

Palace Of Praise

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Chapter 1

I Will Return

*And to this agree the words of the prophets;
as it is written,
After this **I will return...** (Act 15:15,16)*

It was a day of joy and great rejoicing. Priests were marching, trumpets were sounding, people were shouting and singing, children were leaping for joy, and the king himself, the chief ruler of the people, was leaping and dancing in the street. The entire nation was celebrating. What was the big occasion? The Ark of the God of Israel was returning home!

Israel had strayed away from God. The people and the priesthood had been defiled, and God judged His people by temporarily removing His Presence from their midst. His glory had departed from the old order, but on this great day, He was returning home. The Ark of the Covenant, which represented the Presence of God in the midst of Israel, was returning to its new place.

Let's turn to the first book of Samuel and study the fourth chapter. It all started way back in

the time of Eli. Israel had settled in the Land of Promise. At this time in their history, they had no king, no prophet, and Eli was their priest. But Eli had become old and fat, and his ministry practically feckless. His sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were occupying the office of the priesthood in his place, were despicable sons of Belial. Eli was an indulgent father who shut his eyes to the horrific sins of his sons. They sank so low in gross immorality that they lay with the women who assembled to worship Jehovah at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

This incident occurred in the days of the last judges in Israel. The people and the priesthood were defiled, and Eli's sons were in the forefront, leading the Israelites into sin. "Like people, like priests" is an appropriate description. Eli was concerned about it, but didn't know what to do and didn't seem prepared to take any drastic action. He probably didn't want to say or do anything that might offend his sons or shake up the status quo. Therefore, God had to reprove him for his negligence.

God sent a prophet to Eli to say that He was finished with him and his family as far as the priesthood was concerned, and that God was going to raise up a priest-prophet for Israel. This anointed one, Samuel, would minister unto the Lord, and his office would also be that of a prophet.

And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they

were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. (1 Sam 2:27-30).

God rebuked Eli for making himself fat with the offerings of His people. Eli, like many of our modern-day ministers, had become literally fat with the offerings of God's people. How appropriate is this rebuke to us, the present-day priesthood? Is it not true that some of us have become wealthy and affluent from the chiefest of the offerings of the people of God? Instead of taking the due portion ordained by Jehovah, the Hophnis and Phinehas of our modern day have lustfully amassed portions that Jehovah has not given and called it scriptural prosperity. Like Hophni and Phinehas, they have used their position as "priests of the Lord" to rob the people of God and to steal the sacrifices and gifts being offered to God. It was so bad with

the priesthood in the days of Eli that *"men abhorred the offering of the LORD"* (1 Sam 2:17).

Beloved minister, what should we learn from this? The Scriptures tell us that these things are written for our admonition, to warn us so we do not fall into the same error. The judgment of God came swiftly on Eli's priesthood, and therefore we must take heed of the warnings. That corrupt priesthood received a severe judgment, as written in the book of Samuel.

What did Eli himself do wrong? He did not participate in the corrupt practices of his devilish sons in the days of his ministry, but he condoned the practices and did not correct them. The honor of his sons prevailed over the fear of God. This fear of disrupting the status quo and losing favor with the new generation in the ministry is very real in the church world today, and the older generation who were present during the early Holy Ghost movement are failing in their duty of pointing the young ones to the ancient paths.

But God has a new ministry in the making. There is a "Samuel company" being prepared of the Lord in this very hour. This company, fresh and new from the hand of God, is under preparation in the Tabernacle of the Most High. Yes, it's true, God has kept for Himself *"seven thousand in Israel, knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and mouths which hath not kissed him"* (2 Kings). Let's go on.

At the time of Eli's ministry when his sons began to perpetrate their atrocities in Israel, the Ark

of God dwelt behind the veil in the Tabernacle of the Congregation at Shiloh. But God was ready to close the chapter on this old order and to raise up for Himself a prophetic ministry.

Ichabod: The Glory is Departed

Then came the Philistines and arrayed themselves in battle against Israel. The battle became fierce, and Israel was losing. When the elders of Israel saw that they were losing the battle to the Philistines, in a last desperate attempt to save Israel from defeat, they quickly sent for the Ark of God: *"So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Ark of the covenant of God"* (1 Sam 4:4).

They remembered that the Ark had always brought them victory against their adversaries in times past. They figured that bringing the Ark into the fray would force God to save them from their enemies. They were certain that God would be forced to protect His Ark and save His own face. Indeed, when the Philistines saw the Ark of God, they were frightened, but they did not flee; this made them fight all the more with fearful desperation and defeat the children of Israel. Not only did the Philistines win the battle, they killed the priests Hophni and Phinehas and captured the Ark of God. It was a gloomy day for Israel.

On the same fateful day that the battle was lost to the Philistines, a news courier from

the tribe of Benjamin took the news concerning the battle to Eli. When the news that the Ark of God had been captured was relayed to Eli, he was dazed, fell backward off his seat, broke his neck, and died.

His daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and brought forth; for her pains came on her. About the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, Don't be afraid; for you have brought forth a son. But she didn't answer, neither did she regard it.

*She named the child **Ichabod**, saying, The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken. (1 Sam 4:19-22)*

What a strange name to give a child! What a tragedy of immense proportion! "Ichabod" is a Hebrew word that means "no glory" or "departed glory." The name is significant in marking this unfortunate event in the history of God's people. This Hebrew word has also been interpreted as meaning "Where is the Glory?"

Where is the Ark of His Presence? Where is the Shekinah Glory that should cover the Mercy Seat? Where is the Urim and the Thummim? Where is the Pillar of Fire?

There is famine in Zarephath; where is Elijah? The axehead is fallen into the river; where is Elisha the prophet to make it float? The

woman's only child is dead; where is Elisha to bring forth a revival? Jezebel and her prophets have taken over the land; where are Elijah and the God who answers with fire? The temple is corrupted, the moneychangers and the profiteers reign supreme in the sanctuary; where is He, the Messenger of the Covenant? Where is the Refiner's Fire to purify the sons of Levi?

But thus says Jehovah, the Lord your God: *"Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Mal 3:1-3).

The Ark of Thy Strength

God began this work of judging the priesthood and preparing for the new order by suddenly removing His Presence from the old order. The Ark of God, which represents the Presence of God in Israel, dwelt behind the Veil in the Tabernacle of the Congregation before it was removed and departed from Israel. God allowed His Ark, the Ark of His Presence, to be captured by the Philistines and to be carried away to a heathen land.

However, the celebration of the capture of the Ark of the God of Israel was short-lived in the camp of the Philistines, for the Ark did no little damage to their gods and their people. In the first few days that the Ark spent in their land, the Ark of God destroyed their fish-god Dagon and decimated the inhabitants of Ashdod. On the morrow after the first night, they found their god, Dagon, fallen flat on its face before the Ark of God. Yes! *At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow* (Phil 2:). The Philistines should have taken this hint as a warning to return the Ark to Israel, but no, they helped their god up and sat it up in its place again. What they found when they arose the second morning was terrifying. This time their god Dagon was not only fallen on its face, but its head and both palms of its hands were chopped off and only the stump of its body was left to it. The Ark of Jehovah beheaded their gods, just as Jesus beheaded Satan and his principalities and made a show of openly triumphing over them in their own territory. Then the Philistines realized they had to do something very quickly to appease the God of Israel and return His Ark to where it belonged.

I am sure some Israelite soldiers fought to the death defending the Ark of God while it was being captured by the Philistines. The ones who survived the battle must have lamented. What sorrow must have filled their hearts that they failed to defend and protect the Ark of God! But now that the Ark of God is in the hands of the enemy, who is going to protect it? Who is going to defend it? So many preachers today, especially here in the rich nations of the

world, talk as if they are the "defenders of the faith." They imply that if they were not on the job and their powerful ministries were not around, the Word of God would fail, the gospel would not advance, and the will of God would never be brought to pass. My dear friend, that is a delusion.

How blind and ignorant can one get? Don't we know that we cannot protect God's Word—on the contrary, the Word protects us. The Presence of God will defend and protect us. We have no power to defend the Ark of God. We ignorantly think that we can defend the Word of God with our education, with our political lobbying, with our innovative propaganda on the airwaves, but it is not so. What we need to do is to present, put forward, exalt, and lift up the Ark of God on the shoulders of His anointed priests for the world to see, and then we'll see the enemy vanquished right before our eyes. When we do this, we'll see the Jordan River part and make way for the people of God to pass over on dry ground to the land of their inheritance.

The Philistines had the Ark in their possession for seven months, and it was nothing but trouble for them. They transferred the Ark from city to city, but the devastation followed it. After seven months of torment, the Philistines came to their senses, realized that they were being plagued because of the Ark, decided they'd had enough, and made arrangements to return the Ark of God to His place. They called their priests and diviners to see what to do, and here is what the priests and the diviners of the Philistines replied:

Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch-cows on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the cows to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold which ye return to him for a trespass-offering, in a coffer by its side; and send it away, that it may go.

And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know, that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us. (1 Sam 6:7-9)

The Philistines did as the priests and diviners advised and were glad when the Ark left them. The men of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley at the time, and when they lifted up their eyes and saw the Ark, they rejoiced. *The Levites took down the Ark of God, and the coffer that was with it, in which the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed unto the Lord the same day.* And there was Revival on that day, but they also trespassed God's divine order and, against God's ordinance, peeped into the Ark, for which they were judged severely. So the Ark of God and His divine Presence passed on to another people: the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim. The Ark is on its way; the Ark of God is returning home.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness had an outer and an inner court. Worshipers entered the Tabernacle through the beautiful gate of the

outer court with praise, singing psalms proclaiming the glory of God. It was also the place of repentance, where sins were confessed and blood was shed upon the brazen altar before God. The inner court of the Tabernacle was made up of two compartments. The first compartment of the inner court, called the Holy Place, contained the Golden Lampstand, the Table, and the Shewbread. Here the priests, the sons of Aaron, ministered to God and partook of the Shewbread. A heavy veil separated this chamber from the innermost compartment.

The innermost room was the Holy of Holies, also called the Most Holy Place, which contained the Ark of the Covenant, on top of which was the Mercy Seat, where once a year, atonement was made for the sins of the nation. There was no window or lamp in this innermost compartment but the Divine Presence; the Shekinah Glory of God filled and lit this most holy place. This was the glory of God, the weight of the significance of His Dwelling Place that He gave to the Israelites as the sign of their Covenant with Him; for He had said, "*My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest*" (Exo 33:14).

The Ark, which itself symbolizes Christ Jesus, represents the Presence of God in the midst of Israel. The first mention of this ark was in Exodus 25, when God took Moses to Mount Sinai and gave him detailed instructions on how to build it. It was a shadow, a physical representation of something that was already in existence in heaven. The way it was built, the materials that were used, and the purpose for which it was used make it very clear that this

Ark was an earthly type of our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity. God ordained one place, and only one, where He would meet with man: union of God and man could only take place at the Ark. Yes, only in Jesus can there be any hope of man coming into union with Almighty God. *"There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the Man Jesus Christ."*

On top of the Ark were two cherubim looking down at the Mercy Seat where the blood was placed on the Day of Atonement, one at each end of the Mercy Seat. One looked forward to the blood, the other looked back at it, as if it were a picture of the Old and New Testament saints. No one can be saved without the precious blood of Christ. No one. The Old Testament saints looked forward in faith to when Jesus would come and shed His blood; we look back to Calvary when the Lamb of God did it all.

Everything in the Tabernacle speaks of Christ. He is the beautiful Gate through which we enter with thanksgiving. He is the perfect Lamb slain on the Brazen Altar so that our sins can be forgiven. He is the Shewbread in the Holy Place, the Living Word giving to us. Our prayers ascends to the Father through Him, our Altar of Incense. He is the Light of the world, the Golden Lampstand, the Light who sent the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds. The torn veil speaks of His flesh that was bruised and torn for us, giving us entrance into the the Presence of God. As the Scriptures say, *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us,*

through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb 10:20). And as we pass through the veil, we finally enter into the Holiest of All. Here also we see Christ: He is the Ark of God and He is our Mercy Seat before the throne of the living God.

As the Scripture reveals to us and enumerated above, the Ark of the Covenant, also called the Ark of His Presence, symbolizes and represents the Presence of God. Unfortunately, because of the apostasy of His people, God had to forsake this first Tabernacle. The Presence of God departed from its place in the Holy of Holies of the first tabernacle. This was the glory that departed from the Temple (Ezek 10:18-19) and this would be the glory promised to return with the Messiah (Hag 1:8; Zech 2:10).

Ezekiel prophesied concerning this situation in the days of his ministry. He witnessed the judgment of God that fell upon the people, the priesthood, and the elders in the sanctuary for their abominations in the house of God. As he was shown all these things, he fell on his face and cried unto God for mercy.

Sadly, as he watched, Ezekiel saw the glory of God moved from its place in the Holy of Holies to the door of the house (Ezek 9:3-4), then to the Eastern Gate of the Lord's house (Ezek 10:19), and lastly, the glory of the Lord completely departed from the city (Ezek 11:23).

But the Almighty is a merciful God. Blessed be His name forever and ever. For He, our God, *"is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy"* (Psa 103:8). Even though He removed His Presence from the old Tabernacle,

He left His people with a promise that He would return. Amos the prophet proclaimed this prophecy, which was echoed by Apostle James, that He would return and rebuild the fallen tabernacle:

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. (Amo 9:11)

Yes, the Almighty, the gracious One, promised His people in those visions that He would return in the fullness of time and take up His habitation in a new *Tabernacle not made with hands*.

The Holy Spirit is speaking to the Church in many different ways these days of the Lord's return in special visitation to His people with special signs and wonders. Our hearts must be full of eager expectation as we look up for a sign of the appearance of the Glory of God. As we hear all these trumpets sounding, we are eager to ask, What is the meaning of these trumpets? What does their sound signify? Does it mean that the Ark of His Presence is returning to His place on Mount Zion? Does it mean that the Glory Cloud that leads the Israel of God is about to translate her to the next level?

Can't you hear the sound of the trumpets? Can't you sense in your spirit the herald of His visitation? The trumpet is sounding again, as it has through the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began. We must listen carefully in the spirit to what the Spirit is saying this hour to the Israel of God. Let us cleanse

ourselves of all leaven as in the day of preparation, for the Head of the Church has sent His Words to us that He will return, in a mighty visitation, to the midst of His people.

I know most people in the church are very familiar with the first and second comings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are monumental milestones in the plan of God for the Church. However, there are many visitations of the Lord to His Church in revival and many visitations of God to His own in restoration of Truth and of the miraculous, and of Truth and anointing, that we temporarily lost.

We see one of those glorious visitations of the Lord to the Church in the days of Martin Luther, when He restored to the Body the revelation that *"the just shall live by faith."* We see another glorious visitation in the early days of the Healing Movement, when God restored gifts of healings and signs and wonders through Maria Woodward-Ether and John Alexander Dowie. We see the restoration of gifts of faith, healings, and working of miracles in the days of Smith Wigglesworth and in the Welsh Revival in the time of Evan Roberts. We cannot forget the mighty Move of God through John G. Lake's ministry in Africa, Sister Aimee McPherson's crusades and rallies, and at the turn of the twentieth century, the restoration of the Pentecostal gifts at Azusa Street in the days of William J. Seymour. We marvel at the spectacular prophetic anointing on William Branham in the days of "the voice of healing" with Gordon Lindsay, the extraordinary healing revivals of Jack Cole and A. A. Allen, *the man of faith and power.* How about many other

visitations that time and space prevent us from discussing: revivals that shook countries, like Tommy Hicks in Argentina, T.L. Osborn in Indonesia, others in West Africa, and many more that are still harvesting souls today.

Indeed, the Lord has visited His Church as promised through the mouth of His holy prophets. His mighty Presence, which at times departed from its place, is returning.

Let's go back to the story of the Ark of God's Presence returning to its place in Israel. After seven months in the land of the Philistines, it returned to Israel by way of a town called Beth-shemesh and eventually stayed at Kirjathjearim in the house of Abinadab for several decades.

And so, the Ark was then in the house of Abinadab, the Levite, and his son Eleazar was consecrated to minister before the Ark of God. There it remained throughout the time when Samuel the prophet judged Israel, as well as the forty years of Saul's reign. At this time, the Tabernacle of the Congregation was still at Shiloh in Gibeon, but this Tabernacle was vacant: it had no Mercy Seat, no Cherubims of Glory, no Tablet of the Covenant. This was a tabernacle without the Ark and consequently without the Presence of God. But the priests continued their ministries unbothered. They continued offering sacrifices at the Brazen Altar and burning incense in the Holy Place, but the Glory and Presence of God were missing. They continued with their religious activities as ordained by the Law.

When David became king, his heart was filled with a great desire to see the Glory of God return to the midst of Israel. His desire had always been to dwell in the presence of God, and so David's vision was to restore the Presence of Jehovah permanently into the city of David. He realized that the divine order had not yet come to Israel because the Ark of God had not been brought back to where it belonged. So David gathered all Israel together to bring the Ark of God to Zion.

And David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people that were with him from Baale-Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God which is called by the name, the name of Jehovah of hosts who sitteth between the cherubim. (2 Sam 6:1-2)

After the Due Order

So David gathered all Israel for this great occasion of bringing home the Ark of His Presence, but he was so over-excited that he forgot to ask the Lord how the Ark was to be carried. He failed to seek God after the due order.

And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was upon the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.

And they brought it with the ark of God out of the house of Abinadab which was upon the hill; and Ahio went before the Ark. (2 Sam 6:3-4)

Now, wait a minute, David: you brought the Ark of God out of the house of Abinadab, and set the Ark upon a new **cart** to be carried and pulled by a set of dumb oxen? Why? What is the deal here? How did God say the Ark should be carried ? Let's go back and ask Moses and Joshua to remind us how the Ark of God is to be carried during any move of God.

And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the Ark, that the Ark may be borne with them. (Exo 25:13-14)

And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the Ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. (Jos 3:3)

And the priests that bare the Ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. (Jos 3:17)

And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the Ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. (Jos 4:17-18)

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the

trumpets: and the Ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

After Joshua spoke to the assembly before the journeying of the camp, we see that the priests blowing trumpets led the way. Following the seven priests blowing seven trumpets came the Ark of God, carried on the ***shoulders of the priests***. Then the assembly followed.

This is the divine order laid down by Jehovah God. Don't forget it. That same ONE who chose the trumpet blowers and the Ark-bearers laid down the ordinance of how the Ark was to be carried during the move.

As we step out into this next move of God, Dear Ones, we must be meticulous about following God after the due order. We must make sure we do not do things after the traditions of men, for the arms of flesh will fail us. We must not construct our own modern high-technology "cart" to carry the Ark of God, nor place the Ark on the backs of dumb oxen. The Ark must be carried on the shoulders of the anointed ones who are chosen by God for that office. It must be carried with staves by four priests, appointed and sanctified for that ministry after their order.

But David and the people built a brand new cart. If I may be rhetorical for a moment and put it in today's language, they built a new high-technology cart with superb suspension. They even chose a man of strength and valor, an experienced director named Uzzah (Uzzah means "strength") to take charge of things, direct the new machinery, and keep the new organization on track; while Ahio the brotherly

gentleman led the way (Ahio means "brotherly"). Uzzah and Ahio were the sons of Abinadab the Levite. They were honorable men. We can say Uzzah was strong, good-looking, and solidly built, while Ahio was a personable gentleman, well-mannered, intelligent, and highly educated. These two had no problem getting ordained by the elders for this great ministry of bringing home the Ark of the God of Israel. Even David approved it.

Though the sons of Abinadab of Gibeah were Levites, they were no Eleazar, and it was Eleazar whom God appointed and set apart for this ministry. But don't misunderstand this. The Uzzahs and Ahios have their special assignment from Jehovah, but everyone must minister and stay in their line of things. The eyes should not try to do the work of the hands, and the hands should not try to see. This will only create chaos and confusion.

They chose and ordained the strongest men for this job, just like they constructed a superbly engineered cart for the Ark; they got it figured out, but it was all done by the strength of man. How much like them are we today in our ministries? In our quest to keep the revival moving, we build a new cart and ordain the Uzzahs and the Ahios to bring in the Ark and keep the Ark of God from hitting the rocks.

And so the procession with the Ark of God went on smoothly, for the Bible says that *"David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals."*

While the road was smooth, the dumb oxen—i.e., the organization and machinery of men—seemed to carry the Ark without much difficulty, and the revival went on until they reached the threshing floor of Nachon.

At the Threshing Floor

To thresh means: *to beat the stems and husks of grain or cereal plants with a machine in order to separate the grains or seeds from the straw.* God will no longer put up with this. He's had enough and is ready to thresh the seed out of the garbage. On the threshing floor, He separates the useful from the useless, the holy from the profane, and the substance from the worthless.

The system had been tolerated this far, but it couldn't go any farther. And so, as they came to the threshing floor of Nachon, the oxen stumbled. No problem! They had this covered with a contingency plan included in the transportation model. It looked as if the Ark was going to fall, hit the rock, and probably break into pieces. Uzzah, the *man of strength* ordained of men to keep this revival on track, could not stand by and watch this happen, for that was why he was chosen as the man of the hour. If this move of God was to succeed, it was all up to him; he had to use his strength to keep things in order. He had to take charge; after all, he, the man of the hour, was ordained for this purpose.

And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And

the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

What a sudden tragedy! Where did things go wrong? Where did we miss it? We thought we were doing all this great work for the glory of God. Wasn't God pleased with all this praise and pageantry and these glorious displays of adoration? Haven't we put our best brains, strongest men, ablest managers, and highest technologies to work promoting this move of God?

Well, God never ordained the "cart" for carrying the Ark of His Presence to begin with. The "new cart" is man's device to keep the move of the Spirit going and to keep the Ark of His Presence and Glory from hitting the rocks. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab the Levite (the man-ordained clergy), who drove the new cart, were strong, able, qualified men who knew exactly what to do if things went wrong. But God has an instituted order that must be followed. God blesses us as His people and still moves in our midst in spite of the "cart," the new structure and hierarchy that we've erected. He moves in spite of it, not because of it. But if we intend in our hearts to go all the way with Him, we must change our ways and begin to do things after the due order that He ordained, for the threshing floor of Nachon is close ahead of us. There at the threshing floor, He will thresh out all the straws and the husks so that we may be the pure grains He's looking for.

Let's return to the threshing floor of Nachon, where we left David and his people all standing

in amazement, staring at the dead body of Uzzah. The Bible tells us that David was afraid of God on that day and did not bring the Ark of God into Zion as planned, but kept it in the house of Obededom the Gittite.

Wise men may be guilty of oversights, but they quickly correct them as soon as they are aware of them. Repentance means to turn away from one's error and to begin to follow Jehovah and obey Him. David did not try to justify what he had done wrong, nor lay the blame on others, but held himself guilty of not seeking God after the due order.

After a few months, however, David got over this tragedy and called the Levites to sanctify themselves and prepare to bring the Ark of God into its place on Mount Zion:

And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

Dearly Beloved, how then shall we bring back the Ark of God that dwelleth between the Cherubim into our midst? We know that the Ark signifies the presence and the glory of God among His people. So how can we have Restoration Revival? Should we create a new cart to bring the Ark home? No. We are to learn from their example that nothing will work

except to move with God and seek to know His way and His intention for His people in this present hour. We must seek him as David said, "after the due order." For this is the only way we are going to bring the Glory of God and the Ark of His Presence to Mount Zion.

Chapter 2

And Will Build Again

And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. (2 Sam 6:17)

The Tabernacle of the Congregation that Moses built in the wilderness was surely God's order for the wilderness people. He instituted this ordinance as a means of putting His Manifest Presence in the midst of His people. "And let them make me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle" (Exo 25:8-9). These were the words of Jehovah to Moses in the wilderness concerning the Tabernacle. It was a mobile temple that moved with the Children of Israel from encampment to encampment as they crossed the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

Jehovah God called Moses to the Mountain and showed him the pattern of the heavenly Tabernacle and charged him, saying, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo 25:40). And so Moses obeyed God and built the Tabernacle of the Congregation with the Ark of God's Presence in the Holy of Holies.

As stated in the previous chapter, when the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land, they settled the Tabernacle of Moses at Shiloh in Samaria. There, the sacrificial ceremonies were conducted for about 400 years during the period of the Judges. By the end of that period, the Children of Israel had forsaken God and lost His manifest Presence. Then came the Philistines, who defeated them and took the Ark of the Covenant away. After seven months, they had to send the Ark back to Israel on an ox cart. It finally came to rest eight miles west of Jerusalem in a town called Kiriathjearim, where it stayed for approximately 70 years until about 10 years into David's reign. During this period, the tabernacle of Moses was moved from Shiloh to Nob for a while (1 Sam 21:1-6) and then to Gibeon, where it remained until the Temple of Solomon was dedicated (2 Chr 1:3,4).

And so David, the man after God's heart, whose desire was to please God and to be in His Presence, inquired of the Lord and made preparation for bringing the Ark of God into Jerusalem. After his first attempt had failed, he called upon the priests to sanctify themselves and get ready to bring in the Ark of God. David, who was obviously walking in the will of God this time, erected a tent on Mount

Zion as the new habitation for the Ark of God. This was not a mere whim on his part, but an action directed by God. He had made a disastrous mistake in the first attempt to bring back the Ark, which led to the death of Uzzah; this time, he was not going to be presumptuous.

But why? Why was David radically changing the order of worship in Israel? Why did he not return the Ark to Gibeon, where the Tabernacle of Moses was located with the empty Holy of Holies and where the priests were still carrying on their sacrifices and offerings? We learn later in Second Chronicles 29 that David set up this new order of worship of God in obedience to God's commands through the prophets Nathan and Gad (2 Chr 29:25). God must have given David a prophetic glimpse of the glorious Church Age to come, when true worshipers would have direct access to God and worship Him in spirit and truth, offering sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving unto Him.

David brought the Ark to Jerusalem rather than returning it to the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle of Moses at Gibeon. He pitched a tent on Mount Zion in Jerusalem and placed the Ark inside. He then instituted a whole new order of praise and worship. Psalms of praise were written and sung continually before the Ark of God. He appointed priests to minister music before the Ark continually (1 Chr 16:6,37).

And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and next to him

Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obedom; and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals; Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the Ark of the Covenant of God.

Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren:

Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. (1 Chr 16:4-9)

What a great departure from the old order of worship! The Presence and fullness of God had moved into a new Tent on Mount Zion, never to return to the old system in Gibeon. They could continue to carry on their religious activities, their ceremonial rituals, their organizational protocols, and their denominational dabblings, but they were never going to bring God's Glory back into that old tabernacle. And indeed, the Tabernacle of Moses remained at Gibeon without the Ark, and sacrifices continued to be offered there even until the Temple of Solomon was dedicated.

So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. But the Ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he

had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. (2 Chr 1:3-4)

Talk about ministering in a tabernacle without the Presence of God! Yes, the old tabernacle still had its Holy of Holies, but the Ark was no longer inside. The priests were still busy burning incense at the Altar. The lamps were still being trimmed and oiled, and the Shewbread was still being replenished on the table. The high priest most likely still continued performing his ministry on the Day of Atonement. But there was no Ark behind the Veil.

How could they continue to worship in the old tabernacle without the Ark of the Covenant? Without the Glory? Without His Presence? How could they continue the sacrifices and offerings when there was no Mercy Seat, no Tablets of the Covenant, no Ark of the Covenant? What was the High Priest doing behind the Veil on the Day of Atonement? On what did he sprinkle the blood of the lamb? Did he see the Cloud of Glory that should cover the Mercy Seat? What did he see in the Holy of Holies? Did he hear the voice of Jehovah from between the Cherubim upon the Mercy Seat? Of course not! The Mercy Seat was not there, and neither were the Cherubim. The Glory had departed. Yet the religious services continued uninterrupted and the ceremonial rituals went on undisturbed! May the Spirit grant us understanding of these things in our days.

The first Tabernacle, therefore, served its purpose but belonged to an order that passed away. We know for sure that the Cloud of Glory rested upon the Tabernacle in Shiloh when they

entered the Land of Promise. But the glory faded away like the glory that faded away from the countenance of Moses. And finally, when the people whom God had set apart for himself made themselves common like the heathen nations around them, His glory departed and "Ichabod" was engraved on their beautiful gate.

In the first Tabernacle, God's Presence was hidden behind heavy veils from the people, totally concealed and unapproachable. Only the high priest could, after some arduous cleansing, dare to approach His Presence, and that was once a year. But here in the Tabernacle of David, the Ark of His Presence dwelt in an open tent where people could approach and worship Him joyfully without fear and without any wall of partition. Clearly, this tent or tabernacle has prophetic significance for believers today; it points to when our Lord died on the cross and rent the veil, opening the way into the Holy of Holies for us. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh"* (Heb 10:19-20).

Gone are the restrictions of the old tabernacle where only Jewish men were allowed in the Outer Court; where only the sons of Aaron were allowed in the Holy Place, and where only the High Priest was allowed in the Presence of God once a year. In this new Tabernacle, *"Whosoever will may come!"* (Mark 8:34,35) Whoever will may enter into the Holiest of All by the blood of Jesus, who has paved the new and living way into the Presence of God for all.

The experience of worship in the Presence of God in the first Covenant was associated with fear and trembling. Their very first encounter with Jehovah at Mount Sinai was so frightening that the people begged not to go through it again, and even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." And the Day of Atonement brought fearful anticipation to the high priest, who might not have made it back alive out of the Holy of Holies if he did not follow the ceremonial rituals to the letter. But blessed be God our Father, who has made this new and living way for us through the blood of Jesus our Savior.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Heb 12:18,19,22-24)

This new order of worship brings the worshiper into the Presence of God. It is a worship initiated by relationship and intimacy, and David was one of the early men of God to understand this revelation. This is why he was intimate with God and desired to dwell in the

Presence of God all the days of his life. No wonder he had such great intimacy with the Lord and was granted the opportunity to dwell before the Ark on Mount Zion. Not only was he the king of Israel ruling from the throne on Mount Zion, he was also a priest wearing the linen ephod and ministering before the Ark of Jehovah.

We clearly see from Scriptures that the worship inaugurated by David before the Ark of God was a foretaste of the New Testament worship. It was characterized by singing, dancing, clapping of hands, and musical instruments (Psa 47:1,6-7,149:3,134:2, 1 Chr 16:2). The worship in the Tabernacle of David was a drastic departure from the established worship in the old tabernacle.

For about 30 years of David's reign, two tabernacles existed in Israel. In Gibeon, there was the dead, ritualistic worship that characterized the Tabernacle of Moses; in Jerusalem, there was the lively, spontaneous worship that characterized the Tabernacle of David.

The worship in Gibeon was the performance of ceremonial rituals and could not approach the Presence of Jehovah, while the worship in Zion was an experience of the Presence of God. The priests on Mount Zion had access to the Holy One and dwelt in His Presence. On Mount Zion there was no Outer Court, no Holy Place, and no Veil of partition; the priests, the sons of Asaph, were right there in the divine Presence of Jehovah. At Gibeon, the priests offered the sacrifice of animals. On Mount Zion, the offering was the sacrifice of praise: *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise*

to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb 13:15). "Come before Him with joyful singing... Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise" (Psa 100:2,4).

In a way, from the Old Covenant to the New, the real function and purpose of the priesthood did not change. The priests are still commanded to **minister unto the Lord with sacrifices or offerings**. In the Old Covenant, the sacrifices were animals. Jesus' substitutionary death on Calvary's cross perfectly fulfilled and put an end to that. He became our Lamb without blemish, the Lamb of God. The sacrifice that God desires from His priesthood today is the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to Him.

However, after the Temple of Solomon was dedicated, the ministry in David's Tabernacle ceased and the tent went into ruins. The attention shifted to the glamorous Temple and its form of worship, and no one heard of the Tabernacle of David any more until Amos began to prophesy concerning the end-time plan of God:

"In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things. (Amo 9 :11-12)

And so the Ark of God finally came home—not back to the old order at Gibeon, but to its resting place on Mount Zion, to the tent which

David erected for it. God has greater plans for it than ever before. One might ask, why a tent? Why did God lead David to put the Ark in a tent? This speaks of a mortal body. The Spirit of God seemed to give us an answer when He spoke through the Apostles referring to this mortal bodies in which we live as tents. It has pleased God to put "*this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*" (2 Co 4:7).

But one would ask another question: why Zion? Why not Horeb, or Sinai, or another mountain? David, the prophet priest and king, prophesied saying:

For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. (Psa 132:13-16).

Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. (Psa 132:6-8).

This prophecy from David reveals that Zion is not only God's habitation: it is His Tabernacle, it is His resting place, it is the place of His throne. This is the place of His desires, where He longs to dwell forever. This is where His kingly priests minister to Him with joyful adoration and He clothes them with salvation. Mount Zion is the City of our God; it is the Heavenly Jerusalem; it is the Mountain of His holiness and the Mountain of

our Help. *"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion"* (Psa 20:1-2).

Mount Zion is beautifully elevated and beautiful for all situations, the joy of the whole earth. This Zion, which is His Sanctuary, is also the place for His footstool, where we His priests fall down to worship at His footstool. Yet this is the place which He has purposed to make glorious. And this too agrees with the words of the prophets: *"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my Sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious"* (Isa 60:13).

Our hearts should leap with joy as we prayerfully declare with David and say to God, *"Arise, O Jehovah, into thy resting-place; Thou, and the Ark of thy strength. Let thy priest be clothed with righteousness; And let thy saints shout for joy"* (Psa 132:8-9 ASV).

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (Psa 48:1-2).

Chapter 3

That the Residue of Men Might Seek the Lord

Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the Ark of thy strength.

Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

Jehovah our God does everything according to His eternal purpose. There is an ultimate plan and a divine purpose for everything He does and a divine timing for every one of His purposes. *"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven"* (Ecc 3:1).

In the opening section of this book, we asked ourselves an important question concerning the purpose of God in returning to rebuild the Tabernacle of David. We clearly found the answer in the prophecy of Amos, which James quoted during the first council meeting in Jerusalem. This prophecy from the ninth chapter of Amos states:

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. (Amo 9:11-12 NKJ)

But in the New Testament Church when the Apostle James quoted this prophecy, the Holy Ghost clearly revealed the deeper meaning of this passage to us by rephrasing the latter part of the verse. Here is the rendition of the prophecy as James quoted it, pointing out that this prophecy was beginning to be fulfilled right before their eyes:

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. (Act 15:15-18)

In that first church conference, there was a serious issue about what was required for the salvation of the Gentile believers becoming members of the church of Jesus Christ. The Jewish believers were bent on requiring every believer to become a Jew. They taught that unless the Gentile believers became circumcised and started following the Law of Moses, they could not be saved. To them, the Messiah only belonged to the Jews, not to the whole human race.

Let's go to the Book of Acts and examine the context of the passage where this prophecy was quoted by the Apostle. It all began with the ministry of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. They went from city to city preaching, teaching, discipling, strengthening, and establishing the souls of the Gentile believers. They spent time encouraging them to stand in faith, teaching them that we must enter into the kingdom of God through hardship and tribulation. When they returned from this great missionary journey, they testified to the disciples at Antioch of the power and grace that God demonstrated in their ministry in bringing salvation to the Gentiles.

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain

other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (Act 15:1-2)

These men from Judea confused the young Gentile believers by telling them that their salvation was not complete. Paul and Barnabas confronted these Jewish teachers, and there was great disagreement on the matter. The brethren at Antioch therefore sent Paul and Barnabas, along with some other brethren, to Jerusalem to confer with the Apostles.

And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. (Act 15:4-5)

So the Apostles gathered to deliberate on the matter, and there was great disputing among them as well. After a long debate, Peter stood up and reminded the Apostles how God in times past sent him to the Gentiles to choose a people from among them for His Name. He continued:

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.
(Act 15:9-11)

After Peter testified to what God did through him in the early days of the ministry, the multitude became silent and attentive to Paul and Barnabas as they declared the miracles and wonders that God had wrought among the Gentiles.

After all this, James, who was the respected leader of the Church in Jerusalem, stood up and said:

Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Act 15:14-17)

James began by confirming what the Apostle Peter had said and then proceeded to quote from the prophecy of Amos. He was in the Spirit, asserting that what was happening fulfilled what had been spoken through the mouths of God's holy prophets. He proclaimed that God had promised to return and rebuild the Tabernacle of David that was fallen, to set it up, mend the breaches, and restore it. The Holy Ghost, through the mouth of James, unveiled the real purpose of God in rebuilding the Tabernacle of David. The real

purpose was not to set up a Jewish kingdom, nor was it something only for the natural Jewish people. The Holy Ghost stated it clearly here in the New Testament while these Jewish brethren who were so stuck on keeping the Mosaic Law were listening. God's main goal in rebuilding the Tabernacle of David was so that the residue of men might seek after the Lord.

If the "*residue of men*" that God is talking about in the first part of the prophecy is not clear enough, God re-emphasized it by saying, "*And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.*" The Literal Translation renders this phrase as saying, "*So the rest of men may seek the Lord, even all the nations on whom my name is called, says the Lord who is doing all these things.*"

What the Holy Ghost is emphasizing here and unveiling to us is that the purpose of God in rebuilding the Tabernacle of David is not for any special group of people, but for the benefit of all nations. His first call was to the Israelites, the stock of Abraham according to the flesh, to whom belonged the circumcision, to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. But in this end time, He has extended the call and the invitation to the Gentiles, and to all the nations. The holy place will no longer be restricted to a natural tribe, but is accessible to all who would accept His only begotten son as Savior and themselves become the sons of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Even the way into the Holy of Holies is open to all.

Apostle James expounded this prophecy as a promise that when this fallen Tabernacle is restored, the residue of men would seek after the Lord, *even all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called*. Christ died to *gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad*, referred to in this text as those that are *called by his name*. The promise is to all that are *afar off*, and to them that are near, even to as *"many as the Lord our God shall call"* (Act 2:39).

It is indeed reassuring that this promise does not depend on man for its fulfillment. It did not depend on the Apostles, nor does it depend on us or on our faithfulness today. The last phrase of the Scriptural passage makes it crystal-clear that God Himself is doing this work. He is the one who has planned it from the beginning and is bringing it to pass at the appropriate time according to His divine schedule. The phrase states, *"and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things,"* and the following verse reads, *"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"* (Act 15:18).

Yes, it is the Lord God Almighty who says this; it is He who planned it from the foundation of the world, who has determined to do it, and who, by His own might, will bring it to pass. Nothing concerning our world takes Him by surprise, for He planned all His works from the beginning of the world. Nothing that has happened in this world took him by surprise, and so He never needed to make an emergency plan and will never need to. All things are

working according to His plan and purpose, for all things were known unto Him from the beginning and He planned them all.

There is another amazing revelation in this prophecy of Amos from the ninth chapter of his book, which reads as follows:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. (Amo 9:13)

This is a remarkable word of prophecy. God is declaring in this passage that during this restoration, there will be such an overflowing fruitfulness that the harvest season will continue into the following planting season. There will be such a great harvest of blessings, harvest of souls, and harvest of spiritual and physical blessings that the “*the ploughman and the seed-sower will overtake the reaper*”. This means, that there will be such a plentiful harvest that the ingathering will last all summer, continue all autumn, and even when it is time to begin to plough and sow again, the reapers will still be busy gathering the harvest into the barn. And this harvest will bless not only the Jews but all who would come unto God by Jesus Christ.

After this, James who presided over the council in Jerusalem pronounced his sentence, and this was written and sent to the brethren in Antioch, in Syria, and in Cilicia:

And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

For as much as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with

words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. (Act 15:23-29)

By this conclusion, James and the Apostles settled once and for all the dispute concerning what the Church is to follow. The question of whether the Church should be a Jewish sect or an global body open to all races and levels of society based on faith in the completed works of Christ was settled once and for all. James settled the dispute by quoting Amos's prophecy that the Messiah would restore the glory of the fallen Tabernacle of David. The church of Jesus Christ was to be universal, not just local. The Old Covenant was with the nation of Israel; the New Covenant was to be available to all mankind. The Old Tabernacle was just for the Jewish race; in fact, only Jewish males could enter into the outer court, only the priests could enter the Holy Place, and only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies.

In the New Covenant, all these restrictions are removed. Anyone who desires may enter all the way into the Presence of God. In the Tabernacle of David, the Ark of His Presence is not behind any veil, not hidden from view, but located right there in the midst of the tent that David pitched for it.

God has now extended His invitation, which was originally restricted to the Jews, to the whole of humanity. Apostle Peter at first also found this difficult to understand, but God finally got the message to him. James summarized this by saying, "*Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name*" (Act 15:14).

The ministry of this Tabernacle is that of grace, that has made the Ark realm accessible to all who would accept the invitation and come into the courts of the king. In the Ark ministry, the veil of separation is removed by the sacrifice of Christ once and for all, and all people can come up the Mount of God. The Ark takes care of all that separates by the Atonement of Christ, and all who will may come and live in the presence of God.

God has sought to tabernacle with His people from the beginning of creation, and this tabernacle is the revelation of this truth. His love will no longer be hidden in a few, but totally revealed so all might see and come to Him.

When the full manifestation of this ministry comes to fruition in the Church—and it will while we are in this tent—it will result in an ingathering to God of people from all tribes

and tongues and peoples and nations, and people at all levels of society. This is the purpose of God in rebuilding the Tabernacle of David: *that the residue of men might seek after Him.*

This is in line with what the Lord declared through the prophet Jeremiah, saying, *"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer 31:33-34; Heb 8:11). This is the hour of unveiling, when God wills his people to know Him and dwell in His Presence with the veil removed.

No longer will the people have to eat of the lower earth order that is available to them from the legacy of Adam; all can eat of the Bread of Heaven, drink of the Water of Life, and receive full restoration for their being. The ministry of the tabernacle of David is one of restoration of the whole man. It is a ministry of total restoration: a restoration of true worship, a restoration of the Glory of God, and a restoration of His glorious Presence.

Come, and let us return to the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two

days will he revive us: in the third day will he raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he will come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain to the earth. (Hos 6:1-3)

This agrees with the words of the prophet Hosea, for the Tabernacle of David reveals that He will return and revive us and we shall dwell in His Presence. Notice that there is no outer court ministry in the tabernacle of David, and neither is there a Holy Place ministry. It is ministry in the Sanctuary, right before the Ark of His Presence and in the Palace of the King. Yes, it is ministry in the Holy of Holies, where we enter by the Blood of Jesus to offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to the King of kings and the God of Heaven. And these sacrifices and offerings are offered by the royal priesthood, for it is a ministry reserved for His kingly priests. We know, of course, that David was the king of Israel when God instituted the new worship in this tabernacle, yet he also wore the linen Ephod (1 Sam 6:14, 1 Chr 16) which the priests wore and ministered before the Ark of God. No longer are the ministries of king and priest separate; they have been made one, and God has now given birth to a new generation that constitutes "a kingdom of priests" (Rev 1:6, 5:10).

These priests are the same ones who constitute the general Assembly on Mount Zion, the City of the Living God. Mount Zion, therefore, is not only the place of His temple and the habitation of His priesthood, but also the place of His

throne. This is where His anointed ones, the kings, lay down their crowns and worship at His footstool. *"Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool"* (Psa 132:6,7).

As members of the royal priesthood, we draw nigh unto God through our ministry of worship. He has promised to dwell in our praises, and we are therefore sure that the Shekinah Glory will surround us as we worship (Psalms 22:3). Let us continually remember that praise and worship are not things we do only when we feel like it, but a privileged ministry that we should carry out continually, *for great is our God and He is worthy of glory and honor and praise.*

O, what an awesome privilege is ours to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords at the summit of Mount Zion! What a honor to join the songs of heaven with our earthly voices and to celebrate our King in His very throne room before the Ark of His Strength.

Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the Ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

Return O Lord and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and build again the ruins thereof, and set it upright: that the residue of men might seek after You, and all the nations, upon whom Your name is called; for You are the Lord, who does all these things.
(Act 15:18)

Other Books by the Author

1. Bread of Heaven
2. Let This Mind Be In You
3. The Minister of the Sanctuary
4. My One Desire
5. There is a River
6. First the Blade
7. Ye Shall Return
8. On Eagle's Wings
9. The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation