



Kingly Character of Christ XIII
January, 2012

Dear Friend:

When I look at the condition of the church, I grieve over my ministerial generation's failure to emphasize the importance of the *"rod of iron"* as God's weapon for confronting evil in gathering the end time harvest. Psalm 2:8,9 says, *"Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron: You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."* God gives access to the rod but we have to break and strike by faith expecting our Father to destroy the enemy. Jesus gave us an example in striking when He spoke to the fig tree. Faith-filled, Holy Spirit-led words release both life and death.

Great resistance arises to nullify the church's assignment for the harvest. God's provision for vanquishing that resistance is in using the rod of iron. Isaiah 11:1-4 reveals the strength of this rod, *"There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall flow out of His roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears, But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked."*

When you go to church this coming Sunday, conduct your own spiritual poll. Ask the pastor and one parishioner, "Have you ever used the 'rod of iron' Jesus talks about?" If they ask, "Where did Jesus talk about a rod of iron?," you will have your answer. Point them to Revelation 2:26-29 and tell them it is available when needed.

Paul believed he had covenantal access to the rod of iron because he said so in I Corinthians 4:20-21, *"For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?"* Can we access the rod to save our harvest? Paul lived and conducted his ministry as if he could access it as needed to banish evil resistance. Rise up, use the rod, possess like Peter and Paul!

Yours in Him,

Al Houghton

WORD AT WORK

Kingly Character of Christ XIII

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

Scripture: Acts 24:24-26

Acts 24:24-26 is a passage that describes Paul's experience enroute to Rome where he faced a greedy king who was demanding a bribe. The Holy Spirit would not allow Paul to bribe the greedy king. It is interesting that in verse 25 we are given a key to the Kingly Character of Christ that qualifies us to access the spiritual nuclear option. It says, *"Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.'"* There were three things that Paul mentioned that brought the fear of God on the King: righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come. Through Christ, the blood cleanses us from all sin. The question is, what are we doing about self-control? The Greek word is **eng-krat-i-ah**. **Eng-krat-i-ah** means dominion over passion and appetite. The determination to embrace dominion to righteousness is the goal. Self-control is simply the determination that I will allow the Holy Spirit to rule in every area of my life. I embrace dominion of the Spirit exalting the God within. Are we willing to take dominion over our own life and submit it to the Word of God? If we are not, we will probably never see the fear of the Lord flowing through us. If we are, then today's 'Herods' better shape up before they get shipped out.

MONDAY, JANUARY 2

Scripture: Romans 8:12-14

When it comes to the issue of self-control, or giving the Spirit dominion, the necessity of embracing this aspect of personal growth is evident from Romans 8:12-14. Verses 12-14 state, *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."* If we are led by the Spirit of God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life is **eng-krat-i-ah** in action, bringing the Spirit's dominion over every aspect of our being. That qualifies us to carry and manifest the judicial Hand of God. If we yield to the dominion of the Spirit in our life, then we can project the dominion of the Spirit to other lives. If we say yes to God's yardstick, then we can pray that yardstick on others. If we say no to God's yardstick, we cannot stand in the fire we need to call down.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3

Scripture: Proverbs 16:32

Proverbs 16:32 says, *"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."* We have a choice in how we approach life. If we want to make an impact and take cities, we need to embrace the Holy Spirit, who is going to plot out our course for us. We have a choice. We can either be a Holy Spirit-helper, trying to correct everyone's course when they are out of line a bit, or we can encourage them to walk in the Spirit. We can teach them to love the Lord with all their heart and follow the Holy Spirit. Anybody who follows the Holy Spirit is going to find themselves first ruling themselves. When we first allow the Holy Spirit to

rule, we set ourselves in a position to be an example to others and to pray the dominion of God on those who need to change but refuse. The way we qualify to impact a city is to make sure the Holy Spirit is ruling in us first. It is much easier to let the Holy Spirit be someone else's course-corrector, than to incur a lot of anger and wrath by trying to usurp the Holy Spirit's job. It is much easier to be an encourager and an example and to call people to come forth in the fullness of the Spirit. Allowing the Holy Spirit free reign qualifies us to bring the judicial Hand of God wherever it is needed.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

Scripture: Revelation 19:15

Revelation 19:15 says, *"Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."* When we get to the last part of verse 15, we find that Jesus is going to rule with a rod of iron. The Greek word 'rule' is the culmination of why Christ came. Ruling with a rod of iron is defined, in the latter part of verse 15. It is **poy-mah-ee-no**. **Poy-mah-ee-no** is the word for Shepherd. We find that Jesus, as the great Shepherd, has for fifty years been edited out of the majority of our pulpits. Thank God there is a remnant. But right now, what does His 'rule' look like? How clear is verse 15 when it says, *"He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."*? Jesus does that. Jesus is going to demonstrate ruling with a rod of iron through His church in the days ahead. So the question has to be asked: Do we feel comfortable praying a rod of iron into manifestation? Do we know how? Do we feel comfortable praying a rod of iron onto the scene when it is needed? If we do not, we better spend some time with these Scriptures.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11, Revelation 19:15

In Ephesians 4:11 we are told, *"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,..."* In this verse the *"...He Himself..."* seems to be the term of major emphasis. But the *"...He Himself..."* of Ephesians 4:11 sounds strangely familiar. The same *"He Himself..."* appears in Revelation 19:15, *"And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."* Would we have ever connected the Ephesians 4:11 *"He Himself..."* with the Revelation 19:15, *"He Himself...He Himself..."*? It gets even more interesting in confronting our traditional understanding, when we look up the word translated *"pastor,"* in Ephesians 4:11. It is the Greek word **poy-mane**. In Ephesians 4:11, **poy-mane** is the noun that discusses the ministry group who are called in the specific function of pastor. In Revelation 19:15, **poy-mah-ee-no** is the verb of the same word, but is translated as *"rule."* So from the noun of Ephesians 4, describing God's intent for a group of men and women called pastors, to the action of Revelation 19:15, we have the transition in the verb. Pastors in action, in the last days look like the Jesus of Revelation 19:15. *"He Himself...He Himself..."* How many of our pastors have been taught to *"...rule with a rod of iron..."*? *"He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."* Our seminaries and Bible schools have robbed our leaders of who they are in Christ. We have failed to teach them to walk with Jesus the Judge. We have failed to impart function and operate judicially, displaying how pastoral authority looks. How would a pastor feel reading this passage and looking at the Greek, and coming to the realization that for however many years he or she had been in ministry, as a pastor they had been robbed of the authority required for a harvest? I believe the greatest transition that is needed today is a transition for the men and women of God who are called to the ministry of the Shepherd. They must discover who they really are in Christ and what is available to them. Heaven is ready to back up the church if and only if the leaders of the church can come forth into the fullness of who they were created to be. Our nations can look very different in a short period of time with a Holy Spirit invasion. Pray with me that our pastors will come to a full revelation of who they are in Christ and walk accordingly!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:1,2

1 Peter 5:1,2 says, *"The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;..."* It is interesting that, when we come to verse 2, Peter gave a command. The command was in the verb that was used: **poy-mah-ee-no**. **Poy-mah-ee-no** means, 'The flock of God which is among you.' Peter said, "Look – you have the responsibility to use the authority that has been bought and paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jesus of Revelation gives us a *'He Himself...He Himself...'*! You are a pastor with a rod of iron and you should demonstrate the judgment of God!" Peter made it clear that they should not lord it over those entrusted to them, but should give an account when the Chief Shepherd appeared. I would not want to face the Chief Shepherd, having never picked up the rod of iron and having never attempted to bring the fullness of God's Kingdom and having forfeited a whole generation through passivity. Surely it is time for the church to arise!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:3-9

Jesus is called the Chief Shepherd. He is held up as the example of what it means to pastor. And the Jesus of the gospels is a Savior, pastoring with love, mercy and kindness. Jesus, in the book of Revelation, is pastoring with the judgment of God aimed at those who steadfastly refuse His way, His truth and His life. There are obviously two sides of pastoring. It is apparently a two-edged sword. One edge is grace, mercy and love. The other edge is love, with a rod of iron, that demonstrates that the Chief Shepherd is approaching and everyone will give an account of what he has done, whether good or bad. If a person is set on destroying our harvest field, then the rod of iron falls on their head. We initiate the action. It comes under the heading of *"Resist him, steadfastly in the faith..."* (1 Peter 5) Resisting the enemy is a command. It is obvious that the rod of iron has a manifestation in resisting the enemy. The question is, are we willing to use it?

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

Scripture: John 21:15

John 21:15 says, *"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'"* Jesus, after the resurrection, is reminding Peter of his proclamation that he would follow Him to the end. And Peter denied Him three times. Jesus asked Peter if he 'Loves/**ag-a-pee**, with the love that is willing to die for.' Because of his denial and because he had not really been able to follow through, Peter's answer was, *"I love/fil-eh-o you..."* **Fil-eh-o** means, 'To love as a friend.' This is not love willing to die for. The word for "feed" is **ar-nee-on**, and means 'To care for and make sure that those given to you are properly fed and nourished.' Jesus is setting Peter up – He is calling him into restoration after a major failure. Jesus was going to do it by dealing with the priority of motivation that was in Peter's life. There was a reason Peter thought he was more mature than he really was. The three-time denial of Christ revealed something that Peter himself did not know. It revealed something that was functional and operational in his life – his priorities were out of alignment. Because his priorities were out of alignment, there was no way that he could carry through on his commitment. Jesus knew it and He was going to the root of the issue – just like He does with us. I wonder how many places the Lord is going to the root of things with us. Jesus knows our issues!

MONDAY, JANUARY 9

Scripture: Matthew 26:30-33

Matthew 26:30-33 says, *"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered." But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.'"* Peter made it very clear that he considered himself in a class above the other eleven apostles. His statement that, even if all are made to stumble, he never would, was a direct insight into how he felt about his spirituality and commitment as opposed to those of his peers. He saw himself as head and shoulders above everybody else. Jesus addressed this issue repeatedly but was rebuffed. Jesus left Peter to his own devices and prayed for recovery from the failure! The Holy Spirit would work on that aspect of Peter's self-righteousness. Anyone else who had tried to correct Peter would have probably been verbally blasted by a very offended and astounded apostle. The repeated denial of Christ revealed the heart. Peter was broken! His brokenness paved the way for the Holy Spirit. Peter had to deal directly with God. Peter was being restored in a painful encounter where Jesus demonstrated what Peter was really full of. If that was Jesus' commitment to Peter, should we not expect the same thing? Jesus is *no* respecter of persons.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

Scripture: Matthew 26:34,35

Matthew 26:34,35 says, *"Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all the disciples."* Jesus warned Peter of the pressure ahead. Peter's proclamation made it clear he thought Jesus knew where he was in relationship to everyone else, and he was the most trustworthy of the group. Unfortunately, Peter could not live up to his mythical commitment. All the disciples agreed with Peter. They all made the same pronouncement. Once Peter made his proclamation, everybody else joined in. They all rose to the same level and they all fell to the same giant of self-protection. They denied Jesus to save self. Jesus denied self to save them. Like Peter, we may not recognize our giants, but Jesus does!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

Scripture: John 21:16

John 21:16 says, *"He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'"* Jesus repeats the very same question to Peter a second time: *"Do you love/ag-ah-pay Me?"* Do you love Me enough to lay your life down for me? Peter failed that love standard three times! His answer reflects humility. *"Lord, you know that I fil-eh-o you."* The Greek word that makes the greatest statement after the obvious declaration that Peter was not as committed as he thought is the Greek word for *"tend."* Tend is our word for *"rule"* or pastor: **po-y-mah-ee-no**. The entire ministerial life of Peter, he had fought with James and John over who was going to be the greatest. In humiliation, he took the opposite position. He knew he had forfeited being first. Jesus was addressing priorities with the command, *"Feed...tend...feed..."* The Greek word for *"feed"* in verse 15 is the word **bos-ko**. **Bos-ko** means, 'To promote the welfare of every individual ahead of yourself.' It means to serve others in sacrifice. Priority number one of verse 15 is clear, *"Hey Peter, do you love Me enough to die for Me? Obviously not since you denied Me three times. How about trying this for a change – put the people you minister to ahead of yourself."* Jesus thumped Peter right between the eyes with a Biblical brick, *"You are not in ministry to build yourself a kingdom. You are in ministry to serve other people. And it is only when you obediently embrace other people first that you can qualify for the po-y-mah-ee-no rule. You want to rule first and let other people serve you."* Jesus said, *"You serve other people and that qualifies you to rule."* I wish we had had a course in seminary that taught that one

truth. Peter had to learn it the hard way, he had to learn it through failure. The great thing about learning it through failure is it stays with you for the rest of your life. Have we caught this key and foundational characteristic of Christ-likeness?

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12

Scripture: Revelation 19:15, John 21:15

Peter was very much like many of us when he started. He wanted success but God's definition of success and ours is often quite different! God emphasizes serving the people we minister to! God's view of serving includes correction! Not everyone is willing to hear correction. When we qualify for the level of anointing demanded by our ultimate call, dominion is available to confront evil. The rod of iron can be used to advance God's purpose. Any shepherd who tries to function without qualifying for the rod of iron will, in fact, not be able to take his people to the place of strength and power where they need to go. The rod of iron is essential. It is necessary. Without it, we will find ourselves meeting opposition that we are not prepared to overcome. Using a rod of iron demands a servant-motivation. It demands the establishment of a foundation of servanthood, not personal Kingdom-building. Selfish ambition and self-will disqualify us from using a rod of iron. David's covenant guarantees the rod of iron for dispatching opposition to God's plan! Servanthood qualifies us to be heard and releases the angels to bring judicial prayers to pass when our motives match God's purposes for building His Kingdom. There is a giant circuit-breaker attached to the rod of iron and it is called: personal motivation! Advancing our own agenda disqualifies us from dominion. Dominion removes adversaries when prayed in God's will. We are responsible for praying God's government on the promoters of evil.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:32-36

Divine rule conflicts with demonic rule. Some kings yield to their flesh in greater degrees than others. We see that conflict between Saul and David in 1 Samuel 17:32-36. These verses state, *"Then David said to Saul, 'Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.' But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.'"* Saul was called to lead the army, but because he was more interested in securing his own kingdom than obeying God, he could not swing the rod of iron necessary to fell the giant. Because David was more interested in obeying God than building a kingdom, he could use God's anointing and strike with the rod of iron. David, in the course of shepherding, had met both the lion and bear. And he found that God's anointing was enough to kill them both. Most people do not go after a lion and a bear with a stick like a shepherd's rod. But when the anointing is present, that stick is more than a piece of wood in your hand – it is a rod of iron that is backed by all of heaven itself and nothing can live when you swing it against the enemy. David was qualified to swing the rod of iron. Saul was disqualified from swinging the rod of iron. And history records the rest. What is history going to record about us? What is history going to record about our use of God's power? Are we paying the price to live a life that would stand up for Jesus and swing a rod of iron? Are we willing to swing it on ourselves so we can qualify to swing it for God out in the world? Saul would not discipline his own flesh to obey God. David did discipline his flesh to obey God. Observe the difference. You and I are writing history with Jesus every single day. What is history going to record for us? Are we willing to pay the price to swing the rod of iron? Jesus made us a King and Priest. Now rule your flesh so history can record that you are a giant-slayer! Eternity will rejoice. Loose the rod on political filth.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

Scripture: Revelation 2:23-26

The key to using the rod of iron is overcoming. The degree to which we overcome temptation of the flesh is the degree to which we can appropriate covenant promises for advancing God's eternal purposes. Are we willing to overcome like David overcame? David's moral failure with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of Uriah the Hittite could have ended his rule but God had given him a covenant of Sure Mercy. David responded admirably to the confrontation of his sin. He truly repented. True repentance is fairly easy to discern. Not repeating the sin is a sign of true repentance! David overcame and did not repeat the sin! David accessed the "redemption" from a platform of restored righteousness! His true heart-response released a cleansing forgiveness. Faith from the heart accessed the rod of iron from a cleansed conscience. May we keep our conscience clean through the Blood of the Lamb and a determination to overcome in every area!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

Scripture: Revelation 2:26-29

Revelation 2:26-29 states, *"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' — as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"* Jesus offered the church at Thyatira the opportunity to rule with a rod of iron. The same way He received authority from His Father, He offers authority to us. Jesus, in the book of Revelation, carries a rod of iron. And when He strikes with the rod of iron, the opposition is removed. It resembles David's victory over Goliath. Are we facing a Goliath? If we pray the rod of iron into action, Goliath will repent or be removed. Access the rod of iron and trust the Lord to act, removing the opposition. The rod of iron is a serious issue in the book of Revelation. The resurrected Christ is offering it to the church at Thyatira. What is obvious in this passage is that Jesus paid the price for the church to represent the Father with a rod of iron. But today's church only occasionally picks it up. As it stands, if we pick up the rod of iron it is pretty much a faith-accident or a Holy Spirit outburst that causes us to pray beyond our passive theology. David was not passive when he prayed. There is one thing that is obvious in this study – Jesus paid for a rod of iron and He offers it to the church. And if we never pick it up, we will fail to write the history that God has ordained for us in our generation. The rod of iron is real. It is a dimension of spiritual authority that is designed to remove the opposition to our harvest field. David swung it in a sling and when the stone came out, the enemy was on the ground. As a servant of the Most High, when we swing it in obedience, the very same thing should be happening. The early church swung it when Peter was in jail and the angel was released – Herod was gone. The rod of iron is real. It is just as real as David's sling-shot. It is just as real as Herod's removal. The rod of iron has a distinctive purpose. Do not leave home without it!

MONDAY, JANUARY 16

Scripture: Revelation 2:24-26

If we are going to swing the rod of iron we need to realize there is a qualifier. We find that qualifier in Jesus speaking to the church at Thyatira. Revelation 2:24,25 says, *"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come."* *"...Hold fast what you have till I come..."* is difficult. The *"...hold fast..."* coupled with the *"...he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end..."* of verse 26 is the exhortation to persevere. Jesus said that if we want to walk with access to the rod of iron, we must possess our own vessel, hold fast to what we have and continue to walk in integrity. We must persevere in righteousness, live the Christian life in stability and maintain a righteous standard by exalting the Word of God. If we rule our flesh and obey the leadership of the Spirit, then the rod of iron will be with us everywhere we go and we will never meet a circumstance where we cannot pray and bring that rod of iron on the scene. Resist the enemy and watch God gain

victory for our harvest field. The rod of iron is the most practical and necessary thing that is given to us in Revelation because with it we get a harvest. If we forfeit access to it, we forfeit our harvest. How we choose to live makes a difference! How we live and the choices we make guarantee or deny access to the rod of iron. If we rule our own spirit first, we can rule a city.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17

Scripture: Revelation 2:20-23

Specific qualifiers for the rod of iron are identified in Thyatira. Verse 20 proclaims that passivity is a disqualifying characteristic. It says, *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."* The problem with Thyatira is a familiar problem today. They were forfeiting the rod of iron. They deteriorated into passivity. The fruit was a refusal to restrain immorality in their own ranks. Jesus declared a ten-ton judgment. He released the rod of iron. They were allowing major defilement in the congregation. Jesus declared He would kill their disciples. The rod of iron will bring affliction or termination as needed. The rod of iron that Jesus offers the church is for serious opposition. Qualifying to use it requires serious holiness. The rod of iron will terminate the wicked in extreme cases. Jesus speaks to the church and declares plainly, "If you do not repent, I will kill this doctrine and the generation you are infecting with it." Jesus said in verse 23, *"...And I will give to each one of you according to your works."* I don't think there is anything more serious than to command the leaders to rule with the rod of iron. Look at our tradition concerning a pastor. Look at our expectations for a pastor. By our tradition, we expect our pastors to be almost exclusively loving, accepting and gentle. They should "turn-the-other-cheek" and guide us in the direction we should go. Jesus said in the last days that any pastor worth his salt is going to rule with a rod of iron. If we do not rule with a rod of iron, then we do not qualify as a pastor. Without the rod, we are just like a weasel – going somewhere to turn the other cheek. Tradition makes us foolish and misguided! Tradition has robbed us of what it means to pastor. Consequently, we really do not have anyone pastoring the nation because nobody is swinging enough of a rod of iron to qualify. Without a rod of iron, we have counterfeit priests pastoring the nation. We have individuals who are more tares than wheat because they keep people smiling, keep people in their pews and keep people giving with compromised Christianity. That is the definition of a tare. A tare is somebody whose doctrine of compromise and passivity puts people to sleep. Seeker-sensitive pastors are tares. There is some serious soul-searching to be done. The rod of iron has to be swung in the church first. The perverse politicians have little to worry about right now because the guys in the pulpit are too passive to qualify for the rod of iron. The Jesus of Revelation is rising in behalf of the righteous. It is time to write some history. Are you in?

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

Scripture: Psalm 2, Acts 13:33,34, Revelation 2:26-29

There is nothing quite like Psalm 2 because it is a panoramic promise for what Jesus does in empowering the church to bring in an end-time harvest. A picture of the progressive fulfillment of Psalm 2 emerges in the New Testament. In Acts 4 the church agrees, invoking Psalm 2:1,2. God hears and answers. In Acts 13 the resurrected Christ guarantees David's covenant of Sure Mercy for a harvest of nations. Psalm 2:9 appears in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 2, those who overcome passivity gain access to the rod of iron. Access to the rod of iron destroys all opposition to the harvest. Psalm 2 is the outline for possessing nations. The New Testament attests the core promises of Psalm 2 as an outline for the harvest. Do we have a contribution to that harvest in our generation? You and I are called to contribute to that harvest in our generation! Only if we qualify by ruling ourselves will we have access to the rod of iron so we can defeat the opposition to the harvest. How long will we allow unrighteous judges and perverse politicians to rule?

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

Scripture: Psalm 2:1,2

Psalm 2:1,2 describes the adversarial nature of politicians in the last days: *"Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,..."* The first thing we notice in Psalm 2 is the conflict of rulers. The same conflict of rule we saw between Saul and David, we see between political leaders and the church. The political leaders are advancing vain things like abortion and homosexuality. They set themselves and they council together in how to destroy righteous dictates of God. How many politicians have set themselves to destroy the righteous dictates of God? Judges impose abortion by fiat. We have politicians legislating homosexuality. David prophesied it in Psalm 2. It is as true today as the day he prophesied it. I wonder what his experience was when he prophesied it. David saw wicked leaders. The rebellious spirit of Saul is still alive and well. It permeates our politicians. There is a war going on and for the last 50 years the church has been losing. I wonder why? Could it have anything to do with the fact that we haven't taught the church how to access the rod of iron? What an enlightening moment. The Bible had the answer all along and our tradition locked it up out of sight and just plain didn't feed it to us. The answer is in the Bible. David found the God who knew how to deal with kings who plot vain things. David found it in his relationship with the Lord. Will we find the rod of iron in our relationship with the Lord?

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

Scripture: Acts 4:18-21

In Acts 4:18-21, the early church is in a place where they need the anointing of David because they had been ordered not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. A conflict of rulers was raging. Verses 18-21 says, *"So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done."* The early church found themselves in a conflict like that described by Psalm 2. The plots and plans of political leadership declared vain things. They outlawed speaking about Jesus. Our leaders have outlawed prayer in schools. They are outlawing crosses anywhere in the public arena. The early church did not bow to that crap. Why have we? We need to realize that there is no difference between us and the early church. They found themselves in a conflict with government – we find ourselves in a conflict with government. Should we do what they did? I think that is the whole reason the Bible was written. When we find people in the same circumstances that we are in and we follow what they did that brought God on the scene, we should expect the same God that showed up for them to show up for us. Anything less makes it ridiculous to waste our time studying a dead book. When we are led by the Spirit to embrace Scripture, God shows up to confirm His Word. There is something about Him being no respecter of persons that links His intervention to His promises. It is time we took the Word seriously and began to act on it as led by the Spirit!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

Scripture: Acts 4:23-30

Acts 4:24-26 says, *"So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.'"* In Acts 4 the early church found themselves in parallel circumstances as described in Psalm 2. So they agreed together, in one accord, and they prayed Psalm 2:1,2. They asked for divine intervention. The question for the Spirit is, should we follow this pattern? They were asking God to intervene, to give them boldness to stand up for what was right and to stretch out His Hand to heal, and then to do signs and wonders. When the early church prayed in Acts 4, the New Testament was not yet written! So we go to the Old Testament to define signs and wonders. Twelve of the fourteen appearances of those words used together all deal with the very same event. *"Signs and wonders"* refers to what Moses executed in Egypt that brought the people out.

The early church was asking for the judicial Christ! They were asking for the Hand of God to bring judgments against the leaders who were opposing them. They had plenty of examples of what God could do to leaders who were subverting His will and purpose. Moses did it numerous times in Egypt. The early church asked for the judicial Christ to show up. What is wrong with us? Oh – I know – we have been taught that God doesn't do that anymore. We have been taught that we are supposed to "turn-the-other-cheek" and let evil rule. I wonder why the early church did not have that mindset. I wonder why the early church asked God to intervene for them like He did in Egypt. The difference between the early church and us is, they knew the God of the Bible and they understood their Messiah would put their enemy in the grave. They asked Him to do it. I think it is time we started asking for biblical signs and wonders.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:33,34

Deuteronomy 4:33,34 are two verses that identify the signs and wonders that the early church was praying about. Verses 33,34 state, *"Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? 34 Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"* When the early church was asking for signs and wonders they were asking for the God of war, the God with a mighty Hand. They were asking for God to stretch out His arm. They were asking God to execute great terrors, according to all that the Lord did in Egypt. He shredded the trees, killed the livestock and destroyed the crops. Egypt was a desolation. They were glad when the Israelites left. That is the God the early church was asking to show up. Do we even think that way today? Why don't we think that way? Because our tradition has made us nicer than God. We enable our enemies hindering our harvest by praying mercy on them. God would put our enemies in the grave if we would ask. Praying mercy extends the life of the wicked so they can do more devastation and destruction to our harvest field. Only tradition can cause us to oppose our own harvest. Only tradition can cause us to pray the very opposite of what we should be praying. What the early church was really praying was a cry for the God of devastation to show up and rip the enemy to shreds so they could have their harvest field. They had a different mindset. They actually knew God. They did not have our tradition blinding them to a major part of who God was and is. Will we overcome our tradition in time to gain our harvest?

MONDAY, JANUARY 23

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:20-22

Deuteronomy 6:20-22 says, *"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.'"* If our children ask, "What is the meaning of this liberty bell? Why do you live the way you live?" Will we be able to say, "It is because God gave us a covenant and commanded us to live this way. And those who oppose Christ are destroying the foundation of the nation and therefore we have a right to ask the God we serve to strike them with a rod of iron. If they will not repent, He will send them to an early grave before they destroy our nation by filling it with iniquity." Will we be able to give that kind of testimony to our kids? When the early church prayed in Acts 4, they were reviewing the demonstration of God that brought them out of Egypt. They knew the God who could be severe against Egypt, against Pharaoh and everyone in his household. What about the household of our wayward political leaders permeated with perversion, filth, destruction and murder of innocent children? Our tradition says, "Bless them and pray for them." The early church would have shifted gears long ago. They would look at us like we were absolutely blithering, moronic idiots. They knew Jesus. They walked with Him for three and one-half years. And they were praying "Give us the manifestations of the God who brought our nation out of Egypt." It is time we emulated the early church. If the early church needed the God who brought Israel out of Egypt to begin their assignment, how much more are we going to need Him to end the church-age? When theology produces passivity it is rotten theology. Is it not time for a change?

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

Scripture: Deuteronomy 7:17-21

Deuteronomy 7:17-21 states, *"If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'— you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you."* Any time that we face impossible circumstances, the Scripture tells us to remember what the Lord did to Pharaoh and to all of Egypt. Anytime we face adversity trying to hinder our harvest we have to remember not the Jesus who turned the other cheek, but we have to remember the God who brought Israel out of Egypt with signs, with wonders, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. We have to remember the God who puts people in the grave. We are to remember the God who terrified them because of His awesome deeds. There is very little fear of God in our politicians today. Is it any wonder? Our tradition prevents us from calling on the God of signs and wonders. And yet, the New Testament clearly reveals Him! Even the New Testament church, before the New Testament was written, went back to this God when they faced opposition. Our tradition causes us to go back to the one little aspect of who Jesus is in His evangelistic mode. Our tradition says, "turn-the-other-cheek" and pray for the enemy. That is not the testimony of Scripture when you face opposition to your harvest field. The testimony of Scripture is, you go connect with the God who devastated Egypt and terrorized people. Tradition has reduced us to dumber than dust! I am tired of being dumber than dust. I think I want to do what the early church did. I want to believe, I want to connect with the Jesus who has a rod of iron, who terrorizes the perverse, the abominable, the vile and the filthy. He will put them in the grave if they will not turn. I choose that Jesus for this season. I trust God will give us the heart of a warrior so we can make the same choice. The Jesus of Revelation is the Jesus for this season!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

Scripture: Psalm 2:3-5, Exodus 32:10

Psalm 2:3-5 says, *"Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:..."* Where is the evidence of God holding the wicked in derision? The wicked are determined to break any restraints on their evil. Hollywood is determined to break all biblical restraints to their evil. Politicians are determined to break all biblical restraints to morality. My Bible says that God sits in the heavens and laughs. But the Lord will hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them. I wonder what happens when God speaks to people in His wrath? I wonder what it looks like if God speaks to Hollywood in His wrath. We do not have to go very far to find out. All we have to do is look at Exodus. In Exodus 32:10, God is speaking to Moses in a state of wrath, which is the Hebrew word **aph**. He says, *"Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."* When God speaks to people in His wrath, they are near toast. So we could say that when God speaks in His wrath, He is ready to **aph** somebody. In street terminology today, when you "off" somebody, that is the end of their existence. God initiated the concept. Isn't it interesting that Psalm 2 says when the worldly determine they will throw off all biblical restraint, God responds by **aph**-ing them! For those who want to **off** biblical morality, then let the God we serve **aph** them! That is in Psalm 2. That is the God we serve. He is not playing games. He is real. He is serious. The rod of iron is released when you and I ask for it to save our harvest. The early church prayed and they asked for God to **aph** people who hindered the gospel. I wonder what kind of results they got...

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

Scripture: Psalm 2:5, Job 4:4,5

In Psalm 2:5 we are told, *"Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:..."* "Distress" is the Hebrew word **baw-hal**. **Baw-hal** is defined in a very familiar passage. In Job 4:4,5 we are told, *"Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, And you have strengthened the feeble knees; But now it comes upon you,*

and you are weary; It touches you, and you are troubled.” What did God do to Job? Because the word “troubled” is the Hebrew word **baw-hal**. **Baw-hal** is beyond distress. This is Job after the enemy has been released to bring complete destruction. In the first round, satan went out and destroyed everything that Job had. A hostile raid took his servants. Fire fell from heaven as lightning killed all the sheep. The Chaldeans formed three bands, took the camels and killed the servants with the edge of the sword. Job’s sons and daughters were having a party and a windstorm came, collapsed the house and killed them all. His devastation was near complete. And finally, satan was allowed to touch Job’s body and he broke out in boils. Now the promise in Psalm 2 is, when people begin to actively fight against God’s biblical morality, God will mock them and He will terrorize them. Where is the terrorizing of evil-doers? Is it possible that some of these things have to be released on them? There is one thing for sure – when the early church prayed, they prayed for this God to show up in their behalf. I wonder if He did.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

Scripture: Psalm 2:6

Has God set His King on His Holy Hill of Zion? If we really believe Psalm 2:6 – that God has set His King on His Holy Hill of Zion, then the King that is on the Holy Hill has to rule the kings who set themselves against the Lord and against His anointed. Worldly rulers have to bow. That means you and I have to tap the authority of the King who has been set on the Holy Hill and we have to bring His Hand on the wayward who are blocking our harvest field. We are in the same place the early church found themselves. So they prayed accordingly. And when they asked God for signs and wonders, they asked that what God did in Egypt, He do for them. They did not hesitate. They did not back off. They did not “turn-the-other-cheek”. They said, “God, we want you to terrorize the enemy and we want Your Hand upon them. Put them in distress. Do what you did in Egypt.” That is what they were asking for. They were straightforward, they knew their covenant and they knew God had done it before. He did it before and we would do it again. God is not opposed to putting the enemy in the grave. The only people who have trouble with that are religious people with lots of tradition. Thank God David did not have to wade through that. Goliath would still be taunting Israel. It is time we grew into the fullness of our covenant!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28

Scripture: Acts 4:31

The early church agreed together and when they prayed, God answered. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” And everyone there benefited from God showing up. The Lord shook the place, everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit the second time and they all moved in holy boldness. God sent them a holy boldness which is what they needed for the adversary they were facing. The church today needs a holy boldness! We need boldness to confront the evil we are facing! Isn’t it time we stepped into the holy boldness that God has? We need to pray for it, we need to ask for it and I believe we are going to see it. I believe there is a move of holy boldness coming to the church. It may just be a prayer away.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

Scripture: Acts 4:32

God did a major purifying event for the early church. Verse 32 says, “*Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.*” Nobody said that anything he had was his own. They shared as people had need. And because they passed the mammon test, they could execute judicial authority over the mammonites of that day. Because they were willing to rule themselves, they could rule against those who yielded to the spirit of mammon. When mammon arose to oppose the work in their midst the early church manifested the rod of iron. Are we there? We need to be. They showed the way. Let us follow the pattern.

MONDAY, JANUARY 30

Scripture: Acts 4:33-35

Acts 4:33-35 states, *“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”* The early church followed the Holy Spirit and they had a great anointing to witness to the resurrection of Jesus. Great grace was on everyone. Nobody lacked. People who had rental properties sold them, brought the proceeds and laid them at the apostle’s feet. The apostles distributed to people as they had need. It was a real community taking care of each other. The early church was passing the major money test. They were caring for each other, they were ruling themselves and they had access to the rod of iron. Their choices were even bringing conviction on people in the ministry. The stunning thing about what they were doing by ruling themselves, was they were becoming a plumbline that caused people even in ministry to change the way they were functioning. When we say yes to God and rule our own flesh, our own desires and the way we think, doors to justice open! Tradition develops when something has been emphasized enough that it becomes a stronghold in our mind. Today’s church only thinks in terms of “turn-the-other-cheek” when there are many more options. “Turn-the-other-cheek” mentality has been emphasized enough that it is a stronghold. Breaking the stronghold simply means we change what we think about a certain situation. All change begins in changing the way we pray and changing how we act. If we can change how we think, we can change our lives.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

Scripture: Acts 4:36,37

Acts 4:36,37 state, *“And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.”* Barnabus was impacted by the rest of the church. Barnabus was a Levite with a ministry. But he also had illegal land for a Levite, which meant instead of having grazing land for cattle he had a business of farming his land. So Barnabus became convicted, sold his land and brought it to lay at the apostles’ feet. Now when the leadership, the people in full-time ministry, started selling what they had, that caused a real plumbline to be established. That plumbline measured two people who were found wanting. Ananias and Sapphira are examples of that plumbline dropping. God **aph**-ed two people in order to save the early church from mixed seed. The God we serve is ready again with signs and wonders for the asking. Are we asking? We should be. Everything in us should be asking because God is ready.

ITINERARY

1/8-1/15	Kilauea, HI	Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Sun 9:30am; Mon, Wed, Fri 7 pm; Sun 9:30 am	John & Shannon Schmeling 808-828-6682
1/20-1/23	Delta, BC Canada	Kingdom Harvest Ministries, Int. Tsawwassen Arts Center 1153 – 56 Street, Delta, BC Canada 71264 Call for meeting times	Darce & Glenda Dube 604-943-8100
1/ 27-1/29	Amarillo, TX	Email for time and address	Gary & Linda Hall lghall67@sbcglobal.net