment, and he begged Pharaoh's cupbearer to remember him when he was restored to Pharaoh's service (Genesis 40:14). The cupbearer

promptly forgot Joseph, however, and Joseph remained three more years in prison while the word of Yahweh tested him. I believe that Joseph finally came to a place of rest before the Father called him out of prison.

David, too, felt overwhelmed at times by all of his trials. He cried out to Yahweh to answer him and deliver him lest he should be overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. The Psalms are full of David's cries for relief from his perilous and woe-filled circumstances. In all of David's trials he never resorted to fleshly means to deliver himself. When he could have easily killed the man that was making his life perilous and who stood in the way of his becoming king, David did not act in the flesh. He waited for God's provision.

A minister must come to a place of rest before he is considered ready for advancement in the kingdom.

The minister must learn this lesson of waiting. The minister should do nothing to bring himself into the position he feels in his heart is his ultimate calling before Yahweh. He must wait for Yahweh to bring him forth in His own timing. It is Yahweh who exalts men such as Joseph, David, and Moses, and it is Yahweh who will raise up the men that He has called and qualified for positions of service today.

I Peter 5:6-7

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

It is especially hard for those who are young to wait upon Yahweh. Many have failed to wait and they have embarked on some course of ministry that they were not yet ready for. Pride is often the product of failing to wait, and Paul communicated this truth to Timothy.

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I Timothy 3:2-6

2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money...

6 *and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.*

Was not Satan's condemnation that he attempted to ascend to a position that Yahweh had not determined for him? Such presumption can be born out of a heart that is zealous for God and a heart that desires greatly to be of some real service to Him. But true service has this as its guiding rule, "It is performing the will of the Father in heaven." Nothing else qualifies as acceptable service.

Our service will only be acceptable when it is born out of waiting upon the Father to give us a command concerning what we are to do. Like a soldier under authority, we are to do that which our Head commands

Like a soldier under authority, we are to do that which our Head commands us to do.

us to do. We are not to strike out on our own and do whatever our reason leads us to do lest we end up as those whom Yahshua warned his disciples about who will say to Him, "Lord, Lord, did we not do many things in Your name?" His answer is, "You did not perform the will of the Father. You are lawless ones who have become an authority unto yourselves."

Can any minister operate from such a position of independence and be found pleasing to God? In the book of Acts we read that immediately after Saul encountered Yahshua on the way to Damascus and was converted, he began to go out and preach the truth of Yahshua. Although he had received the new name Paul, he was not yet ready for the ministry to be entrusted to him. The Spirit led him to a time of preparation in Tarsus that lasted a number of years (Galatians 1:15-18).

Paul must have been exceedingly eager to embark on the ministry to which he was called. He must have yearned to build up that which he had formerly sought to destroy. Yet Paul had to wait until the Spirit signified that it was time for his ministry to begin. This was made known to the church in Antioch.

Acts 13:1-4

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

How critical are these words, "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit..." All true ministry will bear this witness; it will begin at the Spirit's initiative, it will be empowered by the Spirit, and it will be continually guided by the Spirit. If men are merely sent out by their own will, or at the hands of other men, they may make a lot of noise and they may even build impressive ministries and make a name for themselves, but when their work is tested it will be burned up. All that which is born of the flesh of man or the soul of man will not stand the test of fire.

Although Paul is a great example of a kingdom minister, Yahshua is even a greater example. As we saw, He submitted unto His parents and awaited the day when the Spirit would lead Him to begin His ministry. The Spirit initiated Yahshua's ministry, and He will initiate the ministry of all who follow in Yahshua's footsteps.

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Matthew 3:16-4:1

16 And after being baptized, Yahshua went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him,

17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

1 Then Yahshua was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness...

How many ministers today can attest to the fact that the Spirit initiated their ministry? How many can proclaim that the Spirit led them to where they were to be? People make many such claims today, but are they true? Has the minister gone through Yahweh's school of preparation to prepare him to be a humble servant, or has he followed a course of man's devising and choosing?

What is the fruit of the minister's labor? Does the church exist to provide a platform for the minister to perform his calling, or does the minister live to wash the feet of the saints, to equip and release them to do the work for which they have been called? Has the minister's position resulted in an attitude of pride, or does he walk in humility esteeming others more highly than himself?

It is difficult to walk the path that Joseph, David, Moses, Yahshua, Paul and others walked to be qualified for ministry. It is excruciating at times to wait upon the Spirit of God to declare, "Now is the time!" But if a minister is to lead others into the Sabbath rest of God, he must first enter in himself. This is an important matter, and many failing to grasp and adhere to the truths spoken of here are building that which will not stand the test of fire. It is my prayer that they will receive eye salve that their eyes might be opened and they can see the truth. The days are short and the Sabbath is upon us.

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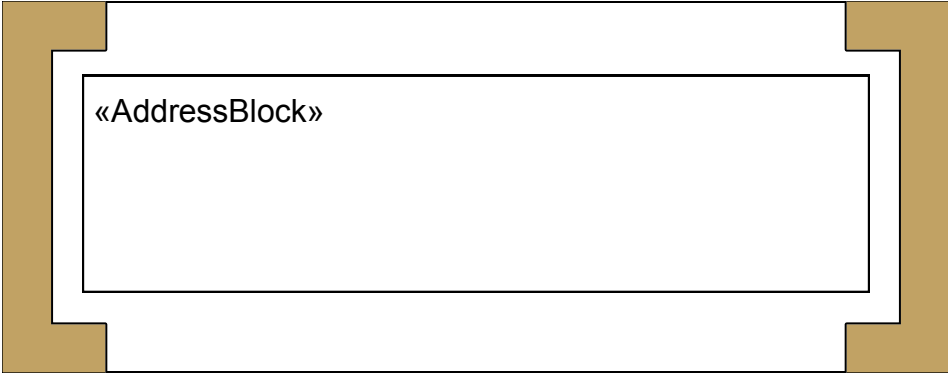
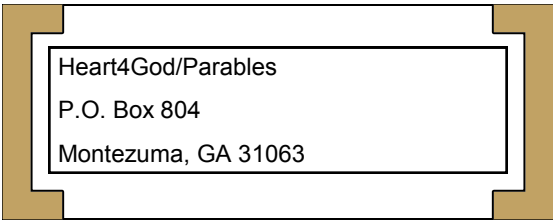
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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center’s Website)

The Hebrew letter pictured above is Kaph. It is believed to be an image of an open palm of a hand. The name of this letter is the same as the Hebrew word for palm.

When seeking to understand how the early Semitic people, which includes the Hebrews, arrived at the spelling of various words, we have to try to imagine

what aspect of the hand they might have been thinking about.

A hand is used for many things. It can grasp. It can hold. It can bend. It can slap. It can cover. It can be cupped like a hollow depression.

Unfortunately, there are no early dictionaries that have been discovered by the early people who used this language and alphabet. Those who seek to reconstruct the origins of ancient words

must act as modern day sleuths, or investigators. Sometimes an intelligent guess is the best one can arrive at.



For example, the Hebrew word above means stand. It is a picture of an open palm, and a picture of a seed. Jeff Benner has suggested that together these signify the “opening of a seed.” A seed must open before it can send out roots, and roots must be formed before a plant can stand upright.

Is this what the ancient Semitic people meant by writing this word in this way? Maybe you can come up with another explanation.