

CHAPTER 3

"STRANGE FIRE"

...."And His gifts were [varied; He Himself appointed and gave men to us,) some to be apostles (special messengers), some prophets (inspired preachers and expounders), some evangelists (preachers of the Gospel, travelling missionaries), some pastors (shepherds of His flock) and teachers. His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated People), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church), [that it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the full and accurate knowledge of the Son of God; that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood - the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection - the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, and the completeness found in Him. So then, we may no longer be children tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching, and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, (gamblers engaged) in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead. Rather, let our lives lovingly express truth in all, things - speaking truly, dealing truly living truly. Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way and in all things into Him, Who is the Head, [even] Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. For because of Him the whole body (the church, in all its various parts closely) joined and firmly knit together by the joints and ligaments with which it is supplied, when each part [with power adapted to its need] is working properly (in all its functions), grows to full maturity, building itself up in love"....

Ephesians 4:11-16 (Amplified Translation)

As we continue our study of spiritual authority we shall look at some different aspects and examples found in the Old Testament writings and we shall see clearly how they tie in with us today. Many disregard the Old Testament, and while it is most certain that we are not called to live "under" the law, the Word of God tells us that the various situations and stories experienced by the house of Israel were for an example to us and as we diligently study these "types and symbols" we shall see clearly the never changing "absoluteness" of our God. As one "allows" the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to freely teach them in this hour

then they shall "surely" come to a continually deeper understanding of the "whole counsel" of God - found in both the Old and New Testament. The examples we shall study shall cause us to understand, to a deeper degree, God's nature, and His way of doing things. Quite simply, the more that one's mind is "renewed" through the Word of God and the power of His Spirit, the less mysterious and strange the things of the supernatural realm shall seem to them and the more "unreal" the things of the temporal world shall seem.

THE "ABSOLUTENESS" OF GOD

In Ephesians 4:15 "speaking the truth in love" is mentioned. To "speak the truth in love" is to speak the uncompromised word of God with no regard for any "physical" or "emotional" circumstance, motivated solely by, and in agreement with, the deepest thoughts and intentions of the Father's heart. The Word goes on to state that as we speak the truth in love we are to "grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the Head, even Christ". The word "all" is used over three thousand times in the Bible and it is one of those words which I classify as a "heavenly or eternal" word because of its "absoluteness". Each time we come across the word "all" in our meditation of the Scriptures, we must open our hearts to allow God to reveal to us its particular application to our own lives and to the establishing of the True Church. Every spiritual law and principle of the Kingdom of Heaven is absolute, and as we look further at this scripture we see that we are called to grow up in all aspects. One thing that God makes clear, as He sets forth His "divine requirement" in His Word, is that we must give Him our all! It is this failure to give ALL of our hearts to God that is the cause of so much strife and confusion in the Church, for, quite simply, if every believer's "deepest" desire was to grow up into the "fulness" of Christ, then there would not be various members continually attempting to go their "own" way apart from the Head - Who is Christ. So as we meditate these scriptures let us open our hearts to understand that God has only one way and that perfect way is found in the "fulness" of Christ.

THE "MIDDLE GROUND" OF CARNALITY SHALL FINALLY BE REMOVED FROM THE CHURCH

One revelation which every child of God that is seeking the fulness of the Father's will for their life is about to receive is the fact that God is "absolute" and that He means what He says. Once this revelation has been "received" by

multitudes of believers then the "middle ground" of carnality shall finally be removed from the church. Jesus said that one is either for Him or against Him, and if we truly believe His words then we shall understand clearly that God never made ANY provision for sin and rebellion to remain - and even be "practised" in the midst of His people! One can in no way continually speak the uncompromised word of God in love unless the motivations of their hearts are pure and they maintain the inherent desire (God-given) to love and serve "all" who cross their path. As we continue our study, we are going to look at the life of Moses and see some of the characteristics which made him a powerful man of God and a powerful delegated authority of God to the people of Israel. In "knowing" that ALL of our heart motivations must be "subject" to the Spirit of "servitude" and that we cannot be motivated by anything which proceeds from a spirit of "self-seeking", we must press on to grow up in all aspects into Christ, who is the Head. As we abide in the Word and the Word does its deepest work (the work of the Cross) within us continually, then, over a period of time, we shall surely be faced with many different situations as the Father provides us with ample opportunity in our daily circumstances to "shift" our dependence from ourselves and our own understanding to trust entirely in His Word. It is in these precious times of learning to stand in faith that we allow God to enlighten us as to His ways and to change our heart that we might be motivated solely by His love. If one truly desires to seek God and walk in the "fulness" of their calling then they shall first have to be "willing" to lay down all of their own selfish plans for it is only in this "radical" laying down of our "self-life" that "allows" us to abide in the supernatural power of God's love.

UNTIL ALL "SELF-INITIATIVE" CEASES THEN STRIFE AND DIVISION SHALL REMAIN THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC...

In Ephesians 4:16 the Word talks about the "proper working of each individual part". It is only as believers walk in the perfect will of God that the true growth of the body of Christ shall come about, and until all "self-initiative" ceases then strife and division shall remain the chief characteristic of all the congregations which have not forsaken ALL to follow Jesus Christ. Every born-again child of God needs to know who are the "delegated authorities" which have been placed over them by God for their edification. It is this being found in the "proper place" that is directly responsible for the "proper working" of each individual believer. In this last hour, as we move forward in the plan of God, and

thus finally move out beyond the darkness of "denominationalism" (and any other thing which is apart from Christ), then we shall come into the state of having a "Body of Christ-consciousness", that is, we shall be conscious only of the establishment of the true Church and we shall come to understand God's plan for its innermost workings in the earth. As we are faithful in our obedience to God then we shall surely become the spotless and unblemished Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, but before all these things begin to take place one important matter must be resolved by each individual believer before God: are they WHOLLY submitted to His authority, that is, have they given the Word of God preeminence in their own lives? If one has not given "preeminence" to the Word of God in their own lives then they shall be found incapable, or even non-desirous, of seeking out and finding those whom God has sent to them as a blessing for their edification. The Father has His ways to get across to us the means for us to walk in the "fulness" of His provision, but it is only to the degree that we are wholly given to Him that He is "enabled" to get them through to us. Quite simply, to the degree that we "hold part back", it is to that degree that we shall have to settle for "less" than "God's best" - and in this most critical hour, less than God's best will surely not be enough! One of the very serious problems in the church, up until this time, is the fact that people are not with the people they are called to be with, whether in small pockets or large congregations, and the two direct causes of this are:

1. their failure to place the Word of God first in their lives.
2. they "maintain" a reliance upon "emotional attachments" and thus their deepest heart motivation always seeks to fellowship with flesh and blood, BEFORE the Father and His Word. They search for and find a "security" (false) in their relationships with people that can and must only be found in proper relationship with God.

This is precisely why "social fellowship" has gained such a dominant grip on the souls of many children of God! Let us keep our priorities straight and measure "fully" our call to first "minister unto the Lord" and then we shall truly be blessed in our fellowship with "flesh and blood", and not only be blessed, but we shall be a blessing.

"PERFECT" OBEDIENCE - A CERTAIN AND ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT

...."Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the Lord spoke saying, 'By those who come near to Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honoured.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent"....

Leviticus 10:1-3

This story of Nadab and Abihu is extremely important to us today as believers and servants of God. We must become "fully" aware of the fact that ALL "true service" is initiated by God. Anything at all - regardless of how good it "looks"- which does not have its origin in the heart of the Father cannot be called a "Christian" activity! The whole point of this brief episode in the life of Aaron and his sons was this: Aaron was the high priest and he therefore was responsible for all the "service" in the temple. His sons were also called to perform a portion of the priestly duty because they were members of Aaron's family, but they were not in charge of things. In other words, they had not been delegated as authorities in the temple to perform the duties which Aaron alone could perform before God. They were mere helpers. Just previous to God's judgement upon Nadab and Abihu they had been helping their father in his priestly duties and all was well (Leviticus 9:18 22-23) and in verse 24 (of Leviticus 9) we see that fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering meaning He had accepted the sacrifice, and all the people saw this and fell on their faces. There can be no doubt that Nadab and Abihu who had obviously helped their father over a long period of time in his duties, knew clearly what they themselves were to do but the Word of God states in Leviticus 10:1 that Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire" before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. It was taking these duties upon themselves without the command of the Lord which brought forth the Lord's judgement! Keeping in mind that all "true" Christian service must be initiated by God then "strange fire" for us today would mean us going forth to serve without an order (an ordained commandment) from God (presumptuously). It would be "any" service on our part which did not have, as its source, perfect obedience to God's authority (His Word). It could also be defined as any action before God

which does not have as its source, the revealed knowledge of His will and the "unction" of His Spirit.

WE CAN DO "NOTHING" FOR GOD AND HIS KINGDOM - APART FROM HIM!

Far from there being any "outwardly" evil attempt to displease God in any way, Nadab and Abihu fell a victim to a "spirit of self-exaltation" and thus they proceeded forth - no doubt in perfect accordance with the commands which God had given Aaron, in times past. The important point drawn out here is that God will not accept ANYTHING as holy or true which has its origin in the "flesh"! This story is a very strong type and symbol for us today and it is a "severe warning" for us to forsake any corrupt element within us as we venture into service for God. In this story we may look upon Aaron as a type of Jesus Christ (as the High Priest) and we may look upon Nadab and Abihu as a type and symbol of the Church (priests of God) (1 Peter 2:9), and as God opens our eyes we shall see and understand clearly that it was not His intention for Nadab and Abihu to serve "independent" of the high priest. Relating that fact to our walk with the Lord today, it has never been God's intention for any one of His children to do anything independent of "the High Priest" - Jesus Christ (John 15:5). Let it be clearly understood that whoever attempts to serve God without first "meeting" Him and having a revelation of His authority (Word-Will), thus fearing to venture forth apart from Him, shall be found offering that same "strange fire" that Nadab and Abihu offered. There are many in the church who have, up until this time, offered that same "strange fire" before the Lord. We pray that they may be shaken in their "foundation" that they might repent and be found in perfect blamelessness in the day of judgement which is even now, upon us. God's fire may not come forth immediately and consume the works of the "flesh", as we shall see in the next scripture, but the day of God's fiery judgement shall come! If we do not have the "assurance" in our hearts that our works are of God "from start to finish", then let us repent immediately and cast ourselves down upon the mercies of God to learn once and for all that we can do nothing for Him, apart from Him.

EVERY SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDE MUST BE REPENTED OF IN THIS HOUR

There has been much talk in so-called spiritual circles of the "good works"

syndrome - and it is certain that it is a large problem and hindrance to the establishment of the Glorious Church. But there has been much "accusation" and "condemnation" of vast multitudes who, indeed, who have not waited wholly upon the Lord in the matter of their service, but let no one be hasty in their "judgement" of their fellow believers, for if they continue on in the "self-righteousness" which causes them to put down (criticize) the ignorant, God's most holy fire shall surely envelop them first! Let those who are "abiding" in the Spirit of Truth and love restore (build up) those the Father has placed in their path in gentleness and with a true affection and desire to see them come into the fulness of God's will for their lives and ministries. We are called to love one another and if those who have been called to a position of delegated authority by the Lord Himself have lost the Spirit of prayer and allowed it to be replaced with a "spirit of self-exaltation" then they shall surely deserve that which befalls them in their rebellion and the "self-righteous" attitudes that unbeknownst to them - minister death and darkness! For were we not all at one time ignorant, and why is it that so many are quick to lay down the "cross" rather than their own life (psuche) in order to bear the burdens of others? Let everyone forsake any "strange fire" which may have crept into their walk and let us at all times be found abiding in God's wisdom and love. If we have not made God the supreme authority in our lives then we shall exalt ourselves into a position of "authority" and if we assume this position of authority in our own lives, then everything that we do shall be done apart from the will of God regardless of how spiritual, how good, or how "religious" it looks. These things are important and EVERY believer must have a revelation from God concerning them, for to continue on in a path apart from God, while at the same time declaring that what is being done is of God shall most certainly bring an "all-consuming" judgement from Him.

THE FATHER'S JUDGEMENT UPON HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD IS INTENSIFYING

Already God's judgement upon His own household is intensifying daily. So let us, as the Church, diligently heed this warning in order that we might do the things which both please and glorify the Father, and forsake the self-indulgent and self-exalting actions of the flesh. In order for us to eliminate "strange fire" from our walk we must separate ourselves unto God "continually" in order that we might hear the voice of the Holy Spirit clearly at any given time. Many have lost sight of the fact that God is a very "practical" God and that He desires to be

involved in even the smallest details of our existence. As we abide in intimate fellowship with God we shall come to know Him and therefore trust Him absolutely, and in this absolute trust we shall daily come to depend upon our God for all things and as the days and weeks and months go by we shall become the "pure vessels" which the Father so desires. Let it be understood that to forsake close and intimate fellowship with God is to forsake all hope of carrying out His will in perfect obedience. To the degree that we first minister unto the Lord it is to that degree that we shall be empowered from on high to be a blessing to all those whom the Father has set in our path. Many even now are scurrying about attempting to meet the needs of the people without first becoming "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) and this is an abomination in the sight of God! For indeed EVERY fleshly activity done in the Name of Jesus has, as its root, man's foolish belief that he himself can "overcome", when in truth our only provision for "overcoming" is an absolute faith and trust in the Father and His Word.

THE "ABSOLUTENESS" OF OUR GOD

...."According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder I laid a foundation and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire"....

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

In coming to a clear revelation of the "absoluteness" of our God we shall begin to understand - without becoming "offended" - that all which is not in Christ - that is, in "true" service to God is in Satan's service. Now there are many who would contend this point but they must understand that it is not we ourselves who decide what is of God and what is not of God, but rather God Himself - in and by His Spirit. As we see in this above portion of scripture, the Father has made a most awesome statement as He said through the apostle Paul:

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

A sister scripture to this one in Malachi 3:18 states:

...."So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. For behold the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evil doer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,' says the Lord of Hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch"....

Clearly, from these two scriptures we can see that there is coming a day, even now, in which the Lord will cause the "source" of each work and word - in Christ or apart from Christ - to be revealed. So let each one of us pay close attention to our OWN calling and forsake the self-exalting false judgement of others which has so plagued and hindered - UP UNTIL NOW - the establishment of a true working five-fold ministry in a true working "local" Body.

JUDGEMENT SHALL NOW COME FORTH "SWIFTLY"

At this point the Father has instructed me to share a word which He spoke to me concerning this matter.

Thus saith the Lord:

...."My Word does not say judge your neighbour. It is written "who are you to judge the servant of another?" and "do not judge lest you be judged"! It is time for each one of My children to fix their eyes upon Me. Did I not say love your neighbour as yourself? It is indeed time for all My children to place My Word first in their lives. For many have "allowed" themselves to be entrapped for too long and should they continue on the perilous course they have set for themselves, they shall surely reap the death and havoc which they have sown to. For if My children, through the evil intent of their heart, continue to judge others, they will sow the seeds of strife and discord which I despise. Therefore, My judgement shall come swiftly upon those who harden their hearts against Me and seek their own glory. All those who truly desire to serve Me must let no unwholesome word proceed

from their mouths, but only such a word as is good for the building up of My Church in love. For the time is short and the hour is late. Let all those who love life and desire to see good days, refrain their tongue from evil and their lips from speaking deceit. For it is certain that the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped and all unrighteousness will shut its mouth in the presence of My Glory"....

Amen

SPIRITUAL ZEAL VS. "EMOTIONAL" ZEAL

It is very easy for a person who has not taken the time to separate themselves unto God and submitted themselves wholly to His Word to, in their "emotional" zeal, get out presumptuously before God and take matters into their own hands. Failure to submit oneself "wholly" to the Word of God can also lead to "passivity", that is, a state wherein we are continually behind in carrying out the will of God - fuelled for the most part by a "spirit of procrastination". Certainly when one is a new believer (having begun in the Spirit) there is a spiritual zeal which follows, but as we have begun in the Holy Spirit so must we "continue" in the Holy Spirit or else our zeal shall become a product of fleshly desire rather than the Father's love. God is not intolerant of the times that we stepped out ahead of Him as new believers, but the things I am speaking of today concern not the "babe" in Christ but rather those who have had great experience with the Lord in His service. It is certain that babies will make mistakes as they learn but one would not expect a mature adult to make those same infantile mistakes and, so too, God does not expect us to drag our heels in pursuing "spiritual matters", diligently.

**ALL MISREPRESENTATION" OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST SHALL
END IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUS
(THOSE WHO ARE TRULY SEEKING GOD FROM A PURE HEART) -
BEGINNING WITH THE "LEADERS**

Let us remember the Word of God which states:

...."to whom much is given, much is required"....

Luke 12:48

for if one sets themselves to pursue a course which is not of God, but which is "religious" (self-serving) in its nature then they shall bring much "misrepresentation", and shall "paint" - through their daily words and actions - a "distorted" image of the Lord Jesus Christ and the will of God. It does not matter to what degree - how subtly or blatantly - one has offered "strange fire" before the Lord, their actions will always cause the people who "allow" themselves to be influenced by them - those who presumptuously carry out their tasks before God - to lean upon their own understanding. Any "contempt" which one shows for God in their failure to carry out His tasks in a perfect obedience shall "breed" a contempt (disrespect-stubbornness) for God, albeit unknowingly, in the ones that they "minister" to. This is precisely why the true delegated authority of God shall ALWAYS be found leading the people into a deeper dependence upon the Father and His Word and "away from" themselves. If any child of God encounters a word or teaching which places the emphasis upon "self-reliance" in any way, or which promotes, in some way, the lie that there is something inherently good in man apart from Christ, then that word must not be received and they must set themselves to prayer for the one who has "misrepresented" God! Any "mental ascension" and presumptuous activity by those who are in a position of leadership shall cause strife and confusion to spread and thus promote Satan's scheme to divide the House of God. Any work done through the fallen nature of man will end up in "death", that is, it will cease to exist and will in no way be acknowledged as being a work of God. Today, many are still attempting to serve God "independently". They have not submitted themselves "wholly" to the Word of God and therefore - whether they know it or not - they sin against God's authority, and in their presumptuous actions they fail to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and in this hour, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, any who wilfully violate God's authority will have their works consumed by fire! Therefore, let us have the assurance in our hearts that "all" we do is God's will - done in His way, through His power.

"KNOWING" THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

...."For behold the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant

and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the Lord of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the Lord of hosts"....

Malachi 4:1-3

Who are the arrogant and evildoers spoken of in verse one? They are all those who have not made the Word of God the sole authority in their lives. They are those children who have not taken the time, through a lack of reverence for God, to feed and nourish themselves upon His Word, and who, in their slothfulness, did not have their minds renewed to the will and the way of God. And, thus, in never coming to the place which would find them cleansed from all defilement of flesh and spirit they presumptuously carry out the "so-called" tasks they say that God has given them, through the darkened wisdom of their own understanding. "Fellowship" with the world will defile one's spirit and unless one takes diligent steps to guard their heart THEN the "voice" (lure) of the world and the Evil One, shall be continually more real to them than the voice of the Holy Spirit. Yet, in the same way, fellowship with God shall keep one's heart cleansed before Him and shall allow them to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit more clearly than any other. If we have never had the assurance of "knowing" the voice of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives and in all our circumstances then let us honestly humble ourselves before God and acknowledge the fact that we have held back part of our hearts from Him, and thus have failed to give His Word the preeminence that He deserves. As we humble ourselves before God let us come to the realization that the only thing hindering us from hearing what God has to say concerning His will for any part of our life, is our "unwillingness" to do ALL the will of God at ALL times. As we do this, the Father shall surely enlighten us to the fact that He is at work in us, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). It is certain that all who desire to serve the Lord from a pure heart must come to the realization that God requires nothing from us except our love of Him through our diligent and reverent obedience to His Word. Let us therefore set ourselves as pleasing and obedient children that we might be proven to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shall appear as lights in the world (Philippians 1:15).

THE GREAT DANGER OF AN ENVIOUS AND JEALOUS HEART

...."Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); and they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the Lord heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.) And suddenly the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out. Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam: when they had both come forward, He said, "Hear now My words; if there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with Moses, he is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?" So the anger of the Lord burned against them and He departed. But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous. Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account this sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. Oh do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten when he comes from his mother's womb!" And Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "O God, heal her I pray!" But the Lord said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again." So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again"....

Numbers 12:1-15

This story has great spiritual significance for us today in the Church. As we look at the characters we see that Moses was a prophet of God, that Miriam was a prophetess and that Aaron was the high priest. We also see in this passage that all three of them were brother and sister. In numbers 12:1 the word of God states that:

...."Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married"....

It seems that Zipporah (Moses first wife) had died sometime before. So then, we must ask ourselves why Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of his marriage to a Cushite woman? And as we do we shall see clearly the great danger of an envious or jealous heart. As I checked back through the scriptures I found that it was not against the "law" to marry a Cushite. Cush was the brother of Canaan and it was only Canaan that was cursed. In Genesis 9:25 Noah spoke the curse upon Canaan by the Spirit of God when he said, "cursed be Canaan." And although Cush was Canaan's brother the curse had nothing to do with him. And in Genesis 28:1 Isaac, when he blessed Jacob, warned him and said:

...."You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan"....

THE EXTREME DANGER OF A "JEALOUS HEART"

Miriam and Aaron had misinterpreted the "situation" and used this incident of Moses' marriage to come against him, but as we continue on in the scriptures we see the real reason behind their speaking against the prophet of God.

vs. 2 states:

...."and they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the Lord heard it"....

The root of jealousy which stirred in the hearts of Miriam and Aaron no doubt had something to do with the fact that they were the elder brother and sister of Moses and they had seen God bring Moses to a place of absolute authority over the people of Israel and thus - in the evil intent of their own hearts - they were jealous of Moses' position with God. We must pay close attention as we study these scriptures through that we ourselves - today - in the Church of Jesus Christ, do not fall into the very same trap as Miriam and Aaron in our dealings with the "delegated authorities of God. It was this seed of "jealousy" that caused Miriam and Aaron to come against Moses, but as they spoke, the Word states that "The Lord heard it." It is obvious that God took great pleasure in Moses because He delights Himself in all those who depend upon Him for all things and so, suddenly, God said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam:

...."You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out. And the Lord called Aaron and Miriam and when they had both come forward He (God) said: "Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, he is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?" So the anger of the Lord burned against them and He departed"

vs. 5-9

Let us summarize what has happened to this point. Verse 3 describes Moses as a man who was more humble than any other man on the face of the earth.

From this truth we can see two things:

1. Because Moses was so totally subjected to God, he was given an esteemed position in the purposes of God for the nation of Israel;
2. This deep humility which characterized Moses' life enabled him to rise above his older brother and older sister, a fact which did not sit well with them.

Then, we see that because of a root of bitterness and jealousy against Moses, Miriam and Aaron spoke against him falsely and had controversy with him even though he had done nothing wrong. How does this apply to the Christian today? If we "allow" a seed of jealousy or envy to grow in our hearts, then it will surely lead us to the place where we will "misinterpret" the true intentions and purposes (will) of God and because of our jealousy and envy and the fact that we desire to exalt ourselves above the will of God, we shall always come to the place wherein we are found to be fighting against God's delegated authorities - and thus against God Himself. It is no small thing which God has commanded us when He calls us to love one another, for failure to do so shall ALWAYS lead the deceived one, however "unintentionally", into the place of fighting against God and hindering His purposes. Aaron and Miriam did not recognize God's authority and it was their self-interest and desire for self-exaltation which blinded them, and, in standing on the natural ground of the flesh they conceived a rebellious heart towards God and against Moses - His delegated authority.

THE FATHER IS THE HEARER AND WATCHER OF "ALL" THINGS

It is written at the end of verse 2:

...."And the Lord heard it"....

Let us understand clearly that the Father is the hearer and watcher of "all things" and He takes it very seriously when anyone comes against those who are walking with Him in perfect obedience. There is one thing that is very interesting to note here: throughout this whole scene there is no mention in the Word of God that Moses spoke to defend Himself. As one diligently studies the numerous examples of Moses' intercession for the nation of Israel we can understand why. Moses had such a solid relationship with God and he had such a clear revelation of what he was called to do that he had no need to answer back, for he knew that if he had been raised up by God as a delegated authority he need not defend himself. Today, as we walk in perfect obedience, we too must have such a deep assurance in our hearts that all that we do is of God and is ordained by Him so that when persecution arises - as it surely will - and Satan attempts to come in like a flood to try and overwhelm us with the fear of what others think, then we, as Moses did, shall wait on God for our vindication - REFUSING to speak in a "spirit of self-justification". Again we touch on the "principle" of God's delegated authority and see that Moses was able to represent God - as His delegated authority - because he had first made himself subject to God's authority (His Word). Had Miriam and Aaron been "wholly given" to seeking only the will of God, they no doubt would have had a "revelation" that Moses was walking in obedience to God and had not "transgressed" the commandment of God in marrying the Cushite woman. This again is a severe warning for us today. If we "hold part back" for ourselves in our carrying out of God's will, then we too shall be "misguided" in our ministry and shall be held captive by Satan - for a time - to do his will. Let us reflect upon the importance of these words in order that we might not be ensnared through deception to hinder the purposes of God.

"STRANGERS" TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE

...."But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous"....

Many people read into this passage that God was the one who put the leprosy on her, but the Word states that it was when God's presence had "withdrawn" that the leprosy came and this is a type and symbol of what happens to the child of God today when THEY SET THEMSELVES outside the "covenants of promise" through unbelief and rebellion - and thus they get outside the secret place of God's presence. We thank God that through the Blood of Jesus we may repent of our sins and be cleansed and get back under the protection of our Covenant with God, but how much more does the Father desire us to be those who are obedient and living in fellowship with Him, so that we might continually walk above "the curse" (the law of sin and death) and abide in the blessings of obedience (Deuteronomy 28; Romans 8:1-2).

DO NOT "REVILE" THE ANOINTED ONES OF GOD

If we, in the ministry, "allow" ourselves to stand on the ground of the flesh, that is, to walk in the natural and live by the wisdom of the darkened understanding of the old man, then we, in some way, will eventually revile, or speak against, the anointed ones of God (blasphemo doxa - blaspheme the Glory). What an abomination it is for the Father to look down upon His church and hear His children speaking unwholesome words of destruction and cursing rather than the wholesome words of edification for the building up of His Church in love! If we are going to "choose" to harbour petty jealousies and seek for a glory which is not ours then we must expect the imminent judgement of God upon our own lives and ministries, for God's deepest desire is to cleanse His church of all the "hatred" and strife and division which - UP UNTIL THIS TIME - has been rampant. Therefore, let each of us humbly present ourselves before our God that He might continually do the deepest work of the Cross in us, and thus allow the Spirit of true humility to abide in us and rest upon us in all that we do, for as one humbles themselves before God they will surely be given eyes to see that which is truly of God and that which is of the "flesh". Let each of us begin to live our lives not in the sight of men but in the sight of God; not for the approval of men but for the approval of God, and then all the reviling and the jealousy and the desire to justify our actions apart from God shall vanish, and we shall become a glorious support to the anointed ones of God rather than a hindrance to them and the task which God has given them to carry out.

JESUS - OUR PERFECT EXAMPLE OF TRUE DELEGATED AUTHORITY

When God gives His authority to men and women to walk in this earth and to build His Church there is NO ONE who can take that authority away from them. Regardless of how much Satan attacks those who are sent by God, his schemes against these anointed servants only serve to "backfire" against him and even "propel" him more quickly towards his imminent doom and eternal destiny (Revelation 20:10) - as they abide in perfect love. As the delegated authority of God stands in the position of total abandonment to the Word of God, their light will always shine through the darkness which attempts to engulf them and not only shall Satan be propelled towards his doom, but God's purposes shall be accelerated and the delegated authority standing in faith shall be greatly exalted - thus glorifying God to the greatest degree in all that they. As God's servants we must be as our beloved Lord Jesus was - as He walked the earth. Even though there were numerous attempts to murder Him, He knew, through the assurance in His own heart, that He was in the will of the Father and that nothing, as long as He continued on in that will, could stop Him from becoming all that God had called Him to be. We too must hold fast to our obedience in Christ and then we shall "know" in our hearts that nothing can stop us from doing God's will for our lives and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:38-39). Let us be clear in these things that we might not sin against God! We must understand clearly that spiritual authority is not something one attains to by their own effort; it is given by God to whomever HE chooses. Many people in the church have a fear of false leadership. In the natural, one attains authority through the exaltation of oneself - with that one's only goal being the approval of men - and even the worship of men; whereas in spiritual terms, to be a true "delegated authority" requires the opposite conditions. It requires an emptying of "self" to be a vessel of God's authority and anointing for the sole purpose of ministering unto the Father and being a blessing to His people and the people of the earth. Jesus, of course, is our perfect example of this. It is written that He could do nothing on His own initiative but only that which the Father "spoke" to Him, and so will it be with any true delegated authority of God in this most critical and glorious hour.

THE "SPIRIT OF REVILING"

One of the truly tragic consequences of the church's failure to obey the command to love one another (and thus be caught up in the "spirit of reviling" that has plagued many areas of the church up until this time) is that wherever there is reviling (reviling being defined as a contempt or a wilful disregard of authority) and rebellion, the presence of God shall "depart". Thus, because many have "held" the seeds of bitterness and envy and jealousy in their heart and because they have "nourished" those seeds through the "practice" of their own self-exaltation (rather than seeking to walk in perfect obedience to God and doing ALL things for His glory and to exalt the Name of Jesus), the life-giving and healing presence of God has departed and the law of sin and death and all its effects (sickness, disease, strife, division arrogance, pride, unbelief, faithlessness and darkness) run rampant throughout many areas of the church. As those who refuse to humble themselves before God begin to congregate in the form of various "denominations" (a "denomination" being defined as any group or assembly or "organization" whose SOLE PURPOSE is not the exaltation of the NAME of Jesus and to come to the place wherein Christ - the Anointed One and His Anointing is ALL IN ALL), even so-called "spiritual ones", then it is certain that the presence of God shall depart from their midst. This is precisely why, in many places, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the healing power of God and even the love of God are absent from their midst. As much as revival comes from being of one accord and of one mind in the unity of the Holy Spirit so does backsliddenness and rebelliousness come as a result of one separating themselves from the Word of God. It is the failure to humble ourselves "wholly" before God that causes us to take the first step of separating ourselves from His Word. The Father longs to bless His people with His presence and yet, in many cases, due to the motivation of their heart and their holding on to the wilful sin which separates them from God, they set themselves outside of His "salvation" (soteria) and leave themselves open to the destructive attacks of Satan. It is such a great blessing for us to experience the power and presence of God in our midst but we must be "pure vessels" in order that He might manifest Himself to a continually greater degree, for in knowing that God's presence judges sin it can be easily understood why those who have a desire to retain sin in their lives must run from Him instead of to Him - and from this we can also understand why those who desire to retain sin in their lives "must" revile God's delegated authorities, that is, those who represent the deepest thoughts and intentions of God's heart. For in all that they say and do, the true delegated authority shall echo the deepest cries of the

Father's heart for His people to forsake their sin and put aside their "own" plans and draw near to Him. To the one who has hardened their heart towards God, the words of the delegated authority shall be as shafts of burning light and fire which shall penetrate their heart and expose the evil motivations within - leading them either to a perfect repentance before God or into "controversy" with Him.

"LET NO UNWHOLESOME WORD PROCEED FROM YOUR MOUTH"

One who is truly obedient to God will always seek and find the authority of God in every thought and circumstance, that is, they will always give the Word of God pre-eminence in their thought- life and in every situation they find themselves in. Once the child of God receives a "clear revelation" that authority and the Word of God are one and the same, then they will have no trouble whatsoever discerning the way in which God chooses to work in the midst of His Church and their own lives will become devoid of confusion and filled with the perfect order and harmony and peace of God.

LET US REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR WORDS AND COME TO KNOW THAT IT IS ONLY AS WE GIVE GOD'S WORD PRE-EMINENCE, AND SATURATE OUR HEART WITH IT, THAT WE ARE ENABLED TO "SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE"

..."out of the fullness - the overflow, the superabundance - of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man from his inner good treasure flings forth good things, and the evil man out of his inner evil storehouse flings forth evil things. But I tell you, in the day of judgement men will have to give account for every idle (inoperative, non-working) word they speak. For by your words you will be justified and acquitted and by your words you will be condemned and sentenced"....

Matthew 12:34-37 (Amplified Translation)

Let it be clearly understood that ANY TIME one reviles it betrays the fact that there is a rebellious spirit working within them from a ground of fear and pride!

The Word states in Ephesians 4:29:

...."Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those who hear"....

There is most certainly a difference between the anointed words which God speaks through those He has sent and the words spoken "in His name" by those who have not remained in a place of "intimate fellowship" with Him. If one has not been SENT by God to speak, regardless of how "true" the words may be, the anointing shall in no way be upon the words which are spoken and thus there will be "no power" available to effectually change the heart of the one being spoken to. It is as we become pure and empty vessels and are then filled with the love of God (shed abroad in our heart), that we are truly fit to minister. Too much (ANY would be "too much") of so-called "ministry" has, as its root, the desire to exalt oneself and therefore they put down (criticize) the one being ministered to in order to exalt themselves, and thus every word that that "unfit" vessel speaks is spoken in a "spirit of criticism" rather than in a spirit of edification. The difference is as day and night and yet for so long this counterfeit ministry which actually promotes self-exaltation rather than the glory of God and the well-being of the one being ministered to, has been accepted as the "normal" procedure in the church, but let it be known that such "ministry" is an abomination to God, for it leads those being ministered to away from God instead of to Him! Let us realize the importance of our words and come to know that it is only as we give God's Word pre-eminence, and saturate our heart with it, that we are enabled to "speak the truth in love". If our hearts are filled with something other than the "uncompromised" (unadulterated) Word of God, that is, the Word of God revealed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, then what we speak, although deemed to be of God, shall be straight from the pit of Hell and designed by Satan to in some way retain his hold on the captive! If we allow the "seeds" of rebellion to enter into our heart through "fellowship with the world" - and let it be understood that if we partake of things apart from Christ then it shall be rebellion that has preeminence in our hearts - then we shall nourish that rebellion, and our activity - regardless of how "good" it may seem or may look - shall be against God!

THE "DIVINE REQUIREMENT" OF THE FATHER IS ABSOLUTE: LOVE ONE ANOTHER THROUGH FIRST LOVING HIM WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART

As we walk further into these end times we shall come to see clearly the stamp of God's absolute requirement upon all that He desires to do, that is, we shall gain a clear revelation of the Word which states:

...."love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself"....

Luke 10:27

It is only in obedience to the law of love that we shall maintain" our place in Christ in this last hour and it is in this place alone that the Glorious Church shall be fully "birthed". Jesus said that "Whoever is not for Me is against Me", and He also said that "by our words we will be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned". Let each of us harken diligently to the words of our Lord so that we might truly reverence God and not speak careless. There are many today who speak against the authority (delegated and inherent) of God and they do not realize the gravity of their words and actions against those anointed by God. We must realize that it is not a matter of our brother or sister but of God's instituted authority. Once one has truly had "authority" revealed to their heart by the Holy Spirit, their concept of sin will undergo a drastic change for they will see what sin is through the eyes of God, rather than basing what sin is according to the moral ethics of man - which are a product of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil". When we truly give God's Word preeminence in our lives then we shall be brought to the place which every true believer must come to, and that is that we shall walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). This is not something which is "optional", but rather it is a definite requirement of God for every one of His children. We must, through the resurrection life of God residing within our hearts, rise above the "sense realm", for even though we are still in this world physically speaking, we are not of it. We cannot operate spiritually in God's service and still bow our knee to the sense realm. Bowing one's knee to the sense realm - in other words allowing themselves to be "influenced" by any part of it - means that they have failed to give God's Word preeminence in that situation and thus they are in a position of not being submitted to His authority. And thus, like

Miriam and Aaron, they shall be found to be "reviling God" and His servants somewhere along the line. I am fully aware that "feelings" may seem more real than the Word of God at times, but we must exercise faith in the fact that God's Word is true and all powerful and that the Name of Jesus is above every name, and that regardless of how we "feel" there is a provision in God's Word for us to transcend that feeling and experience the "fulness" of salvation. There are many who, through unbelief, have literally fought to set aside the doctrines of healing, the doctrines of deliverance, the doctrines of divine prosperity and the doctrine of faith, and they have reviled God's messengers of such "doctrines", deceived into thinking that they were serving God in the process. I am sure that outwardly Miriam and Aaron, in their deceived state, believed that Moses was actually doing something wrong, but God Himself uncovered the true motivation in their hearts, and so too, shall He uncover the evil thoughts and intentions of those today who have been used as vessels of persecution against God's anointed authorities.

ONLY CLOSENESS AND INTIMACY WITH THE FATHER AND HIS WORD WILL PRODUCE THE NEEDED REVELATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF HIS WILL (WORD)

It is only to the degree of one's closeness and intimacy with God that they will understand His will - not only for their own lives - but for the Church and the nations, and I prayerfully call upon all the children of God everywhere to repent before God and humble themselves, for there is great mercy and forgiveness in God and in pleading the Blood of Jesus they shall wash away the effect of any unwholesome words which they have spoken up to this time and thus cut off a "harvest" which would have brought them only death and destruction (Galatians 6:7-8). The Word of God is our lifeline to God, and our "only" salvation. If the Word of God is not our final authority then Satan shall have the preeminent position in our lives and he will most certainly have control of our minds and he will most certainly use us in whatever way we allow him, to hinder God's true purposes. In no way do I seek to build up the "power of Satan" for that power was stripped of him at the Cross, but let it be clearly understood that it is only as the individual believer "receives" the fulness of the revelation of God's authority - both inherent and delegated - that they shall walk in the fulness of salvation and come into the place of the fulness of their inheritance in Christ Jesus. Let us not be deceived, we are in a conflict, a warfare, to end all warfare, and without an absolute reliance upon God, and without walking in the fulness of the authority

that He has invested in Christ - and thus in the Church of which we are a part - then our earthly ministry shall be of no avail and while Heaven shall be our eternal home, we shall have forsaken great reward and rank - both now, and in the age to come! Many children of God have toyed with God's call to "fight the good fight of faith" and therefore they have never come to the place where they are strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might, and because of this they do not have the needed revelation that their struggle is "not" against "flesh and blood", but against all the hosts of Hell. How near these things need to be to our hearts in this last hour for the conflict and the clash of the kingdoms is upon us and without a true and absolute commitment before God we shall surely be defeated in our own lives by the believing of the "lies" of the Evil One.

TO ALL THOSE WHOSE FIRST LOVE IS TRULY THE WORD OF GOD

...."Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you"....

Matthew 5:11-12

To all those whose first love is truly the Word of God, take heart at these blessed words of our Lord, for God is watching over you in the same way that He watched over Moses and He shall continue to do so through to the end of your race. As we continue our study on spiritual authority, have we opened our hearts to learn the lessons provided in the situations of Nadab and Abihu and Miriam and Aaron? Have we come to the realization that we must be close to God in an abiding and intimate fellowship? Have we opened our hearts wide before the Lord to allow Him to deal with any ground which may be causing us to be presumptuous (in our walk with the Lord)? And have we desired first and foremost to carry out the will of God in the way that He would have it carried out? From the story of Miriam and Aaron and their reviling of Moses, the man of God, have we come in to a deep realization of the importance of our words and our constant need to obey the command to love one another at all times? Do we yet understand our need to have ALL things revealed to us by the Spirit of God and to put aside ALL mental ascension, "knowing" that it is this mental ascension which allows Satan to divide the house and keep men and women apart from the will of God. Let us shout a resounding yes to all of these questions, for it is only as we do

that we can fully enter into the mind of Christ and lead God's people into the "fulness" of their inheritance.

Thus saith the Lord:

...."I desire holiness in all of My people. I have not called just a special few to walk in the fulness of the inheritance that is theirs as My children. Indeed it is certain that those of My children who have deceived themselves into believing that I am pleased with, or honour, in any way, actions which do not proceed from faith, are tragically mistaken! They neither know Me very well, nor do they desire to draw near to Me. Such action on their part betrays openly their heart-desire to lust after the things of this world and seek My glory for themselves. Truly, truly I say to you, I shall surely hand over those who flaunt their rebellious attitude before the eyes of the world, to open and public defeat and they shall wallow in their shame and despair for the time has come, saith the Lord, to humble those who have sought to exalt themselves and to honour and show Myself strong before the nations on behalf of those who have humbled themselves before Me. For let those who boast in themselves know that I the Lord shall expose all the cleverly hidden and secret issues of their heart and in all they do they shall suffer devastating defeat, for what have I to do with the acts of unrighteousness they commit before the people. Indeed I shall never vindicate the actions of those who are apart from Me, for is it not written that "apart from Me you can do nothing"? How My wrath burns at the flagrant disobedience which characterizes vast multitudes of My people. They have clearly pushed aside My Word and have deemed their own darkened wisdom as sufficient for their purposes. Indeed they shall have the desires of their heart, for as they abide in fellowship with the Evil One and his domain, so shall they reap the death and corruption they have sown to. My anger shall burn against them and I shall not relent of My judgement upon those who call righteousness evil and unrighteousness holy and profitable for they are nothing more than the messengers of Satan! Behold, by My power and through My holy vessels, My beloved apostles and prophets, I shall destroy and utterly devastate the "false prophets". I say to you My beloved ones be prepared in all things and in all things guard your heart with all diligence for My day has come, a day in which I will show Myself strong with great signs and wonders and both My children and the peoples of the nations shall see clearly those whom I have sent and those whom I have not sent, for the false prophets and those who teach My people under false pretences (outside the anointing) shall surely perish in their

lies, while My true apostles and prophets and all those who minister My Word, only by the power of the anointing that abides within them, shall continually prosper in ways that exceed abundantly all that one could comprehend at this time. And surely all will know that it is I who have prospered them and that it is I who hold each of them in My arms to love them and protect them. Rejoice My beloved ones, for your faithfulness shall be vindicated in every way and the strongholds of Satan shall crumble to dust and be utterly destroyed as you march forward. Do not fear, for I am with you always"....

Amen