



COVENANT

PROMISE, PROVISION
& PROGRESSIVE PURPOSE

DIGGING DEEPER, BUILDING STRONGER.

#ROOTED

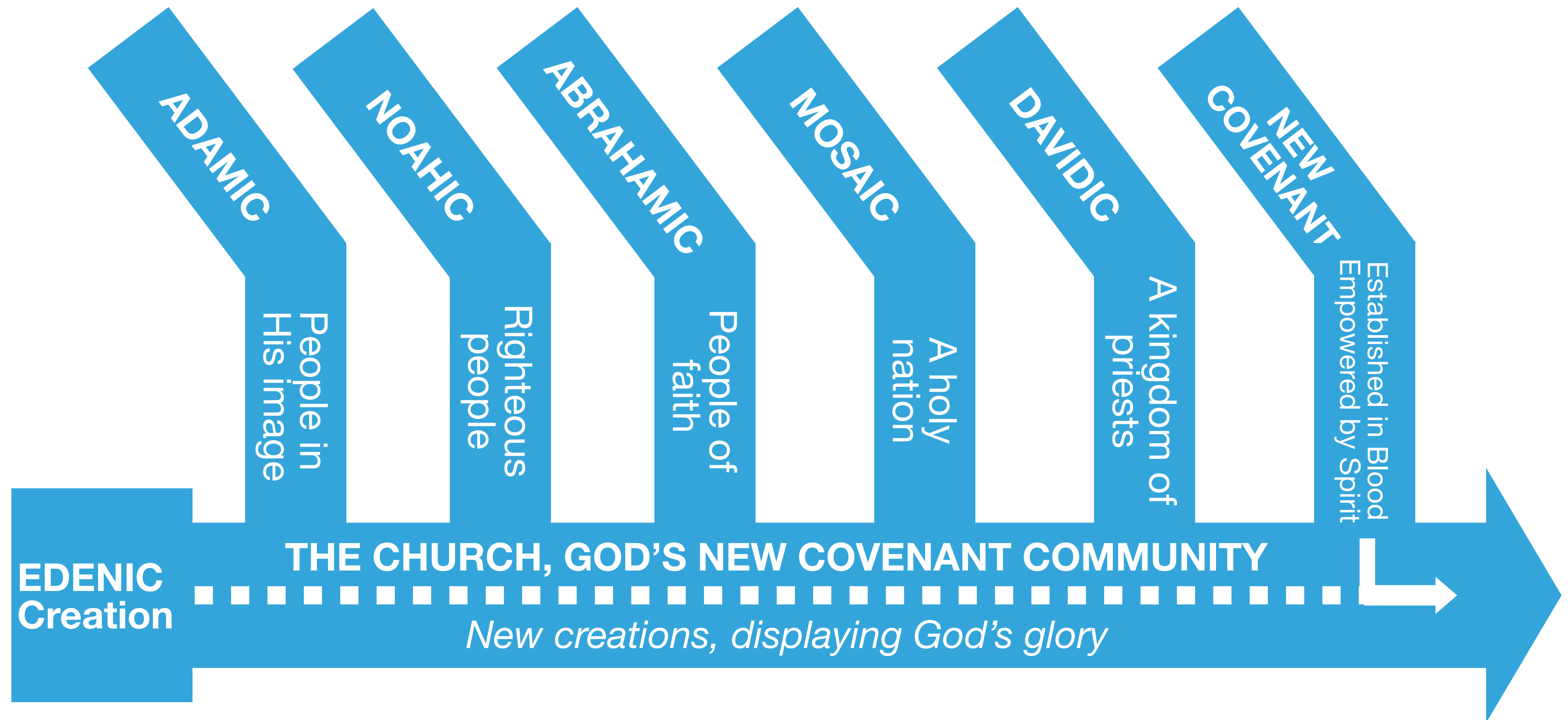
RECAP...

- Covenant is *God's way with His people* - He is a covenant-making, covenant-keeping, covenant-enabling God.
- Covenant is *first seen* in the Godhead; Father, Son and Spirit united in passion, purpose and plan...
- The heartbeat of the covenants is *relationship* and the lifeblood is *hesed* - covenant-love - God's 'stubborn steadfastness' and 'extraordinary persistence' in loving His people.
- The covenants reveal an *unfolding relationship* between God and His people; each is a contributory flowing into the ever-widening river of God's *eternal purpose* and the *everlasting covenant* designed to achieve it.
- God made covenants in Eden (establishing His purpose before the fall); then with Adam (after the fall), Noah (a fresh start after the flood) and Abraham (a promise of countless offspring). Then with Moses (to establish a holy nation for Himself) and David (declaring His desire for a Kingdom)...
- But all these covenants were broken, and all were ultimately only *foreshadows* of the **New Covenant in Christ**, by which God's longing would finally be fulfilled!
- The New Covenant is made in Christ's blood and empowered by Christ's Spirit and is a covenant for all nations. **Christ's worldwide CHURCH is God's new covenant community...**

COVENANT(S) FULFILLED!

- **Adam:** covenant with *created* man – desire for men in His image - fulfilled *in the church*: new creation people (2Co 5:17), “born from above” (Jn 3:3,7) and following Christ’s teaching (Mt 28:18-20).
- **Noah:** covenant with a *righteous* man – desire for family of righteous men - fulfilled *in the church*: a people “made righteous” (Ro 5:19, 2Co 5:21).
- **Abraham:** covenant with a *faithful* man – desire for faithful people - fulfilled *in the church*: a people “justified by faith” (Ro 5:1, Gal 2:16, 3:24).
- **Moses:** covenant with a *chosen nation* – desire for Holy Nation - fulfilled *in the church*: God’s “chosen people...a holy nation” (1Pe 2:9).
- **David:** covenant with a *worshipping* king – desire for Kingdom of Priests - fulfilled *in the church*: a “royal priesthood” (1Pe 2:9), a “kingdom of priests” (Rev 1:6, 5:10)...

I ETERNAL PURPOSE



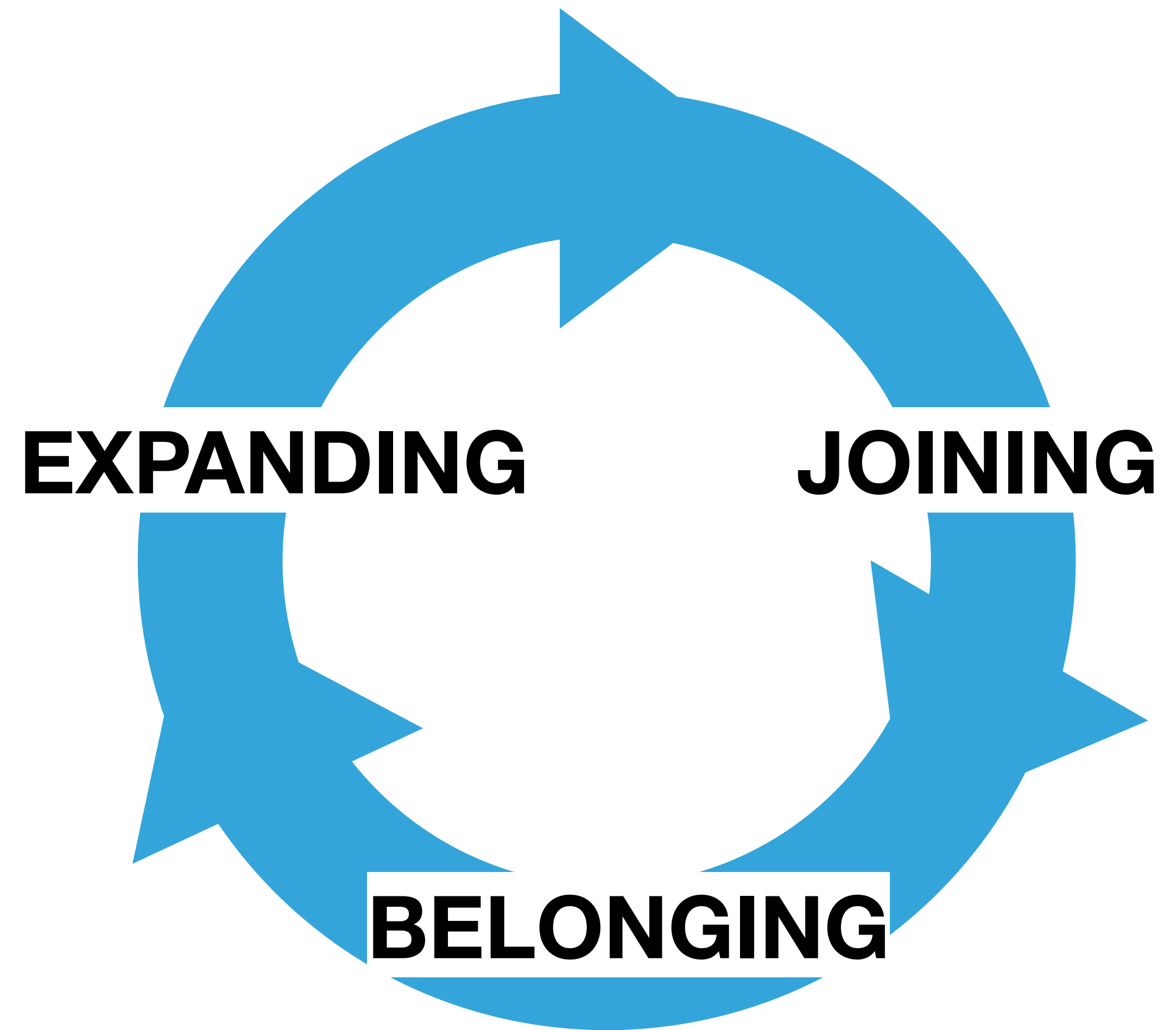
Eph 3:10-11 His intent was that now, *through the church*, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His **eternal purpose** that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NEW COVENANT COMMUNITY

The church is the New Covenant community and is the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose.

As such, all aspects of its composition, the basis of its life and leadership, and its commission to expand are of the utmost importance.

The NT leaves us in no doubt as to how we join, how we live-out our obligations and responsibilities, and how we fulfil our mission...



JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

First **mention** of the *ekklesia* - **Matthew 16:13-19**

**CRUCIAL
QUESTION!**

WHO DO
PEOPLE SAY
THE SON OF
MAN IS?

JOHN...
ELIJAH...
JEREMIAH...
PROPHET...

WHO DO
YOU SAY
I AM?

YOU ARE
THE
MESSIAH,
THE SON OF
THE LIVING
GOD!

BLESSED ARE
YOU!

MY FATHER
REVEALED
THIS TO YOU!

AND ON
THIS ROCK
I WILL BUILD
MY
EKKLESIA

THE FORCES
OF DEATH WILL
NOT
OVERPOWER IT

I WILL GIVE
YOU THE KEYS
OF THE
KINGDOM

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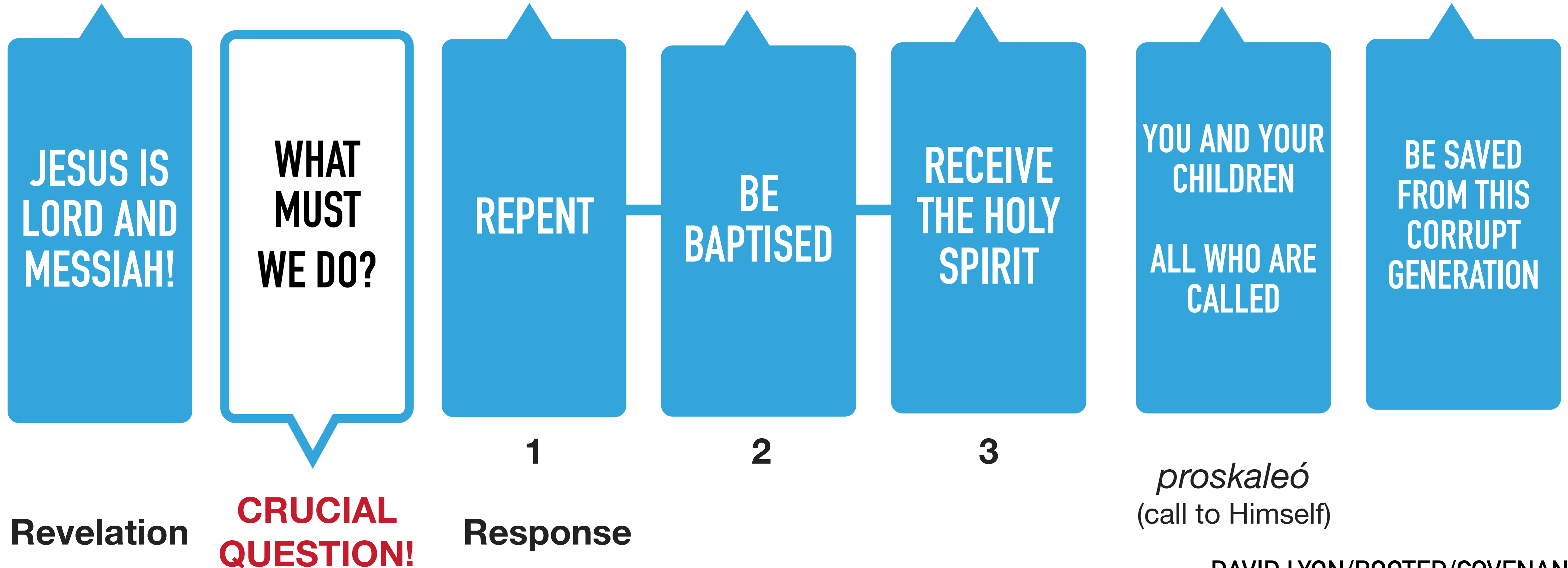
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Revelation

Response

PETER AND HIS REVELATION

First **massive movement/momentum** of the *ekklesia* - **Acts 2:36-40**



MEET THE CHURCH!...

SO THOSE WHO **ACCEPTED** HIS MESSAGE WERE BAPTISED, AND THAT DAY ABOUT 3,000 PEOPLE WERE **ADDED TO THEM.** (ACTS 2:41)

AND THEY **DEVOTED** THEMSELVES TO THE **APOSTLES' TEACHING**, TO THE **FELLOWSHIP**, TO THE **BREAKING OF BREAD**, AND TO THE **PRAYERS** (42)

THEN **FEAR** CAME OVER EVERYONE, AND MANY **WONDERS AND SIGNS** WERE BEING PERFORMED THROUGH THE APOSTLES. (43)

NOW ALL THE BELIEVERS WERE **TOGETHER** AND HELD ALL THINGS IN COMMON. THEY SOLD THEIR POSSESSIONS AND PROPERTY AND DISTRIBUTED THE PROCEEDS TO ALL, AS ANYONE HAD A NEED. EVERY DAY THEY **DEVOTED** THEMSELVES TO **MEETING TOGETHER** IN THE TEMPLE COMPLEX, AND **BROKE BREAD** FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE. THEY ATE THEIR FOOD WITH A **JOYFUL AND HUMBLE ATTITUDE**, **PRAISING GOD** AND HAVING **FAVOUR** WITH ALL THE PEOPLE. (44-47)

AND EVERY DAY THE LORD **ADDED TO THEM** THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED. (47)

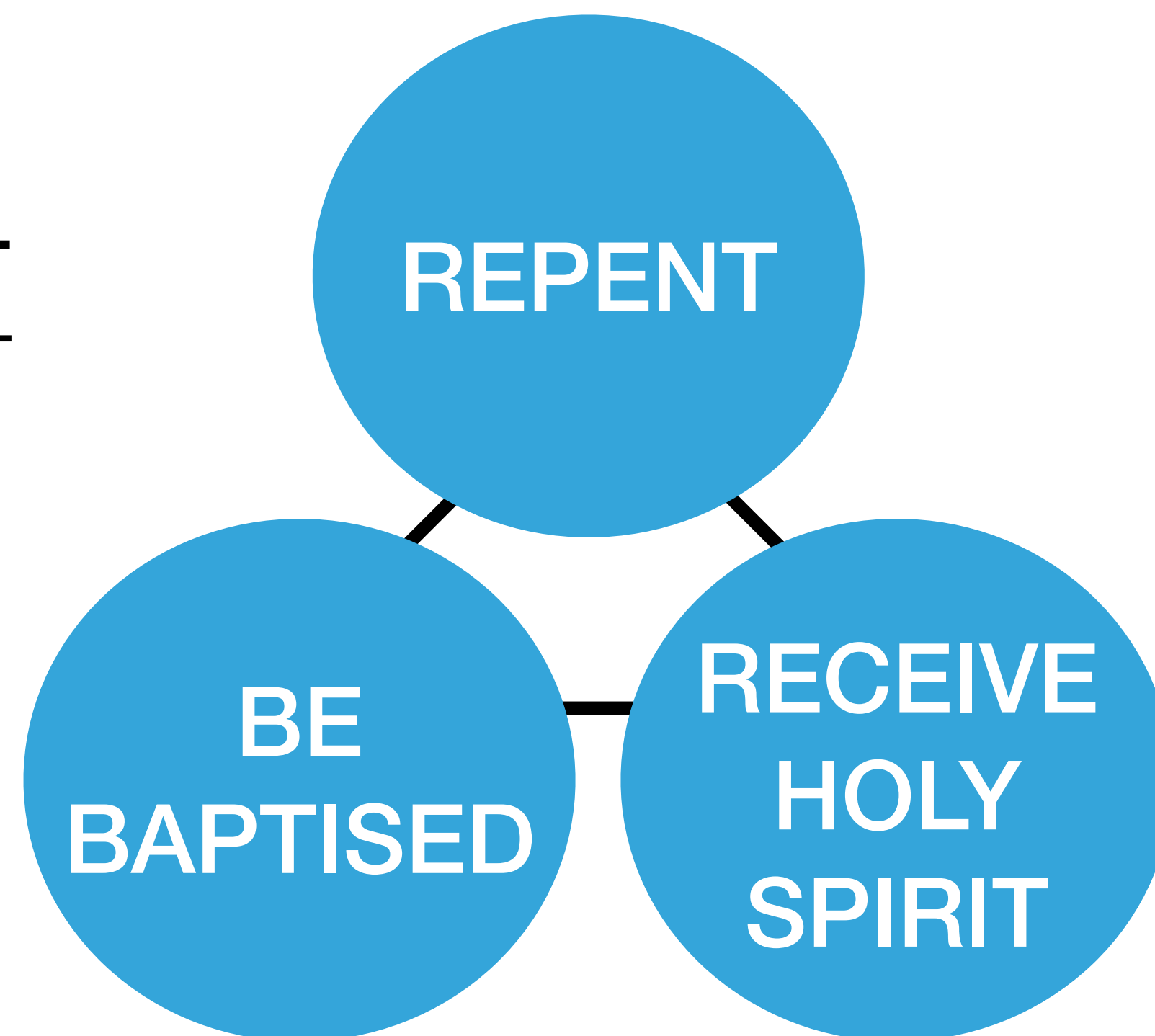
JOINING

BELONGING

EXPANDING

VITAL FOUNDATIONS...

“BROTHERS, WHAT MUST
WE DO?...” (ACTS 2:36)



Establishing these grounds of JOINING is the *first* outworking of [our] authority to use the “keys of the kingdom” to “bind and loose” (Mt 16:19) - cf. Ac 8:14-17, 10:47-48.

“REPENT,” PETER SAID TO
THEM, “AND BE BAPTISED,
EACH OF YOU, IN THE NAME OF
JESUS CHRIST FOR THE
FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS,
AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE
GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”
(ACTS 2:38)

“THE FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE
FROM DEAD WORKS, FAITH IN GOD,
TEACHING ABOUT RITUAL WASHINGS,
LAYING ON OF HANDS....” (HEB 6:1)

I ...WITH A VITAL 'ADDED' DIMENSION!

SO THOSE WHO
ACCEPTED HIS MESSAGE
WERE BAPTISED, AND
THAT DAY ABOUT 3,000
PEOPLE WERE ADDED
TO THEM. **(ACTS 2:41)**



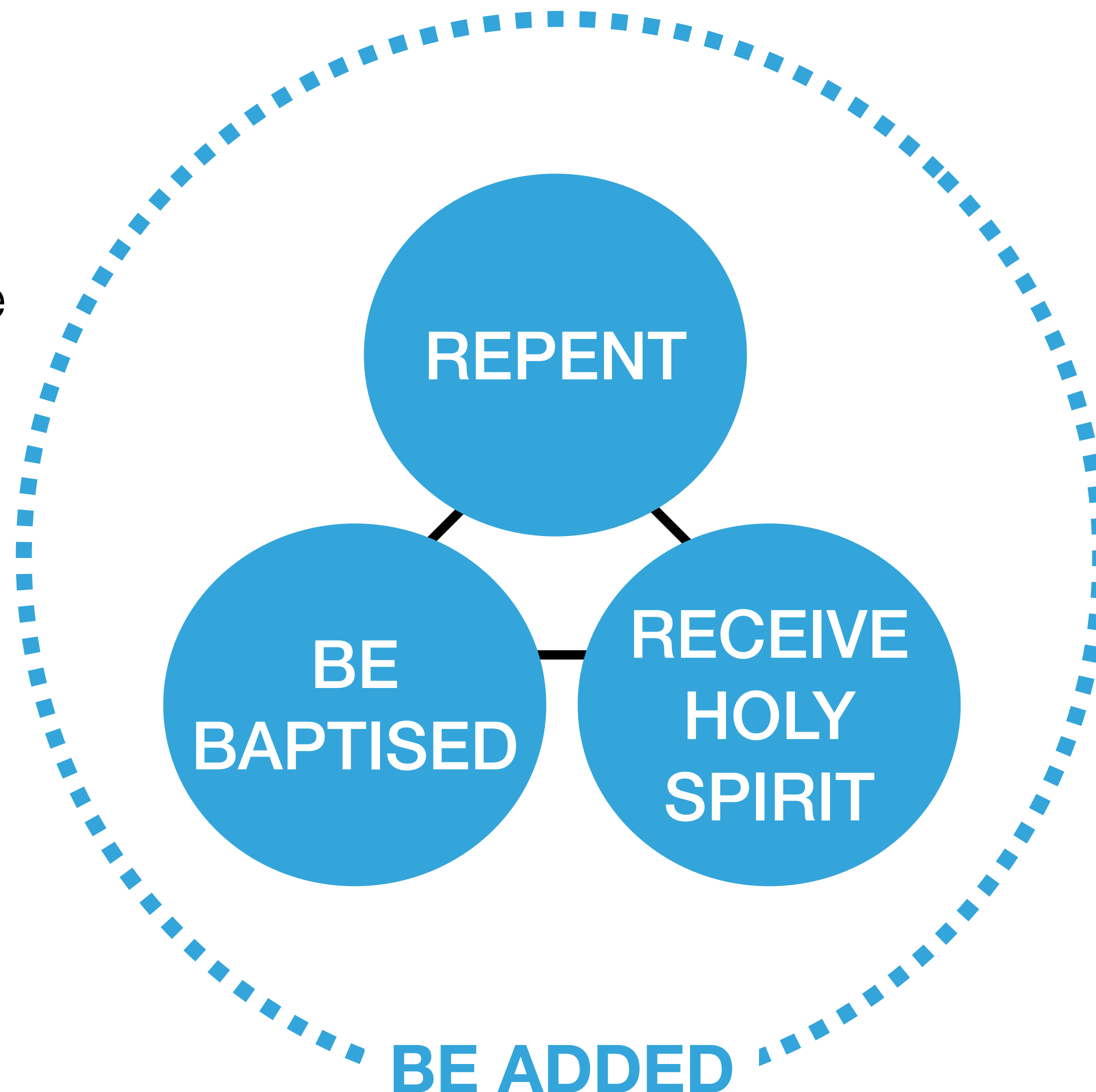
- *The Lord* adds people to His Church (Ac 2:41,47). We're born *from above*; a work of the Spirit (Jn 3:3-7).
- This joining is *made effective* as we become part of a *local expression* of His covenant community... It's "not good" for God's people to be alone (Ge 2:18).

BAPTISM & THE NEW COVENANT

- The sign/seal of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision (Ge 17:11-14, Ro 4:11); indeed, Stephen calls it the “covenant of circumcision” (Ac 7:8). From that time on, God’s OT people were marked by male circumcision.
- Baptism now fulfils this OT command - it’s a “circumcision done by Christ” in cutting-off the flesh-life (Col 2:11-12). Baptism is therefore a vital part of ‘joining’ the covenant community - and hence all followers of Jesus are *commanded* to be baptised (Mt 28:19-20, Mk 16:16, Ac 2:36, etc.) as He was (Mt 3:13-17).
- Baptism *always accompanies* repentance in the NT churches (Ac 2:41, 8:12, 9:18, 10:47-48, 16:14-15, 16:33, 18:18...) - it’s part-and-parcel of the new covenant.
- Note that Paul’s first questions to the Ephesian disciples concern *their baptism* (Ac 19:1-7) - and that when these foundations are properly laid there is no limit to the church that can be built and the impact it can have (19:10)!...

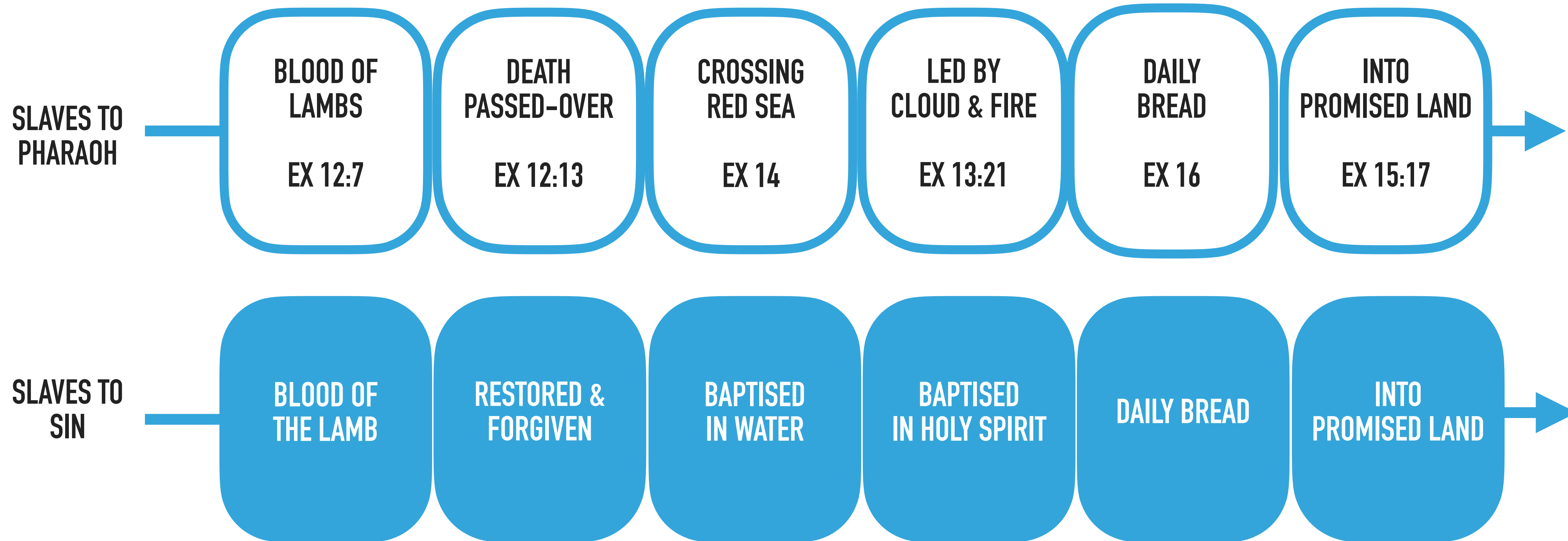
I 'TOTAL SALVATION'

- **Repentance** saves us from eternal death - *forgiven*.
- **Baptism** saves us from the power of the past - *freed*.
- **Baptism in the Spirit** saves us powerlessness in the future - *filled*.
- **Being added** to His Church saves from being alone - *functioning*.
- He PICKS us up, CLEANS us up, FILLS us up, and JOINS us up!



THEREFORE HE
IS ABLE TO
**SAVE
COMPLETELY**
THOSE WHO
COME TO GOD
THROUGH HIM...
(HEB 7:25, NIV)

COVENANT PEOPLE, SET FREE!



NOW I WANT YOU TO KNOW, BROTHERS, THAT OUR FATHERS WERE ALL UNDER THE CLOUD, ALL PASSED THROUGH THE SEA, AND ALL WERE BAPTISED INTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA. THEY ALL ATE THE SAME SPIRITUAL FOOD, AND ALL DRANK THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK. FOR THEY DRANK FROM A SPIRITUAL ROCK THAT FOLLOWED THEM, AND THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST. **1CO 10:1-4**

A person in a dark jacket and jeans is walking away from the camera down a path in a forest. The forest is filled with tall, slender trees, likely spruce or fir, with their trunks reaching high into the sky. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and branches. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or a misty atmosphere.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

WHAT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF A
NEW COVENANT COMMUNITY?
WHAT SHOULD MARK US OUT?

#ROOTED

I AGAPÉ

The New Covenant comes with a “new commandment” - that we “love one another” as Christ loved us (Jn 13:34, 15:12); such love is the primary hallmark of God’s new covenant people (Jn 13:35).

- The word is *agapé* (‘unconditional love, covenant-love’), and in many ways is the NT equivalent of *hesed*. [Though note: *agapé* is a distinctly NT word (with very little evidence of its use before the NT) and it is *eleos* (‘mercy’) which is mostly used to translate *hesed* in the LXX.]
- *Agapé* is *known by its actions*, eg as described in 1Co 13:4-8. The root-motive of *agapé* is selfless and self-sacrificial (Jn 15:13).
- *Agapé* is the new way for all who are born again (1Pe 1:22-23) and fulfils the “entire law” (Gal 5:14, cf Ro 13:8). *Agapé* is “the characteristic word of Christianity” (Vine).

I AGAPÉ IN ACTION?...

How do we outwork our new covenant obligations and responsibilities?
How do we make *agapé* practical, visible and tangible? Consider the many “one another” commands set out in the epistles:

- Live in harmony with one another (Ro 12:16)
- Be devoted to one another (Ro 12:10)
- Honour (prefer) one another (Ro 12:10)
- Accept one another (Ro 15:7)
- Admonish, teach or counsel one another (Col 3:16)
- Greet one another (Ro 16:16)
- Offer hospitality to one another (1Pe 4:9)
- Show care and concern for one another (1Co 12:25)

- Serve one another (Gal 5:13)
- Share one another's burdens (Gal 6:2)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph 4:32)
- Submit to one another (Eph 5:21)
- Encourage each other (1Th 4:18; Heb 10:24)
- Do not slander or complain about one another (Jas 4:11, 5:9)
- Confess your sins to one another (Jas 5:16)
- Forgive one another (Col 3:13)
- Act humbly towards one another (1Pe 5:5)

NB: These far-reaching obligations render many additional 'lateral' covenants unnecessary, though not prohibited (and of course vital for Marriages, Wills, Trust-forming, etc).

As each one draws upon the Spirit to fulfil these responsibilities, the whole church stays holy and healthy - and the world sees that we are followers of Jesus.

GOD'S PASSION FOR HIS PURPOSE

God's passion for His purpose, His honour, His Name and His glory means *He will act* to restore holiness amongst His covenant-people if He needs to. Thus, the NT gives:

1. Instructions re confronting one another over sin (Mt 18:15-20), including warnings intended to induce shame and repentance (2Th 3:14-15).
2. Conditions for the public rebuke of Elders who sin without repentance (1Ti 5:19-20)
3. Precedent for Apostles to exercise discipline where Elders fail to (1Co 5:3-5).
4. Grounds for exclusion - divisiveness (Ro 16:17, Tit 3:10), immorality (1Co 5:4-5, 13) or other unrepentant sin (Mt 18:17) - so the offender seeks to be restored (2Co 2:5-11).
5. The option for God to "remove [the] lampstand" of a church that abandons its *agapé* (Rev 2:4-5) - so its light/testimony ceases altogether.

NB: Establishing the obligations of BELONGING is the *second* outworking of the authority to "bind and loose" (Mt 18:18). A healthy "fear of the Lord" (respect/reverence, holy fear) in His Church (Ac 5:11) leads to great expansion (Ac 9:31)....

A portrait of John Winthrop, a Puritan leader, shown from the chest up. He has a dark beard and mustache, and is wearing a dark garment with a prominent white ruffled collar. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is dark and indistinct.

A CITY ON A HILL


Thus stands the cause between God and us. **We are entered into covenant** with Him for this work. We have taken out a commission... Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it...

For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labour and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace...

We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "may the Lord make it like that of New England." For we must consider that **we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.**

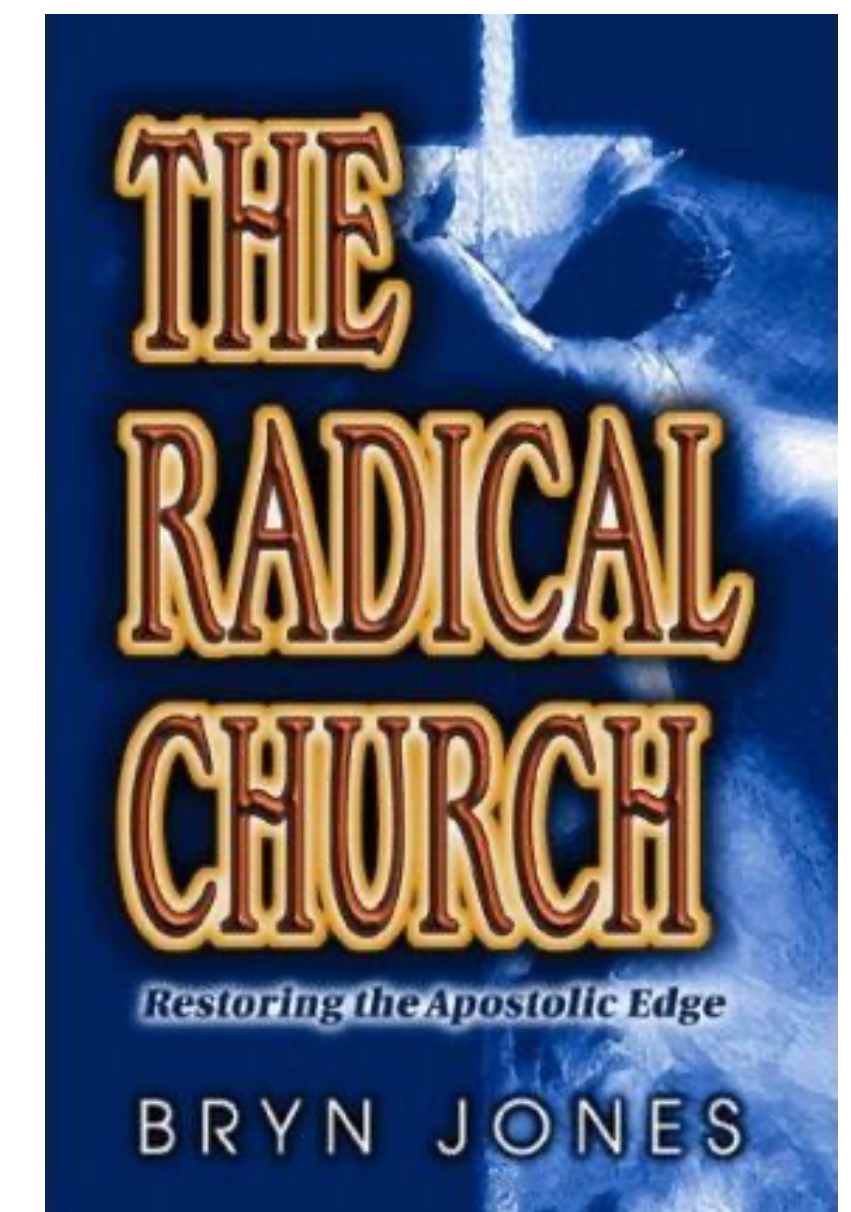
JOHN WINTHROP, 1587-1649

FROM HIS 1630 'CITY ON A HILL' SPEECH
MADE TO FELLOW-SETTLERS
ON THEIR VOYAGE TO NEW ENGLAND

A portrait of Bryn Jones, a man with light-colored hair, smiling, wearing a suit and tie.

“THE BONDING OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES WAS THE RESULT OF SOMETHING STRONGER THAN A SET OF COMMON BELIEFS; THEY WERE JOINED BY COVENANT TOGETHER... THE EARLY CHRISTIANS NEVER CONSIDERED LIFE OUTSIDE COVENANT. THE COMMITMENT TO CHRIST, TO ONE ANOTHER, AND TO GOD’S ULTIMATE PURPOSE FOR ALL THINGS WAS ROOTED IN THEIR RADICAL COMMITMENT TO LIVE COVENANTALLY.”

BRYN JONES, THE RADICAL CHURCH, 102-106.





FURTHER STUDY

WRITE A PSALM THAT EXPRESSES
YOUR GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S
COVENANT-LOVE TOWARDS OUR
CHURCH THIS YEAR.