

# Secrets to Spiritual

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by B.R. Hicks

# **Secrets To Spiritual Growth**

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# Secrets To Spiritual Growth

God's Word commands believers to grow spiritually. Being a Wise, Just, and Faithful God, He does not command the believer to grow without first having given him the secrets to spiritual growth.

The process of spiritual growth involves the gradual increase of Christ's Spiritual Stature in the believer's heart as, through study and prayer, he assimilates new and quickened portions of the Word of God into his new Spiritual Man. Recorded in God's Word are patterns and blueprints that show believers the spiritual experiences they must have if they are to grow to maturity in Jesus Christ.

As with all growth, spiritual growth begins in a seed form, which is the believer's born-again experience — the act of faith when an individual personally receives Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Then, the newborn babe in Christ must feed upon Jesus Christ's Words of Life and daily seek the LORD in prayer in order to increase in His Spiritual Stature. In this way, the believer continues advancing toward spiritual maturity in Christ Jesus.

As long as the believer is faithful to seek and to find new Truth in God's precious Word, spiritual growth will continue.

No doubt the widely accepted teaching that all believers will have the same reward in Heaven accounts for much of the spiritual lethargy that keeps Christians, today, from progressing in spiritual growth. Ignorance about the different eternal Abodes that believers will inherit produces spiritual drowsiness and, eventually, sleep. It also produces forgetfulness and total indifference toward the need of maintaining a constant prayer and study life. It is a shame for Christian believers to be spiritually asleep *above* the ground as though they were dead and buried *below* the ground.

The Apostle Paul warned the Christians of his day to awake from their spiritual sleep.

Wherefore he saith, **Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead**, and Christ shall give thee light (Ephesians 5:14).

Spiritual sleep prevents the Christian from being sensibly aware of the danger he faces if he allows this life to pass without his finding Jesus' loving, humility Footsteps that will enable him to grow into the his Creator's Likeness and Image.

Spiritual sleep prevents believers from obtaining new daily visions of the Prize at the end of the Way. When believers awake from their spiritual sleep and repent of their slothfulness that has kept them from spending time in the Word and prayer, Christ will give them Light in His Word that will reveal what they need to do in order to continue in the process of spiritual growth. Spiritual sleep, like natural sleep, is a state of forgetfulness and unconsciousness.

The Apostle James discussed two great types of forgetfulness.

For **he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was**. But **whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work**, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:24,25).

The first class of forgetfulness of the spiritually dead is that they do not remember what manner of persons they are after they have looked in the mirror of God's Word. The mirror of God's Word reveals the things in the carnal man that are unlike Jesus Christ.

The second class of forgetfulness, found among those who are spiritually dead, is that they forget the Word of God. Failure to remember God's Word, which convicts man of his own sinful selfishness, misery, woe, and the affections he retains for the things of this world will prevent him from growing in spiritual stature.

Once the believer has heard God's Word and has received the Truth of it into his heart, if he does not practice what he has heard because he is spiritually lethargic, he will lose its convictions, and the love of the Word will vanish away like the temporary floods of a spring rain. As a result, the believer will let spiritual death or sleep overtake him and, thus, fail to dress his soul with Jesus Christ's Righteousness.

The widely accepted false concept that *all* Christians will spend Eternity in the same place acts as an opiate that lulls the heart and mind into spiritual slumber. The scriptural account of the Eternal Rewards and Abodes that resurrected believers will receive shows the fallacies of this kind of thinking.

## I. God's Command to Grow

Because the LORD Jesus Christ is the Creator and Redeemer of mankind, He has all Power and Authority to demand that all persons obtain the goal that has been placed before them.

Wherefore **laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings**, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious (I Peter 2:1-3).

God's Word is an incorruptible Seed of Life that lives and abides forever. The Apostle Peter said that the corrupt, sinful dispositions of malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and evil speakings that issue from the natural man will hinder and prevent the growth of the spiritual man's desire for the Word of God.

*Malice*, whose evil disposition is tuned to injure others and whose premeditated designs are fabricated to assert malicious revenge on another, will prevent a spiritual desire for God's Holy Word from growing in the believer's heart.

*Guile*, with its deceitful corruption, will take advantage of another with its flattering, false words and, thus, will hinder the believer's Spiritual Man from growing by quenching his desire for the true Holy Words of God's infinite Truth.

*Hypocrisies*, in their many forms that abide in man's natural, corrupt heart, will suppress the believer's Spiritual Man's desire to lay hold of God's divine Word. Hypocrisy is a counterfeit form of what is real. For example, there is a counterfeit religious zeal, and there is a counterfeit friendship that extends great compliments and pleasing promises to others. *All hypocritical things prevent the growth of the Spiritual Man's desire for God's Word.*

*Envy* is a great enemy of the believer's desire for sincere Truth. Envy grieves over and is angry about the talents, abilities, successes, and exaltation of others.

*Evil speaking* is still another famous enemy that robs the believer of his desire for Truth. Christians who indulge in evil speaking are always degrading, detracting, defaming, and backbiting others.

These old, rotten, leprous garments of malice, guile, hypocrisies, envy, and evil speaking must be put off from the soul if the believer is to fulfill his Spiritual Man's desire for the pure, holy Milk of God's Word that has not been adulterated by man's mixture of opinions and ideas.

Newly born babes, in the natural realm, fervently and frequently desire milk because it provides wholesome nourishment and increases their growth. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, God's Holy Word provides sincere Milk for the new babe in Christ. The wholesome, sincere Milk of Jesus Christ provides complete nourishment for the Spiritual Man and promotes growth in God's Wisdom and Understanding.

**But grow in grace, and in the knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen (II Peter 3:18).

In His First Epistle, Peter told believers that the *source* of all spiritual *growth* is the *Word of God*. In his Second Epistle, the Apostle told Christians to grow in Grace and Knowledge.

The word *Grace* in the Greek means graciousness, which includes gratitude, joy, liberality, pleasure, and thanks. To grow in God's Word means that believers grow in joyful *gratitude toward God* and that they reflect His Grace or *Gratitude toward others*.

Growth in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ means that the believer attains growth in the Understanding of God's Mind, His Will, and His Way of Righteousness and Holiness. Increased Knowledge means greater perception and application of God's divine Moral Principles of Truth since the believer's better understanding allows him to apply them in a greater way in his daily life.

The Book of Ephesians compares the growth of the Church and the personal growth of the believer to a building. Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone, both of the Foundation of the Church and of each individual believer.

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 2:19-22).

The Church is a Holy Temple joined together through Christ for spiritual sacrifices of worship, praise, and service. Jesus Christ has put His Name in the Church; He also has promised to manifest Himself in a special way where two or three believers are gathered together in His Name. Likewise, every born-again believer in Christ is a

holy temple or habitation that should grow in worship, praise, and service to Jesus Christ.

All the Scriptures about growth were written to Christians, not to sinners. The Bible teaches that **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Timothy 3:16,17). Since the Bible was written by the inspiration of God, we know that the Apostles were not giving their own opinions about growth; they were writing the very Command of God.

God’s Word is an infallible Divine Revelation that can be depended upon to help Christians grow. The *doctrine* found in God’s Word enlightens believers so that they can perceive God’s pure, holy, divine Principles of Truth. The *reproof* in God’s Word reveals where believers fall short of Christ’s Moral Principles of Truth. The *correction* in God’s Word strengthens believers with Christ’s Faith, enabling them to lay aside disobedience to His Principles of Truth and causing them to put on obedience to these Principles. The *instruction* in God’s Word teaches believers how to fulfill the Righteousness of His Truth by doing good unto all men. Thus, the Spirit-man of God grows upward and onward unto perfection.

The LORD did not say, “Grow if you feel like it. Grow if it is convenient to do so. Grow if you are especially ambitious.” No! God has *commanded* believers to grow unto the measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.

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: **Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:** That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:11-16).

When Jesus Christ ascended, He gave Gifts of Ministry to the Church for peace, reconciliation, and growth. The goal and objective of Christ Jesus is not only to save people but to bring them to perfection and spiritual maturity, which is the Fullness of the Likeness of Christ. It is God’s desire that Christians be set free from childish spiritual infirmities, the darkness of ignorance of His Truth, the weakness of faith in times of testings and trials, the erroneous judgment of the flesh, and the desire to yield to temptation. Christ’s perfection will deliver Christians from the unsteadiness of the flesh that tosses the soul to and fro, from one opinion to another, like a ship without a rudder in a storm. Following the Truth in love roots the believer in Christ and enables him to love, trust, and depend more on Christ in all things. As the believer grows in spiritual maturity, he leaves the childish “play pens” of immaturity.

God has not left mankind without a way of understanding His great, invisible Spiritual Truths.

**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:** (Romans 1:20).

The Power and Godhead of God belong to the invisible, spiritual world. However, these invisible things can be seen clearly and understood by the visible things in the natural world because they are products of God’s Creation. By His visible manifestation of what He has wrought in secret, God makes Himself known. The Workman is known by His Works. Thus, the perfect order, harmony diversity, beauty, and excellence of all nature tells man about his Creator.

For every spiritual Truth in the invisible realm, God has provided an equivalent picture in His visible Creation. For example, to reveal the invisible *Water of His Word and Spirit*, God made the waters of oceans, wells, rivers, and fountains in the visible realm. To disclose the brilliance of the *Sun of Righteousness* in the spiritual realm, God set a sun in the sky in the natural realm. The entire visible world is full of natural pictures that God has drawn out in His Creation in order to help man perceive their High and Holy Counterparts of Truth in the invisible spiritual realm. Thus, God uses things in the natural realm as pictures or types of things in the spiritual realm.

## II. Pictures of Growth

In His Word, God has left mankind many pictures, likenesses, images, models, figures, or resemblances of His Son so that man clearly may see how to fulfill God’s Command to grow up into spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ. Nowhere in the Bible is there a more minute, detailed picture of the measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ

than in the Old Testament Tabernacle.

### **A. The Mosaic Tabernacle**

The Book of Hebrews calls the first Tabernacle, the Mosaic Tabernacle, a figure, a type, or shadow of the greater, more perfect Tabernacle of Jesus Christ.

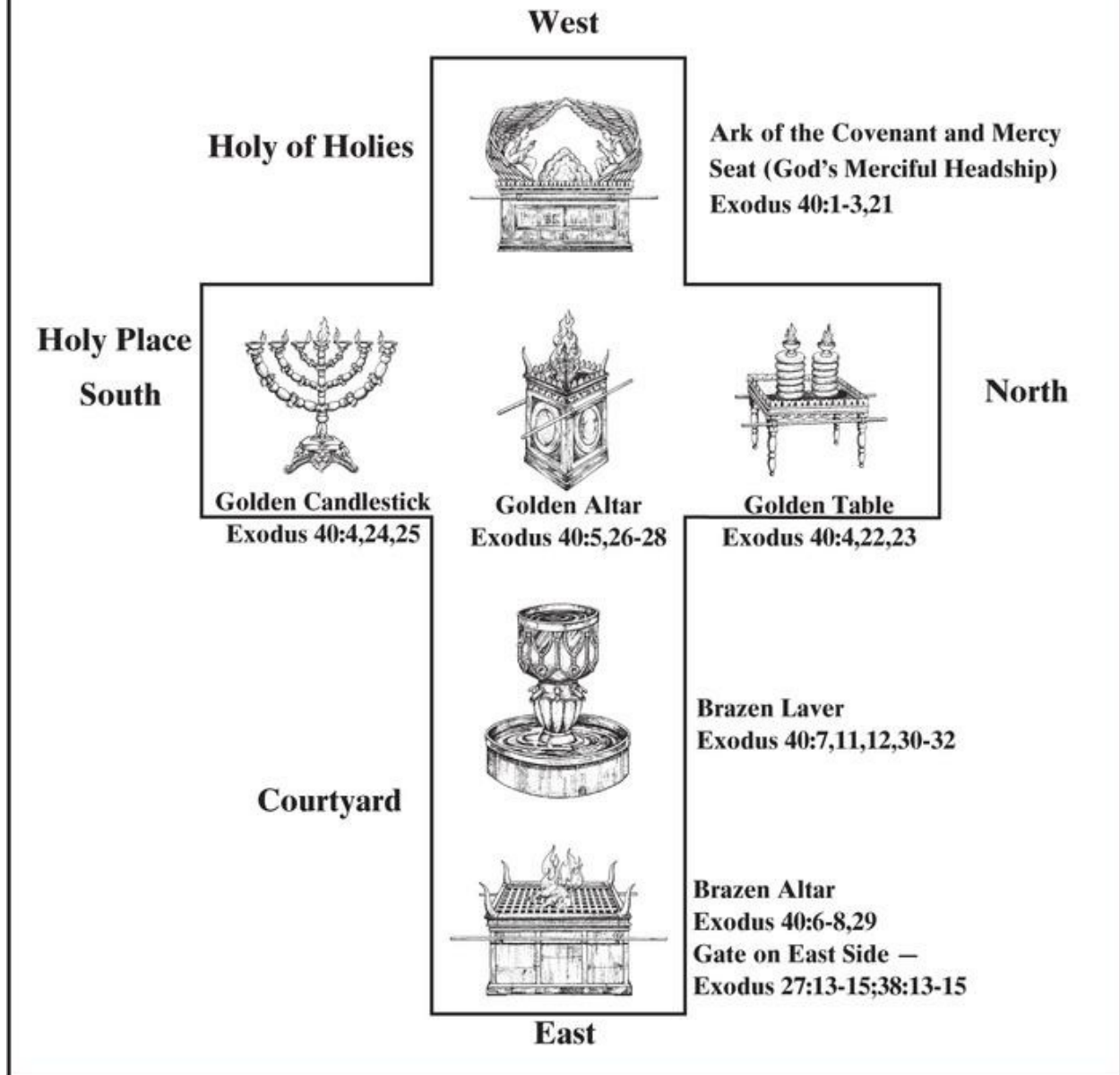
The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as **the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present**, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. But **Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;** (Hebrews 9:8-11).

Since the Mosaic Tabernacle\* was a blueprint of the Spiritual Stature of the Son of God, it becomes a guiding Light to reveal to man's heart how to grow up into the measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.

#### **1. The Seven Pieces of Furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle — The Type and Shadow of the Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ**

The Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ was revealed in type and shadow form in the seven pieces of furniture and the three basic divisions of the Mosaic Tabernacle. In the fortieth chapter of Exodus, God instructed Moses to arrange the seven pieces of furniture in the form of a Cross, working from west to east and from north to south.

## The Arrangement of the Seven Pieces of Furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle



The laws governing God's spiritual directions supersede those that determine the four cardinal points of the compass in the natural realm. In the Mosaic Tabernacle, the vertical bar of the Cross was established by the Ark of the Covenant with its covering Mercy Seat, which was placed in the Holy of Holies on the west side of the Tabernacle, and by the Brazen Altar, which was placed in the Courtyard on the east side of the Tabernacle. In the Holy Place, the Golden Table on the north side and the Golden Candlestick on the south side of the Tabernacle drew out the horizontal bar of the Cross. The Laver was on the vertical portion of the bar that descended into the Courtyard. The Golden Altar of Incense held the center position where the two bars intersected.

When God had Moses set the furniture in place in the Tabernacle, He started where He was — in the Head-realm. From there, God had Moses work down to the Foot-realm of the Cross where man was. In other words, redemption began with God Himself Who mercifully reached down to fallen man.

Starting in the Head-realm of the Mosaic Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat beautifully illustrate the Unified, Merciful Headship of Jesus Christ, Who has been given to be the Head over all things to the Church.

**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 1:22,23).

The Golden Table, with its Twelve Cakes of Bread, foreshadowed the Governmental Strength and Authority of Jesus Christ, Who confessed that He was the Living Bread that came down from Heaven.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven:** if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:49-51).

The Golden Candlestick with its Oil, Fire, and Light represented the true Oil of Wisdom, the Fire of Understanding, and the Light of Knowledge revealed in Jesus Christ.

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the **full assurance of understanding**, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; **In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge** (Colossians 2:1-3).

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

The Golden Altar of Incense pictured the fragrant Prayer Ministry of the LORD Jesus Christ. Because He has committed His blessed Name to Christians, all believers now have the privilege of using the powerful Fragrance of His Name in prayer.

**And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,** that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it (John 14:13,14).

In the Courtyard of the Mosaic Tabernacle, the Brazen Laver was filled with Water out of the Spiritual Rock that followed Israel. The identity of the Rock is clearly established in First Corinthians 10:4:

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that **spiritual Rock** that followed them: **and that Rock was Christ** (I Corinthians 10:4).

The Water in the Laver signified the revealing, cleansing, transforming Powers of the Waters of the Truth of the Name, Death, and Resurrection Life of Jesus Christ.

Know ye not, that **so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: **that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,** even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3,4).

## **2. The Seven Pieces of Furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle: The Type and Shadow of the Believer's Experiences in Growth in the Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ**

The Brazen Altar of Sacrifice, situated at the gate on the east side of the Tabernacle, at the bottom of the Cross as it were, pictured the Humility Throne of Grace and Truth that came by Jesus Christ.

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, **but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ** (John 1:15-17).

**Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,** that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Man cannot start where God started, in the exalted Head-realm on the *west* side of the Cross, because, in the beginning, mankind fell into the low pit of sin and went out from God on the *east* side of the Garden.

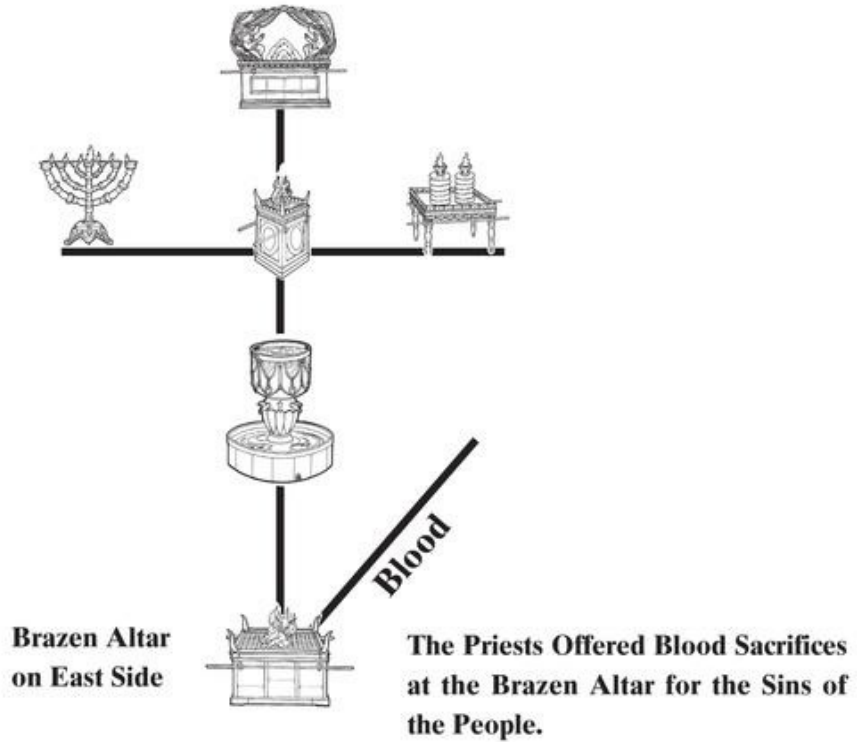
*First*, sinful man must begin his reunion with God or his first step in spiritual growth at the bottom of the Cross, on the east side, at the Throne of Grace. There he must accept the sacrificial Blood of the LORD Jesus Christ as the propitiation for his sin so that he can be brought back into reconciliation and fellowship with God.

Man's eternal Salvation was wrought not by his own merits, abilities, or talents, but by Jesus Christ, the Author of mankind's Salvation. The LORD's Love, Mercy, and Grace opened up a cleansing fountain filled with His own precious Blood so that He could wash sinful man from his sin. It is faith in Christ's Throne of Grace that justifies the sinner and pardons him from his sins.

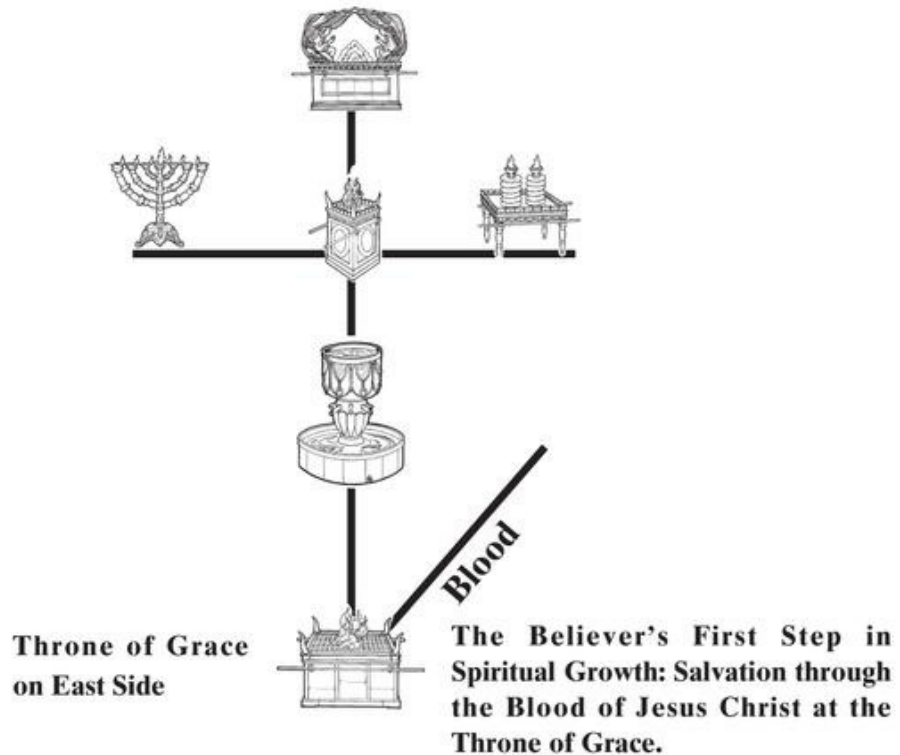
Let *everyone*, therefore, come boldly to the Throne of Grace so that they might be cleansed by this fountain of Blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

All believers must begin at the Throne of Grace, at Jesus Christ's precious, nail-scarred Feet, so that they might be translated from Satan's kingdom of darkness, death, and destruction into God's Kingdom of Light, Life, and Construction. When he enters God's Kingdom, the believer begins a building program, a *constructive* program, that will change him back into the Likeness and Image in which God originally created him.

## Mosaic Tabernacle



## Jesus' Tabernacle



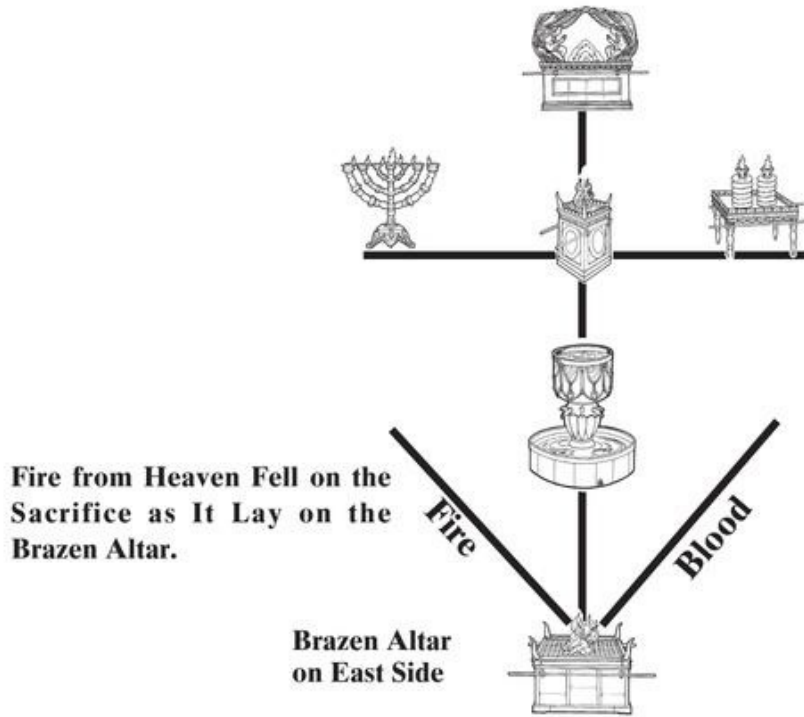
Forasmuch as ye know that **ye were not redeemed with corruptible things**, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; **But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:** (I Peter 1:18,19).

**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10).

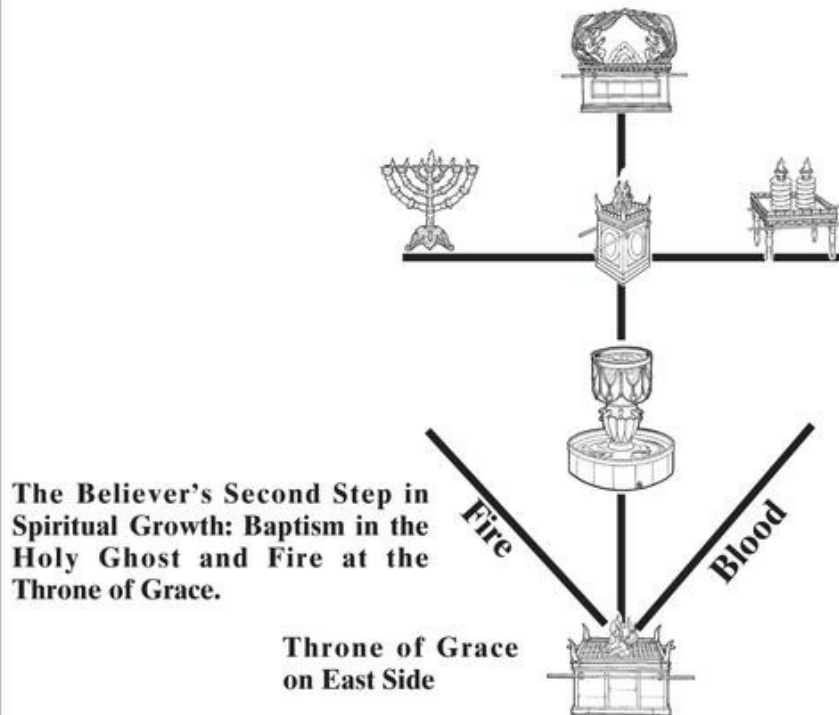
*Second*, the believer must progress to the next experience in Christ Jesus, which was depicted in the Mosaic Tabernacle by the Fire of the LORD that fell upon the sacrifice after Moses and Aaron had offered blood upon the Brazen Altar (Leviticus 9:22-24). The Holy Fire in the Mosaic Tabernacle was a picture of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire in the New Testament.

All the growth and ministry of the whole Mosaic Tabernacle depended upon the foundation of blood and Fire at the Brazen Altar. Likewise, in the Stature of Jesus Christ, His precious Blood, which was shed for sin, and the Fire of the Holy Ghost make up the first layer of the Spiritual Foundation of the believer's Spiritual House.

## Mosaic Tabernacle



## Jesus' Tabernacle



Jesus exhorted His Disciples and followers to tarry in Jerusalem until they had received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire.

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, **until ye be endued with power from on high** (Luke 24:49).

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire**, and it sat upon each of them. **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

*Third*, the believer must continue in his spiritual growth until he reaches the next experience that God has for him. This experience was depicted by the Brazen Laver.

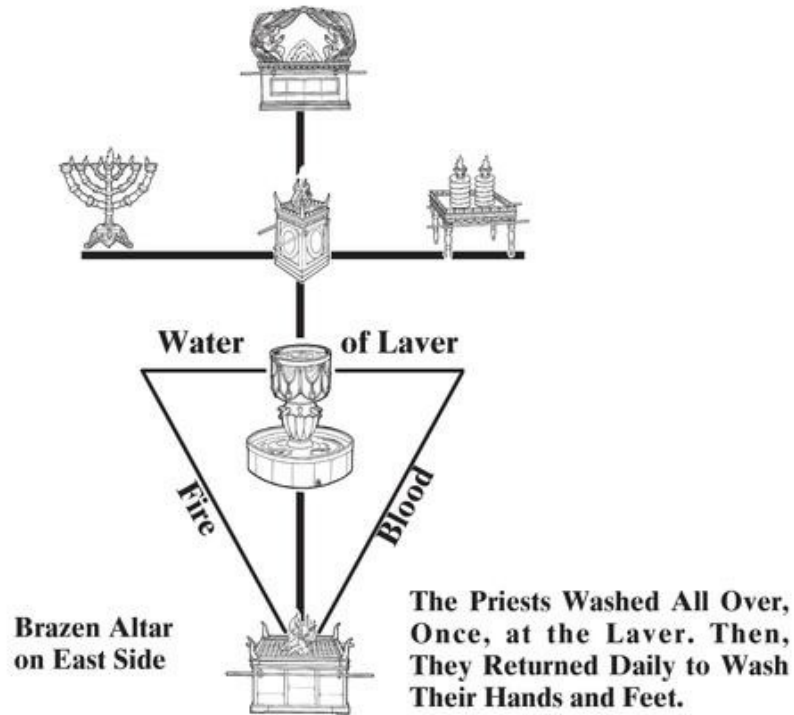
The Priests in the Old Testament were washed once, all over, at the Laver; then, they returned there daily to wash their hands and feet before ministering in the Holy Place.

Although the Brazen Laver was the second piece of furniture in the Courtyard of the Mosaic Tabernacle, it represented the third spiritual experience in relation to man's return to God. The Brazen Laver set forth a beautiful picture of Water Baptism in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ.

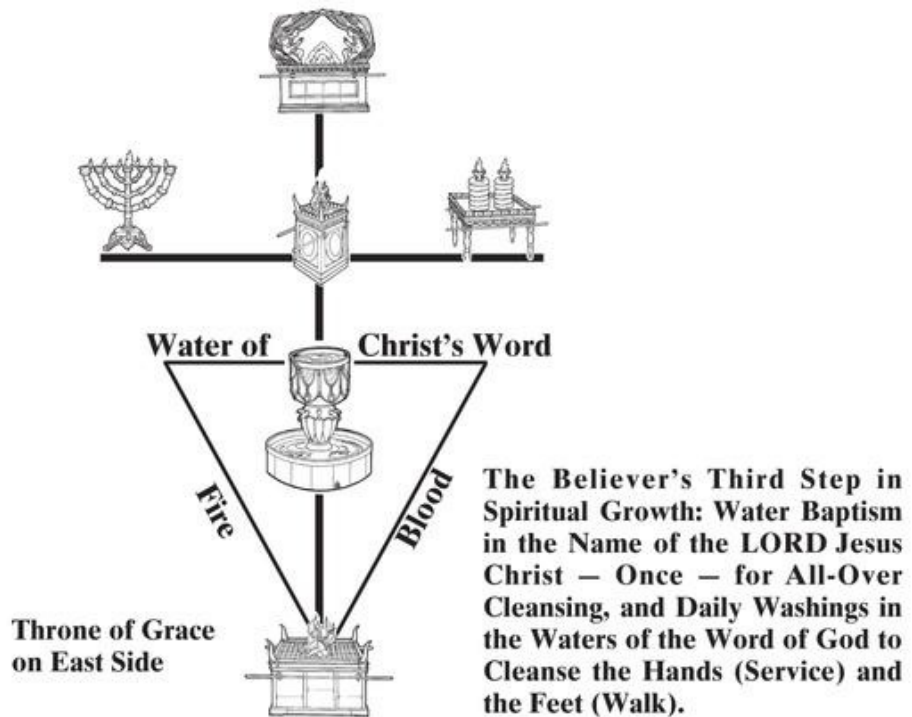
After the believer has been baptized, outwardly, in water, in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ, he returns daily, by faith, to the Living Waters of Christ's Holy Word so that he can wash his hands (the instruments of his service) and feet (the instruments of his walk) and take on, anew and afresh, Jesus Christ's Name, Death, and Resurrection Life.

The believer descends into the watery grave of Water Baptism in order to demonstrate his willingness to let the spiritual Waters of Jesus' Humility Name, His Suffering Death, and His Resurrection Life work inwardly to transform him into the Image and Likeness of the LORD and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## Mosaic Tabernacle



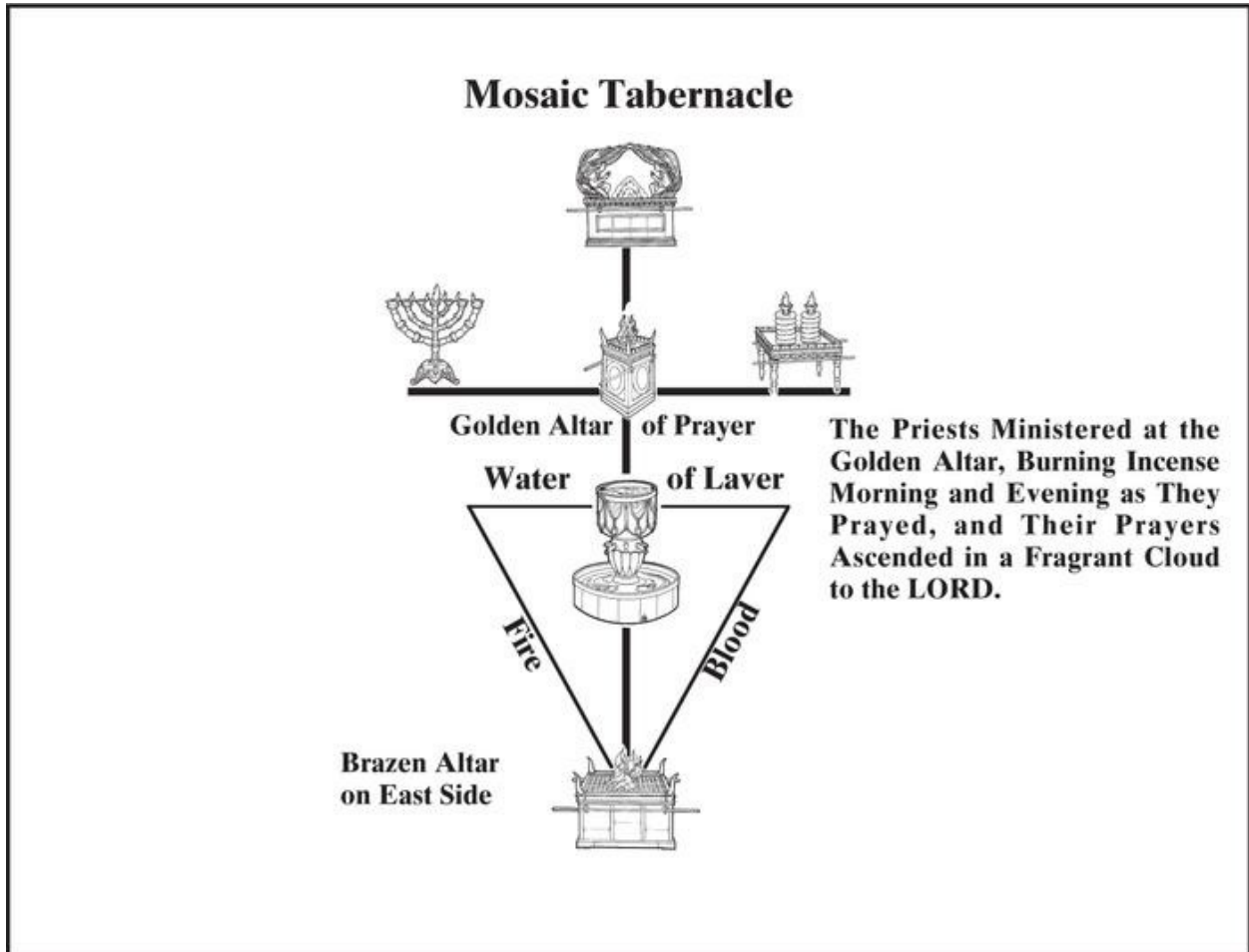
## Jesus' Tabernacle

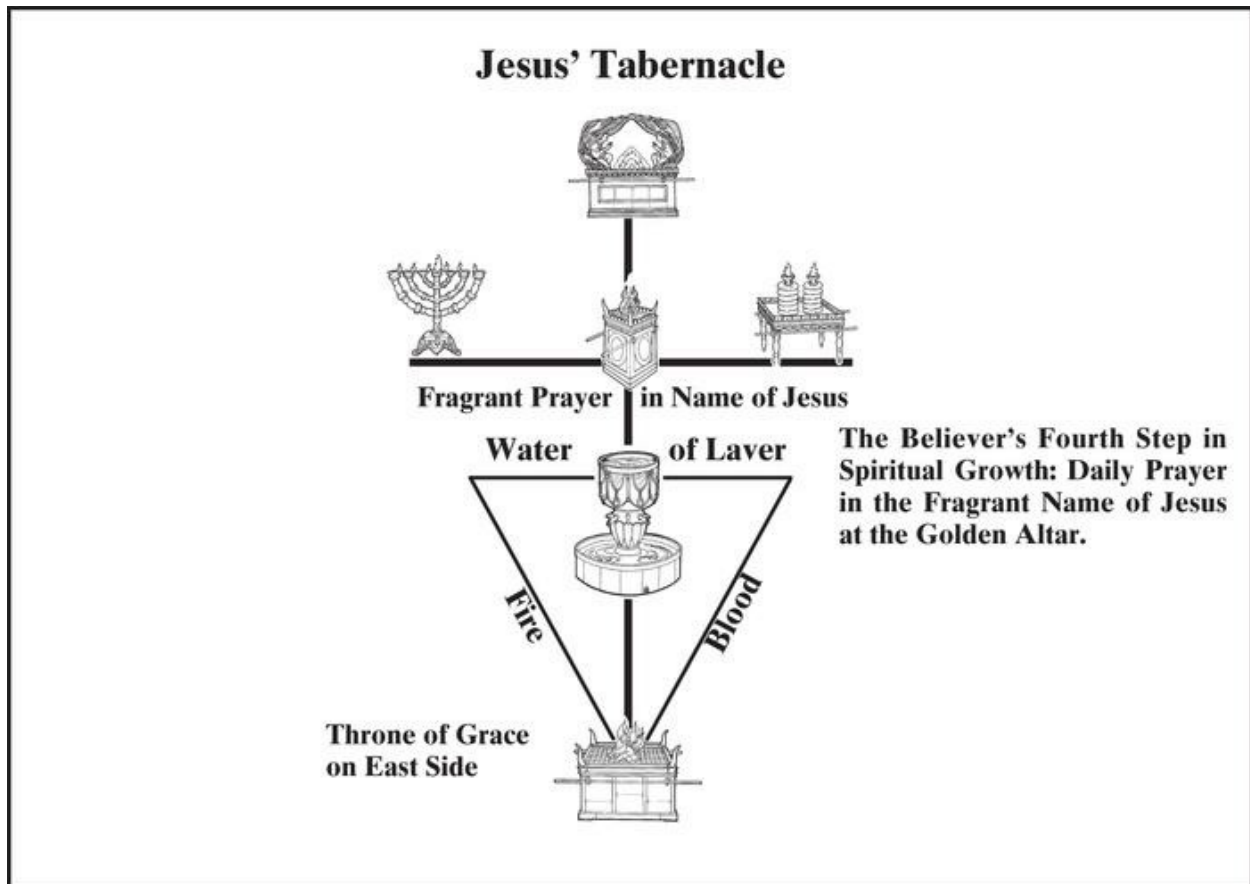


Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

*Fourth*, the believer must progress in his spiritual growth until he experiences the different kinds of prayer that God has for him. This place of growth was depicted in the third piece of furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle, which was the Golden Altar, the place of prayer.

The Priest carried coals of Fire from the *Brazen Altar* and joined them to the incense at the *Golden Altar* so that a fragrant cloud would cover his prayer and ministry in the Holy Place. This was a picture of the Fire of the Holy Ghost joined to the Fragrant Name of Jesus in prayer in Jesus' Spiritual Tabernacle, and it releases Holy Ghost Intercession and Travail in the believer.





Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: **but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God* (Romans 8:26,27).

*Fifth*, as the believer continues to grow spiritually, he must walk obediently in all the Light he receives from the Word of God, which was depicted by the fourth piece of furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle, the Golden Candlestick. The Candlestick pictured all sixty-six Books in the Bible and all Light of Truth.

There were sixty-six Bowls, Knops, and Flowers on the Golden Candlestick that supported seven Lamps full of Light. Seven is the number of completion. Thus, the Golden Candlestick was a picture of all sixty-six Books of the Bible, which produce complete Spiritual Light to lead man into all Spiritual Truth.

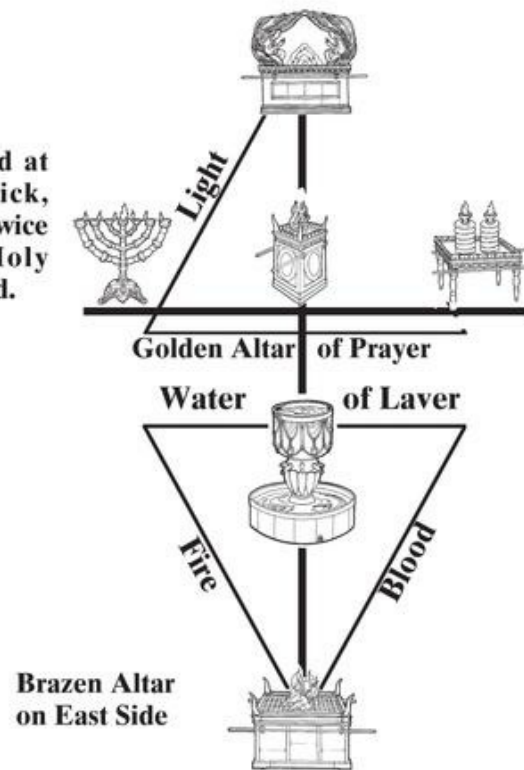
**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**  
That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16,17).

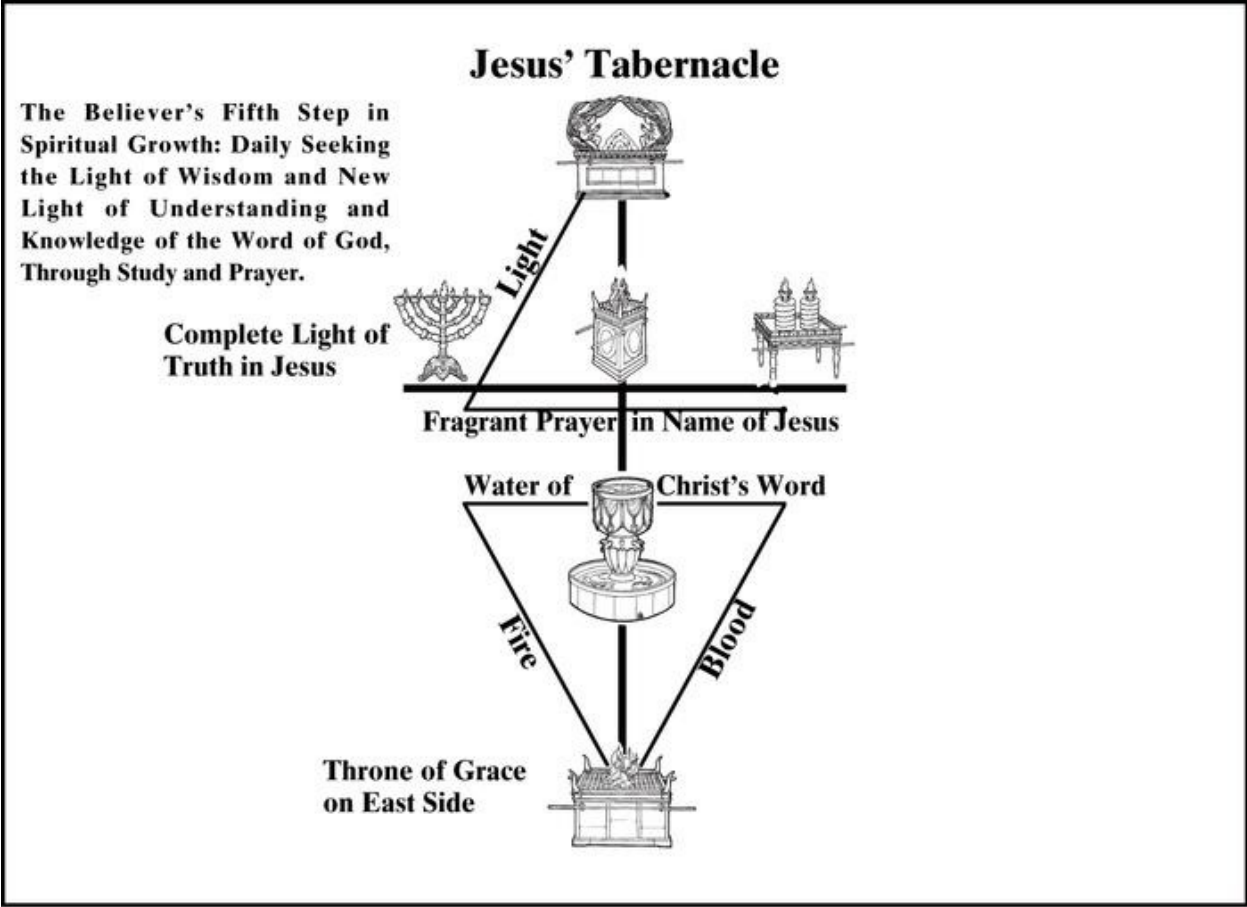
It pleased the Heavenly Father to put the Light of all Truth in His Son Jesus Christ.

If a believer is faithful to follow the Light that Jesus Christ shines upon his pathway each day, Jesus will lead him into all Truth in all sixty-six Books of the Bible.

## Mosaic Tabernacle

The Priests Ministered at the Golden Candlestick, Preparing Its Lamps Twice a Day so that the Holy Place Would Be Lighted.



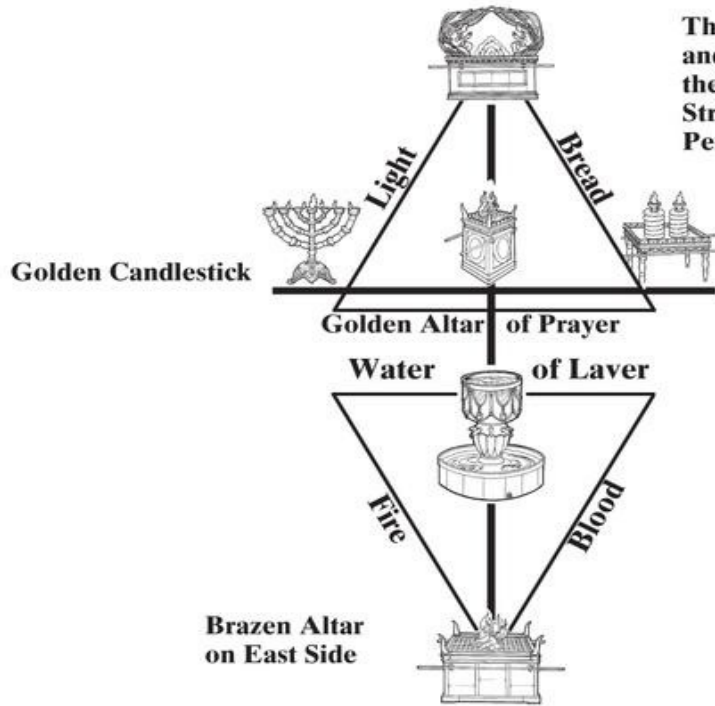


Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

*Sixth*, the believer's progression in spiritual growth will lead him to new strength as he eats the Bread of Truth, which was depicted by the Twelve Cakes of Governmental Bread on the Table of Shewbread in the Mosaic Tabernacle.

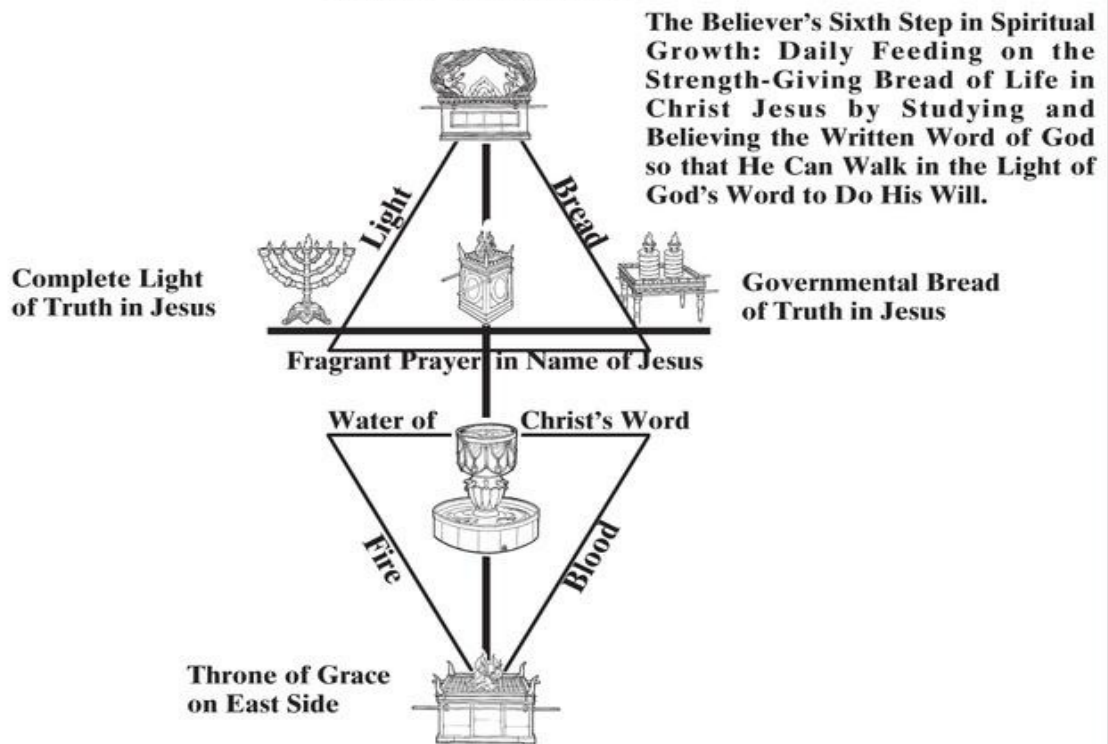
Jesus Christ is the True Bread from Heaven. Spiritual Strength increases and grows as believers feed on the Word of Jesus Christ. When the Bread of the Word becomes a part of the believer, just as natural bread becomes a part of the natural man, the believer has faith to do all things that Jesus Christ asks him to do.

## Mosaic Tabernacle



The Priests Ate the Shewbread and Offered the Drink Offering at the Table of Shewbread, Gaining Strength to Walk in God's Will in Performing Their Ministries.

## Jesus' Tabernacle



The Believer's Sixth Step in Spiritual Growth: Daily Feeding on the Strength-Giving Bread of Life in Christ Jesus by Studying and Believing the Written Word of God so that He Can Walk in the Light of God's Word to Do His Will.

Complete Light of Truth in Jesus

Governmental Bread of Truth in Jesus

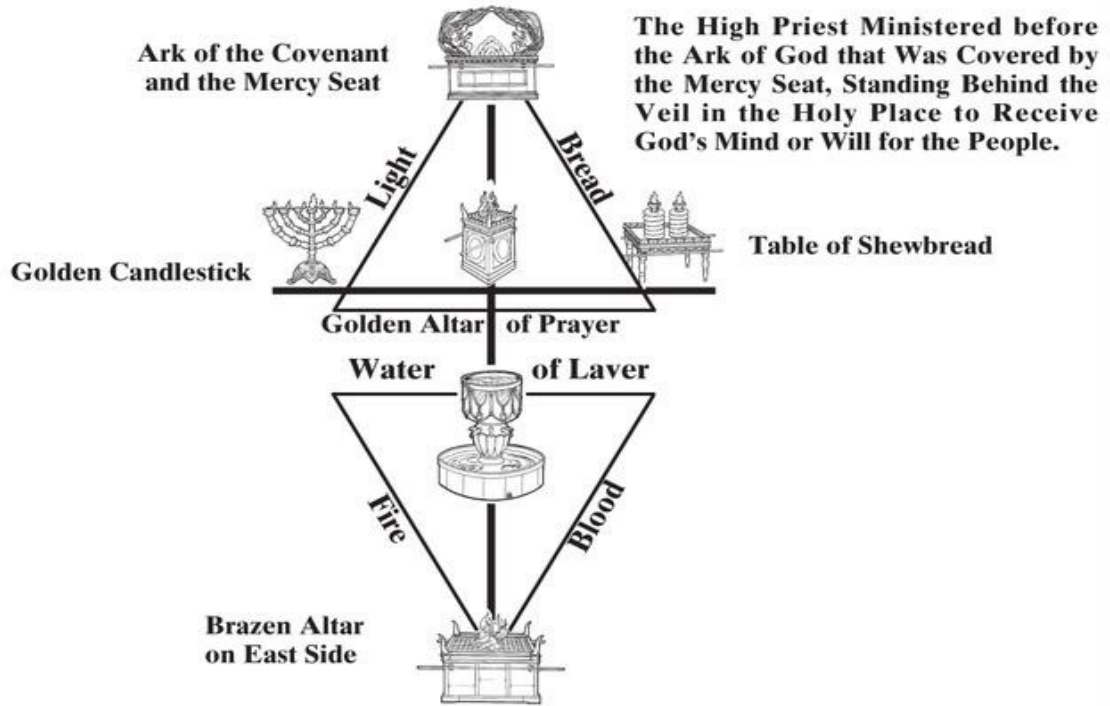
Throne of Grace on East Side

And **Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger;** and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. **I am that bread of life.** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven:** if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and **the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world** (John 6:35,47-51).

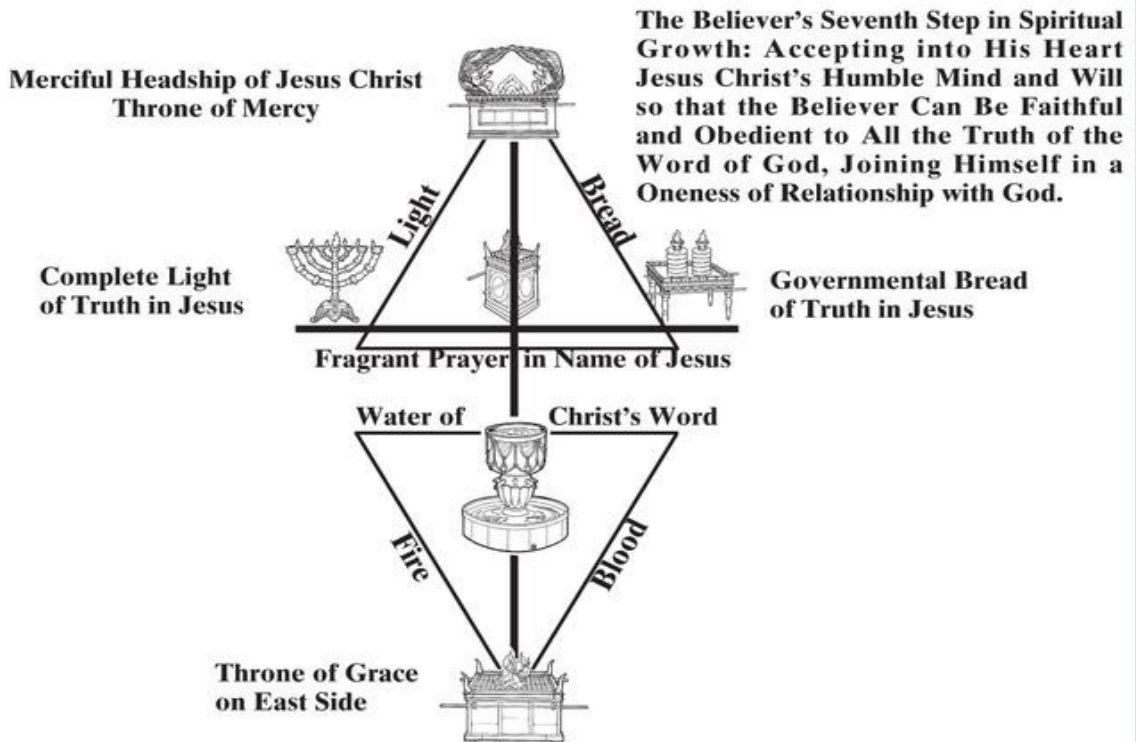
*Seventh*, the believer's growth will eventually lead him into complete acceptance of the LORD Jesus Christ's Headship in all things. The Merciful Headship of Jesus Christ was depicted in the Mosaic Tabernacle by the last two pieces of furniture: the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant, which were joined together to make the Throne or Head of the Tabernacle.

The ultimate goal and objective of all spiritual growth is for each person to crown Jesus Christ as the Merciful Head over *all* things in his life and to bring all things and all thoughts into complete subjection to Him.

## Mosaic Tabernacle



## Jesus' Tabernacle



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 1:22,23).

In every piece of furniture of the Mosaic Tabernacle, God left a picture of a portion of the Spiritual Stature of His Son Jesus Christ so that everyone can see clearly what experiences to seek in order to grow up into complete spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ.

Before a person can begin to grow, he must possess Spiritual Life through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood experience is the beginning of the Foundation of man's Spiritual House. God's provision of Blood, Fire, and Water has made it possible to hear and obey His Command to grow into the measure of the Fullness of the Spiritual Stature of His Son. The Mosaic Tabernacle clearly shows the way to possess mature spiritual growth.

Another Old Testament picture of the progressive growth or unfolding of increased Spiritual Life and development is reflected in Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan's Land.

### **B. Israel's Journey from Egypt to Canaan's Land**

As a nation, Israel grew from being a *Son* in Egypt, to being a *Church* in the wilderness, to being a *Wife* in Canaan's Land, and, finally, to being a *Mother* at Zion and Jerusalem.

## Israel's Spiritual Growth

<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Wilderness</b>	<b>Canaan's Land</b>	<b>Zion and Jerusalem</b>
<b>Son Relationship</b>	<b>Church Relationship</b>	<b>Wife Relationship</b>	<b>Mother Relationship</b>
<p>And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, <b>Israel is my son, even</b> my firstborn: (Exodus 4:22).</p>	<p>This is he, that was in the <b>church in the wilderness</b> with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and <i>with</i> our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: (Acts 7:38).</p>	<p>Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: <b>but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah:</b> for the LORD delighteth in thee, <b>and thy land shall be married</b> (Isaiah 62:4).</p>	<p>Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? <i>or</i> shall a nation be born at once? for <b>as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.... Rejoice ye with Jerusalem,</b> and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: <b>That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations;</b> that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory (Isaiah 66:8,10,11).</p>

As a *Son* in Egypt, the Nation of Israel knew God as a dependent child knows a loving father. Israel had the high dignity of being God's firstborn son among His Creation. When it was time for Israel to leave Egypt, God warned Pharaoh that if he refused to let Israel (God's firstborn son among the nations) go free to serve Him, and continued to hold Israel in captivity, then He would punish Pharaoh by having the firstborn sons of Egypt taken into the captivity of death. Since Pharaoh refused to listen, God punished him by doing what He said He would do; thus, Egypt's firstborn sons died. Although Israel experienced many signs and wonders as a firstborn son, this was just the beginning of their spiritual experiences.

It is sad when people who have entered into a son-relationship with Jesus Christ think that they have attained the height or the end of all spiritual experiences because the son-relationship is, in reality, only the beginning of what can be known and experienced in Jesus Christ.

As Israel progressed in her journey toward Canaan's Land, she was called a *Church*. In the wilderness, when she came under the LORD's Headship, she became an Espoused Wife, an engaged Bride, which still was not the degree of union required of a spiritual Wife whose marriage is fully consummated.

It was in Canaan's Land that Israel learned, as a nation, to surrender her will to her Spiritual Bridegroom and, thus, become His Spiritual *Wife* who enjoyed the pleasurable Spiritual Marriage Union that the human will knows when it is joined to the Fullness of God's Divine Will.

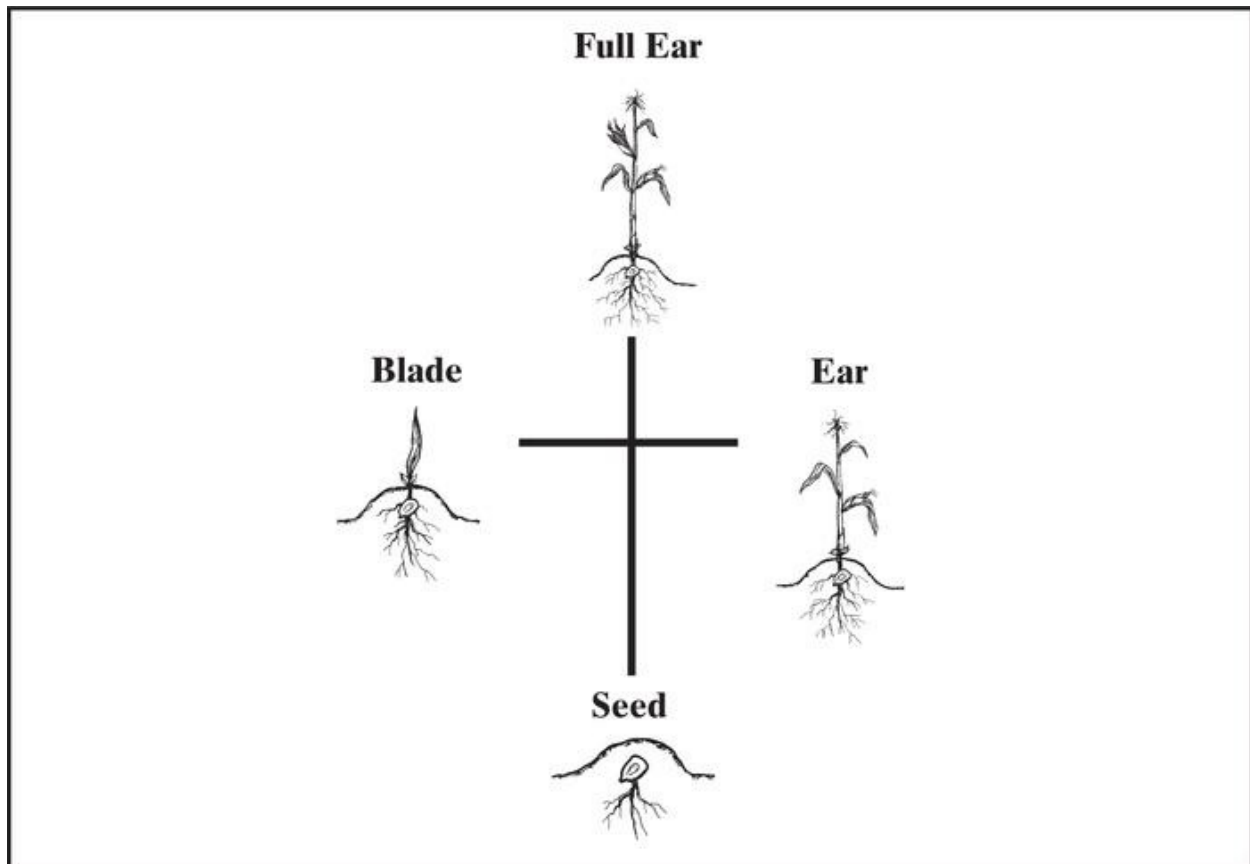
Having become a Wife, Israel then experienced full, reproductive maturity at Zion and Jerusalem. Israel entered into a Oneness of Relationship with her Spiritual Husband and travailed sons and daughters to birth spiritually. At this point in her spiritual development, Israel was rightly described as a *Mother*.

These Old Testament pictures and types show that the believer's spiritual experiences with God always have been ones of continual unfolding and gradual development. Yet, God did not confine the use of pictures to the Old Testament. Jesus Christ frequently told Parables based on happenings in God's natural Creation in order to teach many spiritual Truths. One of the Parables He taught explained the Principle of Progressive Spiritual Growth.

### III. Stages of Growth

Spiritual growth is not attained instantly. Instead, it involves a gradual process, a degree of progression, and an increase of changes in Stature and appearance. The believer's stages of spiritual growth are described in the Gospel of Mark.

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, **and the seed should spring and grow up**, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; **first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear**. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come (Mark 4:26-29).



### A. The Seed Stage

The Seed Stage of spiritual growth relates to the born-again experience in Jesus Christ. Having the Blood of Jesus Christ applied to the heart cleanses the repentant soul from sin, which is the principal, beginning experience in spiritual growth. A seed has the rudiments of the future plant contained within its embryo, and, while the embryo is hidden in the seed stage, it is defended from cold and injury.

Researchers have calculated that natural seeds can cross hundreds of miles of seas, be carried in the gizzards of birds, be hidden in particles of earth adhering to feet, or be lodged in soil floating on icebergs and still germinate when they eventually encounter favourable conditions. Some seeds have been known to germinate after having been stored for hundreds or even thousands of years. These examples prove how well God protects the embryo in the seed.

Likewise, in the spiritual realm, God preserves the embryonic Blood-experience within the Humility Seed of Jesus and buries it in the ground of the human heart. The growth of the Seed begins underground, as it were, buried under the clods of human ignorance and human life and experience. The earth into which the Seed has been cast has to have been prepared and cultivated; then, God adds His celestial blessings of the Sunshine of His Presence and the Water of His Spirit to man's earth, and soon the Seed in man's heart makes the transition into the Blade Stage.

The ground of the heart is altered by the spiritual growth of the Living Seed. How beautiful and pleasant the heart looks when the Living Blade of Truth comes into visibility.

### B. The Blade Stage

The Blade or Leaf begins to flourish above ground as the plant grows. The spiritual experience of growth continues through the *night* and the *day* seasons. The heavy, moist, night seasons of gloom and darkness cause the little Blade to make extraordinary progress in growth in the Word and prayer. The precious, helpful sunshine of the day season causes the little Blade to increase in joy and rejoicing and in thanksgiving in all things.

### **C. The Ear Stage**

Once the Blade has grown sufficiently, the loveliness of the Ear or Fruit is added to the Spiritual Plant. An ear of natural corn is the spike or head which contains the flower and seed. The grains of all growth are conserved in the fruit. *Growth is for the sake of the fruit.* Spiritual growth in the Word of Truth produces the Fruit of Love for Jesus Christ and His Will that transcends one's love for all other people, places, and things.

### **D. The Full Ear Stage**

In the last stage of growth, the fully Mature Ear appears, announcing harvest time. By now the embryo has grown into its full stage and has clothed itself with the beauty and glory of the fully ripe grain. The glory of maturity shines, just as Moses' face shone when it was clothed with the illuminating Glory of the LORD on Mount Sinai. When spiritual maturity is reached, the believer's heart is ready for the LORD of the Harvest to thrust in His Sickle and to reap the Living Truths from it. Harvested grain can be shared and given as food to other hungry hearts, helping them to achieve increased progress in their spiritual growth.

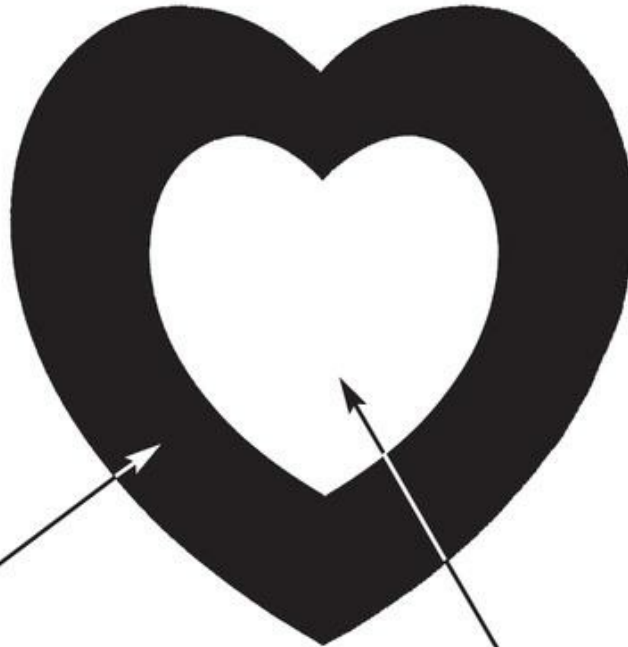
Once a person is convinced in his heart of the reality and importance of spiritual growth, he begins to ask about the process of growth.

## **IV. How to Grow Spiritually**

The key to understanding the process of spiritual growth was given by John the Baptist when he said, "He [speaking of Jesus Christ] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

This Scripture shows that there is something in the believer that must decrease in order for the Spiritual Stature of the LORD Jesus Christ to increase. The Increasing/Decreasing Principle relates specifically to the believer's two hearts or two natures.

## The Believer's Two Hearts or Two Natures



**Old Heart — Desperately Wicked  
(Jeremiah 17:9)**

**Old Heart — Defiled Nature  
(Mark 7:21-23)**

**Old Man — Corrupt  
(Ephesians 4:24)**

**Fleshly Man — Lustful  
(Galatians 5:17)**

**New Heart — Does Not Sin  
(I John 3:7-9)**

**New Heart — Pure Nature  
(I Timothy 1:5)**

**New Man — Righteous and Holy  
(Ephesians 4:24)**

**Spiritual Man — Fruitful  
(Galatians 5:17)**

A sinner has just one nature, which is his corrupt, depraved nature, inherited from Adam the First. The Bible teaches that man is a sinner *by birth* and *by deed* or choice. King David wrote: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). This is sin by birth.

In another Psalm, David spoke of the wickedness in the human heart that causes a person deliberately to choose sin. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies (Psalm 58:3). Within the human heart is the desire to choose sin because man has a sinful nature.

When mankind's first parents (Adam-male and Adam-female, as God called them in Genesis 5:2) sinned in the Garden of Eden, all the Seed in the human heart became corrupted with sin. God could not find a clean spot in which to plant a Seed of Righteousness which could come to fruition through His care.

Every human being is born with a depraved, sinful nature. However, when a person accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour, the LORD creates a *New Heart, a New Nature, a New Man* within. The New Heart is Spiritual, created in Righteousness and true Holiness.

The old heart is completely depraved because all the seeds in it possess the sinful nature of fallen Lucifer's serpentine form that became joined to the human will back in the Garden of Eden. This is the heart that Jeremiah called "desperately wicked." The only righteousness in the old heart is the imitative form of self righteousness that

the proud, sinful Self uses to cover its darkened, depraved nature.

The New Heart, on the other hand, is perfect because it is created after the Image and Likeness of Jesus Christ. **In order for the New Heart of the spiritual man to grow or increase, the old heart of the carnal man must decrease through the process of crucifixion and death of the flesh**, which is accomplished as the believer confesses and repents over the seeds, weeds, and trees of sin that are growing in his old heart.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us** (I John 1:5-10).

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle referred to the crucifixion and death of his carnal flesh by saying, "...I die daily" (I Corinthians 15:31). Death was not the end of the matter, however. Paul had the following testimony, which is recorded in Galatians 2:20:

**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me** (Galatians 2:20).

As Paul's carnal man was made to descend daily into the Waters of Jesus Christ's Death, the Apostle experienced an increased growth of his Spiritual Man through Christ's Resurrection Power and Glory. Although Paul still lived in a mortal body, he was not under bondage to walk after the unregenerated, fleshly nature of his old carnal heart. Through crucifixion and death of the fleshly man and through growth of the Spiritual Man, Paul entered into a spiritual Oneness of Relationship with Jesus Christ. Then, because Paul lived with his human will nailed, by faith, to the Cross of Jesus, he was able to choose daily, moment by moment, to walk after the Spirit rather than after the lusts of the flesh.

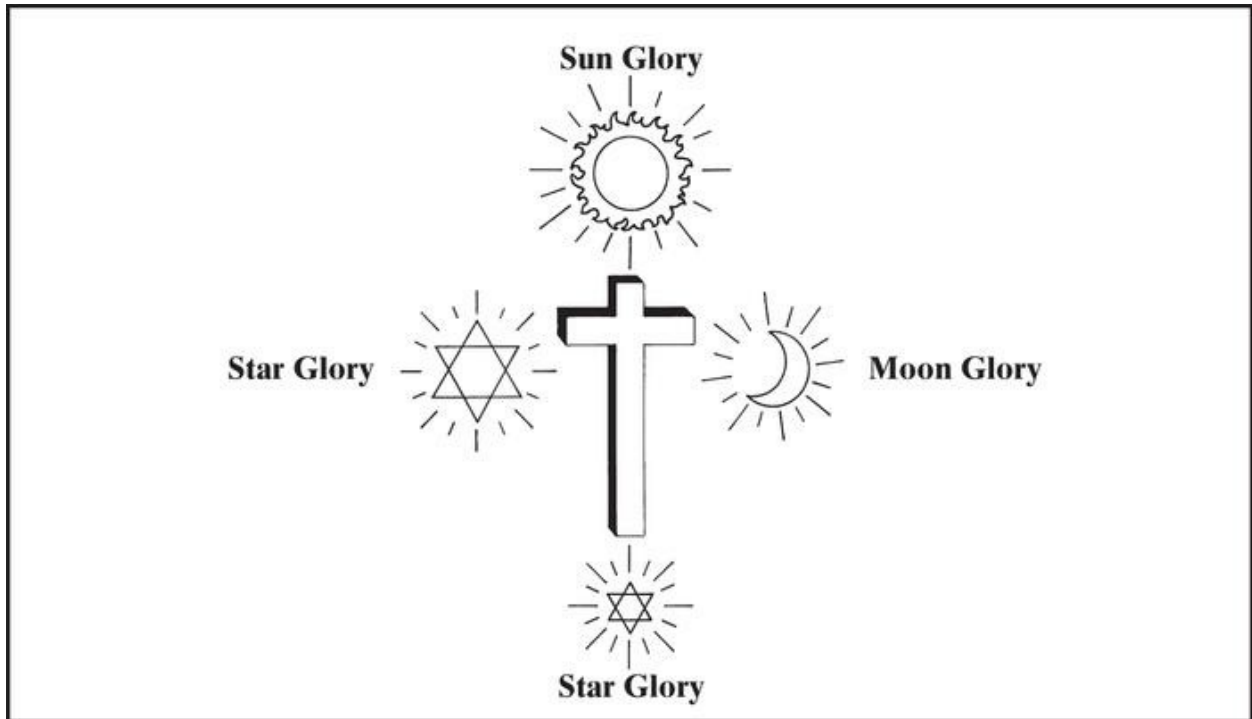
If there were no hereafter, the clear, clean, shining Light of Truth that floods the heart as a person learns to walk daily in unbroken fellowship with the LORD Jesus Christ would more than compensate for any pain experienced in growing to spiritual maturity. Daily fellowship with Jesus is an immediate reward, of course; however, God's Word also teaches that in Eternity every believer will be rewarded according to the measure of spiritual growth attained in this life.

## V. Eternal Rewards for Different Degrees of Growth

That God will reward believers in Eternity is revealed in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians.

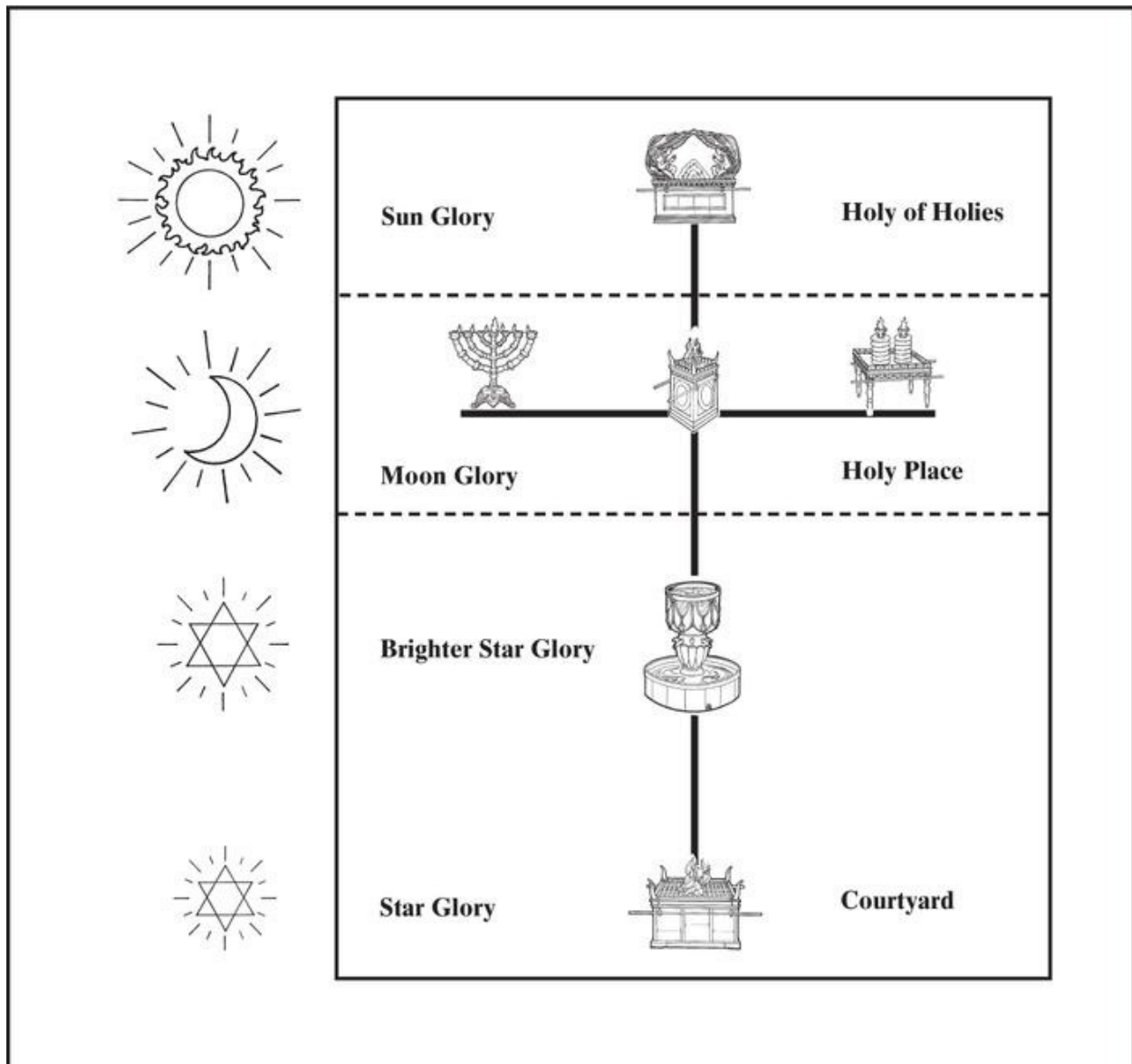
But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:* And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds. *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another. **There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.** It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: (I Corinthians 15:35-42).

This Scripture compares the resurrected bodies of believers to degrees of Glory. On resurrection morning, every believer will arise with a resurrected body that will shine with one of the four degrees of Glory which Paul mentioned.



In Eternity, the Christians who have attained an experience with Jesus Christ only at the Brazen Altar will shine as little Stars; others who have progressed to the Truths revealed at the Brazen Laver will shine with a brighter degree of Star Glory. Believers who have pressed on into the Holy Place, and have gained the Measure of the Stature of Jesus Christ revealed there, will shine with the Glory of the Moon.

Some believers will have grown up into full spiritual maturity in the Holy of Holies and will have had their wills joined in Spiritual Marriage Union with Jesus Christ's Will. The Christians in this latter group will be in the Bride of Christ and will possess the highest degree of Glory — the Glory of the Sun.



Jesus Christ dealt with the matter of Spiritual Stature in the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, recorded in Matthew, chapter twenty. Although the labourers hired in the first hour had agreed to work for a penny a day, they accused the householder of injustice because he paid those who went to work in the eleventh hour the same wage that he paid them — a penny. They proudly argued that they were worthy of more than the eleventh-hour labourers, but what they failed to realize was that those who had gone to work in the last hour had worked as hard and had accomplished as much in one hour as the first-hour labourers had in a whole day. Therefore, the householder was justified in paying both groups the same wage.

The moral of this Parable reveals that God rewards according to Spiritual Stature or Spiritual Growth, rather than according to the length of time spent in the vineyard.

Many people delight in telling how many years they have been in “The Way,” but their lives disclose that they never have grown beyond spiritual babyhood.

In the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul acknowledged the fact that their Church possessed all the spiritual Gifts.

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; **That in every thing ye are enriched by him**, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: **So that ye come behind in no gift**; waiting for the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: (I Corinthians 1:4-7).

After reading these verses, one might think that the Corinthian Church was full of spiritual giants. This was not true, however, for in chapter three, Paul called them *spiritual babes* (I Corinthians 3:1-3). Thus, it is evident that the Gifts of the Spirit are exactly what God calls them — Gifts. God does not bestow spiritual Gifts on a believer *because* he is spiritually mature. On the contrary, the Gifts are given to help believers *grow* to maturity in Christ.

Spiritual maturity is much more than being able to operate spiritual Gifts, as wonderful and glorious as they are. Spiritual maturity is evidenced during the trying circumstances of life by the believer's ability to speak and to behave according to the Nature of the LORD Jesus Christ.

For example, the Disciples were given Power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out devils. But how did they react when the final crisis came? They went to sleep; they forsook Jesus. Peter was the one who loudly had boasted that he was the one who loved Jesus the most. But, later, when he discovered that he could not use his fleshly sword to redeem the situation in which he found himself, Peter went so far as to curse and deny that he even knew the Man Who had been his Leader and constant Companion for over three years.

How did Jesus Christ, the Mature One, behave when He was faced with death in the Garden of Gethsemane? Jesus made the ultimate surrender.

And he said, **Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt** (Mark 14:36).

Jesus surrendered to die alone in the Garden, rather than to lift one finger of His Omnipotent Power to save Himself.

While the innocent one hung between Heaven and Earth, He looked down upon those who had stripped Him, mocked Him, spit upon Him, beat Him, and nailed Him to the Cross. Man's natural reaction would have been to loathe and to despise the ones who had inflicted such humiliation and pain, but Jesus cried, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34). One glimpse of Jesus Christ shows the honest-hearted Christian that there is room for greater spiritual growth!

It is the eleventh hour on God's time clock, which means that the Coming of the LORD is at hand. Now is the time for believers to take advantage of the moments left to them by letting the Nature of the Crucified Christ bring death to their fleshly nature and by laying hold of the Glorious Nature of the Resurrected Christ.

In Eternity, when the saints' rewards are given, it will do no good for anyone to tell how many years he has served in the vineyard or how many spiritual Gifts he has possessed. Regardless of how many souls a person has led to the LORD or how many years of ministry and service he has rendered unto Him, the Word of God declares that all are still "unprofitable servants." The criterion that God will use when He gives the saints their eternal rewards will be the degree of growth in Christ's Spiritual Stature that they have attained, not years of service.

The Apostle Paul compared saints' resurrected bodies to *houses* (dwelling places) and to *clothing* (something to be put on or worn).

**For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked (II Corinthians 5:1-3).

The Book of Revelation describes three distinct kinds of clothing that will be worn by resurrected saints: White Robes, White Raiment, and White Linen. Believers' spiritual apparel is exceedingly important, for their eternal abiding place or Abode will be determined by the class of resurrected Garments they will wear.

### **A. White Robes — Eternal Abode in the New Heavens**

The first class of resurrected Garment that believers will wear in Eternity is White Robes. In his vision, the Apostle John saw *two* groups of souls wearing White Robes. In the Greek, the word for *robe* means a long gown worn as a mark of dignity; the word for *white* means light. Therefore, a believer's resurrected body will be a Garment of the Light and Glory of the Word of God.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, **I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:** And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them

that dwell on the earth? **And white robes were given unto every one of them;** and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled (Revelation 6:9-11).

Notice that the souls in the Apostle John's prophetic revelation did not have their Robes, their resurrected bodies, at the beginning of his vision. They were crying to the LORD from *under* the Altar. This position in itself indicates the immaturity of their Spiritual Stature. Then, when they spoke, their words confirmed that they still were spiritual babes. In so many words they were saying, "How long is this trial going to last? How long will You wait, God, before doing something about our problem?"

These were the words of people whose faith had never matured. They still wondered, "Is God powerful enough to resurrect our bodies from the grave and join them with our souls and spirits? Will He be good enough to clothe us with the portion of His Glory that we obtained back on Earth?"

Beloved, He Who resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead is good enough and powerful enough to resurrect everyone who has ever trusted Him for Salvation. Praise His Name forever!

John watched as the spiritual babes were given their White Robes; and, then, they were told to rest for a season. In chapter seven, John saw another group wearing White Robes of Salvation.

After this [the sealing of the twelve tribes of natural Israel] I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude**, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, **clothed with white robes**, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.... And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, **What are these which are arrayed in white robes?** and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Revelation 7:9,10,13-17).

Some teach that the great multitude mentioned in this chapter are those who will be saved during the Tribulation Period, but this is impossible since John saw this vision at the *beginning* of the Tribulation Period, rather than at the end of it. When John saw this multitude, they were wearing their White Robes, proving that they already had received their glorified bodies. These were redeemed people wearing their White Robes of Salvation.

Verse fifteen says that the great multitude stood *before* or *without* the Throne of God. The word *before* means in the face of, in the eyes of. In the natural realm, it is possible to stand *before* or *without* a house and still not be standing *inside* the house.

Jesus promised that the overcomers of the Laodicean Church would sit with Him *IN* His Throne (Revelation 3:21). The Bride was described by the Apostle John as praising God from *inside* His Throne (Revelation 19:5). In Eternity, God will move His Throne to the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1). Only the Bride will share this degree of Unity with the Exalted Reigning Power and Authority of the Bridegroom.

Verse fifteen also clearly establishes the eternal Abode of the group of believers who will be wearing White Robes.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, **and serve him day and night in his temple:** and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them (Revelation 7:15).

God's Temple is in Heaven. Therefore, it is apparent that *the White-Robed group will serve Him day and night in Heaven*. Since Heaven has no natural sun and moon, the expression "day and night" cannot be referring to a solar day and night such as Earth experiences. The Bible, being its own best commentary, explains this expression in Revelation, chapter fourteen. In this chapter, the terminology "day and night" is used to signify FOREVER.

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up **for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name (Revelation 14:11).

From this Scripture, it is evident that the ones who will be wearing White Robes never will leave Heaven; they will stay there forever and ever. God will dwell among them by His Omnipresence in the same way that He dwells in the world today. These White Robed ones will weep (Revelation 7:17) because they will have missed the Prize of being in the Bride of Jesus Christ; nevertheless, God's Mercy will lead them to Living Fountains of Water.

## B. White Raiment — Eternal Abode on the New Earth

The second class of Garments that resurrected believers will wear in Eternity is White Raiment.

And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, **clothed in white raiment**; and they had on their heads crowns of gold (Revelation 4:4).

In this Scripture, the Apostle John described a group of believers whom he saw wearing White Raiment.

The word *white* again indicates the Glory, Light, and Radiance of their Garments, but the word for *raiment* is a different Greek word from the one used to identify White Robes. The word *raiment* means to put on an *outer and an inner* garment. This shows that the White Raiment group had gone further in the process of clothing themselves. They wore not only the *outer* Robe of Dignity, the Robe of Salvation, but they also wore an *inner* Robe of Power.

According to an eastern Biblical custom, the more clothing a person wore, the greater the wealth and position of that individual. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. The White Raiment ones had pressed on further in the Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ and had attained greater wealth and a position of greater authority and prominence.

Since the Elders wore crowns of gold upon their heads, it is evident that they held exalted positions. God's rule that governs at what point in his life a person is due to receive exaltation was given by King Solomon in the Book of Proverbs.

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; **and before honour is humility** (Proverbs 15:33).

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, **and before honour is humility** (Proverbs 18:12).

During their earthly journey, these saints, the Elders, had laid hold of Jesus Christ's Humility, the Raiment which clothed them with Power to rule over the fleshly dispositions and desires of their own hearts.

The humility that they exercised in their personal lives will make it possible for them to be trusted with ruling power and authority over those who will be dwelling on the New Earth in restored, immortal, physical bodies.

The Scripture stating that the New Earth will be the eternal Abode of the resurrected White Raiment Group is found in Revelation, chapter five.

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 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 5:8-10),

This Scripture reveals that the White Raiment Group will include not only the twenty-four Elders (a symbolic number), but also the four Beasts or Living Creatures (also a symbolic number).

John described these Beasts or Living Creatures in Revelation, chapter four, verses six through nine. No specific Scripture tells that the Garments worn by the Beasts or Living Creatures will be White Raiment; nevertheless, this can be concluded logically from their placement around the Throne with the Twenty-four Elders (who will wear White Raiment) and their ministry on the New Earth with the Twenty-four Elders who also wear White Raiment.

During Eternity, the kings will have the privilege of *entering into* the New City (Revelation 21:24-26); however, the New City will not be their *dwelling place*. In Revelation 5:10, the kings and the priests (the Beasts and the Elders) plainly say, "We shall reign on the earth." This group of believers will have grown in Christ's Spiritual Stature up to the Shoulder-realm and, therefore, will be entrusted with governmental ruling power.

## C. White Linen — Eternal Abode in the New City

The third class of Glory Garments that resurrected, overcoming believers will wear in Eternity is the White Linen Garments.

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 (Revelation 19:7,8).

The White Linen will exceed the White Robes and the White Raiment in the same way that the glory of the

natural sun outshines the glory of the stars and the moon.

The word *linen* is translated from a Greek word meaning radiant, limpid, magnificent, sumptuous (in appearance), bright, clear, gay, goodly, gorgeous, white. It goes back to a root word that means to beam, to radiate brilliance, to *give light*.

It is one thing to *possess* light; it is another thing to be able to *give or share* light. The White-Robed group and the White-Raiment group will possess Spiritual Light for themselves, but they will not be able to impart their Light to others. For example, the White-Robed group will possess a single Robe of Salvation; they will not be able to give that Robe to another without stripping themselves. The White-Raiment Group will possess a Garment of Salvation and a Garment of Power, yet each of these Garments will be their own personal covering. Only the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ will be able to *give* Light, for only she will be joined in a perfect Marriage Relationship with the One Who is the Omnipresent Light of the world.

When a person glimpses the glory and the beauty of the Lamb's Wife, a desire to be a part of the Bride immediately fills his heart.

The Bible says that the Bride *made* herself ready. It also says that her Fine, White-Linen Wedding Dress was *woven* by her righteous thoughts, deeds, and attitudes. The Bride will not receive her Wedding Dress of Glory by gift. The Bridegroom's Gift to the Bride was her White Robe of Salvation that was formed through the foundational experiences of Blood, Fire, and Water in the Courtyard. As she applied the Blood, Fire, and Water to her fleshly nature, her Spiritual Stature grew until she gained the White Raiment of Power related to the Holy Place.

Clothed in the Garments of Humility Power, she will have ruled and reigned over inward attitudes and dispositions that grieved Her Bridegroom's Heart, and her Spiritual Stature will have continued to grow and mature. The Bride will have done more than learn *about* the pure, righteous, holy Principles which governed her Spiritual Husband's decisions and judgments. Her own heart will have been so perfectly joined to His Heart in the Holy of Holies that she will have practiced the same degrees of humility and righteousness that she found in Him.

The Bride's righteousness will have manifested itself, first, toward her Spiritual Bridegroom. While on Earth, she will have learned to keep a right attitude toward God. She will have kept her thoughts, words, and behaviour right, even in contrary, humiliating situations. Second, she will have learned to exercise righteousness toward those with whom she lived and ministered.

Jesus Christ is coming back particularly for His Bride; however, all the overcomers from the White Robed Group and the White Raiment Group also will be caught away at the Rapture. As at a natural wedding, many others, in addition to the Bride and the Bridegroom, will be present at the Marriage of the Lamb.

When the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ shall rise first; then, those who are living shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air. All overcoming saints, whether dead or alive, will be raptured to partake in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Heaven.

There will be *guests* at the Wedding (Matthew 22:10), and *virgins* (in eastern weddings bridesmaids are called virgins [Matthew 25:1-13]), and the *friend* of the Bridegroom (comparable to the best man in weddings today [John 3:29]). Everyone will shine with Garments of resurrected Glory. Some will wear White Robes; some will wear White Raiment; but only one group will wear White Linen. The Lamb has only one Bride; she is singular and unique, and she will be dressed in Fine Linen, Clean and White.

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. **My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.** The daughters saw her, and blessed her; *yea*, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her (Song of Solomon 6:8,9).

Psalm forty-five gives another description of the Bride of Christ in the person of the king's daughter. The virgins, her companions, are mentioned, plus other honourable women, yet there is only one who prepares herself more than all the rest. It is she who is brought unto the King.

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.... And **the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean** (Revelation 19:11,14).

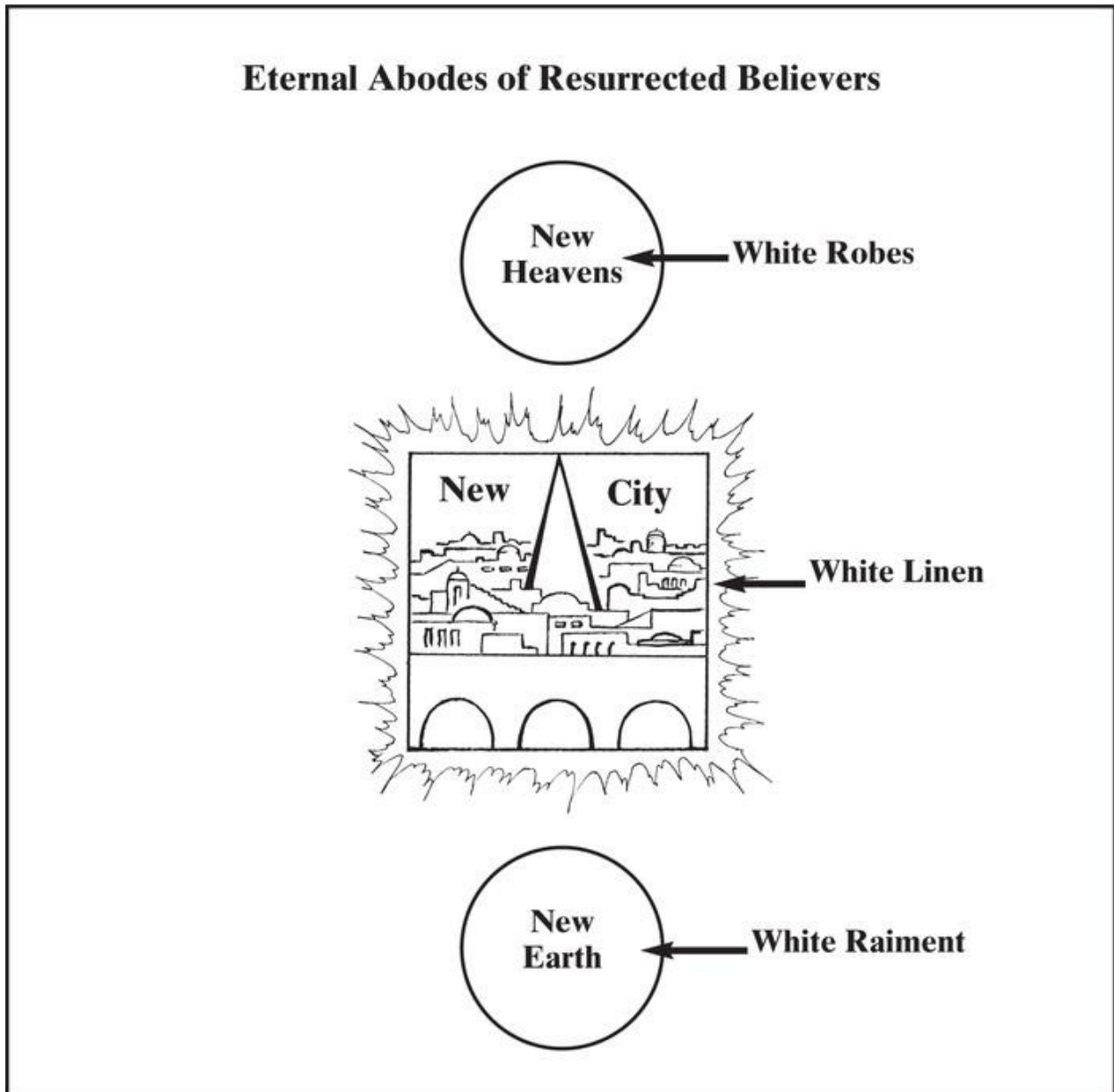
Many years before Christ came to the Earth and took on a physical Body, the Prophet Joel prophesied the LORD's Return to Earth with His mighty Army (Joel 2:1-11). The Scripture in Revelation states that the Armies that will return to the Earth with the LORD, at this time, will be wearing *White Linen*. Therefore, this can be none other

than the Bride herself, ready to war and to fight for the righteous, holy Will of God.

At the end of the Millennial Reign, after God's Will has been firmly established upon the Earth by the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and His Bride, the LORD will turn over the rulership of the Earth to resurrected King David so that he can sit on his earthly throne as was prophesied (Jeremiah 30:7-9; Ezekiel 34:23; Ezekiel 37:24; Hosea 3:5; and Amos 9:11).

Then, the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and His Bride will move to the New City, New Jerusalem, where they will take up their Eternal Abode. In the Eternal Ages, the Bridegroom and His Bride will rule and reign out of the New Jerusalem that John saw coming down out of Heaven.

In Eternity, the three types of Garments that will be worn by resurrected believers are as follows: *White Robes*, *White Raiment*, and *White Linen*. The resurrected Garment worn by each believer will display the degree of Glory that each believer will have attained through spiritual experiences and growth in Christ's Spiritual Stature while on this Earth. The particular Garment worn at the resurrection will determine the believer's place of eternal Abode: the New Heavens, the New Earth, or the New City.



Those who will wear the White Robes of Salvation will remain in Heaven in Eternity (Revelation 7:15). Those

who will wear the White Raiment Garment of Ruling Authority will not return to the Earth until after Christ's thousand-year reign has ended. At that time, King David, again, will sit upon his throne; and, as kings and priests, the White Raiment group will share in ruling and reigning on the New Earth.

The Bride of Jesus Christ is the only one who will spend Eternity in the New Jerusalem in God's and the Lamb's Personal Presence. Surely, throughout the ceaseless ages of Eternity, the Bride will shout that the sufferings of this earthly life were not worthy to be compared with the glorious privilege of growing to spiritual maturity and looking upon the Face of the LORD Jesus Christ and being able to serve Him personally.

May God grant that each day will find every heart earnestly laying hold of increased Spiritual Stature, ever pressing onward and upward, ever striving toward the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Prize, being in the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ, is the reason every believer should be motivated with a burning, holy zeal to grow daily in the Spiritual Stature of the LORD Jesus Christ.





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