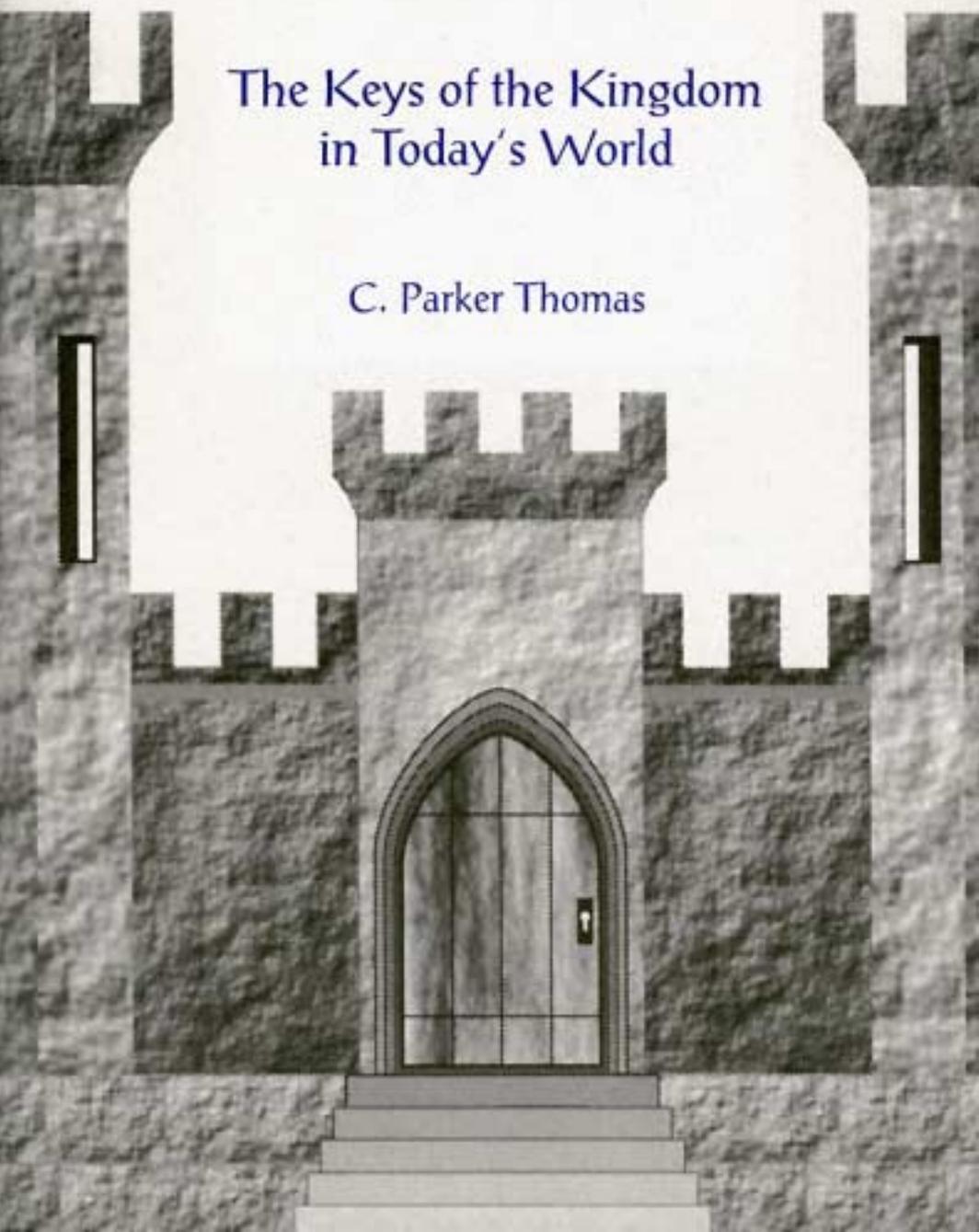


Where Are The Keys?

The Keys of the Kingdom
in Today's World

C. Parker Thomas



The Keys of the Kingdom

by
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Introduction

A series of articles entitled “Where Are The Keys?” was published in the Midnight Cry Messenger in 1979. In that series Bro. Thomas revised and added to a series first published in 1969 entitled “The Keys of the Kingdom.”

The truths contained in these articles are vital and prophetic in nature as the Lord restores His remnant church to her former glory in preparation for His soon return. A restored church will need to have the understanding and use of all of the keys of the kingdom to fulfill God’s purpose in this hour.

The foreword by Bro. Thomas was written as an introduction to the 1979 series.

Foreword

For the past several months I have been thinking about the keys of the kingdom as given to the church in the beginning. Matt. 16:19. What are they? Are they important? Where are they? Are they for us today? If so, why aren't they being used? These and other questions about the keys of the kingdom need to be answered.

I personally have heard very little about the keys of the kingdom from any church or preacher. According to what Jesus said, these keys would authorize and empower the recipient to loose and bind on earth. They certainly must have been important for heaven itself to recognize and sustain the action of the church in the use of the keys in loosing and binding on earth.

Although the Lord has quickened some things to my heart these past few months, I find an article I wrote on the subject ten years ago just as relevant today as it was then. Although I hope to share some of the more present things with you before I finish this subject, these parts will consist mostly of the article I wrote ten years ago.

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Chapter 1

The Keys of the Kingdom

A few months ago a tremendous vision came forth during one of our services in which an angel was seen to come down from heaven with some keys which he gave to the church. Although I do not remember all the particulars of the vision at this time, I remember distinctly that there were seven keys. Seven, the number of perfection, simply meant complete in the sense of all the keys. It is my personal conviction that this was a vision from the Lord showing us that the keys of the kingdom are now being restored to the body of Christ.

Let us go to the scriptures for a study of this very important subject.

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
Matt. 16:19.

These words followed the Lord’s statement concerning the building of his church against which, he said, the gates of hell would not prevail. I believe the keys were given to the church and not Peter. Though an individual most certainly could and would use the keys of the kingdom as a functioning member of the church, he would merely be an arm or extension of the church.

I further believe the keys, except to a minor degree, were withdrawn from the church when it ceased to function as the unified body of Christ. Even as a country loses its power and authority when overrun by the enemy and its people are divided and spoiled, so was the church. Col. 2:8-10.

From then until now every visitation of God has come in answer to the heartfelt cry of God’s people who forsook their divisions long enough to unite in prayer. However, no movement or visitation has ever taken the church back to where she was when the keys were removed.

Let us also note that the keys are in the plural, or more than one. Since they are kingdom keys, they would of necessity give the user

access into the kingdom realm. If we can now ascertain just what the kingdom is we will know more about these keys.

In Mark 4:11, Jesus said, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God ...” A mystery is something that is hidden to most people, otherwise it would be no mystery. In this case, the mystery of the kingdom is not seen or understood by the world. Only the Lord’s people whose hearts and minds have been supernaturally opened by the Spirit can know and understand.

The Pharisees, as well as the disciples, were looking for a visible, tangible kingdom. “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.’” Luke 17:20-21. According to this scripture, the kingdom of God is not something that can be seen with natural eyes.

When Jesus sent the disciples out to preach the gospel and heal the sick, he instructed them to say, “The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”

In Matt. 12:28 he said, “... if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

In Rom. 14:17, Paul said, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

In Cor. 15:50, Paul said, “Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ...”

From these scriptures we see that the kingdom of God belongs to the realm of the Spirit. Healing, casting out devils, joy, peace and righteousness by and in the Holy Ghost are manifestations of the kingdom of God.

Though all space, matter and time will one day be redeemed from the curse and brought under the control of the eternal Spirit, the kingdom of God, as of now, is in a different realm from these things.

By nature, habit and unbelief, we belong to the realm of the fallen creation. Only redeemed men and women with the Spirit of God are able to cross over into the kingdom realm. This is why it is necessary for the natural man to be born again before he can see or enter the kingdom of God. John 3:3-5.

These keys of the kingdom are the means given to the church whereby it is able to do just that. Use of these keys enables the church to perform the work of the kingdom.

HOW RESTORED

Certainly it is important that we know how these keys are to be restored. In Luke 11:52, Jesus accused the lawyers (scribes) of having taken away the key of knowledge. Through their traditions and vain interpretations of the law they had made the word of God of none effect. Mark 7:13. No doubt this is exactly what Paul had in mind in Col. 2:8-10.

The Lord said through Hosea, “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” Hosea 4:6.

By substitution of religious tradition for the word of God, the scribes and Pharisees had taken away the key of knowledge through which men could enter the kingdom of God. The key of knowledge certainly would be one of the great keys of the kingdom.

Because the preachers in Hosea’s day had rejected the true knowledge of the Lord, God’s people were destroyed.

The key of knowledge opens the door to the kingdom. Inside the kingdom door hangs the other kingdom keys which likewise are manifestations of God’s great wisdom and knowledge. The keys of the kingdom are divine principles and knowledge that must be understood and employed by the church. These divine principles or truths as embodied in the holy scriptures can only be known by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The revelation of these keys comes to the body through Jesus Christ the head.

In Rev. 5, it is the Lamb that opens the seven-sealed book that no man was worthy to open. The opening of this book was a very important and needful thing. John said, “... I wept much, because no man was worthy to open and read the book ...” Rev. 5:4.

It is also significant that after the opening of the seven-sealed book the twenty-four elders “... sung a new song, saying Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kin-

dred, and tongue, and people, and nation: And thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Rev. 5:9-10.

Through the opening of this book they were enabled to sing this new song and reign on the earth as kings and priests unto God. In Rev. 14:15 we learn that the hundred and forty-four thousand which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth were also able to sing this new song.

Both of these scenes from Rev. 5 and 14 were shown to us through mighty visions exactly as they are described in the scriptures. The angel of the Lord told us these Bible visions were being given to us that we might know what is taking place. This being true, I believe the Lamb is now in process of opening the book.

Another tremendous vision of a mighty angel which spoke the words of Joel 2:1 perfectly fits the description of the angel of Rev. 10:1. It will be noticed that this mighty angel had a little book open in his hand that John had to eat and as a result, “prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

The eating of this opened book from the hand of the mighty angel, no doubt, became the source in inspiration for John’s prophecy.

The restoration of the keys of the kingdom is coming to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is simply the Lord opening the book to the apostolic truth lost to the church because of vain traditions of men. This, beloved, is how the keys of the kingdom are being restored.

KEYS VITAL

These keys are more than just important. They are vital to the restoration of the church. It is through the use of these keys that the church will be perfected. The body cannot be cleansed and perfected apart from the use of the keys of the kingdom.

Without the full use of these keys the church is limited in what it is able to do. Full and complete operation of the keys means power to loose and bind on earth. Full use of the keys means complete restoration of the power and authority of the church.

All of these keys are necessary to establish God’s kingdom in the hearts of men. Each key enables us to enter into and enjoy some aspect of the kingdom. Like keys that open doors to the many

rooms of some king's castle, the keys of the kingdom are necessary to gain an entrance into the various realms of God's kingdom.

Each key opens the door to some vital and necessary place in God's kingdom. Use of these keys by the church is necessary to introduce others to the king (Jesus) and his kingdom. Use of the keys of the kingdom is also necessary to open the prison doors of unbelief and set the captives free. Needless to say, it is the use of the keys of the kingdom that enables us to take authority over Satan and his demonic kingdom.

It is the church using the keys of the kingdom that the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

It is my conviction that every spiritual visitation the church has experienced has come as a result of the use of the keys of the kingdom. Haven't you noticed the tendency of the various religious groups to put more emphasis on one line of truth than others? Often the reason for this is that they discover that through use of one of these keys they derive great benefit and blessing. Able to enter into the kingdom realm of the Spirit through the exercise of their discovery, they end up going to seed on this truth.

Sad to say, in time they (as a group or movement) end up in a state of darkness, still holding to the form but without the power and Spirit. We know for a fact that the same doctrines preached and practiced by some in times past brought life and blessing to those using them.

Today they are a mere form void of the power and blessing. With some it might be a noisy form worked up in the energy of the flesh; in others it might be quiet, dignified and highly intellectual. One appeals to the group which is looking for feelings and manifestations while the other appeals to the group whose faith is in the wisdom of men and not the power of God.

The true Spirit of God may be quiet and as gentle as a dove or it might shake the place like thunder. We are not to look for either but occupy ourselves with him who is the way, the truth and the life.

Failure to go on into the discovery and use of all the keys of the kingdom eventually leads to darkness. This has been demonstrated time and time again as we scan the pages of religious history. Every genuine movement of the church has been through the discovery and use of one or more of these keys.

Only when the church was in complete possession of these keys, beginning with Pentecost, did she march triumphantly forward. Not a spot, wrinkle or blemish was allowed to tarnish that early church. Acts 5:1-6.

The very first use of these keys by the church began with the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost. There has never been another Pentecost with the church in complete possession of the keys of the kingdom. But, hallelujah! We are looking for the restoration of these keys before the Lord is through with his church. Acts 3:21; Joel 2:25-27.

DECEPTION

We certainly need to be warned against deception in the knowledge and operation of the keys of the kingdom. As with everything else, the religious charlatans, racketeers, and opportunists will beguile and make merchandise of simple souls through the substitution of some shortcut or gimmick.

No specially concocted oil, water from Jordan, magic potion, anointed cloth or magic formula will take the place of the keys of the kingdom. These keys are basic Bible principles that must be believed and practiced if we get results. There is no substitute or shortcut. Only true disciples (learners, followers) of Jesus Christ will ever know and use the keys of the kingdom.

Chapter 2

What Are These Keys?

I would not be so bold as to say I have the complete answer. However, I believe some of the keys are as follows: 1. The Word. 2. The Blood. 3. The Confession of Faith. 4. The Lordship of Christ. 5. The Church. 6. Communion. 7. Judgment.

THE WORD OF GOD

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

I put the Word in first place as one of the great keys of the kingdom because it opens the door into the kingdom itself. The Word is God’s great storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. All the divine principles that actually constitute the keys of the kingdom are found in the Word.

It was actually through substitution of tradition and the vain teachings of the scribes and Pharisees that the door to the kingdom was closed in Christ’s day. Jesus said they had taken away the key of knowledge. Luke 11:52. None can deny the same condition exists today in most of our christian world.

Every doctrine, ordinance and practice of the modern church must be examined in the light of God’s eternal Word. We do not have to be in doubt, God has given us his Word to go by. It is the key of knowledge and faith that unlocks the door of the kingdom to all the other keys. Bypass his Word and we bypass God and all that he has for us.

The basis for all truth and doctrine for the entire church age is the Holy Scriptures. I cannot see any book or so-called revelation replacing the Bible until the church has fulfilled her purpose in the earth.

Of course I am aware that some are saying that the church age is over and that the kingdom age has begun. Some of these also say

that the Bible is out of date and they are the living word and don't need the written scriptures anymore.

I personally haven't gone that far and don't think they have either. I believe his church will be restored in its entirety, using the keys of the kingdom in binding and loosing on earth before the coming of Christ.

The very purpose of the church in the earth is to pave the way and get things ready for the coming King, our Lord Jesus Christ. Using the keys of the kingdom, the church militant will overcome Satan and finish her job of evangelizing the world. The chief weapon used in performing this task will be the Word of God executed by the church.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matt. 24:14.

The church must be brought back step by step from her place of unbelief and impotence before she can execute his Word in the earth. There is, of necessity, a complete restoration of the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to perfect and prepare the church for this great end-time work that will precede the coming of the Lord.

When he presents the church to himself it will be “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Eph. 5:27. Every spot will be cleansed, every wrinkle ironed out and every blemish removed. Rev. 19:7-9.

The Word of God, used as a plumbline in the hands of the Lord's craftsman, will perfect and bring into a unity of the faith the church in anticipation of that day.

For personal instruction and direction, we realize we may not always find a “thus saith the Lord,” but the Holy Spirit will honor the written Word of God and lead and teach us through it if at all possible.

Time and again we have been amazed to realize we have not understood the written Word. Many of our teachings have been handed down to us by men who tried to interpret the scriptures apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. They have presumptuously undertaken to unravel the mysteries of the Word without in-

spiration and the result is Babylon (confusion). The thousands of different sects and divisions give ample testimony to this fact.

Though the scriptures are the inspired Word of God, they become death and darkness to those whose faith is in the wisdom of men rather than the power of God. I Cor. 2:4-5. Like those Paul referred to, their table has been made a snare, a trap, and a stumbling block. Rom. 11:9.

The letter of the Word without the Holy Spirit blinds and kills rather than gives life. Great multitudes of deceived people are held in bondage by the letter of the Word thinking they have the truth. What we need is "... able ministers of the New Testament; not the letter, but of the Spirit ..." II Cor. 3:6.

First, the Word personally believed and appropriated: Often we are faced with problems that we cannot cope with and then the Word comes to our minds by the revelation of the Spirit. With the revelation great strength and assurance is ministered to our hearts and we now face our problem in faith knowing that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. Hallelujah!!

One time I was going through a real time of testing and the enemy had my back to the wall. While I was in prayer bemoaning my situation before the Lord, he spoke to my heart and said, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Isa. 54:17. As that scripture was quickened to my heart and mind I realized that I had nothing to fear. "... if God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31.

David was a good example of one who learned to live by the Word. "Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine afflictions. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me." Ps. 119:92-93.

Truly the Word is a key that will unlock the door of darkness and despair and lead us into the kingdom realm of light and life. The time will come when we realize that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matt. 4:4.

Secondly, the preached Word of God is the key that opens the door of the kingdom to those lacking faith to enter. The Word of

God alone preached in the power of the Holy Spirit can open the prison doors of darkness and despair and set the prisoner of sin free.

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Paul told Timothy, “Preach the Word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” II Tim. 4:2. Nothing will take the place of the preached Word of God to move and stir the hearts of men.

It is the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. It is the fire that purifies and burns away the dross. It is the water that washes and cleans away the filth. It is the sword of the Spirit that cuts asunder and severs the chains of sin. It is the incorruptible seed that contains the life of God. It is the creative force that made the worlds and by whom all things consist.

Through it light, life, health and hope are ministered to mankind. Prov. 4:20-22 says, “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my saying. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”

When the great day of judgment rolls around and all the vanities of life are past, the Word of God will sound forth a testimony unto life to all that have embraced it. By it angels and men shall be judged. The Lord will not bypass or ignore his Word to save a single soul. Take away the Word and you have no approach to God.

The divine schedule for the world, the church and his kingdom is geared to the prophetic unfolding of God’s Word. Churches and men who honor the Word are honored of God. Those who try to hinder and oppose it are ground to powder. Those who refuse the lighted pathway of the Word end up in the quagmire of sin and delusion. Ps. 119:105.

The last words recorded by John as he finished the record of the Revelation, Rev. 22:17-19, is a most solemn warning concerning the Word of God. “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of

life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” (verses 18,19).

THE BLOOD

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Rev. 12:11.

In overcoming Satan the blood of the Lamb is the first thing mentioned in importance by which we overcome. Since man could not in any wise earn or merit salvation, God provided the blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, we have a picture of true grace and self-righteousness. The Pharisee boasted in his religious good works of tithing and fasting and was so glad he wasn't like other men, especially the hated Publicans. The Publican realized he was a destitute sinner and asked for mercy according to God's provision of grace as typified by the mercy seat.

The word “merciful” (hilaskomai) as used by the Publican, pointed to the Old Testament mercy seat. The Publican realized there was no justification apart from the blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

May we realize that our only means of approach to God is through the blood shed on Calvary. Heb. 10:19 says, “Having therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

Though the blood alone makes us worthy, it makes us fully and completely worthy if we will only believe. “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.” Heb. 10:6. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom.5:1.

Truly this is a staggering truth to think that God has provided a way we can be fully justified apart from the works of the law. Gal. 2:21. Our old Adamic nature is self-righteousness. It is indeed hard to conceive of the grace of God that condemned Jesus that we might go free.

His shed blood is our guarantee of freedom. Through it the vile and unclean sinner can come into the presence of a holy God. Its cleansing and justifying power is perfect and complete. Col. 2:10, I Peter 1:18-19. Instead of being fearful and trembling, the sinner

can boldly come into the presence of God through the blood. Heb. 10:19.

After justification, the child of God needs to remind Satan of the blood every time he tries to make him doubt. Nothing is as effective in our warfare against Satan and his demon host as the blood. The devil hates the blood of Christ because he knows it means his defeat.

Reminding yourself of the precious blood will also give you great assurance and faith in prayer. When the spirit of condemnation would keep you from communion with the Lord, think of the blood. Point the devil to the blood and watch him flee from you. Also remind the Lord of the precious blood when you come into his presence in prayer.

The devil has to honor the blood and the Lord is pleased to do so. The Spirit of God will always bear witness to the blood of Christ. Heb. 10:15.

When we understand this great truth of the blood and begin to reckon on its power, we have indeed discovered another great key of the kingdom.

CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH

Our confession of faith could be called the word of our testimony or the word of faith just as easily. Rev. 12:11 speaks of it as the word of testimony. Heb. 4:14 calls it our profession, while Heb. 10:34 calls it our profession of faith.

Now the word of testimony spoken of in Rev. 12:11 is nothing more or less than confessing the truth of God in the face of faith-trying circumstances. It means to believe and confess what God's word says rather than give in to adverse or contrary circumstances.

Upon first consideration this may not seem to be very important but such is not the case. It is actually that most important piece of armour referred to as the shield of faith in verse 16 of Ephesians 6. Please note Paul says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, where-with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

It is going against the natural current of prevailing conditions to confess that God is true. Not only is it confessing that God is true but it is acting upon your confession. It is marching forward into the swollen waters of Jordan before the waters are parted. It is faith

that staggers not at the promise but believes so strongly it gives glory to God in advance. Rom. 4:20.

Not only is it a faith that precipitates confession and action but it also withstands the onslaughts of the adversary when all visible hope and help is gone. It is believing and confessing the promise of God while the enemy rages and hurls his lies, accusations, and sense-laden thoughts of discouragement at you. We cannot over-emphasize this divine principle as it is a most vital key to overcoming the devil.

The secret is learning to say what God's word says instead of what our senses tell us. Be it circumstances, friend, foe or the devil himself, we must learn to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. II Cor. 10:4-6.

The knowledge of God is his word. When we learn to go by what God says rather than earth knowledge, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will set us free from the law of sin and death. Rom. 8:2.

Too long we have gone by what we have felt, what we have seen and what we have heard. Observing these lying vanities we have forsaken our own mercy. Jonah 2:8. Confessing these things instead of the word we have been snared by the words of our mouth. Prov. 6:2.

We have not understood that the power of life and death is in the tongue. Prov. 18:21. It is a wholesome tongue that is a tree of life. Prov. 15:4. Through a negative confession we minister death to ourselves and to others.

I recently received a letter from a lady who had suffered much physically for several years. In the letter she said, "The pain is almost unbearable at times. I can't stand it much longer." This dear lady didn't realize it but she was laying the ground work for defeat. The words of her mouth, a negative confession, were the snare.

Had she known and believed God's word she would have said. "There is no temptation (trial) taken me but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, He will not permit me to be tried above that I am able, but will provide a way of escape that I might be able to bear it. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." I Cor. 10:13, Phil. 4:13.

This confession would have put into motion the law of the Spirit

of life in Christ Jesus. It would have ministered life and strength to her. It would have delivered her from the law of sin and death.

Another trick of the enemy to keep us from making a positive confession is to get us to put it off until another day. He tells us we are not ready, we must have greater faith, a certain feeling before we can claim the blessing. This amounts to our believing the Lord must come to us in the form of a spiritual experience before we dare believe his word. This of course, is just the opposite from the truth. It is Satan's lie to keep us bound by the law of sin and death.

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Rom. 10:6-10.

God is just as close to us as his word. Even in our mouth and in our heart, the word of faith. The power of life is in our tongue. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Confession is made unto salvation. Mouth – confession – salvation.

Please notice in the temptation of Christ by Satan in the wilderness that Jesus met every advance of the enemy with the word of God. Luke 4:1-13. It wasn't enough for Jesus to be familiar with these scriptures when he faced Satan. In resisting the three great temptations Jesus quoted the scriptures to Satan by saying, “It is written.” We likewise need to be fortified with the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. Meet every thought, temptation and trial with the word of God and see what happens in this battle against Satan.

But surely someone will think, “Such phenomenal faith is not for me.” If that is what you are thinking you are right now listening to the voice of the enemy. Rebuke him this instant, tell him he is a liar and the father of it. Also tell him that you can do all things through Christ which strengthens you. Phil. 4:13.

As you exercise your faith it will develop and grow. Regardless

of how little and meager you may think your faith is, begin to use it every opportunity you have. Confess with your mouth what God's word declares. Keep confessing it even if you think it's only of the mind. Sooner or later it will enter your heart and when this happens, Satan's power over you is broken.

How we need to realize that if the living Christ dwells in us, potentially, we have the power to raise the dead, cleanse the leper, cast out devils and heal the sick. Not only that, but the Lord has given us power over all the power of the enemy. Luke 10:19. As far as God is concerned, we that are in Christ have overcome Satan and the world. I John 4:4, 5:4.

It is up to us to simply recognize these facts and confess and claim our rights in Christ. The confession of our mouth can mean the difference between victory and defeat. What we believe in our heart we will confess. Therefore let us fill our heart with the word of God. Psa. 119:11. Let us continually confess to God, to man, to Satan, and above all to ourselves.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

Failure to acknowledge and honor Christ as Lord leads to spiritual ruin. Any individual, group or system that fails to honor Christ as Lord and head will become the tool of Satan. This is the reason for the invention of doctrines that exalt men, experiences and systems rather than Christ. An over-emphasis of something that is true and proper is often a trick of the enemy to lead astray. If Satan can't lead man into heresy he will lead him into some over-emphasis or extreme. This in itself serves the same purpose.

This no doubt was Paul's concern in warning the Colossians lest they be led astray and spoiled through the teachings of man. Col. 2:8-10. It not only leads man into a false position that spoils his effectiveness, but it also leads away from the Lordship of Christ.

Whatever spirit we listen to will be our source of inspiration. The Holy Spirit, evil spirits and the human spirit are the only source of spirit life that can influence man. Because of its corrupt condition the human spirit is incapable of leading man aright.

This is the reason man must constantly honor and look to Christ as head. To the degree we behold our glorious head and honor him we will be filled with his life. In all things he must have the preeminence. Col. 1:18.

I believe it was Peter's own human spirit that wanted to build three tabernacles in honor of the transfiguration. His idea would have, no doubt, been accepted by most religious people today as a great thing, but it wasn't God.

The Father's admonition to hear the beloved Son must ever be honored by the church of Jesus Christ. Christ alone at the right hand of the Father has the authority, the privilege and the honor of directing his body, the church. He alone could say, "... all power is given unto me in heaven and earth." Matt. 28:18.

Christ must be looked to constantly to direct the affairs of his church. In our worship services the Lord Jesus must be the center and object of every song, every expression of praise and everything we do. In all decisions affecting our personal lives and the church, Christ must be kept at the center.

It must ever be kept in mind that he (Christ) is the head of all principality and power. He has been given a name above every name. He is the head of the church. The Father has placed him over all things in heaven and in the earth. Eternal vigilance is necessary lest this great key be lost. Eph. 1:19-23. Col. 2:8-10.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

The revelation of the body of Christ is simply the continuation of the revelation of Christ. For, indeed, his body is one with him even as he is one with the Father. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Eph. 5:30.

Even as God was in Christ, Christ is in his body, the church. They cannot be separated for they are one. Paul calls us "members of Christ." I Cor. 6:15.

Jesus said that persecution of the church was persecution of himself. Acts 9:15. John 15:18-20, Gal. 4:29. In Matt. 25:35-40 Jesus said, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them,

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Failure to discern the body of Christ is the cause of much of our trouble, physical and spiritual. I Cor. 11:29. As long as we are blind to the needs, problems and wounds of our brother, the body of Christ will remain weak and sick. I Cor. 12:26. Luke 10:30-37. No ministry or life can be effective until they discern the Lord’s body. It is only when we discern the Lord’s body that we are willing to lay down our life for the brethren.

Earthly relationships and values have to go when we discern the Lord’s body. Matt. 12:46-50.

It is the treasure hid in the field (the world) for which a man will sell all and buy. Matt. 13:44. It is the treasure in earthen vessels. II Cor. 4:7.

To see the body, the church, means to see God’s earthly habitation or dwelling place – the place where he meets with his people in all wisdom, knowledge, authority and power. Matt. 16:18-19, 18:15-19, I Cor. 5:1-13, Eph. 1:22-23, 2:19-22, 3:8-10.

The revelation of the body comes in exactly the same way the revelation of the head does. Matt. 16:17. It is simply a further step in the unveiling of the mystery hid in God. Eph. 3:8-10, 5:29-32. Truly the revelation of the body is one of the great keys of the kingdom.

To see the body means to see the citizens of God’s eternal kingdom that will soon judge the world and angels. I Cor. 6:1-3.

Failure to see the body is the cause of much division and strife. It is greatly responsible for the independence and rebellion of many who walk alone in the vanity of their own minds.

The revelation of the body is a giant step toward deliverance in bringing unity and strength that can only be experienced as we walk together in one body.

The revelation of the body of Christ is an absolute essential to unity. Nothing will take the place of unity. The whole purpose of calvary and the sufferings of Christ is to make us one – one with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and one with each other in the church, the body of Christ.

The cause of the curse, death and all human suffering is the sin of division that separated man from God in the Garden. God’s great

purpose in his Son's coming to this cursed earth, dying on the cross and the ministry of the church is to bring reconciliation and unity. The Holy Spirit will bear witness to the unity of God's people like nothing else. Jesus said in Matt. 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Psalm 133:1-3 gives us a beautiful picture of the result of unity among the brethren. Jesus' prayer that we might be made perfect in one as he and the Father were one was that the world might believe that the Father sent the Son. John 17:20-23.

Nothing like unity among brethren will convince unbelievers of the reality of Christ in the midst. Likewise, strife, division and confusion is Satan's most effective means of turning the lost away from Christ and the church.

Discernment of the body of Christ is a revelation of the Holy Spirit that Christ is (present tense) come in the flesh of his body the church. This revelation is a must to bring unity to the body of Christ.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

Discernment of the body of Christ also means to see the sovereign completeness of the local church assembly in a given place. We have thought and spoken so much about the mystical, universal body of Christ until we have lost sight of or failed to see the local church as the body of Christ in a particular place.

A church with two or three that have truly been formed by the Holy Spirit has as much right and authority to operate and represent Christ in the earth as one with two or three thousand. Actually it is not a matter of numbers, small or great. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20.

Since we are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:8-10) what more could we have with him in our midst? As the Lord of hosts he could command ten thousand angels to come to our rescue in a moment of time.

Someone will ask the question, "If this is true, why then are so many of the churches spiritually destitute and void of the life of Christ?" The answer is simple, they were not formed by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Matt. 16:13-19. They can never qualify as his

church. They do not behold the head (Christ) nor discern the body (the church).

Brought together by a hodge-podge of many spirits operating under a cloak of religion, the people in such churches are not capable of being subject to the church or moving as a body. Because of the lack or revelation they feel no real loyalty or obligation to their brother or the church. This is especially true when their wills are crossed or interfered with.

It is such people as this that like the universal, mystical church theory. They also like to say that we are all brothers with the same father (God) going to the same place (heaven). When it comes to subjection to the church or those that have the rule over them, they are private interpreters of the word that go by their own interpretations.

As members one of another we are not complete apart from our brother. Every member of Christ's body contributes some measure of Christ that is needed by the whole.

To the degree that the church walks together in union with each other will the life and power of Christ be manifest. If we would have Christ in our midst to loose and bind on earth we must see the body and walk together.

Beyond doubt, this is one of the great keys of the kingdom. Without this key we will not be able to use the other keys. The keys of the kingdom are given to Christ's church for the benefit of the church. All attempted use of the keys for any other purpose simply builds some form of Babylon that must fall.

Only Christ's church built by revelation through the use of the keys of the kingdom will be able to stand. The very gates of hell will not prevail against it.

COMMUNION

Though it may have occurred to most people, communion through prayer, praise and thanksgiving is a marvelous means of expressing what we believe in our heart. It is a testimony of what we believe. Praise and thanksgiving as well as prayer must be cultivated by those who would overcome.

It should be done orally, in the assembly, and in our private devotions. It should be done in song and in word, always from the

heart. Nothing will put the enemy to flight quicker than genuine praise. God dwells in the midst of the praises of Israel.

Regular seasons of prayer, praise and thanksgiving are as necessary in maintaining a good spiritual condition as good food, rest, fresh air, sunshine and bodily exercise is in keeping physically strong.

This battle being in the realm of the spirit, we must be spiritually strong to wage war against the enemy. “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” Jude 20.

Prayer is one of your most potent weapons. Someone has rightly said, “Satan trembles when the weakest saint goes to his knees.”

This is why Satan works so diligently and cleverly at keeping God’s people from praying. We would be surprised at the adept strategy that is used against us by the enemy to keep us from prayer.

Did you ever notice how difficult it is to find time for a season of prayer? You seem to be eternally busy or have something you need to do before you pray. When you take time out and actually begin to pray, it is difficult to relax and give yourself to prayer for thinking about all the things that need to be done.

Another trick of the enemy is to flood our minds with irrelevant thoughts that keep us from necessary concentration. If he can, Satan will minister unbelief to us through negative thoughts or self-condemnation.

Carnal fellowship, unnecessary telephone gossip and television are time-consuming devices that really aid the enemy in keeping us from prayer.

Whatever is necessary, the enemy will do to keep us from praying or to hinder us while in prayer. He knows better than we do that prayer is our lifeline to heaven.

To have an effective prayer life you must discipline yourself to take time out for regular seasons of prayer. This cannot be done if you are in a hurry or pressed in your spirit about other matters.

Study the lives of the apostles, prophets and the holy men and women in every age — all of them were dedicated prayer warriors. Daniel prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem. Dan. 6:10.

Prayer was the outstanding characteristic of the early church. Acts 1:14, 4:24-31, 6:4.

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

I have learned that we must take time out to pray whether we feel like it or not. In fact, I have often gone to the place of prayer with contrary and negative feelings. Going to prayer when you don't feel like it is an act of faith that God will honor.

Prayer must be done in a relaxed manner simply talking to the Lord as you would to your best friend. You don't need to know what to pray or how to phrase your words. The Holy Spirit will inspire and aid you as you wait patiently in faith upon the Lord. Rom. 8:26.

If you feel unworthy and condemned because of your failures just remember that there is none good but one and that is God. Mark 10:18. It is only through the blood that any of us are worthy. Because of Jesus' blood and righteousness which has been imputed to us we have perfect access into the presence of a holy God. Heb. 10:19 says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

At times when it has been difficult to get into a spirit of prayer, I have found that a relaxed patience with praise and thanksgiving will open the door. This no doubt is one of the meanings of Psalm 100:4. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

Several years ago I discovered while working with a demon possessed person that you are subject to get tired after a while and will move in yourself instead of the Holy Spirit. Since the weapons of our warfare are not carnal you cannot cast out devils when you move in the flesh. II Cor. 10:3-5.

When I realized what was wrong I would simply stop and begin reading my Bible aloud to the demons, especially passages of scripture about the blood, the victory of calvary and our authority over the devil.

I would follow this exercise with praise and thanksgiving for authority and victory over Satan and his evil host. This resulted in building up our faith and enabling us to move in the Spirit in our battle against the power of the spirit that was so obstinately trying to hold on to their victim.

Time and again this exercise of faith in praise and thanksgiving would bring victory out of weariness and defeat. Since we do not operate from the high plane or plateau of Jesus and the early church we are in a process of learning many things that will bring back to the power and glory of the early church.

Through praise and thanksgiving we draw nigh to God and he in return draws nigh to us. James 4:8. Singing unto the Lord from your heart is a very effective form of praise and thanksgiving. It will work wonders in the lives of those being oppressed by evil spirits. God desires praise and worship and will bless you with his presence when you do so. By the same token Satan hates for you to worship the Lord and will flee from you when you do it.

There is a direct connection between being filled with the Spirit and worshipping the Lord. Eph. 5:18-20. You cannot worship and praise the Lord from your heart without being filled with the Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24.

It is while we are thus in his presence that we are strengthened in the inner man and spiritually fortified to meet and defeat our adversary the devil. Being Spirit, the Lord is approached through these spiritual exercises. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name." Psalm 100:4.

This indeed is a key to the kingdom and must be discovered and used by the church in this hour. It opens the door into joy, peace and the Spirit-filled life. It means victory to those that discover it.

JUDGMENT

Judgment is a principle that is overlooked and forgotten during times of apostasy. Yet no church or individual can have God's continued blessings upon them if they reject judgment. God loves righteous judgment.

This key, along with other keys of the kingdom, must be used if the church is to be cleansed and perfected. Use of this key will restore the fear of the Lord to the church and cause many to judge themselves. This was one of the secrets of the early church that must be restored. Read Acts 5:1-16.

Hosea 2:14-20 gives us a beautiful prophetic picture of the restoration of the church with judgment. Verse 15 says, "And I will give

her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

The valley of Achor (trouble) is the place where Achan was judged for his sin against God and Israel. Josh. 7:26. The valley of Achor is given to us for a door of hope. This is the judgment of the church before restoration.

After this she (the church) shall sing as in the days of her youth. This is also the time when the church will be betrothed (married) to the Lord forever. Verse 19.

The church must be purified by the word in judgment before it will be allowed to execute the word in judgment upon the world. Eph. 5:26, Isa. 4:4.

Judgment will begin first at the house of God. I Peter 4:17.

The ministry, whose duty it is to lead the church out of the wilderness into spiritual Canaan, will first execute the word in judgment. “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away the dross, and take away all thy tin: And I will restore thy judges as at the beginning, afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.” Isa. 1:25-27.

“And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezek. 20:37-38.

“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.” Acts 3:22-23.

After judgment is executed upon some, as it was in the early church, Acts 5:1-11, the fear of the Lord will be restored. When that happens we will not have to worry about the wrong kind of people joining up with us. Isa. 52:1, Acts 5:13.

In a sense, we tie the hands of God and harbor and protect ungodly rebels by our failure to execute the word. When the church

begins to carry out the teaching of the word in regards to discipline and judgment, we will see the Lord more mightily confirm his word as we loose and bind on earth. I Cor. 5, Acts 5:1-11.

The word must be obeyed or executed if we expect God to work. Hitherto we have tried to pray away these things. We have tried to tongue and prophesy them away. Psychology and politics have been used. Still others have just closed their eyes hoping they would go away in time.

The only remedy is obedience to the word of God. When the church learns this lesson, it will be able to go forth in victory and power. Not only will it have faith and power to execute the judgment written, but it will also execute the word in deliverance and hope even to the raising of the dead.

This key can only be used by those who are first tested and tried and found faithful. Too many, like the disciples, would want to call fire down upon the heads of those who disagreed with them. Luke 9:52-56.

He who would judge must first be judged and learn to judge himself. If we are to judge the world and angels, surely we must first learn to judge ourselves. I Cor. 6:1-13.

Use of this key will shake the foundations of iniquity and literally cause kingdoms to fall. Psalm 149:6-9 says, "Let the high praise of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand: To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon their people. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord."

I believe this scripture is prophetic of the execution of God's word in judgment that will be carried out by the church at the close of this dispensation.

These seven principles or keys will work wonders in the church that will dare to believe and use them. Any church or group that uses them will be led into all truth and righteousness. And they can also expect Lucifer and his demon army to come mightily against them. He hates these keys because they spell his defeat.

Chapter 3

The Curse of Religion

In the strictest sense the keys of the kingdom have never been removed from the church. Through unbelief and vain tradition the church has been stripped of the knowledge and faith to use the keys. You can't use something you don't know you have. In fact, the condition of the church in this area in many cases is worse than a simple lack of knowledge. Actually many have been taught not to believe in such things for today.

Those that believe or profess to believe in the supernatural for today are looked upon as heretics or ignorant religious fanatics. And to be frank with you some of them are just that.

You can usually distinguish the ignorant and the fanatics from those who have a genuine revelation of the Holy Spirit. Much of their ministry will be a charade of fleshly manifestation and over-emphasis of their supposed faith and power. Like Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-11), they actually bewitch their spiritually ignorant followers by their pretended great power.

Another group I certainly do not agree with or approve of is the supposed healing evangelists that go from town to town pitching their tents, holding their healing or miracle revivals and then moving on. Many of these ministries are not ignorant but brilliant and very adept at relieving people of their money and then moving on leaving them holding the bag.

Those who do not believe the supernatural is for the church are another example of how religious tradition has made void the word of God. Matt. 15:6. When the church ceased to manifest the glory and power of God they began to justify their impotence by saying these things passed away after the establishment of the early church.

In process of time this excuse became a traditional concept accepted and believed by many. It is the same type of reasoning and belief that has also done away with the ministry of apostles for today.

If the church ever needed foundational ministries capable of us-

ing the keys of the kingdom it is in this hour. We need to rediscover the foundational truths the early church was built upon and start over again. Psa. 11:3, Eph. 2:20. Thank God! I believe this work of restoration is taking place. Joel 2:23-25. Although there is no hope for religious Babylon as a whole there is a remnant that will hear the voice of the Lord and come to him without the camp. Heb. 13:13, Rev. 18:4.

RELIGIOUS FORM

Since most churches and religious movements are captives of some type of religious form there will never be a release of God's power through them in the use of the keys of the kingdom. II Tim. 3:5 speaks of this condition in the last days by saying, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Religious form denies or limits God's power to the confines of its beliefs and traditions. This includes the condition of the church which is often devoid of God's power and under the control of demons. Rev. 18:2. Religious form is a clever substitute given to fill the void left by a lack of spiritual reality and power.

A form is something that is designed to contain or hold something in place. It is a means of limiting something to a certain quantity, size or shape. Most religious form which is designed by Satan serves the same purpose in limiting or denying the expression of God's power.

Religious form is a clever and cursed device of Satan to keep the modern church from spiritual reality that would bring men into union with Christ. By virtue of its example and teaching it not only keeps men from Christ but also ministers blinding prejudice against God's truth and power that would set them free. It actually serves to seal them in their sins.

Religious form not only denies the power thereof by its obvious spiritual impotence but it makes no place for the manifestation of the Spiritual because of unbelief. Much of the word of God cannot be taught in a positive and relevant way because supernatural manifestations such as healing, signs and wonders are not supposed to take place today. Since faith cometh by hearing you cannot obtain faith where there is no ministry of faith present.

Some religious forms have a beautiful and impressive facade or

external appearance. Jesus would liken them to "... whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." Matt. 23:27.

At the other end of the spectrum of religious form we have the noisy, demonstrative type that shouts glory, hallelujah, speaks in tongues, and boasts of the power that surges up and down their backbone.

Regardless of what the form may be, you almost know step-by-step the order of the services when you walk in the door of such churches. In the quiet, dignified type they give you a printed program outlining the service from beginning to end. In the demonstrative, noisy type you can expect much hand clapping, singing with loud musical instruments which often drowns out the lyrics of their song. They will have one time when everybody is exhorted to come to the altar for prayer. The preaching is punctuated by "hallelujah" and "glory to God," speaking in tongues and exclamations of "I feel the power." All this may be attended with dancing, jerking and other physical demonstrations. The charismatics have toned all this down. They concentrate on bringing in Catholic priests, Presbyterian ministers and ex-gangsters who tell you how they received the baptism. Then we have the good-God type that are always dishing out blessings when you give generously to their great crusades.

Whether the form is noisy and demonstrative or quiet and dignified its captives must be set free if they are to move in the Spirit and use the keys of the kingdom.

Form affects all of us to some degree including great religious systems, local churches and individual human beings. Like the world system in general religion that has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof is anti-God and anti-Christ.

We can't see beyond the confines of the form that imprisons us. Indeed we resent and will resist any effort to change the status quo.

Before we can use the keys of the kingdom this form that holds us captive must be shattered. Before we can see anything better or different we must be delivered from the curse of religion form. As long as people are satisfied as they are there will be no change. If they are convinced and happy as a Baptist, Methodist, Catholic or

Pentecostal, they will remain captive to their own particular brand of religious form.

Until the church is able to use the keys of the kingdom in loosing and binding on earth it stands in need of vital transformation. This can only be accomplished by the renewing of our minds as Paul says in Rom. 12:1-2.

Our minds can never be renewed apart from truth relevant to our need. This truth must come through ministries that have such truth. II Tim. 2:6 is just as applicable today as it was when written to young Timothy by the apostle Paul. “The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.”

We cannot minister something we do not have. The church cannot be established on today’s traditional concept of religion. We must have the revelation of Christ for his church today. It is what he is saying today, Heb. 3:7, and not what the Methodists, the Baptists or the Pentecostals are saying.

Truth given by the Spirit is always relevant to man’s need. As the Lord said to the seven churches, “He that hath an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev. 2:29.

What he is saying today is the exceeding great and precious promises that will enable us to partake of the divine nature. II Peter 1:4. Today’s revelation is relevant, it is fresh, it is vital, it is powerful and life-giving. It is actually Christ the head speaking through the ministry to his body the church according to the need. This alone will restore the church and once again enable it to use the keys of the kingdom.

The professing church without Christ as head and destitute of the revelation of Christ can never use the keys of the kingdom. Like Hagar with no legitimate status as the wife of Abraham, neither the apostate church nor its children (converts) have any part or lot in the kingdom of God. Jerusalem from above, the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven are the true heirs. Gal. 4:22-31, Heb. 12:22-24.

Chapter 4

The Purpose of the Keys

Although we have already considered the purpose of the keys of the kingdom further elaboration is necessary. Generally speaking, keys serve two purposes. They are used to lock and unlock various things including doors, gates, safes, cages, vaults, etc.

Keys of the kingdom likewise lock and unlock things pertaining to the realm of the spirit. It is only by and through the keys of the kingdom that spiritual prisons can be opened. The kingdom itself must be opened with these keys.

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4:18-19.

It will be noted from the above quotation that deliverance and liberty are accomplished by the anointing. It is the use of the word by the anointing of God's Spirit that enables us to use the keys of the kingdom. Use of the keys of the kingdom is simply the Holy Spirit using the word in various aspects of manifestation such as healing, deliverance and salvation. It is when the church uses these keys that it is invincible. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Matt. 16:18.

NEED OF DELIVERANCE

For some time now I have felt a great need for cleansing and deliverance of God's people. Like never before I have been made aware of the carnality and spiritual bondage that exists. Many cannot worship the Lord in the freedom of the Spirit. Many have psychological hang-ups that keep them from hearing the word of God with an open heart. Evil spirits have far too much influence on some. Inertia or just plain indifference hold many in their grip.

Others need to be delivered from worldly and unnecessary activities that keep them from church attendance, prayer and service

in general. Too many would rather play than pray. They are more concerned about entertainment than they are the kingdom of God.

Many have closer ties of fellowship with unbelievers and the world than they do with the church and God's people. As a result of this many marry unbelievers and reap a harvest of trouble and sorrow. If the minister preaches the truth according to the word of God he is called a narrow-minded bigot.

Where such conditions prevail evil spirits operate without fear because there is no discernment or anointing to cast them out. Satan and his evil host do not fear a church that does not have the keys of the kingdom.

SIGN AND WONDERS

Although signs and wonders are not necessarily in evidence every time the keys of the kingdom are in use signs will certainly follow those who use the keys of the kingdom.

In Mark 16:15-18 Jesus said, "... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Please notice that there is not a single hint given that signs and wonders were to cease after the church was established. To the contrary, signs were to follow them that believe. As long as men continue to preach his word in believing faith the promised signs will follow.

The difference in the early church and the apostate church is simply faith. Even Jesus was limited in what he could do because of unbelief when he went back to Nazareth. Matt. 13:54-58.

Although many of the early disciples were ignorant and unlearned men they continued to heal the sick, cast out devils and on occasion raise the dead. They expected as much as they went forth preaching the word of God.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation of the word was the rule rather than the exception.

This was God's way of saying, "These are my servants, I have sent them to you with my word."

The great difference between the primitive church and the modern church is in the one they represent. The primitive church represented God. They were anointed and sent by the Holy Ghost. The modern church represents man in the form of some church or man-made denomination.

The primitive church had God's inspired message relevant to the time and the need of the people. The modern apostate church has a message that projects its particular doctrine and traditions. And, I might add, sometimes those are doctrines of devils inspired by seducing spirits. I Tim. 4:1.

This principle of the word being confirmed by signs following was characteristic of the Lord Jesus, the twelve disciples, the apostle Paul and the early church in general. Speaking of Paul and Barnabas, Acts 14:3 says, "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

Confirming the word with signs following or giving testimony unto the word of his grace is exactly the same thing. It is God bearing witness by the Holy Ghost that it is his word. Acts 5:29-33. Jesus said, "... the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John 5:36.

FATHER GLORIFIED

Confirmation of the word is to be expected when we move in the Spirit and preach his message. It is certainly no imposition to expect this when we have his word. Signs and wonders through use of the keys of the kingdom brings glory to the Father through the Son. John 14:11-13, Acts 3:12-13, Mark 2:10-12.

The keys of the kingdom were given to the church, the body of Christ. Independent operatives who say, "have gift will travel" have no part in the use of the keys of the kingdom. The keys were given to deliver the elect from the kingdom of darkness and bring them together in one body under the headship of Christ.

Individual ministries who use the keys of the kingdom are actually an extension or arm of the body. Such ministries carry Christ's burden for the church and recognize it as Christ's body in the earth.

They know that whatever gift or ability they have was given for the unity of perfection of Christ's body. Eph. 4:1-13.

The local church is the body of Christ in a given or particular place. Paul said to the church at Corinth, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." I Cor. 12:27.

They were not a part of the church or body of Christ. They were the church at Corinth. As a sovereign body under the headship of Christ each local church should be in possession of and using the keys of the kingdom.

There is no greater power or authority on earth than the church. Jesus said in Matt. 18:18, "Verily I say unto you. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Paul instructed the church at Corinth to turn one man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. I Cor. 5:4-5. This man which was guilty of fornication with his father's wife was actually being sheltered and protected as a part of the church. However, it was and is the duty of the church to act in judgment against such flagrant immorality.

According to Paul's teaching the saints shall judge the world and even angels. We are actually forbidden to turn to the judicial system of the world in the settlement of problems pertaining to the church and God's people.

The local church does not have to be a perfect church or have perfect revelation to use the keys of the kingdom. In spite of all the wrong things that existed in the Corinthian church it was the body of Christ and came behind in no gift. I Cor. 1:7 & 12:27.

I believe the Lord is saying to his remnant church in this hour, "Only believe and you will see the glory of God." John 11:40.