

The
High
Calling
Of
God

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All quotations are from the Authorized (King James) Version.

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Preface

Majority of professing Christians claim that many words in the Authorized Version are archaic and as such, a newer and more updated English version is required to help God out to get His message to the poor folks who cannot understand the King's English. Yet we find people in the world often used "archaic" words from the Holy Bible in their publications, newspaper articles, and even in their thoughts and conversations! As to why these many so called archaic words that are still commonly used, the newer bible peddlers cannot offer any convincing explanation. Notwithstanding, many times, certain words found in the King James Bible are erroneously quoted to support a view or a certain application not intended by the Author of the Holy Bible. This is largely due to the lack of spiritual understanding from above as fallen man is not expected to be able to understand spiritual things without the illumination from the Holy Spirit of God. Sad to say, even many Christians are also guilty of using biblical words out of context to justify an erroneous view of the Scriptures or to champion an unscriptural application of a certain way of life that is contrary to the godliness and holy living required of a child of God.

So there are many words in the Holy Bible that have been misapplied by Christians as well as by people in this world. This has led to misapplication of the Scriptures and misinterpretation of the Holy Bible. When Job contending with his accusers, he exclaimed: ***How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?*** (Job 6:25) Words are supposed to be forcible when applied correctly according to biblical definition in their own peculiar ways which may be contrary to the conventional usage adopted by the people of the world. Take for example of the word "gay" in the Holy Bible which has been forced by common usage in our day and age to mean a certain perverted way of life by some individuals who are hell-bent in sinning against revealed truth from heaven. We have witnessed these groups of people twisting Scriptures to support their perversion by claiming that actually God only gives those people who are heterosexuals a reprobate mind but not those who are born homosexuals, because the heterosexuals are actually deviant in their lives (Romans 1:27&28). Hence, when the Scriptures are taken out of context, they are no more what they are supposed to mean and the verses such as Ecclesiastes 11:1&4, (***Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the***

clouds shall not reap.), framed on the wall of the sales office of an insurance company would be just as justifiable and effective in motivating its sales agents to sell insurance products to the masses for profit.

Therefore, we see how words taken out of context become strange fire in the light of biblical usage. The people of this world often regard a noble occupation such as a medical doctor, a nurse or even a schoolteacher as a calling. Some people including Christians would even consider many other occupations as callings as well. There are even Christians as ludicrous as to suggest that even a beer promoter pouring beer to her customer as a calling! Whether or not the profession of promoting and selling beer is a respectable mean of earning a living, it is rather subjective as there are many other occupations in the world that are just as respectable and even legal in the view of the people in this world. But for a Christian to accept any means of making a living as a biblical usage of the word “calling”, it would do injustice to the Holy Scriptures and it dishonours God. He has failed to rightly divide the word of truth. So if a person is unfortunate whether by circumstances or by choice whose means of making a living are immoral by nature, can this be regarded as a calling? If that is the case, is it not indirectly laying the blame to Almighty God for his or her poor and lowly state and God is also responsible for this person’s misery? In this study, we will focus on the subject of God’s high and holy calling, which has often been taken out of context by the people of this world and Christians alike to apply it in a way that is foreign to the biblical definition of this word as found in the Holy Bible. The calling of the world has nothing in common with the calling for the child of God who has been called out of darkness into Christ’s marvelous light! One call is from below while the other call is from above! Just as hell has no affinity with heaven, the calling of this world has no eternal benefits and blessings with the calling that comes from above. May God bless the study of this holy word “calling” which is being used by the Most High to accomplish His divine plan for the redemption Adam’s lost and helpless race back to their original exalted state as the sons of the living God!

Introduction

The Holy Bible has no doubt influenced the writings of many literatures in the world. Many words from the Holy Bible have been borrowed on a regular basis by the people of the world to express their thoughts and feelings as well as their understanding of their world around them. The usage of such words may not always reflect the correct usage of these words as found in the Holy Bible. While we grant allowance to the people in the world to use biblical words to convey their thoughts in writings or in conversations, we must however, never allow their communications and the way they use such biblical words to confuse, corrupt and influence our interpretation and application of the Holy Scriptures. Just like we are told in the Scripture in Deuteronomy 32:31: (***For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.***), the calling of the world is not the calling we received from God. For a child of God, his calling is a privileged calling that is way beyond the understanding of the people of the world: ***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*** (1 Peter 2:9) in which they have no hope to ever partake unless they also come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only when a sinner is called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Son of God that he is able to see the true light: ***For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*** (Psalm 36:9)

Though the world understands a calling as a special motivating force that sustains an individual in his noble pursuit in this life, the biblical term of the word “calling” has a much greater dimension that comes from the throne from above that calls an individual or a corporate group of people to a much greater purpose that is beyond the realm of this present earthly life. From the beginning of time, God calls His creation into existence and sustains them by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:1-3). Nothing can exist outside of the calling of the words of God. It is the Lord God who spoke the world into existence and it is evident that He called things into being during His creation of the world. He called light and darkness Day and Night respectively. He called the firmament Heaven as well as the dry land Earth and the waters Seas. And when the Lord God created the first couple, He gave them a calling: ***And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have***

dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (Genesis 1:28&29) So nature and man alike receive a calling from God for their respective purposes. Moreover when the Adam sinned, it is also God who first called out to him: ***And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*** (Genesis 3:9) This high calling of God from the beginning of time will never cease to be effectual until the end of days. For the Most High has been constantly calling fallen men to repentance so that they might live forever in holy presence of Almighty God.

Since the fall of man, the Most High has been calling out to individuals and groups of people to perform His divine will for the ultimate objective of redemption of fallen men. The calling of God spans the history of time and the call received by different individuals may not be exactly the same but the final outcome of this calling is to demonstrate the goodness and mercy of Almighty God as the story of redemption unfolds through the pages of the Holy Scriptures. Though Adam failed God's calling living in a perfect environment, God continues to call sinners born in Adam to walk with Him in the present evil world. He called Enoch and took him away to heaven without experiencing death. He called Noah to preserve Adam's lost and helpless race to go through the judgment of the great flood. He called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to prepare them for the calling of the nation of Israel as well as for the blessings for all the families on earth. He called Joseph to preserve lives during the famine in Egypt. God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and He also called Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. He called David to be the King of Israel and promised him a Kingdom that will last forever. He called judges and prophets to minister to the nation of Israel. God called Elijah and took him away to heaven just like Enoch. He called John the Baptist to prepare the way before the royal arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel. He called the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to die for the sin of the whole world and God raised Christ from the dead to redeem fallen man born in Adam to restore the image that Adam lost during the fall in the Garden of Eden. Through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, God calls individuals for salvation to become member of the Church, the Body of Christ. All the callings of God come with great privileges and blessings the

world can never fathom and has no part in these callings given from above. The calling of God is to eventually grant recipients the privilege of becoming partakers of God's divine nature. The high and holy calling of God far exceeds the earthly calling of the world whereby understanding this calling from above will definitely transport the child of God into rapturous joy if he will reckon by faith what Almighty God has done for him.

The calling of God never fails and it is established forever, as we understand it according to Romans 11:29: ***For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*** It is something permanent and it has nothing to do with fallen man's choice of occupation in earning a living in this life, which can change over time. Attributing man's way of making a living as a calling, especially alluding it to be of God, will implicate God being responsible for man's undesirable and wayward occupations. Such basic spiritual truth is sadly even beyond the grasp of some Christians who have been walking with God for many years. On the contrary, the calling of God comes with gifts decreed from heaven. No man can change the status of God's calling once it has been decreed from above. While fallen man may constantly change his occupations during his life on earth, he can no more claim this as a high calling of God any more than claiming he has power to stop sinning and live forever. Herein lies the distinction between the calling of the world and the calling from heaven; it is the permanency of a calling from above which no man has any power to alter or tamper with unless he is divine which of course is impossible and the uncertainty of a calling of the world that is both temporal and subject to man's experimentation.

Hence, allowing the earthly calling as understood by the people of the world to influence interpretation and application of the words of God and to infuse their short-sighted definition of the word "calling" into the Holy Bible would cheapen the calling of God given to the child of God from above. The study of the high calling of God will include the analysis of God's call for some prominent characters in the Holy Bible as well as more notably, the calling for national Israel, the divine calling of the Lord Jesus Christ and finally the calling for the Church of the firstborn. The purpose of this study is to distinguish between the earthly calling the world seeks to seduce the child of God and the high and holy calling of God to draw him nigh unto the blessed Saviour. Of course, the calling as understood by the world will be assumed to be earthly and sensual that is devoid of any eternal merits before the true and living God and as such, the worldly and earthly

calling of this present evil world will be ignored. Instead, efforts will be made to examine God's dealing with regards to the high calling issued during different time periods for different individuals for the purpose of redemption of the whole world. May a Christian appreciate what Almighty God has done for him through this study and be stirred up to return a little measure of our love to our great God and blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Earthly Calling of Dominion for Adam

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:26&27)

The desire of the Godhead to make man in the image of God is first revealed for the expressed purpose for man to have dominion over all the creatures on earth. Delight and earnestness are seen in the Godhead during this divine counsel exclaimed with the simple decision, "Let us make man in our image!" It was a spontaneous divine act and no other creatures were consulted for this great act of creation of man in the image of God. So far up till that point during the six days of creation, no other creatures were created in the image of God. Though terrestrial objects are seen to be of much more superior magnificence and power in comparison to a mere small creature-man, the creation of man is to be the crowning glory over all other creatures in the universe to bear the image of God. So despite the physical size and the limited magnitude of the sphere of influence of man, man is the only creature to be made in the image of God capable of reflecting the divine attributes and essences of the Godhead in the entire universe. While the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork, it is man that Almighty God delighted to bestow the divine image upon which man is to have this divine communion with his Creator God.

Men are originally chosen to be God's representatives upon planet Earth and to subdue all things upon the earth is their prerogative. So with the desire of the divine mind expressed and the creative power of God at work, the first man was thus created from the dust. Hence, the first calling of the first man Adam was a call for dominion, a call to dominate over all of the creatures created by God upon the earth. This calling is of such great importance that a divine blessing from above is given to the end that this calling might be fulfilled and the complete expression of the will of God be manifested before all His creatures whether angelic or human for the glory of the thrice Holy God.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. (Genesis 1:28-30)

So God blessed the first couple and this high calling from above, though an earthly calling, was made known in no uncertain terms that men were to be the supreme rulers over all other creatures upon the earth. It is indeed a great and an unmerited privilege for men to be chosen for this task and be recipient of this special favour for this calling is not given to angelic beings that appear to be far more superior in might but to mere small creatures earthbound men. This no doubt instigated the arch enemy of all goodness and truth, the rebel against true holiness and godliness, the sworn foe of the Most High, to deceive the first couple to forfeit their God-given privilege of royal supremacy with God over all the creatures upon the earth. In this way, the fallen Lucifer may seek to avenge his former lost estate, recover what was his dominion in the past and launch his next war against the Most High with the help of the men supposedly the crowning glory and joy of all the earth now become captives as the spoils of war.

With this calling and the divine order established for nourishment and sustenance of the creatures on earth, men set out in this virgin path of subduing all creatures to fulfill their high calling with blessings from above. It was a perfect and harmonious environment. All creatures whether beasts or plants know their order and the earth exudes with exuberant joy and delight under the dominion of men. Pains and sorrows are foreign to this paradise. Groaning and travails are aliens to such a blessed and carefree environment. Death and destruction are unheard of in this new world of holy orderliness. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are unified as one and all of God's subjects give glory to the Most High for His mercy, grace and benefits loaded to all His undeserving creatures.

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man,

saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:15-17)

However, notwithstanding the royal privileges bestowed by the Most High with this calling of dominating over all other creatures on earth, the first man Adam was also given the one and only restrictive commandment to observe. The penalty for inobservance is death. But what was death in the mind of the first man given life from above? Can he fathom what it would be like to experience death? Could he understand the consequences of disobedience and the tragic loss of this paradise should he willfully choose to rebel against the Most High like his predecessor, Lucifer?

The first Adam was created sinless albeit this was untested sinlessness. Adam was created as a free moral agent capable of obeying and disobeying God. He was given a free will and there was no such eternal counsel for the Most High to will the fall of man or decree that man should fall so that God might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward men through Christ Jesus. If this is not the case, this only commandment forbidding man to partake of this particular tree would be redundant and a farce. Furthermore if man were predestinated to fall, this would amount to God Himself culpable of the charge for causing the death and damnation of man. Thus God is the author and cause of the fall, destruction and death of men if Calvin's doctrine on election is true. This is clearly against every grain of all the attributes of the triune Godhead to scheme such an unjust decree and to execute such a plan, it will turn the holiness of God to a mockery.

However, if Calvinists claim that after the fall of Adam God decreed that some would be chosen to be saved without them having a free will to exercise their acceptance of God's salvation as well as God would also bypass others whom He has chosen to be damned, then this is not a decree thought out during the eternal counsel, for this is an after thought formulated in time and history after the fall of man and not in eternity past. Then this would render the Most High to be less than Sovereign who was unable to prevent the fall of man. Moreover, the thrice Holy God is seen to be responsible for the damnation of those non-elect men and their misery whom the Most High has deliberately bypassed for salvation, especially when they are now dispossessed of a free will according to Calvin's

theology and predisposed to do evil after the fall! Such foolish conjectures concerning the mind of the Most High and the endless philosophical speculation of God's eternal counsel for the elect and non-elect by Calvinists have seriously misrepresented the true attributes of the triune Godhead. If the doctrines of Calvin were true, the actual high calling of the first man is a calling of damnation and a calling to fall from grace! Such view is indeed a disgrace!

It cannot be argued that God is indirectly responsible for the fall of man for creating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and did not keep it out of reach of man. For man does not have a predisposition to evil before partaking of this tree and it is in the interest and prerogative of the Most High to put to test man's obedience and finally put an end to his probation by eventually rewarding him with the tree of life. Man is at a neutral state with no propensity to sin against God before partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In fact, men have a much greater chance to live than to die, as out of the multitudes of the trees in the earth, there is only one tree that is forbidden! Moreover, the tree of life is also planted in the midst of the garden!

Can anyone accuse God to be unjust for administering such probation to test men's obedience? Can anyone work out the statistical probability for men to fall under such a regime? It is clearly seen that man has an unfair advantage to prolong his days with the abundance of the trees of other kinds than to partake of the forbidden tree by accident. For under such a setup of a perfect environment without the curse of any kind, partaking of the forbidden tree cannot be an accident. It must be out of willful disobedience against what has been clearly revealed to be forbidden by Almighty God to partake of this particular tree. Ignorance is no mitigating factor in such a case. There is no escaping the sentence of death under this condition in paradise for disobedient of such nature. The fate of men truly lies in their own hands! Free will of men cannot be denied and predestination of men to fall cannot be accepted.

And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not

found an help meet for him. (Genesis 2:19&30)

Here is the first man Adam exercising all his authority under his disposal in the naming of the earthly creatures brought unto him. There is no interfering of his power to decide on the names of these creatures, which is his prerogative under this privileged earthly calling. So this calling of Adam comes with blessings of wisdom from above for there is no need of education of any kind to effect such an undertaking. Man is created perfect in the beginning and there is no need to partake of the knowledge of good and evil in order to walk worthy of this high calling given from above. For divine wisdom has been imputed without any other earthly assistance to function perfectly in this paradise to carry out the expressed desire of the Most High for man to have dominion over all the creatures on earth. So Adam reigns supreme as king over all the earth. The beasts are his subjects and subjected to his naming and their titles immediately effective with the Most High overseeing the proceedings.

What now Adam needs is a 'queen'! She is to be his help meet in the administration of this earthly calling. Her calling no doubt shares the same privileges and blessings from above. This calling is a calling to be fruitful and to produce offspring to replenish the earth. Man is to reign and beasts are to be subjects under this divine calling of man. The offspring of man is to inherit this same calling with its addendum privileges and blessings to rule and to subjugate all creatures on earth. Such is the original plan for planet Earth where men are to be the rulers and custodians over all creatures and matter pertaining to this earth. This order has the stamp of approval from above where the earthly calling is bestowed on men with blessings to be fruitful and multiply to replenish the earth. Under this divine setup, all creatures whether earthly, terrestrial or celestial are to give the triune Godhead all the praises, adoration, honour and glory Whom the Most High rightfully deserves. It is men's special privilege and unmerited favour that the Lord God often visits them during the cool of the day to fellowship and to have this intimate and sweet communion reserved for no other creatures but men who have been made in the image of God. What kindness and goodness from on high that men should be recipient of this unimaginable and unspeakable blessings to be objects of the Lord God's special love and bountiful care! Wouldn't men return a measure of love to this most worthy Sovereign Benefactor who has bestowed so much love and grace upon them?

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Genesis 3:1-6)

Alas, paradise would have to experience an unwanted upheaval of its kind where curse would enter to mar this perfect world and its government and the Kingdom of Heaven under the reign of men is to be shaken! For the archenemy against all righteousness has deceived the weaker vessel during an opportune moment to partake of the one and only forbidden tree among the multitudes of the trees in the Garden of Eden. It is a clear-cut case of deception by this enemy of the soul of man. It is not an upfront recruitment exercise by the fallen Lucifer to instigate men to rebel against the Most High. The father of lies challenges the woman to reconsider the veracity of the spoken words of the Almighty! This causes the woman to doubt the truthfulness of the spoken words of the Most High. She begins to add and subtract from the words of the living God. The liberty to eat of every other tree freely has been removed and the unwarranted addition of forbiddance to touch this tree has been included. Ah, indeed if the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (1 Timothy 2:14)

Up till this point, the first man Adam has not partaken of this fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and divine accountability has not been initiated. For Adam has not been deceived but the woman is in transgression and impending judgment would soon have to come. So Adam has to decide whether to obey the Lord God and keep this one and only restrictive commandment or to disobey and rebel against the words of the Almighty with full knowledge of the consequence of death, which is to

follow. Tragically, Adam chose the latter option and paradise is forever changed! The first consequence of this outright rebellion brings guilt and shame even before they are even held accountable for their action by the Most High.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? (Genesis 3:7-9) If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: (Job 31:33)

So the transgressors have to cover up their sin and seek to camouflage their nakedness by wearing fig leaves in hope of undoing their transgression and restore a semblance of righteousness before the Most High. Notwithstanding all their good works to cover up such a crime so heinous for repaying evil for good from above, they could no longer face up to this Great Sovereign Who had in the past given them this high calling which they had promptly forgotten in their transgression. Instead of exercising their God-given authority to have dominion on earth, they have to go into hiding. Men have been dethroned from their rightful office as rulers on earth! The throne has been abdicated and the crown has been abandoned due to their sin. What pinnacle of folly! What price to pay for unbelief! Men have no more liberty to come before the Lord God whom they once enjoyed sweet communion in order to ask for forgiveness and restoration. The sinners have no moral strength to approach this thrice Holy God but fear, which was once absence, has become a present reality after the fall from grace. Indeed the Scripture is true, *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* (Romans 5:6) How tragic and how the transgressors wished they had never eaten of this cursed tree! Hindsight is always perfect but unfortunately the consequence is seldom favourable! How sad to learn lessons this way instead of trusting in the words of the living God!

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee

that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:10-19)

With divine privileges given for their calling in the past, divine accountability must naturally follow in the present. Since the transgressors have no strength to seek help, forgiveness and restoration, the Divine must initiate to reach the lost! What amazing grace and what love divine that Almighty God should issue another calling for the disobedient subjects! Here is the call to the prodigal to come home. It is not a call for blessing like the previous but a call to accountability and confession. Alas, sin has deceived the man and blame shifting has become the natural trait found in fallen men. Peace and joy once naturally present in paradise now depravity and death unnaturally intrude into every facets of nature under which fallen men must live the rest of their earthly lives. From the high and lofty calling to dominate the earth, men have forfeited their divine rights and special privileges and now have to settle for a call to labour, toil and sorrow on this cursed earth for their sake! Hence the entire creation is brought into bondage as men fell prey to Satan, the adversary of their souls, till the end of time.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the

glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (Romans 8:20-22)

So the greatest theological statement in the entire Holy Bible came into immediate effect! *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:* (Romans 5:12) Man originally created in the image of God is now marred by sin. The offspring of fallen man no longer bears the image of God, which once is the intended plan. Hence, the children of fallen men could only bear the image of their forefathers with sins running in their veins. The only way to restore the original image is found in the Lord Jesus Christ: *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:* (Colossians 1:15) and this is only true for the child of God saved by His precious blood shed on the cross of Calvary, *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* (Romans 8:29)

As such, the first Adam from below lost his calling of dominance and it is to be regained and restored by the second Adam from above. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* (1 Corinthians 15:22,45,24&25) What unspeakable joy awaits those who are now born from above through this last Adam by accepting God's mercy and grace where the precious blood of Christ is ever efficacious to save sinners unto the uttermost! This calling is to be replaced with a better calling for those born again child of God through the last Adam who will one day reign as kings and priests with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lover of our soul! This is indeed paradise lost in the first Adam and paradise regained by the second Adam from above.

The High Calling of Enoch

Despite very little was known about this saint living among millions of people before the flood, he had a very unique and special calling. There were only a few verses in the Holy Bible that mentioned of him. Of course, there was another man by the same name Enoch who was a son of Cain, the murderer from the beginning, who built a city and named it after his son Enoch. This Enoch, the son of Cain, was never mentioned again in the Bible after he made a cursory appearance in Genesis 4:17&18. Perusing the Holy Bible from cover to cover, one will not find any other person by this name Enoch other than this two persons recorded in the Bible.

In contrast, this Enoch, a descendant of Seth, though having his name mentioned only six times in Genesis 5, his name was mentioned again by two different writers in the New Testament to shed a little bit more light on the life of this saint. During those days where men could quite easily live more than nine hundreds years of age and while the tree of life was still in the Garden of Eden guarded by Cherubims to keep sinners away from obtaining eternal life, Enoch did not live up to a ripe old age like his predecessors.

Though before the flood where idolatry was not mentioned to have been practiced by the inhabitants on earth, fallen men did wax worse and worse culminating in the total destruction of those sinners except for the household of Noah. The description of the evil works of those sinners witnessed by the Lord God was recorded in Genesis 6:5: ***And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*** Fallen men had become utterly corrupt and incorrigible. It was a continual practice of evil, a natural development of the fallen state of men that resulted in the destruction of men by the great flood. However, Enoch did not live to see the final rebellion of wicked men that ushered in their doom by this great flood where men had never before experienced a shower of rain from a mild storm.

Undoubtedly, Enoch was also living in appalling times. It was indeed perilous times and any godly man would seek to be delivered from that untoward generation. That past evil world before the flood was full of wickedness and filled with violence. Corruption was their mainstay and

truth had fallen unto the ground. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound even before the Seed of the woman was brought forth into the world for the redemption of fallen and helpless sinful men. So Enoch was providentially protected and preserved as a testimony of God's amazing and all-sufficient grace.

Through this man Enoch was born a man Methuselah who turned out to be the man who lived the longest in the recorded history of the Holy Bible. For his son Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years before he left the scene of that world before the flood. Such was God's goodness towards the object of His affection and His bountiful care.

Enoch was only sixty-five years old when Methuselah was born. Yet in another three hundred years time, Methuselah would be left without his earthly father leaving him to live the remaining six hundred and sixty-nine years wondering about his father's "high" calling. What had been told about Enoch was that Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Genesis 5:24). It was a simple and yet powerful approbation for a man listed among the generations of Adam in Genesis 5 where everyone eventually died.

Before Adam fell, it was a common day-to-day affair where the presence of the Lord was literally real in that the Lord God did walk in the cool of the garden to fellowship with men. What perfect fellowship, wonderful privilege and infinite joy to meet the Maker of the universe and speak with Him face to face! But alas, sin entered into the world and this divine setup of men fellowshiping with the Lord God in an intimate way was no longer possible. Fallen men no longer could walk with God having rebelled against Almighty God and bearing the guilt of failing to keep God's only commandment to abstain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But it was recorded that Enoch walked with God! What comfort to learn of such a possibility where the Divine met with the fallen! What grace and what mercy the Lord God accorded to Adam's helpless race! Did Enoch enjoy the same fellowship Adam once had before he fell? Was Enoch accorded the same privileges of that close, real and warm divine presence of the Lord God Adam had before the fall? What statement of a man written in simplicity that albeit in a fallen state, Enoch walked with God! Was it really possible? But inspiration of the Scriptures cannot be

denied. For Enoch did walk with God and it was only one among the multitudes of Adam's fallen and helpless race that Enoch had this desire to walk with God.

When men could live for over nine hundred years, dependence on God's protection and provision could easily have been taken for granted. However, Enoch had chosen the good part to have a closer walk with the Lord God. What love divine and all loves excelling, joy of heaven and earth unite in a world cursed and destined to be destroyed because of the sins of men! While not much was known about the antediluvian world, this much is known of Enoch's continuous and inseparable fellowship with the Lord. For Enoch indeed had this testimony that he pleased the Lord God.

Imagine a man like any other man living day to day doing his own things, building cities, married and given in marriage, eating and drinking, making lives more bearable and comfortable because of the curse that was pronounced on the earth, this man Enoch was oblivious to all his earthly cares. For he sought after the true source of life and sustenance and he walked with God. He had found the pearl of great price for which he willingly gave up his all and all in his earthly estate esteeming what riches the Lord God could provide than to work out his own salvation from the curse placed upon fallen men. For he could have known that it was appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment before this great truth was penned some thousand years later by another saint raised up to be a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name before kings and many peoples and to suffer for Christ's name sake.

Enoch had certainly found the fountain of youth and never to go back again to broken cisterns that could never satisfy notwithstanding the fact that the general life span of men then was well over nine hundred years. This was indeed a man after God's own heart that succeeded in attending unto the Lord God without distraction. No other men during that time had this testimony that fallen men still desired to walk with God. Sins did separate men from God. It was not God who did not want to be close to His creatures but sins made it difficult if not almost impossible for fallen men to enjoy God's presence like it once did by the first Adam. Fallen men as a whole could no longer bear to walk with God because there was this remembrance of sins notwithstanding the sacrifice by the shedding of the blood of the innocent for the guilty was already initiated after Adam's

transgression in the Garden.

Nevertheless, Enoch was an exception who had this testimony and was a recipient of God's high calling to manifest His mercy and grace upon Adam's fallen race. He was one in many millions who conquered the impossible by the grace and with the help of the God of the impossible. It was amazing grace to see God willing and able to allow a sinner to walk with Him. What accommodating grace from the Lord God! It was miraculous providence that Enoch was enabled to continue this walk of the narrow way despising the shame and ridicule of the world at large to cling unto the Maker of the universe and Author of eternal life.

Not only did Enoch walk with God, God Himself played an active role in this walk by taking him away. It was not mentioned how it was accomplished in the taking away of a man tainted by sins that run deep in the veins of the soul of this fallen creature. It must have been a long walk but a walk that could not be reckoned with earthly time that bound the creatures to planet Earth. It was a walk as far as earthly time could measure up to three hundred and sixty five years at most. It was a walk where time was no more in the presence of the Divine Being! Time had given way to eternity in such a walk. One would wonder what kind of conversation Enoch had with the Lord God. As far as the earthly walk was concerned, what had Enoch asked and done during his walk with God that pleased God, one would also wonder! Could the feat of Enoch be repeated? What impact it had on the family of Enoch concerning his testimony of doing those things that were pleasing in the sight of God, one could only speculate.

Indeed the call of Enoch was special and unheard of in the antediluvian world. The author of Hebrews revealed that Enoch was a man of faith! ***By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*** (Hebrews 11:5) Not only did Enoch walk into timelessness, he had also passed on from death destined for fallen men into eternal life before the shedding of the blood of God on the Cross of Calvary. It was beyond human comprehension and incited angelic amazement that perfect holiness was truly satisfied in this translation of a sinner into the divine presence of the celestial land promised only for the redeemed of the Lord and the usual abode of His heavenly host of spirit beings.

Enoch did see death of his fellow men. Enoch knew what death was like but what he knew not was waiver of the death sentence pronounced on sinful men. So Enoch cleaved to the Holy One who pronounced the death sentence on men and had faith that only through the Lord God was there hope of ever escaping death. Though his walk with the Lord may not be motivated purely for the purpose of escaping this bondage of death, Enoch did receive a promise that he would not see death. This indeed was what really set him apart from the rest of Adam's hopeless race where death was a present reality while execution was a final destiny waiting to happen in a moment's notice. Enoch was truly blessed with a heavenly calling where death was not part of his estate, albeit in his fallen state born of Adam listed to be seventh according to the genealogy of Adam.

Besides being called to partake of God's divine nature having escaped the pains of death, Enoch had the calling of a prophet. For it was recorded by Jude that Enoch did prophesy in Jude 1:14: ***And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.*** So Enoch did receive revelations directly from the Lord during his earthly walk with God. His walk with God was not a closely guarded secret and he was not a secret believer of the Lord. His prophecies clearly demonstrated his faith in the Lord God and he was sticking out his neck to testify of God's truth and His great displeasure over the wickedness of the inhabitants of the earth. Only a man of faith in God would dare to prophesy for God to his fellow men.

Was Enoch well received by his contemporaries? Was his message highly esteemed by sinful men? Biblical revelation proved otherwise for sinners were rapidly hastening to their doom even when God in His mercy did send more prophets to testify for Him in hope that men would repent. What was remarkable was that Enoch did prophesy of the last days of the coming again of the Lord with His saints. This message showed how far sinners had departed from the Lord God even during that time requiring the Lord God to intervene and to come again to visit His creatures in order to bring in everlasting righteousness on earth. It was several thousand years now since Enoch prophesied of the coming of the Lord and the whole creation continue to groan and travail in pain for this momentous event to become a reality.

One could only ponder how much revelations this saints received

from the Lord during his earthly walk with the Lord and his work of faith that pleased the Lord. So as far as Biblical records indicate, Enoch was the first prophet that God had called to testify to the inhabitants of the earth before the flood. What honour for a man despite the infirmities of a man born of Adam's fallen race was given this call to be the first prophet for the Lord God! What crowning glory was it for a man to be a worthy recipient of such an high, holy and heavenly calling whose calling was so high that he was eventually called out of sight beyond the visual range of the eyes of flesh of sinful men that the glory of God may never hope to see! It was a call concerning a walk with God from earthly time to eternal immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see apart from the salvation offered freely to whosoever will come to the Lord on His terms.

The Judgment Calling of Noah

And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. (Genesis 5:29)

The name Noah means “rest” or “comfort and consolation”. The calling Noah received from his father is one of a hope of rest or comfort that his father so desired because of the ground which the Lord God had cursed. Life on earth must have become exceedingly hard and wearisome since the ground is cursed because of Adam’s transgression. Hence his name was called Noah. Little did his father realize that the rest, comfort and consolation he so hoped for actually turned out to be a complete wipe out of the earthly population saved Noah and his family of eight persons during his days. For fallen men waxed worse and worse and impending judgment could not be averted because of the hardness of the hearts of those impenitent sinners living during that perilous times where violence was the norm of society. So the calling according to the will of his father did not materialize as far as the whole world was concerned. However, though what man proposed and God disposed, it is extremely comforting to find Noah approved of God where heaven smiled on him during such appalling times. This is expressed simply in ten words, ***But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*** (Genesis 6:8) What grace showered from on high that Noah out of the multitudes of sinners should be singled out to be recipient of such divine favour! The grace of God does appear unto all man during every generation regardless of the condition of apostasy on earth!

It is further affirmed that Noah indeed received the stamp of approval from God and he was set apart among peers of his generation as a just and perfect man walking with the Lord God, ***These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*** (Genesis 6:9) Because Noah was righteous before the Lord, he received a calling as a preacher of righteousness according to 2 Peter 2:5: ***And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*** So Noah is called a preacher but he is no ordinary preacher. His calling as a preacher is to preach the righteousness God expects from fallen men. For over a thousand years since the fall of Adam where fallen men could easily live over nine hundred years, never had the Lord God needed to

warn sinners that their days would be cut short, especially in such a calamitous way and in such an unimaginable scale! But who would have believed his report?

Though the population might have also heard about the first prophet Enoch prophesying the coming of the Lord God to execute judgment upon sinners according to Jude 1:14: ***And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him,*** this is the first time they were told about the drastic change of the atmospheric condition where the whole earth would be covered with a global flood if they do not repent. Apparently, the translation of Enoch in time passed serves no deterrent to fallen men who are hell bent in their propensity to transgress against God's righteous law written in conscience of their hearts. This will be true for generations to come for fallen men will be doomed to repeat history because they will never learn from history just as Isaiah lamented: ***The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*** (Isaiah 57:1)

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. (Genesis 6:11-13)

So it was against the general backdrop of apostasy and the corruption of the earth had reached such a crisis level where it was filled with violence and wickedness, thus divine intervention was required and all the sinners would be destroyed as determined by the Creator God. It was indeed the iniquity of Adam's fallen race had reached crisis proportion, especially with the Sons of God taking the daughters of men for wives that resulted in perversity of such monstrous nature that their offspring were giants in such unholy unions (Genesis 6:2-4). These angels that left their first estates must be kept in everlasting chains under darkness lest the divine redemption plan through the Seed of the woman be made impossible with the utter corruption

of every single fallen man! As fallen men in the sight of God were only continually evil whose wickedness was great, no redemptive quality was possibly found. Hence, it was under such perilous times that Noah received a calling as a builder of an ark to save his own family of eight and certain animals during the judgment to come.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. (Genesis 6:14-22)

No one since Adam called to till the ground was called to build a structure of such proportion and on such a grand scale. This must be an unusual calling for Noah. Besides having to preach the righteousness of God and to condemn the world for its wickedness, this additional calling to be a builder of an ark certainly brought much scorn and mockery upon him and his family. Who would have believed Noah's weather forecast? Just like who would believe the preaching of the second coming of Christ by the prophet Enoch, Noah's ministry is an utter failure in the sight of men. The long suffering of God with these sinners has run its due course. It is now clearly completely exhausted for they who have heard the preaching of Noah for 120 years with no slightest desire for repentance and so judgment can not be withheld any longer as much as the Lord is not willing that any should perish. This calling to build the ark includes the preservation of

animal lives! Once again, the loving kindness and tender mercy of the Lord God are ever present to preserve lives and death and destruction are only the last resort to ensure that the continuity of the drama of redemption proceeds on schedule!

And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:1,5-7)

So when the sowing by means of the preaching of foolishness during the day has ended and when night has come, no man can work! Now Noah is graciously issued with another calling, a calling to come into rest from his labour for the past 120 years of faithful preaching. What a welcome change of calling! The time of scorning and mockery has to come to an end and the servant of the Lord God must now enter into rest, comfort and consolation. While Noah and all his are enjoying their rest, the wicked world is now to face the inevitable wrath of heaven where the Most High would drown them in a flood never before seen in the history of fallen men! The doom of these wicked sinners paves the way for the renewal of righteousness to follow.

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:20)

So all hell broke loose on earth outside the ark but Noah and all those in the ark were hidden from the storm of wrath billowing on the unrepentant sinners who rejected the preaching of Noah. How sweet to hear the call to come to rest in the Lord God and now multitudes of born again children of God look forward to hear that sweet trumpet call to come up hither to enter into that promise rest! So what Noah's father hoped for in calling his son's name Noah is now honoured and fulfilled by the Lord God in giving him rest from his toils and sorrows.

And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and,

behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. (Genesis 8:13-16)

When the storm of judgment is passed, the call to go is now given to Noah. This is a new beginning for Noah issued with a new calling with blessings bestowed from above. This is a calling to go forth unto fruitfulness and blessing as well as a time to worship. This call no doubt is what Noah expected for quite a while, especially when the enemies against all righteousness have been exterminated. A brand new world is waiting to welcome its new inhabitants that have been preserved for such a time as this to rejoice in the renewed earth freed from its past corruptions of wicked man. It must be a thrilling experience, one filled with joy and jubilation that Noah and his family members are now the rightful owners of the earth prepared by the Most High. It is Noah's turn to reign on earth just like his predecessor Adam.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. (Genesis 9:1)

The call to kingship and dominion once given to Adam is now passed on to Noah and his sons. This first call to supremacy is given to Adam freely by grace and unmerited favour. However, Noah has been found to be faithful and truly a man of faith and so by default he is to be the only worthy recipient of this calling of domineering over all creatures on earth as the enemies of the Most High have been destroyed. For the Scripture says, *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* (Hebrews 11:7) Noah's uncompromising steadfastness in clinging unto the Lord God earns him this calling to be the supreme ruler over the new earth. This man Noah is said to be possessing so great faith in the Most High that his name is mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel standing together with Daniel and Job when Jehovah God threatens to destroyed all those apostate children of Israel according to Ezekiel 14:14&20, *Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall*

deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

While this first call to kingship is given to Adam during a perfect condition before sin enters into the world, this renewed calling to supreme authority given to Noah is marred by sin in which the ground has been cursed by the Most High. Notwithstanding this imperfection now existing in the fallen world, this calling for Noah to dominate the world comes with a consolation in that Creator God will not destroy the earth with such a cosmic flood ever again.

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. (Genesis 9:8-15)

Prophet Isaiah also confirmed that this promise has been given to Noah in Isaiah 54:9: ***For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.***

So the calling for men to reign on earth is once again established but the enemies of the Most High are also waiting in the wings to rob men of this privileged high calling to be rulers over all the earth. For the conflict of the ages is still raging and is in progress and the promise of eternal rest is yet to be fulfilled.

The Blessed Calling of Abraham

Having established Noah to rule over all the earth after the flood, the children of men soon fell into open rebellion against the Most High. Instead of spreading out to populate and replenish the earth as they were called, they congregated together and embarked on a mega project, which invited divine intervention once again to thwart their unholy scheme in trying to reach heaven without approval from above. Such undertaking by fallen men again stems from unbelief in the words of the living God as promised that God will not destroy the earth again by a cosmic flood. So after the Lord God confused men by giving them languages of different kinds, fallen men had no choice but were forced to spread out to all the corners of the earth. With the promise of redemption through the Seed of the woman still in progress, God scanned the earthly landscape and set His eyes upon one man to fulfill the desires of all nations that God and men might be reconciled again so that men might once again obtain and bear the true image of God once lost since the fall of Adam.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. (Genesis 12:1-4)

This man whom the Lord God chose came from the land in Mesopotamia, who was a direct descendant of Seth whom Noah had blessed with blessings of the God of heaven. This man's name is Abram whom God called to leave his kindred and country to a land of promise. So Abram received a calling to leave for a better country and to obtain an inheritance. Abram accepted his calling and left his kindred and country and by faith went to the promise land without knowing its location but trusting in the divine leadership and guidance of the Almighty for direction in the process. For it is said of him in Hebrews 11:8: *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.* Actually, this is no ordinary calling for this is a glorious calling from above

with the revelation of the glory of God. For we are told, *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.* (Acts 7:2&3)

This calling is undoubtedly necessary for fallen men having lost the image of God after the fall of Adam are now seeking a corrupted form of images as aids to worship. For Joshua tells us that they served other gods. *And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.* (Joshua 24:2&3) This call is one of urgency as well so as to separate this man of faith from corruption and for the purpose of redemption of all mankind through him. So this man Abram is specifically chosen by the Lord God, *Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham.* (Nehemiah 9:7)

The calling for this man Abram is unique in that instead of giving him a blanket supremacy over all creatures of the earth like the one given to Adam and Noah, he is given the blessing from above to be a blessing to all on earth. Abram is promised to become a great nation through him and his name will be great should he accept this calling from above. This calling also concerns others in relation to this man Abram. Those who bless Abram will be blessed and the Almighty will curse those who curse him! This pronouncement of blessing and cursing applies to his descendants after him as well. Furthermore, it is in Abram that all families of the earth shall be blessed. How fallen men are in need of divine blessing for the creation is now groaning and travailing under bondage because of the transgression of Adam!

So the mind of the Almighty is revealed in choosing this man to be the central theme of redemption from here onwards for now till the Seed of the woman come. As such, this call settles the manner in which how the God of heaven will deal with fallen men as far as earthly supremacy is concerned. Any other histories of men not dealt with in the Holy Bible is

simply set aside as far as the revelation of the plan of redemption for fallen men is concerned otherwise there will be too much unnecessary distraction from the main theme as the drama of redemption for all mankind unfolds. This does not imply that the Almighty did not have a hand in the affairs of the people of other tongues and nations not recorded in the Holy Bible but those events in the histories of men that have no direct bearing on the Messianic line, the Lord simply chooses not to record them in the Holy Scriptures.

This calling for Abram also does not mean that any other people outside of the descendants of this man Abram are sinners destined for hell fire and without any hope of salvation. The means by which fallen men are judged are based on their response to revealed truth during their time for men are given a conscience to respond according to God's law written in their hearts, ***For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.*** (Romans 2:11&12) Furthermore at this point in history, Moses is still some four hundred years before he comes into the picture. As such, this calling of Abram has to do with the Kingdom of heaven concerning the reign of men on earth under God's directive will from above. It is not a calling to grant salvation for those descendants of Abram per se but rather through Abram, the Seed of the woman will come and salvation will be made available to all men on earth through this Seed and hence all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him. In fact, many of Abram's descendants actually turned out to be enemies of God and many did perish and would be judged by the law.

Now this man Abram being called of God to leave his own country and his own folks at the age of seventy-five to receive an inheritance, it would be reasonable of him to expect to father children. Otherwise, what good is this calling for him! If there are no children born after him, this calling of Abram being the source of all blessing from which all the families on earth expect to be blessed, would become null and void after the departure of Abram thus rendering Almighty God unable to keep His promises. Ironically, the name Abram means "high father" but even at age seventy when he received the call, he still does not even have a child. What kind of father is this man when he is childless, let alone to be a high father! So with much expectation of fatherhood on the horizon and marching forward on God's high calling to the promise land, Abram waits for the

Lord for the promised descendant to be given unto him.

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. (Genesis 15:1-4)

Then some years later before reaching age eighty-five, Abram has more or less given up hope of ever having a son. Ever mindful of God's promise concerning his high calling, he reminded the Lord that the Lord did not give him any children. So he suggested that perhaps his steward Eliezer should inherit his estate. However, the Lord renews Abram with assurance that he will indeed one day have a son from his own body through his wife Sarai to inherit the blessing given to him. The waiting game has to continue and while Abram and his wife are getting more desperate and discourage as days go by. But then, no faith, no son and they simply have to learn to wait upon the Lord! *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:5&6)* Notwithstanding the fact that Abram believed God and was counted righteous before the Lord, unfortunately, Abram listened to his wife who thought they could help God out by circumventing the normal means to obtain children by using the womb of their Egyptian maid Hagar.

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. (Genesis 16:1-3) Finally at age eighty-six, Abram fathered a son but this son was not what Almighty God had in mind for him! So having walked with the Lord for eleven years on this high calling for a better country, this failure to wait

upon the Lord brings much trouble and sorrow to Abram and his true seed in the years to come. For the next thirteen years, there is no record of God dealing with Abram. Once again, no faith, no son and the waiting has to go on until the fullness of time when the Most High is ready to bestow His blessing to fulfill His promises to His servants.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. (Genesis 17:1-5)

Here after another thirteen years of waiting, the first reminder issued to this man who is called according to His purpose, is to be perfect in his walk on this high calling of blessings. In addition, Abram is given a name change and a new name Abraham is given to him which means “father of a multitude”. It had been so difficult for Abram to get a child and by his Egyptian maid, he obtained a son Ishmael who was now about thirteen years old. Abraham seemed almost content with what he did and even probably thought that through his unbelief and impatience, the promised blessing to all the families of the earth would be passed on through this son. This tragic lack of faith on the part of Abraham is evident when his wife is also given a new name Sarah meaning “mother of nations” and even when the Lord assures him of a son through her, *And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!* (Genesis 16:18) How much faith is seen here for the father of faith in his walk with the Lord!

But how gracious is the Almighty and how reassuring is this great God that despite this God-called man’s lack of faith and inconsistency, the Lord renews His promise to Abraham and gives him the covenant of circumcision for him and his seeds! *And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great*

nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. (Genesis 17:19-22) The time has come that Abraham will father a son through Sarah his wife and even the name of this son is given before he is born. How much more details does this couple require to authenticate the veracity of the words of the living God!

By now Abraham is ninety-nine years old and his wife Sarah is ninety years old. It is only when they have come to the end of themselves that the Lord God can work to perform this miracle to fulfill the promise given to Abraham. Indeed, it is not of works lest any man should boast. It must be of God and by God before the true blessing from above can be given to bless the whole world. Likewise it is under such circumstance that this man of faith can exercise faith in God and not in himself and so it is written, *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.* (Romans 4:18-22) Hence God must receive all the glory and no flesh shall glory in His sight!

But then again, the promised son will not come until his wife Sarah is also dealt with as well. *And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.* (Genesis 18:10-15) So here is the final assurance and the time for the birth of the child determined after the revelation of the name of

this son given earlier. God's promise is on schedule and on His own terms and not on fallen men's impatience.

Indeed the fullness of time has come and Abraham and Sarah will have a son. *And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.* (Genesis 21:1-6) This brings to an end all the years of waiting and all the anxiety and disappointment. How true is this proverb: *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.* (Proverbs 13:12) So in this son Isaac, the Seed of the woman will come and he will be much better than the tree of life, for He is the author and source of true life, even eternal life.

How much joy this child has brought to the family of Abraham, one can only imagine! For this is the son of his old age and the reproach on Sarah has finally been taken away. It must be like the days of heaven on earth for this family though the other son Ishmael conceived out of impatience and self will has to be driven away. Basking in the goodness of God for fulfilling what has been promised is now delivered, Abraham and Sarah must be full of thanksgiving and praises for the Almighty. Just as when Abraham is rejoicing in witnessing God bringing to pass concerning his calling to be a blessing to all the families on earth through this son Isaac, he receives an assignment that is completely incomprehensible.

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. (Genesis 22:1&2)

Imagine Abraham's reservation and apprehension, his fear and anxiety in the flesh! Could it be just a dream? How in the world can he even discuss this matter with Sarah his wife for a divine order of such nature? Is

his calling finally coming to an end? Has God change His mind? What has he done wrong to elicit such a demand from the Most High who after such desperate struggle he eventually have a son of his own? So should he or should he not obey the words of the living God? After all, the Almighty is no stranger to him by now and if an imposter issues this order, he definitely would have known. So should he trust God or lean unto his known understanding like he did in the past? The turmoil and frustration must be indescribable for this confused and troubled soul.

No doubt the promises of God concerning his calling when he was seventy-five must be flashing on his mind. Moreover, it took a quarter of a century's waiting for him to finally have this son Isaac. Twenty-five years is a long wait based on man's measure of days on earth and should he simply just give Isaac away? Who would like to be put a spot like this and who would not be troubled if he were put into his shoes? Does Abraham have faith that will move mountains? Is this order negotiable? Should Abraham reason with God? Shouldn't Abraham suggest an alternative since he has offered sacrifices to the Almighty before? Wouldn't it be a tragic waste of human life especially this one hold so dear to this old man? How can he explain this matter to his wife and ever face her again?

However by now having been dealt with on the lessons of faith pertaining to his high calling, Abraham has matured in the most holy faith. Though absolutely having no idea why the Lord who gave him this son was now going to take him away, Abraham did not fret. Without consulting his wife Sarah, and without any hesitation, he proceeds towards the mountain preordained by the Most High to offer his son Isaac as a living sacrifice. This is indeed an act of faith and to suggest anything less would do Abraham injustice for the Scripture confirms this in Hebrews 11:17: ***By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.*** For a Christian to sing the world behind me and the cross before me during such a crisis would be a real test of faith if he were given order of this nature.

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and

he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. (Genesis 22:9-13)

To God be praised for the faith of this saint who passed this test of faith with flying colours! It is indeed excellence! It is par excellence and no doubt this act of faith by this saint shut the mouth of all emissaries of hell! Though years ago when he believed God and righteousness had been imputed to him, here is faith made perfect by works! For faith without work is dead being alone! This is confirmed in James 2:23: *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.* So Abraham earns the title as the friend of God and this fact is also mentioned in Isaiah 41:8: *But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend,* as well as in 2 Chronicles 20:7: *Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?* It is evident that the Almighty is not ashamed to brag about this servant and friend of His for his faithfulness and act of great faith in offering up his only son whom he loves dearly.

Now we do see Abraham's unwavering faith. This is steadfast faith though this command to offer his son may come across as unreasonable and that he might not fully understand the divine will from above, he proceeded and obeyed anyway. For his high calling comes with a son and God has indeed given him a son. As to why his son is to be taken away, he has faith in God who is the God of the resurrection and not the God of the dead. The reasoning of Abraham for obeying God's order is given in Hebrews 11:19: *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.* Because of Abraham's obedience, we see this greatest act of love displayed that the Seed of the woman is indeed proceeding on schedule and God the Father will one day send His only begotten Son to die for the sins of the whole world. Abraham has given us this perfect picture in a figure of the prophesy of the just dying for the unjust and the innocent taking the place of the guilty.

Abraham's faith is of so much significance that the saints who died in faith before the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God are said to have gone to a place named after him in Luke 16:22: ***And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*** which is a temporary paradise awaiting for the remission of sins that are past that they may be ushered to a better place of rest and bliss. The faith of this saint is also so important that all born again children of God can trace their faith back to Abraham who is the father of all who put their faith in God according to the writings of the apostle Paul.

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Romans 4:13&16, Galatians 3:7-9,14&29)

When this act of faith is demonstrated and it is no doubt watched by angelic hosts desiring to look into this faith pertaining to the salvation of fallen men. ***And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:15-18)*** Here is the justification spoken of by James, ***Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? (James 2:21&22)*** This is the evidence of faith being made perfect by work.

The calling of Abraham is indeed a calling of mercy and grace and from this man Abraham, fallen men could be justified according to the law of faith demonstrated by this saint. Abraham has been living out this calling and this calling has been close to his heart even to the day of his death. For before he died, he instructed his servant to look for a wife from his kindred for his son Isaac who is to inherit this blessed calling so that all the families on earth will be blessed. He made his servant swear that Isaac was never to be brought back to the land from whence he came because Almighty God had called him to leave that place and be separated from those sinners who worship idols. ***For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*** (Romans 4:3) From the call he received when he was in the land of Ur at age seventy-five, though at times he faltered, he was indeed a man of faith trusting in the Lord God and righteousness was imputed to him. However, it is still God's unmerited favour that calls him from among the multitudes of fallen men to inherit a blessing, ***Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.*** (Isaiah 51:2) This calling of Abraham is a call to prepare the way of salvation for all mankind soon to be revealed through the Seed of the woman. Abraham is truly a blessed man and he lived up to this high calling expected of him and all the families on earth will be blessed in and through his faith in God but more so through his seed, the promised Seed of the woman soon to be revealed.

The Blessed Calling as a Channel of Blessing for Isaac

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. (Genesis 17:19)

The calling of Isaac is communicated to Abraham before his birth for Abraham has already received his high calling leaving his kindred and country and waiting for God to fulfill His promise of blessing him with a seed who will be a blessing to all the families on earth. This is a calling in line with the true line in which the promised Seed of the woman would come so that the image of God may be restored to those who are the children of the faith of Abraham. For righteousness is imputed by faith and not of works though works show the evidence of faith. This calling of Isaac is also purely one of grace because this is for the purpose of redemption for Adam's fallen, lost and helpless race.

It is in this man Isaac that the Almighty will establish an everlasting covenant with his seed after him. All of these in the mind of the Divine are revealed to Abraham before his birth so that the doctrine of Election might be established according to Romans 9:16: *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.* No fallen man can will God to have mercy on him on his own terms. Anyone who wants to obtain God's mercy must come to God on the terms of the Most High for the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. It is clearly stated that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9) and not some are chosen to come to repentance while others are bypassed for damnation. Hence repentance will depend on the individual whether he will accept God's terms of bestowing mercy on him. Here we see God revealing the way to obtain mercy through the calling of Isaac. *And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.* (Joshua 24:3) Thus Isaac is given to Abraham for this specific purpose that the mercy of God will be made available to all so that all the families on earth will be blessed.

So God chooses to save all men through the Seed of this man Isaac and there is no other way. When the Seed of this man Isaac born of the Seed of the woman shows up, this truth is confirmed, *Jesus saith unto him, I am*

the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6) The definitive article before the way indicates that there is only one way and no other way. As such, it is not for anyone one to will or run to obtain mercy but it is of God Who will show mercy to all who will come to His only blessed begotten Son who is the only way back to God! For Abraham has been told of this truth and has acted upon this will of God to cast out the seed of the bond woman Ishmael; ***And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*** (Genesis 21:12)

Here Isaac is called not because of anything he has done for he is called even before he is born. He is a chosen vessel to bring forth the Seed of the woman still in the future for the drama of redemption will go on as scheduled until the fullness of time to be revealed by a chosen forerunner yet in the future. This calling of Isaac is also understood by writers of the New Testament; ***Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:*** (Hebrews 11:18) and ***Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*** (Romans 9:7) Apart from being called to carry on the Messianic lineage, Isaac is called to be a type of the Son of God when his father Abraham offered him on the altar according to the commandment of God, ***By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.*** (Hebrews 11:17) So Isaac is called to be a type of the only begotten son of his father. The role Isaac participated in during his offering by his father shows the picture of the greatest love the universe will one day behold when the Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world by offering Himself on the Cross of Calvary.

As far as receiving a personal call from the Almighty like his father Abraham, Isaac has been assured once by the Lord God after the death of his father. ***And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my***

statutes, and my laws. (Genesis 26:2-5) God Himself confirms this calling to him personally! He has been assured of blessings from above concerning his inheritance and his posterity based on Abraham's obedience because of his faith in God. So the promised blessing for Abraham is passed on to him by God and not just merely by words of mouth from his father.

In a sense, Isaac also inherited the call through his father Abraham. His parents no doubt have made this call known to him while he is still a youth. The episode regarding the offering of himself by his father Abraham on the order of God undoubtedly etched a deep and lasting impression on him concerning this calling from above for his father. After all, who would not remember the incident where the close call of death nearly becomes a reality with his life cut short? How can he ever forget the cold knife of death staring him at his face when he was laid on the altar on that mountain of trial and tribulation of Abraham's faith? Moreover, how can he forget the Almighty granting him deliverance from the heavens restraining his father hands at the very last moment? There he witnessed the triumph of faith of his father and the confirmation of God's calling of blessing for his father Abraham. Indeed, Isaac is no stranger to the high calling of God. For he did ask his father where was the lamb on that mountain before he was laid on that stone cold altar. How the father and the son must have hugged each other in tears of joy and in thanksgiving to God for providing a lamb Himself! There he experientially learns this lesson of God's calling first hand and the reality of this most holy faith.

Family worship must be very real to this Hebrew family. For Abraham his father also takes great pain to ensure that Isaac will not return to Mesopotamia as well as he will not take a wife from the daughters of the land in Canaan. Hence the wife of Isaac has to be specially arranged from his own kindred through divine guidance for his father Abraham has sent his steward to find him a wife. So Abraham is taking his high calling very seriously and now Isaac in turn will have to keep this high calling of God for his family close at heart. Like his father Abraham, a man of great faith, and this faith in God surely has made a deep impression on Isaac who also participated in the offering on that mountain and Isaac is now to exercise faith on his own as well.

While Abraham his father prayed and waited till an hundred years old before he was given Isaac, Isaac prayed for his wife Rebekah to conceive at

a relatively young age of fifty-nine, *And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.* (Genesis 25:21) So by sixty years old, Isaac became the proud father of twins according to Genesis 25:26: *And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.* With this calling given from above running through the family, marriages for these patriarchs are very serious and important matter. What his son Esau did for marrying the wives of the land has become an issue for Isaac, *And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.* (Genesis 26:34&35) For Abraham has to specially import a wife for Isaac from his own people, Esau takes no such heed as far as the calling for the family is concerned. Esau is seen to be a man who is cavalier in his attitude towards spiritual things and in his manner of life, especially concerning his birthright as Isaac's firstborn which he despised according to Genesis 25:34: *Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.* Esau's ungodliness is also condemned in the New Testament in Hebrews 12:16&17: *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Having to arrest this apostasy surfacing in his family, Isaac has to send Jacob away to get a wife from his own kindred: *And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.* (Genesis 28:1) So following Abraham his father's example, Isaac charged Jacob not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan whom God told Abraham would be destroyed when their iniquity was full (Genesis 15:16). As such, Isaac is exercising faith in his calling to preserve the Seed promised long ago that will come to be a blessing to all the families on earth through his family. In fact, Isaac was so conscious of the fact that he was the recipient of this divine calling via his father Abraham that when he thought he was about to die, he told his son Esau to prepare him the a meal to receive this God-given blessing to perpetuate the calling to the next generation in Genesis 27:1-3 though it turned out that the blessing was given to Jacob through fraud.

Isaac as the son of the father of faith and to live up to the expectation as children of the faith of Abraham, he finally exercised true faith in blessing his two sons concerning things to come as summarized in Hebrews 11:20: ***By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*** The calling of Isaac is a chosen vessel to channel the blessed calling for the salvation of the whole world in time to come. For the Lord God is calling a people out of darkness into his marvelous light through this Seed of the woman yet to be revealed through this Hebrew family. Like Isaac, all born again children of God are the children of promise not born of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but born of the Spirit of God: ***Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*** (Galatians 4:28)

Since the calling of Isaac precedes his birth, his name is also of great significance. For his mother Sarah has been barren for a long time and it is indeed a great reproach for any woman to be without the fruits of the womb. So when Sarah gives birth to Isaac at age ninety, her joy is indescribable which is quite understandable, ***And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.*** (Genesis 21:5-7) This name Isaac given by the Lord even before his birth simply means laughter. Who would even think of giving his son such a name? But how befitting is such a name given from above, for this God-called man is to be the channel of blessings for all the families on earth through the Seed of the woman! Indeed all redeemed families on earth shall laugh because all tears shall be wiped away in eternity! There will be laughter without tears and joy not tainted with sorrow for those who are of the faith of Abraham born through the blessed Seed promised in this man Isaac.

The Blessed Calling of Nationhood for Jacob

With the divine plan of redemption well under way through the calling out of Abraham from the land of Ur and confirmed in Isaac, this calling from above for the blessings of all families on earth is to be passed on to the next generation of this Hebrew family. Isaac has two sons. Esau is the firstborn and Jacob his younger son. So this blessed calling will have to be passed on to either of these two sons. Unfortunately, from the life of Esau and the account on the earlier part of the life of Jacob, these two sons definitely do not possess any quality like their forefathers Abraham and Isaac to be fitting recipient of this most important calling from above.

However, even before the birth of these two boys for this unusual family, the Lord reveals the future of these two sons to Rebekah: *And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.* (Genesis 25:21-23) So it is decided that the elder shall serve the younger even before they are born! Whether Rebekah told Isaac about this revelation or whether Isaac believed her report, as far as God's calling is concerned, this will not in anyway affect the decision made from on High. According to foreknowledge, the mind of the Divine has been revealed. Jacob is to inherit this calling of blessing despite his character flaw and many other shortcomings.

Not only is Jacob chosen and Esau rejected, in the closing of the Old Testament writings, the Lord reveals His attitude and displeasure against Esau in no uncertain terms: *I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.* (Malachi 1:2&3) Is God the cause for Esau's rejection? The answer is obviously no. It is according to the foreknowledge of God that this divine calling is bestowed upon Jacob for the writer of the book of Hebrew also condemned Esau to be a fornicator and a profane person: *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye*

know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. (Hebrews 12:16&17) As Isaac's firstborn, Esau has a natural right to inherit the blessing from his father but he despised his birthright: *Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.* (Genesis 25:34) This is a very serious charge for the firstborn. Moreover, Esau also polluted his seeds by marrying wives of the land of Canaan whom God would destroy when their iniquity is full as revealed to Abraham. Thus Esau forfeited the blessed calling which naturally was his privilege and right from the beginning according to the order of birth. Hence, God's election of His servants for the purpose of executing His plan of redemption for all mankind is conditioned upon foreknowledge and the statement in the New Testament concerning Esau must be read in the proper context: *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* (Romans 9:13) So it is with regards to the overall plan in the drama of redemption is Jacob chosen to bring forth the Seed of the woman and not some individuals are chosen to be saved while others are deliberately bypassed to be damned.

So it was under such an appalling situation in the home of Isaac that Jacob received the blessings and sent out with the charge that he must never marry any daughter of the land in Canaan. *And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram;* (Genesis 28:1,6&7) While this is being observed by Esau, it is too late for him and he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with many tears, even to the extent of marrying wives from Ishmael his relatives but to no avail. This could not change what is already bestowed upon Jacob and the fate of his people is sealed.

The earlier part of the life of Jacob definitely does not smell like a rose either. For he can easily be identified with the world among those calculative schemers and plotters for personal gains to the detriment of his fellow men! Jacob's first personal calling from the Lord is confirmed to him

while he flees the wrath of his brother Esau as well as to seek a wife from his father's kindred in Haran.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee. (Genesis 28:10-22)

Unlike Abraham and Isaac, Jacob's response towards this divine promise and assurance of blessings is one of cautious optimism. He is even audacious enough to prove God by holding the Almighty to His words that reciprocal measure of acknowledgement and gratitude will only be exercised when all the words of the Most High come to pass! That is as much faith as one can exact from this man chosen to be the called according to God's purpose! What amazing grace from on high is seen that the Most High should be held hostage to such unreasonable demands and lack of reverence from this fallen man born in Adam that the long suffering of God

should prevail over such an ungrateful one! So Jacob is soon going to receive an education on scheming from his uncle in Haran.

After squaring off with his uncle turned father-in-law having married his two daughters, Jacob is about to go home when the Lord gives the green light: *And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.* (Genesis 31:3)

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim. (Genesis 32:1&2) Greeted by angels on the way home, Jacob has an unresolved issue that is troubling him. Esau his brother whom he supplanted and offended in the past is to be appeased and pacified! Facing him would be more difficult and dangerous than having to deal with his father-in-law. When conscience accuses, the troubled soul finds no peace and rest! No amount of scheming and plotting would be of much help without the divine intervention and assistance during such a time like this. This is the greatest crisis he has to face up till this point in time.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel. (Genesis 32:24-30)

So in the darkest hour of the night, this faithless man so accustomed to relying on his own might and leaning unto his own understanding has to come to terms with his own wisdom and capability. He has to come to the end of himself before the power of God might work through him as revealed to him years ago. He has to confront who he really is and confess that he is indeed a supplanter when being asked about his name. No longer can he

claim to be the firstborn when being dealt with by the Lord! Here is the call to confession for this chosen man before the call of blessing for his fathers might become a reality to him. The blessing he received from his father Isaac years ago proves to be inadequate in the light of this present danger. The blessing bestowed directly from the Almighty is what this troubled and desperate man really needs. So desperate is this broken man that he musters all his might to wrestle with the Almighty and prevails! This is indeed mission impossible! This call to inherit the blessing involves a name change for him from Jacob to Israel, the father of the children of Israel! How gracious is Almighty God who will perfect that which concerns His servants! Here is truly a new chapter and a new beginning for this God-called man.

As expected after this blessed experience having seen God face to face and lives as well as receiving the true blessing from above, the Lord undertakes for him on the matter with regards to Esau his brother. No longer does he find Esau having enmity against him but wonders of wonders that he finds his brother welcoming him home with open arms! How true as the Scripture shows: ***The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*** (Proverbs 21:1) May God's people learn to trust in the true and living God!

Jacob though already being humbled by the Lord as well as blessed, many lessons of faith are installed for him during the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage. After the episode of the humiliation of his daughter Dinah and his sons taking vengeance in their own hands, Jacob receives a call to consecration to set his household in order.

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. (Genesis 35:1-4)

Acknowledgement of the Divine's dealing and help is most important in teaching his own children true worship of the true and living God. How can this man called of God to carry the blessing first given to Abraham for the blessing of the whole world reflect this holy calling before his own children if he is not leading by example! So Jacob must walk worthy of this high calling which God has given him before his children. He must regard this as a privilege instead of a duty!

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. (Genesis 35:9&10) So when Jacob draws nigh to God, God draws nigh to him! Here is another divine visitation to reassure and confirm the blessing to him. A reminder of his changed in name is necessary to exhort this God-called man to live up to the expectation of this high calling. How often God's people have to be reminded of their calling lest our hearts grow cold towards the things of the Lord Jesus Christ!

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel. (Genesis 35:14&15) As Jacob bargained with the Almighty years ago to reciprocate acknowledgement and returning a measure of his loves when he fled from his brother Esau, he is beginning to put into action regarding his vows as the Lord teaches him that the just shall live by faith. More troubles in the home will put this man to the test of his faith in the Almighty. No doubt he has heard of his grandfather's triumph of faith in offering his father Isaac to the Lord. He is now to be his own man and steps out of the shadows of his fathers. He is required to live by faith through much trials and tribulations!

The news of the death of his beloved son Joseph must have broken his heart very sorely. But many years later when news came that Joseph is still yet alive in Egypt, this brought much joy and comfort to this aged saint. His longing to see his favourite son is understandable and so he is going to Egypt to see him before he dies. However, by now, he is so used to the reality of his calling to be possessor of this promised land in Canaan, it is also hard to make him leave. So apprehensive is this saint that while on the

way to Egypt, the Lord God assures him that he will be brought back to the Promised Land.

And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. (Genesis 46:1-4) No longer is this servant self-willed. He has learned the lessons of faith and he seeks to live in God's perfect and directive will, ever conscious of God's calling of blessing for his fathers and now for him.

So humbled is this man of faith now that when he appears before Pharaoh, his testimony is one of humility and truly a testimony reflecting his high calling that his former forte in scheming, plotting, pride and fear of men are now evidently absent: ***And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.*** (Genesis 47:9&10) In a sense, the old Jacob has died and he is now living up to the new name of Israel given to him by the Most High!

Finally, towards the end of his life, Jacob emerged as a man of faith for he blessed his children and prophesied of things to come concerning his children. ***And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.*** (Genesis 49:1&2) All those years of his natural life on earth, all those lessons of faith he has learned, he is about to reveal to his children and to confirm to them that he has indeed received a high calling from the Most High concerning the blessing of the whole world through his grandfather Abraham. It is now to be unfolded before his children that they are indeed a peculiar people, a chosen nation to the whole world to be a blessing for the salvation of all mankind. So Jacob enters into the hall of fame of the faithful and is listed among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:21: ***By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of***

Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Jacob is indeed living out his calling and his faith is steadfast towards the great and precious promises of God. He knows Egypt is not where God wants him to be and his home is in the Promised Land in Canaan. So great is his faith towards God that he charged his children to bury him in Canaan after his death. *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.* (Genesis 49:28-32) For truly Egypt, a type of the world is not his final resting place. Glory to God for choosing a man and molding him to become a worthy recipient of this high calling through which the promised Seed of the woman will come!

The Blessed Calling as a Type of Christ for Joseph

With the Patriarch Jacob finally passing from the scene, the call of blessing for the promised Seed to come first given to Abraham then to Isaac and eventually to Jacob who has twelve sons, is now to be transferred to one of these sons of Jacob. Though Joseph is not the called to be channel of this Seed for the salvation of the whole world, his calling is by no means insignificant. His life is depicted in so many ways and with unparalleled details that are so much like the Saviour Jesus Christ, Joseph is called to serve as shadows and types concerning the prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joseph is a born dreamer with supernatural skill in dreams and interpretation of dreams. He is the beloved son of his father, which naturally incurred the envy of his brethren. His revelations of his dreams concerning his supremacy over all his brethren including his parents brought wrath upon himself and his brethren plotted against him. Eventually, his brethren sold him into Egypt as a slave. This misfortune that befalls him is also part of his calling from God and as such, he prospers even under such unfortunate circumstances: *And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.* (Genesis 39:2)

Unfortunately for him but with divine providence overseeing his affair, his master's wife framed him and he ended up in prison this time. But once again, this is part of God's plan for Joseph as his initiation rite into true supremacy beyond the wildest dream for this dreamer of dreams. The Lord indeed ordains such a path for this man and surely His goodness, mercy and grace shall sustain this servant in the most difficult and incomprehensible time. So the Lord undertakes for Joseph even in the dungeon of his tribulation and opens another door of opportunity for this man to be prosperous again even under such adversity: *But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.* (Genesis 39:21&22)

The time has come when Joseph demonstrated his God-given capability to interpret dreams and his accuracy in such endeavours was

unsurpassed and all his interpretations came to pass for the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker who were thrown into prison for offences against Pharaoh. However, his time to be elevated is not yet come and he remains for preparation for greater things to come. So more waiting upon the Lord and more strengthening of his faith in the God of heaven is in order, to work out all things for good to them who love Him!

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let

Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:14-44)

Finally, it is time for Joseph to be lifted up and to execute his true high calling for his life. He is called to Egypt for a very specific purpose and this task is now at hand. For God has caused Pharaoh to dream two dreams and no one in his entire kingdom could interpret his dreams. Pharaoh's dreams are no ordinary dreams. They concern the well being of his kingdom. So Joseph is prepared for such a time like this and his appearance before Pharaoh is no accident or coincidence. He is carefully put into place where Pharaoh is to be relieved of his troubled thoughts and his kingdom preserved for such a time of trouble of monumental scale. For Pharaoh's dreams concern the prosperity of his kingdom and the demise of his people. Without Joseph to interpret his dreams, Pharaoh would not be able to prepare for the preservation of his people and his kingdom and avert the impending disaster to come. The interpretations of his dreams and the advice Joseph offers Pharaoh propel him to become the second in command in the kingdom of Egypt. For indeed the Scripture is true: *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* (Psalm

75:6&7)

Now Joseph is really living up to his main calling in administrating the preservation of lives in times of famine to come that will cause much destruction throughout that part of the world. He is only thirty years old when he is given this task to preserve men and beasts: ***And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt: And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.*** (Genesis 41:46) Although Joseph is given this specific task in preserving the kingdom of Egypt, his main mission concerns the preservation of the carrier of the promised Seed to come as well as the nation of Israel in its infant stage when his brethren will soon come down to Egypt for a confrontation which they least expect.

As providence would have it, Joseph's brethren have to come down to Egypt to purchase food for their families back in Canaan badly affected by the famine. They are soundly humbled by Joseph for selling him to Egypt and they bow to him in fulfillment of Joseph's dreams in times past revealed to his brethren: ***And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.*** (Genesis 42:6) Reconciliation with his brethren follows when they confess to their crime against their brother Joseph: ***And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*** (Genesis 45:4&5) Here Joseph reveals his understanding of God's will for him who called him into Egypt for this very purpose to preserve the lives of his family.

This eventually leads to the evacuation of Jacob's entire family to be preserved in Egypt while the famine ravaged the land in Canaan and in Egypt as well as its neighboring countries: ***And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.*** (Genesis 41:54) So Joseph is sent before hand to prepare a place for the coming of his parents and brethren to Egypt to escape the tribulation of the famine: ***And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had***

commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families. (Genesis 47:11&12) Joseph must be a happy man now in walking worthy of his calling to preserve lives, in particular, the lives of all his families now residing in Egypt.

Because of Joseph's special calling, he is called to inherit a double portion of his father's blessing which by right should go to Reuben, Jacob's firstborn: *Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)* (1 Chronicles 5:1&2) This is fulfilled in the history of the nation of Israel concerning his two sons who received a portion each on the land grant of Canaan.

This calling of Joseph for this very important mission to preserve the lives of the descendants of Jacob is not an after thought left purely to the outworking of fallen men. For Joseph is indeed led of God in all his ways to prepare for this very purpose to fulfill this high calling expected of him: *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.* (Psalm 80:1)

Joseph is ordained a man of God to bear testimony for Almighty God in the land of Egypt: *This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.* (Psalm 81:5) Joseph is indeed sent of God albeit through the hands of his brethren because of envy: *He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant.* (Psalm 105:17) Moreover, Joseph is called to manifest the shadows and types concerning the prophecies of the coming Seed, the only begotten Son of God, promised immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve back in the Garden of Eden: *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* (Genesis 3:15) Here the feet of Joseph is said to have been hurt: *Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:* (Psalm 105:18) like the Saviour of the world whose feet will be hurt.

The preparation of this man Joseph and the work of his calling is

briefly summarized in Psalm 105:19-22: *Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.* This clearly shows that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God and the Most High must send a man of God endowed with divine wisdom from above to rule the kingdom of man for the purpose of preserving the lives of men and beasts: *And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.* (Genesis 41:55)

After the death of his father Jacob, Joseph's brethren still could not accept God's calling for Joseph to be sent to Egypt for this very purpose of keeping them alive so that the promised Seed of blessing for the whole world would eventually come.

And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father. And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. (Genesis 50:14-18)

Being struck by a guilty conscience, his brethren begged Joseph for forgiveness and the dream he dreamed a long time ago of having supremacy over all his brethren is living out to its fullest extent. So Joseph has to once again reassure his brethren that he is indeed called of God for this very purpose to sustain and nourish them during such a time ordained of God: *And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his*

father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. (Genesis 50:19-22)

Like his father Jacob who made him promised never to bury him in Egypt, Joseph likewise gave order concerning his bones to be taken from Egypt during the visitation of the children of Israel by the Almighty when they went back to their promised land in Canaan.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. (Genesis 50:24-6)

Like his fathers specially called of God to receive a promise, Joseph is a man of faith who knows full well his lot is not in Egypt but is called to Egypt for the very specific purpose to preserve lives during his time and the future glory of his inheritance still awaits future fulfillment as the drama of redemption proceeds on its course according to the divine calendar. He is painfully conscious of the high calling of his forefathers beginning with Abraham and will one day become a reality for the blessings of all the families on earth through the promised Seed to come.

The Prophetic Calling as the Law Giver for Moses

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. (Genesis 15:13)

Those words spoken to the Patriarch several hundred years ago are about to be fulfilled. The words of the living God are sure and steadfast and nothing will fail. The iniquity of the Amorites is maturing and payback time is at hand.

And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour. (Exodus 1:6-14)

History confirms the verity of God's revelation to His servant Abraham. So Abraham's seed is afflicted according to the words of the Lord after the death of Joseph called of God to preserve lives and beasts in Egypt as well as all of Jacob's descendants. The God of eternity foreknew what would happen in history and chose to allow the course of history of fallen men to unfold but at the same time intervened by calling man to fulfill the greater scheme of things concerning the redemption of Adam's lost and

helpless race.

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive. (Exodus 1:15-22)

Not only are the children of Israel afflicted in their bondage, a systematic program of genocide is now in place to quench the Seed promised along time ago since the fall of man and then through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob so that the drama of redemption of men might be terminated. On the human level, this genocide is justified on the ground of preservation of the kingdom of Egypt but on the spiritual level, Satan and his cohorts are actively engaging in spiritual sabotage through the children of disobedience to prevent their own doom. Now is the time for the Divine to act. However, in order for divine visitation and deliverance from above, God's people must exercise faith for: *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. (Hebrews 11:23) In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three month: And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. (Acts 7:20&21)* So a man is born during this troublous time but miraculously preserved even in the very household of the one who engineers the complete destruction of the Jewish race. How true of the Psalmist to conclude: *When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. (Psalm 76:9&10)* Who would have performed such a

feat apart from divine assistance!

And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water. (Exodus 2:10) Having been rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, the household of Pharaoh paid for the upbringing of Moses destined to be elevated to authority in the Kingdom of Egypt: ***And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*** (Acts 7:22) But Moses is no ordinary man! He is a chosen vessel, a God-called man to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and to deliver them from bondage. Moses is also a man of faith for: ***By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*** (Hebrews 11:24-27) Unfortunately, for a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds albeit, a man of faith, such qualities are not good enough for the mission to lead God's people to the Promised Land!

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. (Exodus 2:11-15)

The wisdom of the world acquired in Egypt tells this man of faith to flee in times of trouble! Could not this man stand up to Pharaoh for the oppression and injustice done to the children of Israel all these years? The wisdom of this world is indeed earthly, sensual and devilish which proves

incapable of confronting Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go to serve the true and living God. Hence, Moses needs an education and has to be sent to “Arabia” which the apostle Paul also went to learn the finer arts in the most holy faith. Moses needs forty years of reflection and contemplation on the majesty of the Most High in order to deal with his own divine calling. He has certainly heard about the calling of his forefathers and their glorious victories in their lives but now he is languishing in the wilderness to learn to be still before the God of his fathers. Not only must he learn the true arts of stillness before God and patience to wait upon the Lord to serve Him without distraction, he must also unlearn all the wisdoms of the world so that such wisdoms will not become a liability for his future endeavours to lead God’s people into the Promised Land.

Finally, Moses is about to graduate from the school in the wilderness majoring in the sound of silence and he will shortly be called upon as the sole graduate for the convocation as the greatest man ever lives to lead several million people for another forty years wilderness trip in the desert. With these forty years of training in the desert, Moses is now capable of having his spiritual senses tuned to hear the still small voice of the Most High and to receive this most prestigious call from above to lead the children of Israel into the land promised to their fathers of yester years. Now he is a fit candidate for divine visitation just like his forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have had in the course of their lives to receive their callings.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:1-6)

This is just another usual day for Moses but he met an unusual

incident that will forever change his life. Moses has been away from the noise and distraction of the world in Egypt for coming to forty years and he has been quieted down substantially. While Moses has been familiar with the quiet surrounding of the desert, he is sensitive in picking up unusual phenomenon that is quite unlike the usual setting of the vicinity. As Moses carries out his task of minding sheep, he chances upon a unique welcome into the presence of the Most High. Not only he sees God in this unusual sight of the burning bush, which is not consumed in the burning, he holds a conversation with this Divine Being and he fears to set sight upon this Divine Visitor. Like his forefathers of old who received their callings, Moses is in a position to be commissioned for a task that will become the center of all conflicts in the world of the history of fallen men. He is about to bring the children of Israel to their land promised to their fathers to become a nation and to be a light to the Gentiles manifesting the true holiness, righteousness and glory of the Most High ruling over all the kingdoms of the world. Here is a reaffirmation that the same God who called his fathers is now speaking to him and calling him to continue with the next phase of the drama of redemption of Adam's fallen race.

And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. And they shall

hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. (Exodus 3:11-18)

But now, Moses being so accustomed to his simple way of life in the quietness and romance of the desert, he is no longer the sure and confident man mighty in words and in deeds some forty years ago back in Egypt. He is now a broken man! He is a nobody by any man's standards. He is just a simple shepherd minding sheep, a lowly occupation and in fact, an abomination to the worldlings in Egypt. Here Moses gives excuses and he needs assurances from the Almighty. His unwillingness to accept the call is seen from the very beginning. More specific instructions are given to Moses and the Most High is to be identified as the God of the fathers of the children of Israel. What an honour and what a privilege! Nowhere in the history of men has the God of Creation ever said to be the God of a chosen race of people in distinguishing the children of Israel from other people! So the Jews and Gentiles are separated! The middle wall of partition is instituted and the commonwealth of Israel is to become a reality soon.

And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. (Exodus 4:1) Having been rejected by his brethren some forty years ago seems to be so vivid as though it was yesterday. Moses is still living with this rejection complex though forty years have passed. How seriously he harbours the hurt of rejection by his own people and he still refuses to forgive and forget! He is seriously not willing to take up the call!

And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. (Exodus 4:10-12) With more assurance including signs and miracles given, more excuses from Moses were the response. This man used to be mighty in words and in deeds is now excusing himself from the high calling to lead a nation. He has

completely forgotten he wanted to be a leader of his people some forty years back. The opportunity is now before him. The vacancy is available but Moses refuses to be the leader he wanted to be all along.

And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. (Exodus 4:13) His rejection of the call is final and he is now begging to be excused from this divine calling. What a shame! It is graduation time but Moses refuses to graduate. What have forty years of training from the school in the desert taught him? Is he unwilling to get out of his own comfort zone to do a work for the Almighty? Moses is now wallowing in his own melancholic depression. He is not interested in any calling let alone one that requires going back to the place of failure and rejection! He is no longer the confident man he used to be. He has renounced all his worldly wisdoms which failed him in the past. He has no more wisdom to count on and he could not muster any courage to do anything but to mind sheep in the wilderness. He has no idea what he is going to do and he is completely bankrupt as far as wisdom, talent and influence are concerned. Little does he know that it is precisely with these conditions of his that the Most High can use him and work through him to manifest His power in this broken man. It is in this way that the Almighty will get all the glory for anything accomplished for the children of Israel and no flesh shall glory in His presence.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs. And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. (Exodus 4:14-19) Years ago, Moses' forefather Jacob wrestled with the Lord to get a blessing but here the Lord wrestles with this man to get him on his feet to be the man he ought to be to fulfill the high calling expected of

him. God is angry with this faithless man, a man unwilling to exercise faith after forty years of reflection and contemplation in the wilderness. Fear of man is no longer a mitigating factor in his bargain with God for he has been told those who would harm him are now dead. The Almighty has to beat him into shape in order to get him onto his feet to start running again. Moses has been handicapped by his past failures for too long and has accepted his lowly and unaccomplished state as fate. Or perhaps he has gotten so used to this indifference for his own people and he has forgotten he has been miraculously preserved since birth for such a time like this to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage. So finally, after much reluctance, Moses begins to move into action after forty years of laidback life without much action for the things pertaining to God.

And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. (Exodus 4:28-30) The journey of a thousand mile starts with one step. The first step has been taken and the children of Israel have been informed of the coming deliverance. They have been told that the God of their fathers is visiting them again and to gather them as a people to worship the true and living God. *And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.* (Exodus 7:7)

And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (Exodus 5:1) The next step to issue the call to Pharaoh has begun. The same Moses who has to flee Egypt is now back with a vengeance determine to make right what has been wrong these four hundred years of injustice towards the children of Israel. What worldly wisdom fails him in times past to garner a revolution for his people; he is now empowered by the promises of the Most High to confront Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go! *And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.* (Exodus 5:2) Of course it would be naïve to expect the enemy of righteousness to meekly consent to such a request.

Actually, Moses fails to tell Pharaoh the exact words that Almighty

God wanted him to hear: *And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.* (Exodus 4:21-23) The threat to kill Pharaoh's son is not conveyed to Pharaoh. This is no an empty threat. It has been determined according to the foreknowledge of God that Pharaoh will not let the Hebrews go: *And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.* (Exodus 3:18-20) So the stage is set for the conflict between the God of Heaven and the Egyptians who worship idols.

The more Pharaoh refuses to let the Hebrews go the more severe the judgment falls on Egypt. *And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.* (Deuteronomy 6:22&23) *Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day; And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror; And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey;* (Jeremiah 32:20-22) The final straw that breaks the back of Pharaoh is when his own son is killed because of his own obstinacy and rebellion against the Most High: *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and*

all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. (Exodus 12:12, 29-32)

So Almighty God executed judgment upon Egypt and set the children of Israel free: *For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.* (Numbers 33:4) Pharaoh finally let the children of Israel leave Egypt. But that night has become memorable for the children of Israel: *And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib.* (Exodus 13:3&4) *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.* (Hebrews 11:28) Moreover when Moses leads the children of Israel out of Egypt, the bones of Joseph is not forgotten: *And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.* (Exodus 13:19)

That is not going to be the end of the story yet for the Almighty will exact a complete destruction upon the Egyptian army and Pharaoh and He gives the children of Israel a song to sing for many years of this great and wonderful deliverance from above. *And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.* (Exodus 14:5-8)

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians

whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. (Exodus 14:13&14,21-31)

The Lord is indeed a Man of war: *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?* (Psalm 76:7)
The devastation of the enemies of God is complete and a song is given to the children of Israel to be sung for perpetuity.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will

exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. (Exodus 15:1-19)

This deliverance of the children of Israel is of so much significance with regards to the parting of the Red Sea that even the saints in heaven will also be singing this song of Moses: *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.* (Revelation 15:3) Moreover, this crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel is reckoned as a type of baptism: *And were all baptized*

unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Corinthians 10:2) To go through this baptism in the Red Sea, faith in the true and living God is required: ***By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*** (Hebrews 11:29) Now the first phase of God's calling for Moses is completed with its primary objectives all accomplished, Moses is soon embarking on the second phase of his mission which proves to be more challenging and more difficult than his confrontation with Pharaoh.

The children of Israel are a stiff-necked and ungrateful people. No sooner after being delivered from bondage, they complain and murmur and wish to go back to live in Egypt. Apparently, with all the great and mighty signs shown to them in Egypt, their evil hearts of unbelief remain unchanged: ***In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.*** (Deuteronomy 34:11&12) They have no faith in the God of their fathers. They have no faith in Moses' leadership. While Moses is up on the mountain with Almighty God to receive the law, the children of Israel ask Aaron to make them a god to lead them into the Promised Land.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus 32:1-6)

Because of this incident, the children of Israel nearly asked to be

obliterated from the face of the earth but Moses prayed for them. *Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you. Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.* (Deuteronomy 9:8,13,14,19&20)

Such provocation is of the Devil who seeks the destruction of the Jewish race so that the coming of promised Seed might be halted. Though the anger of the Most High is appeased, still about three thousand perished: *And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.* (Exodus 32:25-28)

Furthermore, when the children of Israel is supposed to enter the land promised to them, they rebelled against the Lord and believed the report of those spies who have no faith in the true and living God.

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their

sight. And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. (Numbers 13:30-33; 14:1-4) These ungrateful stiff-necked people turn their back against the Almighty and seek to return to bondage in Egypt! How foolish! So quickly they have forgotten the signs and wonders done for them in their deliverance and flight from Egypt and now they are seeking to go back to the place of affliction.

Once again, Moses prayed for them and they were temporarily spared: *Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.* (Deuteronomy 9:23-26)

Because of Moses intercession for the children of Israel, he is given the “privilege” for phase two of his calling to wander with the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years. *And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land*

which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still. (Numbers 14:26-38)

This is his second forty years in the desert! Given a choice, no doubt Moses would prefer to march on to the land flowing with milk and honey immediately. However, those men he is leading refuse to obey God. The burden Moses has to shoulder is getting heavier by the day and he has to get strength from the Lord to continue in his walk on his high calling. Even before they refuse to go into the land promised them, they have been murmuring and complaining along the way and indeed Moses is at his wits' end: *And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?* (Numbers 11:11&12) Now having been condemned to go for a wilderness trip for forty years with these stiff-necked people, Moses despairs of life and requests to die: *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.* (Exodus 32:31-34)

Indeed this second phase of his calling proves much more difficult than the first. Moses has to continue to bear with the murmuring and complaining of the children of Israel. He has to put down rebellion and deal with the children of Israel fornicating with their enemies to corrupt their race and worship false gods. Moses is in an unenviable position in a leadership role which no one would volunteer if given a choice, for these people prove to be an exceedingly ungrateful, forgetful and rebellious people. While Moses faithfully serves the Lord during this second phase of his mission, unfortunately, one incident of intemperance and indiscretion causes him to lose the real privilege of the next phase of his calling; that is, to bring the children of Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey this time.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. (Numbers 20:7-12)

Instead of speaking to the rock to bring forth water for the children of Israel, Moses disobeyed the Lord by smiting the rock. This action of Moses distorts the picture and type of the prophesy of the crucifixion of Christ. Christ is the Rock, which is not to be smitten twice and thus crucifying him afresh to open shame! This offence is so serious that Moses forfeited his calling for the next phase of the operation to bring the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Here Moses buckles under pressure after all these years of relentless trouble from these stiff-necked people! How tragic and how sad to have his mission cut short for one folly for this man who is so meek as Moses! *The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all*

the people of whom thou art afraid. (Deuteronomy 7:19) All that the Lord God has done for the children of Israel means very little to them and they soon forget the goodness of Jehovah God. The stubborn children of Israel just prove to be too much for Moses. It also causes the death of Aaron!

The call to lead the children of Israel now falls on another man, Joshua, who has been faithful being one of the two spies who did not rebel against Jehovah God! *And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.* (Numbers 27:18-23) The hand over of command is now taking place and the charge to march on to the Promised Land is finally at hand under the new leadership of Joshua.

Though Moses pleads with the Lord but the mind of Jehovah God cannot be changed. *But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.* (Deuteronomy 3:26) Having forfeited his privilege to enter the Promised Land, the next best option is just a glimpse of this land that is flowing with milk and honey. *And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.* (Deuteronomy 34:1-5) It must be a sight that is filled with sadness

for this man of God. The past glorious victories in Egypt and the subsequent faithful services for Jehovah God in the wilderness could not avail for this one occasion of disobedience in discharging his duty for this high calling for him. So here is the end of the life of this meek and faithful man having walked the last mile of the way up Mount Pisgah.

And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel. (Deuteronomy 34:7-12) This man Moses is so great that his body is not buried by fallen men for the Lord buried him. For Moses did not die of sickness or old age. Having close communion with Jehovah God day in and day out has caused his face to shine and the children of Israel could not bear to see his face. He has eternal life resonating through him so much so that his body becomes an issue of contention by the devil! *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.* (Jude 1:9) Not only so, Moses is seen with a glorified body with the Lord Jesus Christ on the mountain in Matthew 17:2&3: *And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*

Notwithstanding his moment of folly, Moses is indeed a great man and no other prophet has the privilege of conversing with Jehovah God face to face. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after.* (Hebrews 3:5) He is the man responsible for giving the law to the children of Israel: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* (John 1:17) So Moses is called to be a lawgiver to the children of Israel. Although rejected by his brethren, the Lord called him and raised him to be a ruler over the children of Israel: *This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.* (Acts 7:35) Before his departure, Moses prophesied of the coming Greater Prophet like him which is the Seed promised since time immemorial to be a

blessing to all the families on earth: *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.* (Acts 3:22,7:37)

It is through this man, called of God to be a deliverer that the children of Israel are set free from bondage through great signs and wonders: *And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.* (Deuteronomy 26:8) No other prophet born in Adam has a greater call than this man Moses! The divine plan for the redemption of fallen men proceeds on its course though the leadership has passed on from Moses to Joshua. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.* (Psalm 78:5) After Moses, the children of Israel are bound by the laws given to them and these laws will permeate every fabric of the society of the nation of Israel, for their national existence as well as spiritual and material well-being depend on their observance of the law of Moses. The Law of Moses is to be part and parcel of the national life of the nation of Israel called to be the light of the world through which the Promised Seed will someday come!

The Military Calling of Joshua

When Moses, the servant of Jehovah God, forfeited his privilege of bringing the children of Israel into the Promised Land, Joshua is called of God to take over this next phase of the operation for the conquest of Canaan. Unlike Moses who receives forty years of training in the world in Egypt which he has to unlearn and another forty years of training in meditation and reflection while minding sheep in the desert, Joshua receives his training on-the-job while serving under the leadership of Moses. Joshua is Moses' chosen young man who abides with him: ***And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.*** (Exodus 24:13) When the children of Israel rebelled and make a false god to worship while Moses is up in the mountain with Jehovah God, Joshua is not among those sinners at base camp. Instead, he was waiting for his master Moses below the mountain and when Moses came down to confront the rebels, Joshua thought that the noise of the wicked celebration of worshipping the false god was a noise of war: ***And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.*** (Exodus 32:17) Moreover, during a military conflict, Joshua is the chosen captain to lead the children of Israel in physical warfare while Moses intercedes on the mountain: ***And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.*** (Exodus 17:9&10)

Joshua is also a man of godly jealousy jealously guarding the interest of his master, Moses: ***And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!*** (Numbers 11:27-29) Furthermore, Joshua is also brutally loyal to the faith of his fathers trusting God to bring them into the Promised Land immediately: ***And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us***

into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. (Numbers 14:6-9) Because Joshua has been fiercely loyal and faithful, he not only deserves the right to enter the Promised Land while his peers all died, he also earns the privilege to be the captain of the children of Israel to lead them in this conquest of Canaan: *Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still. For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.* (Numbers 14:30,38,26:65)

To prevent rebellion by the stiff-necked children of Israel after the death of Moses, Moses is commanded by Jehovah God to appoint Joshua to be their captain: *And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.* (Numbers 27:18-22) There is no room for politics in the works of Jehovah God. The works of the Most High is done through divine appointment. There is no democracy where fallen men have the right to decide for themselves the leader they prefer or they like or the person who can work well with them. No committee is ever formed to undertake such a task for succession for spiritual work even in the church age!

No doubt Joshua's spiritual and leadership qualities surpass his peers and he is the best choice both on the human level but more importantly authorized divinely from above to be the next leader for the children of

Israel. Can Joshua step out of the shadow of Moses and be his own man? Such consideration never enters the equation in any handover of command to carry on with the work of God. The most important qualification for spiritual office is faithfulness to God: ***Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.*** (Numbers 32:12) It is not just talent and talent alone will not suffice in the spiritual warfare with the Devil and his cohorts. So Joshua obtains his approval both of God and men for indeed he has proven himself over all these years in his faithful and loyal service to Jehovah God under the leadership of Moses.

Joshua not only receives a lot of training serving under Moses, but what is more crucial is encouragement to go on in spite of insurmountable odds. Moses is also specifically commanded to give Joshua much needed encouragement: ***But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest.*** (Deuteronomy 1:38,3:21) There is no feeling of jealousy or bitterness on the part of Moses to pass on the baton to Joshua to run the next leg of the competition for they are competing as a team on Jehovah's side and not competing against each other: ***And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.*** (Deuteronomy 3:23-28) This is indeed the correct and proper response of a Godly man acknowledging the will of the Lord God as final and non negotiable with regards to the directive will of God. Though during a moment of lack of temperance Moses forfeited his call to bring the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, the posture of his heart is still right with

Jehovah God. There is no place for self-pity and unhappiness when the Lord decides to use someone else in the great battle for the glory of God.

So Joshua is appointed and specially charged with the undertaking to bring the children of Israel to the land promised to their fathers: ***The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee.*** (Deuteronomy 31:1-3,5-7,14,23)

So Moses died and Joshua takes over the leadership and he is about to bring to pass a conquest that is supernaturally aided from above to ensure victory and a complete devastation of the enemies of Jehovah God. ***And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.*** (Deuteronomy 34:9) Joshua is now his own man for his master has been gathered with his fathers. He has to rely solely on Jehovah God for his master Moses is no longer around to offer him counsel.

Besides receiving a charge and an appointment to lead the children of Israel from his master Moses, such an important mission will not do without

divine visitation and a calling from above to confirm his divine appointment. *Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* (Joshua 1:1-9)

Now the promise to their fathers that the children of Israel will inherit the land in Canaan will soon become a reality after such a long time. For the children of Israel are ready this time to take the promises of God seriously after forty years of wilderness wandering. *Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it. And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; Until the*

LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising. And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage. And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. (Joshua 1:10-16)

With the divine calling given personally from Jehovah God, Joshua is now the man in charged as he goes solo and the children of Israel obey him for the Lord has magnified him in the sight of the people: *And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.* (Joshua 3:7,10,4:14)

Finally, the reproach of Egypt is removed and the children of Israel are in a position to receive blessings from above to move into their new homes in Canaan: *And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.* (Joshua 5:9) Like Moses who receives his calling at the burning bush, Joshua receives his final go ahead to launch his first strike deep into enemy territories from the Lord of Host: *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the*

captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15) Such wonderful assurance from the Lord Himself is no doubt needful and welcomed before the first clash of swords and spears on the battlefield. Joshua is assured that he is not fighting for victory but he is fighting from victory because the battle is of the Lord! All is needed now is to believe in the words of the living God: *And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.* (Joshua 6:2)

How sweet the first taste of victory and how effective the fear of the children of Israel and the fame of Joshua strike deep into the hearts of the enemies of Jehovah God! *So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.* (Joshua 6:27) Joshua not only exhibits exceptional leadership capability and military knowledge, he is such a man of faith that while in the midst of slaughtering the enemies of God, he prays to God to have the sun stand still for the whole day to facilitate the complete destruction of their enemies! *Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.* (Joshua 10:12&13) This is more than faith that moves mountains! It is faith that causes the sun and the moon to remain stationary! Who would have even thought of such a possibility? Who would even dare to pray for such an event to take place? It is unimaginable in the mind of fallen men! It takes great faith to make such a request of global proportion and Jehovah God is pleased to honour the request of this faithful servant! It is amazing beyond comprehension what this incident has caused to the rest of the world not involved in the conflict in Canaan land during that time. Did it strike fear in the hearts of sinners all over the world during that day for such an event like this? No one can possibly explain and evaluate the impact on fallen men all over the world on that day because of Joshua's prayer to have his enemies completely destroyed.

So the Lord grants victories to the children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua. In fact, many of their enemies are killed by the Lord

than by the children of Israel for the Lord fights for them. The land is divided to them according to the instruction given by Moses: *And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.* (Joshua 21:43)

When it is time for Joshua to depart having fulfilled his high calling as the captain of the children of Israel to give them rest, he gives the children of Israel a challenge and a choice to make up their mind who they will serve. *And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.* (Joshua 24:1&2,14-19)

Before Joshua died, he managed to make a covenant with the children of Israel to serve the Lord God. *And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he,*

the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. (Joshua 24:21-26) Truly Joshua is a great man used greatly by Jehovah God. He is the privileged man called of Jehovah to bring the children of Israel into the land promised to them in the past and the nation of Israel established in their own home land is now a reality.

Joshua is indeed a loyal servant and a faithful man. The bones of Joseph is not forgotten when Moses took them when they left Egypt more than half a century ago is now under the care of Joshua. As Joseph made the children of Israel promised to bring his bones with them during their visitation from Jehovah God, his bones are buried in the land promised to them. *And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.* (Joshua 24:32) No God-called man would want to remain in the world and be left in a strange land; for they seek a city and a better country prepared by Almighty God.

The calling of Joshua is of much significance as he is called to be a type of Christ who will lead the children of Israel in conquest and give them rest from all their enemies. He is so much like Christ that the author of Hebrews identified Joshua as Jesus in the New Testament to signify his type and calling as Christ to give the people rest. *For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.* (Hebrews 4:8) The children of Israel are now at rest in their own land and the promised Seed is coming according to schedule. This phase of planting the children back in the land in Canaan under the leadership of Joshua is now complete after their fathers left the land for Egypt more than four hundred years ago. The Greater Joshua will appear some day to give all His people eternal rest.

The Kingly Calling of David

When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

The request by the children of Israel to have a king to reign over them is foreknown of God. In fact, to install a king to reign over Israel is also part of God's directive will for the nation of Israel when certain conditions are met. Actually, it is the Most High who is reigning over the children of Israel initially through the Judges raised up by God. However, the children of Israel rejected God's way of reigning over them through those Judges and they asked for them a king, which tantamount to rejecting God's overall reign over them: *And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* (1 Samuel 8:7) So the actual rejection is directed at God and they despise the way and the means in which the Almighty chooses to use to rule over His people.

And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. (1 Samuel 10:19) This fact is

made known to the children of Israel in no uncertain terms for they have been rebellious since they come out of Egypt. They have been a stiff-necked people all these while and their national life is characterized by apostasies and revivals through men of God raised up to keep the nation together. Their desire to have a king to reign over them is primarily motivated out of conformity to be like the other nations around them. ***Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.*** (1 Samuel 8:4&5) In essence, the way in which the Almighty has appointed men to rule over them is no longer acceptable to the people. They want a king just like other nations not because they want to honour God or seek His will or His glory! They want to be like the rest of the nations and they have become worldly instead of a light to the world!

So the people got their first king, Saul, which turned out to be a national disaster! ***But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.*** (1 Samuel 13:14) As such, Almighty God in His mercies looks for a man after His own heart to establish him as king over the children of Israel by sending the prophet Samuel to anoint David with oil and prepare him for the throne: ***Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.*** (1 Samuel 16:13)

Then when the appointed time comes for David to be inducted to the political establishment of Israel, he is tossed into forefront of battle with the giant Goliath where no man in Israel dared to confront this wicked enemy of the Most High. When the men of Israel go into hiding, David approaches king Saul and volunteers himself to take on this enemy: ***David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them.***

And David put them off him. (1 Samuel 17:37-39) This man called of God to be the next king of Israel puts no trusts in the arms of the flesh. Previous confrontation with the animal kingdom has taught him that it is the Lord who will fight his battle and will deliver him from evil. His only confidence is in the God of Israel whom this wicked enemy has come to defy. It is for the honour of God and to uphold the Holy name of the God of Israel is David motivated to fight this foe.

Armed with true faith in the God of Israel, David confronts this enemy and killed him: ***Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.*** (1 Samuel 17:45,48,49) This monumental event forever changed his fortune! Suddenly, David is ushered into the limelight of the children of Israel both in the ordinary citizenry as well as the ruling machinery. David can no longer remain as the ordinary shepherd boy tending to his father's sheep. He is shot to fame with this feat in killing this gigantic enemy when no one in Israel has the courage to confront this evil one.

David is well received in the king's court and even the king's daughter falls in love with him. Most important is the true friendship and brotherhood he gained from Jonathan, a good man, the king's son who spoke well of him and delivered him from evil: ***And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.*** (1 Samuel 18:1,3,4) Indeed such friendship is hard to come by and what more when it is from the king's son next to succeed his father's throne, who is not envious of his success! David found a true friend born in royalty yet most unassuming in all his ways.

Unfortunately, David's fame also brings him much trouble! ***And it***

came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. (1 Samuel 18:6-9) This present king rejected by the Lord has an inferiority complex and so he seeks to kill David. He is painfully aware of his rejection by the God of Israel having disobeyed the order to exterminate the Amalekites: *And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.* (1 Samuel 15:18,19,22,23,28,29) These words have been ringing loud and clear in the head and conscience of this disobedient king. No doubt he is fighting against God's will to preserve the posterity of his own kingdom for his sons but in vain.

And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually. (1 Samuel 18:12,14,16,29) As expected, king Saul fails in his many attempts to get David killed because the Lord is with David. So David is blessed and preserved by the Lord as well as prospered in all his ways before God and men. There are two occasions in which David could have killed king Saul but he withholds his hands because he does not want to lay hand on God's

anointed king. This kind of work is best left to others to perform for who can destroy the Lord's anointed and be guiltless!

Eventually king Saul died for his own transgression: *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.* (1 Chronicles 10:13&14) The will of the God of Israel is now fulfilled and David shall be the next king, a man after God's own heart, who will rule the people of God well. He will rule the people in justice and righteousness.

And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. (2 Samuel 2:4,11,5:1,3,4) *And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel. Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.* (1 Chronicles 11:2&3) So David ascends the throne of the kingdom of Israel according to the words of the living God. Most importantly, this new king is a man who is very sensitive to the will of the God of Israel: *And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.* (2 Samuel 5:12) He knows full well that he is installed as the king over the children of Israel for a special purpose. Though he knows he has the mandate from heaven, he knows it is for the sake of the children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whom the God of heaven has promised to place in their own homeland and bless them so that

all the families of the earth might be blessed. *So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts was with him.* (1 Chronicles 11:9) This much of his calling is clear to him.

During his reign in Israel, he brings the Ark of Jehovah God to Jerusalem and desires to build a house for the Lord. Unlike his predecessor, David is truly a spiritual man who has the interest of the God of Israel at heart. For he establishes worship in Jerusalem and appoints singers to sing before the Lord: *And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.* (1 Chronicles 15:16) So music in worship is institutionalized for the nation of Israel under the leadership of king David. Though David is not allowed to build a house for the Lord God, he receives a promise that his son will build this house, which the Lord God will set His heart there. Moreover, instead of David building a house for Jehovah God, he is promised that God will build him a house forever.

Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom

for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. (2 Samuel 7:5-17)

How many men born in Adam truly seek after God and have God's interest at heart? If only more men are interested in seeking to do the will of God, how much more blessing will be bestowed upon this sin cursed world! No wonder David is called a man after God's own heart for he is the first man mentioned in the Holy Bible who desires to build a house for the true and living God! His desire is motivated by the blessings that the God of Israel has bestowed upon him for he has considered how much he is blessed and he wishes to return a little measure of his love to his blessed God: *And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies; That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.* (2 Samuel 7:1-3) This is no doubt the mark of a God called man; a man called to be a ruler over God's people, the children of Israel.

The response of this God called man after being conferred the honour of God building him a house is worthy of note: *Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.* (2 Samuel 7:18,20,26) It is a response befitting a man who understands grace and favour the Lord bestows upon him who is most unworthy to be a recipient of such mercies and honour from the Most High. It is an acceptance of God's blessings with confidence and full of faith in the God who promises will fulfill this promise to the very end. There is no mark of unbelief in the words of the living God in the response of this man called of God to be the captain of God's people. What a man chosen to be the king of Israel! No doubt his loyal subjects will benefit much under his reign and

prosperity is to be expected under such a man sitting upon the throne to judge righteously on the behalf of heaven: ***And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.*** (2 Samuel 8:15) So the kingdom of heaven is to be instituted with Israel as the head as long as the king and his people follow after the God of Israel.

However, the call of David has a more significant role in the overall plan for the redemption of fallen men born in Adam. Through this man David is to come a King of the Jews, the Messiah of the whole world, who will rule over all creatures great and small in the physical and spirit world: ***Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*** (Isaiah 9:7) This throne of David is not just limited to the territorial jurisdiction of the nation of Israel. ***And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*** (Isaiah 22:22) ***Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*** (Jeremiah 23:5) Justice shall be done in the earth and not just in Israel for this King is King over all the earth! ***In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.*** (Jeremiah 33:15)

Not only is the Messiah, the Seed promised long ago back in the Garden of Eden after the fall of Adam and later promised to come through Abraham is to sit upon this throne, David himself shall have a pivotal role in the Kingdom Age ruling and reigning with this Saviour of the whole world. ***And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.*** (Ezekiel 37:24&25) ***Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.*** (Hosea 3:5) David will one day be a prince over the children of Israel reigning together with the King of kings for these words are spoken

by the prophets long after David has died waiting to return to fulfill the plan of the Most High for planet Earth. Furthermore, before the children of Israel went into captivity in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah also speaks of the same event which will take place one day in the future: ***But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*** (Jeremiah 30:9,33:22) Even when the children of Israel were in captivity in Babylon, this same promise is confirmed by the prophet Ezekiel: ***And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.*** (Ezekiel 34:23&24)

So David receives not only a temporal call to be king over the children of Israel, his call to reign extends into the Kingdom Age when Israel is truly at rest when the Messiah is reigning on earth. David will one day come again for this call is guaranteed by the Almighty for he receives the sure mercies from above: ***Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*** (Isaiah 55:3) God's mercies once given are forever sure and no foe can take away from him these sure mercies bestowed by the Most High for the throne of David will be established according to the words of the living God: ***And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.*** (Isaiah 16:5)

Like all men born in Adam, it is time for David to depart having fulfilled his duties on earth: ***Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.*** (1 Kings 2:1-4) Here is the testimony of a dying man having walked faithfully with

God and fulfilled his calling giving instruction and admonition to his son who will sit on this throne.

Even before he dies, he still remembers the building of the house for the God of Israel and specific instructions are given to his son to ensure this work continues after his departure: *And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.* (1 Chronicles 22:5-9) Though David is not given the privilege to build this house for the God of Israel, his earnest desires to ensure that this house is built compel him to make abundant preparation for the building of God's house while he is still alive. Clearly this man has the interest of his God at the deepest recesses of his heart for David the psalmist also said: *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.* (Psalm 84:10) How much he longs to reside in the house of the Lord is evident for all to behold!

This man called of God to be the captain of the people of the Lord is also well known to be the sweet psalmist of Israel: *Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.* (2 Samuel 23:1-3) Through this man will come the King over all the earth to rule in the Kingdom of heaven and all families of the earth shall be blessed according to the promise given to the patriarch Abraham.

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly. (1 Kings 2:1012) But the call this man David receives will not end with his death for he will one day come back to rule with the King of kings as a prince over the children of Israel as prophesied by the holy prophets called of God to reveal part of God's plan of redemption for fallen man. ***Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.*** (1 Kings 8:16) The promise of the Almighty is bona fide and this call given to David will surely come to pass as sure as the sure mercies of David! Moreover, the same sure mercies of David is extended to all who will hear the Greater Son of David, the Messiah who will establish the throne of His glory in the Kingdom Age!

For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. (Psalms 122:5,132:11,89:14) Indeed this glorious throne to come is a just throne and shall be established by mercy and truth: ***Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*** (Psalm 85:10) What the psalmist said here will be fulfilled in the Greater Son of David and truly all families on earth shall be blessed in him! What a privileged call David received to be a vessel to bring forth the Son of David, this Blessed Seed to come promised long ago!

The National Calling of Israel

After Noah's flood, men are still united with a common language though the distinctive races have begun to emerge via the three sons of Noah. The calling of a nation comes after the episode of the confounding of the languages of men. This is necessary, as men finally have to scatter all over the earth to fulfill the calling of replenishing the earth. However, they bring along with them their own consciousness of what happened to their fathers before the flood and the knowledge of the Divine Being dealing with them after the flood, especially the pivotal event of Babel, which is quite unexplainable as to why they suddenly can no longer communicate with one another. Their consciousness of the Godhead has been corrupted and they begin to rely on "aids" to worship and created images to represent what they perceive to be the divine being or influence that have an impact on their way of life. So we are told that the people served other gods: *And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.* (Joshua 24:2)

So the God of Creation scans the earth and looks for a man to issue him a call to become a great a nation to be the light of the world. This chosen man is Abraham: *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:* (Genesis 12:2) and the early history of this nation is revealed: *And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.* (Genesis 15:13&14) This early history of the nation chosen of God is fulfilled in Abraham's grandson Jacob and his children: *And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.* (Genesis 46:3&4)

Having fulfilled the four hundred years as strangers in Egypt, the nation of Israel is to be established in her own land promised her by Almighty God. So Moses is called to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt

with great signs and wonders to go to their Promised Land. It is indeed remarkable how the God of heaven is intensely interested in the affairs of the fallen race of Adam to the extent of calling out a nation to be His chosen people! As sinful men wander further and further away from the true and living God, every nation begins to have her own gods to safe guard their own national interest! They become corrupt and seek after gods of their own making according to their own imagination. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* (Romans 1:18-23) Because of the rampant practice of idolatry after the flood, the nations are quickly corrupted.

So the calling of a nation as a people to be representatives of the true and living God is absolutely necessary to combat the false gods that these nations worship. They are to distinguish themselves from the idolatrous nations and to be a light in this sin cursed world waiting for the Seed of the woman to come to redeem fallen men from their sins. *And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?* (2 Samuel 7:23) Not only Israel is Jehovah God's chosen nation, she is reckoned as God's first born son: *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:* (Exodus 4:22) The calling of this nation is called in righteousness to be a light of the Gentiles through which this nation will bring forth the Messiah of the whole world: *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.* (Isaiah 42:6&7)

The nation of Israel has a privileged calling to be an holy nation and a kingdom of priests: *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* (Exodus 19:5&6) They are to be Jehovah God's representatives and ambassadors! This nation is born out of adverse circumstances whose people are absorbed as slaves in cruel bondage in Egypt. At one time, a nation wide genocidal program was even carried out in an attempt to extinguish and reduce her male population. Their independence as a nation is one of unexplainable phenomenon because their birth as a nation in their own homeland resulted in the utter devastation of their host nation Egypt: *Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?* (Deuteronomy 4:34) Their birth as a nation is not the result of a man made revolution that ushered in the collapse of the host nation and gained independence on the soil of the host nation in Egypt. For they have no intention to overthrow the Egyptian government and dethrone the king to seize power in their land. Human logic would dictate that should the children of Israel desire deliverance from their cruel bondage and fulfill their national aspirations, they should have rebelled and overthrew the Egyptian government and freed themselves of their tyranny, which humanly speaking would be definitely justifiable after hundreds of years of cruel bondage! *And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?* (1 Chronicles 17:21) This question is unanswerable as far as human logic could offer. It is the prerogative of Almighty God to choose these people. It is purely an act of grace. It defies common sense as to why the children of Israel should not overthrow their Egyptian captors and inherit their land, as even the people of Egypt are ready to rebel seeing their land has been destroyed and many lives perished in their confrontation with Jehovah God because of the stubbornness of Pharaoh.

But the children of Israel have a special calling according to the plan of the Divine Planner of the affairs of fallen men! Instead of sacking the

entire Egyptian court after the complete devastation of their land and seize power to rule over both great and small in Egypt, they left their land and proceeded to the land of Canaan promised to their forefathers of yesteryears. For the nation of Israel is called to be recipients of the oracles of God: ***And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*** (Deuteronomy 4:8) ***Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.*** (Nehemiah 9:13-15) Indeed they have a special calling to inherit the blessings of Creator God: ***Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*** (Psalm 33:12)

Remaining in Egypt would be too shortsighted. Their land is a land flowing with milk and honey promised to them by Almighty God. It is a land promised to Abraham whom God called to make a great nation so that all the families on earth shall be blessed! The children of Israel are commanded to remember the beginning of their national existence: ***And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.*** (Deuteronomy 26:5-9) This root of their beginning is never to be forgotten by the children of Israel. They are a privileged people who have obtained special favour to be God's chosen people and to be a light to the Gentiles!

The Independence Day of the nation of Israel is celebrated in remembrance of their great deliverance from Egypt. This event of their

departure from Egypt has become reckoned as the first month of the nation of Israel. ***This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.*** (Exodus 12:2) This is the month in which the Passover is observed whereby the Lord God spared the firstborn of the children of Israel on the basis of the blood of the lamb applied on their doorposts while all the firstborn of the Egyptians perished. This event is so significant and important that the children of Israel are commanded to observe from year to year that points to the perfect Lamb of God who will be sacrificed for the sins of the whole world! In fact, this is the most important aspect of the calling of the nation of Israel; that is, to be the nation to bring forth the Saviour to the whole world. ***And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.*** (Numbers 9:5) The children of Israel are to keep this Passover without fail for this is a very important type and shadow of the coming of the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

So the nation of Israel is a nation specially chosen by Jehovah God for the purpose of manifesting His holy laws and holiness to the nations of the world. ***For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.*** (Psalms 78:5; 105:10; 135:4; 147:19) ***The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. Harken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.*** (Isaiah 9:8; 51:4) The nation of Israel is to be the light of the world with respect to the Gentile nations in the world because Jehovah God has chosen Israel to manifest His righteousness through this nation. ***What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*** (Romans 3:1&2) ***Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the***

truth in the law. (Romans 2:17-20)

For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:6-8) The national calling of Israel is further explained that the criteria are not based on any goodness or superiority on the part of the children of Israel. It is purely an act of divine grace bestowed upon these people because of the promise to their fathers. On the contrary, the children of Israel have been notoriously rebellious. In fact, the obstinacy and rebellion of the children of Israel are denounced with no uncertain terms.

Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? (Deuteronomy 9:6&7,13,24; 10:16; 31:27) The children of Israel are indeed a very stubborn people who have little faith. In spite of all the great signs and wonders they witnessed in Egypt whereby the nation was almost completely destroyed for their sake and their deliverance was spectacular to say the least with the parting of the Red Sea, they complained and murmured and even provoked Jehovah God by worshipping the golden calf they made to be their god! Their belligerent behaviour and lack of faith prompted even their leader Moses to seek a confirmation and an assurance from Jehovah God not to abandon them: ***Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation***

is thy people. (Exodus 33:13) Towards the end of his life, Moses condemned the children of Israel as a nation void of counsel and understanding: ***For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them.*** (Deuteronomy 32:28)

It is a national shame for this nation that constantly backslides for the God of Creation has specially chosen them and called them to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Because of unbelief, they failed miserably in spite of all the great signs and wonders shown to them. Their hardened hearts are quickly turned out of the way to follow after false gods and resulted in bondage to their enemies whom Jehovah God called them to destroy. Their national history is characterized by apostasies and deliverances through judges and prophets Jehovah God graciously raised up to turn them back unto Him. Had not the God of Israel took pity upon His people, they would have been destroyed long ago where their enemies are eagerly waiting in the wings to do the bid of Satan to wipe out God's chosen people: ***They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.*** (Psalm 83:4) As such, their enemies have defeated the children of Israel many times whenever they sinned against Jehovah God by worshipping false gods!

Not only Moses condemned the children of Israel as a disobedient and gainsaying people, condemnation through the mouths of other prophets are also recorded. ***But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.*** (Jeremiah 7:28) So the children of Israel are removed from their Promised Land and carried away to Babylon and even then, the charge against their rebellion is still unchanged for the people are indeed rebellious to the core and are unrepentant even during their captivity: ***And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.*** (Ezekiel 2:3) However, even after their return to their homeland after seventy years of exile in Babylon, they are accused as a nation to have robbed Jehovah God! ***Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*** (Malachi 3:9) What national shame is this, to be granted relief from their bondage in foreign lands and to be planted again in their own Promised Land and yet incurred the curse for robbing God as a nation! How tragic and what a choice the God of heaven made to choose

these people! *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* (Romans 5:20) How gracious is our God and His longsuffering is indeed immeasurable!

Tragically, when the Seed promised to come through Abraham and now through this nation of Israel arrived, they soundly rejected their Messiah and King! *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.* (John 1:9-11; 19:14&15) Words would fail to describe such national ignominy! How will the nation of Israel ever blot out such national shame from their record! How will such stinking reproach ever be erased from the annals of their history forged on the anvil of rebellion! Because of their final rejection of their Messiah and King, the children of Israel are left without a King and stripped off of their pride of their laws and feasts as a holy nation and a kingdom of priests! *For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.* (Hosea 3:4) Their punishment is the dispersal of their national life as a nation wandering as strangers in the Gentile world and often times persecuted and perished for their crimes on rejection and crucifixion of their own King. So they have been driven from their homeland for nearly two thousand years! It is only in modern history in these last days that they are gathered again as a nation in 1948 in preparation for the final consummation of their exalted position as the head of nations according to divine plan for the calling of this nation. *Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.* (Hosea 3:5)

But then again, Israel is God's elect nation. This nation is indestructible in spite of their many failures as a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. *For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.* (Isaiah 45:4) For Jehovah God looks beyond the temporal setback of this nation in time and the divine plan for this elect nation in the

future is still awaiting for its consummation: *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.* (Numbers 23:21) *That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.* (Psalm 106:5) The nation of Israel is promised divine protection and preservation unknown to any other nation on earth! They are a people specially chosen as a nation to be Jehovah God's representatives on earth. Their spiritual and material well-being are conditioned upon their obedience to the laws given them by their prophets raised up by God.

Despite the blindness of this nation, Israel is set apart from other nations for the glory of God: *The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name.* (Jeremiah 10:16) *Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.* (Isaiah 55:5) The promise of restoration of the nation of Israel to her exalted state is as sure as the calling given to this nation. *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King. Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.* (Isaiah 42:6; 43:1,15; 44:21; 45:4,25; 48:12; 49:3,5) Indeed this is her comfort and assurance notwithstanding her many failures in living up to her national calling as an holy nation and a kingdom of priests.

Meanwhile, the nation of Israel though restored back to the land of Palestine since 1948, blindness in part continues until the fullness of the Gentiles is fulfilled. While the nation of Israel is still unable to recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King because of their unbelief and even as they persecute Christians due to their blindness, Christians are exhorted to remain humble, as they have been grafted into the true olive tree while they are wild by nature: *For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.* (Romans 11:24-28)

Indeed it is through the fall of the nation of Israel is salvation come unto the Gentiles for the expressed purpose of provoking them to jealousy. *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.* (Romans 11:11) It has been foreknown of God that the nation of Israel would fail of their calling yet Jehovah God still chooses to use this nation to fulfill the divine plan for the drama of redemption of the entire fallen race of Adam. Even as the nation of Israel fails to recognize their Messiah, the Gentile nations receive their calling through this Messiah that they have rejected. *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* (Isaiah 65:1) *But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.* (Romans 10:19) So the self-righteous nation of Israel is to be provoked to jealousy by the acceptance of the Gentile nations of the Messiah whom they have rejected. *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they*

sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Romans 9:30-33)

However, the salvation of the nation of Israel will only come when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. It will definitely come to pass according to the prophecies of the prophets of old. *Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.* (Isaiah 66:8; 60:22) *And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.* (Micah 4:7) *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.* (Isaiah 49:6) *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.* (Zechariah 12:10,12; 13:1) *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* (Jeremiah 23:6)

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to

enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of

their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore. (Ezekiel 37:1-14; 21-28)

This blessed event has been waiting to be fulfilled for a long time while the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. What a wonderful day it would be when the nation of Israel is finally converted and restored to her exalted state living out her calling to the fullest! *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.* (Psalm 14:7) It will indeed be a glad day for it is in the promised Seed of Abraham through the nation of Israel are all the families on earth to be blessed. *And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.* (Deuteronomy 28:13) *But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.* (Isaiah 61:6) Meanwhile, the nation of Israel has been set aside by God during the times of the Gentiles. *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?* (Romans 11:12) The conversion and exaltation of the nation of Israel will usher in an age of unprecedented riches and blessings upon all the nations on earth: *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.* (Habakkuk 2:14)

The High Prophetic Calling of Elijah

The unique calling of the nation of Israel also accompanies the calling of the law and the prophets for this God-called nation. This calling of the law and the prophets is mentioned five times in the New Testament. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* (Matthew 7:12; 22:40) *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.* (Luke 16:16) *And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* (Acts 13:15) *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.* (Romans 3:21) So the law and the prophets bear witness of God's calling and dealing with the nation of Israel until John the Baptist during the transitional period between the Old and the New Covenant. While the calling for the giver of the law is given to Moses, the representation of the prophets is embodied in one particular prophet, Elijah.

This man Elijah shares some similarity with Moses as a miracle worker. Like Moses, Elijah performed many miracles in the sight of Israel and in judgment of the false prophets and wicked men of the apostate Northern Kingdom of Israel. This man Elijah appears on the scene during a time of great apostasy under one of the most wicked kings of Israel who married an idolatrous wife Jezebel from their northern neighbour. The influence of Jezebel in the political and religious life of the nation is strewn with her treachery and wickedness that ensnarled the kingdom whose ignominious history remains a constant shame for the nation of Israel. *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.* (1 Kings 16:31; 21:25) So Elijah is called during such a time to bear testimony for the God of Israel to turn the children of Israel back to the true and living God.

Elijah is introduced to the Northern Kingdom of Israel to confront the

great apostasy that is taking place under King Ahab whose reign is largely influenced by his wicked wife Jezebel. Elijah is no ordinary prophet called just to pronounce judgment in the near and distant future on Israel because of her apostasy. He is also given great power like Moses to perform miracles to authenticate his calling for the Jews require a sign (1 Corinthians 1:22). He begins to demonstrate that God is indeed not pleased with this nation by proclaiming a famine to judge the people of the Northern Kingdom. ***And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*** (1 Kings 17:1) While Elijah is called to pronounce judgment, he is also called to sustain life during the time of this famine: ***But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.*** (Luke 4:25&26) The reproach here for the nation is exceedingly clear where the widows in Israel perish but the widow in a foreign land from where Jezebel came and enthroned with Ahab is preserved.

And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. (1 Kings 18:1&2) So when the time for this judgment is to end, Elijah is called to bring back the rain to the land for he has been instrumental in bringing on the famine. But before the rain can come to restore and revive all things, a spectacular confrontation with the prophets of the false gods must take place to show who is ultimately the true and living God who is in control of the elements of nature. So the stage is set and the battle is about to begin. The challenge is issued to determine whether the god of the false prophets or the God of Israel whom Elijah serves is the true and living God.

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves

four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac,

and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (1 Kings 18:17-46)

This contest is actually initiated by Jehovah God who called Elijah back to Israel to testify to the children of Israel their folly and unfaithfulness to the God of Israel who is their protector and provider but they choose to depart from the true God who has given this nation a calling to be the light of the world. As expected the false god Baal that the children of Israel have chosen to rely on could not answer the prayers of his followers when they needed him most. Even when his followers desperately offer to perform penance by cutting themselves to appease this false god but to no avail for heaven simply remains mute. The heaven is silent and there is no answer of fire to consume the sacrifices his prophets have prepared for him! Moreover, when Elijah mocked their god Baal, Baal could not even offer an answer to his challenge. So to add insult to injury, Elijah “handicapped” his opponents by filling the surrounding trench and altar together with the sacrifice with water to silence the mouths of the false prophets and calls for fire from heaven to consume his sacrifice. This act of faith and the accompanying

answer of fire immediately from heaven is nothing lack of spectacular in the sight of the enemies of God and the children of Israel. It is a clear demonstration of the awesome power and might of the true and living God of Israel. It is also clearly a resounding confirmation for the true prophet of Jehovah God to the children of Israel. The result of this miraculous heavenly fiery consummation of the sacrifice prepared by Elijah brings an end to the fence sitters who were halting between two opinions. This divine demonstration of the power vested in the true prophet of Jehovah God also resulted in the execution of the false prophets of Baal as well as the ushering in of the long expected blessing of rain to heal the land. Here comes the end of the judgment of famine on the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

While it is indeed true that Elijah is a great prophet, it is equally true that he is just a man like any other fallen man born in Adam: ***Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*** (James 5:17) No doubt the victory on Mount Carmel brought great satisfaction and confirmation for this prophet of Jehovah God but the nation of Israel is practically unchanged from her waywardness. As for Elijah, the great victory won did not keep him on this mountain top experience of triumph and faith for very long. The enemy of all righteousness Jezebel is still wielding her royal power as queen and she immediately seeks revenge for her prophets that were killed by Elijah during that contest of manifestation of the true God! ***And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.*** (1 Kings 19:1&2) Unfortunately the response of this prophet used greatly by Almighty God did not rise up to the occasion but fled for his life: ***And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*** (1 Kings 19:3&4) How sad and disgraceful is the response of this great prophet of Jehovah God who fled on the threat issued by a wicked woman. The enemies of God must be rejoicing over this desperate flight of the prophet of Jehovah God who tormented them. His past victories over the prophets of Baal is now turned into a farce. So when

reason recovers, Elijah seeks to terminate his life due to shame. Had he wanted to die, he could have remained in Samaria to confront the wicked queen and die a martyr's death for the God of Israel. Why run away on a mere threat from a woman when he could have been cut to pieces on Mount Carmel before the false prophets and the equally disloyal and disobedient children of Israel who had suffered for more than three years of famine because of him? So Elijah is indeed a man of like passion like any man born in Adam. He has come to the end of himself like what Moses experienced who also asked to have his life taken away after he was so vexed with the children of Israel who had been constantly provoking the God who delivered them from the fiery furnace in Egypt.

However, Jehovah God gently ministers to this discouraged prophet by providing for his food and drink through means beyond human comprehension. *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.* (1 Kings 19:5-8) His sustenance comes from above when all men fail him. How gracious is Jehovah God for if men were to minister to Elijah, they would certainly turn out to be physicians of no value and probably mock the prophet to scorn for being frightened by a woman. While fleeing from the wicked Jezebel, Elijah has an appointment with Almighty God to renew his calling and continue with his prophetic ministry to the children of Israel.

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And

after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. (1 Kings 19:9-19)

Surprisingly, there was no reprimand for his failure to stand up to the wicked Jezebel. Instead, Elijah is called to prepare for the removal of the wicked King Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Elijah is also reassured that he is not alone standing for Jehovah God during this appalling time when the nation is generally apathetic towards spiritual things for the nation of Israel. So Elijah has to continue to walk worthy of his calling especially now after this episode of failure and renewal to fight the good fight of faith. He is to mentor a successor after him who is also specially chosen and called to the prophetic ministry for the children of Israel. So like Moses, he has an audience with the Holy One of Israel for forty days in the Mount. Herein lie the parallels of the law and the prophets called specifically to complement the call of the nation of Israel. Moreover, Elijah is also given the privilege to hear the still small voice of Almighty God in the midst of the convulsion of the elements in his natural surrounding. So Elijah is very much like Moses in the sense that Moses hears the voice of Jehovah God speaking to him face to face in the Mount and he likewise hears the voice of God speaking to him personally during this time of distress in the Mount. Such appointments with Jehovah God face to face on the Mount confirm their personal calls as the

law and the prophets to the nation of Israel.

During the ministry of Elijah, he performed many miracles. He called for a famine on the land of Israel. He sustained the widow's family during the famine. He prayed for the return of the rain to end the famine. He raised a child back to life. He called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. He called down fire from heaven to consume the soldiers sent by the king to arrest him. Such is the power and authority given to a man to change the course of nature to fulfill his calling as the true prophet of Jehovah God. But most importantly is the divine appointment he has to attend across Jordan where he will be ushered into the presence of the Holy One of Israel without having to go through the baptism of mortal death. Only one man before him, Enoch, has this privilege of translation from mortality into immortality. Elijah is a special prophet called to be recipient of such a wonderful privilege and honour. On top of all those miracles Elijah performed, he did one more miracle before he was taken away from the earth. Like Moses and Joshua before him who parted the Red Sea and Jordan River, Elijah also parted Jordan to prepare the way to meet Jehovah God. *And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.* (2 Kings 2:1,8,9,11) So Elijah is transported into the heavens with a vehicle sent from above leaving behind his testimony and his work to be continued by his successor to this prophetic ministry for the nation of Israel.

Elijah is indeed a very special prophet called of God for the children of Israel. He is not called just to manifest the power of Almighty God vested on him but he is to show the children of Israel the way and prepare them for the coming King of the Jews born of David, the promised Seed to bring blessing for all the families on earth. He is a prophet much spoken of by the children of Israel. His testimony and his life work, especially his amazing translation into heaven, have left a very deep and unforgettable impression

on the collective consciousness of children of Israel. So during the times of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, the children of Israel inquired whether they were Elijah sent back to earth to prepare them for the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. For all of Israel have heard about his translation and his coming again in the future. Moreover, Elijah is mentioned in the closing of the Old Testament that he will certainly come again: ***Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*** (Malachi 4:5&6) This undoubtedly elevates Elijah to a very unique position for his calling. For the children of Israel will look towards this man in the future concerning the coming Kingdom where Israel will become the head of all the nations as the light of nation to the Gentile nations at large.

So during the time of John the Baptist and Christ, the people questioned whether Elijah has indeed return to Israel. ***And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?*** (John 1:19,21&25) ***When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*** (Matthew 16:13&14) As such, Elijah being mentioned in the last two verses of the Old Testament will remain as the prominent character to look for by the Jews with regards to the calling of this nation. Elijah is reckoned as a national hero in the eyes of the Jews and many seek to emulate his examples and his heroic deeds including the disciples of Christ: ***And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*** (Luke 9:54) Though Elijah has a prominent role to play for the nation of Israel, the Jews are curious including the disciples of Christ as to how Elijah will fulfill his calling in the latter days for the nation of Israel. ***And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.***

(Matthew 17:10-12)

This prophet Elijah occupies such an important position in the nation of Israel that during the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, an angel is sent to proclaim that this child to be born shall go in the spirit and power of Elijah: ***And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*** (Luke 1:17) Apart from Moses the prophet and lawgiver well known to the children of Israel, Elijah is a person that is most watched by the children of Israel concerning their kingdom promised to them by Jehovah God. Like Moses, Elijah also appears together with Moses and the Lord Jesus Christ in a glorified state in the Mount of Transfiguration: ***And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.*** (Matthew 17:1-4) This honour of being with Christ in a glorified body is only shared by the representatives of the law and the prophets specially called to minister to the children of Israel. Elijah is so deeply etched in the national psyche of the children of Israel that even when the Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, they thought Elijah would come to His rescue: ***And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.*** (Matthew 27:46-49)

The special role given to the prophet Elijah for the nation of Israel is unmistakable. His calling as a special prophet apart from other prophets is made clear in the Holy Scriptures. For Elijah to complete his calling as this special prophet to the nation of Israel, he will have to come again in the latter times during the time of Jacob's trouble where the nation of Israel is now set aside will become the focus of Almighty God's purpose of redemption for the whole world. Given the similarity of showing signs and

wonders to the children of Israel, Elijah and Moses will be the two witnesses to come back during the last days to minister to the nation of Israel again. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.* (Revelation 11:3-12)

While Jehovah God buried the body of Moses which is disputed by Satan and Elijah being caught away into heaven without seeing death, the next time when they come to fulfill their calling, they will have to undergo the baptism of mortal death for a temporal moment only to be caught away again into heaven in the sight of all the sinners on earth. It is only then that the ushering in of the long expected Kingdom Age where the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David, to bring in everlasting righteousness on earth, where blessings for all the families on earth would materialize. So the complete calling of Elijah is held in abeyance for the moment to be completed in the future at a time of God's choosing to deal with the nation of Israel again. Meanwhile the children of Israel will have to watch for this great prophet Elijah to signal the end of their humiliation and bondage and be elevated to the true nature of their calling as the head of nations in the world.

The Holy Calling of John the Baptist

While Elijah has a very special calling as a prophet to the nation of Israel and has been caught away to meet the Holy One of Israel without experiencing mortal death, it has been prophesied that he will come back to Israel again in the last days to prepare the nation of Israel to accept the promised Seed of Abraham, the Greater Prophet prophesied by Moses of old. In fact, other prophets have also made mentioned about this coming forerunner to announce the coming of the Greater Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ, like unto Moses to restore all things for the nation of Israel. ***The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*** (Isaiah 40:3) ***Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*** (Malachi 3:1) ***Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*** (Malachi 4:5&6) So with the Old Testament closed with the last two verses proclaiming the coming again of Elijah, the nation receives no more visions and prophecies from Jehovah God and a period of four hundred years of silence descends upon Israel. For Jehovah God has been exceedingly displeased with this rebellious nation. Even when they have been restored to their own land after seventy years of captivity in Babylon, they have not learned their lessons and by and large, they are still a very stiff-necked people. Moreover, they have brought a curse upon themselves for robbing Jehovah God: ***Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*** (Malachi 3:8&9) This is the sad and tragic history of a nation called of Jehovah God to be a light unto the Gentile nations.

So when the fullness of time has come, the drama of redemption for fallen men picks up steam again during a time when the nation of Israel is under Roman tyranny. The early history of the nation begins when they were under bondage through the furnace of iron in Egypt only to be delivered by a great prophet Moses sent by Jehovah God. This time when they were under Roman bondage, they likewise expected deliverance from

above and they were waiting for the Greater Prophet prophesied by Moses of old to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Like they have been told to watch for Elijah to come, it is time for this forerunner to prepare the way to kick-start the process for the Kingdom of Heaven. The announcement of the birth of this forerunner is made by no ordinary agent of fallen man. An angel with his name revealed is sent to announce the birth of this coming prophet to prepare the way before the Lord.

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Luke 1:5-17)

So this forerunner prophet is born of the priestly tribe. His birth is also miraculous like that of his forefather Isaac, a son born of old age due to the barrenness of his mother. Like Isaac, the son of Abraham, his name is also revealed before he is born. In addition, this child is also to be the object of special care for he is called to be a Nazarite from his mother's womb. This forerunner of the Lord God, recipient of this high and holy calling, is to be sanctified and holy unto the Lord. Here he is proclaimed to be the one coming in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord. He

is the one the children of Israel have been waiting for to bring an end to their shame and humiliation before their enemies. Because he is to be the forerunner to prepare the way before the Lord, his birth precedes the birth of the Seed of the woman, promised since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, by less than six months. This special child called to prepare the way for the Lord also has his spiritual senses quicken while he is still in his mother's womb for he could recognize the Lord before his birth when the mother of the Lord visits his mother. *And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.* (Luke 1:39-45) This forerunner is so joyful in meeting the Lord before they are born that he leaps in his mother's womb! What a special and gifted child is this to receive such a privileged calling from above. He is indeed a chosen vessel for this very specific purpose to play his role in the redemption of fallen men: *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* (Romans 11:29)

Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. (Luke 1:57-66) So the time comes for the birth of

this child. He is named John according to what the angel Gabriel revealed some nine months back. The birth of this unusual child brings great fear to those living far and near. The four hundred years of silence for the nation of Israel is about to end and a new era to renew the promises made to the children of Israel is set take place.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel. (Luke 1:67-80)

The birth of John also accompanies the loosing of the tongue of his father bound for nine months due to unbelief. Immediately his father praised God and prophesied of the coming deliverance for the children of Israel and confirmed the prophesies of the prophets of old with regards to the coming one to prepare the way before the Lord. The coming of this child is connected with the covenant promised to their forefather Abraham and the Kingdom of David. Here is the proclamation that John is called the prophet of the Highest. This truth is confirmed by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ: *For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (Luke 7:28)*

Some thirty years have passed and this prophet is set to rock the political and religious scene in the land of Palestine. His father's prophesies

with regards to his astonishing birth that brought great fear has long been forgotten. The child has grown strong in spirit and is empowered in the spirit of Elijah by the Lord God to prepare the way of the Lord that the nation of Israel has all along been waiting for until now. It is time for John the Baptist to be made known to the nation of Israel. *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.* (Luke 3:1-6) The words of the living God have finally come to the nation of Israel again. The God of heaven has bypassed all the unworthy political elite and the religious establishment, for John the Baptist is the chosen vessel called to bring forth the words of God to the people of Israel. John the Baptist is confirmed as the one prophesied by the prophets in the Old Testament to be the one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord's arrival to Israel.

John the Baptist is a controversial figure to the nation of Israel to say the least. For the appearance and attire of John the Baptist are distinctly different from the people of his day. *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.* (Matthew 3:4) Comparing him with the prophet Elijah, it is evidently obvious that John the Baptist is indeed coming to the scene of Israel in the spirit and power of Elijah. *And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.* (2 Kings 1:7&8) Not only are his outward appearances and attire paralleled that of Elijah, his mannerism and demeanour echoed much of Elijah's testimony and fiery preaching during his time in the Northern Kingdom of Israel more than seven hundred years ago. Here John the Baptist preaches the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven and the baptism of repentance for the

remission of sins. *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* (Matthew 3:1&2) *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.* (Mark 1:4) Like Elijah, John the Baptist is neither received by the ruling authorities nor acknowledged by the religious leaders of his day. For the ruling class has no interest for the Jewish people at heart and the religious circle is largely apostate as far as the faith of Jehovah God is concerned.

However, while his straightforward, upfront and hard hitting preaching is rejected by the ruling class and the religious elite, the common people hear him gladly and receive his message readily. Moreover, they also submit to his baptism for remission of sins: *And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.* (Mark 1:5) Because John is not authorized by the religious establishment of his day, the religious leaders have been antagonistic towards his ministry and envy him for his ability to muster a large following after him but for fear of the people who regard John the Baptist as a prophet sent by Jehovah God, they dare not take action against him. After all John the Baptist is not schooled by this apostate religious establishment and he certainly would not expect to receive their blessings for his ministry. Furthermore, John the Baptist denounced the wickedness and hypocrisy of the ruling religious class in no uncertain terms: *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* (Matthew 3:7-10) His unapologetic preaching and uncompromising attitude towards the religious class undoubtedly won him many enemies from this class of people. This is the way John the Baptist takes to prepare the way of the Lord for the nation of Israel lest the Lord come and smite the earth with a curse. This is the calling of a man for such a specific and thankless task to turn the heart of the children to their fathers and vice versa in order to prepare the way of the Lord to come to Israel.

The preaching of John the Baptist is not full of scholarly talk for his preaching is not laced with sophistry to impress the scholarly and confound the ordinary. Instead, he preaches to the people heart to heart directing them to obey the commandments of God to love their neighbours as themselves in their outward works meet for repentance. *And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* (Luke 3:10-14) His message of the gospel of the Kingdom is so simple that anyone who is sincere and honest before God would be able to obey for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and the King is on His way to bless all the families on earth. So John the Baptist is called to prepare the way and make ready a people for the coming King of the Jews to visit His people. *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.* (Matthew 3:1-3)

While John the Baptist is very clear about his own calling and repeatedly identifying and confessing that he is not the Christ but the one prophesied by the prophets of old to be the forerunner to herald the coming of the Lord, the people are rather skeptical about who he really is: *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.* (John 1:19-23) So John the Baptist knows without any shadow of a doubt who he really is; for he confessed that he is the one called to make straight the way of the Lord in preparation for His royal arrival to the nation of Israel. But the people still have some other ideas as to who he really is for some speculate that he might be the Christ.

And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. (Luke 3:16-18) To quash such rumours, he has to repeatedly point the people to the coming One mightier than him. Being called a prophet of the Highest, he also prophesied of the coming of the Lord whose baptism is not with water but with the Holy Ghost and fire.

According to John the Baptist, as part of his calling, it is revealed to him that he is to manifest the Messiah to the nation of Israel by a very specific sign. *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!* (John 1:29-36) Hence the very purpose for his ministry of baptism with water is to recognize the Messiah and introduce Him to the nation of Israel! While some thirty years ago as a babe in his mother's womb, he could recognize the unborn King of the Jews in the womb of Mary who came to visit his mother and he leaped for joy, it is through this ministry of water baptism on the one hand for the remission of sins in preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven but more specifically to recognize this Messiah and point Him out to the children of Israel and urge them to follow after Him.

Though John the Baptist is a fiery preacher of righteousness who appears to be extremely arrogant to the apostate religious leaders of his days, he is indeed a very humble man at heart. For he is called to prepare the

way of the Lord to come to Israel, and his mission is to manifest the Messiah to the Jews. He also knows there is this Mighty One who is preferred before him and when He is come, he must take a back seat as far his own ministry is concerned and this is part and parcel of his calling. In his own words with regards to the King of the Jews, the Lord Jesus Christ, he said: ***He must increase, but I must decrease.*** (John 3:30) John the Baptist is a faithful man and a preacher of righteousness who is fearlessly loyal to his holy calling. For he fears neither great nor small and in the course of his preaching, he crossed the king of the land by pointing out his wickedness concerning the wife the king has married. ***For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.*** (Mark 6:18) ***But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*** (Luke 3:19&20) So John the Baptist suffered for doing right!

While it has been mentioned that Elijah is a man of like passion as any other man, John the Baptist coming in the spirit and power of Elijah is no different. When he has heralded the coming of the King and has manifested Him to the children of Israel, there is much anticipation that the Kingdom of Heaven will materialize any moment with the King of the Jews, the Son of David now on earth, but John the Baptist is languishing in prison for righteousness sake! For how can it be when the King is about to reign but his loyal subject is rotting in misery! So John the Baptist must be deep in depression and is now having second thought with regards to the whole scheme of thing. For circumstances are definitely against him for the moment! When he expected the glory of God to appear any moment, there is almost no light shining for him in the dungeon. As such, John the Baptist takes some desperate measure to ascertain the reality of this calling of his, whether he has indeed made a genuine mistake and has chosen the wrong person to introduce to the children of Israel. ***And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?*** (Luke 7:19&20) After all, humanly speaking, he is being rational for seeking proofs and confirmation to verify the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. For when the King is on earth and about to be enthroned, why should his faithful servant, more importantly, the one who manifested Him to the nation of Israel should be incarcerated in prison!

While he understands that the Messiah must increase and he must decrease, little does he expect to be decreased to the state of being bound in prison with fate unknown while the country is boisterous with expectation to be delivered from Roman bondage and the Kingdom of Israel would become a reality any time soon! Such thoughts might have troubled this great prophet of the Highest who is now expecting an answer from heaven and an assurance of making the right judgment for his calling to manifest the true Messiah to Israel.

And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. (Luke 7:21&23) The answer John the Baptist receives might not be something he has hope to hear, for he is told not to be offended in the way the King of the Jews would order circumstances and events beyond his understanding. For he receives confirmation from witnesses of the signs and wonders the Lord Jesus Christ performed to confirm that He is really the Christ. This no doubt offers some measures of relief to his anxious soul and comfort to his spirit though he has to continue his miserable existence in prison but not for very long.

But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus. (Matt 14:6-12) So the end of John the Baptist is to suffer a martyr's death for the Lord as a prophet and a preacher of righteousness. For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand but the nation of Israel is not prepared to receive the Kingdom.

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and

more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. (Matthew 11:9-14) The Lord Jesus Christ confirms that John the Baptist is indeed the one prophesied to be the forerunner to prepare the way before Him. John the Baptist is also to be the Elijah to come if the people would receive it but they rejected him. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.* (Matthew 17:11-13) So the children of Israel rejected their prophet coming in the spirit and power of Elijah who could be the true Elijah and as such the Kingdom of Heaven has to be postponed for a while. Hence, John the Baptist fulfilled his calling as the forerunner and the chief servant to herald the coming Kingdom of Heaven and prepare the way for the arrival of the King of the Jews. While his ministry ends with his departure, a more important ministry is now on its way to restore the image of God that the first Adam lost. For the true image of God is now on earth and the restoration of this lost image to fallen men is now set in motion. The drama of redemption for fallen men is about to climax as John the Baptist decreased and deceased but the Lord Jesus Christ is increasing with the passing of the day.

The Divine Calling of the Lord Jesus Christ

While John the Baptist has fulfilled his calling and has been moved off the scene, this great drama of redemption for fallen men continues uninterrupted and culminates at the point where the Creator of the universe completes the transaction to redeem all those who hope in God's mercy and wait for His salvation. The great battle between good and evil is moving ahead and the score to settle the conflict of all ages is about to begin. It concerns the redemption of the souls of fallen men by the divine blood payment to ransom Adam's lost and helpless race. It is the appointment for the Son of God at the cross of Calvary that will put an end to the work of this great redemption for fallen men: ***For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*** (Isaiah 50:7) It is the salvation of the universe that all creatures above and below heaven have been waiting for and curiously anticipating its fulfillment. ***Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*** (1 Peter 1:10-12)

So finally the Seed of the woman promised since the beginning of time after the fall of man confirmed in Abraham is now on earth. ***And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*** (Genesis 3:15) These words spoken by the Lord God back in the Garden of Eden have been waiting for its fulfillment for nearly four thousand years now! ***Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*** (Galatians 3:16) The thread of this Seed runs through pages of the Holy Bible where fallen men have time and again been revealed and reassured of this Seed to come for many ages. Seven hundred years before this Seed is to come, the children of Israel have been told: ***Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and***

shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14) With each passing generation, more details of this coming Seed are revealed and here His name is mentioned and the significance of His wonderful name expounded to all those who wait patiently for His salvation. *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* (Isaiah 9:6&7) Even the location of the arrival of this promised Seed is not withheld from fallen men. *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* (Micah 5:2) In addition, the place where this Seed is to grow up is also revealed to men. *Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* (Isaiah 9:1&2) *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.* (Matthew 4:14-16)

For the nation of Israel called of Jehovah God to bring forth this Seed to bless all the families on earth, King David is specifically called to be the vessel for this promise to be fulfilled. *And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.* (Isaiah 16:5,22:22) As an extension of King David, this Seed to come is called the Branch. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall*

reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5,33:15)

So when the fullness of time has finally come, the miraculous birth of this Seed is announced. *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* (Luke 1:26-34) The birth of this promised Seed is so important that it will do injustice just to be proclaimed by any fallen man. An angel sent from the court of heaven is the fit and proper agent for this task at hand. This is the event that all creatures terrestrial and celestial have been waiting for since time immemorial. Mary is the blessed woman chosen to bring forth this Seed promised since the beginning of time. This Seed to come is the Son of the Highest called to inherit a Kingdom and a Throne and to reign forever. He is to be born of a virgin free from the corrupted seed of Adam's fallen race. *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.* (Matthew

1:20-23) So the coming of the Son of God is confirmed as revealed some seven hundred years ago by the prophet Isaiah. This is the first time a Man is come to deliver fallen men from their sins. No man since the fall of Adam has been called and given the power to deliver him from his own sins let alone the sins of other fellowmen. *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* (Romans 5:12) So this Seed to come, the Son of God, is born sinless and only He alone can deliver sinful men from their sins: *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* (1 Corinthians 15:21&22) *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* (Hebrews 2:14&15)

When this Seed promised long ago has grown up and made manifest to the children of Israel by John the Baptist as the Son of God, the first aspect of His calling as a Prophet is first to be fulfilled: *The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* (Deuteronomy 18:15-19) Because the children of Israel have been told of this coming greater Prophet, so when John the Baptist showed up on earth, they enquired whether he was this Prophet. *And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?* (John 1:21,25) However, when the Lord Jesus performed many miracles to authenticate His prophetic calling, some of the Jews are convinced that Christ is this Prophet prophesied of old. *Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Then*

those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. (John 6:14; 7:40) On the contrary, the apostate religious leaders challenged the Lord Jesus Christ to confirm that He is the true Christ: *Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* (John 10:24)

Nevertheless, a prophet is not accepted in his own country since the time of old for the nation of Israel: *And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.* (Matthew 13:57; Luke 4:24,44) Furthermore, it is common for prophets to perish in Israel while carrying out their God called duties for their ministry: *Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* (Luke 13:33) The condemnation of the crimes against the prophets sent by God is strongly worded and such heinous crimes are denounced with no uncertain terms by the Lord Jesus Christ: *Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.* (Luke 11:47&8) The blood of the prophets shed will definitely be required from these sinners: *That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.* (Matthew 23:35) Indeed those who rejected God's prophets of old will receive their judgment in time to come but for those who reject this Great Prophet Jesus Christ, their fate would be far worst: *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?* (Hebrews 1:1&2; 2:2-4) Their damnation is just and their fright will be certain in that

day for: *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* (Hebrews 10:31)

The manifesting of Christ to the nation of Israel is not purely the work of John the Baptist alone. The Lord Jesus Christ also receives approval from His Father in heaven during His baptism in Jordan: *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* (Mark 1:9-11) In fact, this is not the only occasion where the Father in heaven openly shows His approval of His Son before men. At the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father again told the disciples to hear Him: *And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.* (Mark 9:7) This is indeed the Prophet that Moses of old told the children of Israel to hear him and here the Heavenly Father Himself told the people to hear His only begotten Son. During one time when the Lord Jesus Christ prays to His Father, He receives approval from His Father again: *Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.* (John 12:28-30) Therefore, though John the Baptist bears witness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the witness from above truly manifests the glory of the Son of God on earth.

Moreover, there are also other witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ both on earth and in heaven: *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.* (1 John 5:6-9) In particular, for the purpose of redeeming Adam's lost and helpless race, the blood of Christ is of great significance for His blood is not the blood of man tainted by sin; it is the blood of God which is why it is ever efficacious to

wash away the sins of sinners: *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* (Acts 20:28) As such, this calls for the absolute necessity of the virgin birth of Christ. It is exclusively God's own blood that is acceptable for the redemption of sinners: *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* (1 Peter 1:18-21) It is precisely through this precious blood of Christ that sinners can be redeemed from their sins for there is absolutely no redemptive quality in the blood of any fallen man: *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.* (Revelation 5:9,10)

In order for this divine blood to be shed for sinners, a fit and proper vessel is required. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.* (Hebrews 10:5-7) So the prophesy for this special body has finally come through the virgin birth in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 where the first shedding of blood took place back in the Garden of Eden to cover the nakedness of the first couple on earth who transgressed the only commandment given them by the Almighty. Therefore, redemption is impossible without the shedding of blood. *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood*

of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:22-26) Hence, when John the Baptist introduced Christ to Israel, He is called the Lamb of God: *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* (John 1:29) Indeed this is no ordinary Lamb. It is part of the calling of Christ as the Prophet that He is the Lamb of God to sacrifice Himself and shed His precious blood for the sins of the world. This great act of redemption that takes place in time is actually part of the divine plan that is hatched before the beginning of time: *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* (Revelation 13:8) It is this perfect Lamb of God that is prepared before the history of time to sacrifice Himself for sinners who is also to be exalted above every creature to be worshipped for all eternity. *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* (Revelation 5:6,12)

Not many people during the time of Christ recognized and acknowledged Him. But those who believed whose eyes are opened called Him and acknowledged Him as the Son of God: *Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.* (Matthew 14:33; 27:54) *And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.* (John 1:34) Even devils came and acknowledged Him when sinners failed to pay homage to the Lord Jesus Christ: *And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.* (Luke 4:41) While those who believe Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, receive eternal life, those who reject Him will face eternal damnation. *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* (John 3:18) So the point of contention is whether Jesus is indeed the Son of God

and the enemies of Christ capitalize on this issue to put Christ to death. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.* (John 10:36; 19:7) Notwithstanding, the suffering and atoning death of Christ as a Prophet is foreknown of God and it is part of the divine plan to redeem sinners from their sins: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* (2 Corinthians 5:21) *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:* (Romans 1:4) *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* (John 20:31)

It is the appointment of Calvary that the children of Israel who have been keeping the Passover all those years is finally and permanently fulfilled in truth and in reality and its shadow and type are to be done away after the transaction of this great sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It is here that: *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* (Psalm 85:10) It is here that the primary objectives of the blessed Son of God are accomplished: *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* (1 John 3:8) It is at the Cross of Calvary that ransomed souls are snatched from hell fire through the precious blood of this blessed Lamb of God: *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* (1 John 4:15) While the Lord Jesus Christ pays the ransom payment for sins at Calvary with His precious blood, more importantly is the fact that He is resurrected from the grave where, death, hell and the grave have no power to keep Him there! It is through the resurrection that He is truly declared to be the Son of God where His Father accepts His perfect sacrifice. *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.* (Acts 2:31) *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* (Psalm 16:10) *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* (Romans 1:4) It is because of His resurrection that sinners can now hope for eternal salvation and be blessed with eternal life: *For if we have been planted together in the*

likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Romans 6:5; 5:10)

Having fulfilled His calling as a Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ has now moved on to the calling as a Priest. *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* (Hebrews 4:14) He is no ordinary Priest but He is the Great High Priest called apart from the Levitical priesthood because Christ is not subject to death anymore and this new priesthood is uninterrupted by the death like the earthly priests: *Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life* (Hebrews 7:16). This calling as a Priest is revealed in Psalm 110:4: *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.* This truth is also confirmed in Hebrews 5:5&6,10; 6:20; 7:17&21: *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)* So this part of the calling of Christ as a Great High Priest puts an end to all the shadows and types of the priesthood administered by priests of the Levites in the Old Testament. It is through this current calling as a Priest that the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes for His people: *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* (Hebrews 7:23-25) This Priestly ministry is the only perfect and continuous intercessory work for the people of God because the Lord Jesus Christ is ever alive to carry out this great work before God uninterrupted by death like the earthly priests born in Adam on earth. So the Lord assumes this unchangeable priesthood to replace the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament upon the completion of His prophetic

calling. The intercessory work of the Lord is sure and secure because He has been a man and understands the sufferings and infirmities of man and as such He is qualified to be the only merciful and faithful high priest to stand before God on behalf of His people: ***But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*** (Hebrews 2:9,17&18)

Because of Christ perfect unchangeable priestly ministry, He is also the only Captain of Salvation capable to lead His people safely home: ***For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*** (Hebrews 2:10) The trip home for the believer is made absolutely certain because the Lord Jesus Christ is also the believer's Advocate to defend him against the accuser of the brethren before the court of heaven: ***My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*** (1 John 2:1&2) This is made possible because the Lord Jesus Christ is the righteous dying for the unrighteous and He has been made the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Moreover, Christ is called to be the Chief Shepherd to lead His people home and He is also the Bishop of the believer's soul: ***For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*** (1 Peter 2:25; 5:4) Because the Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and Bishop of the soul of the believer, the believer will never go astray and he can entrust his soul to His safekeeping. None will lose his way and all will make it safely home to the Father's house. Furthermore, this Great Shepherd will perfect the believer to do the will of the Father and the things that are pleasing in His sight: ***Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom***

be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20&21) The reason the believer can be made perfect in every good work to do God's will is because the Lord is also the Author of the believer's eternal salvation as well as Author and Finisher of his faith: *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 5:9; 12:2) As such, it is impossible for the believer to be imperfect in the final destiny to be the object of the praise of the glory of God: *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.* (Ephesians 5:27)

Meanwhile during Christ's priestly ministry, He is building the Church, the body of Christ, from which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of this Church. He is also this chief corner stone whereby the whole building is to be built: *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* (Ephesians 2:20-22) The foundation of this Church in the making is the Lord Jesus Christ because the first office of this Church is that of the apostles and Christ is this Great Apostle of apostles as the Head of the Church: *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* (Hebrews 3:1) Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is more than worthy for consideration by the child of God as his Great Apostle and High Priest! While the Lord Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone, the house He is building is made up of believers who are the lively stones used to construct into a spiritual house as an holy priesthood as part of Christ's priestly calling: *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* (1 Peter 2:5&6) Therefore, all Christians being part of this Body of Christ also enter into this priesthood of believers: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* (1 Peter 2:9)

Having perfected this glorious Body, the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to assume the next calling as the King of kings to reign over all creatures great and small. When the Lord Jesus Christ first came, he was rejected by his own: ***That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*** (John 1:9-11) At one time, the people nearly made Him King: ***When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*** (John 6:15) But that was not the time for Christ to fulfill this calling until His prophetic and priestly calling have been accomplished. When being questioned by Pilate during His trial whether He was the King of the Jews, He confirmed this purpose for His birth: ***Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*** (John 18:37) Before Christ's betrayal, He rode into Jerusalem once again confirming His calling as the King of the Jews in His own words: ***Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*** (John 12:15)

Even the enemies of Christ knew the purpose and intent of Christ to assume the position as a supreme ruler over all of them: ***And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.*** (John 19:12) They accused Christ of trying to be a King over them just like the rebels accused Moses of making himself a prince over the children of Israel (Numbers 16:13). These sinners in order to preserve their own place and position in their established political role for the nation, out rightly rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as their King and accepted Caesar to be their king instead: ***But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*** (John 19:15)

For the moment during this priestly calling interceding for the saints, Christ is not sitting on a throne but only sits on the right hand of God waiting to be enthroned in that day to come: ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand***

of God. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. (Colossians 3:1, 1 Peter 3:22) Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ is still the King of glory and He is known to be the King eternal by the child of God: *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (1 Timothy 1:17) One day, the Lord Jesus Christ will be shown to the world that He indeed is the only Potentate and the King of kings: *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.* (1 Timothy 6:13-16)

That day is drawing near that Christ must be revealed to the world the actual full manifestation of His Majesty, splendour and glory where His sufferings and humiliation are all behind Him as a Prophet who perished outside Jerusalem. All saints shall praise this King of saints: *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.* (Revelation 15:3) while His enemies will make war with this King of kings: *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* (Revelation 17:14) So finally this KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS will assemble His heavenly armies to conquer the earth to vanquish His foes to establish His rightful reign on earth for a thousand years over great and small: *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on*

his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)

So then will Israel be converted in that day when Christ comes again to establish His rule on earth when He sits on the throne of His glory in Jerusalem: *For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.* (Isaiah 54:5) Hence, the Lord Jesus Christ will be called the God of the whole earth when He rules over all nations with a rod of iron: *And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.* (Revelation 12:5) It is then that the nation of Israel will repent and receive Christ as their Messiah and King and mourn for what they have done to Him: *In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.* (Zechariah 12:8-14) So the prayer and heartfelt desire of the apostle Paul that his brethren, the children of Israel, might be saved shall be granted. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* (Romans 10:1) Then the purpose of God to put away the sins of Israel shall be fulfilled in that glorious day: *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.* (Romans 11:25-27) So the Lord

Jesus Christ will rule over all nations on earth from Jerusalem in that day where Israel will once again be exalted to her rightful place according to the divine plan for her!

For Christ indeed must reign before the end comes where death will finally be destroyed: *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) Indeed Christ must reign over all His enemies and put all enemies under His feet: *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* (Psalm 2:6-12) Only then will the Lord Jesus Christ deliver up the kingdom to God so that God may be all in all in all unity of the Godheads in eternity!

Meanwhile, the all encompassing calling of Christ is to destroy the works of the devil who has the power of death: *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* (Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8) The sad reality of death because of Adam's transgression will be undone by this last Adam from above: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* (1 Corinthians 15:22,45) This first Adam was made in the image of God as a

son of God (Genesis 1:26&27) but the children of Adam were born in his own likeness after his own image where the original image of God was lost: ***And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.*** (Genesis 5:3)

However, this last Adam from above is the image of the invisible God made visible to fallen men: ***Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*** (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3&4) By Him, the image of God is restored to those who believe in Him and they are given the power to put on the new man with this image and become partakers of Christ and His heavenly calling: ***And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.*** (Colossians 3:10, Hebrews 3:14,1&2) Because of this restoration of the image of God to fallen men, all those who receive Him are given the power to become the sons of God just like the first Adam who was originally a son of God: ***But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*** (John 1:12&13) This is made possible as those who receive Christ are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God: ***For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*** (Romans 8:29) Right now, the arch enemy of our souls is trying to prevent this image via the gospel of Christ to penetrate the hearts of sinners so that they might not become the sons of the living God: ***In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*** (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Notwithstanding the hindrance from the devil and his cohorts, the

Lord Jesus Christ who tasted death for every man: ***But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*** (Hebrews 2:9) having fulfilled all His divine callings will be exalted above every name where every knee will bow to acknowledge that He is indeed the LORD: ***Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*** (Philippians 2:5-11)

This blessed and glorious day for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ for the true nature of His deity and holiness is drawing nearer by the day. Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of all praises, adoration, honour, glory and power for He is indeed the Son of God as well as the Son of Man: ***Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*** (1 Timothy 6:16)

The Heavenly Calling of the Church of the Firstborn

Since time immemorial, the Most High has been calling out men to accomplish His will during different period of time in this sin cursed world. Many individuals have been called and have fulfilled their callings to the glory of God. However, as for the God-called nation Israel, ***For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*** (Isaiah 45:4), this nation has failed miserably as a kingdom of priests and an holy nation in this present evil world: ***Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*** (Exodus 19:5&6) This promise as a kingdom of priests and an holy nation unto Jehovah God is conditional upon the obedience of the nation. Notwithstanding, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance: ***For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*** (Deuteronomy 7:6-8) So in spite of the rebellion of the nation of Israel, through this nation is called of God a most important Person to bring forth salvation to the whole world that the lost and hopeless race of Adam might be redeemed unto God: ***Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*** (Isaiah 42:1) Through this Man, He is to accomplish what no man born in Adam is able to perform: ***And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*** (Isaiah 49:6)

Because of national Israel's rejection of their Messiah when He came into the world, they are now condemned to blindness in part until the fullness of the Gentiles is accomplished during this present time. So now

God called out a people unto Him outside of the nation of Israel: *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* (Isaiah 65:1). It is for the expressed purpose of provoking this rebellious nation to jealousy because of their rejection of their Messiah: *But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.* (Romans 10:19) As such, this calling of God is now made freely available to all who will call unto the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the whole world, the blessed Lord Jesus Christ! Indeed, this is the truth: *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* (Romans 11:29) God will not change His mind after a person has been called to respond according to His prescribed way of obtaining salvation. This way is now made plain to all in all simplicity of faith to trust in His promises: *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* (John 14:6) So this calling of God unto salvation is now made universal to all and is no longer held under the auspices of the nation of Israel: *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* (Ephesians 2:11-22)

While this universal salvation is now available to all, this does not

imply that God is forever through with the nation of Israel. For the apostle Paul warned those who think that they have replaced Israel not to boast in their present acceptance by God because of their faith in Christ: ***Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*** (Romans 11:18) Paul further cautioned them not to be ignorant concerning Israel's present standing in God's sight: ***For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*** (Romans 11:25-29) No doubt Israel shall be saved one day in the future. They will be restored and exalted to their rightful place in God's plan for the world as the head of nations to fulfill their roles as a kingdom of priests and an holy nation on earth.

As for the Church, the Body of Christ, this calling of God is all encompassing. The blessings that come with this calling exceed all human imagination. It is certainly beyond the wildest dream of a lost sinner born in Adam that he can now share in Christ's exalted state having being called by God: ***Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*** (Ephesians 2:5-7) What exceeding riches of God's grace and kindness to the child of God have been given without merits of any kind of his own self-righteousness are now obtained in Christ! It is past finding out to the fallen mind of the sinner born in Adam who is now exalted to sit in heavenly places in Christ! The apostle Paul also desired for the believer in Christ to have a perfect understanding of his calling in Christ: ***The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all***

principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:18-23) It is definitely possible for the child of God to know what is this hope of his calling in Christ and the riches of his glory being a member of the Body of Christ, the Church, in this new exalted position far above all principality, power, might and dominion not only in this world but also in the world to come. If only the child of God can reckon by faith what his present state really is as well as the riches of his inheritance in the future actually are, the resurrection power of Christ will become a present reality for him to live a life that is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of the thrice Holy God. In addition, this present calling of the child of God in Christ is said to be called in one hope of his calling: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* (Ephesians 4:4-6) This calling is one which is complete in the one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all. What a glorious calling is this for the child of God! There is no other substitute, other counterfeit and other offer to compare to the riches of this hope of one calling in Christ.

However, this high and heavenly calling for the child of God must not be confused with his earthly calling. This earthly calling bestowed by God has nothing to do with his occupation or the means of earning a living for him. One aspect of this earthly calling concerns his status at birth: *Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.* (1 Corinthians 7:18-20) There is a distinction made being called a Jew or a Gentile: *Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.* (Romans 2:17-20) This is a divine appointment and the prerogative of the Most High for anyone born in Adam coming into this world. This is something beyond

anyone's control or desire. He cannot choose to be born a Jew or a Gentile and he has to abide by this earthly calling according to his status of birth. Moreover, even his station in life is an earthly calling where he has very little control over: ***Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*** (1 Corinthians 7:21-24) So whether a child of God is called being a servant or called being free, he has to abide by his predestined earthly calling in his station during this earthly life. Nevertheless, if he can exercise any option to become free, he may act upon such an opportunity to be free but he should remember that he has a higher calling beyond the realm of this earthly life with blessings and privileges the people of this world can never hope to partake and enjoy unless they also become a member of the Body of Christ by calling upon our blessed Saviour for salvation. Hence, a child of God can be born rich or poor and this has no material impact on his higher calling in Christ. Therefore, for a child of God, he should not be too overly concerned about his earthly calling with regards to his station in this earthly life. Even one's marital status is an earthly calling which can only be severed by death or divorce by desertion according to the principles spelt out in 1 Corinthians 7:6-17. Hence the commandment to abide in this calling as the Lord has called every one: ***But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*** (1 Corinthians 7:17)

Concerning the calling from above where the child of God has been called, the truth is that not many mighty, noble and wise are called as they are less likely to rely on the Divine for his earthly needs where his eyes can see. As far as his spiritual needs where his eyes of flesh cannot see are concerned, it would be even less likely that he would even consider as something worth his time for such intangible pursuit. So as he supposes in his self-conceit that because of his privileged earthly calling, he is what he is and he does not really need God especially assistance from above. These words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ come to mind: ***And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*** (Mark 10:23) The apostle Paul aptly points out that: ***For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*** (1

Corinthians 1:26) So it is to be expected that those who are of the upper class of the society will be less likely to respond to God's high calling. As such, it pleases God to choose the underdogs in this world to glorify them in Christ with this privileged high calling from above: ***But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.*** (1 Corinthians 1:27-29) Hence we have this inescapable truth spoken by James: ***Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*** (James 2:5)

Having dealt with the distinction being called a Jew or a Gentile as an earthly calling where one has no control over, the Scriptures confirm that the general high calling from above is only obtainable via the Seed promised since the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden and subsequently revealed to be coming from Abraham before the Law and the establishment of the nation of Israel: ***Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*** (Romans 9:7) Hence, the calling of the nation of Israel is a chosen vehicle to bring forth this Seed promised long ago for the salvation of the whole world. This in no way denies those born outside of Abraham from any means of obtaining salvation for it is written: ***Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*** (Romans 3:30) So God called both the Jews and the Gentiles alike: ***Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*** (Romans 9:24-26) While the nation of Israel is presently set aside, God is calling out a people to be the children of the living God in Christ. The apostle Peter gives further confirmation of this doctrinal truth during his sermon on the day of Pentecost: ***For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*** (Acts 2:39) So both the Jews and Gentiles are now called in Christ: ***But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*** (1 Corinthians

1:24) Indeed there is no difference for those who are called in Christ: *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* (Romans 3:22-26)

As far as this calling of the gospel is concerned, for some; it comes with an office: *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,* (Romans 1:1) Paul is called to be an apostle. Besides telling the Christians in Rome concerning his calling of apostleship, he also told the same to the Christians in Corinth in his opening letter to them: *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,* (1 Corinthians 1:1) The office of an apostle is no doubt a special calling of God though the other apostles did not make mention of it with as many words where their apostleship is assumed in their epistles addressing to Christians during their days. The apostle Paul also indicates that his calling to the office as an apostle is an act of God's will: *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* (Colossians 1:1&2) Other than the calling of the office of an apostle, other offices may as well be regarded as a calling since we are told: *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* (Romans 11:29) These offices come as gifts from above for the Church: *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:* (Ephesians 4:7-12) These offices are given to the Church for the purpose of perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Individuals who hold the office of an apostle,

a prophet, an evangelist or a pastor and a teacher are gifts to the Church for the expressed purpose mentioned earlier and they are servants of the Church and not being lords over God's Church. Some seem to take these offices as positions of power within the Church to terrorize, extort, abuse and manipulate the sheep in the Church. They have deviated from the original purpose for which these offices are set up by divine appointment to build up the body of Christ. Some charlatans are so audacious as to claim to be apostles and prophets when we already have the complete revelation of God's holy words in our hands. Because of the love of self-exaltation, all kinds of unbiblical offices are created to satisfy one's ego. Some claim to be an Elder Prophet or a Presiding Prophet while others claim to be Sovereign Apostle or even Prince of Apostles as well as Senior Apostle. In order not to cause the sheep to feel left out, all kinds of ministries are created. There are so many so called ministries to make one feel important to the Church such as the ministries of helpers, ministries of ushers, ministries of offering collections, ministries of nursery care, ministries of janitorial services, ministries of lavatory services and other ridiculous ministries to make one sick of such promotion of self-importance within the Church. No doubt, the biblical term of the word "calling" has been abused and taken to the extreme to justify all sorts of nonsensical offices and ministries.

But for the child of God who is called from above, it is this simplicity of the faith that comforts him to know that he is accepted in the Beloved and not in any man-made schemes to elevate him to some unbiblical offices to satisfy his puffed-up ego. This higher calling from above is simply a call in Christ: ***Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:*** (Romans 1:6) and as many as have put their faith in Christ are called of Jesus Christ. And when the apostle Paul addressed them, they are known as called to be saints: ***To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*** (Romans 1:7) Indeed, salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ is a called to sainthood. This calling to sainthood is a divine act of God from above and no man on earth can beatify any dead man to become a saint any more than he can work his way to heaven on his own merits. Those who have received the call to be saints are also sanctified in Christ Jesus: ***Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*** (1 Corinthians 1:2) which is also a work accomplished from above apart from any human agency to effect this great work of

sanctification in the believer's life. Jude also addressed Christians as being called are sanctified by God as well as being preserved in Christ: ***Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.*** (Jude 1:1&2) As such, as far as the life of a believer in Christ is concerned, all things that happen to him during his earthly life is part of the process of sanctification for him and all things do work together for good to them who are the called in Christ: ***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*** (Romans 8:28) This is because God foreknowing all those who will receive the Son of God as Lord and Saviour, will also predestinate them to conform to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. God does not predestinate those He foreknows who will not accept His way of salvation to conform them to the image of His Son because it is impossible for them to be conformed to the image of Christ having rejected Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. The image of Christ will not fit them! ***For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*** (Romans 8:29&30) So for those predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, God will call and those who are called, God will also justify them who have put their faith in Christ. Eventually, God will glorify these God-called saints who have been conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing can beat what God will do for His saints whom He has called in spite of all the counterfeit callings schemed by sinners to elevate themselves above the words of the living God for advantage.

To distinguish the calling from above from the calling of the world, the calling from on high is a holy calling: ***Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:*** (2 Timothy 1:9&10) and this calling comes with salvation for the sinner via the gospel of Christ. This holy calling is effected by God through the gospel and not earned by human means according to his own works of self-righteousness. It is only through the

gospel of Christ is a sinner called to obtain glory: ***Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*** (2 Thessalonians 2:14) The high calling of God must come through the gospel of Christ. Any other calls outside of the gospel of Christ are counterfeit calls that will result in shame and damnation instead of glory. These are unholy calls that direct sinners in the broad way of destruction instead of showing them the narrow gospel road that leads to salvation and glory in Christ: ***Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*** (Matthew 7:13&14) So not many will accept the calling from above but will rather choose to hearken to the call from below. The calling from above is also a call to fellowship with the Son of God: ***God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*** (1 Corinthians 1:9) This is a call to partake at the King's table and to rejoice in the presence of His Holiness. This call to fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ is a present reality for the child of God though he is still residing in his body of death while living on earth. In contrast, the call of the world is a call to rebellion and a call to mock the work accomplished at the cross of Calvary by the Lord Jesus Christ. Not surprising, many fake calls are found in many so called churches to make a mockery of a true biblical high calling from God. As a result, many professing to know Christ are reveling in such counterfeit calls thinking that they are indeed serving God in their misplaced callings. However, the true calling from on high is a heavenly calling meant only for holy brethren: ***Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.*** (Hebrews 3:1&2) The religious fraudsters' earthly, sensual and devilish callings have nothing in common with this heavenly calling for the holy brethren who are true partakers of this biblical calling who consider the Lord Jesus Christ as their Apostle and High Priest who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

As far as this high calling of God is concerned, there is a prize for those who will diligently pressed forward in the direction towards the mark to obtain this prize: ***I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 3:14) The prize of this high calling of God is not solely reserved for those who hold the office of an

apostle. Every child of God is encouraged to press on to obtain the prize of this high calling of God. The only way to accomplish this feat is by forgetting those things that are in the past and reach out for those things that are before them during this earthly pilgrimage: ***Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*** (Philippians 3:13) Faith in God's promises is the foundation upon which a child of God is to press toward the mark for the prize of this high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He must believe that there is a prize for those who will run the race to obtain this prize with regards to his high calling he receives from Almighty God. Pressing forward to reach out for this prize is an active faith that drives the believer to continue to move on and move forward in spite insurmountable odds in his quest to complete the race. There is no time for faltering in this great race with whatever length of time that is left for him to run this race. There is no way to make up for lost time and hence he is to forget those things that are behind him. Every breath he takes to live another second is the time now available for him to make the best of his next stride forward to reach out for this prize that is before him. The mark for the prize of this high calling of God is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Author and the Finisher of the faith of the child of God. The child of God is to press forward in the correct direction. He has to be constantly looking up and the proper bearing which he has to take is to be: ***Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*** (Hebrews 12:2) If that is indeed his preoccupation, he will no doubt be: ***Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*** (Titus 2:13) whereby winning the prize of the high calling of God is almost certainly a forgone conclusion.

The apostle Paul likens the high calling of God as a race on a track upon which the child of God is called to run: ***Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*** (1 Corinthians 9:24) So there is also a prize as promised upon completion of this race for those who run lawfully: ***And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*** (2 Timothy 2:5) While running this great race of the high calling of God, holding forth the word of life is paramount in order to ensure that the labour exerted in running this race may not be in vain: ***Holding forth the word of life; that I***

may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (Philippians 2:16) There will be great rejoicing at the end of this race when the high calling of God is accomplished in the life of the believer in Christ. There will be obstacles along the way in this great race and much weight of infirmities of the body and sins of the flesh will beset the competitors set out to complete the race. The exhortation to put aside all these besetting influences must be observed at all time if one is to complete the race successfully: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 12:1&2) There will be no excuse not to finish the race for the child of God is compassed about with such a great cloud of witnesses who have completed the race and are now cheering him on to run this race of God's high calling for him. The most important factor in continuing to run this race is the fact that the Lord Jesus being made a little lower than angels has endured the cross and despising the shame to chart out the path of this race for him and He has succeeded and He is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Furthermore, we are called to follow the steps of this Great Saviour who has gone on before us: *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:* (1 Peter 2:21) and sufferings are to be expected in the course of this race as part of the high calling of God. However, patience is a prerequisite in the running of this race. In addition, the attitude of the competitor is not one of complacency but one of humility trusting God to assist him in this great quest to run the race of this high calling for him: *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 3:12) This will no doubt ensure that the child of God will be able to claim like what the apostle Paul claimed at the end of the race: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* (2 Timothy 4:7&8) So the prize of this crown is not just reserved for the apostle but for all them that love the appearing of Christ. As such, without looking unto Jesus, the child of God will be running in the wrong direction and running the wrong

race. The correct bearing along the road of this high calling is always looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. So the constant exhortation to look up and lift up the head to look for the Saviour who will be coming back again: *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* (Luke 21:28) Hence, the call to be patient in running this race as the coming of the Lord draws nigh: *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* (James 5:8) The coming of the Lord will be quick and He will come at the least expected moment and rewards will be given out to those who have run and completed this race of God's high calling: *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* (Revelation 22:12)

The words of comfort to those who are running this race are given so that the child of God may have hope and be constantly looking up unto Jesus who has promised that He will come again. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) The marching order for the final high calling to become a reality is clearly spelt out. No one who has run this race will miss out on this redemption parade to be ushered into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is indeed a high calling coming true where the saints are caught up high into the heavens having assembled at the trumpet's call when the competition is over. *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up*

in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:51-58) The unmistakable transformation of the child of God having put on immortality is now finally able to see the blessed Saviour: *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.* (1 Timothy 6:16) This is indeed the wildest dream come true and there will be great rejoicing for those who run the race of the high calling of God with patience. No stories of paupers turning from rags to riches on earth will ever be able to compare with this great story of redemption for the riches and kindness of God bestowed upon those whom He called out of darkness into His marvelous light! *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* (Ephesians 2:7)

Therefore, the child of God is encouraged and daily exhorted to run this race of God's high calling knowing that his labour will not be in vain in the Lord. This is the way to prove his high calling receives from above and that he is indeed walking worthy of this high calling commissioned by Almighty God: *Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:* (2 Thessalonians 1:11) Nevertheless, setbacks are to be expected during this race and the child of God must always consider the Lord Jesus Christ for what He has done for him because of the constant danger that he might become faint in his mind and quit the race: *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* (Hebrews 12:3) Due diligence is required to ensure that he is making his calling and election sure otherwise, the child of God might faint in his mind for failing to consider Christ who suffered so much for him: *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:* (2 Peter 1:10) The warnings of the Lord Jesus Christ are ringing loud and clear: *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. For many are called, but few are chosen.* (Matthew 20:16; 22:14) But the Lord also assures His

people of their privileged position being called His friends: ***Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*** (John 15:15) All things are indeed made known unto the child of God by the written words of God.

This assurance also speaks of an assembly in heaven in the future where those who are called, chosen and faithful will assemble in the great parade for the marriage of the Son of God coming back to earth to establish the Kingdom promised to Israel: ***These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*** (Revelation 17:14; 19:7-9&16) These God-called saints will be arraigned in fine linen, clean and white having finished the race on earth ordained of God for them. Will you be found among these great armies of God's called, chosen and faithful saints who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb?

If you have not so much heard of the high calling of God until you read this book, despair not, dear friend. The Most High who is calling out a people unto Him is not deliberately leaving you out of this promise: ***For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*** (Acts 2:39) While it is true that before you know Christ, you are an enemy of God but this enmity is abolished once you have accepted God's call for you: ***For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more,***

being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Romans 5:10) This work of reconciliation is accomplished by the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered and died on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the whole world: *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight:* (Colossians 1:21&22) thus making void the existing enmity between the sinner and God: *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.* (Ephesians 2:15-17) This gospel of peace is now preached to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because God has ignored your past ignorance with regards to the Godhead of the true and living God: *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* (Acts 17:29-31) So will you now respond to His call of reconciliation via the gospel of peace through the Lord Jesus Christ? You cannot work your way to cause God to accept you on your terms but you have to come to God on His terms who is calling you with this high and heavenly calling if only you will repent and believe Him. For the Scriptures have made it exceedingly clear that you are required to put your faith in Christ as means of accepting God's call for you and you are responsible for responding to His call for you to be reconciled to God.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:9-13)

God has indeed issued a call for you today: *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)* (2 Corinthians 6:2) Will you respond by calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved? *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?* (Hebrews 2:3&4) Today may be your last day on earth to hear His call of peace for you and tomorrow may be a day of eternal regret for spurning your only chance of being accepted in the Beloved! Tarry not, for the call to salvation in Christ is now made freely available to you by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ promised since the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* (Revelation 22:17) The call to come to God is found throughout the Bible. The Lord God called out to Adam after he fell in the Garden of Eden. The call to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life is given at the closing of the Holy Bible. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ today and be accepted in the Beloved!

As for a child of God, this high and holy calling of God is no doubt a blessed calling: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:* (1 Peter 2:9) It is indeed beyond the fallen mind of a sinner to comprehend what our gracious and merciful God will do for those who would only trust Him and believe in His written words. For how can a sinner prone to sin and wander away from God be called out of darkness into God's marvelous light and become a member of this chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation and a peculiar people to Almighty God! It is really past finding out! No wonder the apostle Paul exclaimed: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.* (Romans 11:33-36) So even eternity of eternity would be insufficient for the child of God,

recipient of this blessed high calling, to praise, honour and glorify this our Great God and our Blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ for what God has done for him. For what God has promised, He will be more than willing and able to perform all the great and precious promises for the child of God because: *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.* (1 Thessalonians 5:24) May all those who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity and serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear and walk worthy of the high calling of God making your calling and election sure!

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. (Romans 15:33)

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kjp-asia.com.