

PICTURES	OF	SALVATION
The	Fourth	Man
The	Rock	of
The	Law	of
Ruth	and	the
Joshua		Leper
Joshua	and	Boaz
The		Jericho
The	March	Scapegoat
		Faith

THE FOURTH MAN

Nebuchadnezzar, king of mighty Babylon had conquered much of the world. The city of Babylon was most beautiful. Its wall was wide enough for 8 chariots. A great river went through the centre of the city. Its hanging gardens were one of the seven wonders of the world.

From Babylon he ruled the world. He captured Jerusalem and had taken the royal children captive. **In Daniel 3** we read about three of them: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

One day the King made a huge gold statue of himself (pride!) (v1). He commanded everyone to bow down and worship it when the music played (v4,5). He threatened: **Whoever refuses I will throw them into a fiery furnace** (v6). He said: **You must BOW or else BURN.** In life we all face pressures to compromise, to do the wrong thing for an easy life. The devil is saying: **Bow to me or I will burn you.** Your faith will be tested to see what kind of stuff it is made of. Some have a superficial faith that depends on environment. While things are OK and those around them are serving God, then they go along. But if circumstances are tough, or those around them are worldly, then they compromise and fall away. True faith is at the core of your being- you trust God whatever is happening around you, whatever your friends are doing. Pressure will reveal what is in your heart- the quality of your faith.

When the music played almost everybody obeyed (v7). They fell on the floor before the idol. Many compromise because they do not have strength in their heart. God's Word in you gives you strength. Get established in the Word until your heart is fixed trusting in the Lord (Psa 112). You must make a quality decision and say: **I will not compromise. I will only worship God.** While thousands bowed down, 3 young men stayed on their feet (v8-12). They refused to bow. They refused to compromise. They were loyal to their God, the One and Only God, the Creator of Heaven and earth. He had commanded: **You shall not bow down to any graven image or worship any idol. Worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.** They were faithful to God. They stood out in the crowd. When you don't compromise you will stand out.

When Nebuchadnezzar heard about this he was very angry (v13). He tried to intimidate them. He said: **I will give you one more chance. I will play the music again and if you bow down I will forgive you. But if you do not worship, I will cast you into the fire** (v14,15). In other words: **Bow or Burn.** Then he said: **Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?** (v15). He said: **I am the King. I am more powerful than your God. Worship me.**

When the pressure comes upon you, saying *give up*, you must be like these boys. You must not stay silent (intimidated) or you will come under that control. When under pressure USE YOUR MOUTH. Declare your faith in God. We must speak our faith to the things coming against us. Don't be passive under pressure. But you must open your mouth and declare your faith. The three boys were very brave.

They believed in God and they declared their faith with three statements:

(1) GOD IS ABLE TO DELIVER ME.
 They said: **King Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to give you our answer** (v16)
We don't have to think hard about how to answer you, we have made our decision, we are not scared or intimidated by you, our God is greater. Never bow to intimidation. Our mind is made up. If you throw us into the fire, our God, whom we serve IS ABLE TO DELIVER US from the burning fiery furnace (v17a).
 Nebuchadnezzar had said: **Who is that God that shall deliver you?**

They said: **Our God is able! Our God is bigger than you.**

RISE UP and SAY in the pressure:
Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.
OUR GOD IS ABLE! Nothing is impossible with God.
 Proclaim in the pressure: **Our God is able!**
 Whatever you are facing: **He is able to deliver and help.**
 Whatever financial need or sickness: **He is able.**
 If he heats the furnace seven times: **He is able to deliver me.**
 Do you believe: **Our God is able?**
 The God Who created the universe is able!
 The God Who split the Red Sea is able!
 The God Who does mighty wonders is able!
 In trouble the first thing we proclaim is:
My God is Able! He is able to deliver me.

He is able to heal me. He is able to save me from the fiery furnace. He is able to set me free. They said: 'Our God is able to deliver us.

(2) GOD WILL DELIVER ME
Then they said: **and He WILL deliver us out of your hand, O King (v17b). That's the spirit of FAITH!**
They knew God would not let them down. God is faithful.
The king said: **BOW or BURN.**
They said: **We will not BOW and we will not BURN.** You cannot win by compromising. What you compromise to keep you will lose. You also lose your honour, self-respect and inner strength. But if you stand firm, refuse to give up and trust yourself to God you can't lose. God will not let your problems destroy you, if you will trust Him completely. Let God be your Source of Deliverance. You have nothing to lose by trusting God. Because if you compromise you will lose it all anyway.

(3) I WILL WORSHIP GOD WHATEVER HAPPENS
Then they said: **And even if he does not deliver us, we will still be faithful to Him, we will still worship Him. We will not serve your gods, O King. We will not worship your golden image (v18).**
This is not lack of faith. This was their total dedication and submission to God. They were 100% loyal to God. Some people only serve God when things go their way. Are you like these boys? Will you never bow - whatever you are feeling -whatever happens - whatever your friends are doing? They said: **We will not bow, we must be true to our God.**

Then he was very angry and commanded the furnace to be heated 7 times hotter! (v19). He commanded his best men to throw them bound in their clothes into the fire (he was a bit nervous after their bold confession!) (v20,21). Now we see what happens to compromisers, the men who bowed so as to not be burned. They burned! The fire was so hot that they were killed by the fire - the terrible price of compromise! (v22).
What you compromise to keep will eventually lose in the fiery trials of life.
They tried to keep their life and they lost it. If you bow you will burn. Compromisers have no power to endure the fires of life - they are combustible, they will burn. They have no strength to face the fire. They end up losing everything. You can't win by compromising but if you keep faith in God you cannot lose because He will turn up in your trial.

So, the boys were thrown into the fire (v23).
But suddenly Nebuchadnezzar. had a big surprise.
He said: **I thought we threw 3 men into the fire.**

His counsellors said: **That's right, O King, 3, definitely 3 (v24).**
The King said: **'Look, I see 1,2,3,4 men. Who is the 4th Man in the fire?'**
He said: **I see 4 men loose, walking in the middle of the fire. Who is that 4th Man - He looks like the Son of God? (v25).**
They should be burnt up but the flames are not touching them. They were bound but now they are free to walk. That 4th man must be protecting them. He must have loosed them. They are talking with the 4th man. Who is the 4th Man?

If you don't compromise the fire won't touch you. It will even work for your good. You will not be hurt by it. The bondage of the enemy will be loosed off you. Why? Because the 4th man will be with you in the fire. You will be under His protection. If you trust Him, He will deliver you and show Himself to you. **They would not BOW so they couldn't BURN.**
Because they did not compromise the 4th Man turned up and caused the fire to have no power over them.

We also have to face our own fiery furnace. These are tests, trials and temptations. They are not sent from God but from the enemy to pressure you into compromising (James 1:12). If you trust God, He will be with you. Your problems may be real and big but not as big as these teenagers faced, not as bad as being thrown into a fiery furnace! If you had the choice of your problems and this fire I know what you would choose! If they could stand firm in faith in the trial, then so can you! If you bow you will never meet the 4th Man in your problem. If you bow you will be running from satan in fear all your life, dominated and intimidated by him.

If you give your life to God then you will meet the 4th Man in the fiery furnaces (trials) of life.
He will be with you, Isaiah 41:10: Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
Isa43:1-3: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God.

Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt28:20)
For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'
So we may boldly say: The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me? (Hebrews 13:5,6).
He will show up and help you through your troubles at home or work, sickness, money problems, whatever situation you face. Problems come to everyone - but you can go through them with the 4th Man. They are great opportunities to grow stronger. He will give you a miracle.

God does not put you into the fiery furnace but He will bring you out. He doesn't make the fire but He will give you power over the fire and bring you though with your character strengthened. He doesn't bind you- but He will loose you from your bonds! He doesn't bring sickness- but He will heal you. When they came out of the fire there were only 3 men again! The 4th Man had disappeared. He had gone to deliver someone else who was saying: **I will not bow.**

WHO IS THE 4th Man?

In Daniel 3, three young men were thrown into a fiery furnace because of their faith in God, but the fire had no power over their bodies. A 4th Man was seen talking with them in the fire. This Man delivered them from the power of the fire and loosed their bonds. When they came out, not a hair of their head was singed, neither was their clothing touched. They didn't even have the smell of fire on them (v26,27). They did not BOW so they didn't BURN.

The Bible says: **by faith they quenched the violence of fire** (Hebrews 11:34). The trials of life are like a fiery furnace, but if you are like the three who trusted God, refusing to compromise then the 4th Man will be with you. You will meet Him in the fiery trials. He will be with you. He will untie you and loose you. He will walk and talk with you. The fire won't touch you or hurt you. When you come out, you won't even smell!

If you don't BOW you can't BURN.

King Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed that he said: **This God is greater than me. Let them worship their God** (v28,29). He became a believer. Your greatest witness to the world is how you come through the fiery trials of your life with faith in God. They see you not bow and they see the 4th Man turn up to help you and that your clothes are not singed. He said: **There is no other God that can deliver after this manner.'** Then he promoted them to a high position. If you are faithful to God, He will bless and promote you, because you trust in Him (v30).

Nebuchadnezzar said: **I see 4 men in the fire.** His counsellors said: **Yes, King, and they are not hurt but who is the 4th man?** Nebuchadnezzar said: **I don't know, but he looks different, He is majestic, He is radiant, He looks like the Son of God!'**

Who is the 4th Man?

I'll tell you who He is! He is the central Person in the Bible. The whole Bible is about Him. It only makes sense when you see Him there. He appears in every Book (John 8:39, Luke24:25).

In Genesis He is the SEED OF THE WOMAN (the one to be born of a virgin) He is our Noah's Ark - the refuge from judgement He is our Isaac - God's only Son sacrificed for us. He is the Angel of the Lord who wrestled with Jacob.

In Exodus- He is the BURNING BUSH He is the PASSOVER LAMB whose blood delivers us from certain destruction.

In Leviticus - He is our GREAT HIGH PRIEST In Numbers - He is the PILLAR OF CLOUD BY DAY AND THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT.

In Deuteronomy - He is the PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES

In Joshua He is the CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION

In Judges He is our JUDGE AND LAW-GIVER

In Ruth He is our KINSMAN-REDEEMER

In Samuel He is our TRUSTED PROPHET

In Kings and Chronicles He is our REIGNING KING

In Ezra He is our FAITHFUL SCRIBE

In Nehemiah He is the REBUILDER OF the BROKEN DOWN WALLS of human life

In Esther He is the DELIVERER from our enemies.

In Job He is our EVER-LIVING REDEEMER, for Job says: For I know my Redeemer lives.

In Psalms He is our SHEPHERD, our SHIELD, ROCK, FORTRESS, STRENGTH and SONG.

In Proverbs He is our WISDOM

In Ecclesiastes He is our DELIVERER FROM FUTILITY

In the Song of Solomon He is the LOVER of our soul, our BRIDEGROOM.

In Isaiah He is the PRINCE OF PEACE, WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE SUFFERING SERVANT Who BEARS OUR SINS, OUR SALVATION FROM WHOM FLOWS THE WATERS OF LIFE, THE ANOINTED DELIVERER WHO BINDS UP THE BROKEN HEARTED, DELIVERS THE CAPTIVES, OPENS THE PRISON DOORS AND GIVES THE OIL OF JOY TO THE MOURNING.

In Jeremiah He is the RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

In Lamentations He is our WEeping PROPHET

In Ezekiel He is the Source of the RIVER OF LIFE

And in Daniel He is THE FOURTH MAN IN THE FIERY FURNACES OF LIFE!

In **Hosea** He is the FAITHFUL HUSBAND
 In **Joel** He is the BAPTIZER WITH THE HOLY GHOST
 In **Amos** He is our BURDEN BEARER
 In **Obadiah** He is the MIGHTY TO SAVE
 In **Jonah** He is the ONE RISEN FROM THE BELLY OF HELL after 3 days and nights.
 In **Micah** He is the ETERNAL ONE, BORN AS THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM
 In **Nahum** He is the AVENGER OF GOD'S ELECT
 In **Habakkuk** He is the INTERCESSOR
 In **Zephaniah** He is our SAVIOUR who rejoices over us with singing and dancing.
 In **Haggai** He is the RESTORER OF GOD'S LOST HERITAGE
 In **Zechariah** He is the FOUNTAIN OPENED IN THE HOUSE OF DAVID FOR SIN
 In **Malachi** He is the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS RISEN WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS.

WHO IS THIS FOURTH MAN? - I'll tell you who He is!

In **Matthew** He is the ROYAL MESSIAH
 In **Mark** He is the WONDER WORKER
 In **Luke** He is the SON OF MAN
 In **John** He is the SON OF GOD, THE BREAD OF LIFE, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, THE DOOR to eternal life, THE RESURRECTION and the LIFE, THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE, THE GOOD SHEPHERD who lays His life down for the sheep, THE TRUE VINE.
 In **the Gospels**, He is the One crucified for our sins.
 In **Acts** He is the RISEN LORD working
 In **Romans** He is our JUSTIFIER
 In **1&2 Corinthians** He is our SANCTIFIER and OUR VICTORY OVER DEATH
 In **Galatians** He is the REDEEMER FROM THE CURSE
 In **Ephesians** He is the CHRIST OF UNSEARCHABLE RICHES
 In **Philippians** He is the GOD WHO SUPPLIES ALL OUR NEEDS
 In **Colossians** He is the FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY
 In **1&2 Thessalonians** He is our SOON COMING KING
 In **1&2 Timothy** He is our MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN
 In **Titus** He is our FAITHFUL PASTOR
 In **Philemon** He is the FRIEND WHO STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER
 In **Hebrews** He is the BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT
 In **James** He is our GREAT PHYSICIAN
 In **1&2 Peter** He is our Chief Shepherd soon to appear as the Bright Shining Morning Star
 In **1,2& 3 John** He is LOVE
 In **Jude** He is the LORD COMING WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS
 In **the Book of Revelation**: He is the LORD OF LORDS and the KING OF KINGS, the ALPHA and OMEGA, the FIRST and the LAST, the BEGINNING and the END, the CONQUEROR OF DEATH and HELL who declares:

'I am He who is risen and alive forevermore'

WHO IS THIS FOURTH MAN Who showed up in the fiery furnace?
 Who is it who will show up in your fiery furnaces if you don't bow, if you stand on God's word uncompromisingly?
 He is OF JESUS OF NAZARETH,
 THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, OUR SAVIOUR,
 OUR LORD AND KING!

JESUS CHRIST IS THE 4TH MAN.

He will turn up for you in your fiery furnace!
 He is enough to bring you through and deliver you whatever you are facing. If you don't compromise, if you refuse to bow in your fiery trial, He will show up for you.

PICTURES OF SALVATION: THE CLEFT ROCK (Exodus33)

The Cleft Rock where Moses experienced the glory of God is one of the many great PICTURES of Jesus Christ and His Salvation in the Bible. Jesus, the central character of the Bible, fulfilled all its pictures and prophecies- that's how we know He is the true Messiah.

He said:
 'You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life' (John 5:39,40). 'All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day' (Luke 24:44-46).

The theme of this section of scripture is how man can live in the Presence of God. Created in God's image, man was made for direct face-to-face fellowship with God, to share His glory as His son. But sin has made this impossible. Exodus 32 records a great tragedy

which highlights this problem. It should have been a highpoint for God was drawing close to man coming down in glory upon Mt Sinai. Moses had gone up into God's glory to receive the 10 Commandments. It seemed that God's presence with man was coming to be more of a reality. But while the people were waiting they made an idol - a golden calf (an Egyptian symbol for deity) and worshipped it (images and idols will always lead you to worship a false god), thus breaking the first 2 Commandments. In anger, Moses smashed the tablets of God signifying that man has broken God's law. This exposes the fundamental problem- how can sinful man dwell in the presence of a holy God without incurring God's wrath?

Exodus 33:1-3: 'Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.' God was saying: 'how can I go with you if you sin like this?' His glorious holy Presence would mean destruction would fall on the people for He is just and must punish sin. But separation is no real solution, for man was made for God's Presence.

Would you accept these terms that God offered - the perks (land) without the Presence? Do you love God and want to be in His Presence or do you just want the benefits? This was a test and Israel responded well: 'When the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, 'Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments (signifying repentance), that I may know what to do to you.' So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb' (v4-6).

The Tabernacle of Meeting (of God with man) was then put outside the camp and those who sought the LORD could go out to it. When Moses went, the pillar of cloud stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses face to face (v7-11). Moses prayed for God's Presence to go with them (v12,13). God then promised: 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest' (v14). Then Moses said (in v15-16), 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth' (God's presence is what should mark God's people out). 'So the LORD said to Moses, 'I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name' (v17). Then Moses made a bold request: 'Please, show me Your glory' (v18). Moses had already made effective intercession but He still felt the separation between God and His people and so He wanted to enter into a closer fellowship, so that through him God and man might come closer. Israel had held back at the mountain afraid of judgement but Moses was willing to risk getting closer to the glory of God. Are you drawing back like Israel or entering in like Moses? He is not just thinking of himself but he knows that if he can enter in, he can lead others into that same place with God. Likewise, if you enter in, you then encourage and show others the way into God's Presence also.

God's answer was: 'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion' (v19). This means God's love and grace is a sovereign and free expression of who He is. It is not brought forth by our merits. Thank God He has chosen to be merciful to all especially to those who trust in Him and receive His mercy. 'But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live' (20). His request was granted as far as God was able without killing Moses for even Moses (being human and having sinful flesh) cannot live in the direct glory (radiation) of God's Presence. For the glory strikes sin down. However our resurrection bodies will abide in the glory. Meanwhile there is a WAY in which man can spiritually dwell in and enjoy the goodness of God's Presence without being judged. God promises Moses that he will enter into this experience and through it God will reveal how He will make it possible for all men to stand in His Presence, for God is no respecter of persons.

The event itself is full of symbolic meaning which we will draw out later: 'The LORD said, 'Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the ROCK. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the CLEFT OF THE ROCK, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back (afterglow, reflection, wake) but My face shall not be seen (no direct exposure to the glory is possible).' (v21-23).
The cleft Rock represents Jesus Christ.

The true Mount Sinai (now called Jebel El Lawz) is in Saudi Arabia (as Galatians 4:25 says). This is the region of Midian where Moses tended sheep for 40 years. The traditional Mt.Sinai does not fit the Biblical requirements in many ways. However Jebel-El-Lawz (the Mountain of the Law) has all the required features as well as archeological remains from when Israel camped there. Notice the main summit is blackened (God came down in fire!). Alongside it, is another smaller peak of ROCK, with a plateau in-between, that is cleft so that it is one piece of rock divided into 2 peaks. Underneath is Elijah's cave. Moses was to stand on this peak with the tablets and wait for God to appear to him in His glory. God then came and transported Moses into the safety of the cleft, while His glory passed by. Knowing the physical arrangement on Mt.Sinai will help us visualise what happened and fully grasp what God is teaching us through the symbolism.

The Cleft Rock where Moses experienced the glory of God is one of the many great PICTURES of Jesus Christ and His Salvation in the Bible. The theme of this section of scripture is how can sinful man dwell in the presence of a holy God without incurring God's wrath? When Moses prayed: **'Please, show me Your glory'** (v18), God answered: **'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live'** (v19,20). Through this experience God is showing all men the Way He has provided for man to spiritually enter and dwell in the goodness of God's Presence and Glory without facing judgement. Therefore the event is full of symbolic meaning which we will now draw out.

'The LORD said, 'Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the ROCK. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the CLEFT OF THE ROCK, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back (afterglow, reflection, wake) but My face shall not be seen' (no direct exposure to the glory is possible while we are still in our mortal bodies) (v21-23).

What is God teaching and revealing here? - The cleft Rock represents Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, GOD IS OUR ROCK- the strong unchanging One in whom we can trust and find refuge: **Ps18:2: 'The LORD is my ROCK, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my ROCK, in Whom I take REFUGE. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.'**

Ps31:2,3: 'My ROCK of REFUGE, a strong fortress to save me...my ROCK and my fortress.'

Ps62:2: 'He alone is my ROCK and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken.'

Ps 62:7: 'My salvation and my honour depend on God; He is my mighty ROCK, my REFUGE.'

Ps 71:3: 'My ROCK of REFUGE, to which I can always go...you are my ROCK and my fortress.'

Deuteronomy 32:4: 'He is the ROCK, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment.'

2 Samuel 22:32: 'For who is God, save the LORD? and Who is a ROCK, save our God?'

The imagery of a ROCK clearly belongs to God, so if we see the Bible apply it to Jesus Christ then this is a proof of His Deity. Paul says that the Israelites in the wilderness: **'all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ'** (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Paul is referring to the event recorded in Exodus 17:6: **'The Lord said to Moses: 'Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the ROCK, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.'** Moses, at God's command, struck this ROCK, miraculously bringing forth a much needed supply of water for God's people. The physical rock is a picture of Christ being struck to provide the water of life (the Holy-Spirit) to satisfy man's spiritual need. The striking of the rock points prophetically to the crucifixion of the Messiah. His body was broken open for our sins. The result of the striking of the Rock was that a fountain of living water was opened to quench the spiritual thirst of the entire world. Jesus said: **'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive'**(John7:37-39). This is a picture of the Trinity in action providing our salvation. The Father plans and commands. The Son was struck by the Rod of God for us, releasing the living waters of the Holy-Spirit (contained and hidden in Christ) for us to drink. The Lord is truly our Rock of Salvation.

Thus in Exodus 17, JESUS CHRIST is the ROCK that was CLEFT for us to receive the waters of salvation. Now in Exodus 33, we again see a Cleft Rock which must represent Christ crucified.

We are now ready to see God's description of how man can stand in God's goodness. **1. THE PHYSICAL LOCATION: 'Here is a place by Me.'** God's provision for salvation has a specific Location which represents a specific Person (Acts 4:12). We know the true Mt.Sinai is Jebel-El-Lawz in Saudi Arabia. The main summit is still blackened perhaps from when God came down in fire! God in His glory was on the main peak but there was a smaller peak of Rock alongside the main peak with a plateau in-between. This secondary peak symbolises Jesus Christ, the Son, Who is eternally with the Father (John1:1). Moreover, this peak is CLEFT OPEN, so that it is one piece of ROCK divided into two.

2. FAITH IN CHRIST: 'and you shall stand on the ROCK.' Moses was told to stand on this Cleft-Rock peak with the tablets, calling upon God to appear to him in His glory. This represents us putting all our faith on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts16:31).

3. BAPTISM INTO CHRIST: 'So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you IN the CLEFT of the ROCK.' God then came in His glory and transported Moses into the Cleft of the Rock, a place of refuge and safety while God's glory passed by.

When we put our trust in Christ, calling upon His Name (Rom10:17), then God comes in His glory and puts (baptises) us into Christ, where we are safe from judgement (Gal3:27, Rom6:3). In Christ every blessing of salvation is ours. So God has provided a place of safety in Himself through the Cross of Christ (the Cleft Rock), where we can abide in God's grace. Otherwise we, like Moses, would be destroyed by the presence of God's glory.

4. ATONEMENT: 'and I will cover you with My hand while I pass by.' In Christ a covering (atonement) is provided for us. God's glory includes His holiness and judgement on sin, but God Himself intervened to cover and protect us from what would destroy us. No angel or mere man could do this, only the hand of God Himself. Jesus died in our place, and bore the wrath of God upon our sin. This protection only avails for those in the Cleft.

5. RESURRECTION BLESSING: 'Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back but My face shall not be seen.' Once judgement had passed Moses could receive the tidal wave of goodness that followed in His path. When we were put into Christ we were identified with His death and resurrection. In His death He bore the wrath of God upon our sin once and for all so we no longer need protecting from God's wrath (the hand is removed) and we enjoy the goodness of God's glory that shines out from His resurrection.

6. The Event Itself- a picture of our New Birth in Christ (Exodus 34): Moses prepared two blank tablets of stone, to typify God's Laws written in the heart (the New Covenant), replacing the first tablets broken by man (the Old Covenant). This time God would write them in Christ and so would be eternal. **'Moses... went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD commanded him; and he took the two tablets of stone. Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name (character) of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed: 'The LORD, the LORD, the GOD (the Trinity) is merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, but by no means clearing the guilty'** (v4-7).

When we trust in Christ, we are put into Christ and the glory of God comes through us. God's character is revealed and proclaimed, which is both mercy and judgement but in Christ we are hidden from all judgement. Thus in Christ, God comes and speaks into our hearts His eternal goodness, love, compassion and mercy towards us (also Exodus 33:19). He speaks all His blessings to us in Christ and He writes His laws on the tablets of our hearts (Jer31:31-34; 2Cor3:2,3) for after God's glory had passed through, the 10 commandments were written on the tablets, so that we are a new creation in Christ recreated in His image of righteousness and holiness (2Cor5:17,21; Eph4:24). The glory of God (the Holy-Spirit) came and did this at Pentecost for those who trusted in Christ, manifesting the New Covenant (of God's law and glory) within them, soon after Christ had been cleft for us on the Cross. The Old Covenant (of God's external law and glory) at Mt.Sinai was also initiated at the feast of Pentecost. So even when God entered into the Old Covenant with Israel, He knew its limitations and inability to bring man into the law and glory of God, so by this event He prophesied the new and better Covenant to come.

ROCK OF AGES CLEFT FOR ME
As a YOUNG MINISTER traveled through the rugged country near England's Cheddar Gorge, the clouds burst and torrential sheets of rain pummeled the earth. Caught unawares by a sudden downpour, the lone weary traveler was able to take shelter in a mighty cleft of rock, standing under a rocky overhang. The figure is the Reverend Augustus Toplady, a zestful Calvinist preacher. The cleft is in the face of a large cliff of limestone, connected to Cheddar Gorge. Rain storms in this area can last for hours. Settling in for a long wait he has nothing to do but study the rock around him. It is a mighty cleft after all. Inspiration comes in a flash, as if from on high. Fumbling in his pockets for something on which to record the imagery that fires his imagination, he finds some playing cards. There, protected from the buffeting wind and rain, he conceived one of the best loved hymns ever written, **'Rock of Ages, Cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.'** The cleft now has its own car park.

In 1776 he wrote an article for 'The Gospel Magazine' with his new hymn 'Rock of Ages' as the crown for his article. His theme was to proclaim his belief that the Cross of Christ is the source of our salvation and not our own good efforts. He wrote that just as England could never pay her national debt, so man could never by his own merits satisfy the justice of God. In the middle of the article he burst into song, printing for the first time the hymn 'Rock of Ages', which so ably describes Christ, the Rock of Ages, as the remedy for all our sin. Could a mere man help God to achieve our own salvation? No never! We must look to the cross and come to Christ depending totally on Him. Its strong declaration of Christ and His work on the cross as man's only hope of salvation from the judgement his sin deserves, earns it a place of honor among hymns of grace.

The hymn is based on an encounter of Moses with God, where the cleft Rock is a picture of Jesus Christ and His salvation. The picture of Christ as a rock split open to provide a place of spiritual refuge for sinful people is drawn from Moses' experience recorded in Exodus 33:20-23, where Moses desired to stand in God's Presence and see His glory (which is God's plan and purpose for man). However man's sin would mean his certain destruction (judgement) by the holy presence of God, unless God somehow provides a way of salvation. God's special provision (of the Cleft-Rock) for Moses (which protected Him from judgement, even while standing in God's Presence) symbolically revealed how God would provide access to God's Presence and a shelter from judgement for all men through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 33:20-23: 'God said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.' And the LORD said, 'Here is a place

by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.'

Because Moses, a fallen man, could not see God's face and live, God Himself protected Moses by placing him in the Cleft of a Rock, as He passed by in His glory. In like manner, by being hidden in Christ, our Rock, cleft (split) open on our behalf on the Cross, we are sheltered from the eternal death we would surely face when we stand before a holy, righteous God to be judged. Instead we are given eternal life in His glory.

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
 let me hide myself in thee;
 let the water wounded and the blood
 from thy of sin the side which flowed,
 be of me from its guilt and cure,
 cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labour of my hands
 can fulfill thy law's demands;
 could my zeal no respite know,
 could my tears forever flow,
 all for sin save, could and not atone;
 Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing simply naked, helpless, foul, wash
 in to come look I me,
 my the to to Saviour,
 hand cross thee thee or
 I I for for fountain I
 bring, cling; dress; grace; fly; die.

While when when see Rock let
 I mine I thee of me
 draw eyelids soar on ages, hide
 this close through thy cleft myself
 fleeting in tracts judgment for in
 breath, death, unknown throne, me, Thee.

As 'My Sickness My
 he heart is no prayers
 neared every affliction, are
 the day pain now
 end stronger no cause, all
 and death converted
 Toplady stronger itself no into
 proclaimed, glory. dissolution. praise.'

While when when see Rock
 I mine I thee of
 draw eyelids soar on ages,
 this close through thy cleft
 fleeting in tracts judgment for
 breath, death, unknown throne, me,
 let me hide myself in Thee.

PICTURES OF SALVATION - THE LAW OF THE LEPER.

A very important miracle of Jesus was the healing of a leper in Luke5:12-14; Matt 8:1-4; Mark1:40-44)
 'Behold, a man full of leprosy saw Jesus; and fell on his face and implored Him, saying,
 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' (Luke5:12)
 'Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.'
 (Mark.1:41,42)

'He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, and said to him,
 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things
 which Moses commanded as a testimony to them.' (Mark.1:43,44)

This is the first recorded miracle of Jesus in Matthew who emphasises Jesus' claim to be the Messiah-King. By this miracle He staked His claim with the authorities to be Messiah from the start of his ministry.

MESSIANIC MIRACLES The Jewish teaching of the day was that there were certain well-defined miracles that only Messiah could do-the Signs of the Messiah. Such a miracle had never been done -it was reserved for the Messiah to prove himself. So when Jesus started doing these miracles it always provoked a great response from the leaders. For these were their own tests for Messiah!

These included the healing of:
1. **ONE BORN BLIND** (John9:32)
2. **ONE RAISED FROM THE DEAD** after 3 days=the sign of Jonah (Mt.12:38, John.11:45,53 -this is why Jesus waited until the 4th day to raise Lazarus)

3. **DELIVERANCE FROM A DUMB SPIRIT**
The Jews could only do deliverance by asking the spirit for it's name but this could not work for a dumb spirit! (Matt.12:22,24 when Jesus did it they had to explain it away and so had to say he did it by satan's power)

4. **THE CLEANSING OF A LEPER** (Luke7:22; Matt11:5)
No Jewish lepers had been healed since the law was given.(Luke.4:27)
You can't heal a leper for in touching him you are made unclean. They believed only Messiah could touch him and not be defiled. When the leper said: 'You can heal me'-he was confessing his faith in Jesus as Messiah. This Messianic miracle caused the Jewish leaders to start investigating Jesus and his claims. (Luke.5:17).

THE SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE and SYMBOLISM OF LEPROSY
Leprosy was treated completely differently from all other sickness. It is uniquely a type of sin (Isaiah 1), especially in it's consequences (curse and death). Thus a leper isn't described as SICK but as UNCLEAN and not HEALED but CLEANSED (as if leprosy signified the presence of sin). He was under the power of sin, incurable by natural means. Only Divine intervention could help. Thus no medication was given and lepers were in the hands of priests not doctors. The LEPER was a SIGN of all men under the power of sin and death. That's what a sinner looks like spiritually! He was a walking dead-man, with robes torn, hair shorn, mouth covered. This was the dress of a mourner, going to his own funeral. He proclaimed 'unclean, unclean' as one does for a 'dead body.' He had to live outside the city walls isolated from society. He pictures all men under the sentence of death, rotting in his own corruption, under the power of sin cut off from an and God, without hope.

LEPROSY as a picture of SIN

1. **It is inherited and communicable**(lepers had to live separated and shout 'unclean, unclean' to warn others. Sin is contagious. Be careful who you spend time with. **'Be not yoked with unbelievers'** (2 Cor6:14). When someone is in a bad spirit they are shouting out 'unclean-don't get too close or you'll be contaminated, don't open your ears too wide or you will be infected with the same spirit.' (they covered their mouth to stop infection spreading).

2. **It starts on the inside (in the blood) but soon shows up on the outside.**
You can't hide sin in the heart-it comes out in words and deeds. The leper was smelly.

3. **It's a gradually spreading corruption with ulcers and sores breaking out.** Fingers and eyelids get eaten away. Gradually the whole body rots. Sin like bitterness, undealt with, will eat up and destroy your life.

4. **He gradually loses feeling in affected parts of his body.** You stop feeling pain and so if you put your hand in burning heat you don't realise it is being destroyed. As sin progresses sensitivity of conscience is dulled and you excuse, and justify anything. The voice of conscience warning you of danger and destruction becomes faint.

5. **It was incurable.** There was no hope. He could do nothing. Man is hopeless under the power of sin (Rom.6:23). He can't save himself. He is under a certain death sentence, with a destiny of permanent isolation (hell). The priests and the law (religion) could reveal and diagnose it but had no power to heal it.

6. **Leprosy brought shame and disgrace.** They were removed from fellowship with God's people and God's presence (in the temple). Sin isolates us and cuts us off from fellowship. We are no longer useful.

Leprosy (sin) destroys a man physically, mentally and emotionally. The Leper was a visible token that man under the power of sin was helpless. Salvation was only possible through the Messiah -The Anointed One, who alone could save the unsavable!

So when Jesus met this man-FULL OF LEPROSY and TOUCHED him and HEALED him it was dramatic!

Thus God gave leprosy a special emphasis and it's cure would be a sign showing how God would save all men. This emphasis is seen in that 2 whole chapters of Moses' law (Leviticus 13 and 14) are dedicated to it. These provided the stage for the Messiah to prove himself and showed visually how he would save us.

(1) **Leviticus.13**told the Priests how to diagnose it in it's early stages. It gave quarantine and washing procedures (Bible hygiene was advanced beyond it's time) When he was confirmed as a leper he was declared UNCLEAN and sent out of the city. A Record of each leper was kept by the priests.

(2) **Leviticus.14** told them what to do when a leper was healed. They were to verify the healing, offer up a programme of sacrifices and declare the leper 'CLEAN' so that he could live a normal life again in fellowship with God and man. While the Priests constantly practised ch.13, they NEVER practised ch14, in1500 years! They came to realise that only when Messiah (God in the flesh) came would lepers be healed. Lev14 was part of the law so it had to be fulfilled. It declared there was healing for the leper, salvation for the sinner. But It was only to be fulfilled by Messiah himself. They knew when lepers came to them for Lev14, they must investigate for it was a clear sign Messiah was come.

That's why Jesus sent the leper to the priests to perform Lev14 on him, 'as a testimony to them'. Imagine their reaction as one leper after another showed themselves healed! They couldn't deny it for it was in their own records. They would ask: 'How did this happen?' Each time the answer was: **'Jesus of Nazareth healed me!.'** The Jewish leaders knew he was the Messiah! Healing a leper was no simple healing -it was Jesus proclaiming Himself the Messiah who alone has power to save us from the depths of sin, sickness, corruption and death.

What does this miracle show us? (Luke5:12) We are like the LEPER. He shows us how a sinner receives salvation.

1. **Admit** we are sinners (unclean)
2. **Believe** in Jesus is the Christ-the only one with the power to heal and cleanse us from sin (it's power and penalty).
3. **Come** to Him humbly-ashamed of our condition. He fell on His face (Luke) He bowed the knee(Mark) He worshiped Jesus (Matthew) He acknowledged Him as Lord and called earnestly upon Him to save him (Luke) He submitted to His will saying: '**If you will-you can heal me**'. You must cast yourself upon Jesus and submit to His will for you.

What does it show us about Jesus?

1. **HIS LOVE for the unlovely.** He was 'moved with compassion.' Even though we were smelly and rotten, deserving only death, yet He loved us. He said '**I am (continually) willing**' He is no respecter of persons. He loves and wants to save and heal each one of us.(Heb13:8)

2. **HIS TOUCH.** He touched the untouchable. He didn't heal from a distance. Jesus came down from heaven. He came where we were and touched (identified with) us. In this touch he received our sin, he bore our leprosy. He died in our place and suffered the death of a leper. That's why he died outside the city walls, rejected of men, separated from the presence of God. By this touch he received our leprosy and in exchange salvation and healing flowed out to us!

3. **HIS POWER.** (Rom10:13) The leper was instantly healed, showing the power of Christ to be all-sufficient to save man from any sin and sickness if we call on Him. He cures the incurable. When we trusted in Christ and called on Him, He touched us, our sin (leprosy) was forgiven and removed by His saving power. He cleansed us and declared us righteous, makes us a new creation, able to have living fellowship with God.

Later in His ministry Jesus healed 10 LEPERS at once! (Luke17:11-19) saying '**Go, show yourselves to the priests.**' As they went, they were cleansed. Their healing manifested gradually as they obeyed and acted in faith. One was a Samaritan (the other 9 were Jews) The 2 groups show us the right and wrong responses to God's grace. The Samaritan, seeing his healing, remembered, and returned to Jesus to humbly give thanks. But the Jews, in pride, forgot Jesus. Some just want healing to get on with their lives. They reject and forget the Healer and are self-absorbed. They can't find time in their busy schedule to worship and thank God. If asked, they say 'there is no time, I have to do other things.' Jesus rebuked this shameful response. Jesus wants disciples-those who come back to thank Him with their lips and lives.

Jesus says to these:'Your faith has made you WHOLE.' WHOLENESS is more than just cleansing. All 10 had the evil removed but the 10th also saw lost parts restored. The thankful one was filled up with more goodness and grace. The others were in danger of losing what they got. (Matt12:43-45) Their wrong attitude also showed in their relationships. Racial prejudice (based on pride and superiority) goes when we're humbled by the realisation we're all lepers (sinners) together. Receiving the grace of God should humble us more and unite us. We're all born again of same Father. We've nothing to boast in, except that God is our Father, and Jesus our Saviour. But the 9, forgetting God's grace, quickly moved into pride and bigotry and were happy to disassociate from the Samaritan.

Jesus emphasised the importance of the offerings Moses prescribed when a leper was healed. The Priest performed a ceremony (a wonderful picture of the Atonement) to show how he was saved from sin and leprosy. Leviticus14: 'the law of the leper

on the day of his cleansing' (v1.2)

'The priest goes out of the camp, and examines him' (v3),

If he proves to be healed, the priest takes '2 living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.' (v4)

One bird is killed in an earthen vessel over running (living) water. (v5)

The bird that lives is a picture of the leper. The bird that dies is CHRIST. For the Leper to live and be free from his sentence of death, another must die in His place.

He does not die on the temple altar but outside the walls (bearing the sin and reproach of the leper). The bird to die was tied by a scarlet cord (our sins) to the piece of cedar wood (the altar =the cross). Christ like this bird was killed in an earthen vessel (his human body) and his blood was mixed with the fresh (living) water that indwelt the bowl. (The Holy Spirit).

The hyssop is used to sprinkle the blood on the leper (v6,7) signifying his cleansing is by the blood of Christ. (Psalm51:7; Ex12:22)

The living bird was dipped (baptised) into the bowl (Christ) into the Blood and into the Water (the Spirit) (v6,7) Then it was set free in an open field.

When we accepted Jesus we are put into Christ; plunged into the Blood and Spirit. The Living Water communicates the work of the Blood to us.

He applies the Blood to us and we fly free because of Christ's death!

A bird was used to show the freedom of resurrection life-life in 3 dimensions (not just in mind and body but in spirit also) We are set free to soar in the Spirit (Isaiah 40:31) Not earthbound but setting our minds on heavenly things. Flying free from sin, free from condemnation, in the realm where all things are possible! We are set free to serve and worship God without fear. It's a picture of the leper set free to have fellowship with God and man. It's a picture of new life in Christ, who died that we might live. If we're identified with His death, we're also identified with His resurrection (Rom6:3-5)

We're set free from sin and sickness through the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PICTURES OF SALVATION-RUTH and BOAZ

To meet someone at the airport we don't know we'd need pictures of him to help us recognise him when he comes. These would prepare us for his coming so that we'd accept him and not reject him and let him pass us by. For this reason the Old Testament is filled with pictures of the One who would come to bring salvation (the Messiah). These PICTURES of Jesus are called TYPES of Christ. They describe every aspect of his Person and Work. When Jesus came he claimed to fulfil the whole Old Testament. He's

the central character of the whole Bible and key to understand it. With our eyes opened we see Jesus everywhere in the Word and the Bible comes alive with significance. (Luke24:25-32,44,45)

One of these Pictures of Jesus is found in the great love story of Ruth and Boaz.

It's set in the time of the Judges- dark times in Israel. Against this dark background shone a bright light out of BETHLEHEM that gave hope for the future. The Book of Ruth tells this story which anticipates the true Star of Bethlehem when in a dark world the Light of the World was born and began to shine out of Bethlehem. (Micah5:2) This story, full of love, devotion, faithfulness and loyalty tells the story of Boaz and Ruth and how they come to be husband and wife.

It's a romance that pictures the Divine ROMANCE between Christ and his Church (the subject of the whole Bible.) The Bible starts and ends with a MARRIAGE and the heart of it's revelation is the UNITING of God and man in covenant love and fellowship and co-dominion (MARRIAGE is the best word we have to describe such a union)

The problem is that sin has come in breaking the relationship between God and man leaving us poor, destitute and defenceless. So there's a great obstacle in the way of the fulfilment of the 'romantic' dream of union of God and man.

A great sacrificial price must be paid by the Bridegroom (Christ) We need to be REDEEMED (bought back) to be restored to God and belong to Him. Thus REDEMPTION and THE REDEEMER are the main themes of the Bible. The Drama of Redemption in the Bible tells the story of how the Bridegroom (Christ) out of love for his Bride (the Pearl of great price) pays the price to make it possible for her to be restored and exalted to be His wife. The BRIDEGROOM becomes the REDEEMER of His BRIDE so that the 2 can be one.

The story of Boaz and Ruth is a picture of this drama, and so is a story of ROMANCE and REDEMPTION. The ROMANCE is the fulfilling of the dream of this union of love against seeming impossible circumstances keeping them apart. REDEMPTION is the paying of a sacrificial price to accomplish this. Union is made possible by the Bridegroom becoming her REDEEMER. The man must take the initiative to redeem. He alone has the power and authority but the woman must accept Him as her husband by accepting his redemption.

REDEMPTION happens when a person or thing has fallen into the hands of another and a PRICE must be paid to get it back. **Redemption is the release of a person or thing through the payment of a price or ransom.** To redeem is to save or rescue someone from a bad situation, to deliver them out of the hands of another and restore them to blessing, by paying the necessary price. The Redeemer sacrificially pays the price for freedom and the redeemed now belongs to Him. Jesus came to redeem us to God, with his own life, with his own blood! (Mark10:45, Matt20:28, 1Tim2:6, Gal3:13, 1Pet1:18,19; Rev5:9) **'The church of God which He purchased with his own blood'** (Acts20:28) We've been redeemed from the hand of sin, satan, and curse by the BLOOD OF JESUS (the price He paid to set us free to be His Bride- we now belong to him.(1Cor6:19,20) **'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her...that he might present her to himself a glorious church (bride)'** (Eph5:25,27) The PURPOSE of REDEMPTION isn't just us to save us from sin but to save us for Himself -to be His Bride forever-sharing his eternal life, riches, position and glory -ruling and reigning with Him. REDEMPTION is part of the ROMANCE for it's the Bridegroom overcoming all obstacles to make union possible.

RUTH chapter 1

Elimelech ('My God is King') and **Naomi** his wife ('Pleasant') have 2 sons. Famine causes them to leave **Bethlehem** ('The House of Bread'=the place of God's provision) and go to **Moab** (a Gentile land) This was a BACKSLIDING, leaving God's will leaving the land of promise to find satisfaction in the world. God looked after those who remained in Bethlehem. As a consequence Elimelech died and as did his sons 10 years later.

Elimelech=Adam whose sin brought destruction and death on his whole family. The sons married but died childless. **Naomi=Israel** scattered to the nations who though flawed, brought the knowledge of God to **the Gentiles = Orpah and Ruth**. One of her Gentile widowed daughters-in-law was **RUTH** ('Beauty' or 'Rose') Naomi (Israel) returns to the land where she will meet her Saviour. She tries to send her daughters-in-law away to find husbands elsewhere because she can't provide sons for them and as gentiles they'd have no status in Israel.

Ruth ('beauty'- inner and outer) =believing gentiles.

Orpah ('one with big hairdo'-concerned with outward things only) =unbelieving Gentiles. Orpah left Naomi and went back to her gods. But Ruth believed in the God of Naomi (Israel) and so decided to stick close and bless her. Gentiles have come to know God through Israel for He's revealed Himself through her and her Bible. A true believer knows her debt to Israel and blesses Israel. It looked bad but her FAITH IN GOD controlled her actions. (Ruth1:16-18) As a true SEEKER OF GOD she'll find God and her salvation. (Jer29:13) She knows He is the God who has revealed Himself through Israel and her scriptures and so that is where she goes to seek her destiny and salvation.

When they return to Bethlehem Naomi calls herself 'Mara'='cursed, bitter' (v20,21) for due to sin she'd lost her way. The women were empty of husbands and sons. This meant poverty and no future. The family name would end and they were outsiders in society. Naomi and Ruth picture mankind (Jew and Gentile) under the consequences of sin, without hope, powerless to save themselves (Eph2:12,13) Women on their own (in those days) were outsiders, with no status or ability to provide for themselves. Not having a son to care and protect in later life was a great problem. They were bound to servitude and in great need of a saviour.

Chapter 1 introduced **RUTH= a believer seeking after the true God as He has revealed Himself to Israel through the scriptures. It shows us in our great need of salvation and inability to obtain it ourselves.**

RUTH Chapter 2 introduces **BOAZ= a picture of Christ:**

'There was a relative (kinsman) of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth ...his name was Boaz.'(v1)

- (1) **BOAZ** like Christ was a mighty man-ABLE to SAVE. (Boaz means: 'In Him is strength, Ability')
- (2) **He** was wealthy-he alone has the resources to redeem her.
- (3) **He** was Lord of the Harvest (ch2and3)

(4) Born in Bethlehem (Micah5:2, Matt2:6)
(5) Kind, compassionate, loving -WILLING to SAVE.
(6) He was a KINSMAN to Ebimelech and Naomi.

This is crucial to the story as it qualified him to act as REDEEMER. Likewise Christ was born into the human family to redeem us. He is related to Adam and Israel and so is one of us -our Kinsman-Redeemer.

The Book of Ruth is the revelation of CHRIST as our KINSMAN-REDEEMER, our BOAZ -for 'IN HIM IS STRENGTH and ABILITY' to redeem, save and restore us. He is 'ABLE to save to the uttermost those who come to God by him.'(Heb7:25)

By 'the Law of Gleaning' (Lev19:9, 23:22, Deut24:19) the poor who didn't have their own land could glean the left-overs of any field. Ruth was still outside Christ but was trying to glean what she could from the wheat (the Word) Ruth was led by the Spirit and 'happens' to go to Boaz's field. When our heart is to seek God He'll lead us to the answers. The Spirit leads us to Christ and his fields as He led Ruth to Boaz. In v6 a **Servant (= the Spirit)** introduces Ruth to Boaz. He tells her to stay in his fields (v8,9) She asks why she has found grace in his eyes, she being an outsider. (v10) He's seen her and admires her faith in God and loyalty to Naomi, and is attracted to her.(v11) God sees those who seek after Him and rewards them. Boaz blesses her: 'A full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to trust' (v12) **'He is a rewarder of those who believe and diligently seek Him.'**(Heb11:1) Boaz arranges for her to stay in his fields under his provision and protection. She tells Naomi (the matchmaker) who gets excited because she knows he is a NEAR KINSMAN (v20) which means he has the right to REDEEM them and bring them under the covering of his wings (his authority and blessing).

The key word and concept of the story is KINSMAN-REDEEMER ('GOEL' in Hebrew) He had an important part to play in the life and laws of Israel. He was:
(1) The Redeemer of the Inheritance in the Promised Land Property laws were different to ours. The land belonged to God, who gave each family a part of the land but they didn't have the right to sell it forever. If they lost the land by poverty and debt they could sell it but it was restored to them in the Jubilee. (Lev25:25-34)
Or a KINSMAN had the right to pay the price and REDEEM the land back for the family.

(2) The Redeemer from Slavery
Similarly if a man in debt sold himself into slavery a KINSMAN could REDEEM him and pay for his freedom.

(3) Avenger of Blood (Num35:9-38) If a family member was killed the nearest kinsman (his Protector) must find the killer and avenge his blood. If it was accidental he could flee to a City of Refuge. When we sin we are under a sentence of death and need to flee to Christ -only in him are we safe. But he was still in danger if he left the city. But when the High Priest died he was free from all condemnation! (Rom8:1)

(4) The Redeemer of the Family Name and Future by Marriage (Deut25:5-10, Ruth4:10) It was a disaster for a man to die without sons to continue his NAME, that he could live on in them. His inheritance in the land and his name would be lost. So his brother was obliged to marry his widow to raise up a son for him thus redeeming his name and inheritance into the future. This is behind the story in Luke20:27-38. If there was no brother, a near KINSMAN could pay the price to REDEEM the man's future (but he wasn't obligated) It was a sacrifice for he would invest in providing for the widow and the son but the son or the inheritance would not be named as his but his dead brother's. (4:6)

BOAZ is the picture of CHRIST as our Kinsman-Redeemer. RUTH is the CHURCH-the redeemed.
In order to REDEEM us he must be our near-KINSMAN. That's why Jesus had to become a man like us, related to us by blood to redeem us (Gal4:4,5; Heb2:14-16, Phil2:5-8, Jn1:14) Being a Kinsman like Boaz gave him the right to redeem. His perfect life and blood gave him the ability to redeem us. Wealthy Boaz was also ABLE. However neither Boaz nor Jesus were obligated to redeem their Ruth (church) but it was a decision of LOVE. In love, Boaz redeemed Ruth taking her as his wife. In love, Jesus, our Boaz, laid his life down for us to pay the full price for our redemption (full restoration to blessing) Now we are in him, the Bride of Christ and in preparation to be his eternal wife, the completion of our redemption. (John10:15,18, Ruth2:1,3;11,4:9) Praise God, in love our 'Greater than Boaz' was ABLE and WILLING to redeem us. Jesus fulfilled every aspect of the KINSMAN-REDEEMER

The key revelation in this story is of CHRIST -our KINSMAN-REDEEMER.

The Kinsman-Redeemer was a relative who had the right to act as:

(1) The Redeemer of the Family's Promised Land

(2) The Redeemer from Slavery

(3) The Protector / Avenger of Blood

(4) The Redeemer of the Family Name and Future by Marriage.

BOAZ is a picture of Christ our Kinsman-Redeemer. To REDEEM us he had to be our KINSMAN. That's why Jesus had to become a man like us, related to us by blood to redeem us.

In chapter1 we see Ruth, a seeker after God in great need of redemption. Like us she is powerless to save herself. In chapter 2 we meet Boaz-the One able to Redeem.

In RUTH chapter3 we see Ruth (us) coming to Boaz (Christ) for salvation.

This redemption results in SHALOM (a state of rest and well-being) (v1) Boaz, the kinsman is pictured as the Lord of the Harvest who winnows the grain on his threshing-floor. He throws the grain into the air, with a breeze blowing. The chaff is separated from the true grain because it's blown downwind. The chaff is gathered up and

burnt. The grain is put into the Lord's barns. Jesus will do this with the unbelievers (chaff) and believers (grain) in the final judgement. (Matt3:11,12; Ps1:4)

Ruth dresses as a bride (v3) and lays at his feet showing her willingness to submit to him as her lord. (v4) She uncovered his feet so that he would feel the cool night breeze, wake up to cover his feet and find her there! (v7,8) He asks who she is and she answers 'Ruth' and says 'don't just cover your feet, cover me also': 'Spread the WINGS of your GARMENT over thy handmaid, for you are a near-kinsman'(v9) This was a lovely way of asking him to be her Kinsman-Redeemer. 'Like your feet I'm out in the cold, defenceless. I ask you to redeem me, take me in, protect me, bring me in from the cold. I want to belong to you. You're able to bring me into rest. I can't save myself. I cast myself at your feet. I want to dwell under the shadow of your wings. Spread your authority over me. Warm me with your presence. Let us be united in marriage.' For salvation we must come to the feet of Jesus and ask him to save us. This is a picture of us coming to the Lord Jesus to save us. (Rom10:17) **WE MUST COME TO JESUS TO BE SAVED!** (Matt11:28) Jesus said: 'He who comes to me I will in no wise cast out.'(John6:37) Boaz was more than willing to redeem Ruth.(v10-13) Christ so wanted to redeem us that he died for all. He was glad she didn't go after others. Jesus is so glad when we come to him rather than go after other things or gods for help. He takes us in. He offers Himself to us, spreading His wings for us to come under. **'He shall cover you with his feathers and under his wings you shall trust.'** (Ps91:4; Ruth2:12)

Christ like Boaz had the right to redeem but not the obligation. He was willing but could only do it when she came to him and laid at his feet calling upon him to be her redeemer.

Boaz (Christ) was WILLING and ABLE. Boaz (Jesus) didn't have to redeem Ruth (us) but in love he laid his life down for us to pay the full price for our redemption. Sin left us out in the cold but he took us in giving us a covering (atonement) with his redemption (blood) When we come to Jesus we are covered (atoned) with his blood and we are safe from judgement and enter into peace with God, protected for eternity under his wings. Ruth was outside Christ, seeking salvation- realising He was her Kinsman-Redeemer she came to Him, submitted to him as Lord, asked him to cover her so that she would be IN HIM, she trusted in his covering (salvation) She came to Christ personally and asked him into her life and trusted herself under his wings. He took her in. She was seeking God's salvation, now she found it in Boaz through this act of faith. She trusted herself to him, relying on His character, strength and love, came to him and called upon him for salvation.

But there was a problem: Another kinsman had first rights to redeem. Would he step in instead? He must be given the opportunity. (v12). This raises the issue of whether salvation can be found in anyone or anything else. This is in the story because God wants it known that there is salvation in no one else so that all our trust, love and praise would be in Christ.(Acts4:12) That's why the law came first, (before Christ) to show it can't save us, nor can we save ourselves by our works. Nor can any other guru or religion save. **'No one can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God any ransom for him. For the redemption (price) of their soul is precious (costly).'** (Psalm49:7-9) To pay for one person's eternal life and salvation is beyond anyone. All are born as slaves to sin (inheriting a sin-nature from Adam) and can't pay the price to set themselves free let alone redeem another!

Only the spotless Son of God born of a virgin is sinless and thus free to save. 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman...to redeem us.' (Gal4:4,5) He's able to redeem and set us free for the value of His Blood is infinite and able to pay the full price of our redemption! (John8:32-36) So the Law came first to show it couldn't save. (v13) Boaz sent a coded message to Naomi (v17) in the 6 measures of barley he gave her that day. (Man is to work 6 days before resting in the completed work on the 7th day.) He was promising her that he would complete all the work of redemption that day before entering his rest. He was saying-'leave it to me, I will do it all and see it through.' This is how Naomi interpreted it. (v18) Jesus finished the full work of redemption, paying the full price before he entered into rest and sat down at God's right hand.

In RUTH chapter4 we see the redemption and the blessing procured for Ruth. Boaz invites the other kinsman to redeem the land but when he makes clear that he would also have to redeem Ruth by marrying her he said: **'I CANNOT'** (v6) He didn't have the wealth, he couldn't pay the price to redeem, take in and provide for this family. Now the way was open for Boaz to redeem. (v7,8) The removal of the shoe was a shame to the other for not being able and willing(Deut25:8-10). By it he signed over right of ownership and redemption (the right to walk on the land) **Jesus, our Boaz was the only one strong enough, rich enough and free enough to redeem us. Thank God he was also willing! Boaz (Jesus) paid ALL the price to redeem Ruth and her land (blessings)**(v9) Boaz with unselfish love, laid his life and resources down to redeem. What he paid to raise up a family for Ebimelech had to be taken from his own family.

Boaz fulfilled the responsibilities of the Kinsman-Redeemer.
 Willing and able to pay the redemption price he:
 (1) **Redeemed the land** (v9) buying back her lost land, so she could live in the blessings (her inheritance.)
 (2) **Redeemed Ruth from certain slavery (servitude).**
 (3) **Accepted the responsibility of covering and protecting her even with his life.**
 A Redeemer is described as the RESTORER and NOURISHER of life.(4:15)
 (4) **Redeemed her by paying the price to marry her.**
'I've purchased Ruth to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead (Ebimelech) upon his inheritance (land), that the name of the dead be not cut off.'(v10) The sons would continue the family name.
 Thus he secured her eternal peace, name and blessings.
 Her redemption was completed in a fruitful union that produced David and Christ. (v11-20)

Jesus fulfilled every aspect of the KINSMAN-REDEEMER:

(1) He came to pay the price to restore us to every lost blessing, to abide in our promised land. (Gal3:13,14) (In the fall we lost our land and position (every blessing) in the Kingdom.)

(2) He released (redeemed) us from slavery to sin. We sold ourselves (in Adam) into slavery to sin which had the right to control our future. Only a free and wealthy Kinsman could redeem us from the slave-market of sin.(Eph1:7) A slave can't free a slave. Only Jesus, free from sin, could deliver us, purchasing us with his precious blood (1Pet1:18,19) No-one else could pay the price for our eternal salvation. The Greater than Boaz is Able! (2:1)

(3) He's our Protector and will avenge the blood of the righteous. The only escape is to flee into Christ. He'll destroy satan. He lays his life down to bring us in, protect and nourish us.

(4) He marries us to secure our eternal name, blessings, position, inheritance and future. Redemption is the releasing from a state of poverty and curse (c.f. Ruth) and restoring to blessing and wealth by the payment of a price (ransom) We had no future. We were delivered from being out in cold (outside Christ) and brought into Christ, redeemed by his blood. (Col1:12-14) Redeemed from slavery we now belong to him, purchased with his blood. Redemption is completed and consummated in the marriage-the fulfilment of the Romance. Christ's redeeming work brings us into union with himself giving us an eternal future, life, inheritance, name, and blessing under the shadow of his wings. Ruth's fruitfulness prophesies the church would be a great blessing.

The greatest part of his work isn't to redeem our blessings (land) but to redeem US, paying the price to set us free and be eternally united to Him. **Thus Redemption culminates in the Marriage of CHRIST and the CHURCH. RUTH is a TYPE of the CHURCH-the redeemed community.** As a Gentile she prophesies the Gentiles coming into Kingdom of God with full equality in Christ. To be our Bridegroom Christ had also to be our Redeemer. The price is paid. We're now betrothed. Our redemption (release) is completed at marriage (the resurrection) (Rom8:23) Ruth and Boaz (Church and Christ) are united forever in love. Ruth and the land (inheritance) are united forever.

Jesus purchased full restoration for all. In the story in taking Ruth as his wife he gave Ebimelech (Adam-the human race) an eternal name and future. Mankind was fruitless in our marriage (union) to sin. Through Boaz (Christ) man lives on forever. Man is redeemed and has a future. Naomi (Israel) and Ruth (the church) also are redeemed and united in God's plan. **Jesus our Kinsman-Redeemer will protect us if we put ourselves under his shadow. He'll avenge us. His love is shown in that he became one of us to redeem us, paying the price none else could pay for 'IN HIM IS STRENGTH'. He is full of power and life. Like Ruth let us be at his feet and let him cover us.**

PICTURES OF SALVATION - JOSHUA(1)

Israel's history gives pictures of our salvation through Christ (1Corinthians10:1-13) They were saved from the hand of Pharaoh (satan) in the EXODUS by trusting in the substitutionary sacrifice of the PASSOVER LAMB. They were delivered out of bondage in the kingdom of darkness. By faith they followed Moses (a picture of Christ) baptised into him, identified with him. God opened up the Red Sea and they went through death and resurrection, in which satan's power was forever broken. They entered God's Kingdom through a covenant with God at Sinai, just as we entered a new-covenant. Thus they are now a picture of God's people saved by grace. God's plan was not just to bring them out of the land of curse but to bring them into the Promised Land of every blessing, and to establish His Kingdom (dominion) on earth through them. This land,promised to Abraham is often wrongly taken as a picture of heaven. But heaven has no giants, no battles and no danger of expulsion! It's actually a picture of our PRESENT INHERITANCE IN CHRIST of the Kingdom of God, the good land of God's will for us, which we're called to enter in this life,and which involves a fight (of faith).

They first faced a WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE, having to go through the wilderness en-route to the land, where, in the face of lack and problems they were to learn to trust God as their Provider. Again and again they saw God work for them, but stubbornly refused to trust Him in difficulty. Thus when time came for them to enter the land, they refused through unbelief, believing the giants to be bigger than God. Even with God's Presence and Promise, they saw themselves as grasshoppers and backed down from the fight. They should have admitted the impossibility of doing it in their own strength (this is humility), but also seeing they are not alone and that with God all things are possible, for greater is He that is in and with us than any force that's against us. (This is faith, which declares 'God gives me the victory, He is my Helper, whom shall I fear?') Due to their unbelief they entered the WILDERNESS WANDERINGS for 38 years, and most died in the wilderness. This is many christians today (saved but in the wilderness; God providing but never entering into God's best, His plan for their life.)

The BOOK of JOSHUA tells how God's people entered and possessed the land under JOSHUA'S leadership. It is given as an example for us, revealing the key insights we need to enter our promised land, defeat our enemies and possess our possessions.

This Land is a place of REST and STABILITY from wanderings, of ENJOYING God's blessings (Deut6:10,11), a land of LIVING WATER (Deut8:7), of ABUNDANCE (8:8,9), and VICTORY(11:25)

Hebrews3:16-4:1 confirms this is a picture of the Christian life and urges us to not be like those who through unbelief did not obey, but to believe, obey and possess our land. Joshua reveals the kind of faith required to possess the land of good things. Entering the land is not automatic, it takes an ACTIVE FAITH, a faith that works, that steps out believing God's word is true and that God will back it up as we obey it.

(1) **FAITH IN SELF**-depending on your ability or goodness, trusting in your works will never get you into the land. Whenever they got overconfident and moved independently of God they failed. This was the 1st lesson to learn. Again and again they faced opposition or problems too great for them. It's good to come to the end of ourselves, to realise 'I can't'. But this revelation alone just takes us half-way.

(2) **PASSIVE FAITH**, faith without works is ineffective. It says: *'I can't do it, so I'll wait for God to do it. If God wants me to have it, He'll just give it to me.'* Joshua1:1-4,11 shows God had already given it to them (positionally) but only the place where they put their foot did they possess experientially. Like inheriting the title-deed to a house full of squatters, in order to enjoy it, they had to stake their claim and evict them.(Luke10:19) It only becomes ours in practice when we act on the promise. So, God has given us all things (Eph1:3) but we must actively put our feet on them. The Land is possessed by FAITH + WORKS= OBEDIENCE (Hearing and Acting on the Word) It takes courage to do this because there are enemies. It's easier to wander in the wilderness, hiding from opposition.

This faith says: *'I can't do it by myself, but I'm not alone, God is with me. I have His Word and Power, so I can and will do it in Him.'*

As I do His Word His power will come through. He is with me, He'll put me over. As I step out in faith, His power is released. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He's given me His Promise and Command, His Presence and Power, so trusting Him, I'll act on His Word and the impossible will become possible. As I do my part (the possible) God will do His part (the impossible)'

Joshua1:5-9 gives us encouragements for taking our land. He puts courage in us through His Word.

(1) 'No man will be able to stand before you.'(v5a)

We can say: 'If God be for us, who can be against us.?' (Rom8:31)

(2) 'I am with you. I will never leave or forsake you.'(v5b,9) 'I will never leave nor forsake you, so we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my Helper. I will not fear. What can man do to me?' (Heb13:5)

(3) 'Be strong and very courageous for I've given this land to you.'(v6; 1Cor16:13; Ps31:24; Eph6:10-13)

(4) 'If you're courageous to put the Word into practice, I will give success and victory.'(v7)

(5) 'You must continually MEDITATE (speak to yourself) the WORD so that it controls your thoughts to the point where you act on it. Then you'll make your way prosperous and have good success'(v8)

There's no shortcut to spiritual growth, to possessing our land. It's by hearing and doing the Word. We must possess the land of spiritual blessings in heavenly places, fighting off satan's lies. We must meditate God's Word to know the truth of what belongs to us and to give us the faith and courage to act on the Word and possess the land. As we do this, keeping our eyes on our leader-Jeshua, God will give it to us to enjoy.

The Land can't be possessed by ourselves. God entrusted it to a representative-JOSHUA. He had to lead them into the land.

Only by following his leadership could they possess the land.

JOSHUA is a picture of JESUS.

In fact these 2 names are identical-meaning: 'The Lord is our Saviour, our Helper.'

This NAME summarises the message and theme of the Book: It's only by trusting the Lord Jesus and following him as his disciple that we enter into our full salvation. He helps us possess it. He leads us and we follow him to victory.

He is the CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION. 'It was fitting, in bringing many sons to glory (inheritance) to make the CAPTAIN of their salvation perfect.' (Heb2:10)

'Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ' (2Cor2:14)

'We are more than conquerors through Christ.' (Rom8:37)

'Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1Cor15:57)

MOSES was a picture of CHRIST who died before they entered the land.

JOSHUA, arising in his place is a picture of JESUS, RISEN FROM THE DEAD leading us into his inheritance.

The inheritance(the Kingdom) was entrusted to Joshua who then divided it up among the people. Likewise Jesus, our Joshua, gives us our portion in the Kingdom. We can only possess our land by following Jesus, our CAPTAIN. He leads us to Victory.

JOSHUA like JESUS was courageous in battle,

obedient to God not backing down until he had completed his mission, dedicated to God and to meditating His Word.

He was an aggressive general often taking the enemy by surprise.

He was humble, giving the glory to God. He showed a great spirit of faith in God, even when facing the impossible.

He was faithful and God gave him success.

Joshua2 tells the story of Rahab, the one believer in Jericho.

She showed her faith by her actions that saved the life of the spies. (Heb11:31) She risked her life to welcome and protect God's people.

Thus through her active faith she saved her life, possessed her land and gained an honoured position in the Kingdom of God as an ancestor of King David and King Jesus.(Matt1:5)

Hers is a wonderful picture of salvation.

When all around her were judged she was delivered from judgement by the Blood of the Lamb. It was Passover time, and all Israel put the Lamb's blood on their doors as a sign of faith in the Lamb of God who delivers them from judgement.

Rahab was told instead to hang a SCARLET rope out of her window, as her sign of faith. This represented her faith in the

BLOOD. Thus when God destroyed Jericho only her house stood! When judgement falls only those who trust in the Blood of the Lamb will be spared.

Joshua 3 tells the story of the Crossing of the Jordan (Ps114)

It was flood season and the river that flowed from Adam seemed an impossible barrier to their progress. Likewise our old-life flowing from Adam seems a barrier to spiritual progress and success in entering God's plan, purpose and blessing. But they were to learn that what's impossible to us is possible to God if we trust and obey. The Presence of God in the Ark (a picture of Jesus) went before them. They were to keep their eyes on it and follow it. The Priests had to step in the water and only then did the waters part (an act of faith releasing God's power) Then all Israel passed over as God's power from the Ark overcame the waters. While governed by the old life (characterised by trusting in self) we're cut off from the Land. We must see that by his death (descending into the Jordan) Jesus (our Ark) has overcome the power of the old life so that by faith we can enter into a new resurrection life. Now as we walk in the Spirit, looking to the Lord, the waters of the old-life are held back and we can walk into the blessings of the new-life, crossing into a new dimension of life.(See Rom6; Gal5:16) Thus the Jordan Crossing represents the point when a christian dies to the old-life of trusting self (walking in the flesh) and rises to a new-life of walking in the Spirit. It is a point of dedication to God, to walk in the Spirit, obeying Him and pressing into His will and blessings by faith. This believer puts himself under the control of the Spirit and now says: **'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.'**(Romans8:2)

Continued in Joshua and Jericho

PICTURES OF SALVATION - JOSHUA and JERICHO (2)

JOSHUA is a picture of JESUS the Captain of our salvation who leads us victoriously into our promised inheritance (land) The Book of Joshua gives us the keys to taking the land.

Joshua 4 tells of the Memorial of 12 stones at Gilgal that they built to the miracle of the Jordan Crossing, which represented their entrance into a new life under the power of the Holy Spirit. This was a place they were always to return to remember how God brought them into this new dimension of life. It was the Presence of God in the Ark that held the waters back. It is only by walking by the Spirit, trusting in and being filled by the Spirit that we overcome the waters of the old-life (flesh) This revelation is essential for victory in the Promised Land. Likewise we must always return to this place of realisation and rededication to be refilled with the Spirit.

Joshua 5:1-12 takes place at Gilgal reinforcing this message. Here they were all CIRCUMCISED. This cutting of the flesh represented their covenant with God and hence their renunciation of trusting in the flesh. It is a picture of the circumcision of our heart. **'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.'**(Phil3:3) This had to be done before going forward. Likewise all our faith and praise must be in God not ourselves.

Joshua5:13-6:5 tells of the appearance of THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD to Joshua. This is JESUS himself, showing that Jesus was really the One who led them into the land. He is 'the Greater than Joshua' The battle would only be won by following his instructions. He had his sword drawn, a warrior ready to execute vengeance. He led not just Joshua's men but an invisible army of angels. Though they seemed outnumbered and Jericho seemed impossible to defeat, greater forces were with them than against. **'Greater is He that is with us than he that is in the world.'**(1John4:4) Eyes of faith see the invisible forces on our side.

Joshua6:1 describe the walls of Jericho. It was the door to the whole land and was most strongly fortified. We face our Jerichos-the strongholds in our minds and in our circumstances that stand at the door blocking our progress into the land. They must be pulled down for us to take our land. Identifying and defeating our Jericho is the key to taking the whole land. God's strategy was for them to walk around it 13 times in 7 days. They had a good look and saw how impossible it was. Faith is not denial. It doesn't pretend the problem is not there. It looks it squarely in the eye and then looks to God to overcome it. God wanted them to come to the place of seeing it was impossible so that they had to look to God and trust Him completely. Then they knew it was God who alone who gave them the victory.

Archeology confirms how strong Jericho was. The Middle-Bronze Age remains of Jericho (1600BC) show an impressive defence system. (SEE PICTURES) First there was a deep trench with a 20 foot revetment wall towering over it. Once you were over this you had to ascend a steep slope covered by a glacis (a slippery white plaster surface) which went up to the base of the main brick-walls. On this slope you were a sitting duck for the archers on the walls. It was also Passover (harvest) time(3:15) and they would have had plenty of grain in -confirmed when archeologists found large storage jars filled with carbonised grain, burnt by fire (6:24)

For these 7 days they were to say nothing (6:10) They would have just talked and meditated on the problem and become discouraged. All they heard were the continual blowing of God's Jubilee Trumpets announcing that God's Kingdom was at hand, declaring God's imminent judgement -the end of Jericho. It was a final warning and opportunity to those inside to repent of rejection of God and surrender. As Israel saw the Ark, reminding them of God's Presence in their midst and as they heard the trumpets proclaiming victory FAITH was rising in their hearts, and so when Joshua said: **'Shout for the Lord has given you the city'**(v16), they released their faith together in a loud shout of praise and victory and the walls fell out flat. (v20) Normally walls fall INwardly but the angels pushed Jericho's wall OUT for a reason. The walls tumbled down the glacis filling up the trench enabling the attackers easy access to the city. Thus they could climb over the rubble directly into the city.(v20) Remains of the mud-brick wall were found in the trench confirming the Bible's account. Thus they ran in and possessed the city with swords in their hands to finish off the disobedient. (see 2Cor10:4-6) The city was then completely burnt - again confirmed by the archeological remains. Joshua then put a curse on Jericho preventing it being rebuilt for hundreds of years. This left it a desolate ruin, exposed to erosion resulting in the almost complete destruction of the remains of the city itself. This has also been noted by archeologists to their surprise.

'By FAITH the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were encircled 7 days.'(Hebrews11:30)
 This story is a picture of the active obedient faith needed to destroy our Jericho's. As we believe and obey God, He works through us and for us, to do what we can't do.

With our Jericho:

1. We must SEE IT and admit the impossibility of doing it ourselves.
2. We must then SEE GOD-that with Him it is easy. We look at things through the eyes of faith. If God has told us to do it, then we can do it for He is with and in us. Thus we act in faith knowing as we do He will put us over!
3. We SOUND THE TRUMPET against the problem, meditating and declaring God's word, seeing that stronghold falling down, announcing to it that it is finished.
4. Then when faith has risen we release our faith against it according to Mark 11:23, with a shout of faith and praise, pulling down satan's stronghold. God's power and His angels are released and thus the mountain of resistance shall be removed.
5. We go in with praise to God and the sword of the word to finish off any remaining enemy resistance. (Eph6:17; 2Cor10:6)

'Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance on the heathen, punishments on the people; To bind their kings with chains, and nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.'(Psalm149:6-9) The sword we use is God's written judgements. 'IT IS WRITTEN' It has 2 edges.

One is the POSITIVE word FOR US-'this land (promise) is mine !'
 The other is the NEGATIVE word against satan: 'you are defeated !'

Thus if we obey our Captain Jesus as Israel obeyed Joshua the walls of our Jericho will come crashing down, and we will advance into God's will in our lives and God's Kingdom will be extended in and through us.

JERICHO is a picture of any enemy stronghold (the Canaanite inhabitants had given themselves over to satan and all kinds of evil and were ripe for judgement) Ultimately it is a picture of the whole WORLD-SYSTEM, which is under satan's power (2Cor4:4), illegally possessing the earth. At the end of the age it will be fully given over to satan and ripe for judgement. JESHUA is coming with the armies of God (saints and angels) to repossess the earth and kick satan and his people out. God's people will then repossess the earth, God's Kingdom will then be physically established on the earth. As with Jericho: 'the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a SHOUT, with the voice of an arcangel and with the TRUMPET OF GOD'(1Thess4:16)

As 7 trumpets blasted for 7 days, so in the Book of Revelation God blows 7 trumpets for the last 7 years giving His warning of imminent judgement as God's Kingdom comes on the scene. They also herald the last chance for the people on earth to repent. 7 is the number representing spiritual perfection, so we see many 7's as God's perfect Kingdom is established. As the last day of the 7 involved an escalation and intensification of activity before final judgement fell, so we see the same thing as the 7 years of the Tribulation move to their close. With the final (7th) Trumpet God pours out His final judgement and establishes His Kingdom: **'The 7th angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.'** (Rev11:15) At this signal the World-System (Babylon) falls down and is consumed by fire (Rev18) Then Rev19:11-16 describes the final invasion as God's army comes to possess satan's stronghold (the earth) Jesus executes vengeance with a sharp sword out of his mouth. He executes judgement on His enemies with the sword of his mouth. He casts out satan, and possesses and reigns over the earth for 1000 years. The Kingdom of God will be established and God's people will possess their inheritance.

When the walls of the kingdoms of this world come crashing down-who will remain? Only those, who like Rahab and her house who believed in the Lord and separated herself from the evil of Jericho. It will be those who trust in and confess the blood of the Lamb as Rahab did by hanging the scarlet thread out of her window!

Diagram1: THE WALLS OF JERICHO

The revetment wall of Joshua's Jericho. For an idea of scale look at the woman on the right. (For the wall's position, see the diagram2)

Diagram2: showing the remains of the defensive system of Jericho.

PICTURES OF SALVATION - THE SCAPEGOAT.

We are unable to understand spiritual realities because they are invisible. So God teaches us by using things we can see. The physical world we understand is parallel to the spiritual world. He teaches us spiritual truths by using visible representations of invisible realities. The sacrifices and ceremonies of Israel are types or pictures of Jesus and reveal the salvation he would bring. The climax of the sacrificial system was THE DAY OF ATONEMENT giving the most complete picture of the sacrifice of Christ.

THE SACRIFICES.

God wants fellowship with His people. He gave Israel the law which revealed His perfect standards. But He knew they would sin and break the law and God's Justice required that sin be punished. In fact the law was given to reveal sin and it's consequences. Sin was a barrier to fellowship with God. So God gave the sacrificial system along with the law. The meaning of 'sacrifice' is 'to bring near'. The sacrifices showed how God would fix the sin problem so that the worshipper can be brought near, into fellowship with God.

The problem was:

- (1) **The presence of sin**, defiling the man and putting him under satan's power and
- (2) **God's Justice** requiring the punishment of death for that sin (Rom6:23).

The sacrifice of an innocent animal as a SUBSTITUTE taught man that the penalty of sin is death but that an innocent one can die in the sinner's place and thus make atonement for him.

The sacrifice takes his place (substitution) and pays the price (punishment) for his sin. Once Justice was satisfied (God is propitiated)

then God was free to bless and have fellowship with him. Thus the only way for a sinner into God's presence was through the BLOOD of a substitute- **'without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin'** (Heb9:22) But animal blood has no real power to save or satisfy God. It does not have the value to ransom a man's life. (Heb10:4) It only had value in pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, whose blood alone has the power to atone. As they offered their sacrifice in faith in the coming Messiah, their faith united them to the true sacrifice (yet future) and a limited, temporary covering of sin was effected. However sin could not be removed fully until the final sacrifice was made. So sacrifices had to be offered daily to stay in fellowship.

The Day of Atonement (Leviticus16) was the most solemn Feast day of the year. God wanted to build into the system of sacrifices a picture of the ultimate sacrifice that transcended all other sacrifices. This was done on the Day of Atonement. On this day ALL their sin for the whole year would be atoned for and forgiven by just one sacrifice. With all the other sacrifices offered up, why have a special day where a sacrifice is made for ALL sins? (v21)

God made it clear that the normal round of sacrifices was insufficient:
(1) the daily repetition implied sin wasn't really dealt with,
(2) many sins may not have been covered by a sacrifice (through ignorance or neglect) and
(3) EVEN the sins that had been sacrificed for, were still present and had not been put away from Israel by the sacrifices. This led to the need for ONE GREAT SACRIFICE by which complete atonement would be made for all sins for that year. The other sacrifices were but preparations pointing to this final sacrifice that would be effective. This was done on the Day of Atonement.

Now the fact that they repeated the Day of Atonement year after year showed that even this was not the ultimate sacrifice but only pointed to it. Only the sacrifice of Christ could put away all sin for all time.

'Not that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another -He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.' (Heb9:25-26)

However as the climax of the Old Testament sacrifices, the Day of Atonement gives the highest revelation of Christ's sacrifice. This Day spoke of a DAY when God would put away all sin (past, present and future), ONCE FOR ALL, by the sacrifice of His Son. Each YEAR in Israel is a picture of ALL TIME- The timing of the Day of Atonement (10th day, 7th month) in the Jewish Year is in the same fraction through the year as the GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT (the day of the cross) is in history (after 4000 years out of a total of 7000)! All the sacrifices through the ages were limited and ineffective and were just a preparation for the Great Final Sacrifice. They revealed the method but failed to put away sin. They pointed to the ONE SINGLE SACRIFICE THAT WOULD PUT AWAY SIN ONCE and FOR ALL.

'Jesus our High Priest doesn't need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.' (Heb7:27). **'Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.'** (Heb9:12)

It seemed disproportionate after all the blood spilt during the year, with no permanent effect that one sacrifice would deal with all the sins of all the people for the whole year.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT reveals there is an ultimate sacrifice that removes all sin, and that no amount of other sacrifices can avail in it's place. As the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement superseded all other sacrifices and dealt with all sin for that year, so the cross supersedes all sacrifices and deals with all sin for all time! Thus the sin-offering sacrifice on the Day of Atonement is a Type of Christ in a greater way than any other sacrifice and it gives us far more detail about the work of Christ than the ordinary sin-offerings (which just revealed the main truth of substitution).

Let us now look at this sacrifice: 'He shall take 2 male goats as a sin offering.' (Lev16:5) The ONE SIN OFFERING involved 2 GOATS. Jewish law rightly required them to be identical. Why? Because they represent one sin-offering. Each represents Christ-our sin-offering in a different aspect. It was not physically possible for 1 goat to show how Christ put away our sin. **The 1st goat is Christ crucified on the cross. The 2nd is Christ's spirit-soul after his death on the cross.**

Another surprise is the use of a smelly GOAT who represents the unrighteous: **'He (Jesus) will set the sheep (righteous) on His right hand, but the goats (unrighteous) on the left.'** (Matt25:33) Jesus, although he was the spotless, sinless lamb of God, identified with us, took sin upon himself, becoming sin (a goat) that we might become sheep (righteous) (2Cor5:21)

'He shall take the 2 goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle (see picture)
Then Aaron shall cast lots for the 2 goats, one lot 'for the LORD' and the other lot 'TO AZAZEL'' (Lev16:7,8)
Both goats were dedicated to God for the work they would do, as Christ was. One lot had 'for the Lord' on it. The other had 'to Azazel' on it.

Translators have trouble with the name 'Azazel' and translate 'goat to Azazel' as 'scapegoat' referring to the goat that 'escapes', carrying the sins of Israel on it's back. 'Scapegoat' then came into our language as one on whom all the blame is put. However

by the language of v8, 'Azazel' must refer to a person in opposition to the Lord. One goat is 'for the Lord', the other 'for or to Azazel.' Azazel means 'apostate, fallen, removed one.' He was well-known as the prince of the demons of the wilderness. Azazel is satan. The goat sent to Azazel was released into the wilderness, where Azazel was, carrying all the sins back to their origin.

The 2 goats represent 2 phases of Christ's atonement -one with respect to God, the other with respect to satan.

Sin originated from it's father satan. When we received it, it cut us off from God (spiritual death) and we came under satan's power.

Thus we have a DOUBLE PROBLEM:

(1) Sin cut man off from God, putting him under God's judgement, and
(2) the presence of sin puts him under the influence of satan.

Christ had to solve both problems as a sin-offering to put away our sin once for all.

In his death on the cross Jesus was the FIRST GOAT. He bore and suffered the punishment for our sin in our place. This was the sacrifice FOR THE LORD, which removed the barrier of sin between us and God, and satisfied God's Judgement upon sin. Thus we could now be forgiven and come under the blessing of God.

After his death, Jesus as the SECOND GOAT carried our sins upon his spirit-soul into the wilderness of hell, where satan ruled. These sins having been expiated (forgiven) on the cross, could be now separated and removed from us. He took them 'to Azazel', dumping them all on the devil where they belonged! Thus Jesus, in the 3 days and 3 nights buried our sins in hell forever. When he rose again he left them all behind. Sin's final destination is with satan and hell (judgement) If we're not separated from sin it would take us into satan's hands and hell forever. Either we can carry our own sin to hell or we can let Jesus carry our sin there for us! Jesus went to hell so we would not have to go there!

With our sins forgiven our relationship with God is restored. With all sin and curse removed from us, having been returned to satan it's source,

our relationship with satan is ended and his power over us is broken forever.

The greatest sacrifice of the year was the sin-offering on the Day of Atonement which was done through 2 goats, which revealed 2 phases of Christ's death.

GOAT

1:

'Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.'(Lev16:9)

This goat was sacrificed 'for the Lord', to propitiate God's Justice. Hands were laid on it (as in v21) and thus the sins of Israel were transferred to the goat. In its death it symbolically paid the just punishment for sin, thus providing forgiveness. It was a Type of Jesus, the sinless substitute who alone was acceptable as the sacrifice for sin.

He shall kill the goat of the sin offering, for the people, bring it's blood inside the veil and sprinkle it on the mercy seat. So he will make atonement for the uncleanness of the children of Israel, for their transgressions and all their sins...he makes atonement for all Israel' (v15-17)

When God saw the blood on 'the mercy seat' ('place of propitiation') above the tablets of the law, He saw the price had been paid for man's breaking the law, and manifested His glory between the cherubim, showing that sin was covered (forgiven) and man could have fellowship with God. This was a picture of Christ's death on the cross once for all the sin of all people. When he said: 'It is finished', this meant the price for sin was paid, but the complete work of redemption in all phases was not done until he arose.

Sin was now forgiven before God but for a complete salvation it must also be removed from us forever.

This was the work of GOAT 2.

'But the goat on which the lot fell to be the goat for Azazel (wrongly translated 'scapegoat') shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it (seev21) and to let it go as the goat to Azazel into the wilderness' (v10)

The 1st goat was Christ's death on the cross paying the price for our sin, reuniting us to God. Only after this goat was slain and it's blood fell on the mercy seat, do we go to the 2nd goat: 'When he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place (1st Goat) he shall bring the live goat.'(v20)

This 2nd goat continues the story of how Christ put away sin. At death his spirit-soul left his body. Now he is the living goat.

He shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat into the wilderness.' (v21,22)

The living goat took their sin into the wilderness-an uninhabited land, a land of separation and forgetfulness, an habitation of demons where Azazel was prince-a good picture of Hades-Hell. So when Jesus died physically, his spirit (still living) descended into hell, the domain of satan. He carried all our sin and sickness away. Our sin having been expiated (forgiven) on the cross by Jesus as the 1st goat, could now be separated and removed from us. Jesus as the 2nd goat took it back to its origin (satan) and dumped it on satan hence ending our relationship to him. Jesus went to Hell for us as a goat, because he was still 'sin' (2Cor5:21). He carried our sin and was still identified with it. Thus, he was still cut off from God's Presence. Thus, his spirit went to the land of the unrighteous dead, where unbelievers go -a place of separation from God, a place of demons and

under satan's dominion.
'He was cut off from the land of the living' (Is53:8)

'He was numbered (put in rank) with the transgressors, He bore the sin of many.' (Is53:12)

UNDER THE EARTH (see diagram).

Luke16:19-26 shows that under the earth there were 2 compartments of Hades (Hell) where the dead went. Believers went to Abraham's bosom, a place of comfort (also called Paradise). Unbelievers went to Torments. This is a holding cell as they await final judgement. These 2 areas were within sight of each other with Paradise above Torments, and separated by a great gulf preventing any from crossing over.

In **2Cor12:1-4** we see that since Christ's ascension, Paradise (where believers go) has been moved to the 3rd heaven.

'When He ascended on high, He led captivity (believers captive in Paradise) captive.' (Eph4:8, see Matt27:52-53)

2Pet2:4 Under Torments is Tartarus where certain evil angels are confined.

The lower regions of hell are also called the Abyss (Bottomless Pit)
After he died physically on the cross, Christ descended into lower-hell:

'Now, 'He ascended' means He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.' (Eph4:9,10)

Loaded with our sin he sunk into the depths of hell, into the Abyss:
'Do not say in your heart: 'Who will descend into the Abyss?'
(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)' (Rom10:6,7)

He went to the lowest place for us (Ps88, Matt12:40) before he rose to the highest place defeating all powers on the way up. (Eph1:19-23)

So that now He is Lord of every region! (Phil2:7-11)

Removal of sin. Jesus took our sins to the abyss and buried them there!

That's why it says: **'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'** (John1:29)

'Once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' (Heb9:26)

'As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.' (Ps103:12)

That's why God can say: **'I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.'** (Is43:25)

'I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.' (Jer31:34; Heb8:12)

That's why we can say: **'You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back** (out of sight).' (Is38:17)

He will again have compassion on us, and subdue our iniquities.
YOU WILL CAST ALL OUR SINS INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA.' (Micah7:19)

The ocean depths represent the Deep or Abyss of darkness (Gen1:2)
When God sent the Flood he buried all sin in the Deep. Sin must be buried and put away. Instead of burying us in hell, he separated our sin from us and buried it in the depths of hell, in land of forgetfulness, to be remembered no more! So, instead of us carrying our sin to hell to await final judgement; Jesus bore our sin upon himself, carried it to hell, dumped it and left it there when he arose.

For the daily sacrifices only one hand was laid on the animal, but on this Day the Priest put both hands upon it signifying a **COMPLETE transfer of sin to the goat**. God laid all sin and all curse (including sickness) upon Jesus.

One hand transmitted sin and the other the consequences of sin (the curse)
To this Isaiah also testifies:

'The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (and its consequences)' (Is53:6)

'He made His soul an offering for sin' (v10)

'Surely He has borne (away to a distance) our sicknesses and carried (as a heavy load) our pains' (v4)

'He shall bear (as a heavy load) their iniquities.' (v11)

'He bore (away to a distance) the sin of many.' (v12)

The 2nd goat does not denote a sacrifice to satan, no blood was shed.
It is returning sin to where it belongs. Jesus did this ONCE FOR ALL.

Forgiveness and healing doesn't just come by asking for it, for it's only available through the sacrifice.
However we have to believe in and receive the sacrifice.

The sacrifice was only effective for them if they appropriated it with the right heart attitude. On this Day Israel had to fast and be penitent and repentant for their sins. Then when they saw the 1st goat sacrificed and the 2nd goat taking their sin away they knew they were forgiven.

They are a picture of God's people with contrite and believing hearts receiving forgiveness. Our attitude to our sin must likewise be serious, humble, and repentant. Then by faith we see Him remove it far from us. We must believe the report for it to be effective for us. (Is53:1)

We must see him do this through the eyes of faith and accept our forgiveness and freedom.
'Behold! (open your eyes and see)

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' (John1:29)

Our attitude to satan when he comes to condemn us for sins we have confessed, is to quote the scriptures above and say:

'Jesus took away my sins and sicknesses and buried them forever-but your sin is still upon you and you're destined for the pit!'

The Jewish practice on the Day of Atonement as given in the Talmud was for the scapegoat to be taken to a cliff in the wilderness they called Azazel and pushed it over the edge. Thus they made sure it did not return to town. This agrees with the picture of Christ descending into the Abyss. They tied a red cord to the scapegoat, the cliff and the temple door. The Talmud claims that when the goat fell, the scarlet cord on the cliff and temple door supernaturally turned white signifying that sin was thus put away. **'Come now, and let's reason together,' says the LORD 'Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'** (Is1:18)

The Talmud also says that from AD 30 it no longer turned white! The final sacrifice had been made, making the old system redundant. At the same time for 40 years (30-70 AD when the Temple was destroyed) all the lots for the goat for Jehovah were in the High Priest's left hand (which they took as a bad sign of impending judgement). This was against impossible odds-1 in 1,000,000,000,000 ! Also the Temple doors started opening by themselves and the west light of the Menorah (the servant candle used to light the others) failed to burn!

Appendix: Hebrews 8-10 presents the New Covenant in Christ as the fulfilment of the Old. It argues that the incompleteness and ineffectiveness of the old system meant it was but a picture pointing to the fulfilment by Christ. They were not of permanent effect for they only foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ. (Heb10:1-4; 9:7-14). It shows the Temple and its ceremonies as all SYMBOLIC of Christ and the New Covenant. (8:5,6; 9:9,11,23,24;10:1) It says that the climax and centre-piece of this system (the Day of Atonement sacrifice) was fulfilled in Christ. (9:23-26) Thus it contains the New Testament commentary on this Day.

It clearly shows that Christ fulfilled the picture of the final, perfect, complete, effective sacrifice that puts away sin once for all. Thus it proves the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement are a Type of Christ. (Heb9:7-14, 23-26; 10:1-12)

Hebrews 8:6-12 describes how the NEW and BETTER COVENANT was predicted. 'Better' because provision was made for the complete forgiveness and removal of sin through the better sacrifice so that man and God could be permanently united. Christ came to offer the perfect sacrifice, once for all, to end all sacrifices. (Heb10:9-19) **'By one offering He has perfected forever those being sanctified.'**(v14) Thus sin has been forgiven and removed: **'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'** (v17) and we can draw near even into the Holy of Holies, God's Presence, by the blood of Jesus. (v19)

THE MARCH OF FAITH - (2 Kings 6:14 -7:20).

It is the time of Elisha, a great prophet of God. Syria, Israel's enemy are continually frustrated because Elisha knows their plans by the Spirit making Israel ready. When the Syrian King thinks he has a spy, he is told about Elisha and so sends an army to get him: **'Therefore he sent horses, chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'** And Elisha prayed, **'LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.'** Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. **And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha'** (v14-17). Elisha asked God to blind the Syrian army and led them into the hands of Israel. They disarmed them, gave them supper and sent them home. FAITH SEES the Army of the Lord with us - which removes all fear. God and His army is with every believer - so fear not! He is ready to fight for you! In the story coming up we see this Army in action, and discover the KEY that releases it to fight.

A Siege brings Famine!: **'It happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for 80 shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab (dollop) of dove droppings for 5 shekels of silver'** (v24,25). The cause of this was sin. Moses warned Israel that if they continued in sin they would be oppressed by enemies and would come into great famine but if they repented God would deliver them (Deut 28, Lev26). If we go away from God we go into spiritual famine. The Word will mean nothing, we will suffer much and it won't be God's fault.

The King (Jehoram), the son of Ahab was not a good king: **'Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned 12 years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them'** (2Kings3:1-3). But even this King was shocked by the depravity that this famine produced: **'Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, 'Help, my lord, O king!' And he said, 'If the LORD does not help you (he was looking to the Lord now) where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?' ('have a look at our supplies, how can I help you?')** Then the king said to her, **'What is troubling you?' And she answered, 'This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.'** So we boiled my son, and ate him (this isn't what upset her but what happened next!). And I said to her on the next day, **'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son.'** This was too much even

for the king!: 'Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body' (v26-30). Sackcloth was uncomfortable - so it was a sign before God of true repentance and sorrow for sin. Elisha (God's law-enforcer) had said God would deliver Israel if they repent. He was repenting, but it was somewhat superficial as we shall see, although God responded even to this.

A Flash of anger: 'Then he (the king) said, 'God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!' (v31). He was angry with Elisha (and God) because he had promised deliverance upon repentance and still they were in a mess. His faith and repentance was weak for now in a fit of rage he decides to kill Elisha. 'But Elisha was sitting in his house, the elders were sitting with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him (to kill him), but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, 'Do you see how this son of a murderer (Ahab) has sent someone to take away my head?' (a word of knowledge). Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him (running to stop him, realising his fit of anger was foolish, for he would seal his own fate if he killed the prophet)?' (v32). So the Soldier was to be delayed until the King could catch up. 'And while he was still talking with them, the messenger, came down to him; and then the king (arrived and) said, 'Surely this calamity is (judgement) from the LORD (upon our sin); why should I wait for the LORD any longer?' (v33). The King now humbles himself somewhat confessing that their sin had caused this calamity. He says: 'I've been repenting. How much longer must we wait for God's deliverance?'

Now a stunning prophecy of deliverance! 'Then Elisha said, 'Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: `Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria' (7:1). God's kindness was seen in His responding to a less than perfect repentance. He declared the promise of FREEDOM, DELIVERANCE, RESTORATION, PROVISION, PROSPERITY was theirs now. God had broken the power of the enemy and their time of captivity and famine was over. God had set them free. This word was given to give them hope and the faith to arise and take corresponding action.

For the unbeliever it was all too much: 'So an officer on whose hand the king leaned (he trusted his advice - be careful who your advisors are!) answered the man of God and said, 'Look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?' ('Elisha is hallucinating out of hunger! It's impossible. Even if the Syrians leave - our food supply is gone, it will take months to get back to normal'). And he (Elisha) said, 'In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it' (7:2). That is: 'He will see it come to pass and see others get blessed, but will not enjoy it himself.' This is the lot of those who refuse to believe God's Word, preferring their own reason.

How did DELIVERANCE come? What happened next? God brings salvation by first giving His Word. Elisha's prophecy would have spread around the city. Some scoffed but others had their hopes raised by the promise, but all were too afraid to do anything about it. The story now focuses on an unlikely group who did take action, and as a result God uses them to bring deliverance. Their story is told because it is essential to the outcome. It reveals how God works through our faith. God gave His Word but He needed to find those who would believe and act on His Word to bring it to pass.

God stirs the faith of 4 lepers (God can use anyone, even the most unlikely - He can even use you!): 'Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, 'Why are we sitting here until we die?' (7:3). They were used to sitting there as outcasts, in passivity starving waiting for people to bring them food. Now with hope of deliverance their faith and courage rises to take action. The focus is now on them because they did something important that made all the difference. By faith they acted on the Word. Now we see how they brought deliverance.

They decided that doing nothing was not an option, they arose and by faith MARCHED out of captivity into freedom and as they marched their march of faith God's army marched with them, causing the enemy to flee in terror. Thus God's Word came to pass through these 4 lepers!

God speaks His Word of freedom to you, but until you BELIEVE it and ACT on it you will not be blessed, for 'faith without works (corresponding actions) is dead, don't be hearers only but doers of the word - then you will be blessed in your doing' (James1). Lazy Christians can't be blessed. ACT like the word is true. Until you receive the Word, and act on it, and march your March of Faith, God's power and army is not released.

We saw God's angelic Army surrounding the believers. Now we will discover the KEY that releases it into action. Elisha had given a stunning prophecy of deliverance from the famine- namely that salvation was theirs now (7:1). This word was given to impart the hope and faith needed to arise and take corresponding action.

How did this deliverance come about? The story now focuses on an unlikely group of 'four leprous men at the entrance of the gate', because they are the key (7:3). Through this story God reveals how He works. First, He gives the Word. Then when men believe and act on the Word, His Power and His Army are released into action. It was only when these lepers marched in faith did God's Army march and deliverance was manifested. Let's now look at the steps of faith that these men took.

1ST STEP of faith. Faith begins in the heart. God works through His Word to stir them out of their passivity: **'They said to one another, 'WHY SIT WE HERE UNTIL WE DIE?'** The first thing the Word does is give you hope and inner strength causing you to rise up on the inside ready take action. This happened to the lepers. They were sitting down in hopeless passivity, but now their thinking changes and they start asking the right question. They ask: *'What's the point of sitting down in our doubts until we die? Why are we sitting down in our depression, sitting down in fear and worry, sitting down under our circumstances, sitting down under enemy domination, defeated by the setbacks and hurts of life?'* Freedom starts by asking this question. Hope is causing them to rise out of passivity. Be an ACTOR not a REACTOR! Are we paralysed by the past, fearful of the future, quitting on life, sitting passively, accepting defeat as normal, letting life happen to us? Do we SIT and SINK or GET BACK off the substitutes bench and get back into the game? The lepers did not seem to have much choice but when the Word came to them saying that God was with them and would deliver them, hope sprang up in their hearts and they decided to claim their freedom.

When you come to this point you have to overcome the doubts and fears that come to you mind. They did this by considering the alternative: **'If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us fall upon the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die'** (7:4). *'What have we got to lose? let's rise out of apathy. Let's break out out this mould. If we die let it be in action.'* Anything was better than sitting in unbelief! Rather than sinking in the past until death, ask why should this spoil my life?, why don't I get up and act on the Word? The only real option is to face and overcome our fears and mountains, and march forwards into where the blessing is, trusting God to go with us as He promised. When faith stirs take action and march out.

If you feel defeated read the Word to build your faith to where you can take action. **'He has delivered me from the dominion of darkness** (sickness, past, fear, worry, mental torment, failure)' (Col 1:13). God has written to me in your prison and told you that He has set you free and in the name of Jesus you can walk out. You can rise up and march forth. Start marching out and dominate the devil and your circumstances. Say: *'I will walk out of this worry, I am marching out of my old ways into a new life by Christ. I will not waste my life by sitting down until I die. Jesus has set me free - now I march the march of faith into my promised land even if it seems impossible.'* This is what the lepers did.

2ND STEP to Victory. **'And they ROSE UP at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there!'** (7:5). Notice: **'they arose in the twilight'**, when things turn grey - not the best time naturally. Should they wait for morning? No - act when faith is stirred, wait no longer, for **'Now is the acceptable time.'** Enough is enough. Arise and call on the Name of the Lord. *'I will walk out of this in the name of Jesus.'*

3RD STEP to Victory: GO! We are blessed in doing God's Word. **'We walk by faith, not by sight'** (2 Cor 5:8). They started their March of Faith. It was not easy. They had to help each other to their feet. Every step was an agony. Only the faith in their heart kept them going. They were hungry, but they marched on. They were sick and in pain, but they marched on. Alone in the night, with death and danger stalking them, they marched on. Look at Israel's Army (all four of them) limping along, marching on the Syrians! But they were powerful through God. They were hooked-up to God through faith. They were God's invading Army and the enemy fled from before them!

Why did they flee?
'For the LORD had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses- the noise of a great army (God's angelic Army on the march!) **so they said to one another, 'Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!'** **Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact -their tents, their horses, and their donkeys** (leaving all their provisions and food behind) **and they fled for their lives'** (7:6,7).

When did the lepers march toward the Syrians! - **'In the twilight.'**
 When did the Syrians flee, upon hearing God's army marching toward them? - **'In the twilight.'**
 So when the lepers marched, God and His army marched with them.
 When you ARISE and MARCH your March of Faith you do not march alone - God and His army goes with you and the enemy ARISES and FLEES in terror!

Only when they acted in faith did heaven march with them. All God needed was these men to march in faith to fulfil His word of deliverance. He works through our faith and obedience. We must act out our faith to enjoy the blessing. Acting our faith is compared to a walk. By faith we walk out of worry, sickness, fear into life, health and peace. They had just one word from God - but we have the whole WORD of God to march on.

Those who marched in faith were the first to enjoy the blessings and they had the first pick of them: **'When these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent, ate and drank, and carried from it silver, gold and clothing, and went and hid it; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it'** (7:8). Testify so others can enter into the blessing ('If it worked for me it will for you too'). This also helps us to stay in the blessing: **'Then they said to one another, 'We are not doing right. This day**

is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household.' So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, 'We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound -only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact.' The gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside' (7:9-11).

Now others have to do their own march of faith and courage to enter the blessings and claim their freedom:
'So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, 'Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.' (The King was cowed in unbelief and fear. Faced with same dilemma as the lepers, the same argument won the day: 'Let us go forth. What is there to lose, we are dead anyway?') 'One of his servants answered, 'Please, let men take 5 of the remaining horses left in the city.' Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; who are doomed anyway; so let us send them and see.' Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, 'Go and see.' And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king' (7:12-15).

'Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned (the unbeliever) to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, 'Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria.' Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, 'Now look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?' And he had said, 'In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.' And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died' (7:16-20). So the prophecy was fulfilled. The believers marched and entered the blessing. The unbeliever was killed trying to stop them enter in.

There are many other Marches of Faith in the Bible. Consider Abraham, the Exodus from Egypt, Joshua's March into the Promised land, David going out to Goliath, Jehoshaphat and his choir, slaves at Jubilee, Jesus walking through a hostile crowd, Peter walking on water, the woman with the issue of blood. Jesus sent the 10 lepers, the crippled man, the blind man, and the nobleman with a sick son on marches of faith. His whole life was a March of faith and by the Great Commission He sent us all on a march of faith to go and preach the gospel.

We too must make our March of Faith. It starts by accepting Jesus as our Lord. Then step by step we march into greater glory. Don't sit in passivity but RISE UP and MARCH trusting God to go with you. God says to you: 'I have set you free now walk free.' As we act on the Word we will experience the victory of new life and eat from the table provided by God. Now arise and march your March of Faith!