

# The Light of the World: As the World Gets Darker, the Church Must Shine Brighter!

**Discover Your Spiritual Identity!**

**The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People**

“You are THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matt. 5:14, MEV, emphasis added).

Jesus had just shared the Beatitudes with His disciples, challenging them to be poor in spirit, repentant, meek, righteous, merciful, pure-hearted and carriers of the peace of God in a strife-filled world. Then He prophesied, “You are the light of the world.” The context is important because only people of godly character can truly fulfill this calling.

Notice He did not say, “You should be” or “You have the potential.” Rather, He said, “You ARE the light of the world!”— because they did not choose this task for themselves; He chose them and ordained them to walk in it.

The disciples had only been with Him a short time. They had not yet been born again so they could hardly comprehend the largeness of the destiny unfolding before them. If the Messiah had said “You are the light of Jerusalem,” it would have been easier to believe. But He said, “the world.” I can almost imagine them shaking their heads in doubt-filled amazement as they discussed among themselves.

How could this be? They were just common, uneducated men with limited means. How could they ever hope to have worldwide impact? But the Son of God’s words surely echoed in their hearts and minds, causing them to feel the heavy weight of

this sacred charge that He would later empower them to fulfill.

### **The Two Times Jesus Claimed This Status for Himself**

Not long after His Beatitude message, Jesus demonstrated this calling to be “light of the world” – on two separate occasions.

The first time, an angry mob of Jews threw a distressed, disheveled woman at Jesus’ feet, claiming she had just been caught in the act of adultery. They were strict legalists – fiercely religious people who, like a pack of predator wolves, prowled the streets of their cities, ready to “pounce” on the weak and the erring.

Jesus knelt next to her trembling frame, feeling her pain and remorse. He wrote on the ground. Then the same voice that said, “Let there be light” in the beginning “divided the light from the darkness” once again, saying:

“Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7).

The darkness of pride, anger and judgmental, hyper-religious attitudes had to flee. The light of love, righteousness, truth, forgiveness and reconciliation shone forth brightly as He warmly spoke, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more” (John 8:11). Then the defining moment arrived. He gazed at the stymied onlookers and boldly announced:

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

What a magnificent declaration! As the light of heaven spilled over into this gloomy, physical world, it illuminated the consciences of judgmental people with the mercy of God and caused them to drop their stones. It flooded the hearts of the

disciples with courage to be different by showing them the power of love. And it radiated hope to a broken woman in deep despair. Yes, all who witnessed that event were “enlightened” in one way or another. And the light that emanated from that single event on the Mount of Olives is shining still – nearly two thousand years later – lighting up a shadowy and guilt-ridden world with the kindness of God.

### **The Man Born Blind**

In the very next chapter, in a continuation of the revelation, Jesus passed by a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2). The Son of God responded:

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned. But it happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3).

In one short sentence, the Messiah shined the light of God on a question that has always plagued the minds of human beings for millennia – the reason for human suffering. Then Jesus announced:

. “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5, NKJV).

An extremely important element is revealed in this statement. Jesus filled this vital role while He was here in this realm. But as soon as He ascended, the torch passed to us. Now, it is our turn to shine. His instructions were simple, “Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13, KJV). So go out today into this dark world, withstand the prince of darkness and drive out the works of darkness wherever you find them.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

To explore this wonderful subject more deeply, listen to the episode on Mike Shreve’s weekly podcast called, “Discover Your

Spiritual Identity.” Watch a TV presentation on our calling to be “the Salt of the Earth” on Mike Shreve’s YouTube channel. {eoa}

*A product of the Jesus Movement Era, Mike Shreve has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970 with an emphasis on healing and the prophetic. His primary biblical teaching for over 35 years has been the spiritual identity of believers. This powerful insight is featured on his weekly podcast on and his TV program – both titled Discover Your Spiritual Identity. It is also the theme of his Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. The first three categories on his YouTube website expand on this amazing revelation:*

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# **The Salt of The Earth: God is Challenging You to Be a World-Changer**

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“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how shall it be made salty? It is from then on good for nothing but to be thrown out and to be trampled underfoot by men” (Matt. 5:13, MEV).

Salt is a substance purposefully used to change whatever it contacts. So when Jesus told His disciples, “You are the salt of the earth,” in essence, He was saying, “You are God’s chosen catalyst to bring change to this world.”

When the world changes the church – that’s apostasy. But when the church changes the world – that’s true revival – and it’s a clear indication that believers have truly fulfilled this calling. Jesus was a living example of someone who walked in the reality of this role because when He came to earth, major changes took place that transformed the world forever. Especially in this era, humanity aches for those who will boldly walk in this “salt-calling” to counteract the evil, the insanity and the deception that are abounding.

Unfortunately, many believers do not have a “salt” mindset; instead, they barely function in a “survival” mode – striving to implement enough biblical truth just to survive the battles of life. But God has called His people to be proactive, not just reactive.

Quite often the Bible defines its own symbols and such is the case with salt. Colossians 4:6 commands:

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you should answer everyone.”

So salt can represent the grace of God. First, the Mighty One salts needy people with grace, supernaturally changing their hearts and lives. Then He salts the world with them – sending them forth with the power to utter grace-filled words that change the lives of others.

## **Five Attributes of Salt**

There are at least five primary attributes of salt that symbolize various ways believers should function in this world, including the following three:

– A flavor enhancer – Often we use salt to enhance the flavor of food, making bland or even bitter food enjoyable. So Christians who fulfill this salt-calling are used by God to “enhance the flavor of life” for those who are enduring a bland or bitter existence. The world is full of people who constantly face deep depression, anxiety, fear or despair. God sends His salty people into their lives to make an otherwise “inedible meal” a feast of hope, joy, peace, forgiveness and love.

– An antiseptic – Salt has germ-killing properties; it can halt the progress of infections. So those who fulfill the calling to be salt often put a stop to the contagious disease of sin in the environment around them. By introducing godly values and the knowledge of salvation into their world, they provide the antidote for souls made sick by the carnality and sensuality that prevails here.

– A preservative – Especially before the advent of refrigerators, salt was used to keep meat from rotting. It is still added to many types of foods as a preservative. So those who fulfill this calling are used of God to preserve biblical truth and godly values in a society that often rejects such standards.

And there’s much more to this wonderful revelation!

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# **The Prosperous of the Earth: Prosperity is Part of Our Inheritance But It Needs To Be Understood!**

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“All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship” (Ps. 22:29, NKJV).

Does God desire to prosper His people and if He does, what

does that involve? Bringing balance and clarity to this controversial issue is exceptionally important. Let's start by explaining why God refers to His people as "the prosperous of the earth" in Psalm 22.

Along with Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 prophesied some of the most graphic details of what Jesus would go through on the cross:

- "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (His cry from the cross, vs. 1, NKJV).
- "They pierced My hands and My feet" (vs. 16).
- "They divide My garments among them and for My clothing they cast lots" (vs. 18).

Then the end of Psalm 22 foretells the glorious outcome of the Messiah's suffering:

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations. . . All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship;" (Ps. 22:27-29).

These verses are foretelling the Kingdom Age and, quite possibly, the marriage supper of the Lamb – attended by those who have been washed from their sins in the precious blood of Jesus. All those who are blessed to be a part of that glorious coming era will undoubtedly be prospering in God as they experience "heaven-on-earth" conditions in a renewed paradise world, but that means something much different than what is normally associated with the word. In fact, it will have absolutely nothing to do with financial well-being.

### **Defining the Term**

The dictionary definition of the word "prosper" conveys two primary meanings:

1. To succeed in an enterprise or activity, especially to achieve economic success.
2. To enjoy vigorous and healthy growth: to flourish.

So, prosperity can cover a lot of territory.

Even though most people associate “prosperity” with financial success or material gain, the first time it is mentioned in the Bible, it has nothing to do with that. Abraham is sending his servant Eleazer on an important mission and he instructs:

“The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father’s house” (Gen. 24:40).

God did “prosper” Eleazer’s efforts, supernaturally leading him to Rebekah who then became Isaac’s wife. Two chapters later, though, Isaac was described in a way that did include being blessed in the area of material wealth:

“The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous” (Gen. 26:13).

So, in some cases, flourishing materially can be a sign of prosperity streaming from God’s blessing (and I must ask, “How could the work of God be promoted successfully worldwide without those who are favored this way?”) But this aspect is certainly not the biblical emphasis.

What about Joseph, who became a slave in the captain of the guard’s home and, after that, a prisoner in Pharaoh’s dungeon? In both situations, this great-grandson of Abraham was described “prospering”:

“His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper” (Gen. 39:3).

“The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph’s authority, because the LORD was with him; and

whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper” (Gen. 39:23).

These references could not be referring to material prosperity because neither slaves nor prisoners would have been allowed to own material things or grow a fortune. Therefore, Joseph must have “prospered” a different way, in things like organizational abilities, leadership skills and social interactions. Plainly spoken, he just knew how to get things done effectively and successfully, and he was good with people.

Another great example is the first psalm that declares a blessing over the one who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly:

“He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3).

That covers a lot of territory – “Whatever he does.” Even if it never overflows to material fulfillment, that covers the full scope of a person’s life and being. So, our problem may be semantics. Many people recoil from the so-called “prosperity gospel” because they automatically associate prosperity with the idea of getting rich for the sake of getting rich and flaunting those riches. However, biblical prosperity goes far beyond that – so much so that God even names His people “the prosperous of the earth” – why? Because even though we are not all well off financially during our sojourn in this world, we will be changed into His image at the resurrection and dwell in His presence forever. Now, that’s a sign of prospering to the highest degree!

To go deeper in this revelation of what it is to be “The Prosperous of the Earth,” listen to Episodes 61 and 62 of Mike Shreve’s podcast titled *Discover Your Spiritual Identity* on Charisma Podcast Network. You can also see the video version of some of his podcast episodes on Mike Shreve’s YouTube

channel: Be sure to purchase a copy of his Charisma House book on this subject of our God-given names and titles, *WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ*. {eoa}

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# **Children of the Covenant: Discover the Source of Infinite Stability in an Unstable World**

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## People

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (Acts 3:25, KJV).

In this powerful proclamation, spoken by the apostle Peter right after the crippled man was healed at the gate beautiful, God’s people are named “children of the prophets and of the covenant.” What does that mean? Whatever you are a child of, you owe your existence to. So, through divine revelation flowing through the prophets, from Enoch onward, and the introduction of covenants into this world, God has brought forth a people chosen for miraculous interventions, outpoured blessings and abundant provisions. This inheritance empowers us to overcome all the evil and darkness of this realm.

There have been nine major covenants introduced by God into this fallen world. We are participating in the eighth called the New Covenant. Without this covenant, there would be no such thing as the body of Christ (see Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:8-13).

A covenant is a binding agreement made between two or more parties, each binding himself to fulfill certain obligations. These are called “covenants of promise” in Ephesians 2:12 because each covenant contains divinely authored promises that give God’s people blessed assurance concerning what He will do for them and how He will move in their behalf.

The Hebrew word translated covenant in the Old Testament is *beriyth* (pronounced *ber-eeth'*), which means to enter a pact by passing through pieces of flesh. In ancient times, covenanting parties would slay a sacrificial animal and then walk in between the divided carcass to make a symbolic statement. They were displaying the seriousness and the permanence of what they were doing (as serious and permanent as death itself),

and they were actually calling down a similar fate of death upon themselves if they dared to break covenant.

When God made a covenant with Abraham, He first pledged to Abraham a promised seed, then a Promised Land which they would inhabit. Having established His commitment to this two-fold miracle, to seal the agreement, God commanded Abraham to slay five different kinds of animals, dividing three of them in half. Surely, Abraham watched in awe-struck wonder as the Creator passed through the pieces of flesh in the form of a “smoking oven and a burning torch” (Gen. 15:17, NKJV). What a serious and sacred statement the eternal God was making! Knowing how Abraham would interpret this vision, it can be deduced that God was symbolically calling death (annihilation) upon Himself if He failed to keep His covenant with Abraham. Because such an aftermath was impossible, our heavenly Father was showing how dependable and unstoppable His covenant commitment to Abraham was. We can have just as much confidence concerning our covenant relationship with the God of Abraham.

When God made a covenant with David, He promised to preserve His dynasty (the throne of David) forever. To verify this, God spoke through Jeremiah this powerful prophecy: “If you can break My covenant of the day and My covenant of the night, so that there should not be day and night in their season, then also My covenant may be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign on his throne . . .” (Jer. 33:20-21, MEV). How intense is that! The solar system would have to shut down before God’s covenant commitment to David would fail! Evidently, the sun has continued to rise, and the night has continued to fall – in an unbroken, steady, predictable way for thousands of years. All the demons that exist could not stop this natural rhythm of nature from happening, neither could they stop the Messiah from being born (the Son of David who caused David’s throne to endure forever). And this is the amazing takeaway – we can have just as much assurance concerning our covenant relationship with

the God of David.

The Greek word translated covenant in the New Testament is *diatheke* (pronounced dee-ath-ay'-kay) and it means a will or a testament to be enforced at the death of the testator. So, the "New Covenant" is a revelation of the glorious inheritance that belongs to sons and daughters of the Most High by virtue of Jesus' death on Golgotha. We are referred to as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," because we share in the inheritance of the firstborn, Son of God – which includes the New Creation in all its glory (Rom. 8:17; Rev. 21:7).

So, Child of the Covenant – quit fearing! Quit allowing your heart to sink into depression and discouragement, thinking that all hope is lost! Your God is going to uphold you with His grace. Nothing can pluck you out of His hand. Satan and his demonic underlings cannot win. God would call death upon Himself before He would fail His commitment to you. The sun would have to cease shining before your covenant with God could be thwarted or overcome. God has made a sacred and serious commitment to get you to your final goal. He is the covenant-making, covenant-revealing, covenant-keeping, covenant-establishing, covenant-fulfilling God!

Explore this wonderful subject more deeply by listening to this episode of Mike Shreve's weekly podcast, *Discover Your Spiritual Identity*, or you can view the video podcast by going to our YouTube channel ().

Be sure to subscribe so you will get notifications for two more upcoming episodes on this powerful subject: Children of the Covenant / Part 2 (Episode 92 – October 1) and Children of the Covenant / Part 3 (Episode 93 – October 8). {eoa}

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# **Signs and Wonders: God's People are Chosen to Manifest His Supernatural Power**

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“Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and wonders. . .” (Isa. 8:18, AMP)

Foundationally, a “sign” is something that directs a person to a desired goal (like street signs or business signs). In like manner, God sends supernatural “signs” to guide us on our earthly journeys and then causes us to become “signs” who guide others.

Other definitions include the following:

A “sign” can be a natural token symbolizing a spiritual reality, like the “sign” of the rainbow given to Noah representing God’s promise to never allow a global flood again.

A sign can be an extraordinary, supernatural happening that reveals or validates God’s true identity, His will or His purposes.

A “wonder” is a divinely orchestrated, miraculous event that causes those who witness it to be filled with awe concerning God’s greatness.

### **The First Level of Prophetic Revelation**

On the first level, this prophecy was simply speaking about Isaiah and his children. The naming of each child at birth was a prophecy concerning the destiny of both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel.

Isaiah named his first son Shear-jashub, which means, “A remnant shall return.” It was a prophecy that the northern kingdom of Israel (made up of 10 tribes) would conquer the southern kingdom (made up of 2 tribes, Judah and Benjamin) and carry many away captive, but a remnant would eventually return to their homeland.

Isaiah named his second son Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means, “Quick to the plunder and swift to the prey.” It was a prophecy that the northern kingdom of 10 tribes would reap the judgment of God and be attacked by the empire of Assyria who would plunder them.

### **The Level of Prophetic Revelation**

There is also a higher, Messianic level to this prophetic passage.

Hebrews 2:13 (AMP) quotes the beginning of this verse (“Here I am, I and the children whom God has given me”) as proof that a new covenant had arrived; a time when God’s people would be a part of His family, not just citizens of a covenant nation. However, if the beginning of the sentence foretold born-again believers in the New Covenant, then the next four words must refer to us as well:

“I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and wonders. . .” (Isa. 8:18, AMP).

We have been filled with God’s Spirit to fulfill this role. Having received God’s miraculous influence in our lives, we become the means by which His miraculous influence infiltrates the world around us.

## **Israel in Egypt**

At pivotal points in the history of God’s dealings with mankind, He has employed supernatural “signs and wonders” to indicate His involvement in the affairs of both individuals and nations. There is no greater example than the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

The Highest gave Moses three signs to convince the Israelites and the Egyptians that he was truly sent from God: (1) His rod, thrown down, became a serpent; (2) water, poured out, became blood; and (3) a hand withdrawn from his bosom became leprous, then clean.

Then God produced more awe-inspiring signs and wonders in Israel like a pillar of fire by night, a cloudy pillar by day, manna from above and a gushing river of water from the rock that followed them in the wilderness. Through these things, Israel became a sign and a wonder in the world. This awakened faith in generations following that God could continue to manifest Himself supernaturally to confirm His love and power toward us all.

## **David's Wonderful Declaration**

Another great example is David, who enthusiastically proclaimed, "I have become as a wonder to many" (Ps. 71:7, AMP). The MEV translation says, "a wondrous sign." Surely, his family and his nation "wondered": they marveled at how a common shepherd boy became a world-renowned warrior, bringing down a famous Philistine warrior named Goliath with just a stone and a sling. Where did his power come from? The anointing, of course. David's declaration should be ours as well – for all believers have the potential of being a "wonder" – a source of awe and inspiration – lives evidencing the supreme blessing of divine influence.

## **Jesus and the Church**

When the Savior came into this world, Simeon, the prophet, held God incarnate in his arms at the temple and announced that the little baby would be a "sign" that would be "spoken against" (see Luke 2:25-34). After Jesus ascended into heaven, Peter described him as "a Man attested by God . . . by miracles, wonders, and signs" (Acts 2:22, NKJV). That's how the New Covenant was introduced into the world and it continued with the disciples.

Under the backlash of religious persecution, the early church prayed for miraculous manifestations, saying, "Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30, NJKV). We should still be praying this way.

## **My Story**

I became a sign and a wonder from the time I received Jesus into my heart. When I was searching for the truth back in 1970, I began studying yoga, Hinduism and Sikhism under an Indian guru. Eventually, I became a teacher of yoga myself at

four universities in the Tampa, Florida area and I was running a yoga ashram (a commune where devotees study more intensely).

Because of the influence of a friend, one day I asked God to give me a supernatural sign – to verify that Jesus was truly the only way to heaven and the Savior of the world. Though I prayed all day long, the “sign” did not happen until late that afternoon. Unknown to me, there was a prayer group in town that was interceding for me because they read about me in the paper. One of its members picked me up hitchhiking that day, even though at first he had no idea I was the yoga teacher he and his prayer group had been praying for.

When I stepped into his van, I felt a surge of excitement. A picture of Jesus was taped to the ceiling of the van. I knew it was my sign (a God-incidence, not a coincidence). On top of that, Kent (the guy driving) just “happened” to be a former yoga student himself, but he had found the Lord – so he knew exactly how to witness to me. God is such a genius.

Within an hour of receiving that “sign” from God, I became a sign and a wonder to my yoga students. That afternoon and the remainder of the week, I announced my conversion to my classes and told them I had unknowingly misled them, and that Jesus really was the only way. I shut down my ashram immediately. Most of my students became Christians also. So, do you see the pattern?

When you receive a sign and a wonder from God, quite often, you become a sign and a wonder to others.

Explore this wonderful subject more deeply by listening to a former episode of Mike Shreve’s weekly podcast called “Discover Your Spiritual Identity.” View his messages on YouTube, You may download the free booklet that tells Mike Shreve’s conversion story called *The Highest Adventure: Encountering God* by going to . {eoa}

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# **The Anointed of the Lord: Seven Categories of God's Anointed Representatives**

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“The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed” (Ps. 28:8, KJV).

To be anointed means to be chosen by God and endued with a

measure of His Spirit to fulfill an ordained purpose. Our title Scripture reveals that God supernaturally strengthens and protects such blessed individuals. Consider a few classic examples – David facing Goliath; Daniel thrown in the lion's den; Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego cast into the furnace of fire. In all of these cases, God was the "saving strength" of His chosen representatives and by His Spirit, they supernaturally overcame impossible situations.

But what about those who were martyred, who lost their lives serving God – like Stephen, Peter or Paul? Did something go wrong? No, these consecrated persons fulfilled their appointed times on earth and when the greatest adversary of all appeared – death – they still emerged victorious. God's "saving strength" enabled them to overcome what no human being can overcome on his own. Instead of death being an end, for such anointed ones, it became a portal into a glorious, eternal existence in a spiritual sphere.

Concerning the patriarchs of old, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God adamantly declared, "Do not touch my anointed ones, and do no harm to my prophets" (Ps. 105:15, MEV). As they passed through this world – often shunned, disregarded, opposed, persecuted or outnumbered – still they were under God's oversight and received His provision and protection. Not only did they survive; they thrived in what they were sent to accomplish. Those who fought against them were rightly recompensed.

Under the Old Covenant, certain choice leaders were primarily the ones titled "the anointed," easily divided up into seven main categories: patriarchs, judges, kings, governors, prophets, priests and soldiers (certain choice soldiers who were supernaturally empowered in battle).

Then the Messiah came (from the Hebrew *mashiyach*, meaning "the anointed One"). The "oil of gladness" (the supernatural oil of the anointing) rested upon Him in an unprecedented,

unsurpassed way (Ps. 45:7). When He announced His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, He quoted from the prophet Isaiah's writings:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18-19, see Is. 61:1-2, emphasis by author).

He was the epitome, the most excellent expression, of all seven categories of persons anointed under the old will – for He was, is and ever will be the Patriarch of all patriarchs (the Ancient of Days Himself), the Judge of all the earth, the King of kings, the Governor among the nations, the great Prophet Moses said would come, the Great High Priest and the exemplary soldier, the Captain of our salvation. All seven "anointed" roles were fulfilled to perfection on the highest spiritual level, in just one person – also referred to in the New Testament as "the Christ" (from the Greek word Christos, also meaning "anointed One").

Later on, Peter declared "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" and that as a result, He "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). That's probably the most exact, concise way of describing the God-given purpose of those who are anointed in this hour, no matter what realm of society we function in. All true, born-again believers are now among the anointed; we have all received the indwelling of His Spirit and we all need to "preach the gospel," "heal the brokenhearted" and go about "doing good"– delivering those who are oppressed by satanic influences in this world.

This may be a dangerous and deception-filled world but we can have absolute confidence. In his first epistle, John encouraged New Testament believers with the following

exhortation:

“The anointing which you have received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. For as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in Him” (1 John 2:27).

Three primary promises are given to “anointed ones” in this passage:

1. The anointing will abide in us all our days.
2. The anointing will teach us all things.
3. The anointing will instruct us how to abide in God.

Thank God these three things will be our “saving strength” until we transcend into the heavenly realm and then progress to the next stage of our destiny in the Lord, reigning with Him as kings and priests on this earth.

By the way, we will be anointed for that God-ordained task also.

Explore this wonderful subject more deeply by listening to a past episode of Mike Shreve’s weekly podcast or the TV program, posted on our YouTube channel, that brings forth this revelation (both called “Discover Your Spiritual Identity”).  
{eoa}

**Mike Shreve** has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970, with an emphasis on healing and the prophetic, and was a leader in the Jesus Movement in the early 70s. His primary biblical teaching for the past 35 years has been the spiritual identity of believers. This powerful insight is featured on his weekly podcast on and his TV program – both titled “Discover Your Spiritual Identity.” It is also the theme of his Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. The first three

*categories on his YouTube website expand on this amazing revelation*

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# **Claim Your Redemption Rights Through the Lord**

**Discover Your Spiritual Identity!**

**The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People**

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy” (Ps. 107:2, NKJV).

To “redeem” means to loose away or set free from bondage. It is a biblical term especially associated with the liberation of debtors, slaves or prisoners. To “redeem” can also mean to buy back that which has been lost, stolen or forfeited. Watch for these key words as you continue reading.

In the beginning, Adam lost his oneness with God and passed on that fallen state to all his offspring. The enemy has since stolen many things from our hearts and lives – like virtue, righteousness, peace, perfect health and everlasting life. Some of us have been our own worst enemies and have even

“sold” ourselves for nothing (for foolish things that had no lasting value – Isa. 52:3). From birth, we have all been slaves to a lower nature and, as a result, prisoners of carnality in a world separated from its Creator.

Thank God that from the onset of this calamity, He had a plan of redemption in mind. Strangely, though, it did not manifest right away but unfolded gradually through the centuries.

### **The First Mention of Redemption**

The first mention of redemption is found in Genesis, the book of beginnings. As Jacob prayed over his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, he declared:

“The angel who redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; let them be called by my name, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Gen. 48:16).

The angel Jacob referred to is “the Angel of the Lord.” This is not an ordinary angel; rather, it is a title assigned to the Messiah when He manifested Himself to His people in various ways under the Old Covenant. (See Gen. 16:7; 22:11; 32:22-32, Hos. 12:3-5, Ex. 3:2; 23:23, Jdg. 6:11-24 for appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ.) In Jacob’s declaration above, a spiritual precedent is being set –that when the Redeemer comes into the lives of His chosen ones, His intention is to deliver them not just from some evil, but from all evil – from every wicked, dark, base or demonic thing that could possibly be encountered in this world, even the bonds of death itself.

### **The Messiah Canceled the Curse**

Many years later, when the law was revealed to Moses and the children of Israel, it resulted in both blessings and curses. For those who obeyed, it resulted in great blessings, but for those who disobeyed, terrible consequences were forecast.

(Over 100 curses are listed in Deut. 28:15-68.) One disturbing verse dreadfully foretold:

“Cursed is he who does not confirm all the words of this law by doing them.” (Deut. 27:26).

There were 613 commandments in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) and according to this verse, if a person fell short of keeping just one, he or she came under the curse of the law. So, all who participated in the Old Covenant were under a yoke of bondage, because no one could live a perfect life (Gal. 5:1). However, like the dawning of a new day, the New Covenant arose out of the shadows with the promise:

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13).

What a miracle! Through His death and resurrection, Jesus loosed all those who would ever trust in Him from all their sins and failures – and the judgment that should have resulted from their sins. He delivered us from every curse of the law, including sickness, poverty and battles of the mind. He did not accomplish this miracle through some religious ritual, but through the price He paid on the cross:

“For you know that you were not redeemed from your vain way of life inherited from your fathers with perishable things, like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

### **The Final Act of Redemption**

Even if the darkness of death stalks us, we can echo with confidence the bold words of the patriarch Job: “I know my redeemer lives!” (Job 19:25). He will do a complete work in us to the very end. There is a yearning in every true believer for the completion of this redemption process. We long to be restored to us all that Adam lost in the beginning and even taken to even greater glory. That’s why we “groan within

ourselves while eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23).

See, there is a threefold process to redemption: He already has redeemed our spirits when we were born again. He is in the process of daily redeeming our souls, but in the future, He promises to fully redeem our physical bodies. Of His chosen ones, He pledges:

“I will ransom them from the power of Sheol. I will redeem them from Death. O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?” (Hos. 13:14).

We can be assured of this final outcome, for we have been “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit . . . until the redemption of the purchased possession” – powerfully preserved by the Most High “for the day of redemption” (the day of the resurrection) (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30).

No wonder our main title Scripture encourages God’s redeemed to “say so” (Ps. 107:2, NKJV). Because the only way we can fully experience these and all of our other redemption rights is to seize them by faith through the power of the spoken word. Let’s do that often, starting right now!

Explore this wonderful subject more deeply by listening to three former episodes of Mike Shreve’s weekly podcast called *Discover Your Spiritual Identity* or the TV program, posted on our YouTube channel ().{eoa}

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# **The Pillar and Foundation of The Truth: Standing Strong in a World Full of Deception**

**Discover Your Spiritual Identity! The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People**

“But if I am delayed, you might know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

An expertly fashioned pillar represents qualities like uprightness, authority, strength, stability, dominion, greatness, excellence and permanence. Towering, ornately designed columns often symbolize that which is exalted, admirable, praiseworthy, awe-inspiring and superior.

These words describe the kind of believers that are especially needed now, during a time when our culture is increasingly being dominated by selfishness, immorality, violence, greed, dishonesty and blasphemy. Sacred things are lightly esteemed,

even scorned and profaned in this era – including the sacredness of life itself. In such “perilous times,” heaven ordains choice men and women to courageously lay the foundation of truth once again and rear up a pillar-like standard to turn back the hearts of the wayward (2 Tim. 3:1).

It was such a time of crisis when God called Jeremiah. Though he insisted his youthfulness disqualified him, the Lord countered:

“For you shall go everywhere that I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak . . . Do not be dismayed at their faces . . . For indeed, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar . . . They will fight against you, but they will not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you” (Jer. 1:7-8, 17-19).

God made His earthly representative an “iron pillar” – a strong, unbending, unchanging voice of truth – and his testimony made an impact that has endured to this day. In this hour, when proponents of communism, socialism, pluralism, humanism and transgenderism are doing all they can to discredit, dishonor and disregard the truth, it is imperative that a new generation of prophets and prophetesses arise – not to tickle the ears of self-absorbed Christians, but to disarm the forces that would like to subject the entire human race to a dark and godless agenda. Children of God, we can push back, and we must!

### **Pillars of the Earth**

Hannah, the mother of Samuel, revealed this calling on all of God’s people in a powerful, heartwarming way – declaring that God:

“Raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts up the oppressed from the dunghill to make them sit with princes and inherit a throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth belong to the Lord, and He has set the world upon them” (1 Sam. 2:8).

First, this speaks of the transformation that comes to those who covenant with God:

– “He raises the poor from the dust” (elevating those who are “poor in spirit” from the “dust” of mortality – the bondage of a mere, temporal existence, Matt. 5:3).

– He “lifts the beggar from the dunghill” (delivering those who plead for mercy from the “dunghill” of carnality – the bondage of a sensual, base, egocentric lifestyle).

Once they are loosened, God positions the repentant “among princes” – adopting them into a royal lineage. They become sons and daughters of the King of kings, destined to reign with Him forever. Those chosen for such a destiny become “pillars of the earth,” not only in the future kingdom of God, but right here, right now. The world rests upon them – for they often become key players, major influencers, in shaping society. They are God’s catalysts for change, His means of introducing kingdom values in a world quite opposed to them.

Explore this wonderful subject more deeply by listening to a former episode of Mike Shreve’s weekly podcast called “Discover Your Spiritual Identity” or the TV program posted on our YouTube channel that brings forth this same revelation. A suggested book about becoming a pillar of truth in this generation is *GOD and Cancel Culture: Standing Strong Before It’s Too Late* by Charisma founder Steve Strang.{eoa}

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# **The Church: God's Victorious People, Authorized to Trample the Gates of Hell**

**Discover Your Spiritual Identity: The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People**

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

Acts 2:47 explains that in the beginning, "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." So from the start, "the church" was a work of God, not a work of man. The word "church" is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia* (pronounced ek-klay-see'-ah), meaning called out ones. So, all who are in the church have been "called ... out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Presently, over two billion people claim the Christian faith

in this world. However, there is a “professing church” (those who merely profess an intellectual belief in a historical Christ) and a smaller-in-number “possessing church” at its core (those who possess a genuine, personal relationship with Jesus). This latter group is made up of sincere lovers of God out of every denomination who are truly born again (see John 3:1-7). Such a spiritual rebirth happens when the Lord Jesus dwells in a person’s heart “by faith” (Eph. 3:17). Such persons make up the “true church”: not an organization, but a living organism—the body of Christ worldwide.

### **The Church Is the Most Valuable Institution in the World**

Acts 20:28 declares we are “the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Whenever we purchase something, we must first be convinced that the item is more valuable to us than the price—or we will never make the transaction. In like manner, God must have decided that even though we were sin-stained, defiled and under a curse, we were more valuable to Him than His own blood. How amazing is that!

### **The Church Is the Most Important Institution in the World**

The church is called “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). This world is saturated with deception. But the church is like a memorial “pillar” raised up high above all nations, radiating the brilliant light of truth to those who are stumbling through the darkness. Furthermore, the church is a strong foundation on which God is building His eternal plans and purposes in a world that is often opposed to Him. Without this influence, all the seed of Adam would utterly perish. However, through the church, the truth will prevail, for the wicked one, “who deceives the whole world” will ultimately be vanquished by those who have been begotten by “the word of truth” and born of “the Spirit of truth” (Rev. 12:9-11, James 1:18, John 16:13).

### **The Church Is the Most Victorious Institution in the World**

During His earthly sojourn, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” The chief apostle responded, “Some say that You are John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Jesus then replied, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:13-16). Jesus then declared Peter was “blessed” because he received that insight, not from “flesh and blood,” but from the Father in heaven—then the Savior prophesied with intensity:

“Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18, KJV).

In other words, the greatest adversaries of the human race—sin, the curse, Satan, his demonic hordes, the grave, eternal destruction—none of these can triumph over the church of the living God, because it has been formed, not by doctrinal persuasion, but by supernatural, divine revelation (that’s the “rock” Jesus was talking about). Therefore, absolutely nothing can prevent the members of God’s true church from obtaining ultimate, absolute victory, because the Most High intends to be both “the Author and the Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). He has already predetermined that at the resurrection His “called out ones” will emerge: “... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

Yes, we will then be “called out” of mortality into immortality, “called out” of time into eternity and “called out” of separation from God into a rapturous oneness with Him—forevermore!

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## **Disciples: Believers Who Have Awakened Ears and Awakened Tongues**

**Discover Your Spiritual Identity: The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People**

The title “disciples” is the most used name for God’s people in the New Testament. In contrast, the term “believers” only appears twice, while the term “Christians” is only found three times. But the word “disciples” surfaces 256 times in reference to the sons and daughters of God: one time in the Old Testament and 255 times in the New Testament (KJV). What should our conclusion be? God’s emphasis should be our emphasis.

To be a disciple means to be schooled in the Word, by the

Spirit, in the deep things of God. It means always striving to reach “the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). Evidently, the word “disciple” is the root of the word “disciplined,” so those who accept the call to be “disciples” must be ready and willing to “discipline” themselves in order to be in alignment with God’s Word, God’s will and God’s purposes for their lives—regardless of the cost.

There are three main definitions of a “disciple”:

- One who is trained or taught: a student.
- One who aspires to be like his teacher: a follower.
- One who accepts, and assists in spreading, the teachings of another: an adherent.

Just one authentic disciple can impact the world more powerfully than a thousand believers who are minimally religious. No wonder Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19).

### **An Old Testament Mystery Unveiled**

There is an intriguing, hidden mystery surrounding the one time “disciples” appears in the Old Testament. Ironically, it wasn’t even referring to God’s people in that era. Instead, the prophet Isaiah was foretelling certain characteristics that would be associated with “disciples” in the New Testament age. Here’s the original verse:

“Bind up the testimony; seal the law among My disciples” (Isa. 8:16).

To “**seal the law**” meant to bring the law (the Torah) to a place of fulfillment—in other words, roll up the scroll and put a seal on it because a new era is about to unfold (which is exactly what happened when Jesus finished his earthly journey and ascended into heaven).

To “**bind up the testimony**” could mean to safeguard the words of the Messiah by recording them for future generations, in order to perpetuate His cause (because the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10; see Rev. 1:2, 9; 12:17)).

But there’s more.

Two verses later, in a continuation of the prophetic declaration, the Lord spoke through Isaiah:

“See, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts who dwells in Mount Zion” (Isa. 8:18).

We know this verse is a reference to New Covenant disciples because the first part of it is quoted as proof of that very thing in Hebrews 2:13. So apparently, one reason God raises up “disciples” is for the purpose of manifesting “signs and wonders” (the manifestation of the supernatural that advances God’s kingdom and validates Jesus’ claim of being the Savior of the world). In these dark times spiritually, we need this—because dry, ceremonial forms of Christianity can never bring the kind of spiritual awakening that births radical change in people and society as a whole.

### **Going Deeper**

The profoundness of the revelation goes even deeper when we examine the original Hebrew. The word translated “disciples” is *limmud*, which is from the root word *lawmad* that means to stick with a goad (a pointed stick that a shepherd uses to prod sheep the right direction). A good example of this symbolic connection is Ecclesiastes 12:11:

“The words of the wise are like goads ... given by one Shepherd.”

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, thousands were

gripped by his message—as he proclaimed that the Messiah who was crucified had risen from the dead. Like a shepherd, Peter “goaded” that “flock of sheep” in the direction of the cross. In describing their reaction, Acts 2:37 says:

“They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”

In other words, they were stuck with the “goad” of God’s wisdom prodding them in the right direction to find true salvation (see Paul’s conversion story also—Acts 9:4-5). But there’s an even deeper truth to be discovered.

### **The Spiritual Awakening of a Disciple**

Though *limmud* is translated “disciples” only once in the Old Testament, it is also translated twice as “learned” in Isaiah 50:4 (NKJV):

“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned [Heb. *limmud*], that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned [Heb. *limmud*].”

You could easily render this verse, “The Lord GOD has given me the tongue and the ear of a disciple.” What would that mean?

A true disciple, because of a consistent commitment to truth, is sensitive to the voice of the Lord and guidance of the Holy Spirit—an awakened ear.

A true disciple, because of consistent communion with God, is prophetic and powerful, someone who knows what to say and when to say it (“a word in season”) to bring forth change—an awakened tongue.

Such inspired individuals become conduits of kingdom influence wherever they go—something the world desperately needs in these chaotic times.

## **Further Teaching on the Subject of Our Calling to Be Disciples**

Many claim to be “Christians,” but true, dedicated “disciples” are rare. Yet this is the most used title for believers in the New Testament. Jesus did not say, “Go and make believers of all nations.” He said, “Make disciples.” There is a big difference. Prepare to be challenged!

Ten primary signs of a true disciple are found in Jesus’ teachings. These are some of the most challenging declarations the Savior ever made to His followers. Those who truly act on these divine directives become world-changers and history-makers. {eoa}

**Mike Shreve** *has taught on the spiritual identity of believers for over 30 years. This powerful revelation is featured on his weekly podcast on and a weekly TV program on “It’s Supernatural Network” (ISN)—both titled Discover Your Spiritual Identity (also posted weekly on YouTube here). It is also the theme of his Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. A product of the Jesus movement era, Mike has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970 with an added emphasis on healing and the prophetic.*

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