

Restoration of all things

Acts 3, 21: ***“He (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets”.***

Everything has to be restored until the Lord returns? This includes our proper relationship as a Church from the nations to Israel. In these present times some Christians recognized that we are in the same boat with the people of Israel and that God’s first covenant people Israel and the new covenant people who have entered into a covenant relationship through Jesus Christ are both persecuted in Muslim countries. Deception overcame the church during the time of the Nazis in Germany because Christians thought they were not connected to Israel and to the 10 commandments, especially not with the first one. Exodus 20, 3 says: ***“I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me”.***

The first Christians suffered under the Roman Caesars because they refused to bring godly honour to the Caesars. Mordecai refused to give godly honour to Haman in the book of Esther because he was a Jew. Hitler hated the Jewish people because of the God of Israel and the 10 commandments. If our conscience is bound to the 10 commandments then a dictator is not able to manipulate a whole nation and to control them. If he plans to kill, to steal or to be worshipped as a Messiah, the people will not enter because they are committed to the word of God. We approach a time when the Antichrist will again demand godly honour; therefore, we must prepare our hearts to stay in a right relationship with our Lord. Manipulation can also happen in different forms inside of the Church and we need to watch our motivations in the light of God’s word. Paul’s motivations were so pure that he said in 2 Corinthians 11, 2: ***“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to HIM”.***

His first desire was to present a pure virgin bride to the Lord. The Lord knows our motives. Do we desire to have a great ministry or to be influential? This is what the Babylonians wanted as they said in Genesis 11, 4: ***“Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered”***.

Paul also talks about other wrong motives in Galatians 4, 17-18: ***“Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be always and not just when I am with you. My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you”***. We see Paul’s struggle for the right relationship with his spiritual children. Paul is warning us in Galatians 1, 10: ***“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ”***.

There was the first hour of grace for the church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and as we look at the effects of the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we can only pray that the Spirit of the Lord will take over again.

Joel 2, 28 prophesied: ***“And afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams; your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days”***.

The Spirit of God overcame all gaps existing during that time. The gap between Jew and Gentile couldn’t be mentioned at that time, because the basis for this unity was only given through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. With the new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Lord will again bridge the gap of division and heal the wounds of the last centuries. Jew and Gentile would find their place in the Kingdom of God and do what each one of them is required to do, being in the perfect will of the Lord. Ephesians 2, 14 -16: ***“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by***

abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility". In the entire New Testament this is the only time we see the word "create" in relation to Jesus. This creative act of Jesus is very important because it relates to the preparation of His Bride. During this process, we are passing through great birth pains. It can be painful to find the right place in God's Kingdom because it might not be what we think and also not what others think. We have nothing in our hands and we depend on the Lord. There will be new wine in new wineskins. The unity of the first Church was a supernatural experience. Because of this unity in the Lord Jesus, there was sharing of goods, healing, deliverance, salvation and holiness. The law of Holy Spirit was written on their hearts, as it is written in Jeremiah 31, 31- 34: "***The time is coming', declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them' declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time', declares the Lord. 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, know the Lord, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest' declares the Lord***". Without this supernatural intervention we are unable to stand during difficulties and times of suffering.

Jesus was left alone in Gethsemane during His hour of great suffering. In the hour of great suffering, during the Holocaust, the Jewish people were also left alone even by the biggest part of the Church in Europe.

During the eschatological hour of darkness and suffering, the Church of Yeshua and the Israel of God, will stand in opposition with a humanistic understanding and the kingdom of this world.

Jesus loves the Jewish people and we also need to love them. Our love towards the people of Israel needs to be rooted in our love towards Jesus. He is also the door to Israel. John 10, 1- 2: ***“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep”***. We may have some discouraging experience as friends of Israel and could turn against Israel if our motivation is not founded on the Lord. The young Martin Luther was very positive towards the Jewish people because he believed that they would receive the gospel of justification by faith. But when this did not happen as he expected he turned against the Jewish people. It is so important that the church of Jesus Christ would not miss the hour of their responsibility towards Israel! Jesus said, ‘if salt loses its taste, it is worthless and will be thrown on the streets’.

As the Holy Spirit restores everything, He will also restore the manifold gifts and the different callings received through the work of the Holy Spirit to build up the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4, 11-13: ***“It was HE who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be build up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”***.

Many of God’s children are displaced because of the human control in the church. We seldom see Acts 13, 1-3 in practice in the Church. They served the Lord together in prayer and fasting. There was no agenda mentioned in Acts 13, 1-3, but they received personal and corporate words of confirmation for their calling from the Lord. Today the Body of Christ suffers because many of God’s people are in bondage of human structures and they are not liberated to serve according to their calling. If the Holy Spirit will be poured out again, every one of us will walk under the anointment of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus will reign in His Body and everybody will be able to serve in the calling the Lord has given to him.

Paul wanted to bring the gospel of grace to Jerusalem as we read about it in Acts 20, 24: ***“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me- the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace”***. There is a spiritual battle concerning the Gospel of grace especially in Jerusalem.

It is very important to believe and to stand firmly in the grace of God. Romans 5, 15-21: ***“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who received God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

Guest speakers use this word for the Church in Germany often. Without the grace of God there is no way out for us. But this does not happen automatically. Grace and our faithful response will bring forth the fruits of repentance. As Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 3, 8: ***“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance”***. Dietrich Bonhoeffer also warned the Church about the dangers of the “cheap grace”.

Paul has worked hard, but he was able to bring grace and hid investment for works for righteousness together. 1 Corinthians 15, 10: ***“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me”***.

Because of His grace we do not have to live under the reign of sin anymore. Romans 6, 14 says: ***“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace”***. We have nothing to be proud of, because both the Jews and the Gentiles are chosen by grace only. In Romans 11, 5-6 Paul writes: ***“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace”***.

When the Lord saves the whole remnant of Israel, it will be also because of HIS grace. Romans 11, 26: ***“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob”***. Romans 11, 32 goes further: ***“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all”***. In the end God will show mercy over Jews and Gentiles so that no one can boast.

Peter says that we have to put our hope in the grace of God. and 2 Peter 3, 15: ***“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him”***. It seems that Peter did recognize that Paul had special insight when it came to the understanding of grace and he referred to this.

If we count on the grace of God, we can see the purposes of God even in the worst sinner’s life. There is a deep searching going on in Jerusalem for the real foundations of the first church since it all started there. At the moment, Messianic Jewish congregations don’t have a structure like the traditional bishops. There are ideas on how to go about it, but there are also fears that the mistakes of church history could be repeated. We need a supernatural breakthrough. There is an old resistance towards the prophetic ministry in Jerusalem since a very long time. Jesus addressed the rejection of those who were sent from the Lord to Jerusalem and the rejection of prophecies. Matthew 23, 37: ***“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”***

An apostle is someone who is sent by the Lord and there is always great need to receive those whom the Lord is sending. We need in the

church the restoration of the five-fold ministry. According to Ephesians 2, 19: ***“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone”***.

The Lord is calling and sending workers in His harvest and He will restore these ministries and protect His flock from the self-appointed or self-promoting ministries. There is some confusion in the body of Christ because the five-fold ministry needs to be restored.

Peter Robertson from New Zealand wrote a book called *The Jerusalem Revival*. In this book he wrote: “The church in New Zealand will only see revival in the measure they are investing themselves for a Holy Spirit revival in Jerusalem.” I got his permission to quote some short passage from his book *Letters to a Young Prophet*: “The unholy three’s only way of conceiving “government” in both Church and state is either the tyranny of the one over the many (dictatorship), or the tyranny of the majority over the minority (democracy). Prior to the Reformation, tyrannical governments were the order of the day via kings and popes. Since then Protestantism has been seduced by various manifestations of secular and religious democracy. It continues to strike me as queer indeed that Protestants who are so clear-eyed concerning the fallibility of an infallible pope are so utterly blind to their own equally stupid notion that majority of God’s people are sure to be right. The “apostolic revolution” which so many have been trumpeting in recent years ought to be addressing the substantial gaps in the Church’s foundations caused by all manner of humanistic rather than divine government. It’s entirely about the Church being built on God’s foundations, which are, Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 2:19-20.

The true apostolic revolution is all about God’s prerogative and right to build HIS house on HIS foundation, which consists of apostles and prophets, sovereign created and welded together by Jesus. This is the only “construction” that has the strength to bear the weight of those other

leadership (usually pastoral, teaching, evangelistic) ministries necessary for the life and health of the local church life.” Some time ago I received another article about the teachings of the Nicolaitians that could be interesting also for you. We read about this certain group of people in Revelations 2, 6 but I did not have a lot of information concerning their true identity before.

According to the article: “The Holy Spirit makes us aware about the teachings that influences the Body of Christ to separate the people from a walk of intimacy with the Lord. One of the stumbling stones is the spirit of the Nicolaitians. We recognized this spirit raising its head at the very outset of the early apostolic church and it represents a perverted form of leadership that has an opposite motivation to that of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord will draw the people to the Lord Jesus while this counterfeit influence seeks to separate the people from the Lord. The Nicolaitians spirit will masquerade as a true governmental and spiritual authority, but using fear, manipulation, and control to achieve its agenda. The term “Nicolaitians” comes from two Greek words “Nikos” and “Laos”. Nikos means to conquer and by implication, dominancy over the defeated. The term “laos” means “the common people” or the “laity.” Then it means: “to conquer (dominate-intimidate-manipulate) the common people (laity).

An examination of church history is highlighting the Nicolaitians movement that marked the beginning of an unrighteous priesthood within the Church. We want to identify the spiritual influences that has stolen the inheritance of the saints throughout the Church ages and overcome with Christ as He overcame.

True leadership will equip the people to do the work of the ministry. Ephesians 4:11-12.

The apostle Paul was willing to lay down his life for the people to whom he ministered. He did not lord his spiritual authority over the

people but readily poured himself out for the sake of the Lord's Church. That quality is the predominant separation between the genuine and the counterfeit forms of leadership. The true leadership model is not that of a pyramid but an inverted pyramid. True spiritual fathers will take great joy in seeing their spiritual offspring flourish in their relationship with the Lord and the impartation of the gifts. The Lord clearly expressed his disgust and hatred for the Nicolaitian spirit and its corrupt agenda. In fact, those who shared His disdain for this evil opposition were commended. (Revelation 2:6) For those entrusted with true authority, make no place for intimidation, control and the power-hungry counterfeit authority over the sheep.

The Nicolaitian spirit will target Christians who have lost their "first-love" affections for the Lord. The enemy meticulously orchestrates a series of life events that cool our affections for the things of the Spirit with the intended hope of imparting apathy and lethargy. Hope deferred will make the heart sick! If accomplished, the door is then opened to this form of leadership that directs the focus of the people away from the Lord. Thankfully, the spirit of wisdom and revelation is promised to each believer, affording understanding of our rich inheritance in Christ. The Lord is granting the spirit of revelation to open "eyes and ears" to a place of fellowship with Him and taking away hopelessness. In its place, "first-love" affections are being restored. Holy desperation is in the hearts of a bridal company who will not be satisfied hearing the testimony of others who have encountered the Lord Jesus— they must have their own personal relationship.

In John 10 there is a clear word from the Lord stating, "***My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow me***". We are promised the ability to experientially apprehend the revelation of His Voice. The more acutely familiar we are with His Voice the more capable we become of recognizing the counterfeit. There has been a plot of the adversary to steal this aspect of our heritage, but the desolate heritage of the saints will be restored. The restoration promises in Joel 2:25 will take place. The Lord

prophetically outlined this privilege when He said: ***“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out”*** (John 10: 3). The Lord is calling us by name and leading us out of the bondage and oppression into a place of freedom and liberty because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. The Nicolaitian spirit will no longer hold bride of Christ hostage. Her destination is to be joined with the Lord in the promised union.

True Apostolic leadership will be commissioned with a fourfold mandate like the one given to the apostle Paul. The Lord sent one of His cherished friends, Ananias, to release a prophetic commission to the now converted Saul of Tarsus. Ananias told Paul four specific admonitions that would overshadow his life and are also characterize apostolic leaders. The scripture in Acts 22:12-15 says: ***“A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard’”***. Paul was empowered with four distinctive privileges that exemplified his apostolic calling. Those are:

1. Appointed to know His will;
2. See the Righteous One;
3. Hear utterances from His lips;
4. Be a witness/testifier of what was seen and heard.

The word witness is a judicial term signifying one who gives testimony only to what they have personally seen and heard. Anointed eyes and ears are essential in the accomplishment of this mandate. These attributes will begin to separate true governmental qualities from the Nicolaitians spirit.

The Disciple of Jesus, John must have known the teaching of the Nicolaitians. In this light we understand also better what he had to say about the teachings of the Gnostics and the Nicolaitians. He is warning us in his first letter, in 1 John 2, 18-21: ***“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us,***

but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth”.

And in 1 John 2, 26-27 we also read: ***“These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him”.***

John was for sure not against it to teach in the church; he is only addressing those leaders who believe that without their advice the sheep of the Lord would not find the right way or understand the ways of the Lord.

We are in need of a unity created by the Lord Himself between Israel and the Church in the nations. The Lord will build Jerusalem and it could be that He will call and use the outcasts as David did it in the case of his first army. Psalm 147: 2-3 says: ***“The Lord is building Jerusalem. He gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the wounded heart”.***

The restoration of all things is related to a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in Acts 1, 5: ***“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”.*** Immediately after this the disciples asked Jesus if this is the time that the Kingdom would be restored to Israel. Verse 6 says: ***“So when they met together, they asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”*** Jesus doesn't deny the connection between the outpouring of Holy Spirit and the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. He only says in verse 7 that ***“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority”.***

Before the kingdom for Israel would be restored, the power, the call and the commissioning to preach the gospel all over the world, the Holy Spirit had to be poured out and the disciples had to start their work in Jerusalem. Verse 8 tells us: ***“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”***.

In Ezekiel 37, 1- 2 the Spirit brought the prophet to a valley full of dry bones. Only after he had observed this very sad situation was, he allowed to prophesy life into the dry bones. Ezekiel was so affected by the horrific scenery with the dry bones that he could only prophesy out of obedience to the Lord, not by his personal emotions.

Believers were together on the day of Pentecost in one place and in unity. Acts 2, 1: ***“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place”***.

On the one hand, unity in prayer and being together in one place is a pre-condition for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In 1982 during a European-wide meeting in Strasbourg, some believers received a picture. There was ducks swimming in a little pool, which was divided by a fence in the middle. But then a strong rain came and the level of the water rose so that the dividing wall was covered with water and all the ducks could swim together in one pool.

Our prayer in unity will release the Holy Spirit afresh over the body of Christ.

Verses 4-5: ***“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven”***. All were filled and God did not show any partiality. Even during that time Jerusalem was already a city where Jewish people and proselytes came

together from all nations under heaven. Verses 9-11: ***“Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs”***.

In his preaching Peter refers to the prophet Joel. Verse 17: ***“I will pour out my Spirit over all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy”***. All flesh means all flesh, young and old, men and women, Jew and Gentile. Verse 21: ***“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”***. The Name of the Lord will be known and many people will call on His Name, Yeshua. In a time of great need and suffering God will bring us to this place. The Holy Spirit would also restore the grace of repentance to the Church. We need the repentance, which comes from a spirit of conviction. Peter addresses the Jewish people in the power of the Holy Spirit and with a lot of love, and not with a spirit of condemnation. Acts 2, 23: ***“You have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death”*** and Acts 2, 36: ***“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ”***.

The Holy Spirit brought conviction and there was a wonderful reaction by the grace of God. Verse 37: ***“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”***

The first time we find the word “restore,” mentioned in the Bible, is in the story where Joseph meets the cupbearer, who was restored into his position before the pharaoh (Genesis 40:13-21).

In Psalm 51, 12 we read: ***“Restore unto me the joy of my salvation”***. Jesus also refers to this truth in Luke 10, 20: ***“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven”***. Every day the joy of our salvation can be our well-of-life and encouragement.

Another well of our joy is obedience to the Lord as he leads us each day. John 15 9-11 *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete”*.

I don’t think that Jesus is referring here to the “Ten Commandments”, but more to the leading of the Holy Spirit, whom He experienced every day. Real joy in the Lord is related to our ability to hear and act on what the Lord is asking us to do. The expectation that the Lord leads us in a real way is often under attack. Sometimes we begin to function more according to people’s expectations and it isn’t easy to discern between the two.

The Holy Spirit will also restore godly authority in the church.

There are two kinds of authority, the delegated, and the transmitted authority coming from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The delegated authority for instance is the one which the police officer has. Whenever I see men or women in the uniform of the police, I ought to respect this person as a delegated authority from the state in which I live. In some Churches ushers have a special uniform or a nametag. They are giving instructions which have to be followed because they are authorized from the church leadership.

If we are in a place of authority, there is still the question relating to our motives for exercising authority. When our motivations are from God, the Glory belongs to HIM. He is the “One” being revealed. On the other hand, when a desire to dominate arises within us, selfish ambitions can come forth.

This was always a question in the life of Jesus. After He spoke and healed people, the spiritual leaders were asking Him: ***“in whose authority are you doing this?”***

It is as if they were saying: You are definitely not doing this because this authority was delegated to you – So who sent you? Luke 20, 2-6: ***“Tell us by what authority you are doing these things, they said. Who gave you this authority? He replied: I will also ask you a question. Tell me, John’s baptism was it from heaven, or from men?’ They discussed it among themselves and said, ‘If we say, from heaven, he will ask, why didn’t you believe him? But if we say, from men all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet’. So they answered, we don’t know where it was from. Jesus said, ‘neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things’”.***

At one time, in John 5, 19 Jesus also answered like this: ***“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does”.*** Our Lord Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of true spiritual authority when we look at His life and teachings. To enter into the same lifestyle, we have to stay very close to Him, just as close as the branches are to the vine.

As we see him washing the feet of His disciples, we grasp the character of Jesus.

He proceeded to perform the functions of the lowest slave. God was here incarnated, the Creator of the universe, the One who had the right to exercise all authority, acting like a slave! Jesus said in John 13, 13-15: ***“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If Lord then, your Teacher, and I have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you”.*** It is an authority with an entirely different motivation from anything that is human and it displayed the true character of God.

How do we enter into the authority given by the Lord? For example, anyone can go fishing. But when someone fishes often and

becomes good at catching fish, you might say: that person is a “fisherman.” Firstly, is not a title or some kind of position, but a description of what he does. Similarly, many people can fix a leaking faucet, but when they do this sort of work regularly and become good at what they do, then they are recognized as a “plumber”.

So, it is in the church. God has assigned special tasks to each one. These are unique areas of service through which we nurture the body of Christ. No one can delegate the members to prophesy in the services, if the Lord has not gifted the person. When God regularly uses someone in the area of prophecy and this person becomes known from the faithful way, he is exercising this gift, he could be called a prophet. When someone brings many people to the Lord, we say he is an evangelist. It is not about the titles. The Lord told us in Matthew 23, 9: ***“And do not call anyone on earth father for you have one Father and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called teacher, for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant”***. The titles are reserved for the Father and for Jesus! He is “King of Kings” and “Lord of lords.”

In these present days, in some Free Churches people are teaching about divine order. The basic thought behind these instructions seems to be that there is a kind of hierarchy, a sort of chain-of-command within the church of God what we have to recognize. Certain people think that we have to submit ourselves to this hierarchy - we have to “get in line” with it - if we want to fulfil God’s will, and experience blessings. There exists a kind of pyramid structure, similar to an earthly corporation or government within the church. But the structure of the Kingdom of Heaven is different.

Matthew 20, 25-28: ***“But Jesus called them to Himself and said: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”***.

Jesus makes a strong point here also according to Luke 22, 26 by saying: ***“on the contrary, he who is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves”.***

It is exactly the opposite to the way that it is in the world. Paul himself says concerning the authority manifested through him in 2 Corinthians 1, 24: ***“Not that we lord it over your faith, but we, are helpers of your joy”.*** A leader is someone who goes in front as an example. The others seeing this example realize that this is from God and they follow. King David for example was a lowly shepherd, but the Lord chose him to lead His people. Many of the prophets were nobodies until God touched their lives and began to act through them. One day when the twelve were walking with Jesus, they began having an argument. They were fighting about who would be the greatest when Jesus becomes king. The Lord used this opportunity again and tried to show them something about how He intended His body to function. He took a little child beside Him and said something very profound. Luke 9,48: ***“He who is least among you all will be great”.*** This is exactly the opposite of our normal, human way of thinking.

Yeshua will restore all things before He comes back and His church will be very different. We learn some truths from His word only as we come into situations where we are forced to find a solution to our problems. We are questioning ourselves in the Church: What kind of Church life did we pass onto our younger generation? What are we looking for in the Church and what are our desires? The letter to the Hebrews tells us what Abraham was looking for!

Hebrews 11, 8–10: ***“By faith Abraham obeyed God when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he waited for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God”.***

Abraham preferred to live in tents, in something that was temporary, because he was looking for the perfect city, the heavenly Jerusalem! Abraham was dissatisfied with the intentions and the convictions of the ordinary men of his age. Even though he also would have liked to provide stability and a good future for Isaac and Jacob he still preferred the tent, a temporary home. Also, in the church when we meet someone who brings in a successful concept of Church life, fellowship and theology, we are often impressed. Successful ministries are very attractive, especially if a church has gone through very dry times. We are impressed, because we hope that our church would also grow in numbers and spiritual influence. Abraham could have built a big palace because he was very rich. But he chose to live in tents because his desire was to wait for the eternal city, where the foundation, architect and builder would be God Himself. He did not pretend that he had already arrived, but he continued to seek the heavenly city. He remained to be a seeker and a man full of desires to find everything in the Lord and to receive from HIM the new home. If we pretend that we have arrived as an individual or as a group, believers who cannot stand in their unfulfilled longings are cheated by promised expectations and because they are unable to be alone, they are willing to be a part of some unbalanced communities. The methods of this world have received much space in some congregations and not only in traditional churches. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in chapter 10 verses 35-36: ***“So do not throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised”***. Because they desired a better heavenly country, God was not ashamed to be called their God. God is already responding to the desires of his people. He has prepared a city, a place for those who wait for His city.

Hebrews 11, 14-16: ***“For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country, from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better that is a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them”***.

Without a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Lord will not have full control over the Church. The Bridegroom Yeshua will form the shape of the bridal Church. He will create Himself the one “new man” out of Jew and Gentile. He has created and prepared a place for us – the new city of Jerusalem. We need the leading of the Holy Spirit in our personal life and also in the Church.

Every truth we have overlooked and neglected during the centuries of Church history will be restored in a visible way, in the new building of God. Jesus teaches us: blessed are the hungry. In Matthew 5:3 we also can read: ***“Blessed are the poor in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven”***.

Raniero Cantalamessa said: “There was a shift in Church History. After some time, it was no more recommended for a group of believers to be poor, as Jesus also was poor. But there was a concern about the poor and to help them out of their misery. To be poor is like the word of Jesus for the eunuch. Some are born poor, some are made poor by men, some have made themselves poor for the Kingdom’s sake”. Like Paul said, if I give all my possessions to the poor and it is not out of love, it would not count! The motive is still the most important! In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul reminds us that without love, nothing counts before God.

To be poor in the spirit also means that we accept that our knowledge and understanding about the ways of the Lord are very limited, especially if it comes to the will of God for another person. The Lord does not always inform us about His plans for other brothers and sisters. Real prophecy comes from an inner poverty. I do not know what the other person needs but the Lord knows. I do not know the right time but He knows. Isaiah 50, 4: ***“The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning; he awakens my ear to hear as the learned”***.

We need more freedom of personal convictions, because if we have strong convictions we could pass on our thoughts to others. The poor in spirit will not dare to say something of his own.

To discern all the information, we receive every day is a great challenge. Hebrews 13, 9-10: ***“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods, which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat”***. The Lord has ways to feed those who seek Him even when they find themselves outside of the “camp”.

Hebrews 13, 13-14: ***“Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city but we seek the one to come”***.

Often, we do not even have to go outside the camp, because we already find ourselves outside. If it wasn't really our fault, then we will be very happy one day that we are outside. Galatians 1,

10: ***“For do I now persuade men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ”***. Bondservants like Paul make a decision to seek first the ways that would please the Lord.

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