

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 16

Ephesians 4:9–13

Ephesians 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

CHRIST'S descension and then ascension into heaven, mirrors Moses' ascension and descension, but in a contrasting manner. Where Moses began His journey at the bottom of the mount, to the top, and then back down again, the Son of God began His descent with coming to the earth, to ascending to heaven, and then in His appointed time, shall return in the full glory and majesty of the Father.¹ Where Moses also went up into the mount

for only a brief time and interaction with the Lord,² Jesus came down from heaven, after eternally being in God's presence.³ This is also why the Son of God's ministry is so much greater than God's servant Moses' ministry. Though Moses brought a portion of God's Word to man, only God's *only begotten Son*⁴ has been eternally in the intimate and everlasting presence of the Father, and as such, has not only revealed more of God's Word and will to man, but also God's person.⁵ Where Moses could only reveal God's law to Israel, God's Son, Jesus Christ has far exceeded this revelation and revealed the Lord's dis-

1 John 16:28 *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

2 Exod. 24:18 *And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.*

3 John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

4 John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

I John 4:9 *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

5 John 1:14–18 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. ¹⁶And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

position,⁶ person, and holy character.⁷ Ultimately it could not be one merely born of the flesh, who could divulge true sight of God, but only He, Who possesses inseparable⁸ and continued relationship with Him.⁹ Through Christ doing so, believers may now honor, cherish, and love the Lord, just as all other holy creatures do.¹⁰ As the only begotten of God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. (John 1:18) *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* The Greek word for *bosom* is #2859 *kolpos* (KOHL-*pose*). *Strong's Lexicon* reveals the usage of the word as “In the New Testament, ‘*kolpos*’ (KOHL-*pose*) is used to describe the bosom or chest area, often symbolizing intimacy, closeness, or a place of honor.” Concerning the historical background of the word, *Strong's* also states, “In ancient Jewish culture, reclining at a meal was a common practice, and the position of lying close to the host's bosom was one of honor and intimacy. This cultural practice is reflected in the

New Testament, where being in someone's bosom signifies a special relationship or favor.” Man's inability to see God, resides in the great gulf of separation that lies between him and God. This distance of understanding is enough that the world by all its wisdom—its advances in science, technology, mathematics, space, etc., and any other form of gaining insight into the present universe—still cannot know, nor could ever come to truly know God, apart from God revealing Himself to man. At best without Christ's revelation of the Father, the very best that men can do in trying to search Him out, is based upon speculation, imagination, and religious conjecture. Ultimately, without the Son of God, revealing God to man, then God could never fully be known. This is also why those who lack either knowledge of, or faith in Jesus Christ, actually possess no true perception of God at all. For it is only through the Son, that the Father can be accurately seen, known, and believed in.¹¹

It is worth noting that just as Moses' face shone after briefly being in the presence

6 I John 1:5 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

John 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

John 16:27 *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

7 John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Matt. 19:26 *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*

8 John 10:30 *I and my Father are one.*

9 John 8:58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

10 Luke 2:13 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Neh. 9:6 Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*

Rev. 7:11–12 *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,* ¹²*Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

Job 38:7 *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

11 John 14:9 *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

of God,¹² and some believed this transformation continued throughout His entire ministry,¹³ then what shall be the glorious radiance of the Son of God¹⁴ when Jesus returns from continually being in God's holy celestial presence, and in His appropriate time, to judge the world in righteousness.¹⁵ This triumphant return, when Christ descends in the full glory of the Father,¹⁶ shall be significantly greater and far more astonishing than even what Jesus' close disciples Peter, James, and John observed of Jesus' glory, on the mount of transfiguration.¹⁷ What the disciples saw in part, the world will observe, see, and behold, in full. Peter, James, and John's interaction of seeing the Lord Jesus in His glory, also prepared them for their Christian callings. What can be gathered

by this, is that to boldly and enthusiastically preach He, Whom God has sent into the world to save man, then there must occur first an element of seeing Him in His glorified state. Since it is seeing the Lord Jesus as He truly is, glorified, that prompts His messengers to deem as their most important mission and purpose in life, to reveal Whom they have believed upon to the world. This process of preparing men for ministerial service, through permitting sight of the Lord Jesus in glory, was evidenced early after Jesus' resurrection, when He revealed Himself to *above five hundred brethren*.¹⁸ To perceive Christ as He truly is, is the greatest motivator in priming and prompting those called to God through His Son, to heartfully and with energized religious fervor, engage

12 *Exod. 34:29–30 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.*³⁰ *And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

*Exod. 34:34–35 But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.*³⁵ *And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.*

13 Talmudic Interpretations – Some Rabbinic sources suggest that Moses retained a divine radiance throughout his life. The Talmud (Bava Batra 75a) mentions that Moses had a supernatural glow, possibly referring to this concept.

Midrashic Literature – Midrash Tanchuma and other commentaries often depict Moses as maintaining a supernatural quality, even at death (Deuteronomy 34:7 notes that his vigor was undiminished). Some interpretations extend this to mean his radiance persisted.

14 *Mark 13:26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

Luke 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Matt. 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

15 *Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

16 *Matt. 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Luke 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

17 *Matt. 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*

18 *I Cor. 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

Matt. 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

in the work of the great commission.¹⁹ For nothing will spark, ignite, and fuel a spiritual heart more—consequently producing a burning desire to spread the gospel—than clearly seeing the Son of God, as He truly is. Ultimately it is perceiving the Lord Jesus, after He has been raised and ascended to God, that will transform a man from merely performing religious duty, to inspire him for sincere spiritual evangelism. For once the Son of God is truly seen, then those who have received sight of Him, will count themselves as spiritually bound to announce, declare, and herald the Lord Jesus' present glorified, and authoritative state²⁰ to the world.

It is also through saints beholding the glory of the Lord, that they are transformed to reflect God's glory in their own lives. (II Cor. 3:18) *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Cor. 3:18) We see God mirrored in Christ, who is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15²¹), and as we gaze, with our face unveiled, on that mirror, a change comes over us. (END QUOTE)

It is as men behold the *glory of the Lord*, that they are both changed and reflect back through their heart and lives, the very image of the One of Whom they have beheld. What was true of Moses externally, when his face shone after being in God's presence is similarly true of saints

internally. (II Cor. 4:6) *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Barnes' notes are extensive on this verse, but they aptly reveal the true essence of both the reality and the experience that every true Christian will undergo, through the Spirit of God providing light, to spiritually perceive the glory of God, through the person and face of Jesus Christ.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 4:6) *For God, who commanded ...*—The design of this verse seems to be, to give a reason why Paul and his fellow-apostles did not preach themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, 2 Corinthians 4:5.²² That reason was, that their minds had been so illuminated by that God who had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that they had discerned the glory of the divine perfections shining in and through the Redeemer, and they therefore gave themselves, to the work of making him known among people. The doctrines which they preached they had not derived from people in any form. They had not been elaborated by human reasoning or science, nor had they been imparted by tradition. They had been communicated directly by the source of all light—the true God—who had shined into the hearts that were once benighted by sin. Having been thus illuminated, they had felt themselves bound to go and make known to others the truths which God had imparted to them. ... this verse teaches the fact, that the minds of Christians are illuminated. They are enabled to see things as they are. This fact is often taught in the Scriptures; see 1

¹⁹ Matt. 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

²⁰ Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Phil. 2:10–2:11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

John 17:2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

²¹ Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

²² II Cor. 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

John 2:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12–15.²³ They have different views of things from their fellow-men, and different from what they once had. They perceive a beauty in religion which others do not see, and a glory in truth, and in the Saviour, and in the promises of the gospel, which they did not see before they were converted. . . . this verse teaches, that it is the “same God” who enlightens the mind of the Christian that commanded the light at first to shine. He is the source of all light. He formed the light in the natural world; he gives all light and truth on all subjects to the understanding; and he imparts all correct views of truth to the heart. Light is not originated by man; and man on the subject of religion no more creates the light which beams upon his benighted mind than he created the light of the sun when it first shed its beams over the darkened earth. “All truth is from the sempiternal (sem-puh-TUR-nahl “endless”) source of light divine;” and it is no more the work of man to enlighten the

mind, and dissipate the darkness from the soul of a benighted sinner, than it was of man to scatter the darkness that brooded over the creation, or than he can now turn the shades of midnight to noonday. All this work lies beyond the proper province of man; and is all to be traced to the agency of God—the great fountain of light. (END QUOTE)

The means by which supernatural transformation is accomplished, is through the *Spirit of the Lord* abiding in the believer’s heart.²⁴ Thus, when someone gains, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, Christ within them,²⁵ and has been born of God,²⁶ and then sets their eyes upon the Savior, first spiritual illumination enters the heart, and then spiritual transformation begins to take place within it. This transformation is accomplished by the power of God’s Spirit. So that when men’s

23 1 John 2:20 *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

1 Corinthians 2:12–15 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*

24 11 Cor. 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

25 Gal. 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

26 John 3:1–7 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ²The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. ³Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

1 Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

1 Pet. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

1 John 2:29 *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

John 1:12–13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

eyes become unveiled,²⁷ and they are able to have true sight of Christ, and perceive Him as He presently is, then the *Spirit of the Lord*, begins a spiritual change within them, which will ultimately augment and expand throughout their entire physical being. This supernatural process begins internally, and then progressively extends itself outward.²⁸ So that ultimately what the Spirit of God has accomplished in the heart, will become visible to the world, through the life.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, II Cor. 3:18) The change that takes place in us is a spiritual change (see 1 Corinthians 2, and notes on 2 Corinthians 3:6²⁹). It is not affected by formal enactments, which at best can but condemn, but it is the work of a Lord Who works within, Who sends forth the beams of His light that they may transform, not the outer surface, but the heart, that so the man may reflect back undimmed thence the glorious Light that has shined on him. And so the man into whose heart the Light of Christ has entered progresses from one stage of spiritual glory to another, until at last (Romans 8:29³⁰) he becomes fully

conformed to the image of the Son of God.
(END QUOTE)

Ephesians 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

From Christ's descension, came Christ's ascension, so that He *might fill all things*. Because the Lord descended and then ascended, He now, through His own spiritual fullness, fills all things. From then Christ's heavenly fullness the Holy Spirit is given, gifts of grace are imparted,³¹ and believers are fully redeemed. It is the Lord Jesus' full journey—from heaven to earth, to die for sin, and be resurrected and ascend to God—that allows for those who believe upon the Savior, to be accounted as *complete* in Him. Ultimately it is the journey of Christ and all that He accomplished in coming from heaven, and ascending back to heaven, that spiritually accomplishes for the believer, eternal fellowship, union, and peace with God.³²

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:10) *Far above all heavens*—see the notes on Ephe-

27 II Cor. 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

28 Matt. 5:14–16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Phil. 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

I Thess. 5:5 *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

29 II Cor. 3:6 *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

30 Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

31 John 7:36–39 *What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? ³⁷In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

Eph. 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

32 Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

sians 1:20–23;³³ compare Hebrews 7:26.³⁴ He is gone above the visible heavens, and has ascended into the highest abodes of bliss; see the notes on 2 Corinthians 12:2.³⁵

That he might fill all things—Margin, “fulfil.” The meaning is, “that he might fill all things by his influence, and direct and overrule all by his wisdom and power.” Doddridge. (END QUOTE)

It is through Jesus’ descent from heaven, to die on the cross for man’s sin, to then be raised from the dead, after the punishment for sin had been fully completed, which is the genesis of the believer’s completeness in Him. (Col. 2:10) *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*

The Greek word for *complete* is #4137 *pléroó* (play-row). *Strong’s Lexicon* defines the word *pléroó*, (play-row) “From the Greek word πλήρης (*plērēs* (play’-race)) [#4134], meaning “full” or ‘complete.’” *Strong’s* also describes the usage of the word as “The verb ‘*pléroó*’ (play-row) primarily conveys the idea of filling something to its full capacity or bringing something to completion. In the New Testament, it is often used to describe the fulfillment of prophecies, the completion of joy, or the filling of individuals with

the Holy Spirit. It can also refer to the fulfillment of the law or commandments, indicating a bringing to full expression or realization.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines *pléroó* (play-row), “(from *plērēs*, (play’-race) ‘be full,’ see 4130 /*pléthō* (play’-thō))—properly, fill to individual capacity, i.e. to the extent it is ‘meet’ (appropriate).” From these definitions we observe that through Jesus’ journey coming from heaven to the earth, and then ascending back into heaven, that the believer has been made full and complete in all that was lacking and would prevent eternal communion with God. Because of the completeness given to saints through Christ, all shame, disgrace, humiliation, and chagrin for past sin, has been removed. Hence, where fallen and sinful man is deficient and incomplete on his own, and unworthy of heaven, now through the Son of God and His redemptive ministry, Christ’s own fullness, makes him complete. Because of this, the sinners’ salvation need not rest on himself, neither upon his own personal works or worth, but rather on the finished work of Who has been given the full authority by God to save man.³⁶ For the true saint, it is not himself, nor personal holiness which makes him fit for heaven, but rather the journey of his Savior.

33 Eph. 1:20–23 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

²¹*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;* ²²*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* ²³*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

34 Heb. 7:26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

35 II Cor. 12:2 *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

36 John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* John 3:17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

II Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Col. 2:10) *Ye are complete.*—Literally, *ye have been filled up* in His fulness, as in John 1:16.³⁷ So St. Paul had prayed for the Ephesians that they might be “filled with (or rather, *up to*) all the fulness of God,” and “grow into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 3:19; Ephesians 4:13³⁸). To partake of the divine *pleroma* (play-row-mah) [4138] is not the special privilege of the initiated; it belongs to all who are united to the Lord Jesus Christ. (END QUOTE)

Ephesians 4:11–13 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹²*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

¹³*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

Another result of Jesus' descent into the world, His victory over it,³⁹ and His ascent back to heaven, is that He has given in His absence, gift ministries, supernaturally appointed, ordained, and equipped by Him, for the divine purpose of the spiritual development and expansion of His church. These heavenly ministries are critical for the believer's spiritual

growth, and their coming to a more accurate knowledge of the Savior. Where also false teachers and preachers will seek to lead men to themselves,⁴⁰ these heavenly sent ministries will first perfect the saints, preparing them for the work of the ministry.

Just as Jesus imparted to all believers a measure of various gifts of grace,⁴¹ so has He given as a gift to these same believers, divinely placed gift ministries to assist them in growing up in their own personal ministries. These heavenly sent ministries, appointed and equipped by the ascended Christ, include *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers*. Their purpose and reason for living, is for *the perfecting of the saints*, with a view to the *work of the ministry*, with a further view of the *edifying of the body of Christ*, with the final result of producing greater *unity* in the church, and its members arriving at a greater *knowledge of the Son of God*. Though many believers have been saved by Christ, there is still much lacking in both their faith and walk; because of this, spiritual restoration is needed, before they can be fully equipped to fulfill their own specific call to Christ. It is thus the purpose of these spiritually gifted ministries to perfect that which is lacking in the saints, preparing them for the work of the

³⁷ John 1:16 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

³⁸ Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

³⁹ Eph. 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

⁴⁰ John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

⁴¹ Acts 20:30 *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

II Cor. 11:13 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. II Pet. 2:1–2 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

Matt. 7:15 *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

Matt. 24:11 *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

⁴¹ Eph. 4:7 *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

ministry, and ultimately growing them up to possess both a knowledge of, and faith in, Christ Himself. These gift ministries are essential for the Christian's growth and development. Through Christ's power, working within them, they help restore that which is broken in the saved, so that they may carry out Christ's purpose for their own lives. Without these divinely appointed ministries, the body of Christ, would be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every deceptive and devilish wind of doctrine, purposed to deceive.⁴² To foolishly reject these spiritual servants, given to the church by the Son, is to ultimately reject their Sender.⁴³ For none can truly reject those sent by the Son of God, for the church's advancement and growth, and not reject who has placed them in His body. (Luke 10:16) *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.* This is not to say that all those who merely in word claim relationship with the Son of God, and claim to come in Christ's name, should immediately and without careful spiritual inspection be accounted as having been sent by Christ. Absolutely not. This is because the world is filled with an abundance of false teachers and pseudo-prophets never appointed by the

Lord Jesus.⁴⁴ For this reason the scripture cautions all believers to *try the spirits*, to spiritually determine if God is truly the source of those who claim to be speaking by it. (I John 4:1) *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* The genuine prophet Jeremiah also spoke of spiritual counterfeits in his time, who came in God's name but was not sent by God. (Jer. 5:31) *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?* Sadly, as this verse reveals, false prophets have abounded through the millenniums, and still today many merely professing believers love to embrace their false, deceptive, and harmful doctrines. Indeed, many who only profess to follow Christ in word, regularly gather to themselves false teachers,⁴⁵ in the place of true ministries which Christ has set in His church. As the verse states, *my people love to have it so.* That is, there are many in religion, who will embrace false prophets, and their false prophecies, far above the real truth of God's Word

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Jer. 5:31) My people love to have it ...—The words imply more than an acquiescence in evil, and describe an ethical condition

42 Eph. 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

43 II Chrn. 36:12 *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD.*

44 Ezek. 13:9 *And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.*

Jer. 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

Jer. 23:16 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*

Matt. 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

II Tim. 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

45 II Tim. 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

like that of Romans 1:32 [*Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*]. (END QUOTE)

Undoubtedly there are many in various positions of Christian government, who have gained religious influence and authority, whom Christ has not placed there, much less ordained for ministry. Thus, just because a man labels himself as a prophet or an evangelist, does not mean that he is who he claims to be. Moreover no man also has the right to take such an honor, thinking himself either an *apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher*, through personal will, or selfish desire. Like priests in the Old Testament, none could assume, through merely human desire, the title, honor, and position of a priest. (Heb. 5:4) *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* To be called to such an office, an individual must first be divinely called and appointed by God for it, as Aaron was.⁴⁶ Though some will disagree with this principle being applied to ministers today, one only needs to look at the spiritual immaturity and lack of deep biblical instruction in the body of Christ, to conclude that divinely sent spiritual leadership is severely lacking. Consequently, if saints are not being perfected in their faith, and the work of the ministry is not successfully being undertaken by them, and spiritual edifi-

cation is not being evidenced in Christ's body, then undoubtedly, those leading God's people, have not themselves been equipped by the Lord Jesus, for the positions they hold. Ultimately, all positions in Christ's body must be according to divine will, and cannot be entered into merely through human desire. This is why though a person may attend either Bible college, or seminary, this itself does not equip him, or her, for church pastorship. Undoubtedly the appointments of the ministries of *apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers* are certainly no exception to this rule. So that if a man only needs religious education to claim himself fit to lead God's people, then Christ, and His divine appointments, apparently are not even necessary to conduct Christian ministry. In regards also to the true ministries in the church, Jesus said, (John 15:16) *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* Jesus' words reveal that not only did He choose the disciples for salvation, but that He even more specifically ordained them for ministry. Ultimately it is solely the Lord Jesus, Who chooses, and then appoints for ministry, those purposed to function as true ministers in His church. This is also why if a man has not spiritual power, nor heavenly wisdom in his ministry, then you can be certain that he has no divine appointment by Christ, nor

⁴⁶ *Exod. 28:1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.*

Exod. 29:1-8 And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, ²And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. ³And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. ⁴And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. ⁵And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: ⁶And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. ⁷Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. ⁸And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them.

will he ever be able, because of his lack of ability to demonstrate the Spirit⁴⁷ even effectively, witness, or testify for Christ.⁴⁸

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 15:16) I have chosen you—To be apostles. Yet all whom he now addressed were true disciples. Judas had left them; and when Jesus says he had chosen them to bear fruit, it may mean, also, that he had “chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,” 2 Thessalonians 2:13.⁴⁹

Ordained you—Literally, I have placed you, appointed you, set you apart. It does not mean that he had done this by any formal public act of the imposition of hands, as we now use the word, but that he had designated or appointed them to this work, Luke 6:13–16; Matthew 10:2–5.⁵⁰

Bring forth fruit—That you should be rich in good works; faithful and successful in spreading my gospel. This was the great business to which they were set apart, and this they faithfully accomplished. It may be added that this is the great end for which Christians are chosen. (END QUOTE)

I Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. Because it is true that God hath set the members in the body, as *it hath pleased Him*, then it must be equally true that the gift ministries

which Christ has ordained to strengthen these members in their spiritual walk, must also be according to divine will. To foolishly think then that the members of Christ's church, and how they are purposed to function in it, must be in accordance to divine will, but reject the idea that those heavenly sent ministries, ordained by Christ, need not be appointed by Him for ministry, is spiritual nonsense. For none can truly be effective in any spiritual calling, unless he has been divinely equipped by the Savior, for it. It is therefore only the Lord Jesus Who has placed true gift ministries in His church, and only He Who imparts the necessary spiritual gifts and abilities, that will make them effective in it.⁵¹

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, I Cor. 12:18) as it hath pleased him] Literally, as He willed. See last note. St Paul would have us draw the inference that our own peculiar disposition and talents are appointed us by God, that we may perform the special work in the world for which we were designed. We are not therefore to repine because we do not possess the qualifications which we see possessed by others, but to endeavour to make the best possible use of the gifts we have. (END QUOTE)

What is also true is that those sent to labor for the Lord, and spiritually reap the harvest of God, are to a certain degree, largely

⁴⁷ I Cor. 2:4 *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*

⁴⁸ Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

⁴⁹ II Thess. 2:13 *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

⁵⁰ Luke 6:13–16 *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; ¹⁴Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, ¹⁶And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.*

Matt. 10:2–5 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. ⁵These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

⁵¹ Luke 9:1–2 *Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. ²And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

rare.⁵² (Matthew 9:35–38) *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad,*

as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

The harvest that Jesus spoke of are those souls, though hungry and desiring greater

52 I Kgs. 18:21–22 *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*²² *Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.*

I Kgs. 22:6–36 *Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*⁷ *And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?*⁸ *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.* *And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.*⁹ *Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.*¹⁰ *And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.*¹¹ *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.*¹² *And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand.*¹³ *And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.*¹⁴ *And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.*¹⁵ *So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*¹⁶ *And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?*¹⁷ *And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.*¹⁸ *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?*¹⁹ *And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.*²⁰ *And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.*²¹ *And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.*²² *And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.*²³ *Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.*²⁴ *But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?*²⁵ *And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.*²⁶ *And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;*²⁷ *And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.*²⁸ *And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O people, every one of you.*²⁹ *So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.*³⁰ *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.*³¹ *But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.*³² *And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.*³³ *And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.*³⁴ *And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.*³⁵ *And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.*³⁶ *And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.*

fellowship with God, were instead spiritually starving and wandering as sheep absent a shepherd. Hence, though the quantity of those searching for the truth was great, what was lacking, and whom there existed very little of, were those divinely sent laborers of God, to reap His harvest. It is for this specific reason that Jesus instructed the church to *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest*. The reason that prayer is important in this matter, is because only God can send, and equip with spiritual power, those who are able to draw people to Himself. Ultimately only *the Lord* has the ability to both send and equip for ministry, laborers for His harvest. Since the harvest is God's, only those ordained by Him, can properly reap it. What was true in Jesus' time, is also true today. For though there are many who desire God, and seek to know the way of salvation, there remain very few who have been sufficiently spiritually gifted, to help them in their journey. Because also so many in the professed church are spiritually unfit for the offices they hold, and lack the spiritual power and ability for their religious positions, a great amount of God's chosen, even today, are left to wander as sheep with no shepherd.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 9:36) But when he saw the multitudes—*That followed him from place to place. When he saw their anxiety to be instructed and saved.

*He was moved with compassion on them—*He pitied them.

*Because they fainted—*The word used here refers to the weariness and fatigue which results from labor and being burdened. He saw the people burdened with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the Pharisees; sinking

down under their ignorance and the weight of their traditions; neglected by those who ought to have been enlightened teachers; and scattered and driven out without care and attention. (END QUOTE)

Apostles. The Greek word for *apostle* is #652 *apostolos* (ah-POSE-toh-los). *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, "*apóstolos* (ah-POSE-toh-los) (from 649 /*apostéllō*, (ah-pose-TEL-lo) 'to commission, send forth')—properly, someone sent (commissioned), focusing back on the authority (commissioning) of the sender (note the prefix, *apo* (ah-POE)); apostle." To properly be called an *apostle* of Jesus Christ, demanded a special commission to go forth and spread the gospel. For the apostle Paul this commission was to the Gentiles,⁵³ so that they might hear the truth and be saved.

Strong's Lexicon states of the usage of the term, *apostolos* (ah-POSE-toh-los) "refers to one who is sent forth with a specific mission or commission. In the New Testament, it primarily denotes the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus Christ, who were sent out to preach the gospel and establish the early Church." *HELPS Word-studies* also reveals the term to mean, according to the Cultural and Historical Background: "In the Greco-Roman world, the term '*apostolos*' (ah-POSE-toh-los) was used to describe a messenger or envoy sent with authority to represent someone else. In the context of the New Testament, apostles were seen as authoritative representatives of Jesus Christ, entrusted with spreading His teachings and establishing His Church. The role of an apostle was foundational in the early Church, as they were responsible for teaching, guiding, and maintaining the doctrinal purity of the Christian faith."

⁵³ Gal. 2:7–8 *But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)*

One of the most unique and rarest of Christ's gifts to the church, are those chief ministries, which the Lord Jesus personally ordained as *apostles* for Himself. To accurately be labeled a special messenger of the Lord Jesus, which is what the word *apostle* means, there needed to be personal contact with the Savior. Examples include Paul,⁵⁴ Jesus' twelve disciples, Judas and Silas, etc..⁵⁵ Ultimately, no angel could give legitimacy for such a ministry, nor could any man, carelessly assume this title through personal will. Needless to say, no angel can call a man to true religious office, though many false prophets have attributed angels, and false visions, as the source of their calling. Examples of this heresy include Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon church,⁵⁶ and the angel Moroni,⁵⁷ whom Smith claimed came and spoke to him. Mohammed could also be

included, who claimed being visited by the angel Gabriel in a cave.⁵⁸ These are but two examples of very many through the centuries, who were false prophets claiming to gain their ordination for ministry through a visitation from an angel. (Col. 2:18) *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*

We can also say with spiritual confidence that no such ministries as apostles exist today, though we do hold much of their divinely received doctrine in the canon.⁵⁹ Ultimately apostles were gifted with extraordinary spiritual powers.⁶⁰ This was necessary for their planting the gospel throughout the world, and providing credible witness, that the Lord Jesus

54 Acts 9:15–16 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

55 Acts 15:32 *And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.*

56 Bushman, Richard L. "Joseph Smith." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Smith-American-religious-leader-1805-1844.

57 Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Moroni." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., www.britannica.com/topic/Moroni-religious-figure.

58 Montgomery Watt, William, and Nicolai Sinai. "Muhammad." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 25 Feb. 2025, www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad.

59 Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

II Pet. 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

II Tim. 3:16–17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

60 Acts 19:11–12 *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

Acts 2:1–7 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

4*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?*

Acts 5:12–16 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16There came also a multitude*

had personally ordained them for ministry. Like the prophets of old, the Lord would not let the apostles' words fall to the ground.⁶¹ Understandably there are none who have ever held higher rank in the body of Christ, than those directly and personally called by the Son of God, for the ministry of an apostle. Since apostles in the early church held the highest rank; as such they were entrusted with the greatest responsibility to testify for the Savior, and fulfill the great commission, in leading others to be baptized by Him.⁶²

The next ministry, and perhaps even in spiritual rank and authority, are the ministries of *prophets*. Strong's defines the word #4396 *prophētēs* (prof-ay-tace), "a prophet, poet; a person gifted at expositing divine truth." Its word origin, according to Strong's is, "Derived from the Greek word 'pro' (before) and 'phēmi' (fay-mee) (to speak), meaning 'one who speaks forth' or 'advocate.'" The usage of the word, "In the New Testament, 'prophētēs' (prof-ay-tace) refers to a person who is divinely inspired to communicate God's will and message to others. Prophets are often seen as God's spokespersons, delivering messages of warning, guidance, or revelation. They may foretell future events or provide insight into God's plans and purposes." Practically speaking, if the church is exposed to a true prophet of the Lord, then this will easily be evidenced by the accu-

rate, truthful, and spiritually beneficial prophecy which is brought forth.⁶³ This prophecy will not only awaken people to the Lord's presence, but also the revelation brought forth will often lay bare the *secrets* of men's hearts. This is seen in I Corinthians chapter fourteen when we observe what true prophetic utterances will produce, of which God's prophets, are their main source. (I Cor. 14:24–25) *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* It is also *prophets*, and the prophetic messages they bring forth, which are most effective at touching and influencing those who *believeth not* and/or are *unlearned*.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 14:25) *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest*—Made manifest to himself in a surprising and remarkable manner. He shall be led to see the "real" designs and motives of his heart. His conscience would be awakened; he would recall his former course of life; he would see that it was evil; and the present state of his heart would be made known to himself. It is possible that he would suppose that the speaker was aiming directly at him, and "revealing" his feelings to others; for such an effect is often produced. The convicted sinner often supposes that the preacher particularly intends "him," and wonders that

out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Acts 16: 16–18 *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.*

Acts 28:7–9 *In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.⁸ And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.⁹ So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:*

61 I Sam. 3:19 *And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.*

62 Matt. 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

63 I Cor. 12:7 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

he has such an acquaintance with his feelings and his life; and often supposes that he is designing to disclose his feelings to the congregation. It is possible that Paul here may mean that the prophets, by inspiration, would be able to reveal some secret facts in regard to the stranger; or to state the ill design which he might have had in coming into the assembly; or to state some things in regard to him which could be known only to himself; as was the case with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1, ⁶⁴ seq.)...(END QUOTE)

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, I Cor. 14:25) *and so falling down on his face*: either publicly before the whole congregation; or when retired, as one ashamed of his sins and errors, and not able to look either God, or good men, in the face; and being in an adoration posture; or however, being truly humbled before God under a sense of his iniquities,

he will worship God; pray unto him, and earnestly entreat he would be merciful to him a sinner, and blot out all his transgressions, and forgive him all his sins; and will ever after acknowledge him to be the true God, embrace his Gospel, submit to his ordinances, and attend his service:

and report: or “declare”, freely and openly to the church, to all men, to the world, and to his company from whence he came, and to whom he belonged,

that God is in you of a truth: that the Spirit of God, who is truly God, and searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and the deep things of men, and makes them manifest, is in the prophets and preachers, otherwise they would never be able to make manifest the secrets of the heart as they do;

and that the presence of God is in the church, and the power of God goes along with the ministration of the word: hereby, now many valuable ends are answered, a sinner is converted, God is worshipped and glorified, credit is brought to religion, the church of Christ is spoken well of, and prophets or preachers are honoured... (END QUOTE)

What is seen here, is the direct correlation to bringing the unsaved and/or unbelieving to recognize God, and be humbled in His presence, will include either the ministry of a prophet, or the special gift of prophecy. Generally speaking it takes the ministry of a prophet to open the eyes of those spiritually blind to both God and their own sinful state. Fear, reverence, and respect for the Lord is a good thing, and none are more suitable to producing this in the unsaved, and those ignorant of God, than those called to speak for God. This is also why though other ministries can be highly effective in ministering to the saved, it will often take the gift ministry of a prophet, to reach those deep in sin, and far away from God. Outside of the gift ministry of an *apostle*, there is no greater ministry purposed to bring people back to the Lord, than those *prophets* sent by Him.⁶⁵ To therefore discover the will of God, especially in areas where scripture is silent, or not known, the prophet's ministry is indispensable. (I Sam. 9:9) (*Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.*) A few of the scriptures that speak of the Lord's prophets, include:

⁶⁴ Acts 5:1 *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*

⁶⁵ II Chrn. 24:19 *Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.*

Jer. 3:22 *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.*

Isa. 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Joel 2:12 *Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning;*

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

II Kings 21:10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

*Deuteronomy 34:10–11 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,
¹¹ In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,*

I Samuel 3:19–20 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

²⁰ And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

I Kings 16:12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet.

II Kings 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may

enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Jeremiah 7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:

Jeremiah 29:19 Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 25:4 And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

Isaiah 38:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

Jeremiah 46:13 The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt.

II Chronicles 24:19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.