

Gods Plan, Purpose, Provision and Promise. Part 2 of 3 Parts, originally produced as 1 Document. Undated. Unsure if or when shared with SCF*

Foundations of the Church or Bride of Christ

Let us begin at the end.

Revelation 19 verse 6-7

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

We are the Church, the Church is not made of bricks and mortar but by *living stones*, that is the people who are its members.

Ephesians 4 verse 1-3

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is only one bride, one Church and being prisoners of the Lord, like Paul we should walk in a way worthy of Jesus. There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God.

The Body is His Church or Bride, the Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the Lord is Jesus, the God is Father.

The one Faith has one source, Jesus although there are different kinds of faith.

Faith: A steadfast trust in God to bring His promises regardless of what stands in the way.

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Sanctifying or Saving Faith: The faith that not only experiences and grasps the truth about the Gospel of Jesus Christ but which also believes in the person and work of Jesus alone for salvation.

Gift Faith: This allows believers in Jesus Christ to raise themselves above distress and difficulties that might otherwise weaken them.

Hebrew 6 verse 1-2

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

The one Baptism has two kinds but one source, the baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4 verse 11-13

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Jesus Gives us Gifts

(a) He gave some as **Apostles** and **Prophets**. These lay foundations in the Church, they are pioneering ministries who find a site on which God wants to build His church, they clear away the rubbish and dig the trenches and become the foundations, underneath the bricks.

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Ephesians 2 verse 18-20

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

The Church being built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being the cornerstone. Cornerstone means beginning of or extent of the shape.

(b) He gave some as **Evangelists**, there are only two mentions of an evangelist in the New Testament. Philip who was called thus and Timothy who did the work of an evangelist. The reason for this is possibly because it is the prerogative of all believers to preach the Gospel although obviously some may specialise. It was the scattered ones who Phillip had taught probably, emphasising their lifestyle in the community. Their witness was more what they were than what they said.

Evangelists then, are those who bring materials along to the site to be built into the Church.

(c) He gave some as **Pastors** and **Teachers**, they would put together the materials brought to the site by the evangelists.

Each member is a living stone, not a dead brick, which has the name of Jesus visibly stamped on him or her. Pastors will teach as well as care for the flock. Teachers will teach the word of God and be examples in the living out of that word.

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Each of the four or five ministries are given to us by Jesus for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work to the building up of the body of Christ.

We become one mature person - the bride of Christ.

Ephesians 4 verse 14-16

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

The purpose of the ministry is that they impart what they are to others who have been called of God so that there are many ministries available in His Church.

Authority in the Church

There is only one authority, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28 verse 18

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

However, He has delegated that authority to us, His disciples. Without His authority we can neither rule or serve Him.

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Matthew 9 verse 5-6

Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."
Jesus always has displayed His authority by signs and wonders.

Matthew 9 verse 21

And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well."
Jesus' authority was beginning to be recognised.

Luke 9 verse 46-48

An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."
Authority or gifting can lead us into pride if we do not remember that it is actually Jesus' authority.

Luke 22 verse 25-27

And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

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27 For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

This was Jesus' instruction about authority.

2 Corinthians 10 verse 8-18

For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame, 9 for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. 10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present. 12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. 13 But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, 16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another. 17 But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. 18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

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This was Paul's boast about his authority.

Authority is given to Apostles and Prophets to lay foundations in new churches, authority is given to Elders to rule in the local Church and authority is given for each of us to exercise our gifts to serve God with.

Matthew 23 verse 1-12

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; 3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. 4 They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. 5 But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. 6 They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. 8 But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. 11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

The balance of authority emphasises the source of all authority.

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Commitment to the Body of Christ

Romans 12 verse 1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

I commit myself to making myself and my time, money, etc available. Firstly to Christ then to the body. Joining myself in heart and harmony in fellowship with other believers. I submit myself as a servant to those who are accountable to God to be a servant with them.

Hebrews 13 verse 17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

1 Peter 5 verse 1-3

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

Elders have been given who are to shepherd the flock, it is most important that we see the need to allow the Good Shepherd to shepherd you.

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John 10 verse 14-15

I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. Know your earthly shepherd, The Lord is my Shepherd, an earthly shepherd is not my Lord! God is looking to bring the Father-Son relationship into the Church.

Malachi 4 verse 5-6

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

The government of the Kingdom of God is on the shoulders of Jesus.

Isaiah 9 verse 6

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Elders and Deacons

1 Timothy 3 verse 1-13

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

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4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The scripture above gives us the qualifications of the elders and deacons. We may all aspire to be elders, but it is God who chooses them. We may however, all be deacons or servants but again there are qualifications.

Acts 6 verse 2-4

So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

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They were men and women filled with the Holy Spirit, signs and wonders were present. Elders emerge as a gift to the Church. Approval by the Holy Spirit, recognition by the Church and the laying on of hands occurred in the early Church by the Apostles and Prophets.

Acts 14 verse 23

When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 15 verse 4

When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

Acts 15 verse 22-29

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas - Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, 23 and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

24 "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls, 25 it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 "Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth.

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28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

END OF PART 2 OF 3, CONTINUED AT PART 3 OF 3

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