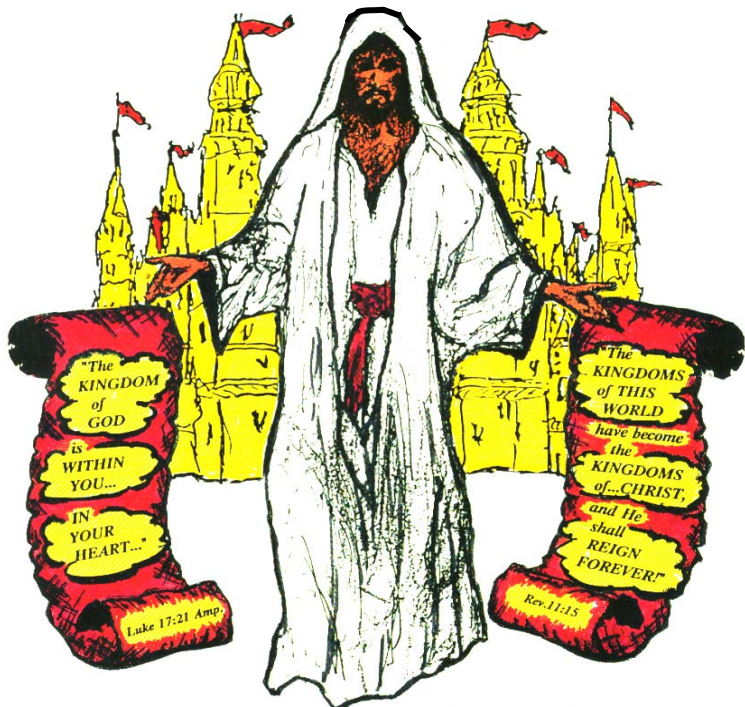


Restoring

THE GOSPEL
OF
THE KINGDOM
OF GOD



Pastor Randy Shupe

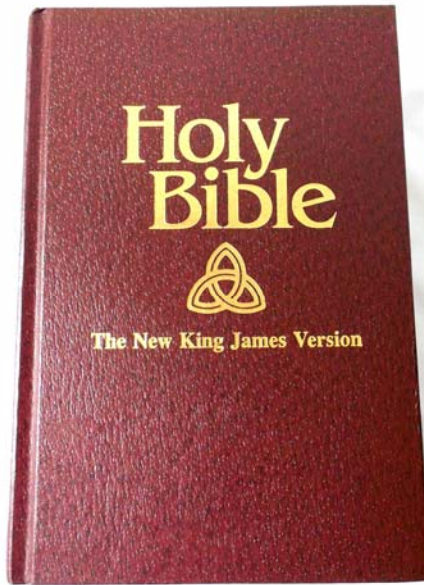
Restoring

THE GOSPEL
OF
THE KINGDOM
OF GOD



Pastor Randy Shape

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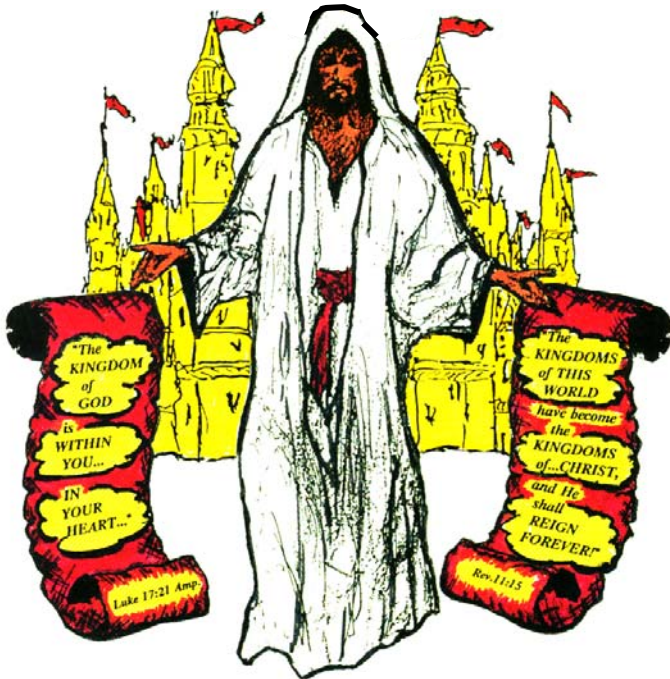


The majority of scripture references quoted in this book are from the New King James Version by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

For some time I have been persuaded that this is the finest English translation of the Bible. My thanks to Thomas Nelson Publishers for this helpful aid to God's people.

PART ONE

**“UNDERSTANDING
WHAT IS
THE KINGDOM
OF GOD”**



**“FROM THAT TIME
JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH AND TO SAY,
‘REPENT,
FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND...’”**

Matt. 4:17

**“NOW JESUS WENT ABOUT...
TEACHING AND PREACHING
THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM...”**

Matt. 4:23

TO ABIDE IN
THE NEW CREATION TO COME
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON THE NEW EARTH...

PHASE THREE:
THE ETERNAL
KINGDOM



PHASE ONE:
THE INTERNAL
KINGDOM

ABIDING PRESENTLY
IN THE HEART OF
THE CHURCH
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON EARTH...

PHASE TWO:
THE EXTERNAL
KINGDOM

TO ABIDE IN ISRAEL
DURING
THE MILLENNIAL REIGN
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON EARTH...

THE GOSPEL ("GOOD NEWS") OF THE KINGDOM

**"JESUS CAME
PREACHING
THE GOSPEL OF
THE KINGDOM OF GOD...
AND SAYING,
'THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IS AT HAND,
REPENT,
AND BELIEVE
IN THE GOSPEL..."**

Mark 1:14-15



**"JESUS SAID,
'I SAY UNTO YOU,
UNLESS ONE IS
BORN AGAIN
HE CANNOT
SEE
THE KINGDOM OF GOD...
HE CANNOT
ENTER
THE KINGDOM OF GOD..."**

John 3:3,5

The central theme of the four gospels is the gospel of the kingdom of God. There are over one hundred references to the kingdom in the gospels. Jesus taught forty parables in the gospels and the theme of most of them was the kingdom of God. To preach "the gospel" is to preach about the kingdom of God.

The passages above tell us plainly that the message which Jesus preached was centered upon the kingdom of God. We see that even the mandate to be born again enabled the recipient to see and to enter that kingdom. The new birth was not meant to be a stand alone message, but rather a prerequisite, a specified condition attached to entering the kingdom of God.

Over the centuries the gospel message has been reduced to "you must be born again." The message of the kingdom of God has been omitted. By separating the new birth from the kingdom of God, the message becomes a conversion experience divorced from the reason for it, namely discipleship. What was Jesus' emphasis? It was discipleship:



**"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL,
'IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME
AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY
HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS
CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME.
FOR WHOEVER DESIRES TO SAVE
HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT,
BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE
FOR MY SAKE WILL SAVE IT.
FOR WHAT PROFIT IS IT TO A
MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE
WORLD, AND IS HIMSELF
DESTROYED OR LOST?
FOR WHOEVER IS ASHAMED OF
ME AND MY WORDS,
OF HIM THE SON OF MAN WILL
BE ASHAMED WHEN HE COMES
IN HIS OWN GLORY..."**

Luke 9:23-26

You will find this type of emphasis throughout Jesus' teachings in the gospels. Yes, He did preach the need to be born again, but He also preached the cost of repentance with an eye kept on the ultimate goal, living life in the kingdom of God.

THE NEW BIRTH:

"...YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

Jn. 3:7

Let us establish what is behind the new birth from God's perspective. What takes place when one repents and truly becomes born again? Paul the apostle explains the significance of this great spiritual event:

"...GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER WHO HAS QUALIFIED US TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT. HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE, IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

Col. 1:12-13



THE NEW BIRTH: EXCHANGING OF KINGDOMS:

TRANSLATED

"OUT OF DARKNESS..." "INTO HIS LIGHT..."



**TAKEN FROM
THE
KINGDOM
OF
DARKNESS**

**PLACED INTO
THE
KINGDOM
OF
GOD**



"...BUT GOD BE THANKED THAT THOUGH YOU WERE SLAVES OF SIN, YET YOU OBEYED FROM THE HEART THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE TO WHICH YOU WERE DELIVERED. HAVING BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN, YOU BECAME SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS... NOW HAVING BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN, AND HAVING BECOME SLAVES OF GOD, YOU HAVE YOUR FRUIT TO HOLINESS, AND TO THE END, EVERLASTING LIFE." Rom. 6:17-22

Where Jesus states that we enter the kingdom of God by means of the new birth, Paul greatly amplifies that truth for us. Note that we were translated (transferred) out of the power of Satan's kingdom of darkness... and placed into the kingdom of God. In exchanging kingdoms, we move from one source of authority to another, from spiritual darkness to spiritual light, from the authoritative power of Satan to the power of Christ.

It is important to see that Paul states we are not merely set free from sin, but that we also come under the power and authority of a new Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not set free from our sins to live life as we please, but rather to now live a life that pleases our new Master:

"AND HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT (LIVE) FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN."

2 Cor.5:15

God help us to see that there is more to being born again than just receiving forgiveness of our sins. According to the apostle Paul, we exchanged kingdoms and masters by means of the new birth!

**“THEN THE DEVIL, TAKING HIM ON A HIGH MOUNTAIN,
SHOWED HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD...**

**AND THE DEVIL SAID TO HIM, ‘ALL THIS AUTHORITY I WILL GIVE YOU,
AND THEIR GLORY; FOR THIS HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO ME,
AND I GIVE IT TO WHOMEVER I WISH.
THEREFORE, IF YOU WORSHIP ME, ALL WILL BE YOURS.’**

Luke 4:5-7



Scripture states that all the kingdoms of this world belong to the god of this world, which is the devil. In the above temptation of Jesus by Satan we do not find the Lord disputing Satan’s claim to owning all the kingdoms of the world.

Perhaps we would readily admit that all the evil empires belong to Satan, but we are more squeamish when it comes to the idea of including America as being among the kingdoms that are under the sway and control of the evil one.



**IS IT A
KINGDOM
OF THIS
WORLD?**

As a teacher, I pray that by the time we conclude this book you will be convinced that America is not the manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth and nor was it intended by God to be so. Even if America turns out to be the best kingdom on earth, it does not qualify as a manifestation of the kingdom of God. No such nation fills that mandate including America. The apostle John was given three identifying marks that single out any kingdom that belongs to this present world:

**“DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD...
FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD-**

- (1) THE LUST OF THE FLESH,**
 - (2) THE LUST OF THE EYES,**
 - (3) AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE-**
- IS NOT OF THE FATHER,
BUT IS OF THE WORLD...”**

1 Jn.2:15-16



John

It requires very little effort to establish what the apostle John identifies as the three primary evil marks that constitutes this present world. All three all readily found in abundance within the shores of America. With such worldly fruit, how can we espouse this country to be the product of:

1. THE LUST OF THE FLESH:

- PORNOGRAPHY...RAPE...INCEST...
- HOMOSEXUALITY...LESBIANISM...
- PROSTITUTION...CHILD MOLESTATION...
- SENSUAL, SEDUCTIVE ATTIRE...
- SEXUAL ADVERTISEMENTS...
- DRUG ADDICTION...
- DRUNKENNESS...
- ABORTION...MURDER...

“ONE NATION UNDER GOD”?



2. THE LUST OF THE EYES:

- MATERIALISTIC GREED...
- LOVE OF MONEY...
- LOVE OF PLEASURE...
- LOVE OF SELF...
- COVETOUSNESS...

3. THE PRIDE OF LIFE:

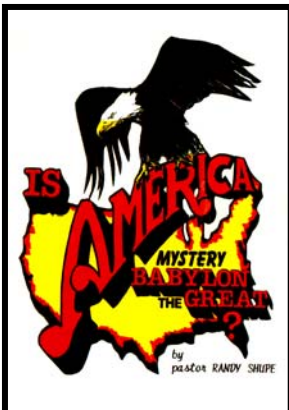
- HUMANISM...INTELLECTUALISM... ELITISM...
- HIGH-MINDEDNESS...SUPERIORITY...
- PHILOSOPHY... STATUS SYMBOLS...PATRIOTISM...
- WORSHIP OF THE STARS (ROCK STARS, MOVIE STARS, SPORT STARS)

America proudly displays the banner of “one nation under God”, but in reality it is the self-proclaimed god of this world, Satan. John reminds us:

**“WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF GOD,
AND THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE.”**

1 Jn. 5:19

Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruit (Matt. 12:33). If it is a good tree then it will bear good fruit. However, America, as depicted above, bears very bad fruit. I am personally persuaded that America is rapidly becoming the last great world empire known as “Babylon the Great.” I have written two in-depth books in which I have sought to persuade Americans of the true destiny of this country in God’s sight.



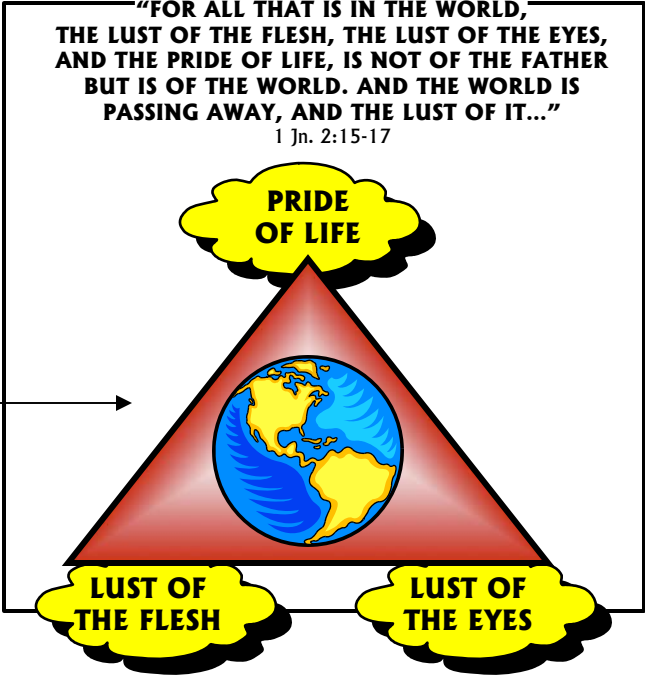
Both of these prophetic books can be read free or purchased on my website at:

PastorRandyShupe.com

I would urge you to weigh the evidence for yourself.



At best, all the kingdoms of the world, including the nation of America, are under the sway of the Wicked One and manifest in varying degrees these three corrupt identifying marks of satanic influence. Obviously, some nations more than others.



Now consider this: Would it surprise you that the kingdom of God also bears three identifying marks? They are designed by God to set it apart from all earthly kingdoms under Satan’s influence.



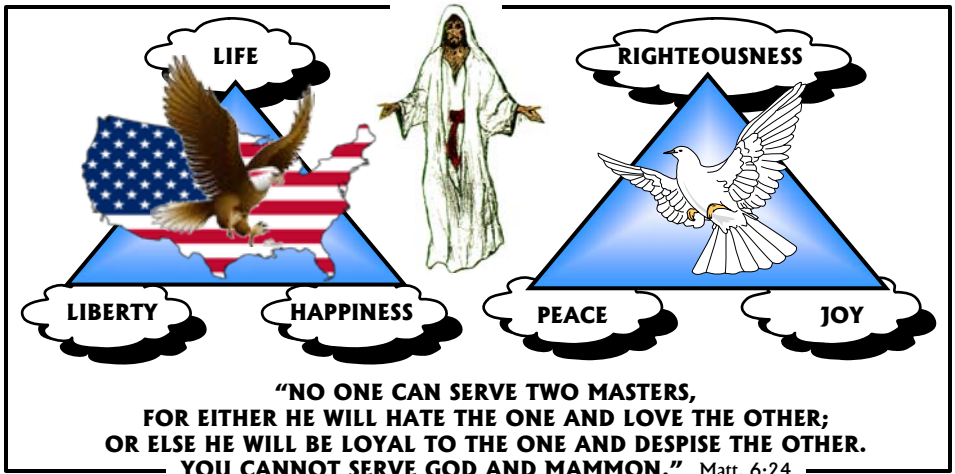
I don’t think one need be a rocket scientist to see that “righteousness, peace and joy” are quite distinct markings from “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” This unique set of priorities sets apart the kingdom of God from the kingdoms of this world (Rom. 14:17-18). Paul states these three constitute what is acceptable service to God.

However, beware!
Satan has purposely created misleading subtle substitutes for the three previously stated goals of the kingdom of God!

Here are three cherished goals found in the US Constitution guarantying every American the right of pursuit as citizens of a nation supposedly created under the inspiration of God.



Yes, these are lofty objectives that will certainly occupy the time and money of its citizens, but are they the same as pursuing, "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"? No!
Will this trio of objectives be "acceptable service to God"? No!
Are these two "birds of a feather"? No!
Forgive my play on words, but a bird of prey is not the same as a bird who prays.



There is a strong Christian-based movement to restore America to its so-called godly foundations. God's people are very much trying to serve Christ acceptably by pursuing these subtle substitutes for the real objectives of the kingdom of God. The attempt to legislate morality upon immorality through a whole list of Christian causes is not the mandate Jesus gave to His church to pursue.

"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM...AND TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU..."

Matt. 28:18-20



— THE GREAT COMMISSION —

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM...AND TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU...”

Matt. 28:18-20



The Great Commission has become the great omission among most Christians in America. It has been replaced with pursuit of a political solution for what are really spiritual problems. Think on this: God’s message of **IMMORTALITY** has been exchanged for seeking to halt the flow of **IMMORALITY**.

Jesus has not changed His commission. The new birth is to be followed by baptism and **then** we are to pursue the command to teach them the things Jesus has taught us. We are not taught to take kingdom laws and seek to legislate them upon unconverted hearts. The laws of God were given for the people of God, not for the un-regenerated masses that do not know God. We are rapidly departing from the gospel Jesus gave and replacing it with a subtle substitute that is devoid of the true kingdom of God. The kingdom we are pursuing is America. The Puritans made the same mistake. They sought to make America into “a city on a hill” that would be a physical manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth. This is not what Jesus has in mind for His church:

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH SIGNS TO BE OBSERVED OR WITH VISIBLE DISPLAY... THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU, IN YOUR HEART...”

Luke 17:20-21 Amp.



THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD, IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, MY SERVANTS WOULD FIGHT...”

John 18:36

Three very important truths are stated by Jesus above that will help us to avoid the subtle substitutes being circulated as manifestations of the kingdom of God:

1. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT OF THIS WORLD...**
2. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT APPEAR VISIBLY...**
3. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN THE HEART...**

If the kingdom of God were of this world then Jesus said His servants would fight. However, they did not fight and neither should we. America is not, nor can be, the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God in its present manifestation is a kingdom of the heart, an internal kingdom that lives within every born-again believer throughout the whole earth. It cannot be seen, but it can be felt-heart felt. The present manifestation of the kingdom of God that abides in the heart is to be one of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom.14:17-18). Only the one who serves Christ in these areas will be performing acceptable service to God.

A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE OF KINGDOM VISION

**IN THE
PRESENT:**

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH SIGNS TO BE OBSERVED OR WITH VISIBLE DISPLAY... THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU, IN YOUR HEART...”

Luke 17:20-21 Amp.



**IN THE
FUTURE:**

“BUT YOU ARE THOSE WHO HAVE CONTINUED WITH ME IN MY TRIALS. AND I BESTOW UPON YOU A KINGDOM AS MY FATHER HAS BESTOWED ONE UPON ME, THAT YOU MAY EAT AND DRINK AT MY TABLE IN MY KINGDOM, AND SIT ON THRONES JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.”

Luke 22:28-29

As I mentioned before, Jesus made over a hundred references to the kingdom of God. Above are two of those passages which represent for us a balanced perspective of kingdom vision. Jesus said it was one in which the kingdom would be within you-in your heart. Paul the apostle clarified that position by stating that this manifestation of the kingdom of God was an inward heart condition of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Later in this book we will look extensively at a heart kingdom abiding within every born-again believer. We will also look at the future kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom over which Christ will rule for a thousand years on earth. Finally, we will examine the third manifestation of the kingdom of God that will abide forever and ever in the new heavens and new earth. These last two will indeed be physical kingdoms on earth.

However, there is a real danger for God’s people to be focusing on these physical kingdoms to come rather than on the present spiritual kingdom that presently abides in the hearts of the born-again believer. If we ignore the spiritual kingdom in favor of the physical kingdom to come we will be ill-prepared for it when it does come. Ever keep in mind that the spiritual precedes the physical. We must wait for Jesus to come to rule forcibly over the nations as prophesied:

**“NOW OUT OF HIS MOUTH GOES A SHARP SWORD,
THAT WITH IT HE SHOULD STRIKE THE NATIONS.
AND HE HIMSELF WILL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON...”**

Rev. 19:15

**“AND HE WHO OVERCOMES AND KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE END,
TO HIM I WILL GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS.
HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON...”**

Rev. 2:26-27

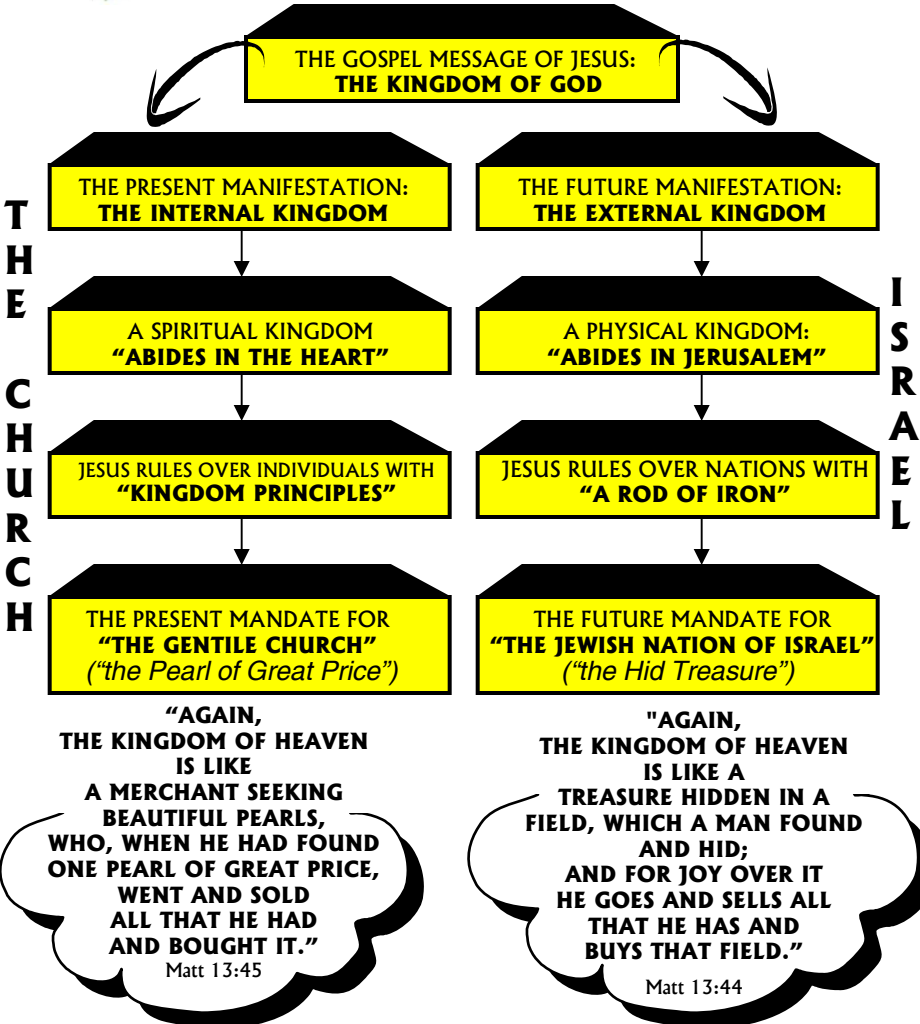
This iron-clad rule is not for now! It is for the kingdom to come. For now, we must heed Jesus’ words that the kingdom is within you-in your heart.

Below is a flow chart of what lies ahead for God's people, Jew and Gentile alike. (I pray that you realize that Israel is still part of God's people.) Paul emphatically taught that the church has not replaced Israel in God's sight as is currently being widely taught in the church today. Listen to how Paul addressed this erroneous position in his day:



"I SAY THEN HAS GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE? CERTAINLY NOT!...AT THIS PRESENT TIME THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE...FOR I DO NOT DESIRE BRETHREN, THAT YOU SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YOU SHOULD BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION, THAT HARDENING IN PART HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN, AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED AS IT IS WRITTEN..."

Rom. 11 excerpts



**"AGAIN,
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS LIKE
A MERCHANT SEEKING
BEAUTIFUL PEARLS,
WHO, WHEN HE HAD
FOUND ONE PEARL
OF GREAT PRICE,
WENT AND SOLD
ALL THAT HE HAD
AND BOUGHT IT."**
Matt 13:45



**"AGAIN,
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS LIKE
TREASURE HIDDEN
IN A FIELD,
WHICH A MAN FOUND
AND HID;
AND FOR JOY OVER IT
HE GOES AND SELLS ALL THAT
HE HAS AND
BUYS THAT FIELD."**
Matt 13:44

**THE PRESENT:
"THE GENTILE CHURCH"
(*"the Pearl of Great Price"*)**

**THE FUTURE:
"THE JEWISH NATION OF ISRAEL"
(*"the Hid Treasure"*)**

**"HAVING MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL...
THAT IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE
ALL THINGS IN CHRIST..."**

Eph. 1:9-10

If indeed we are almost at the end of the church age, or as Paul calls it the time of "the fullness of Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25), then we can see clearly what is the present priority for the church until Jesus comes to snatch away those who are enraptured with His present internal kingdom.

The kingdom parables of the "Pearl of Great Price" and "the Hid Treasure" tell us about Jesus' dual relationship with the church and Israel. Having already paid a great price for the church (the pearl of great price), He has temporarily hid in the world Israel (the hid treasure) until the end of the period called the fullness of the Gentiles. At that time Jesus will move to the goal of saving Israel (Rom. 11:25-32).

Notice above that Paul calls this present period a "dispensation." Presently, we are in the dispensation of the church. In the millennium we will enter a thousand year dispensation of earthly government in which Jesus will rule the nations from Israel with an iron-clad rule.

What follows the millennium is the final "gathering into one" of all the things remaining in Christ (Eph. 1:9-10). This will be in eternity where there is no more measurement of time as we know it. The blending of Israel and the church into one is depicted in the symbolism of the New Jerusalem:

**"SHE HAD...TWELVE GATES...
AND NAMES WRITTEN ON THEM,
WHICH ARE THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL...
NOW THE WALL...HAD TWELVE FOUNDATIONS,
AND ON THEM WERE THE NAMES OF
THE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB..."**

Rev. 21:12-14

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KINGDOM PARABLES



“TO WHAT SHALL WE LIKEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD,

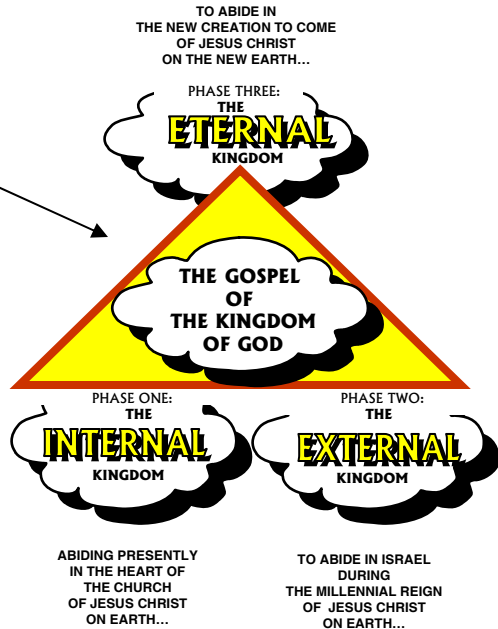
OR WITH WHAT PARABLE SHALL WE PICTURE IT?”

Mark 4:30

The most detailed things Jesus spoke pertaining to the kingdom of God are found within the forty parables of the gospels. To ignore the kingdom parables is to lose the greatest portion of teachings upon the kingdom of God. These parables neither stand in conflict with one another or with doctrinal truths found in the epistles.

However, the key lies in understanding the unfolding of the three progressive dispensations in which the kingdom appears:

For example, consider below the two groupings of some of these parables. If you are familiar with the content of these parables, you will readily recognize that one column deals with matters of the heart, which is the internal kingdom, (the present) while the other column deals with the kingdom which is to come, the eternal kingdom (the future). These are not conflicting parables but rather stories about different dispensations of the kingdom of God.



PRESENT:

“THE KINGDOM WITHIN YOU”

THE PARABLE OF

- THE SOWER...*
- THE RICH FOOL...*
- UNFORGIVING SERVANT...*
- THE PHARISEE AND THE REPUBLICAN...*
- THE GOOD SAMARITAN...*
- THE TWO SONS...*
- THE PRODIGAL SON...*
- THE GOOD AND EVIL SERVANTS...*

FUTURE:

“THE KINGDOM YET TO COME”

THE PARABLE OF

- THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS...*
- THE GREAT SUPPER...*
- THE WEDDING FEAST...*
- THE WHEAT AND THE TARES...*
- THE TALENTS AND THE POUNDS...*
- THE VINEYARD WORKERS...*
- THE DRAGNET...*

“IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN... BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES FOR THEY SEE, AND YOUR EARS FOR THEY HEAR; FOR ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU



THAT MANY PROPHETS AND RIGHTEOUS MEN DESIRED TO SEE WHAT YOU SEE, AND DID NOT SEE IT, AND TO HEAR WHAT YOU HEAR, AND DID NOT HEAR IT. THEREFORE HEAR...”

Matt. 13:11, 16-18

“AND FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS ENDURED VIOLENT ASSAULT, AND VIOLENT MEN SEIZE IT BY FORCE AS A PRECIOUS PRIZE-- A SHARE IN THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM IS SOUGHT WITH MOST ARDENT ZEAL AND INTENSE EXERTION.”

Matt 11:12 Amplified

What Jesus spoke to His disciples is also for us today. It has been given to the church to know the mysteries (“hidden truths”) of the kingdom of God. Such illumination is one of the many blessings of a better covenant based on better promises (Heb. 8:6). Note that Jesus emphasizes that many prophets and righteous men before us desired to see and hear such truths. In light of that statement, we must ask ourselves, what is the level of our desire to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God?

Know this: standing in our way are a host of satanic-inspired deceivers bent on keeping hidden what God has now revealed. Paul warned of such doctrinal pitfalls being presented to God’s people:



“THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN, IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS BY WHICH THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE...”

Eph. 4:14

“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING AWAY SO SOON...TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL... THERE ARE SOME WHO...WANT TO PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST... IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.”

Gal. 1:6-9

In part two of this book we shall seek to expose “Satan’s subtle substitutes” that are custom made for American Christians to keep them far away from pursuing the real kingdom of God.

**“UNDERSTANDING WHAT
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT”**

PART TWO
**SATAN’S
SUBTLE SUBSTITUTE
FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

**“THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN,
TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT
WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE,
BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN,
IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS
BY WHICH THEY
LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE...”**
Eph. 4:14



**“SATAN HIMSELF
TRANSFORMS HIMSELF
INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.”**
2 Cor 11:14-15

**“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE
TURNING AWAY SO SOON...
TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL...
THERE ARE SOME WHO...
PERVERT
THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...
IF ANYONE PREACHES
ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU
THAN WHAT YOU
HAVE RECEIVED,
LET HIM BE ACCURSED.”**
Gal. 1:6-9

**“FOR IF HE WHO COMES
PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS
WHO WE
HAVE NOT PREACHED,
OR IF YOU RECEIVE A
DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU
HAVE NOT RECEIVED,
OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL,
(I FEAR)
YOU MAY WELL
PUT UP WITH IT.”**
2 Cor. 11:4

Beware! If Paul didn't preach it under the banner of "the gospel" then we better not believe it! As the scriptures plainly and prophetically warn, there will be counterfeit gospels widely and fervently proclaimed under the banner of preaching the truth.

THREE SUBTLE SUBSTITUTES FOR THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

3. THE PATRIOTIC GOSPEL



1. THE POLITICAL/SOCIAL GOSPEL

2. THE KINGDOM NOW GOSPEL

We have all heard the popular cliché, “good things come in threes.” However, here is a trio of three that I would like to convince you do not contain good things at all. Rather, they are subtle substitutes crafted by Satan designed to sidetrack God’s people from pursuit of the real kingdom of God.

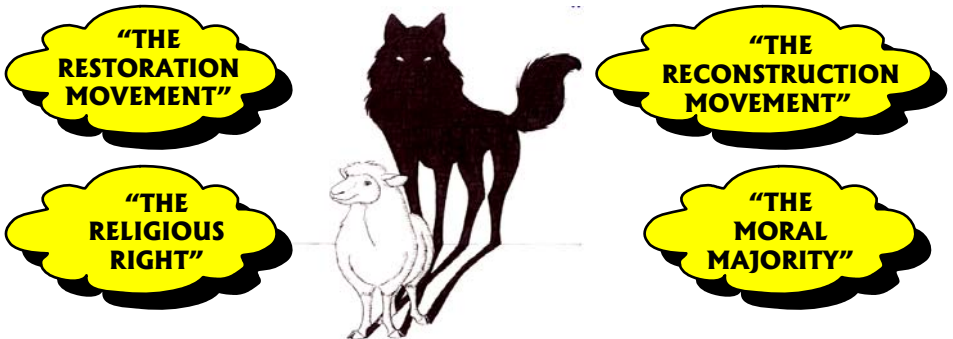
These are in essence “pick your own poison” choices that are custom made for American citizens that appeal to the popular banners of “One Nation Under God” and “In God We Trust.” In other words, they are sugar-coated with just enough Christian morals and principles to attract the most dedicated and fervent believers to embrace them as being from God for His special people, the people of America. However, buyer beware! These are counterfeit gospels!

**THE
PATRIOTIC
GOSPEL**



**"WHEN THE ENEMY COMES IN LIKE A FLOOD,
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD WILL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM."**
Isa 59:19

When Satan comes in like a flood with his counterfeit gospels, the proper response should be like Paul's biblical retort, "For what do the scriptures say?" (Rom. 4:3). However, history shows the more common response has been the development of supportive "Christian" movements that propel Satan's counterfeits all the more. Here are a few examples



Paul saw this coming in his day and gave this prophetic warning:

**"TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES AND TO ALL THE FLOCK,
AMONG WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS MADE YOU OVERSEERS TO SHEPHERD
THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH HE PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.
FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTURE SAVAGE WOLVES
WILL COME IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK...
FROM AMONG YOURSELVES MEN WILL RISE UP,
SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES."**

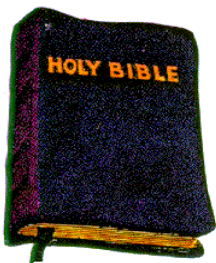
Acts 20:28-30

All three of the previously mentioned counterfeit gospels have a common bond. We will look at that tie in a moment. Let us first seek to define what constitutes the political/social gospel:

THE POLITICAL/SOCIAL GOSPEL

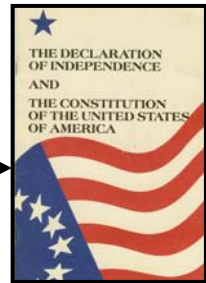
The political/social gospel is an attempt to take the moral laws of God and legislate them upon the unregenerate. It is a message that thrives upon various righteous causes promoted by Christian ministries. It is the likes of the anti-abortion movement, the anti-pornography campaigns, and the anti-homosexual-AIDS groups, anti-gay marriage, etc. Highly active politically, they are commonly, but synically known as those belonging to "the religious right." Advocating civil disobedience as a means of valid protest, they remain in the media spotlight bringing strong conflict upon themselves which is then considered to be suffering for the cause of Christ. Revival in the land is considered to be attainable only through filling various political offices such as the Supreme Court or the White House with strong Christian candidates that will champion reversing laws in the land such as Roe vs. Wade, etc. In other words, pursuing political solutions for spiritual problems.

Let us go right to the root of why all three of these counterfeit gospels are readily accepted by American Christians. It centers upon a brand of Christianity that promotes the wrong Constitution! A Constitution is comprised of fundamental principles by which a nation or "kingdom" is governed. In other words, it is the specific laws which make a nation/kingdom achieve its objectives. Below are pictures of two such constitutions. One was given to govern the spiritual kingdom of God and the other to govern the physical "kingdom" (government) of America:



~ CONSTITUTION ~

"A system of fundamental principles by which a nation is governed... a document embodying these principles..."
Webster



It has been drilled into us that America's Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were documents divinely inspired by the God of the bible. If that is true, then its contents should be in agreement with the constitution of the kingdom of God which is the Word of God. If this is "one nation under God", then the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence should have compatible goals with those expressed by Jesus and Paul. God is not double-minded is He? Would He give one set of goals in the Word of God, and then give a different set to a nation under God? Hardly so! Consider God's declaration of Himself:

"FOR I AM THE LORD, I DO NOT CHANGE." Mal. 3:6

Having put forth those thoughts, let us take a look at what are the goals/objectives of the kingdom of America and compare them to those of the kingdom of God. Remember that John warns us:

**“BELOVED, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERY SPIRIT,
BUT TEST THE SPIRITS, WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD...”**

1 John 4:1

CONSTITUTION



We have already established what the Word of God reveals are the goals, “the reason for being”, concerning the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul stated them to be “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). With these kind of lofty goals we can see why Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36). These are spiritual goals functioning in a spiritual kingdom and are administered by the Holy Spirit of God.

We are not ignorant as to what are the goals, “the reason for being”, when it comes to the kingdom (government) of America. They are plainly stated in the Declaration of Independence. They are inalienable rights to pursue after “life, liberty and happiness”. However, these are not spiritual goals but physical ones. We are clearly warned by Paul that the kingdom of God does not consist of physical things like “food and drink”:

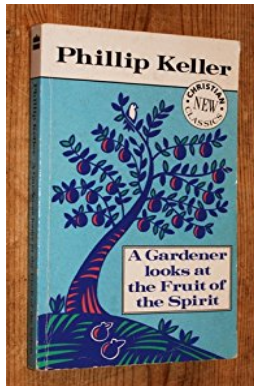
**“FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK, BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT...
DO NOT DESTROY THE WORK OF GOD
FOR THE SAKE OF FOOD...” Rom. 14:17-19**



It doesn't take much effort to see the stark comparison. One set of goals are heavenly-minded while the other is quite earthly-minded. One set will focus its followers upon a spiritual kingdom while the other will lead its followers along a path of a very physical kingdom that guarantees inalienable rights that cannot be taken away.

For instance, note that one kingdom stresses “joy” and the other promotes “happiness.” Lest you think that joy and happiness are one and the same, consider the comments of Phillip Keller in his book,

“A GARDNER LOOKS AT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT”



“Joy is not happiness. Happiness is conditioned by people around me; it’s conditioned by things... events... circumstances taking place in my life. In other words, happiness depends upon what is happening to me... Joy has to do, not with what people are doing to me or what things are doing to me, or what circumstances are doing to me; it has to do with my relationship to God... Joy functions... independently of anything or anyone... it is produced within me by the very presence of God Himself...”

What Phillip Keller states about the fruit of joy is easily substantiated by considering what the Word of God has to say about that subject. Nehemiah said, “The joy of the Lord is my strength” (Neh. 8:10). David spoke of having the “joy of Your salvation” restored unto his life (Psm. 51:12). Habakkuk declared he would “joy in the God of my salvation”, even when there was no fruit on the vines/no herd in the stalls (Hab. 3:18). Jesus told us that in the midst of persecution we were to leap for joy because our reward would be great in heaven (Luke 6:23). Paul said that the fruit of the Spirit contains joy (Gal. 5:22). James said we should count it all joy when we fall into trials because it perfects our faith (Jm. 1:2). Peter tells us that our relationship to God is joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8). We can see that these expressions are not the result of happy circumstances. Rather they deal with our inward relationship to God Himself.

When we think of “happiness” we dwell upon an absence of trial or suffering. It speaks of laughter and fun. It has the connotation of prosperity, fortune, blessing and favorable circumstances that stimulate the emotions. The pursuit of happiness is not a principle of the constitution of the kingdom of God. After revealing that the kingdom of God consists of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,” Paul goes on to tell us what we are to pursue:

“THEREFORE LET US PURSUE THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE AND THE THINGS BY WHICH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER.” Rom. 14:19

“PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL MEN, AND HOLINESS, WITHOUT WHICH NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD...” Heb.12:14

“PURSUE LOVE AND DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS...” 1 Cor. 14:1

Look high and low dear saint, but the pursuit of happiness is not to be found in God’s Word as an inalienable right guaranteed to any follower of Christ.

The American gospel is firmly rooted in the contents of the Bill of Rights. However, let us compare that philosophy to what Paul records of the unjust persecution experienced by the early church:

“...YOU WERE MADE A SPECTACLE BOTH BY REPROACHES AND TRIBULATIONS... AND JOYFULLY ACCEPTED THE PLUNDERING OF YOUR GOODS, KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE A BETTER AND AN ENDURING POSSESSION FOR YOURSELVES IN HEAVEN.”

The
“plundering of our goods”
you say?

The American gospel
certainly wouldn’t
stand for that!

After all, that is what the
“Bill of Rights” is for, right?
Dear saint, if you allow the
philosophy of the Bill of Rights
in your life as a follower of
Christ, you will not know
anything of what the early
church was all about.

The teachings of Jesus in the
Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)
will make no sense to you at
all. As soon as someone
steps on your toes, it will
become a matter of
demanding your rights.

Take a look at the Bill of Rights above and then compare them to these
conflicting words of instruction from Jesus:

Heb. 10:33-34 excerpts

**LIFE
LIBERTY
HAPPINESS**



CONSTITUTIONAL BY-LAWS
 (“THE BILL OF RIGHTS”)

- 1 Right of free speech...
- 2 Right to keep and bear arms...
- 3 Right against unreasonable search and seizures...
- 4 Right to fair trial...
- 5 Right to elect leaders...
- 6 Right against involuntary servitude (slavery)
- 7 Right against taking of life, liberty, or property without just cause...

“...I TELL YOU NOT TO RESIST AN EVIL PERSON. BUT WHOEVER SLAPS YOU ON YOUR RIGHT CHEEK, TURN THE OTHER TO HIM ALSO. IF ANYONE WANTS TO SUE YOU AND TAKE AWAY YOUR TUNIC, LET HIM HAVE YOUR CLOAK ALSO. AND WHOEVER COMPELS YOU TO GO ONE MILE, GO WITH HIM TWO... LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU, THAT YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...” Matt. 5:39-45



As a pastor, I often receive junk bulk mail from various ministries stressing our rights as Christians, and how they are fed up with the denial of those Constitutional rights. The call to God’s people becomes one of “stand up and be counted”, to “write your Congressman”, to protest... protest... protest. What has happened to this mandate:

“...IF ANYONE SUFFERS AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED, BUT LET HIM GLORIFY GOD IN THIS MATTER... LET THOSE WHO SUFFER ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD COMMIT THEIR SOULS TO HIM IN DOING GOOD...” 1 Peter 4:16,19

A PROPHETIC WARNING TO CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA

If God's people in America do not awake and forsake this political/social gospel with all of its righteous causes, and return to the mandate to be reconciling the world to God, then their destiny may be among those spued out of the mouth of Jesus when He comes. At the time of the rapture they will be left behind for the dreaded tribulation as foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) who lacked being found ready to be taken away from this present world by their Master.

Perhaps one of the most frightening revelations comes from a word study of the names of the churches listed in Jesus' seven letters to the seven churches. Names bear great significance in scripture and often contain great hidden truths. For instance, "Philadelphia" is the only church that receives the promise of the rapture (Rev. 3:8-10). Is it significant that the name "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love"? In light of that, let us now consider that the meaning of the name of another of these prophetic seven churches, "Laodicea". This is the church that Jesus promises to spue out of His mouth when He comes:

~ LAODICEA ~

"THE WORD COMES FROM THE ROOT "LAOS", MEANING PEOPLE; AND "DIKE" MEANING MANNER, CUSTOM, RIGHT. "LAODICEA" THEREFORE MEANS "THE PEOPLES RIGHTS".

LAODICEA REPRESENTS THE POPULAR RIGHT, THE POPULAR JUDGMENT OF THE PEOPLE. WE ARE PRESENTLY LIVING IN THE TIME WHEN THE WILL OF THE MASSES PREVAILS.

EVERYTHING MUST BE SUBSERVIENT TO THE POPULAR WILL. IT IS EVEN SO IN ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCLES-POPULAR PASTORS POPULAR SERMONS, POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE CHURCH."

("Studies in Revelation"-Frank M. Boyd, pg. 73)

Laodicea is not a backslidden church, that is Sardis (Rev. 3:3). Rather, the church of Laodicea has different values and priorities for itself than those that Jesus wants them to have. Read the story for yourself:

"THESE THINGS SAYS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD:

'I KNOW YOUR WORKS, THAT YOU ARE NEITHER COLD NOR HOT.

I COULD WISH YOU WERE COLD OR HOT. SO THEN, BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT, I WILL VOMIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH. BECAUSE YOU SAY, 'I AM RICH, HAVE BECOME WEALTHY, AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING' -- AND DO NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE WRETCHED, MISERABLE, POOR, BLIND, AND NAKED -- I COUNSEL YOU TO BUY FROM ME GOLD REFINED IN THE FIRE, THAT YOU MAY BE RICH; AND WHITE GARMENTS, THAT YOU MAY BE CLOTHED, THAT THE SHAME OF YOUR NAKEDNESS MAY NOT BE REVEALED; AND ANOINT YOUR EYES WITH EYE SALVE, THAT YOU MAY SEE.

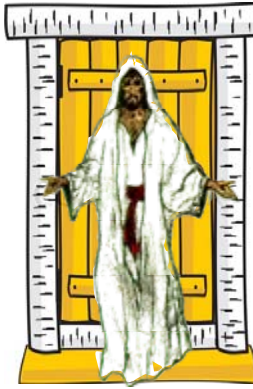
AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN. THEREFORE BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT. BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK. IF ANYONE HEARS MY VOICE AND OPENS THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN TO HIM AND DINE WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME. TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE, AS I ALSO OVERCAME AND SAT DOWN WITH MY FATHER ON HIS THRONE. "HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT

THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.' "

Rev. 3:14-22

**"BEHOLD,
I STAND AT THE DOOR
AND KNOCK.
IF ANYONE
HEARS MY VOICE
AND
OPENS THE DOOR,
I WILL COME IN TO HIM
AND DINE WITH HIM,
AND HE WITH ME."**

Rev. 3:20



**"ONCE
THE MASTER
HAS RISEN UP AND
SHUT THE DOOR,
AND YOU
BEGIN TO STAND OUTSIDE
AND KNOCK AT THE DOOR,
SAYING,
'LORD, LORD,
OPEN FOR US...'"**

Luke 13:24-30

If we are to be taught by the Holy Spirit, we must compare spiritual things to spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13). The dangerous alternative is to rest in the wisdom of man's teaching. Look at the above comparison of spiritual to spiritual. One depiction of Jesus is outside the door of His own church (Laodicea-Rev. 3:20). It is Laodicea that is the master of the house and must open the door if Jesus is to come in. The other passage (Luke 13:24-30) is one of the parables of the kingdom of God. This time however, we find a role reversal in which Jesus is the Master of the house of the kingdom of God. At the appointed time, He rises up and shuts the door. What follows is also described in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25. The outcry of those outside the door is the same, "Lord, Lord, open for us..." Compare this senerio to the letter to Philadelphia in which Jesus sets before them an open door that no one can shut.

Are we going to listen to man or to what Jesus has said to the churches? These are seven prophetic letters depicting the spiritual condition of His churches until His return. Consider these sober words of Jesus:



**"LORD, ARE THERE FEW WHO ARE SAVED?'
AND HE SAID TO THEM,
"STRIVE TO ENTER THROUGH
THE NARROW GATE, FOR MANY,
I SAY TO YOU, WILL SEEK TO ENTER
AND WILL NOT BE ABLE.
WHEN ONCE THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE
HAS RISEN UP AND SHUT THE DOOR,
AND YOU BEGIN TO STAND OUTSIDE AND
KNOCK AT THE DOOR, SAYING,
'LORD, LORD, OPEN FOR US,'
AND HE WILL ANSWER AND SAY TO YOU,
'I DO NOT KNOW YOU..."**

**THEN YOU WILL BEGIN TO SAY, 'WE ATE AND DRANK IN YOUR PRESENCE,
AND YOU TAUGHT IN OUR STREETS.' BUT HE WILL SAY, 'I TELL YOU I DO
NOT KNOW YOU, WHERE YOU ARE FROM. DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU
WORKERS OF INIQUITY.' THERE WILL BE WEeping AND GNASHING OF TEETH,
WHEN YOU SEE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB AND ALL THE PROPHETS
IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND YOURSELVES THRUST OUT. THEY WILL COME
FROM THE EAST AND THE WEST, FROM THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH,
AND SIT DOWN IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. AND INDEED THERE ARE LAST
WHO WILL BE FIRST, AND THERE ARE FIRST WHO WILL BE LAST."**

Luke 13:23-28

**“THERE WILL BE WEeping AND GNASHING OF TEETH,
WHEN YOU SEE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB
AND ALL THE PROPHETS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD
AND YOURSELVES THRUST OUT.”** Luke 13:28

Is it not logical that in order to be thrust out of the kingdom one must first be in the kingdom? This is obviously a message to those already considered to be inside the kingdom-saved people! However, Jesus has said that there is a day coming in which He will “gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 13:41). We cannot say because Jesus does not “know” them that they were not saved. The word “know” simply means “I do not recognize you”. Have you ever ran into an old acquaintance and remarked to yourself, “My, how he/she has changed! I don’t recognize him/her.” I believe that is how Jesus feels about Laodicea! She has become so worldly that He does not know (recognize) her. Laodicea is a church that has chosen earthly-minded values and is engaged in the affairs of this life even though the Word of God says:



**“NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES
HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE,
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO HAS
CALLED HIM TO BE A SOLDIER.”**

2 Tim.2:4

Our warfare is against “principalities/powers, rulers of darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).



Christianity is a battle for the souls of men not for the soil of men. We are in a battle than cannot be won by a hand-selected Congressman. If we choose to become a friend of the world, then James tells us that we are adulterers and adulteresses and have rather become the enemy of God Himself:

**“ADULTERERS AND ADULTERESSES!
DO YOU NOT KNOW
THAT FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD
IS ENMITY WITH GOD? WHOEVER THEREFORE
WANTS TO BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD
MAKES HIMSELF AN ENEMY OF GOD.”**

James 4:4



James

God help us all to grasp that Jesus, the Bridegroom, is not going to marry an adulterous bride! Paul warns believers:



Paul

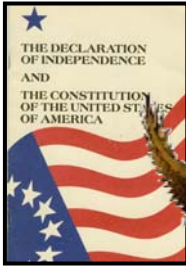
**“...I HAVE BETROTHED YOU
TO ONE HUSBAND,
THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS
A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.
BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW,
AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE
BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE
CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN
CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES...
A DIFFERENT GOSPEL...
YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT.”**

2 Cor.11:2-4

Which of these two ideologies qualifies as pure and undefiled religion?

LIFE

**LIBERTY
HAPPINESS**



“THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT”

RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH...
RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS...
RIGHT AGAINST UNREASONABLE
SEARCH AND SEIZURES...
RIGHT TO FAIR TRIAL...
RIGHT TO ELECT LEADERS...
RIGHT AGAINST INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE...
RIGHT AGAINST TAKING OF LIFE, LIBERTY,
OR PROPERTY WITHOUT JUST CAUSE...



OR

**RIGHTHOUSNESS
PEACE
JOY**



“RIGHT RELIGION”

“PURE AND UNDEFILED
RELIGION
BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER
IS THIS:
TO VISIT THE ORPHANS AND
WIDOWS IN THEIR TROUBLE,
AND
TO KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED
FROM THE WORLD.”

James 1:27

Be a good Berean like those in Acts 17:11 and search the scriptures and see if these things are true. The political/social gospel will not stand up to the teachings of Jesus or Paul. Neither taught people's rights or civil disobedience. Neither one entangled themselves in the affairs of this life in political or social issues. They did not seek to legislate the moral laws of God upon the immoral. What they did was to simply preach the kingdom of God (Matt. 4:17, Acts 28:31).

God does not want us to attempt to make America into the kingdom of God. He wants us to preach to Americans about the kingdom of God which, for the present, abides in our hearts, and in the future, will be literally manifested on the earth with Jesus as its King! He wants us to preach that “except a man be born again he cannot see/enter the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3,5).

Beware of the political/social gospel. It has many names such as “the moral majority”, “the religious right”, “the reconstruction movement” and “the restoration movement”. Regardless of what it is called, it is a different gospel than what Paul preached:

**“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING AWAY SO SOON...
TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL...THERE ARE SOME WHO...WANT TO
PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST... IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER
GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED,
LET HIM BE ACCURSED.” Gal. 1:6-9**

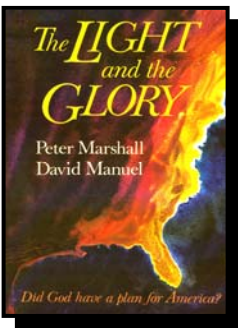
CHRISTIAN BEWARE OF

THE POLITICAL/SOCIAL GOSPEL

The political/social gospel is an attempt to take the moral laws of God and legislate them upon the unregenerate. It is a message that thrives upon various righteous causes promoted by Christian ministries. It is the likes of the anti-abortion movement, the anti-pornography campaigns, and the anti-homosexual-AIDS groups, anti-gay marriage, etc. Highly active politically, they are commonly, but synically known as those belonging to "the religious right". Advocating civil disobedience as a means of valid protest, they remain in the media spotlight bringing strong conflict upon themselves which is then considered to be suffering for the cause of Christ. Revival in the land is considered to be attainable only through filling various political offices such as the Supreme Court or the White House with strong Christian candidates that will champion reversing laws in the land such as Roe vs. Wade, etc. In other words, pursuing political solutions for spiritual problems.

This political gospel permeates Christianity in America. What is stated above is exactly how the majority of Christians in America see their responsibility toward their earthly country. Because the real kingdom of God has been removed from the gospel, the nation of America becomes the only place for Christians to establish the kingdom of God on earth. They are convinced that America was founded as "One Nation Under God" so they labor to return it to its godly foundations. This is a false foundation originated by the Puritan segment of this nations founders. Below are some excerpts from a cherished book among American Christians steeped in the political/social gospel. However, it is a very unbiblical stance pertaining to the kingdom of God. Remember Jesus plainly said:

**"THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH SIGNS
TO BE OBSERVED OR WITH VISIBLE DISPLAY..."** Luke 17:20-21 Amp.



"The Puritans really believed it...they actually believed... what few people have, before or since: that the kingdom of God really could be built on earth, in their lifetimes... all it needed, they felt, was the right time, the right place, and the right people...The Puritans were the people, who more than any other, made possible America's foundation as a Christian nation." (pages 145-156)

"...in the virgin wilderness of America, God was making His most significant attempt since ancient Israel to create a new Israel...they saw themselves as called into their new promise land in order to found a new Israel, which would be a light to the whole world." (page 169)

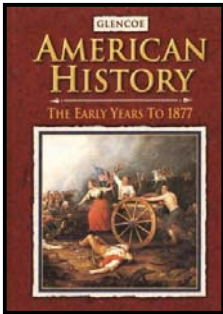
A city set upon a hill...the Puritans understood New England to be a type and emblem of New Jerusalem...a New Jerusalem, a model of the kingdom of Christ upon earth...we Americans were intended to be a living proof to the rest of the world...this continent as the stage for a new act in the drama of mankind's redemption...we Americans, were meant to be a light to the gentiles...a demonstration to the world...the first settlers consciously thought of themselves as a people called into a continuation of the covenant relationship with God...Furthermore, they saw themselves as called into their new promise land in order to found a new Israel, which would be a light to the whole world. A city set upon a hill, was how John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, puts it..." (pages 19-20) ...And this was exactly what was beginning to happen in God's new Israel..." (page 213)

Perhaps it is true, as history reports, that the Puritans lived very godly lives, yet they held a very serious false doctrine. It was the same one Mormon leader Brigham Young followed, namely, that the kingdom of God could be built by men on earth prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you will search the scriptures, you will find that no earthly kingdom is a manifestation of the kingdom of God! Only Israel has been selected by God to eventually become the kingdom of God on earth. It will occur during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ after His second coming.

Prophecy does not predict the kingdom of God physically manifesting itself on earth prior to the return of Jesus. However, prophecy does predict the rise of a one-world government, a one-world commerce, and a one-world religion, prior to the coming of Jesus Christ. This is Mystery, Babylon the Great, the counterfeit kingdom which Jesus will destroy at His coming.

In these last days we must look to the prophetic Word for direction, and not to enhanced story-book accounts of history. Man tends to bias his account of history. Only God's Word is an accurate account of truth.

May I ask you, which of these two books shall you commit the safety of your soul? Which one shall be used to establish truth in your heart? Which one is truly inspired by God?



FOUNDING FATHERS OF AMERICA...

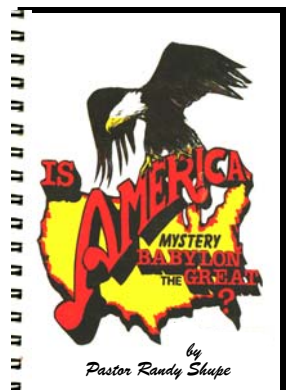


FOUNDING FATHERS OF CHRISTIANITY...

**“GIVEN SUFFICIENT TIME,
CHERISHED TRADITIONS
BECOME DOGMATIC BELIEFS”**

French Historian, Amaury de Reincourt

American Christians are very dogmatic about the godly foundation upon which they think America was built. Books like *“The Light and the Glory”* have only strengthened these false beliefs. America as “One Nation Under God” is a foundation of sinking sand that stands in opposition to the scriptures. I can only implore you to consider reading this book I wrote back in the early 90’s on this subject. (You can read this book on my website free of charge: PastorRandyShupe.com)



The founding fathers of America used phraseology such as One Nation Under God, and also In God We Trust, but who was the “God” to whom they referred? Let us look to the Declaration of Independence for some clues:

**In Congress, July 4, 1776
The Unanimous Declaration
of the Thirteen United States of America**

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...

In addition to the emphasis upon man and his rights, note the use of “laws of nature” and of “nature’s God.” That is the counterfeit religion of deism and not of biblical Christianity!

Compare the above contents of the Declaration of Independence with what Webster declares as Deism, and you will have the real “god” of our founding fathers. It is man himself!

Consider Webster’s definition of Deism:

DE-ISM, de iz-um, n. (Fr. deisme, < L. Deus, God.) The doctrine or creed of a deist.-de-ist, n. (Fr. deiste.) One who believes in the existence of a God or supreme being but denies revealed religion basing his belief on the light of nature and reason; one who believes in a God who created the universe but takes no part in its operations – de-is-tic, de-is-ti-cal, de-is tik, de-is’ti-kal, a. – de-is-ti-cal-ly, adv.

So important is this concept that I have made a comparison of these two sets of principles for you to consider:

<p align="center">THE GOD OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE</p>	<p align="center">IS THE SAME AS THE GOD OF THE DEIST</p>
<p>The laws of nature and of nature's god... We hold these truths to be self-evident... Endowed by their creator... Opinions of mankind... their just powers... unalienable rights... right of the people... organize power... as (it seems) to them most likely to effect their safety and happiness... (Total absence of mentioning Christ or Christianity)</p>	<p>Basing his belief on the light (evidence) of nature and reason... (Logic – what is self-evident) Believe in a god who created the universe but takes no part in its operation. (Left up to mankind to do as they see fit) Denies revealed religion but believes in the existence of God...</p>

**“...HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS
BUT DENYING ITS POWER.”**

2 Tim 3:5

Deism is a form of godliness which denies the power of God. Simply stated, God created, but He does not become involved in the operation of His creation. That is left to mankind. Here is the reason we find such a heavy emphasis upon mankind in the Declaration of Independence with an acknowledgment to “the God of Nature” who is also their Creator. There is not one reference to the God of the Bible, or Jesus Christ for that matter, in the whole Constitution or the Declaration of Independence! Why is that? Because deism denies revealed religion, and that includes Christianity!

The Declaration of Independence states that the goals of God for man are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. These self-evident truths are derived from the “god” of deism and his “laws of nature”.

These goals do not agree with what the Word of God establishes as God's will for God's people. The Bible presents a heaven-mindedness centered upon eternity rather than an earth-mindedness centered upon this present temporal world:

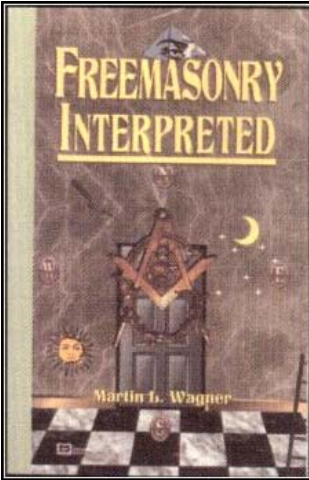
“FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION IS WORKING FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY, WHILE WE DO NOT LOOK AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN, BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN. FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORARY, BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL... IN THIS WE GROAN, EARNESTLY DESIRING TO BE CLOTHED WITH OUR HABITATION WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN...”

2 Cor. 4:17-18, 5:2

Many Christians are espousing that we return to the God of our founding fathers. However, to do so would require that we embrace the false religion of deism rather than true Christianity. This god of deism certainly inspired the Declaration of Independence. There is even greater evidence of deism being the religion of the founding fathers of America. This is proven by considering that the bulk of the founding fathers of America, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Ben Franklin, were all active Masons. All masons are deists. Deism is the religion of Freemasonry.

I pray that you will take the time to read what the founding fathers of America were embracing as doctrines through their involvement with Freemasonry.

Allow me to give you some extensive excerpts from "Freemasonry Interpreted" by Martin L. Wagner first printed in 1912:



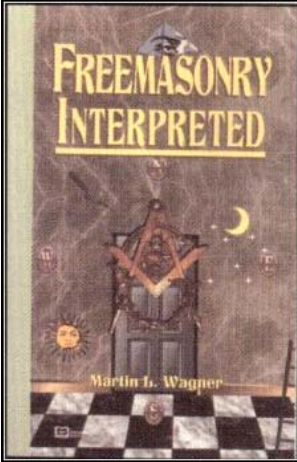
"Findel, a high Masonic authority, says: "The most decisive agent in accomplishing the transformation of Masonry was that intellectual movement known under the name of English deism which boldly rejected all revelation and religious dogmas, and under the victorious banner of Reason and Criticism, broke down all barriers in its path. It can not be denied that there is to be found a certain spiritual connection between this movement and the fraternity of Freemasons as it afterwards appeared."

The god whom Masons reverence and serve, is not Jehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the generative principle, a force in nature.

In order that we may get a clear idea of the principles and practices of this Masonic moral law, this law of nature in Masonry, we must go to the English deists, who are the accepted authorities on morals in Masonry. Deism was in flower when modern Masonry took its rise, and its principles and precepts were incorporated in this institution. It was deism that transformed the Masonic guilds from an operative into a speculative fraternity. The deistic principles were widely published and extensively accepted, and the deists appealed to the law of nature as a warrant and justification of their practices.

The Masonic institution under the powerful influences of this intellectual movement, adopted this law of nature as its moral law, and doubtless for the same reasons that the deists took refuge in it.

The foundation of Masonic morality, or of Masonic ethics, is not the Christian religion, but the Masonic religion.

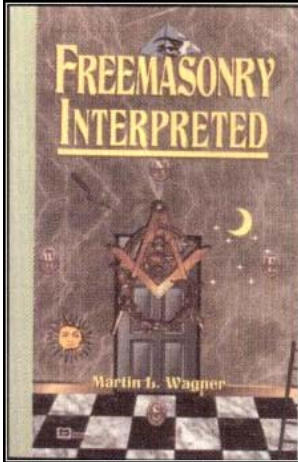


The Masonic ethics arise “from and are supported by the recorded facts of nature and the relation of all these to man, through experience of the demonstration of science.” (Buck in Life and Action, Vol. 2, No. 2, pg. 133). The ultimate standard of right or wrong in Freemasonry is not the Decalogue (God’s Law) but that which they term the law of nature. This law of nature is the operation of the so-called divine nature, as it is discerned by human reason, or human experience, which Masons have demonstrated, classified, and systematized, and apply to individual conduct.

This law of nature Freemasonry accepts as the sole revelation of the will of the deity, and has adopted it as its moral standard. The chief moral precepts and practices, deduced from this law of nature, are set forth in the lectures, are expressed in obligatory form in the oath or covenant, and in mandatory form the charges. They are veiled under symbols of the work-tools of a builder’s craft, and in geometrical figures and terms. The foundation of Christian ethics is entirely distinct and different from the foundation of Masonic ethics.

This law of nature is therefore the only law suited in every respect to be adopted as the Masonic code. (Mackey’s Jurisprudence, pg. 502). Again the same writer says: “The ten commandments are not obligatory upon a Mason as a Mason, because the institution is tolerant and cosmopolite, and cannot require its members to give their adhesion to any religious dogmas or precepts, excepting those which express a belief in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. No partial law prescribed for a particular religion can be properly selected for the government of an institution whose great characteristic is its universality.” (Ency. Pg. 205)

Freemasonry has a moral law distinct and different from that of Christianity. The basis for its ethics is not the Decalogue. The church's interpretation of that law, Freemasonry rejects and repudiates.

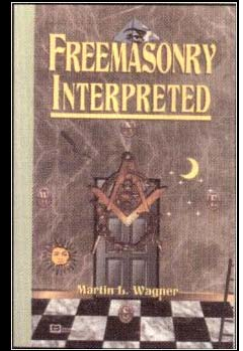


As Masonry supplants Jehovah with its Grand Architect of the Universe, (Lucifer) so also it supplants Jehovah's law by another which it designates the law of nature. In support of our contention we submit the language of the foremost authority among Masons. Every Mason, say the old charges of 1722, is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law. Now this moral law is not to be considered as confined to the Decalogue of Moses, within which narrow limits the ecclesiastical writers technically restrain it, but rather as alluding to what is called the "lex naturae" or the law of nature.

This law of nature has been defined by an able but not recent writer on this subject, to be the Will of God relating to human actions grounded on the moral differences of things; and because discoverable by natural light, obligatory upon all mankind. This is the moral law, to which the old charge already cited, refers, and which it declares to be the law of Masonry.

It calls things by their opposites. It substitutes legends for facts, expresses legendary lore and pagan myths in the language of holy scripture. It calls heathen deities by biblical names of God, heathen rites by Christian phrases, and Masonic doctrines in phrases and terms of Christian theology. The whole system is not what it appears or pretends to be. It is a pretence, a delusion, a fraud, a lie. It hides its moral and religious ideas under veils, glyphs, ideographs and expresses them in art speech, emblems, and types, which have a semblance of the true but really refer to the untrue.

The institution itself is a deception. It conceals its real sentiments, even in its solemn instruction and lectures in the lodge. It does not mean what its language most expresses. It has a secret system of principles and moral ideas which aims to subvert the present order of things, and an open system which professes to support it. But all this must be concealed, and to conceal it, it teaches its disciples to practice the art of dissembling, prevarication, deception, and falsehood, in word, in act, and in profession. Masonry is from the standpoint of Christian ethics, a stupendous, organized lie. It holds down the truth in unrighteousness, upholds falsehood under the garb of truth, and by this trick of substitution and juggling with language it deprives the Bible and especially its ethics of all vitality so that the adherents of the craft can safely regard that book with contempt.



Jefferson, Washington, Adams and Franklin were all Masons, and Masons are deists-not Christians! The Declaration of Independence blatantly espouses deism, not Christianity! America is indeed “One Nation Under God”, but it is the god of deism, the god of the Masons, which in reality is none other than the god of this world, Lucifer himself!

To whom shall we give our allegiance? Shall we believe Jefferson, Washington and Adams, the founding fathers of America, all Deists, when they say that the Constitution is inspired of God establishing One Nation Under God with the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness as specific goals of God for His people?

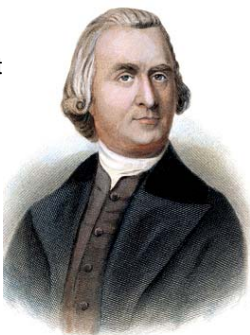
Or shall we give heed to Jesus, the Chief Cornerstone of the Church (Eph. 2:0), the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18), and the apostle Paul, who wrote two-thirds of the New Testament, the very founding fathers of the Church?

Why are the followers of Christ not following the Head who said “My kingdom is not of this world? If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight...” Why then are Christians trying to Christianize America through “Right To Life” and other causes such as fighting against pornography, homosexuality and civil liberties? Why are Christians seeking to obtain a Christian president for one of the kingdoms of this world? Would not Jesus say to us today what He said to His people 2,000 years ago:

“FOR LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, YOU HOLD THE TRADITION OF MEN...ALL TOO WELL YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION... MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NO EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITION WHICH YOU HAVE HANDED DOWN.”

Mark 7:8-13

“That God would be pleased to guide and direct the administration of the Federal government, and those of the several states in the union, so that the whole people may continue to be safe and happy in the



constitutional enjoyment of their rights, liberties and privileges, and our government be greatly respected at home and abroad”

*Governor of Massachusetts,
Samuel Adams 1793*

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to a political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.



In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness...”

*George Washington,
Farwell address, 1796*

The philosophy above of both Samuel Adams and George Washington sound very God-centered, but are they really?

Look carefully at the stated goals Samuel Adams has for the people of God: →

“THAT THE WHOLE PEOPLE MAY CONTINUE TO BE SAFE AND HAPPY IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL ENJOYMENT OF THEIR RIGHTS, LIBERTIES AND PRIVILEGES, AND OUR GOVERNMENT BE GREATLY RESPECTED AT HOME AND ABROAD”

The founding fathers of America claim that the Constitution was inspired by God. Is that true? Does America have as its foundation the same principles that the Word of God reveals for His people? Does God instructs us to “Be happy, for I am Happy”? No, it says we are to “Be holy for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16) . Happiness and holiness are not one and the same concepts.

If you endorse the writings of the founding fathers of America, then you will develop a philosophy of patriotism. However, if you follow the writings of the founding fathers of the Church, you will be patristic. The important question for us all is whether they are one and the same philosophies. I say they are not!

PATRIOT

“A PERSON WHO LOVES HIS COUNTRY AND ZEALOUSLY SUPPORTS, DEFENDS IT AND ITS INTERESTS”

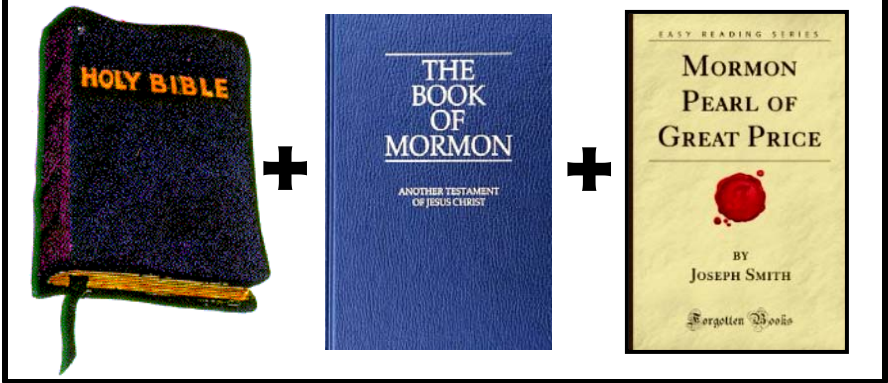
Webster

PATRISTIC

“BEING OF OR PERTAINING TO THE FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THEIR WRITINGS”

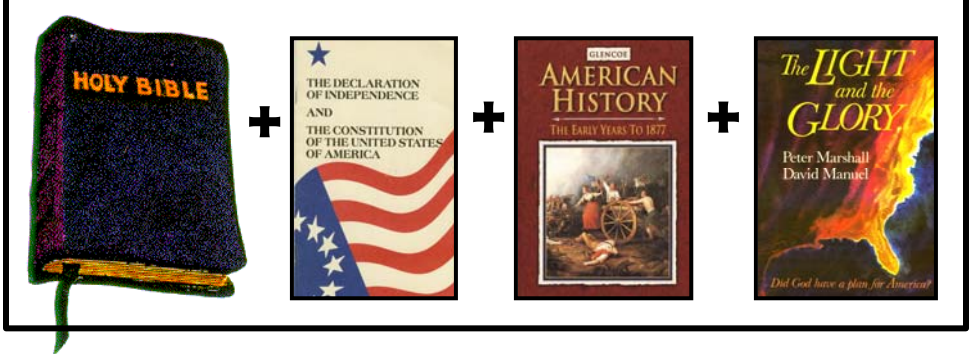
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BASIS OF THE MORMON FAITH IN AMERICA:



How is it that in condemning Mormonism as a false brand of Christianity, American biblical scholars of Christianity site as the base of it being a cult, the use of “The Book of Mormon” and “The Pearl of Great Price” as documents of truth in addition to the Bible, and yet the same error exists in Christianity by placing right along side the Bible, the contents of the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, American history books, and the likes of “The Light and the Glory” as valid sources of truth? Doesn’t this make us to be supreme hypocrites?

BASIS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN AMERICA:



As a pastor, I will never forget this movie in which York, a recent convert to Christianity, refuses to take up arms to kill the enemy because the Bible said, “Thou shall not kill.” In a very reverent scene, his superior officer gives York a copy of an American history book to consider in addition to the Bible. Later York is seen sitting on top of hill at sunset reading the history of America. It persuades him to overcome the biblical commandment not to kill, and he becomes one of America’s war heroes due to his sharpshooting skills he learned in shooting turkeys. Moral to the story? It takes more than the Bible to shed light on what is morally right. Ask the Mormons. They suffer from the same deception as does much of Christianity in America.



THE PURITAN WAY



**A RELIGION BASED ON
EARTHLY
CAUSES...**

**“...THE PURITANS SAW
THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO
THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN
ORDER TO FOUND
A NEW ISRAEL,
WHICH WOULD BE
A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD...
A CITY SET UPON A HILL.
THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD
NEW ENGLAND TO BE
A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF
NEW JERUSALEM...
A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF
CHRIST UPON EARTH...
LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF
THE WORLD...THE STAGE FOR A
NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF
MANKIND’S REDEMPTION...
WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO
BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES...
A DEMONSTRATION TO THE
WORLD...”**

(Excerpts from *The Light and the Glory*-
Peter Marshall)

VS. THE PILGRIM WAY



**THE HEAVENLY
CAUSE
OF TRUE RELIGION...**

**“AND HE OPENED THEIR
UNDERSTANDING, THAT THEY MIGHT
COMPREHEND THE SCRIPTURES.
THEN HE SAID TO THEM, ‘THUS IT WAS
WRITTEN, AND THUS IT WAS
NECESSARY FOR THE CHRIST TO SUFFER
AND TO RISE FROM THE DEAD THE
THIRD DAY, AND THAT REPENTANCE
AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE
PREACHED IN HIS NAME
TO ALL NATIONS...’ ”**

Luke 24:45-48

**“...GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND
PREACH THE GOSPEL
TO EVERY CREATURE...”**

Mark 16:15

**“...CHILDREN OF GOD
WITHOUT FAULT IN THE MIDST OF
A CROOKED AND PERVERSE
GENERATION, AMONG WHOM YOU
SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD,
HOLDING FORTH
THE WORD OF LIFE...”**

Phil.2:15-16

The Puritans laid a different theological foundation in this country than did their counterparts the Pilgrims. Jesus taught that His sayings were the only solid foundation that will stand the test of the “wind, rain and floods” of trial and tribulation (Matt. 7:24-25). All other foundations or sayings such as endorsed by the Puritans above are but “sinking sand” (Matt. 7:26-27). Paul emphatically stressed that there was no other foundation for Christianity that can be laid other than what has been laid, which is in essence the cross of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). The foundation of the cross has been replaced with the foundation of following after the righteous cause. Puritanism is thriving in America today. However, Puritanism is not pure religion. I want to try to convince you that the Pilgrim way is still God’s way for American Christians to follow.

On the previous page I contrasted for you two different, foundational concepts. The right one is based on the foundation of Christ crucified as the solution to what ails the world. The Pilgrims held fast to this biblically-based foundation but the Puritans did not. Their solution to the world's ailment was to demonstrate a literal expression of the Kingdom of God on earth in America. It is this foundation which has spawned the much-heralded Christian banners of "One Nation Under God" and "In God We Trust." Truth of the matter is that we shall not see such a manifestation of "nations under God" or of "nations trusting in God" until Jesus Christ returns at the time in which He will make "The kingdoms of this world...[to] become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ" (Rev. 11:15). The Puritans were not willing to wait for this prophesied era and neither are the politically-motivated Christians in America today! This timely article appeared in the Rocky Mountain News during the Thanksgiving holiday. The likes of the politically-based Religious Right and the Moral Majority movements are based solidly upon the same basic erroneous foundations of Puritanism, namely, the God-ordained establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth — in America!

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2004

Many still believe in our 'errand in the wilderness'

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, the children dress up as Pilgrims and we feast on turkey, cranberries and pumpkin pie to commemorate how they (the Pilgrims, not the kids) struggled and survived in the New World. But let's take a moment to really remember those early Americans.

In his masterful volume, *A History of the American People*, British historian Paul Johnson describes the Puritans who landed at New Plymouth on Dec. 11, 1620, this way: "They were the zealots, the idealists, the utopians, the saints, and the best

Clifford D.
May

of them, or perhaps one should say the most extreme of them, were fanatical, uncompromising and overweening in their self-righteousness." But, he concedes, they also were "immensely energetic, persistent, and courageous." They and their heirs were to weave one of the most vibrant designs in the American tapestry.

They left Europe to escape religious persecution — not quite the same as saying they came for religious freedom — and "to create His kingdom on Earth." John Winthrop, whom Johnson calls "the first great American," considered Europe "a lost cause," both irreligious and badly governed.

... they signed a social compact "based upon the original Biblical covenant between God and the Israelites." Also influenced by early 17th century social-contract theory, they drafted "just and equal laws" that were firmly anchored in the teachings of the church.

The Puritans considered it their mission to create a better society than any the world had seen before. Winthrop wrote: "We must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

It is tempting to theorize that the Puritan/Pilgrim spirit has, over the past few hundred years, moved further inland, far from Massachusetts and other coastal communities, to what we now call the red states. But that would be simplistic. As Johnson points out, the Puritans were eventually joined by adherents to other religious traditions, and over time, "the Puritan merged into the Yankee, a race whose typical member is eternally torn between a passion for righteousness and a desire to get on in the world." Besides, the Puritans were hardly conservative in the sense that they favored limited government and rugged individualism. On the contrary, Johnson says, they believed that government "should interfere and direct and lead as much as it could, in all aspects of life. . . . Puritans saw the individualist as a dangerous loner, meat for the Devil to feed on." By the early 18th century, Puritanism was in decline and new American concepts of religion were taking shape. Cotton Mather (1663-1728), one of the most famous and learned Puritans, was among the first to see this, and he regretted it. "There is danger lest the enchantments of this world make them forget their errand into the wilderness," he wrote.

Yet there are today still those who believe America has a mission, and who see this exceptional nation still aspiring to be a "City upon a Hill." I suspect the Pilgrims would take some satisfaction in that.

Clifford D. May is the president of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies a policy institute focusing on terrorism.

I urge you to visit this website: <http://endtimepilgrim.org/puritans.htm>. Below are brief highlights of a 59-page article pertaining to the beliefs of the Puritans versus those of the Pilgrims. I advise you to consider the whole article as it appears on this website. It is worth reading in its entirety. If you are a Christian in America you are either endorsing the erroneous foundation of the Puritans or the biblically-based foundation of the Pilgrims. Jesus said that if we continue in His Word we would know truth that would set us free (Jn. 8:30-32). It is my conviction that God's people, in this country, need to be set free from politically-based religion. Perhaps this article will help. Here are the highlights:

***PURITAN HISTORY;
PAST, PRESENT,
AND FUTURE***

From the English Civil War to the settlement of the New World and onwards to the emerging New World Order and the end-time drama.

*An essay by Gavin Finley M.D.
September 2003*

**THE PURITAN HEART AND MINDSET AS
THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL
AND POLITICAL ACTION.**



American fundamentalist Christians show a willingness to assume the burden of responsibility for the spiritual condition of America. They also show a readiness to accept the political power that might come along with it.... they show a determined purpose to not only purify the Church in America but also prod the saints to get up and do something. They believe that Christian believers should and must be politically and socially activated. To their way of thinking this is absolutely necessary to preserve the Christian heritage of America and thereby save America itself.... American Christians pursue their quest with great zeal and enthusiasm. They bring their spiritual dreams down from heaven and onto this earth where they can be "manifest". This is the basis of "manifest destiny". It is a sense of America being destined by God for influence beyond her own borders. This was proclaimed back in the 1840's and formulated into U.S. foreign policy. Many historians consider this principle of "manifest destiny" to be the main spiritual engine driving American history forward. These totally committed Christian citizens are all working towards the fulfillment of the same basic dream, and it is a lofty one. It can be summed up in one phrase and sentiment. It is to see the establishment of '**one nation under God**'.

Strange to say, we have seen this very same heart desire, mindset and motivation before. We saw it exemplified in the English and American Puritans of centuries past. It was clearly laid out by John Winthrop in his memorable exhortation to the Puritans as they set sail on their voyage to the New World in 1630. At that time he charged the early colonists with these words,

**"....WE MUST CONSIDER THAT WE SHALL BE AS A CITY UPON A HILL
(AND THAT) THE EYES OF ALL PEOPLE ARE UPON US.."**

This "City upon a hill" was not the 'Holy City' the children of Abraham and the Pilgrims were seeking. It was not the future New Jerusalem John saw coming down from heaven and fully revealed in its ultimate glory. (Rev.21) But the American Dream was certainly tapping into the holy energy of that sublime vision. Their "City on a hill" was very definitely an earthly reflection of the Holy City...The shining city they were now seeing in their mind's eye was something glorious and holy. It was a City which they had in effect brought down from heaven to earth. The object of their dream was something being fashioned by them in the 'here and now'. They were tired of hearing about that City in the sweet by and by. They wanted to see God's "Kingdom now"...They believed themselves to be the people destined to be a great and glorious "nation under God". As such they would enjoy His divine favor, His protection, and the great prosperity that came along with that. This was, (and remains to this day), the Puritan dream for America. The vision is still out there amongst the American people.

Nowadays they do not go by the name 'Puritans'. But nevertheless, the politically and socially active Christians we see in action today are in fact a continuing stream of the very same people who came out from England in the 1600's. The thesis of this article is that the Puritans are still with us....The Puritans are about to inherit global power!

Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan dictator/Lord Protector of England, would be amazed to see what has happened to those democratic Bible believing people who rose up in the 1600's and flowed out of England to the New World. His beloved Parliament is still there. Now in the U.S. Congress his people are still raising their voice for freedom and "one nation under God," and the Puritan Army is still marching on. The same yellow ribbons the Puritan Army wore back in the 1640's can still be seen. They are being displayed all across the land. And now, it seems, the modern Puritans are on the threshold of a dream.They are about to dominate world history! Whether we like it or not world history is now being profoundly shaped and fashioned by American history.

**TODAY'S PURITANS IN THE AMERICAN CHURCHES AND THE FIERY
PREACHING OF THE 'LAST CRUSADE' FROM THE PULPITS. THIS IS NOW
BRINGING IN HISTORY'S FINAL VERSION OF CHRISTIAN DOMINIONISM.**

Back here in the west no one dares to use the forbidden "c" word. But from the rhetoric coming from some televangelist preachers it certainly would appear that we might well be re-opening the crusades for a final campaign, even the 'last crusade'. Truly these are historic times....

In the American churches too we are also seeing a new political pugnacity coming into vogue.... There is a lot of talk in the American churches about "taking dominion" and "bringing in the kingdom". This is clearly post-millennialist language. It is at variance with the accepted Biblically based pre-millennialist doctrine traditionally held by careful Biblically well founded evangelicals....

The popular doctrine of the end-time we now see emerging holds that **the Church** will rise up and set things right! **They**, will be the ones to take over the planet! These crusader Christians now coming on the scene believe that they have a mandate from God to take over the political powers of this world and bring in the "Kingdom Now." To their way of thinking Jesus is not coming back until they do!

Do these Utopian post-millennialist Christian Dominionists really believe that they will succeed in their quest? Most assuredly they do. They believe that when the established unified World Church has straightened out everything on the planet then the Second Coming of Christ will just be a formality. They will be the princes of peace. They will have everything wrapped up. Jesus Christ will merely be coming back to officiate at their church sponsored awards ceremony in Jerusalem. The Victorious Church will set up their Christian Television cameras on the Mount of Olives and whistle for Jesus to come back. He will dutifully return and start handing out rewards to "Five fold ministry" dominionist Church leaders. They will then be truly sanctified to rule the planet....

This unscriptural view of the future end-time events is what is behind the pugnacious, even arrogant, new mindset emerging in western Christianity today. The call to politico/military action here is quite different from the traditional evangelical zeal to see the Gospel preached around the world. It goes far beyond our traditional missionary work of sending in food to the starving, medical assistance to the sick, establishing orphanages, digging wells etc. 'Taking dominion' is the 'in' word at the cutting edge of the American church these days.

These militant Christians are not just speaking of a spiritual dominion here. To the Puritan mind the earthly agenda in America is every bit as important as the Gospel and the missionary agenda abroad. Dominionist and 'Kingdom Now' thinking, like Jesuit thinking under Spain or Victorian thinking during the years of the British Empire sees the Christian advance being backed up by the state using the sword or military power. Just how far might we expect a Puritan American dominion to push for empire? Because 'empire' is the true reality here.... Can Puritan Christians be expected to run a police state? They did to some extent back during the English Civil War. One classic example is seen in the famous 19th century painting, "When Did You Last See Your Father?" by W.F. Yeames.

It shows an interrogation of women and children of a Royalist family by agents and soldiers of Oliver Cromwell's Puritan Army. If we take a look at the painting we see something very interesting. The sergeant and the cavaliers, along with the Parliamentarian investigators, are all wearing a **yellow sash**.



http://www.historyonthenet.com/Civil_War/when_did_you_last_see_your_father.htm

Are we seeing 'yellow ribbons' in the picture here? We are certainly seeing them in America at war today. And just what is the meaning of the yellow ribbons? They are now being displayed all across America. Are they a connection to our Puritan past?

....If American history today is a continuing stream dating back to Puritan history in England in the 1640's then what does this tell us about ourselves? It means that at a future time in history when the curtain opens up on pivotal world events, we might well expect to see the Anglo-American Puritans emerge again. They are now the superpower and have the responsibility before God of bringing a just and lasting peace on earth. They also have a Godly and global mandate in the Great Commission and the Gospel. We can expect them to act in the same energetic and decisive way they did 460 years ago. We can fully anticipate that they will come on the scene with the same vigor and holy zeal they showed when they went to war for a godly cause back during the English Civil War. At that time every unit in the Puritan Army had its own preacher. And from history we know that the injection of religion into a war makes it all the more effective, and all the more terrible. Are we are seeing the Puritans on the rise again? If we are, then we can be sure that they will not be content to just sit around and debate the issues forever. When those issues are moral issues of great importance and they feel that their 'nation under God' is being taken down the road to Sodom and Gomorrah or is becoming an abortion mill or a house of prostitution and pornography and is in danger of losing God's favor then they will act. We can expect them to rise up politically and militarily.... For America, the current presiding superpower, it will be no different. No matter whom they elect to political office, the history which emerges will be that which has been prophesied and written in the Holy Scriptures.

Let us start our journey of discovery by taking a quick look at the modern day Puritans in action today. Then we shall trace their roots back in the 1500's as they emerged in England during the years following the Reformation. Their scriptural zeal alienated them from the heart of King Henry's newly established Church of England. But after several decades of persecution they emerged as a political force to be reckoned with in the early 1600's. These hard bitten politically active Biblical Fundamentalists then rose up in Parliament in an awful row with the King Charles.As we shall see, the Puritans became the main players in the English Civil War. They even had the gall to take up arms against the King of England. After defeating him on the battlefield they tried to make a deal with him but without success. Finally, after accusing King Charles of high treason, they had him beheaded. Puritans do not stand for any nonsense. These people mean business! We shall follow the Puritans on their passage to the New World and observe their dominant role in the forging of the United States of America. Finally we shall see what they are up to today. Just what is their dream and vision? And what course are they plotting for the future....

But some Christians think that this American church-state accord just might become a problem in the future. In fact some are concerned that American evangelicals might do even worse than the British Christians did. Some think that the American church could be politically seduced in the same manner as the German Christian church was misled by Hitler during the 1930's.

During those years of economic distress German Christendom left the 'way of the cross' to 'take up the sword' and follow their political champion. The rest is history. They were led down a dangerous pathway of national domination leading to the Second World War. Could American Christians in similar fashion be gathered to some similar charismatic leader or conqueror? In some future time of national or international crisis could such a political pied piper again rise up and lead the Christian children away on another devastating crusade? Some are concerned that American Christendom could be led into a similar compromise and ensuing disaster with all its blood guiltiness and shame.

Most Christian fundamentalists or evangelicals in America have not expressed any such concerns. Most do not know modern history or the patterns of past history. So this possibility hasn't even crossed their minds. They are quite happy to be on the political right. They are not even on the lookout for pitfalls on the road ahead....

THE AMERICAN PURITANS OF TODAY ARE 'RISING UP' AND TAKING STRONG POLITICAL ACTION FOR 'CHRISTIAN VALUES' IN SOCIETY.

The modern day Puritans are very active on the legal front . They are hiring lawyers and taking their case for a 'nation under God' into the higher courts. They take legal action in the defense of Christians who have been victimized by secularist strong-arm tactics of their arch enemy the ACLU. The American Center For Law and Justice is very active in this area. They will also petition and take legal action at the Supreme Court level on issues such as partial birth abortion, (which is essentially infanticide), pornography, students rights to gather and pray on state school property and a host of other church-state battle zones.

Even though modern day Puritans are very active in the public arena their main voice is heard through their various religious ministries. From the pulpit as well as Christian radio and Christian television they continue to mount a potent preaching and informational campaign against the liberal agenda. Today's Puritans would be represented by such politico/religious organizations as that of the Rev. Jerry Falwell which was once called the "Moral Majority" and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. They drum up support for conservative causes and conservative political leaders. They try very hard to get them elected into office hoping for some political favors for the church in return.

Christian political activists believe that playing the political game is the only solid down to earth avenue open for them in their quest to bring back the Godly American culture they once knew and loved. Christian radio and television offer a huge platform and opportunity for ministers of the 'Religious Right' these days. 'Fear is the key' here. Many Christian fundamentalists are fearful. They are therefore angry. They are angry because they are being marginalized and alienated in the American public arena. As Christians this should not be a problem. Such treatment is normal for those who are called of God. But as American citizens our modern day

Puritans believe that they are the head and not the tail...Televangelists find it very easy to play on these insecurities and fears. Using the pulpit they often work up their crowd in the manner of political populists in the town hall. They know that there is much to be gained in presenting themselves as a champion of the fundamentalist politico-religious agenda. More money flows in when these issues are aired than when the usual evangelical programming is broadcast. It seems that today's Puritans are more interested in promoting a Christian milieu in the land of their present sojourn than in taking the Gospel to people in other lands.... Christian programs which center on preaching the Gospel or teaching Holy Scripture or promoting missionary outreach abroad are typically under funded. These 'old fashioned' sorts of evangelical programs which center on the Great Commission are sadly neglected. They struggle to stay on the air. This is to our shame.

It seems that our church-life has lost it's zest. The spiritual dynamic in the scriptures and in personal devotions doesn't seem to be as relevant these days as it once was. Christians attend church now for reassurance and social lubrication. A host of programs are now offered centered around "my needs". These include 'self esteem' seminars, rallies in which motivational speakers are hired, singles ministries, baseball etc. This is strange. What has happened to our prime focus in the Gospel and the discipling of our children in the faith? How about the ministry to our brothers and sisters in the poorer inner city churches? And how much action do we see in missionary outreach to other countries?

These are very real concerns. God has given us these times of prosperity for a purpose. That purpose is not just to build up church masonry and indulge our own self life. We have a job to do. Accordingly we should redeem the time during this period of peace God has given us.... What has happened to us? Are we 'falling away' from the faith of our fathers? Have the modern Puritans drifted into a lukewarm state of declining Christian commitment? Could we in the western church of today be the church of Laodicea?

The Puritan Christian has his eyes on his own land...The New World here in America is "it". America is "that city set on a hill". It is hard for him to concern himself with places beyond, places where the Christian family overseas is expanding in an unprecedented and wonderful way.

The situation in China and South America is quite different. Over there the evangelical church carries on without the support of any 'nation under God'. They certainly don't enjoy much in the way of 'political protection' and lavish church buildings either. They have no political champions to 'take dominion' or 'take up the sword' for them. They have no "defender of the faith". Quite the contrary in fact. They are under persecution! Yet in the spiritual sense the suffering church over there is doing extremely well.... Young evangelicals overseas share the Gospel with great devotion and enthusiasm. In China the underground church has no political protection.

They conduct secret communion services hidden in the forests. Pastors are under constant threat of imprisonment.... Christians in China are arrested and put in prison for sharing their faith. Many have died for the witness. Many are continuing to die. Many Christians in the persecuted suffering church abroad can't even get a personal Bible. Vietnamese Christians will pay two weeks salary and risk imprisonment to get a Bible on the black market. Meanwhile, back in America, evangelicals pay politicians to gain favors. And for what? Is it out of fear of persecution? And are they getting their money's worth? Is this a rewarding use of God's tithes and offerings? Here is the question for American Puritans:

**CAN WE BUY POLITICAL INSURANCE
TO GUARANTEE PROTECTION AGAINST
THE ALIENATION OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA?**

Judging from the testimony of our Christian brothers and sisters overseas might we be better off funding the Gospel missionary outreach abroad.... In spite of all this persecution and the neglect of our western church the vital and faithful witness goes on in the suffering church abroad. The invisible underground church in China continues to double every 7 years. The Chinese Church is now a communion of over 100 million souls. Meanwhile, back here in America and the west our young people yawn when the subject of the Christian faith is brought up... They have little sense of responsibility and are in constant need of being entertained.

...the American Puritans are becoming very vocal. The Christian political fight for a 'nation under God' goes on. By far the biggest issue for Christian fundamentalists today is the continuing abortion outrage.... Puritans in America have made great efforts and much money has been spent on politicking. Have they been able to stop the abortion? No, they have not... What can we do about this? Can we legislate, bribe, or sue a society into Godliness? Shall we join the anarchists and bomb or gun our society into godliness? Or does righteousness come into a society when the throne of Christ is established in individual human hearts?....

The other big issue for politically active Christians is the banning of class prayer in public schools in America... Can we merely replace God with "family values". It is only the indwelling Christ who brings these moral values home to a given group of people in any permanent sort of a way... Christian parents have had enough. They are opting out of the increasingly depraved public school system altogether. They are sending their children to Christian schools or home-schooling them. Where did this zeal for the spiritual preservation of a Christian America come from? Is it new? Or have we seen it before in America's earlier history? If we look back into the very beginnings of American colonization I believe we can see an unmistakable outline of a special group of socially and politically active Christian believers. They came to these shores with a specific goal in mind. Their quest was to nurture a pure Christian culture and establish a Christian nation in the New World. Back in those early days these Christians were called the Puritans.

THE ROOTS OF PURITAN ZEAL IN CHURCH HISTORY

If these Christian activists are indeed the continuation of the Puritans then where did their zeal for a '**nation under God**' come from? This is a very interesting question. The roots of Puritan zeal probably go back a long way.... Perhaps the zeal for 'one nation under God' even goes back deeper into the mists of time. Perhaps its roots go back to the nation of Israel....

This is all very interesting. But for this particular journey in search of that zeal for a 'nation under God' we shall content ourselves with a look back just 500 years into Christian history. Our journey of discovery to seek the roots of the Puritans begins at a time when the Holy Scriptures were coming to the common man in Europe. After a thousand years of medieval darkness the Word of God was returning.... The 1500's were years of great change. The peasants revolted throughout central Europe during a conflict that would come to known as the Peasant Wars. During this period of internal strife the Turks took advantage of the situation. They attacked European Christendom from the east. The Muslim forces advanced to the point where for a while they were actually closing in on Vienna. It was an awful time to be alive in Europe. It was a time of unprecedented religious, political and social upheaval. Out of all this turmoil came **the Anabaptists**. These were the ultimate Christian radicals...

During the Reformation wars in central Europe many had seen enough of Christian savagery and barbarism to last several lifetimes. For many separatist evangelical Christians it got to the point where they didn't care which army won. From the scriptures they had come to believe that Christianity was a matter of personal faith, not national or church sponsored citizenship. Nor was it about which church or cathedral you belonged to. It was all about a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ and a personal faith walked out with Him daily.

Accordingly, while they paid their taxes to the governing powers the Anabaptists resolved to take no oaths of allegiance with the political or ecclesiastical princes, whoever they might be. Nor would they take up arms with or against any army coming into their valleys, whether they were Protestant or Catholic... For their stand in the peace of Jesus Christ they were bitterly persecuted from both sides. Millions of Anabaptists died at the hands of Catholic and Protestant powers alike. They continued to die for over 200 years. This story has not been told. It has been cut out of the history books. From these determined Christian separatists came the peace loving Amish and Mennonites along with the Brethren and some primitive Baptists of the free church tradition. They remember this history. We don't. Let us make no mistake about this. The Pilgrim saints who had rejected the sword were still full of Christian zeal. But they had given up on a church that had corrupted itself by going to bed with the state. They would prefer to go to their secret Christian meetings, even if they were under the constant threat of being arrested... The pathway they were now going on was a 'highway of holiness'. ~ Isa.35:8-10.

The Anabaptists resolved to keep their little church pure in devotion to Christ. They were weary of seeing the hideous mixture of the cross and the sword played out before their eyes year after weary year. The sword had been stained with Christian blood. To their mind it had become a despised and shameful thing. It no longer had the sacred power of chivalry it once held over them. They had seen its dark side. It had come to the point where they were going to turn their back on politics and make the peaceful preaching of the Gospel their prime concern come what may. At this time the first missionary outreaches were organized.

The Mennonites, the Baptists, the Brethren and many other Christian groups began to send out missionaries beyond European shores. A new era in Christian missions had begun....

Church history is full of stories of compromised Christians persecuting uncompromised Christians. The millions of Anabaptists who died in the 1500's and 1600's were not put to death by the Turks or pagans from the forest. They died at the hands of self respecting fellow Christians.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ENGLISH PURITANS IN THE 1500'S AND EARLY 1600'S .

This is where we pick up our story of the Puritans. The coming of the English Bible was giving rise to desires for full Reformation of the Church of England. There was even talk of **'purifying'** the Church of England. It was during the latter part of the 1500's that men like Thomas Cartwright began to argue for a purified English Christianity. They wanted to see a Church of England free of the medieval trappings and vestments of the Roman Church from which it had come. These reformist evangelicals came to be called **'Puritans'**...

Evangelicals in England during those times had two choices. They could separate from the Church of England and become Non-Conformists or Pilgrim style Separatists. Or they could join the Puritans and stay in the system hoping to reform it from within. Both streams of evangelical Christianity were persecuted but the separatists had it far worse. King James had commissioned the printing of the Holy Scriptures which sets men free, but under his reign religious freedom was still not realized. Englishmen were still forbidden to worship outside the Church of England. Many Bible believing Christians, under persecution by the king's bishops, were forced to flee the country. A Puritan community from the town of Scrooby left for Holland in 1608... Here people of faith could gather and worship without fear of persecution. Here too they could educate their children into a biblical world view with their own Christian schools. But for the Pilgrims and Puritans from Scrooby, (and others), Holland was a temporary haven. But it was not their destiny. The Puritan fellowship from Scrooby would only stay there in Holland 12 years. Then they would set forth towards the next stop on their epic journey. The Pilgrims and Puritans were bound for the New World. During the fall of 1620 they set sail aboard the Mayflower. Meanwhile, back in England, the Puritans fumed and fretted and chafed under the constraints under which their new biblical faith was forced to operate.

The difficult Pilgrim path of living as "non conformists" and walking a separated life to Christ was open to them of course, but the Puritans were committed to the continuation of a church-state union. So they remained within the Church of England trying to move the huge medieval colossus with all its "Romish" trappings forward inch by inch into biblical Christianity. Being people who believed in 'the system' the Puritans were determined to change the national church from within....

All this was making things very difficult for the emerging Puritans. They did not want to take the road of 'separation of church and state' as the Pilgrim separatists were doing. They were not going to worship secretly. Nor did they want to gather in little fellowships. They were Englishmen! And they would worship God as Englishmen. If the system was not with them then their future course was clear. They would change the system! ...

The Puritan corporate conscience began to burn within them. They prayed and they agonized as they sought to bring political and social substance to their dreams of a 'nation under God'. They knew what could and should be done. And by God's help they were going to make it happen!... The Puritans soon became the main movers and shakers in the political arena. During the 1630's they began to dominate English Parliament.... The bitter feud between King Charles and the Puritan leaders in Parliament got progressively worse. Finally it erupted into the awful English Civil War.... The Puritans had triumphed in the political arena. Oliver Cromwell, became a virtual Puritan dictator over England. He ruled as 'Lord Protector' until his death in 1658. England prospered greatly during those years. So as we can see, the Puritans back then meant business. They were totally and absolutely committed to establishing a Christian nation with a representative government elected by and subject to a Christian people. And so they remain today.... As we have seen, the Puritans were politically active Christians of the established English church. They had big dreams for a new Christian nation. In the 1630's to 1650's they had tried to establish their new nation in England. Indeed they had succeeded for a few short years under benign theistic dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell. But alas, this Christian republic was not sustainable... Their dreams and their efforts for a righteous Christian republic ruled by a representative government of Godly, wise and uncorrupted statesmen had not been realized.

A group of Puritans had settled Jamestown in 1611. Then in 1620 the separatist Puritan congregation from Scrooby, via Leiden, Holland, set sail for the New World aboard the Mayflower... Like many who would come after them they were greatly encouraged in their quest for a 'nation under God'. In spite of very harsh living conditions and great loss of life that first winter they firmly believed that their dream was possible. They had arrived at Plymouth Rock and from there they would set foot into the New World. Before them lay an entirely new continent offering a new and fresh opportunity. Surely here in the American colonies they could begin to establish the model Christian society and Christian representative government that was eluding them back in England. As they gathered on board the Mayflower to lay out the basis for their Christian government their dream crystallized in that famous document known as the "Mayflower Compact."

THE PURITANS AND THEIR FRIENDS, THE PILGRIMS

The Puritans were not the only Christians that came to America. On the sea passage with them were other Christians on a mission. These fellow travelers, the ones who could truly be called Pilgrims, were similar in Christian devotion to the Puritans. But these Pilgrim friends did not have the Puritan zeal for hammering out a Christian church-state system. They merely saw themselves as sojourners in the land, travelers on a pilgrim pathway leading onwards into history towards a glorious destiny. They were glad to see their Puritan friends making the effort to set up a Christian nation. In fact many of the Pilgrims would join the ranks of the Puritans at the signing of their covenant on board the Mayflower and later as they went on to tame the wilderness together. The Pilgrims would benefit greatly from living alongside their politically active Christian companions. But for the Pilgrims politics was not their main burden or motivation. They believed that no matter what system was adopted a society was only as good as it's people. As evangelicals they were going to 'go with the flow' as much as their consciences allowed. But there was no doubt that these people were different from the Puritans. Their motivation was the evangelical Fire for its own sake. They were out to spread the Light of the Gospel. Their passion was to see the indwelling Christ come into the hearts of men, women, and children. They longed to see Him do His marvelous work changing them from the inside out. This was their burden. It was to see the world changed one heart at a time. For the Pilgrims their social obligation was a simple one. They would pay their taxes, embrace their civic duties and be good citizens wherever they were. Their main agenda was to live a life of Christian witness before men. It was also to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. They were glad to be out there, sowing the seed God's Word. After all, wasn't this the original purpose of the Christian church?... For the Pilgrims this was their top priority....As for politics, wasn't Jesus Christ their coming Messiah? For the Pilgrims the hope of seeing a perfect government on earth in this present evil age was not a realistic one. If there was any 'kingdom of the church' to be set up then wouldn't Christ Himself bring it into being at the appropriate time? After His return in judgment and deliverance Jesus Himself would establish His Kingdom on earth. And He would achieve this when He returned at the end of this present age. At the set time He would judge the wicked and establish His glorious Millennial Kingdom. His reign upon the earth would last for a thousand years. ~Rev.20 For the Pilgrims these were fairly simple and straightforward observations which any diligent Christian could draw from the Holy Scriptures.

For the Puritans, however, this Pilgrim goal was not sufficient. They had a more complex and more earthy agenda to hammer out. For the Puritans, a Christian republic in the New World, a 'nation under God', was not just a religious pipedream. It was a very present necessity. If they were going to establish a new nation in the New World then they must stick together. Pilgrim separatism would not do. They had big plans for a big Christian nation...

In the early colonization of America the Puritans very nearly achieved the formation of that great theocratic society they had sought. The Massachusetts Bay colony and early English Puritan colonies of the New World were nearly all at that time very much coming to be a 'nation under God'. But could this theocratic society and the 'nation under God' be preserved? That was the burning question back then. And it remains so to this day.

THE AMERICAN PURITANS TODAY VS. THE SECULAR HUMANISTS

Nearly 400 years have now passed by since the Mayflower dropped anchor off Plymouth Rock. Alas, the moral decay and biblical apostasy in America, England and Europe is all too obvious. In the U.S. the secular humanists are coming to the fore. They have set forth an entirely secular agenda for America and the new world. They are now on the bridge of the Great American Ship of State, as it were, and they are about to take the helm. What is more, they have now barred the door to the modern day Puritans. In effect they have told American Christians to "check in your Christianity at the door. Don't bring it into the halls of government, or the town square, or the public school, or the workplace. You are free to practice your Christianity if you wish. But only in the church sanctuary on Sunday." This has incensed many American Christians from all denominations. The Puritans in today's America are the ones who feel particularly hurt in all this. They feel betrayed. They feel like they have been locked out of the society which they, with God's help, built. They fondly remember the Christian America that was. Then they look around and see their nation and their children rejecting God, and they weep.

Secularists in America, like the Puritans, can also be traced back to the early beginnings of the New World. Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and other leaders coming out of the so-called 'Enlightenment' and 'Age of Reason' had little time for the God of the Pilgrims and Puritans. They had a humanistic and rationalistic dream for America. The movement for a secular New World was also being driven by a secret Masonic/Illuminati agenda putting key men in high places to enact changes slowly and in little steps. We cannot put too much emphasis on this but a secret agenda for a secular, (or pseudo-Christian), New World Order was there right at the very beginnings of America. It remains with us to the present day. The Masonic symbol indicating the plan can be seen on the U.S. dollar bill. The pyramid, symbolizing this great effort to forge a New World Order, even has the number 1776 written on the foundation stone....

Have the secularists really taken over in America? Some would say they have, or that they are about to take over. The cultural milieu is now predominantly pagan. And the dream for the future of the New World is no longer a Christian dream. Secularists are moving to have the words, "under God" plucked from the Pledge of Allegiance and the words, "In God we trust" struck from the 5 cent coins. They too have big dreams for America and the New World....

THE FUTURE GREAT DANGER FOR THE PURITANS

There is no doubt that the overt plan of secularists is to promote a secular nation and a secular 'global village' or New World Order. But this is not a real danger for true Christians. They understand that this must come to pass at some point in time. They know all about it. And they prepare their hearts for it and for the witness it will call for. It is no different to what our brothers and sisters face in the persecuted church abroad.

Christian believers do better under persecution in China than we do in the West living in materialistic affluence. If secularism is not the problem then what is the real danger? The real danger for the Puritans is compromise. This is essentially what Balaak told Balaam. The dark powers cannot touch the people of God. Not unless they step over the line and compromise with the powers of this world. The dark powers intend to draw the Puritans away from their focus on Christ. They want to entice them into a meaningless dialogue, then into a political turmoil that achieves nothing, and finally into a hopeless battle that ends in defeat....Will they eventually succeed in drawing the Puritans into that epic future mega deal of the end-time? God forbid! Let the Puritans rejoin the ranks of the Pilgrims if that offer ever comes before them. A great political disaster awaits the unwary people of God. - Dan.9:27....

What do the 'Christian Right', the Puritans of today, think of all this? Well this is what is a real concern to the Pilgrims who are watching all this unfold. Their Puritan friends do not seem to be aware of the danger of spiritual compromise. Of course they are quite rightly very exercised about the onward march of secular humanism in America. In fact they are extremely angry about it. They see this as a betrayal of the true Christian intent of the American founding Fathers. They say that the true destiny of America has been hijacked. Now, with the nation coming into pagan hands a new course has been set.

The Puritans of today are indeed rising up against this threat. They are sending out a clarion call from the pulpits, on Christian radio and television and also on the internet. The word is that 'unless Christians in America 'rise up and retake the system' we are all lost' They are responding prayerfully and politically to the onslaught of secular and pagan darkness. They are pouring into the breaches. They are raising their voices in the political and judicial arenas in a heroic attempt to stem the flow of this incoming evil tide... What will happen to the Puritans? That remains to be seen. They will most assuredly come to the greatest trial they have ever faced....

PURITAN PRIORITIES. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM? OR PERSONAL DEVOTION AND THE GOSPEL OUTREACH?

No one doubts the raw power of Christian America. But let us take stock of devotional matters for a moment.

If the Puritan media spokespersons of today are directing their concern outwardly towards others in the political and judicial areas are they also directing that same critical eye inwardly toward themselves? Are they judging themselves? Do they critique their own Christian family in America with the same zeal that they judge others? Are they looking at their own hearts? Is their own house, the Church in America, in order? This is where the Puritan family begins to get a little quiet. Their original goal was to purify the Church of England. Back in the late 1500's when the Puritans emerged, they had wanted to 'purify' this new national church which King Henry had established for them. They wanted to bring it into line with Biblical Christianity, free of the trappings of the medieval church from which it had come. Back in those days they demonstrated a determined zeal to reform their church.

If the so-called 'Christian right' in America are today's Puritans then they may be slipping a little. Because it seems that they see the enemy as being **outside** the church. The boogey-man is 'out there' in the secular realm rather than inside the church in the spiritual realm. It would appear that today's Puritans may have lost some of that classic Puritan capacity for inner reflection and self examination. Issues of inner holiness before God are not considered as important nowadays as the political agenda. Their focus is mainly on wrestling with those secular dragons out there in the outside world. The fight against 'those secular humanists out there' has become more important than attending to their personal walk in devotion to God. This is a cause for some concern. Why has this happened?

Listening to Christian radio and Christian television it seems that amidst all the political activity the perfecting of the Church in America in Christian doctrine and practice has not been a priority. This essential part of the divinely appointed Puritan task has been toned down. Is this a result of the dominant role of the 'electronic church' and their marketing of the message for the masses? They did this of course for good business reasons. To stay on the air they have to maintain their popularity, and they must do so in an increasingly profane church 'body politic'. Here the big church and big Christian media monopolies have been handed an impossible task. They must maintain at least the appearance of being a company of saints committed to walk in holiness. As evangelicals and fundamentalists they have always upheld in the pulpit the necessity of a life 'separated unto God'. But as an ally to a bank or a political party they they must be 'practical' here. As a matter of political pragmatism they must not become too 'exclusive' lest they 'lose the consensus' and their political pull in the halls of temporal power. The big religious systems, Puritan systems notwithstanding, have found it necessary to 'tone down' their exclusivity in devotion to Christ, lest they lose what united front they have been able to cobble together. Like the ecumenical Christians who have already compromised themselves with the worldly powers, (and left wing politics), the Puritans are heading down the very same path. They are talking a lot lately about 'unity'. But they are not defining who that unity is with or where that covenanting might lead the Puritan branch of the evangelical family.

Nevertheless, these are good businessmen. They know that the widest possible inclusiveness means the more contributions will be sent in and the hence best bottom line. They depend on these contributions to stay on the airwaves. As we see them today it would seem that the goals and the passion of the Puritans have not changed all that much in the past 400 years. Their quest for a 'pure Christianity' and a 'holy nation' has not changed since they signed the original compact on board the Mayflower. They still fully intend to see that America becomes a 'nation under God'.

THE PURITAN SPIRIT AND THE 'LAST CRUSADE': THE NEW MILITANCY EMERGING IN THE CHURCH.

Here is the thesis of this article. That same Puritan spirit seen in England in the days of the English Civil War is still with us today in America. Their Puritan zeal is still just as fiery hot. Just a few years ago the so called "religious right" impeached President Bill Clinton for 'moral failure'. I submit to you that once again this was the Puritans at work. Such a thing would never happen in Europe or any other nation in the world for that matter. Christian activists are on the warpath. These Christians are angry! Road rage is now being superceded by religious rage. In many of the churches the preaching has become strident, the drums of war are in the sanctuary and 'warrior praise' goes up before the altar... Church services in many quarters are becoming loud and raucous. Christians are being drawn back into the mode and ethic of the warrior monks seen during the crusades. Is this the "last crusade" being preached? It is the contention of this writer that Puritan Christians are alive and well in America today. They just do not wear the name 'Puritan' on their sleeves anymore than their cousins from the former British Empire would own the name 'Victorian'. They would say that the age of the Puritans is over. Nevertheless those Puritan goals have not been reached. Not by a long shot. And the Puritan agenda is still quite evident in society today. It has not changed in 400 years. They are still totally committed to bringing in a pure Christian society upon this earth by faith and by the hard work Puritans are renowned for.

How are Puritans different from their Pilgrim brothers and sisters? Well for one thing they are not too impressed with the call for Christians to 'turn the other cheek' or to just 'take up their cross and follow Christ'. Nor do you hear Puritans speak much of 'entering into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings'. They are happy to see their task accomplished in the holy flows of Christian ministry yes, but they are also willing to use force to achieve their goals if necessary. They are not ones to talk much about 'the patience of the saints'. Nor are they inclined to wait around for the return of the Messiah to see His Kingdom established. They want it now! Even if their task becomes a global undertaking our Puritan friends are prepared to tackle it head on. Not happy with the quiet evangelism of the heart and the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by missionary activity and support of native missionaries abroad, their focus is on America. They want to set something in motion that is more than just the Gospel outreach. They want to control the whole church-state system, not only nationally but on an international scale... **52**

Will the Puritans take government or corporate assistance for their ministries if it is offered? That remains to be seen. But like the Jesuits of the older church or the British Victorians they do believe that with a powerful church-state collusion they can bring in the "Kingdom Now" much more quickly and decisively than their missionary outreaches can do it. They will claim it by faith, champion their authoritarian church leadership, and lay hold of their earthly power under God. To their mind the Christian church has been given the dominion in this age. So they fully intend to be the ones to bring it in. What is more, they plan to wrap this all up **before** the second coming of Messiah. What Christians need to do, (they say), is to 'rise up' and 'seize the moment'. This dominion, they truly believe, is theirs for the taking. They consider it to be their "manifest destiny".

No one doubts their sincerity. And no one can deny that the Puritans are leaving their mark on English and American history. The Puritan dream continues. We see it pass on from the days of Oliver Cromwell, and the rise of English parliament in the 1600's and the English Civil War. The dream of Christian dominion in this present age did not die in England with Cromwell. It came over to America by ship with the Puritans. Its first document was penned on board the Mayflower. It was there that many Pilgrims joined the ranks of the Puritans. It was then, and is now, a dream of the Kingdom of God on earth. Can it be established in the New World under a God fearing church-state leadership. This is an interesting question. Many Puritans currently believe this can and will be done... They believe that the Kingdom of God is in the church now. This present church age is the millennium (or so they believe). The Kingdom of God is due to be fully established here on earth by the church and **before** Messiah returns. This is the crux of Dominion Theology. Dominionists also believe that God is finished with the Jewish nation. According to them, all the covenants and promises God had with Israel have now passed on to the church....

THE FUTURE OF THE PURITANS.

What lies out there in the future for the Puritans? Certainly they will not let go of their dream of an earthly 'nation under God'. Surely they will never compromise their beliefs in the exclusivity of the Christian faith as the ecumenicals have done. But we can be sure that this will be precisely what they will be asked to do. Being the politically engaged Christians that they are, is there a very real danger that they might enter into negotiations for a leading role in the emerging New World Order?... Will they turn from their politicking and take the path of quiet witness? Will they join the Pilgrims on the highway of holiness?

This is an interesting question. After all, many of the Pilgrims crossed over and signed on with the Puritans when they signed the Mayflower Compact did they not? Will the Puritans cross over and join the Pilgrims next time? Or will they take up the sword and adopt a patriotic military stance against their future arch enemy?...As for the Puritans we should harbor no doubts about their continuing zeal. Nor should we doubt their willingness to finish the course set before them. Right from their early beginnings they regarded their life in God as a great adventure. It would seem that the Puritans are already up onstage. And in some future year they will come to the glorious climax of their history. And there they will embrace their destiny....

Do all evangelical Christians go along with the Puritan dream of a global church-state colossus bringing in the Kingdom of God? No they do not. Apart from the liberal Christian and ecumenical church tradition, (which we shall not discuss here), there is another group of evangelicals who have no faith whatsoever in any deals the established church might make with the princes of this world. They are especially wary of any covenant that looks even remotely like being the end-time 7-year deal that the angel Gabriel told Daniel about in Daniel 9:27. They place their Christian zeal first and foremost in the spreading of the Gospel. The support of missions abroad is the main focus of their activism. They are also prepared to make whatever peaceful witness they are called upon to make, even if it costs them their very lives. These are a group of Christians we might call the Pilgrims. Pilgrims agree with their Puritan brethren that the present state of western Christendom is perilously compromised. However, they would not go along with their Puritan/crusader course of political action. Not at all....”

(end of quotes from)

PURITAN HISTORY; PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

*An essay by Gavin Finley M.D.
September 2003*

There are two brands of Christianity in America today. They are (1) “the Puritan way” that is embraced by the majority of American Christians and (2) “the Pilgrim way” followed by the minority. A.W. Tozer once said, “Do not be fooled by the majority, for history proves that the majority has always been wrong.” The story of the children of Israel in the wilderness exemplifies that point. The majority of Christians in this country are being swept up in the fervor of modern-day Puritanism. However, the Word of God will show you clearly that the foundation of Puritanism is not pure religion.

The apostle James tells us that the mark of “pure and undefiled religion” is (1) “to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and (2) “to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jm. 1:27). The Puritan pathway is one of seeking to “remove the spots from the world” while the focus of the Pilgrim pathway is “to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” These are not the same objectives. The first is futile ideology while the latter is perfect theology.

The Pilgrim pathway can be likened to the man Jesus singled out as “a wise man” who built his house upon the rock (Mat. 7:24-25). Jesus clearly identifies “the rock” as consisting of “these sayings of Mine.” Then He contrasts this wise man to a “foolish man” who built his house on a foundation of “sand.” Obviously, the sand represents the “sayings of men” that are opposed to the sayings of Christ. God has given us His Word so that we could make a clear distinction between “the sayings of Christ” and “the sayings of men.” The apostle John clearly warns the believer, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone into the world.” (1 Jn. 4:1).

John went on to say that, “they are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world...We are of God. He who knows God hears us, he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 Jn. 4:5-6). It is my firm conviction that “the Pilgrim way” is the spirit of truth but “the Puritan way” is the spirit of error. Puritanism is misguided zeal just as it was for the Jewish zealots in Paul’s day of whom he warned, “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). Modern-day Puritans such as brother Gavin describes in his article are full of zeal but, we must judge, not according to knowledge. Among Jesus’ sayings is, “My Kingdom is not of this world...My Kingdom is not from here” (Jn.18:36). Yet, the modern-day Puritans are pursuing madly after an earthly kingdom to make it into the Kingdom of God just as did their Puritan forefathers. Is this “building on a rock” – “the sayings of Christ?” No, it is building upon “the sayings of man” – “sand!” what will happen to this “house?” Jesus said, “...it fell. And great was its fall” (Mat. 7:26).

Consider the Puritan cause against abortion raging for over the last three decades with little or no progress. Have we learned nothing from the futile attempt of previous “Puritans” who brought about the legislation of the prohibition era in the 20’s? What was the result of “banning liquor by legislation?” It produced boot-leg liquor and fueled the coffers of the Mafia. If the Puritans of today could reverse “Roe vs. Wade” by legislation, what would be the result? Abortion would go underground and would kill mothers as well as babies. We cannot legislate morality on immorality! We cannot “remove the spots from the world.” Rather, we are to “keep ourselves unspotted from the world.” Paul tells us, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Rom. 12:2). We are not to “conform the world” but rather not “be conformed to it.”

The Puritans want the unalienable rights of “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” in an earthy kingdom. This is sand theology. The Pilgrim way is to pursue the Kingdom of God in its present manifestation of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). It is the Christian who “serves Christ in these things that is acceptable to God” (Rom. 14:18).

There is another contrast that Jesus makes between “the wise and the foolish” other than what is stated in Matthew Chapter 7. It is in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Mat. 25:1-13). Jesus states that He will take the wise virgins and leave the foolish virgins behind. The Book of Proverbs makes great comparisons between what constitutes “the wise and the foolish.” Consider this footnote from the Amplified Bible pertaining to the meaning of “a fool”:

“the word “fool” in the Old Testament seldom, if ever, is used to describe the feeble-minded, imbecile, idiot, or moron. Rather, it always has within it the meaning of a rebel, especially against God and the laws of order, decency and justice...”

Certainly we cannot accuse most modern-day Puritans of breaking God's laws of order, decency and justice. But are they not rebelling at other portions of God's Word such as pursuing an earthly kingdom in spite of the otherwise clear sayings of Christ? If they continue to rebel, God may do to them what He did to Israel, "...and He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" (Psm.106:15). Perhaps God will leave behind the foolish (Puritan) virgins for the "earthly kingdom" that so consumes their hearts!

Unless modern-day Puritans repent of such ideology and become biblically-based "Pilgrims", they are in danger of becoming just as duped as were the German Christians who politically helped Hitler rise to power at the expense of the Jews. If you read brother Gavin's article carefully you know that he, like me, is warning believers in this country that America is the New Roman Empire rather than the New Israel that the early Puritans believed it to be. If the politically-based Puritans of today are not careful, they may be involved in propelling to political power the last great Caesar of the coming revived-Roman Empire!

I pray that this article has impacted you the reader sufficiently enough to see the dangers of embracing this political/social gospel. But you may say, "But everybody I know that is a Christian is embracing this as the gospel that God wants to be preached in America". Beware of what the multitudes are doing. Consider these wise words from the Late A. W. Tozer:



**"DO NOT BE FOOLED BY THE MAJORITY,
FOR HISTORY PROVES THAT
THE MAJORITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN WRONG."**

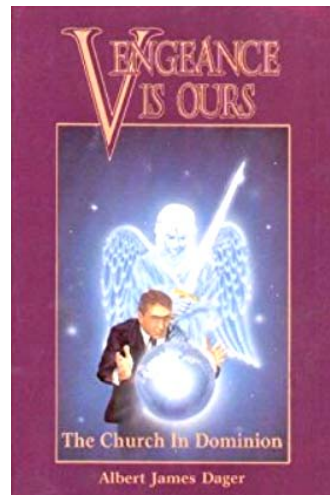
A. W. Tozer

Let us now move on to the second of Satan's subtle substitutes for the gospel, "the Kingdom Now" gospel.

Dominion theology ("Kingdom Now") is predicated upon three basic beliefs:

- 1) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve;
- 2) The Church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan;
- 3) Jesus cannot or will not return until the Church has taken dominion by gaining control of the earth's governmental and social institutions.

(Albert James Dager)



(Recommended reading)



THE “KINGDOM NOW” GOSPEL

As we did with our previous counterfeit gospel, let us begin our look at this second manifestation of the counterfeit American gospel with a definition of

THE “KINGDOM NOW” GOSPEL

(Movement also is known as “Dominionism”, “Third Wave”, “Latter Rain”, “Kingdom Now”, “Joel’s Army”, “Manifest Sons of God”, “New Apostolic Reformation”)

“Kingdom Now theology is a branch of Dominion Theology which has had a strong following within Pentecostalism. Kingdom Now theology states that although Satan has been in control of the world since the Fall, God is looking for people who will help Him take back dominion. Those who yield themselves to the authority of God’s newly appointed apostles and prophets will take control of the kingdoms of this world, being defined as all social institutions: the “kingdom” of education, the “kingdom” of science, the “kingdom” of the arts, etc, The practical theology that builds a foundation of social transformation, is called “Kingdom Now” theology:

“Christians have an obligation, a mandate, a commission, a holy responsibility to reclaim the land for Jesus Christ—to have dominion in civil structures, just as in every other aspect of life and godliness. ... But it is dominion we are after. Not just a voice. ... its primary intent is the conquest of the land—of men, families, institutions, bureaucracies, courts, and governments for the Kingdom of Christ.” (The Changing of the Guard: Biblical Principles for Political Action)

“Dominionists celebrate Christian nationalism, in that they believe that the United States once was, and should once again be, a Christian nation. Dominionists promote religious supremacy, insofar as they generally do not respect the equality of other religions, or even other versions of Christianity. Dominionists endorse theocratic visions, insofar as they believe that the Ten Commandments, or “biblical law,” should be the foundation of American law, and that the U.S. Constitution should be seen as a vehicle for implementing Biblical principles

(Frederick Clarkson- author of Eternal Hostility)

Below is a well-written article from Mclean Bible Church that articulates the inherent danger Christians face from the "Kingdom Now" gospel. This movement is not new, but rather has been around since the 70's in one form or another. Take the time to read this article as it will help you to understand the danger:

"What is Kingdom Theology?"

"At its most basic definition, kingdom theology would be the part of theology that studies the Kingdom of God in all its many different aspects, manifestations and elements. In that sense kingdom theology is a legitimate and beneficial part of theology as a whole. But there are also theological "movements" or beliefs that are sometimes labeled as "kingdom theology," so one must be careful to understand how the term is being used.

One type of kingdom theology that would be considered within the realm of biblical or orthodox Christian doctrine is what is sometimes referred to as the "already but not yet" view of the kingdom of God which simply means that the "end times" began with the ascension of Christ into heaven. It is also called "inaugurated eschatology" because the life, death and resurrection of Christ are seen as inaugurating, or ushering in, the beginning of the last days. Those who hold this view believe that the Kingdom of God is already here but has not yet been fully consummated. This type of kingdom theology divides human history into two broad periods of time. First is the "present evil age" which started with the fall of man and will last until the Second Coming of Christ. This time period is marked by sin, sickness, death, disease, war and poverty. In it Satan is seen to be ruling the world and the world's system as seen in verses like Ephesians 2:2 and 6:12, among many others. (Of course we also know from Scripture that Satan's rule is limited to only what God allows him to do.) The second age is the "age to come" where the kingdom of God rules an age of eternal life, freedom from sin, sickness and suffering. It will be a time of universal peace on earth and God's absolute sovereign reign over all of creation.

Proper kingdom theology teaches that both ages are in play today. In other words, while Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of God we still suffer from the consequences of living in a fallen world with sin, sickness and disease. So while the Kingdom of God is already here and Christ is already ruling from heaven, the full benefits of the Kingdom have not yet been ushered in. Because the Kingdom of God is still "not yet" here in all of its glory and power, Christians still suffer sickness and death. Although we have eternal life we still live in a world of sin with all the sickness, pain and suffering that brings. Until Christ returns again we will not experience the fullness of the kingdom of God in all aspects and areas. Where the waters start getting muddy among adherents to a kingdom theology point of view is in regards to exactly how much and to what degree the power of the Kingdom of God in the age to come is being manifested today. (The above position is the view held by Mclean Bible Church.)

Improper kingdom theology became a popular teaching among some Vineyard churches and was embraced by charismatic leaders such as John Wimber and others. A misunderstanding or distortion of kingdom theology has influenced or led to many different variations and movements such as the Latter Rain Movement. The charismatic leaders of these groups do not see the distinction between the two ages or how the Kingdom of God is manifested differently now than it will be after Christ's return. This leads to many outlandish and often unbiblical claims concerning miracles, a Christian's ability to live totally free from sickness and disease, and all types of other errors.

Taking the biblical concept of kingdom theology to unbiblical extremes, some of these leaders began to make claims that the miracles that modern day "prophets and apostles" were performing were greater than anything done by the original apostles. This erroneous teaching has spawned a whole movement of unbiblical and sometimes heretical teachings. The teaching also became popular among "Word of Faith" teachers and spawned related but heretical views such as the Kingdom Now Theology and Dominion Theology.

The basic premise of the kingdom theology movement is that the Kingdom of God is in effect now, and certainly that is a true statement. God is reigning and His Kingdom is in place as it always has been. God is the sovereign ruler over all things and we know from Scripture that Jesus Christ is "at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56) and that He is "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Where some of the proponents of the more extreme kingdom theology movements begin to go wrong is that they believe and teach that all the Old and New Testament promises and descriptions of the Kingdom of God directly apply to Christians today. Therefore they teach that salvation also brings with it total and complete healing of all diseases and problems. Then when that world view does not match with reality they make the healing dependent on man's faith and not God's power or reign.

Another teaching that is somewhat common among those that take Kingdom Now theology beyond what the Bible teaches is that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ has restored the earth to what it was before the fall and that man's rule and reign over the earth now is the same as it was for Adam and Eve before they sinned. What those who embrace this type of extreme theology fail to recognize is the "now but not yet" aspect of God's Kingdom. As John Frame writes, "We live in tension between this age and the age to come. In Christ, the age to come has already arrived, but the present age, dominated by sin, will not expire until He returns." While many kingdom promises do apply to Christians today, many still await a future and more complete fulfillment after Christ's Second Coming.

Where some who teach kingdom theology begin to get off base biblically is that they try to appropriate and apply all promises and verses that pertain to the kingdom of God to Christians today and fail to see the future, fuller fulfillment that is to come. Kingdom Now or Dominion Theology teachers try to apply Old Testament verses to Christians today in a way that cannot be done through sound exegesis of the passages. Like most false teachers, they selectively quote from Scripture and take verses out of their context to make application that is not supported from the text.

Extreme Kingdom Now theology has many problems. First of all it diminishes the need for the return of Christ and what the Bible teaches that He will accomplish when He comes again. After all, if the full Kingdom of God is available and in effect for Christians today, why does Christ need to return at all? Second is that Kingdom Now theology exalts man and makes God dependent on man and his faith in order for God to accomplish His will. God's rule is diminished and His sovereignty is attacked by many Kingdom Now teachers. Man controls his own destiny through his words and the power of his faith. Starting with the false teaching that God "lost control" of the earth when Adam and Eve sinned, extreme adherents to kingdom theology believe that God has been looking for a "covenant people" who will take control of the earth back from Satan. Through the power of their faith and by following "last days apostles and prophets," the church will win back dominion over the kingdoms of this world.

These kingdoms extend to all areas of life including sickness, disease and financial problems. They also include such things as education, government, science, etc. Those who embrace this teaching are looking forward to the time when they, as God's covenant people, take dominion over every aspect of the world ruling and reigning for God. They believe this will be achieved as believers use supernatural gifts given by the Holy Spirit. This particular type of kingdom theology has given rise to many well-known false prophets who have made all kinds of wild claims and prophecies only to be proven wrong time and time again.

Again it is important to recognize that kingdom theology, when correctly understood, is certainly within the realm of evangelical Christianity and those who teach it and embrace it can have sound biblical reasons for doing so. The danger, like many doctrines or theological movements, comes from those who distort the doctrine or take the theological construct to unbiblical places. Proponents and teachers of kingdom theology can run the gamut from being good sound biblical teachers to those who are misguided but not totally unbiblical, all the way to outright heresy. So one should be very careful to avoid broad-brushing the entire movement and instead judge each teacher or church by comparing what they are teaching to Scripture."

(From: <http://www.gotquestions.org>)

HAVE NOT WE SEEN THIS BEFORE?

This counterfeit Kingdom Now gospel has common ground with the previous Political/social gospel we examined. How so? You will remember that we established the religion of our founding fathers was Deism, a false brand of Christianity in that it transfers the power and authority of God the creator over to His creation, namely man.

Under Deism, man is delegated to make all the decisions since the God of Deism takes no active part in his creation.

DE-ISM, de iz-um, n. (Fr. deisme, < L. Deus, God.) The doctrine or creed of a deist.-de-ist, n. (Fr. deiste.) One who believes in the existence of a God or supreme being but denies revealed religion basing his belief on the light of nature and reason; one who believes in a God who created the universe but takes no part in its operations –

In light of that, consider now what is being espoused by the Kingdom Now teachers. Here is a quote from one of its leading advocates. I will leave out his name in case that he repents of this heresy:

“IN MATTHEW 24:14, JESUS CLEARLY SAYS THAT HE CANNOT RETURN FOR HIS BRIDE UNTIL SHE HAS DEMONSTRATED THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM TO ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH.

UNTIL THE CHURCH CAN DEMONSTRATE THE ALTERNATIVE KINGDOM, JESUS CANNOT COME AGAIN. GOD NO LONGER HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SEND CHRIST BACK TO EARTH, BECAUSE HE WILL NOT CIRCUMVENT HIS ETERNAL PLAN.

WHILE NO MAN KNOWS THE DAY OR THE HOUR, I CAN SAY WITH THE AUTHORITY OF GOD THAT CHRIST CANNOT AND WILL NOT COME BACK UNTIL WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM TO THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH.

THAT TASK DEMANDS A MATURE CHURCH, WHICH WILL HAVE BECOME AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD.

THAT IS WHAT THE CHURCH IS ALL ABOUT AND JESUS CHRIST’S RETURN IS UP TO US.”

Do you see the parallels between these two counterfeits? In both cases authority has been transferred from God Almighty to man! God is no longer in charge! It is up to man as to when Christ can return! Both of these false gospels promote role reversal. Kingdom authority is now in the hands of the subjects of the kingdom. Man is in charge of the kingdom-not the King! Wow! What a deceptive heresy the people of God have embraced! Did not Jesus tell His disciples just the opposite?:

“...THEY ASKED HIM, SAYING, ‘LORD, WILL YOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL? AND HE SAID TO THEM, ‘IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO KNOW THE TIMES OR THE SEASONS WHICH THE FATHER HAS PUT IN HIS OWN AUTHORITY.’”

TRUE PROPHET OF CHRISTIANITY:

**“...THEY ASKED HIM,
SAYING, ‘LORD, WILL YOU
AT THIS TIME RESTORE THE
KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?
AND HE SAID TO THEM,
‘IT IS NOT FOR
YOU TO KNOW THE TIMES
OR THE SEASONS WHICH
THE FATHER HAS PUT IN
HIS OWN AUTHORITY.”**

FALSE PROPHET OF DOMINIONISM:

**...GOD NO LONGER HAS THE
AUTHORITY TO SEND CHRIST BACK
TO EARTH,
BECAUSE HE WILL NOT CIRCUMVENT
HIS ETERNAL PLAN....I CAN SAY
WITH THE AUTHORITY OF GOD THAT
CHRIST CANNOT AND WILL NOT
COME BACK UNTIL WE HAVE
DEMONSTRATED THE GOSPEL OF THE
KINGDOM...JESUS CHRIST’S RETURN
IS UP TO US.”**

Compare Jesus’ statement above with this false prophet’s statement that “God no longer has the authority”... “He will not circumvent His eternal plan.” Actually, it is true that God will not circumvent His eternal plan. The return of Christ has been pre-planned before the foundation of the world just as was His death pre-determined (Gal. 4:4, Luke 13:32). To claim that Jesus’ return is up to us and our feeble attempt to establish the kingdom of God on earth is blatantly false.

Jesus spoke of a dispensation known as the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24). Paul spoke of a dispensation called the fullness of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25). In Ephesians, Paul speaks of a specific dispensation called the fullness of the times that will determine the return of Christ:

**“...IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES HE
MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST,
BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH...”** Eph 1:10

If you study the prophetic Word, you will find that all the times and seasons as well as all authority to control those events remains in the hands of God. It is according to God’s time table and not man’s. God is not waiting for man to achieve what only God can do Himself. The Kingdom Now message thrives upon willful ignorance of the prophetic Word which Peter tells us is a light shining in a dark place that we would do well to heed (2 Pet. 1:19). Consider also Peter’s admonition and cure for the scoffers who would come ridiculing the promise of His coming:

**“THAT YOU MAY BE MINDFUL OF THE WORDS WHICH WERE SPOKEN
BEFORE BY THE HOLY PROPHETS... KNOWING THIS FIRST:
THAT SCOFFERS WILL COME IN THE LAST DAYS... SAYING,
‘WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?... ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS
THEY WERE FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION.”** 2 Pet. 3:2-4

Kingdom Now Dominionism thrives on modern-day prophets with a different message than the holy prophets of whom Peter speaks. One consistent theme of these false prophets centers upon the rapture, the promise of His coming for His people. According to the Dominionist, there isn’t going to be a rapture. What they present instead is a glorious triumphant church that takes over the kingdoms of this world and then hands them over to Jesus when He eventually is “allowed” to return by this now triumphant church.

“A GLORIOUS TRIUMPHANT CHURCH THAT TAKES OVER THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD IN THE TRIBULATION.” REALLY?



“HE (ANTICHRIST)...SHALL PERSECUTE THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH... THEN THE SAINTS SHALL BE GIVEN INTO HIS HAND FOR A TIME, AND TIMES, AND HALF A TIME (3.5 YRS.)” Dan. 7:25

“...YET FOR MANY DAYS THEY SHALL FALL BY SWORD AND FLAME, BY CAPTIVITY AND PLUNDERING...TO REFINE THEM, PURGE THEM, AND MAKE THEM WHITE, UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END; BECAUSE IT IS STILL FOR THE APPOINTED TIME.

THEN THE KING (STILL ANTICHRIST) SHALL DO ACCORDING TO HIS WILL: HE SHALL EXALT AND MAGNIFY HIMSELF ABOVE EVERY GOD, SHALL SPEAK BLASPHEMIES AGAINST THE GOD OF GODS, AND SHALL PROSPER TILL THE WRATH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED; FOR WHAT HAS BEEN DETERMINED SHALL BE DONE.”

Dan. 11:33-36

What you have just read is prophecy from one of the mouths of the holy prophets that Peter tells us to be mindful of as an antidote against all the last day scoffers that speak against the promise of His coming.

It is the tribulation saints (Jew and Gentile converts) that are taken captive by Antichrist and his kingdom rather than the reverse as presented by the Dominionists. It will be after the return of Christ that the “kingdoms of this world” become the kingdoms of Christ. First must come the wrath of God that has been determined. It will span the last three and a half years of the tribulation and that is why Jesus told His disciples to pray that they be counted worthy to escape all these terrible prophesied events that will befall all who dwell on the earth:

“BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT DAY COME UPON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. FOR IT WILL COME AS A SNARE ON ALL THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.”

Luke 21:34-36

“FOR THEN THERE WILL BE GREAT TRIBULATION, SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD UNTIL THIS TIME, NO, NOR EVER SHALL BE. AND UNLESS THOSE DAYS WERE SHORTENED, NO FLESH WOULD BE SAVED; BUT FOR THE ELECT'S SAKE THOSE DAYS WILL BE SHORTENED.”

Matt 24:21-22



The boastful, but prophetically ignorant, Dominionists indeed scoff at the idea of a promised rapture. They synically call those who embrace this promise of Jesus to be “escapists”. However, isn’t that exactly what Jesus told His disciples to pray, that they be “counted worthy to escape all these things”? (Luke 21:36).

The tribulation is part of the Day of the Lord, a dispensation in which God will systematically pour out His wrath on His enemies. It is a day of severe judgment. You do not want to be found among the foolish virgins who shall be left behind because they were not found ready to escape (see Matt. 25:1-13).

If you read Jesus’ seven prophetic letters to His churches, you will find that He is not promising an unconditional guarantee of being raptured simply because of being born again. Actually, He is threatening the unfaithful segments of His church with being left behind. The Dominionist acts like it is a special privilege and honor to be left behind as God’s agents of faith and power. God help us all to hear what the Spirit has said to the churches!

THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA:

“...I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT... SHE DID NOT REPENT. I WILL CAST HER AND THOSE WHO COMMIT ADULTERY WITH HER INTO GREAT TRIBULATION, UNLESS THEY REPENT... AND I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH. AND ALL THE CHURCHES WILL KNOW THAT I AM HE WHO SEARCHES THE MINDS AND HEARTS...” Rev. 2:21-23



THE CHURCH OF SARDIS:

“...I HAVE NOT FOUND YOUR WORKS PERFECT BEFORE GOD... REPENT. THEREFORE IF YOU WILL NOT WATCH, I WILL COME UPON YOU AS A THIEF, AND YOU WILL NOT KNOW WHAT HOUR I WILL COME UPON YOU. YOU HAVE A FEW... WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS; AND THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE, FOR THEY ARE WORTHY.” Rev. 3:2-4

THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA:

“I KNOW YOUR WORKS... SO THEN, BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKEWARM... I WILL SPEW YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH... AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN. THEREFORE... REPENT.” Rev. 3:15-19 excerpts

We need only to compare the above with what Jesus promises to His faithful church:

THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA:

“I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.... BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN.” Rev. 3:8-11 excerpts





"I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.... BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN."

Rev. 3:8-11 excerpts

The reward of Jesus to His faithful people is **NOT** to be left behind for the tribulation as the Dominionist state to be God's will for them, but rather to be found worthy to escape all these things. This is in perfect harmony with what Jesus said in Luke 21 about "being found worthy to escape".

Consider as well the apostle Paul as he speaks about the day of the Lord's wrath. The context begins in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 in which Paul speaks the well-known verses about the promised rapture of the faithful. Chapter 5 is a continuation of his thoughts as he begins with the word "But":

"BUT CONCERNING THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS, (OF THE RAPTURE) BRETHREN... YOU KNOW PERFECTLY THAT THE DAY OF THE LORD SO COMES AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT... BUT YOU, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF... FOR GOD DID NOT APPOINT US TO WRATH, BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST..."

1 Thess. 5:1-9 excerpts



I think we can see that both Jesus and Paul encourages the saints with an escapist mentality concerning the Day of the Lord. I plead with you that you do not embrace the error of the Kingdom Now/Dominion Theology. It feeds a spirit of pride and arrogance. Its roots spring out of the erroneous faith for prosperity gospel. It is a man-centered gospel whose thrust is "Are you not gods"? It has been around before under the title of "the Manifest Sons of God". The name changes, but the message does not. If you embrace it, you may well end up facing Antichrist instead of the blessed hope of seeing Jesus Christ face to face.

There is much more that I could say, but I will restrain myself as it is not the main thrust of this book.

DOMINIONISM: AN OLD STORY

**“...THEN THE SERPENT SAID TO THE WOMAN,
‘...GOD KNOWS THAT IN THE DAY YOU EAT
OF IT YOUR EYES WILL BE OPENED,
AND YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD,
KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL.’
SO WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THAT
THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD,
THAT IT WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES,
AND A TREE DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE,
SHE TOOK OF ITS FRUIT AND ATE.”**

Gen 3:4-6

The story of Dominionism goes all the way back to the Garden. Satan baited Eve with:

YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD...

YOU WILL BECOME WISE LIKE GOD...

YOU WILL KNOW GOOD AND EVIL LIKE GOD...

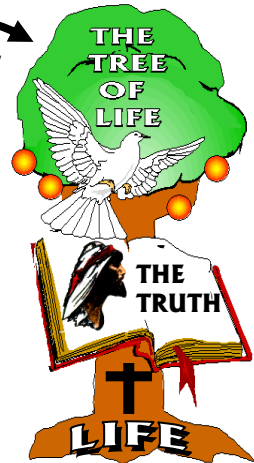


This “likeness of God” comes by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”, Satan’s chosen tree of habitation. As we all know, there were two trees in the Garden singled out by God, one with forbidden fruit and the other with permissible fruit. They were:



**“...THE TREE OF LIFE
WAS ALSO IN THE MIDST
OF THE GARDEN,
AND THE TREE OF
THE KNOWLEDGE OF
GOOD AND EVIL...
OF EVERY TREE OF
THE GARDEN YOU
MAY FREELY EAT;
BUT OF THE TREE OF
THE KNOWLEDGE OF
GOOD AND EVIL
YOU SHALL NOT EAT,
FOR IN THE DAY THAT
YOU EAT OF IT YOU
SHALL SURELY DIE.”**

Gen. 2:9,16,17



**“SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL...
I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING;
THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE...”**

Deut. 30:15,19

**“THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE. THAT WHICH IS DONE
IS WHAT WILL BE DONE. AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN...
IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US.”**

Ecc. 1:9-10

The reason there is nothing new under the sun is because the devil is an unchanging devil. He is today what he was in the beginning. Man was placed in the Garden and fallen Lucifer, the Serpent, went after man with his special kind of knowledge designed to make man equal to God. Today this deception is called Dominionism.



RELIGION BASED ON
DOMINION
 (MAN-CENTERED RULE ON EARTH)

- 1) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve...
- 2) The Church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan...
- 3) Jesus cannot or will not return until the Church has taken dominion by gaining control of the earth's governmental and social institutions...

RELIGION BASED ON
SUBMISSION
 (GOD-CENTERED RULE ON EARTH)

- 1) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve...
- 2) Jesus Christ is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan...
- 3) Jesus Christ will return to take dominion from fallen man and to rule over all the kingdoms of the earth with a rod of iron for a thousand years ...

I am amazed at how Satan can begin with a truth and quickly turn it into a lie. Man did have dominion while in the Garden, but there the truth ends. God is not waiting for man to re-establish dominion on earth before Jesus Christ can return. The return of Christ to earth will take place at the height of Antichrist's reign and dominion over the earth, not at the time of the church's dominion and reign! Remember Jesus' warning that it will take His return to shorten the days of Antichrist and save the world from his destructive power:



**"FOR THEN
 THERE WILL BE GREAT TRIBULATION,
 SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN
 SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD
 UNTIL THIS TIME, NO, NOR EVER SHALL BE.
 AND UNLESS THOSE DAYS WERE SHORTENED,
 NO FLESH WOULD BE SAVED;
 BUT FOR THE ELECT'S SAKE
 THOSE DAYS WILL BE SHORTENED."**

Matt 24:21-22

"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE. THAT WHICH IS DONE IS WHAT WILL BE DONE. AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN... IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US."

Ecc. 1:9-10

IN TIMES PAST

"...PROFESSING TO BE WISE... THEY CHANGED THE GLORY OF THE INCORRUPTIBLE GOD INTO AN IMAGE LIKE CORRUPTIBLE MAN... WHO EXCHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD FOR THE LIE, AND WORSHIPPED AND SERVED THE CREATURE RATHER THAN THE CREATOR..."
Romans 1:21-25



God's Word explicitly reveals that the past as well as the future contain a conflict between the truth and the lie.

IN THE FUTURE

"THE COMING OF THE LAWLESS ONE IS ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF SATAN... ...THOSE WHO PERISH, (DO SO) BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED...AND FOR THIS REASON, GOD WILL SEND THEM A STRONG DELUSION, THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE THE LIE, THAT THEY ALL MAY BE CONDEMNED WHO DID NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH..."
2 Thess. 2:9-12

Are we to ignorantly believe that the present in which we live is not also marked with this same conflict?

What has worked for Satan in the past is what will work for him in the future. We must not be naive to think that he is not actively applying his subtle substitute for the truth in the present. I believe the above is a prophetic warning from the apostle Paul as to how Satan is presently getting God's people to eat of the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil rather than being supernaturally sustained by The Tree of Life. The cure for such deception:

"AS YOU HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK IN HIM, ROOTED AND BUILT UP AND ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH, AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, ABOUNDING IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING. BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN, ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST."

Col. 2:6-8

Dominionism is Satan's present lie crafted for redeemed man to get him to trust in his own capabilities and strengths. It is a man-centered gospel of deception. It is Satan's subtle substitute for the truth that can only be found in Jesus Christ who is "the Truth" (Jn. 14:6).

RECOMMENDED READING:

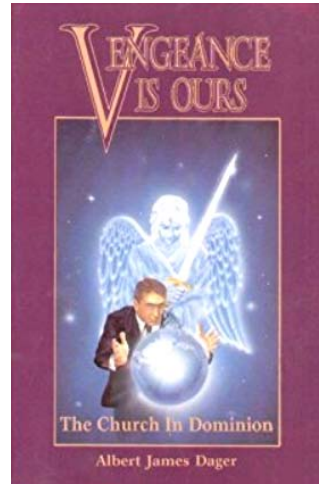
VENGEANCE IS OURS - The Church In Dominion

Albert James Dager

“A new militancy is stirring in the breasts of Christians in response to the evils that beset society. Tens of thousands attend spiritual warfare seminars hoping to learn how to take back from Satan what he has stolen. A call for vengeance on God’s enemies and a restructuring of society under God’s Law is being heard in ever-widening circles.

But is it the Christian’s responsibility to take control of society and to reconstruct it in accordance with God’s Law?

Vengeance Is Ours presents some startling revelations in this analysis of various forms of dominion theology from Manifested Sons of God to Christian Reconstructionism.”



Sword Publishers
P.O. box 290
Redmond, WA 98073-0290

James Dager appears to be the leading spokesman against the dangers of the rise of Dominionism in the church. Perhaps these excerpts from his book will entice you to read more of its inherent danger:

No Rapture

To the dominionists, the idea of the Lord returning to remove His saints from the earth smacks of defeatism. It is perceived as a pessimistic eschatology that is unacceptable to the dominion-oriented mindset. That mindset insists that the Church *will* be victorious, triumphing over all of God’s enemies in order to present the earth to Jesus when, or if, He does eventually come back.

Some say they believe in the rapture, but they redefine it as a “feeling” of rapture, or excitement, when the Lord returns to receive the earth from the hands of His triumphant Church. In other words, every-one will be “caught up” emotionally. This is a misapplication of the term “caught up,” which is an idiomatic expression peculiar to the English language. To be “caught up” in some exciting event is not the equivalent of the Greek *harpazo* as found in I Thessalonians 4:17, II Corinthians 12:2-4, and Revelation 12:5. This Greek word is used to describe the catching up bodily as in Acts 8:39 where Philip is “caught away” by the Holy Spirit to another locale.

Instead of believers being caught up, dominionists believe that it is the non-believers who will be caught up and destroyed, leaving only those who will live in harmony with the dominionist agenda.

Esotericism-understood by or meant for only the select few who have special knowledge or interest; recondite. 2. belonging to the select few. 3. private; secret; confidential. 4. (of a philosophical doctrine or the like) intended to be revealed only to the initiates of a group:

A HISTORY OF ESOTERICISM VS. GOD'S REVEALED TRUTH

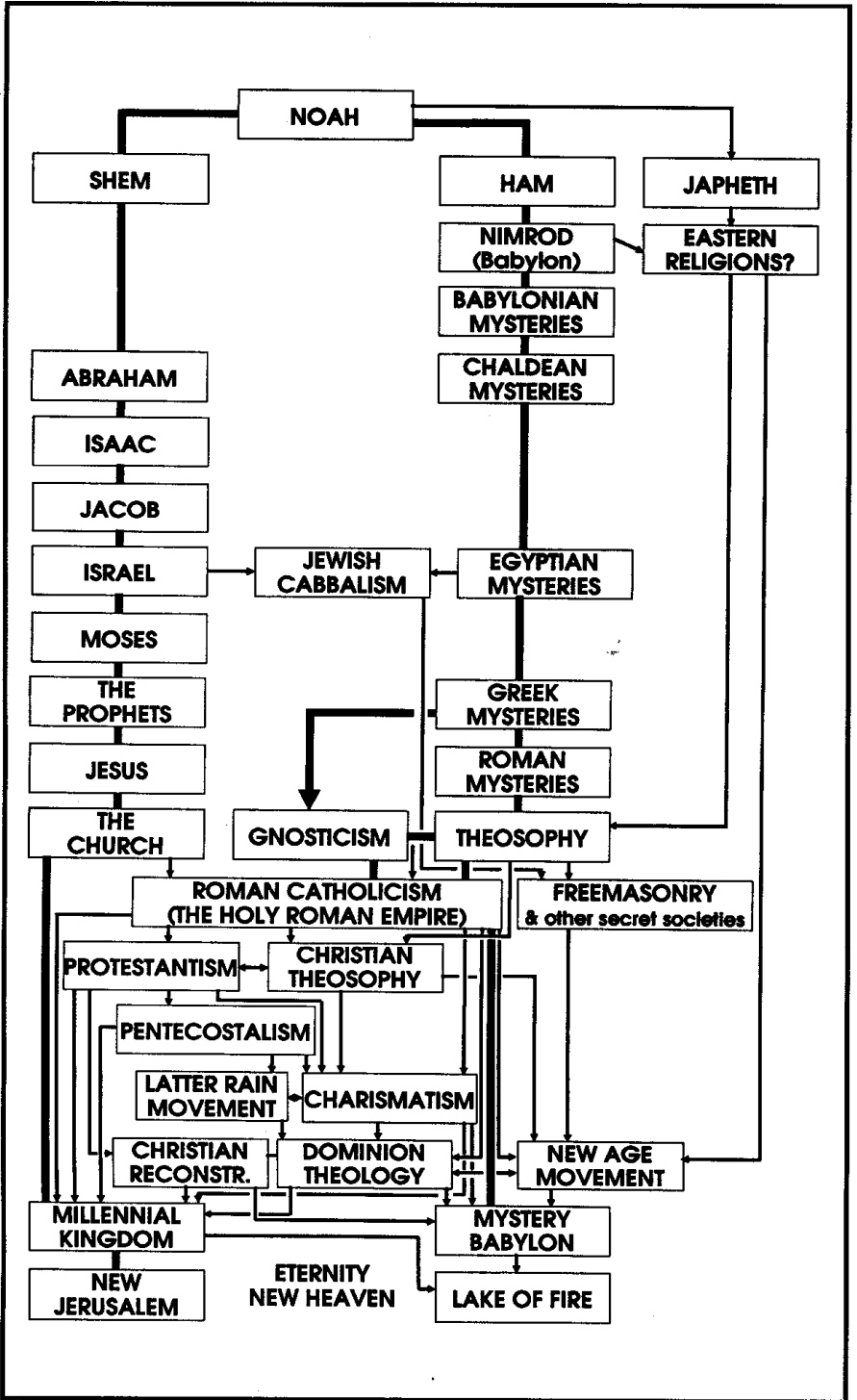
The chart on the facing page is by no means a complete representation of the history of esotericism and its conflict with God's Truth. Nor is it possible to compile such a representation. The interaction of diverse cultures throughout the five thousand years of human history since Noah's flood has produced many religious philosophies, and their links to one another are lost to antiquity. Yet there are obvious similarities found in all of the world's religions, including much of what has passed for Christianity since the first century.

It should be noted that even the most learned esotericists cannot find definite links from one philosophy to another. But the exceptional similarities of philosophy should be adequate evidence that a central source of occult knowledge (satanic spirits) is behind them all. Our chart is at best a poor representation of an extremely complicated subject.

To avoid too much complication, we've eliminated some connecting lines, such as gnosticism's lead into the New Age Movement, and into charismaticism. The Eastern Religions are especially difficult to trace and, for most purposes, are not as relevant to the subject as are the Western esoteric traditions out of which the Holy Roman Empire arose. So we've only shown their link to theosophy and to the New Age Movement.

The purpose of the chart, therefore, is merely to demonstrate generally how our specific subject, dominion theology, grew out of a blending of Christianity with esoteric tradition. It also shows that those caught up in dominion theology can be restored to biblical truth, and thus avoid the eventual melding into the one-world religio-political system of Mystery Babylon. So, too, can all who are part of the world's religious systems, including Protestants, charismatics, and Roman Catholics.

Even some of those who are not saved, and who are involved in pagan religions, will enter into the Millennial Kingdom. However, out of the Millennial Kingdom, at the end of the thousand years, many will be cast into the Lake of Fire because of their rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have proven faithful to the end will enter into the Eternal Kingdom of God.



Diverse Movements

Within the dominion camp are several movements whose teachings are similar over all, yet diverse in some ways. These movements, though to a greater or lesser degree disavowing association with each other, are sufficiently homogenous in their eschatological and theological stances that they can all be placed under the common banner of dominion theology. Some actually overlap one another. The more prominent of these movements are:

- Latter Rain
- Manifest Sons of God
- Identity
- Restoration
- Charismatic Renewal
- Shepherding-Discipleship
- Kingdom Message
- Positive Confession
- Reconstruction

Some movements are more extreme than others, and each is somewhat unique in its approach to the basic tenets of dominion theology. Not everyone within each movement is necessarily in agreement with each other, let alone with those in other movements. Still, each has teachings that are sufficiently aberrant that they warrant careful testing by Scripture. Each has a part in propagating all or a major number of dominionist teachings, though some individuals within some movements would deny that they are dominionists. Some are networking together for their common cause. Some teachings are quite bizarre, and reveal occultic influences.

Not everyone in these movements believe all dominionist teachings. For example, not all charismatics are dominionists. Yet while the adage "guilt by association" does not always hold true, a consistent pattern of support and fraternization are sufficient grounds to question whether or not one holds the views of those he supports and with whom he seeks unity.

(VENGEANCE IS OURS - The Church In Dominion *Albert James Dager*)



THE PATRIOTIC GOSPEL

Of all the subtle substitutes that Satan has for the true gospel of the kingdom of God, the “patriotic gospel” is his ultimate counterfeit. What I am going to share with you will be difficult, to say the least, for Americans and especially for veterans who have embraced the concept that patriotism is a means of serving God while also serving their country.

Before I became a Christian, I was a patriot. For many years afterward I remained patriotic. Having been fed a steady diet of “In God We Trust”, “One Nation Under God”, and “God and Country”, I too believed that one could be a Christian and a patriot. When I read Jesus’ statement that “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36), I felt that applied to all the evil empires but certainly not to America. This I reasoned, was God’s country, founded on godly principles, by sincere men of God.

However, if you have read my controversial book, *“Is America Mystery Babylon the Great?”* then you know that I no longer embrace such a philosophy as “God and Country” or the ability to be a Christian and also a patriot. I have come to see these are very conflicting positions.

In seeking to define the word “patriot”, I found that Webster listed the word “patristic” right below it. This is a pungent contrast of the dilemma we face:

<p>PATRIOT</p> <p>“A PERSON WHO LOVES HIS COUNTRY AND ZEALOUSLY SUPPORTS, DEFENDS IT AND ITS INTERESTS”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Webster</p>	<p>PATRISTIC</p> <p>“BEING OF OR PERTAINING TO THE FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THEIR WRITINGS”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Webster</p>
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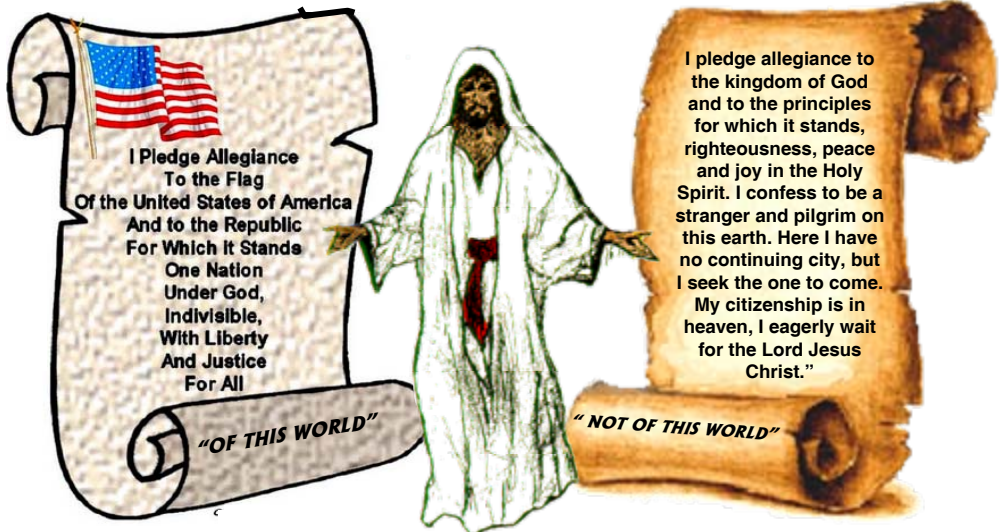
As was stated earlier, there is a great distinction between the founding fathers who encourage the pursuit of “Life, Liberty and Happiness” and the early church fathers who taught us to pursue “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” We cannot pursue the best of both worlds.

Author and columnist, Herbert Agar wrote a book entitled "In Pursuit of Happiness".

In it he made this statement concerning "allegiance":

**"RIVAL POWERS COMPETE FOR OUR ALLEGIANCE.
WE ARE FOREVER STRAINING TO SERVE TWO MASTERS."**

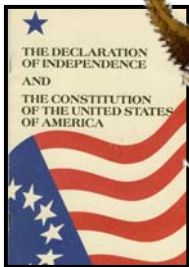
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**"NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS;
FOR EITHER HE WILL HATE THE ONE AND LOVE THE OTHER,
OR ELSE HE WILL BE LOYAL TO THE ONE AND DESPISE THE OTHER.
YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON."**

Matt. 6:24

**LIFE
LIBERTY
HAPPINESS**



**RIGHTEOUSNESS
PEACE
JOY**

**"HOW LONG
WILL
YOU FALTER
BETWEEN
TWO OPINIONS?
IF THE LORD IS GOD,
FOLLOW HIM;
BUT IF BAAL THEN FOLLOW HIM.'
BUT THE PEOPLE ANSWERED HIM
NOT A WORD."**

1 Kings 18:21



Can we successfully be patriotic and patristic as well? Is it possible to fully serve two masters? Jesus said no. If we really compare the Word of God with the Declaration of Independence, we also must say no. We cannot pledge our allegiance to the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, and at the same time obey the Word of God to be strangers and pilgrims on earth. These philosophies are in direct opposition to each other. We cannot serve them both. Their goals and objectives are not even remotely compatible with one another.

This is one of those hard sayings, but I believe that to embrace patriotism is to give our allegiance to another god. It violates the first two commandments:

**“I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD...
YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME....
YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM NOR SERVE THEM.
FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD....”**

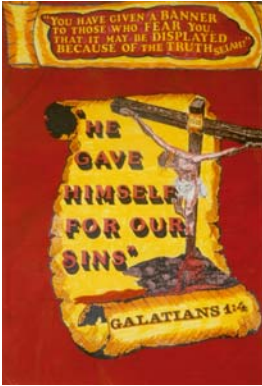
Ex. 20:5

I believe it is a grief to God, and perhaps even angers Him, to see the spirit of patriotism so manifested within the house of the Lord every time the Fourth of July rolls around. The American flag is not among the banners of the Lord! Consider this passage concerning the purpose of “banners”:

**“YOU HAVE GIVEN A BANNER TO THEM THAT FEAR YOU,
THAT IT MAY BE DISPLAYED BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH.
SELAH (“THINK ON THAT”).
THAT YOUR BELOVED MAY BE DELIVERED...”**

Psalms 60:4-5

God likes banners that display the truth. He wants us to display truth that delivers His beloved people. Here are two examples of banners of truth that I keep continually displayed before the people of our own fellowship:



I am not advocating flag burning. I am rather stressing that what belongs in the house of the Lord are those things pertaining to the kingdom of God rather than the things that identify with the kingdoms of this world. God’s people are bombarded all week long with the philosophies of this world. They do not need to be encouraged to embrace worldly concepts when they come to the house of God.

Neither do I want you to think that we should be anti-American. The unsaved people of America do not have anything but this earthly kingdom. Naturally they will be patriotic. It is among the things that the god of this world (Satan) is blinding their eyes with to keep them far from the truth. Remember that Satan offered Jesus “the kingdoms of this world and all their glory” (Matt. 4:8). The price was to worship Satan. I fear that what Jesus rejected is presently being widely accepted not only by the unsaved in America but by many Christians as well!

The core essence of witnessing centers upon opening the eyes of Americans to the heavenly and eternal alternative of earthly kingdoms. That alternative is the gospel (good news) of the kingdom of God. America is not, nor can be a manifestation of that kingdom.

Actually patriotism is a religion in itself. Even secular education confirms this to be true. Consider these excerpts from a current college curriculum on social studies:

“In many countries today, a number of forces have acted together to produce a new sort of modern nationalism... Modern nationalism may have replaced religion as the major faith to which people give their first allegiance. Citizens of a nation join together in common loyalty to a set of ideals, just as “medieval Christians” used to do. They use symbols such as flags, much as... Christians use the cross... The Star Spangled Banner become the hymns of this new faith. Citizens visit national shrines such as... Kennedy’s grave... the nation’s heroes... Lincoln, Washington, become the saints and martyrs of the new faith. And like religion used to do, modern nations call on the people to sacrifice their property or lives...”

(“The Shaping of Western Society”-Holt Social Studies Curriculum.
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. 1974, page 281)

May God help us to have our eyes opened to what this patriotic spirit is all about. It is a different gospel! Let me stress what is the proper Christian responsibility toward America. I will let the scriptures speak for me. They are loud and clear in defining Christian interaction with earthly kingdoms. I do not want you to misunderstand anything that I have presented to you. What is stated below is what I endorse and am encouraging you to do as well:

“THEREFORE SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF MAN FOR THE LORD’S SAKE, WHETHER TO THE KING AS SUPREME, OR TO GOVERNORS, AS TO THOSE WHO ARE SENT BY HIM FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF EVILDOERS AND FOR THE PRAISE OF THOSE WHO DO GOOD (“LAW-ENFORCERS, POLICE”). FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, THAT BY DOING GOOD YOU MAY PUT TO SILENCE THE IGNORANCE OF FOOLISH MEN... AS SERVANTS OF GOD. HONOR ALL PEOPLE. LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD. FEAR GOD. HONOR THE KING.”

1 Pet. 2:13-17

“LET EVERY SOUL BE SUBJECT TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES. FOR THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT FROM GOD, AND THE AUTHORITIES THAT EXIST ARE APPOINTED BY GOD. THEREFORE WHOEVER RESISTS THE AUTHORITY RESISTS THE ORDINANCE OF GOD, AND THOSE WHO RESIST WILL BRING JUDGMENT ON THEMSELVES. FOR RULERS ARE NOT A TERROR TO GOOD WORKS, BUT TO EVIL. DO YOU WANT TO BE UNAFRAID OF THE AUTHORITY? DO WHAT IS GOOD, AND YOU WILL HAVE PRAISE FROM THE SAME. FOR HE IS GOD’S MINISTER TO YOU FOR GOOD. BUT IF YOU DO EVIL, BE AFRAID; FOR HE DOES NOT BEAR THE SWORD IN VAIN; FOR HE IS GOD’S MINISTER, AN AVENGER TO EXECUTE WRATH ON HIM WHO PRACTICES EVIL. THEREFORE YOU MUST BE SUBJECT, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF WRATH BUT ALSO FOR CONSCIENCE’ SAKE. FOR BECAUSE OF THIS YOU ALSO PAY TAXES, FOR THEY ARE GOD’S MINISTERS ATTENDING CONTINUALLY TO THIS VERY THING. RENDER THEREFORE TO ALL THEIR DUE: TAXES TO WHOM TAXES ARE DUE, CUSTOMS TO WHOM CUSTOMS, FEAR TO WHOM FEAR, HONOR TO WHOM HONOR.”

Rom. 13:1-7

**“TELL US, THEREFORE, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
IS IT LAWFUL TO PAY TAXES TO CAESAR, OR NOT?...
‘RENDER THEREFORE TO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR’S,
AND (RENDER) TO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD’S.’”**

Matt. 22:17,21

When man’s laws do not contradict God’s laws then we must obey them. Just because we are not of this world, and the kingdom of God is not of this world, it is not justified to break or disobey the laws of man. Only when man passes laws contrary to God’s laws does the scripture instruct us to disobey man and obey God (see Dan. 6, Acts 4).

I feel the need to stress these things lest someone uses this material in a perverted way to justify rebellion against the laws of the land. As Christians, we should be obedient citizens and examples of what the Spirit of Christ can do to enable us to be or to do. The mentality that the scriptures present to us, which enables us to hold a proper perspective of our relationship in the world, is that of becoming

STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON EARTH



**“...AND CONFESSED THAT THEY
WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS
ON THE EARTH...
THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY,
THAT IS A HEAVENLY COUNTRY.
THEREFORE GOD IS
NOT ASHAMED TO
BE CALLED THEIR GOD,
FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY
FOR THEM.”**

Heb. 11:13-16

**“BELOVED, I BEG YOU
AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS,
ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH
WAR AGAINST THE SOUL.”**

1 Pet. 2:11

**“FOR HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY,
BUT WE SEEK THE ONE TO COME.”**

Heb. 13:14

We are in the world but not of the world (Jn. 17:15-16). Of necessity, we must use this world, but not misuse it (1 Cor. 7:31). Paul tells us not to be conformed to this world but rather to be transformed through the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2). He also admonished us not to become entangled in the affairs of this life that we might please Him who has called us (2 Tim. 2:4). The apostle John instructs us not to love the world or the things in the world because they are not of the Father (1 Jn. 2:15-16). James also warned about becoming a friend of the world, and thereby becoming the enemy of God (Jam. 4:4).

Do you begin to see how it is that we cannot serve two masters?

THE "GOD AND COUNTRY" PHILOSOPHY

In a country steeped in the patriotic philosophy of "God and country," multitudes of American Christians think they know what "fighting the good fight of faith" is all about. After all, we have done it through two World Wars. In spiritual ignorance Christians have embraced the songwriter's bad theological mix of, "Praise God, and pass the ammunition!" However, such religiously-inspired patriotic enthusiasm has not been limited to Christians in America. Consider the so-called divine inspiration by which the majority of German Christians were duped twice, in two World Wars, into goose-stepping across Europe with their destructive war machines:

"GOD WITH US"

banner



"God with us" was on their banners and engraved on their government-issued belt buckles.

"GOD WITH US"

Nazi belt buckle



Convince the people of "God with us" and it makes a powerful ally to execute any earthly cause. It is well-documented that Adolf Hitler believed himself to be a good German Lutheran Christian who was merely carrying out the expressed wishes of Martin Luther concerning the Jews. Consider these unbelievable comments from a lengthy treatise written by the revered founder of the Protestant reformation, Martin Luther:

On the Jews and Their Lies is a 65,000-word treatise written by Martin Luther in 1543. In the treatise, Luther wrote that the Jews are a **"base, whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth."** ***They are full of the "devil's feces ... which they wallow in like swine,"*** and the synagogue is an **"incorrigible whore and an evil slut ..."** He argues that ***"their synagogues and schools should be set on fire, their prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes razed, and property and money confiscated. They should be shown no mercy or kindness, afforded no legal protection, and these "poisonous envenomed worms" should be drafted into forced labor or expelled for all time."*** He also advocates their murder, writing ***"we are at fault in not slaying them."*** The treatise exercised a major and persistent influence on Germany's attitude toward its Jewish citizens between the Reformation and the Holocaust." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Jews_and_Their_Lies)

WAR IS CERTAINLY A PART OF THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE

How does Satan seduce God's people to become "entangled in the affairs of this life?" He adds the "God with us" factor. He did so with Christians in Germany, and sadly, he is also doing the same with much of American Christianity. American Christians, like Paul, are also citizens of an earthly kingdom. Paul came to reject his earthly citizenship in favor of his heavenly one (Phil. 3:20), but most American Christians give high priority to their earthly citizenship over their heavenly one due to the whole-hearted endorsement of the "God with us" factor. By embracing the "One Nation Under God" and "God and country" philosophies, we too, like the Germans, have become duped into becoming entangled in the affairs of this life.

"God With Us"



As Christians, we have no problem with Satan having such delegated authority over all of history's secular, pagan, murderous, horrific nations that have been, and still exist on the face of the earth.

"God With Us"



However, most Christians will have problems believing America is included in "all the kingdoms of this world." After all, isn't America "God's New Israel" (as the Puritans called it) and the only "One Nation Under God," and the only nation bold enough to proclaim, "In God We Trust," all over its money and its buildings! Certainly Germany was duped by the "God With Us" factor, but not America, we think we are the real deal! But are we? That is a question worth researching. I do not believe Satan has a greater deceptive force on earth than that of using a sanctimonious, religious covering of God's approval for the things Satan himself is orchestrating on earth.

It is man who glorifies war, but God does not speak well of it at all:

**"...WHO ARE FALLEN OF THE UNCIRCUMCISED,
WHO HAVE GONE DOWN TO HELL WITH THEIR WEAPONS OF WAR;
THEY HAVE LAID THEIR SWORDS UNDER THEIR HEADS,
BUT THEIR INIQUITIES WILL BE ON THEIR HEADS..."**

Ezek 32:27

**"FOR OUT OF ZION THE LAW SHALL GO FORTH, AND THE WORD
OF THE LORD FROM JERUSALEM. HE SHALL JUDGE BETWEEN MANY
PEOPLES, AND REBUKE STRONG NATIONS AFAR OFF; THEY SHALL
BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES, AND THEIR SPEARS INTO
PRUNING HOOKS; NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST
NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANYMORE."**

Micah 4:2-3

**"THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH
IS FOR THE SOULS OF MEN,
NOT FOR THE SOIL OF MEN"**

Pastor Randy Skupe

**"BUT YOU
O' MAN OF GOD...
FIGHT THE GOOD
FIGHT OF FAITH..."**

1 Tim. 6:11-12



**"YOU THEREFORE
MUST ENDURE
HARDSHIP AS A
GOOD SOLDIER
OF JESUS CHRIST."**

2 Tim. 2:-3

**"NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF
THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."**

2 Tim. 2:4

**"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS,
BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE
COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS,
EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE. AMEN"**

Matt.28:19-20

How interesting that the last line of the Great Commission conveys to us, "GOD WITH US," does it not? Whenever we align ourselves with what is in God's Word, He will be with us always. However, He is not with His people when they shift from the proper emphasis of focusing upon saving the souls of men to the improper thrust toward saving the soil of men. It is tragic to see the exchange of the true heavenly Kingdom of God for an earthly substitute. When we became born again, the Word reminds us:

**"HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND
TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE..."**

Col. 1:13

The Christian is taken out of all kingdoms of this world, all the ones Satan showed Jesus in a moment of time, including America, and has presently been translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. For the believer to truly have "God with us" it will require embracing the spiritual Kingdom of God as it is revealed and defined in God's Word. However, God will not be with us, if we substitute an earthly kingdom to expel all of our energy, time and money seeking to capture it for God. The mandate for believers in America is to rescue Americans, not America! We are to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God into which every born-again believer is thus translated. Its King forever is Jesus. In this Kingdom there are no elections, no voting, the laws are perfect, and so is the Lawgiver, Lord and King, Jesus Christ (Isa. 33:22).

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS PRESENTLY THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

PART THREE

"THE INTERNAL KINGDOM OF GOD"



**"ASKED...WHEN
THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD COME, HE REPLIED...
'THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH
SIGNS TO BE OBSERVED OR WITH VISIBLE DISPLAY...
FOR BEHOLD,
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU,
IN YOUR HEARTS."**

Luke 17:20-21

Having said enough about Satan's subtle substitutes for the gospel of the kingdom, let us now begin to open up the first area of this trinity of the true kingdom of God. We shall examine the present manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth, the internal kingdom abiding in the heart.

We saw earlier that the apostle Paul expanded our understanding of what Jesus meant by the statement, "The kingdom is within you, in your hearts."

Paul defined what the kingdom of God consists of: →



TO ABIDE IN
THE NEW CREATION TO COME
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON THE NEW EARTH...

PHASE THREE:
THE ETERNAL
KINGDOM

**THE GOSPEL
OF
THE KINGDOM
OF GOD**

PHASE ONE:
THE INTERNAL
KINGDOM

ABIDING PRESENTLY
IN THE HEART OF
THE CHURCH
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON EARTH...

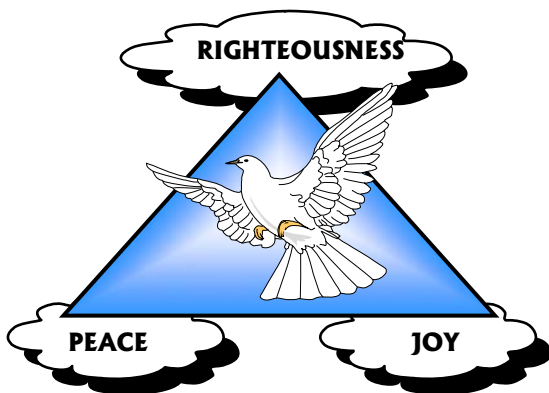
PHASE TWO:
THE EXTERNAL
KINGDOM

TO ABIDE IN ISRAEL
DURING
THE MILLENNIAL REIGN
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON EARTH...

**“ASKED...WHEN
THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD COME, HE REPLIED...
‘THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH
SIGNS TO BE OBSERVED OR WITH VISIBLE DISPLAY...
FOR BEHOLD,
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU,
IN YOUR HEARTS.”**

Luke 17:20-21

ACCEPTABLE SERVICE TO GOD



IN THE HOLY SPIRIT Rom. 14:17-18

Above is what Paul portrayed as acceptable service to God. It is when we serve Christ in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Far too many of God's people have established their own idea of what is acceptable service to God.

Our goal in this chapter will center upon learning how we can serve Christ in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In the triangle above you will note that I have placed "righteousness" as the capstone above "peace and joy". That is simply because it is righteousness that produces peace and joy. You will understand that as we proceed on. Let us establish at this time that righteousness has a place of preeminence in the kingdom of God:

"SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

Matt. 6:33

It is through the new birth that we can enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3,5). Also by this event we receive the righteousness of Christ as a gift of grace (Rom. 5:17, 2 Cor. 5:21). In simple layman's terms, when we repent of our sins, Jesus forgives and takes away our sins replacing them with a robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10, Rom. 3:21-26). However, these foundational truths do not give us the complete picture of righteousness. We are also to live righteously (Titus 2:12), and to become slaves/servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:18-19). Paul tells us:

"BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH ARE BY JESUS CHRIST, TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD."

Phil. 1:11

The thrust for this chapter is to identify what are the fruits of righteousness with which we are to be filled. Note that Paul stresses they are by Jesus Christ and will bring glory and praise to God. Jesus said:

"LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."

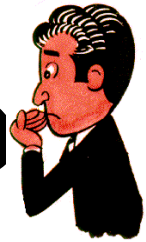
Matt. 5:16

BECOMING FILLED WITH FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS



**"...THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF...
I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES.
HE WHO ABIDES IN ME,
AND I IN HIM,
BEARS MUCH FRUIT;
FOR WITHOUT ME
YOU CAN DO NOTHING."**

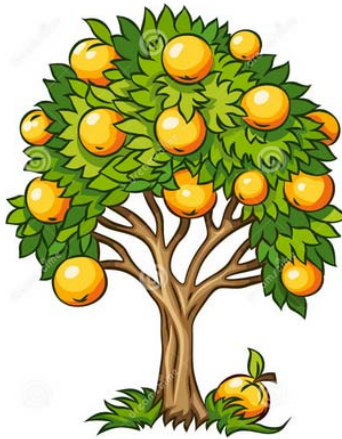
John 15:4-5



In these verses, Jesus stresses the need to abide in Him in order that we can bear much fruit. Notice that both Jesus and Paul present the concept of fruit bearing being accomplished by Jesus Christ, as we abide in Him. The point I want you to hear is that God is not looking for us to manufacture fake fruit. He wants the real thing which is only possible through Christ Jesus. Here then is the great mandate Jesus presents in Chapter 15 of John:

**"BY THIS
MY FATHER IS
GLORIFIED,
THAT
YOU
BEAR
MUCH
FRUIT;
SO YOU
WILL BE
MY
DISCIPLES...."**

John 15:8



**"I CHOSE
YOU AND
APPOINTED
YOU THAT
YOU
SHOULD
BEAR
FRUIT,
AND THAT
YOUR
FRUIT
SHOULD
REMAIN..."**

John 15:16

Notice that the proof of being a disciple is bearing much fruit. Note also Jesus stresses that our fruit should remain. The purpose of Jesus appointing us unto salvation goes beyond just making it to heaven. We have been appointed to continually bear much fruit. Hear this:

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD
ABIDING IN THE HEART**

Righteousness



Peace Joy

**BEARS MUCH FRUIT
IN THE LIFE**



There is a symbolic pattern given to us in the Book of Revelation that I want to use to give us a continuing theme for the rest of this chapter on fruit bearing. It is a glimpse into the kingdom of God that will be in eternity, and it deals with the subject of fruit trees:

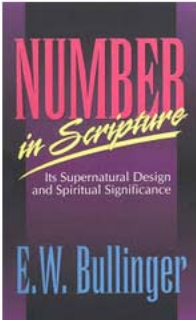


“AND HE SHOWED ME A PURE RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE... PROCEEDING FROM THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB. IN THE MIDDLE OF ITS STREET, AND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RIVER, WAS THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH BORE TWELVE FRUITS, EACH TREE YIELDING ITS FRUIT EVERY MONTH...”

Rev.22:1-2

We know nothing of what this scene depicts, we can only speculate with our temporal, finite minds on the things God declares to be infinite and eternal. However, we can understand the spiritual meaning of fruit bearing in the kingdom of God. The point I want to take from this mysterious heavenly scene is the reference to:

“BEARING TWELVE FRUITS...”



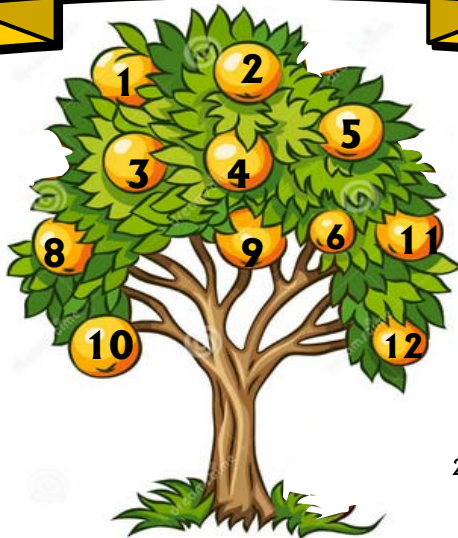
TWELVE
Is a perfect number, signifying perfection of government, or of governmental perfection. It is found as a multiple in all that has to do with rule.”
Numbers in Scripture- E.W. Bullinger, page 253

The Scriptures abound with this number of governmental perfection. There were 12 tribes of Israel and 12 apostles of the Lamb. The eternal city has 12 gates and 12 foundations, with 12 angels. What I am going to present to you is a spiritual version of the tree of life. It will be a tree of (kingdom) life. Its 12 fruits will be principles which Jesus taught that are to govern our hearts against the philosophy of this world. In the remainder of this chapter we will examine each of these 12 fruits. They are not dogma. There are other truths that Jesus taught as well. I do believe however that if these 12 fruits abound in us, we will hear “Well done, good and faithful servant” in eternity.

THE FIRST FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:

~ 12 ~ KINGDOM FRUIT

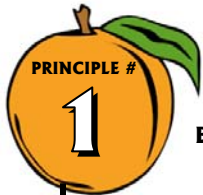
**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified

Let us now begin to examine 12 of those kingdom principles which are designed to govern the heart of the people of God and manifest the kingdom of God on earth.



ABIDING IN CHRIST

“I AM THE TRUE VINE, AND MY FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER. EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT DOES NOT BEAR FRUIT HE TAKES AWAY; AND EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARS FRUIT HE PRUNES, THAT IT MAY BEAR MORE FRUIT. YOU ARE ALREADY CLEAN BECAUSE OF THE WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU.

ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU. AS THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, UNLESS IT ABIDES IN THE VINE, NEITHER CAN YOU, UNLESS YOU ABIDE IN ME. “I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. HE WHO ABIDES IN ME, AND I IN HIM, BEARS MUCH FRUIT; FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING. IF ANYONE DOES NOT ABIDE IN ME, HE IS CAST OUT AS A BRANCH AND IS WITHERED; AND THEY GATHER THEM AND THROW THEM INTO THE FIRE, AND THEY ARE BURNED. IF YOU ABIDE IN ME, AND MY WORDS ABIDE IN YOU, YOU WILL ASK WHAT YOU DESIRE, AND IT SHALL BE DONE FOR YOU. BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED, THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT; SO YOU WILL BE MY DISCIPLES. “AS THE FATHER LOVED ME, I ALSO HAVE LOVED YOU; ABIDE IN MY LOVE. IF YOU KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, YOU WILL ABIDE IN MY LOVE, JUST AS I HAVE KEPT MY FATHER’S COMMANDMENTS AND ABIDE IN HIS LOVE. “THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU, THAT MY JOY MAY REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL... YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME, BUT I CHOSE YOU AND APPOINTED YOU THAT YOU SHOULD GO AND BEAR FRUIT, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN, THAT WHATEVER YOU ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME HE MAY GIVE YOU.”

John 15:1-16



“HE WHO ABIDES IN ME

BEARS MUCH FRUIT.”

This first kingdom principle lays a foundation for all the others that will follow. It is a vital concept for every Christian to grasp. We have seen that God requires that we bear much fruit.

Here we find how we can do so. It requires that we abide in Christ.



The simplistic language that Jesus uses here in John 15 is compatible with elementary instruction such as “see Johnny run”. We could borrow a popular phrase of the world to get the point across as well.

It is

Take time to read these simplistic statements.

They define for us responsibility and capability.

Failure to bear much fruit comes through man’s attempt to do what only God can do.

Without abiding in the Vine, we branches can do nothing. We need the life-giving substance that comes from the Vine. In the natural realm it is tree sap that gives life to the branch. A Christian that seeks to bear fruit by self-effort will only produce fake fruit. God wants the real thing.

“READ MY LIPS”

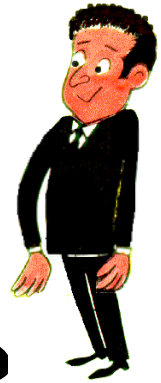
I AM
THE VINE...

YOU ARE
THE BRANCHES...

MY FATHER IS
THE VINEDRESSER...

THE BRANCH
CANNOT BEAR
FRUIT OF ITSELF...

WITHOUT ME
YOU CAN DO NOTHING...



It is vital for every Christian to hear what Jesus says so plainly. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself. What God calls us to do and be in the New Testament requires supernatural power. It has been humorously said that the “Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible”. But the scriptures says, “With God, all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). However, it requires that we must properly abide in Christ. Let us define what that means from the Greek:

ABIDE

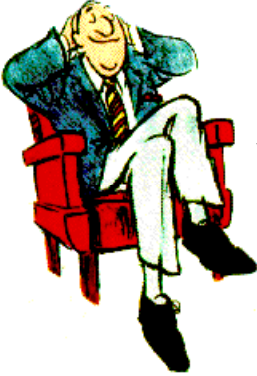
3306 meno- "to stay in a given place, abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, to tarry"
(Strong's Concordance)

ABIDE

“to stand ready for, await, to stand up under, endure a hard trial, to endure without yielding.”

(Webster’s Dictionary)

Whether you look to the original Greek language or to just plain English, this word has great depth. If we were to reduce it down to its simplistic root, it would mean to “patiently wait and endure hardship”.



The concept of abiding in Christ has been greatly abused. God’s people are wrongly taught they are abiding by sitting around and doing nothing. This is not what Jesus said. He told us “Without Me you can do nothing.” The concept of an abiding branch has also been overly stated as just “let go, let God.” Again, a man-made concept. Paul properly states for us the working relationship between God and man:

“...I PLANTED, APOLLOS WATERED, BUT GOD GAVE THE INCREASE. SO THEN NEITHER HE WHO PLANTS IS ANYTHING, NOR HE WHO WATERS, BUT GOD WHO GIVES THE INCREASE. NOW HE WHO PLANTS AND HE WHO WATERS ARE ONE, AND EACH ONE WILL RECEIVE HIS OWN REWARD ACCORDING TO HIS OWN LABOR.

**FOR WE ARE GOD’S FELLOW WORKERS;
YOU ARE GOD’S FIELD, YOU ARE GOD’S BUILDING.”**

1 Cor 3:6-10

The Amplified is even more clear:

**“FOR WE ARE FELLOW WORKMEN-JOINT PROMOTERS, LABORERS TOGETHER-WITH AND FOR GOD; YOU ARE GOD’S GARDEN AND VINEYARD AND FIELD UNDER CULTIVATION;
YOU ARE GOD’S BUILDING.”**

Take time to compare spiritual to spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13), and you will have all that the Holy Spirit seeks to impart to us. We are fellow-workmen and laborers together with God in His garden and vineyard, which is speaking of us. We are branches that must abide in the Vine’s supernatural power, but we are also fellow-workmen and laborers. That sounds like a lot more labor on our part than just sitting around “sipping sap” from the Vine. In another place Paul exhorts the brethren:

**“WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING;
FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU
BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE.”**

Phil. 2:12-13

“THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WANT YOU TO AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE... LET OUR PEOPLE ALSO LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS... THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL.”

Titus 3:8, 14

FRUITLESS



“A CERTAIN MAN HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED IN HIS VINEYARD, AND HE CAME SEEKING FRUIT ON IT AND FOUND NONE.

THEN HE SAID TO THE KEEPER OF HIS VINEYARD, ‘LOOK, FOR THREE YEARS I HAVE COME SEEKING FRUIT ON THIS FIG TREE AND FIND NONE. CUT IT DOWN; WHY DOES IT USE UP THE GROUND?’ BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, ‘SIR, LET IT ALONE THIS YEAR ALSO, UNTIL I DIG AROUND IT AND FERTILIZE IT. AND IF IT BEARS FRUIT, WELL.

BUT IF NOT, AFTER THAT YOU CAN CUT IT DOWN.’”

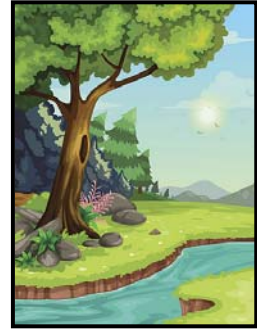
Luke 13:6-9

This is a parable about Israel, as the fig tree. However, it also bears a good principle pertaining to fruit-bearing. The solution to its barren state lies in the necessary labor of digging around it and in proper fertilization of the soil.

This depicts the part that our works play in fruit bearing. If the needful labor of works are ignored, then we may become like this barren fig tree, all leaves but no fruit. We must ask ourselves what kind of works will lead to fruit bearing. Are there really things that God wants us to do that will dig around and fertilize those dead areas in our lives?

I believe the answer is a big “Yes!”

FRUITFUL



“BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO WALKS NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY... HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND IN HIS LAW HE MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT. HE SHALL 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.”

Psalm 1:1-3

Like this tree planted by an abundance of water, to diligently labor in the water of the Word results in bearing much fruit. In the book of Ephesians Paul speaks of the sanctifying act of “washing in the water of the Word” (Eph. 5:26). The church has majored in being washed in the blood (Rev. 1:5) at the expense of washing in the water of the Word. One act will justify us in God’s sight (the Blood) but the other act will sanctify us in God’s sight (the Water). The fruitful state depicted above comes as a result of washing in the water of the Word. We need an abundance of water available to do so.

Here are three specific areas in which we are to labor. If you are active in them, you know that they consist of hard work. They all impact fruit-bearing:

**“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND POWERFUL...
PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT...
A DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART.”**

Heb. 4:12

**STUDY
THE
WORD...**
2 Tim. 2:15



**MEDITATE
IN THE
WORD...**
Psalm 1:1-3



**“...RISE AND PRAY
LEST YOU ENTER
INTO TEMPTATION...”**

Luke 22:46

**“...BUILDING YOURSELVES UP...
PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.”**
Jude 20

**“...THIS KIND COMES OUT
BY NOTHING BUT
PRAYER AND FASTING.”**
Mark 9:29

Ask any pastor and he will tell you how easy it is to gather the saints together to play, but how difficult it becomes to gather the saints together to pray.



**“I HUMBLED MY SOUL
WITH FASTING...”**
Psalm 35:13

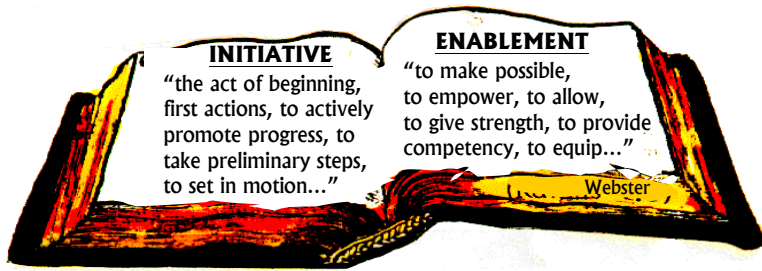
**“I CHASTENED MY SOUL
WITH FASTING...”**
Psalm 69:10

**“...THIS KIND COMES OUT
BY NOTHING BUT
PRAYER AND FASTING.”**
Mark 9:29

As there is a natural preference to play rather than pray, there is likewise a desire to feast rather than fast. Personally, I hate to fast, but I hate fruitlessness much more.

The Christian life is best represented by the dual mandate of labor and fruit bearing. Labor is something we can do, but bearing fruit is only something God can do. In this we are fellow laborers and workmen together with God (1 Cor. 3:6-10). Perhaps this statement will help clarify my point:

**“THE INITIATIVE LIES WITH US,
THE ENABLEMENT BELONGS TO GOD”**



Once the Christian's eyes are opened to the principle of initiative vs. enablement (works that produce fruit), the Word of God will become much more self-explanatory. We begin to realize what is our responsibility vs. what belongs to God. Here are a few examples of rightly dividing the Word of truth with our initiative and God's enablement:



OUR LABOR

"MAY YOU SURELY LEARN TO SENSE WHAT IS VITAL, AND APPROVE AND PRIZE WHAT IS EXCELLENT AND OF REAL VALUE..."

Phil. 1:10-11 Amplified



FRUIT OF OUR LABOR

...BEING FILLED WITH FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH COME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO THE HONOR AND PRAISE OF GOD... THAT HIS GLORY MAY BE BOTH MANIFESTED AND RECOGNIZED..."

INITIATIVE

"WORK OUT- CULTIVATE...YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH REVERENCE AND AWE...AND SELF-DISTRUST...SERIOUS CAUTION...WATCHFULNESS AGAINST TEMPTATION... SHRINKING FROM WHATEVER MIGHT OFFEND GOD AND DISCREDIT THE NAME OF CHRIST..."

Phil. 2:12-13 Amplified



ENABLEMENT

NOT IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH, FOR IT IS GOD WHO IS...EFFECTIVELY AT WORK IN YOU...ENERGIZING AND CREATING IN YOU THE POWER...TO WILL AND TO WORK FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE..."

INITIATIVE

"BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION, WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD..."

Phil. 4:6-7



ENABLEMENT

AND THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASS ALL UNDERSTANDING, WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST..."

INITIATIVE

ENABLEMENT



“ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU. AS THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, UNLESS IT ABIDES IN THE VINE, NEITHER CAN YOU, UNLESS YOU ABIDE IN ME... HE WHO ABIDES IN ME AND I IN HIM, BEARS MUCH FRUIT; FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.”

John 15:4,5

In defining what is required to abide in Christ, I want to use this illustration from 1 John 5:7-8 which speaks of “three in agreement” that function upon the earth:

“FOR THERE ARE THREE WHO BEAR WITNESS IN HEAVEN: THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT; AND THESE THREE ARE ONE.



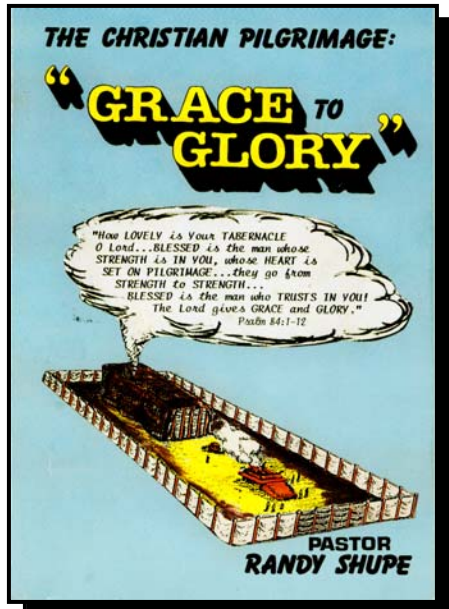
AND THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS ON EARTH: THE SPIRIT, THE WATER, AND THE BLOOD; AND THESE THREE AGREE AS ONE.”

1 John 5:7-8

If these verses are not clear to you, then I would suggest this book which I wrote pertaining to the great “type/shadow” of the tabernacle of Moses.

Paul is using tabernacle terminology in verse 8 above. The blood was shed upon the brazen altar. The water is taken from the brazen laver in which the priests washed lest they die. The Spirit is typified by the Holy Place and its three articles within.

These three (the blood, the water, the Spirit) are still functioning in agreement on earth. They typify the essence of abiding in Christ.



**"...YOU ARE STRONG,
AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES IN YOU..."**

1 John 2:14

**"CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT,
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY IT AND CLEANSE IT
WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,
THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF
A GLORIOUS CHURCH,
NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING,
BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH."**

Eph. 5:25-27

**THE
WATER**

**"FOR THERE ARE
THREE WHO BEAR
WITNESS IN HEAVEN:
THE FATHER,
THE WORD,
AND THE HOLY
SPIRIT;
AND THESE THREE
ARE ONE.**

**AND THERE ARE
THREE THAT BEAR
WITNESS ON
EARTH:
THE SPIRIT,
THE WATER, AND
THE BLOOD;
AND THESE THREE
AGREE AS ONE."**

1 John 5:7-8

**ABIDE
IN
CHRIST**

**THE
SPIRIT**

**"BY THIS WE KNOW
THAT WE ABIDE IN HIM,
AND HE IN US,
BECAUSE HE HAS
GIVEN US OF
HIS SPIRIT."**

1 John 4:13

**THE
BLOOD**

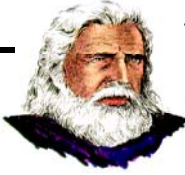
**"HE WHO
EATS MY FLESH AND
DRINKS MY BLOOD
ABIDES IN ME,
AND I IN HIM."**

John 6:56

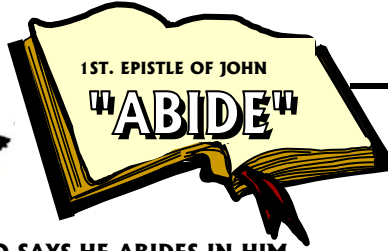
When we are filled with His Spirit (Eph. 5:18), and are abiding in His Word (John 15:7), and are partakers of communion (Matt. 26:26-29), then we are abiding in Christ. It is that simple. Are you abiding in Christ? All the above are supernatural acts. They require faith, not intellect. These three agree as one simply because they are all centered in Christ. The Holy Spirit was sent to reveal the things of Christ to us (Jn. 16:15). He has authored and presently illuminates the Word of God (which is Jesus Christ-John 1:1). The Holy Spirit sprinkles the blood of Christ upon us (1 Pet. 1:2), as we confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:7).

Perhaps the most neglected area of abiding in Christ is communion in which we eat of His body and drink of His blood. Jesus said "Do this in remembrance of Me". We are to celebrate His death till He comes. More emphasis has been placed upon celebrating His birth than His death. Actually, the Word of God does not tell us to celebrate His birth at all, but rather His death. Do you see how far from the commandments of Christ we have strayed?

There is so much more that could be said about this principle of abiding. Listed below are the references that the Apostle John makes in his first epistle. Astoundingly, in merely five chapters, John uses the word “abide” twelve times in instructing believers how to live the Christian life. I recommend that you take the time to read this flowing account in this little epistle. You will be struck by the magnitude of importance John places on “abiding.”



The Apostle John



**“HE WHO SAYS HE ABIDES IN HIM
OUGHT HIMSELF ALSO TO WALK JUST AS HE WALKED.”**

1 Jn.2:6

“HE WHO LOVES HIS BROTHER ABIDES IN THE LIGHT...”

1 Jn.2:10

**“...YOU ARE STRONG AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES IN YOU,
AND YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE.”**

1 Jn.2:14

“...HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD ABIDES FOREVER.”

1 Jn.2:17

**“...THEREFORE LET THAT ABIDE IN YOU WHICH YOU HEARD FROM THE
BEGINNING. IF WHAT YOU HEARD FROM THE BEGINNING ABIDES IN
YOU, YOU WILL ALSO ABIDE IN THE SON AND IN THE FATHER.”**

1 Jn.2:24

**“BUT THE ANOINTING WHICH YOU HAVE RECEIVED FROM HIM ABIDES
IN YOU...AS IT HAS TAUGHT YOU, YOU WILL ABIDE IN HIM.”**

1 Jn.2:27

**“AND NOW LITTLE CHILDREN, ABIDE IN HIM...
THAT WE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE AND NOT BE ASHAMED
BEFORE HIM AT HIS COMING.”**

1 Jn. 2:28

“WHOEVER ABIDES IN HIM DOES NOT SIN...”

1 Jn. 3:6

**“...HE WHO HATES HIS BROTHER ABIDES IN DEATH.
WHOEVER HATES HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER,
AND YOU KNOW NO MURDERER HAS ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN HIM.”**

1 Jn. 3:14-15

**“NOW HE WHO KEEPS HIS COMMANDMENTS ABIDES IN HIM,
AND HE IN HIM.”**

1 Jn. 3:24a

**“AND BY THIS WE KNOW THAT HE ABIDES IN US,
BY THE SPIRIT WHOM HE HAS GIVEN US.”**

1 Jn. 3:24b

**“BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE ABIDE IN HIM, AND HE IN US,
BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN US HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Jn. 4:13

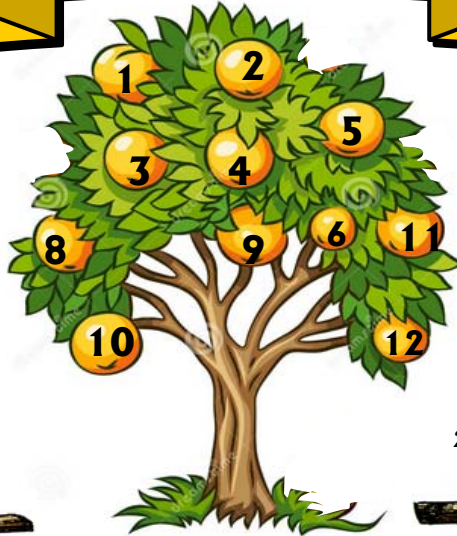
**“GOD IS LOVE, AND HE WHO ABIDES IN LOVE ABIDES IN GOD,
AND GOD IN HIM.”**

1 Jn. 4:16

THE SECOND FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor.13:5 Amplified



THE PRINCIPLE OF **THE CROSS**



**“WHOEVER DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME,
LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS
CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOEVER
DESIRES TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT,
BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE
AND THE GOSPEL’S WILL SAVE IT.”**

Mark 8:34-35



The whole crux of Christianity rests upon the concept of our embracing the work of atonement obtained upon the cross of Christ. It is the foundation of our faith:

**“FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN
THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.”**

1 Cor. 3:11

**“...BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF...
HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS...
YOU, WHO ONCE WERE ALIENATED... NOW HE HAS RECONCILED...”**

Col. 1:20-21

No picture of Christ on the cross conveys the depth of His suffering on our behalf. Isaiah tells us “His visage (appearance) was marred more than any man...” (Isa. 52:14). There is no greater form of intense suffering than the prolonged agony devised by the Romans through crucifixion. The mention of the cross struck fear in the hearts of those who had witnessed its cruelty.

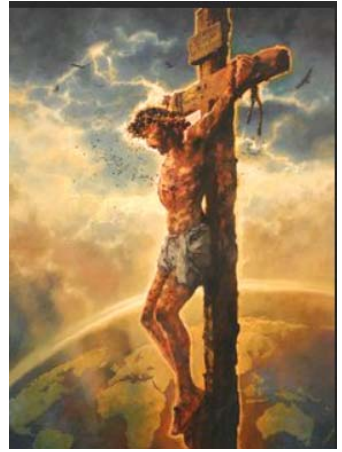
**“AND WHEN THEY HAD
COME TO THE PLACE
CALLED CALVARY,
THERE THEY
CRUCIFIED HIM...”**

Luke 23:33

**“...HE HUMBLED HIMSELF
AND BECAME OBEDIENT
TO THE POINT OF DEATH,
EVEN THE DEATH OF
THE CROSS.”**

Phil. 2:8

Let us take a look at the cost of our redemption. Consider these vivid and frank excerpts from an article describing Jesus' death by crucifixion. Not only will it show us the pain and agony He suffered for us, but it will help us to grasp the significance of the meaning of taking up our own cross.



“Crucified! No death is so thorough. No shame is so complete.

First, there was the scourging.

The scourging post was two feet high. An iron ring, placed close to the top, projected from both sides. Clothing was ripped away from a prisoner so that he stood naked. Roman lictors were professionals. They confined their labours to the fine, brutal art of scourging, and they could beat a victim until only the barest spark of life remained in the prisoner. Wrists were firmly shackled to the iron rings. Then the victim was stretched, face down, with his feet pointing away from the post. The Roman scourge was a flagra, a short-handled whip consisting of several thin iron chains which ended in small weights.

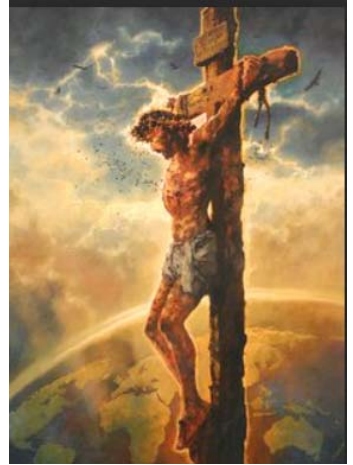
Scourging was called the "little death". It preceded the "big death": Crucifixion. Even the tension of awaiting the first blow is cruel. The body is rigid. The muscles knot in tormenting cramps. Colour drains from the cheeks. Lips are drawn tight against the teeth. As the whip descends, the chains fan out across the back, and each link cuts through the skin and deep into the flesh. The weights crash with bruising force into the ribs and curl tortuously around the chest. When a man is scourged there is pain beyond the memory of pain. Sweat bursts from the brow and stings the eyes. At each stroke of the flagra, a victim's body twitches like a beheaded chicken. The second stroke patterns the back and half of the chest with a V-shaped network of small cuts. Only the Son of God could hold back the high-pitched wail of unbearable agony. The very juice of life is torn away with every lash. There is only the blinding, burning pain as cruel whips whistle again and again through the air and across the back and shoulders. The flagra can flay a man alive. Under Hebrew law, the strokes were limited to 39. Roman punishment was not so limited. There was only one rule for the lictor who scourged a man about to be crucified: he must not die. A spark of life must be sustained for the agony on the cross. Men have bitten their tongues in two under such beatings. Only blessed unconsciousness could bring relief.

*The next step was the parade
to the execution ground.*

Roman politicians always liked to make examples of condemned men. The long, slow parade along public streets was designed to serve as a warning to others that Rome dealt quickly and mercilessly.

A centurion usually served as the executioner.

While four soldiers held the prisoner, he placed the sharp five-inch iron spike in the centre of the hand's wrist. A skilful, experienced blow would send it through to the wood. Four to five more strokes would hammer the spike deep into the rough plank, and a final blow turned it up so that the hand could not slip free. A small projection, resembling a rhinoceros horn and known as the "sedile" is fitted solidly through the crotch.



This was fitted in order to take most of the weight off the condemned man's hands. Then a nail was driven through each foot. It was a death reserved for slaves, thieves and traitors. The wounds in the hands send fire down through the arms. Fainting only relieves temporarily.

It is darkness and pain; then pain and darkness. The pain in the back, arms, hands, feet and crotch is a dull, throbbing, horrible, endless pain.

The pain builds up. It multiplies. It is cumulative.

There is not one moment of respite. The cross is planted so that the greatest amount of sunlight will pierce the prisoner's eyes. Below, the curious crowd wait, fascinated by the torture. The macabre scene is played out slowly. Dying should be a private thing, not a public spectacle.

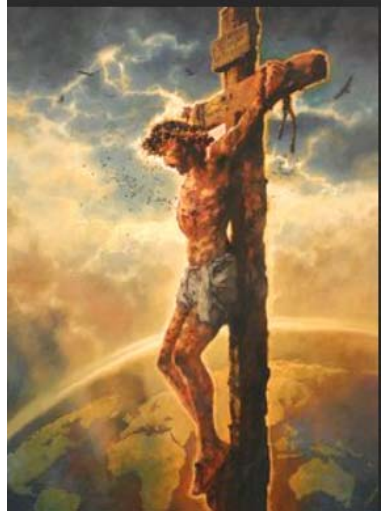
There is something obscene about having a mob of people standing around, waiting for you to die. Then the thirst begins. The lips are dry. The mouth is parched. The blood is hot. The skin is fevered. The greatest of all needs at this moment is a drop of cool water. Water is denied .

At the foot of the cross the death-squad drinks in the presence of the dying man, to add to his mental torment. The sun shines directly into the eyes of the crucified. Even when the eyelids are closed a red glare penetrates. The tongue thickens. What was once saliva is now like unloomed wool. Swelling begins in the hands and the feet. The sedile digs deeply into the genitals. It is impossible to turn, or to change one's position. Muscles begin to twitch. The real horror is only beginning.

What has happened up until now is child's play. One by one the muscles of the back gather in tight, knotty cramps. There is no escaping them, no pulling out of them, no gentle massaging hands to ease them away. They move across the shoulders and the thorax. They move down into the abdomen. After two hours on a cross, every muscle in the body is locked in solid knots and the agony is beyond endurance.

*Men shriek themselves into insanity.
The pain and symptoms are identical to
tetanus (lockjaw-when a muscle
undergoes continued contraction.)*

*Man, with all his genius, has never
devised a more cruel or more agonising
death than that of tetanus - the slow,
steady contraction of every muscle.
Death by crucifixion makes the agony
last as long as possible. Each hour is an
eternity. At times the cramps make the
neck rigid and the head is held flush
against the vertical beam. A man longs
for death. It is his only desire. There are
flies, insects, and the yelps of dogs with
the smell of blood in their nostrils.
Birds of prey, scavengers of the skies,
circle lower and lower.*



*Prayers seem to mock a man, but you either pray or curse.
As the hours pass, the tiny blood vessels which feed the nerves will be
squeezed flat, and with the lack of blood circulation comes paralysis.*

A new agony develops for those who linger on the cross.

*It is the agony of the mucous membrane. On the cross there is no
end of suffering. It is only the manner of suffering that changes, and
the degree of pain that changes. As the hours passed, soldiers were
inclined to hasten death. They began breaking bones. Standing on a
ladder, a practised legionnaire would swing a mallet in a short arc
and shatter the right femur (the thigh-bone) instantly.*

A second, sharp blow would shatter the left thigh.

These were new pains.

*During crucifixion, the mucous membrane - that thin, slippery
tissue which lines and lubricates much of the human body - dries
to the consistency of fine gravel and scrapes the tender tissues of
the anus (the posterior opening of the alimentary canal).*

*The dried membranes tear at the tortured throat.
They lie like stones in the sinuses. Layers of tissue are ripped
from the eyes every time they are moved or blinked.*

*Could there ever be more intense suffering this side of hell?
Most condemned men died naked.*

CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED.

He died the most brutal death ever devised by man."

by C. M. Ward (Sydney)
Source Unknown

To the natural eye, the cross was a place of defeat and humiliation inflicted by one's adversaries. However, this is not how the Word of God depicts what transpired behind the scenes. It was a place of triumph and victory. Consider what was wrought by means of the cross:

HE DISARMED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS...
Col. 2:15

HE DELIVERED THE SAINTS FROM THE POWER OF DEATH...
Heb. 2:14-15

HE OBTAINED THE KEYS TO DEATH AND HADES...
Rev. 1:18

HE PLACED THE SAINTS IN AUTHORITY WITH HIM FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER, MIGHT AND DOMINION...
Eph. 1:20-22, 2:4-6

PLAN OF BATTLE:
DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL
1 Jn. 3:8

METHOD OF BATTLE:
THE POWER OF THE CROSS
1 Cor. 1:18

COST OF BATTLE:
THE DEATH OF THE CROSS
Phil. 2:8 Heb. 12:2

The above diagram was from a previous teaching I had done on “the King of Glory-Mighty in Battle”. If you will take the time to read through all of the above scripture references, it will change your thinking about the concept of the cross. It was not a place of defeat, but of victory. The cross has to be counted among the weapons of our warfare, mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4) when you consider all that the scriptures reveal that was accomplished behind the scenes. This is why Paul would say the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18).

The cross of Christ is the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18). This is what Paul proclaims about the cross. We must come to grips with the fullness of what is being implied in this statement. It is more than the fact that we obtain forgiveness of sins through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20, Eph. 1:7). Look at the statement Paul makes pertaining to the power of the cross at work among those who are being saved:

“...GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME, AND I TO THE WORLD.”

Gal. 6:14

**"...GOD FORBID
THAT I SHOULD GLORY EXCEPT IN THE CROSS
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD
HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME, AND I TO THE WORLD."**

Gal. 6:14

THE **WORLD**



THE **FLESH**

**"KNOWING THIS,
THAT OUR OLD MAN
WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM,
THAT THE BODY OF SIN
MIGHT BE DONE AWAY WITH,
THAT WE SHOULD
NO LONGER BE SLAVES
OF SIN."**

Rom. 6:6

THE **DEVIL**

**"...HAVING NAILED IT
TO THE CROSS. HAVING
DISARMED PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS, HE MADE A
PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF THEM,
TRIUMPHING
OVER THEM
IN IT."**

Col. 2:14-15

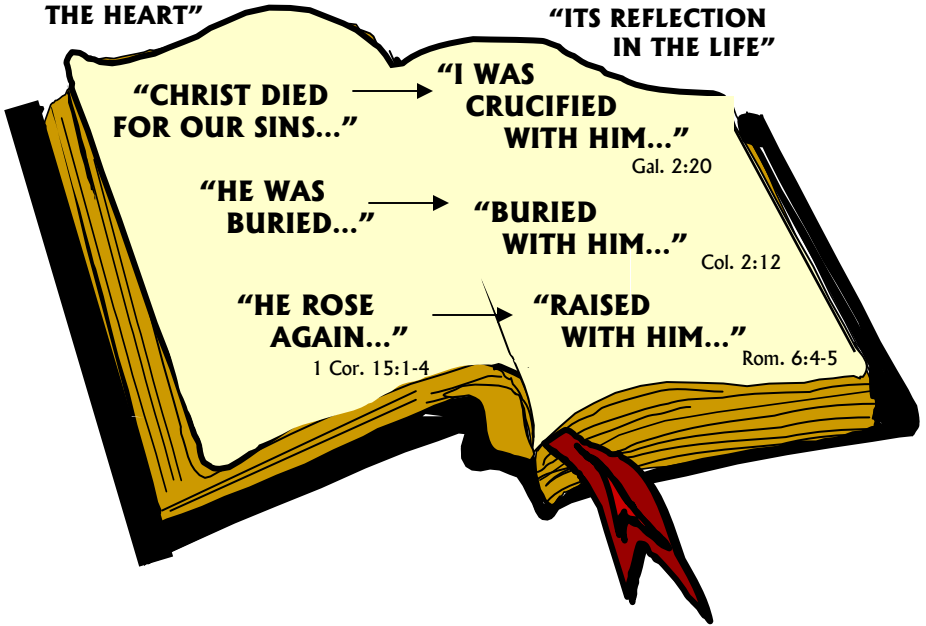
We are keenly aware that throughout the Word of God, we are given this three-fold mandate to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Paul reveals to us that the source of the ability to do so lies in the application of faith in the finished work of the cross of Christ. Jesus has done the work. We must respond in faith towards what He has accomplished on our behalf. It is our personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that supplies us with power to overcome. The central message of this power is the cross.

For the point of illustration, consider the teachings of Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul presents the gospel as consisting of Christ died for our sins... He was buried... He rose again... (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Central to this message is the cross. Paul goes on in other places in which we find him making a personal identification with these same three truths. Not only did Christ die for our sins, but we were crucified with Him. Not only is it true that He was buried, but we were buried with Him. Not only did He rise again, but we were raised with Him. We are to have a personal identification with the cross of Christ beyond the purchasing of our redemption. It is the very means by which we can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Through the personal application of what Christ did for Paul (and for us), we can see how this Divine influence on the heart led to a reflection in the life of Paul.

"DIVINE INFLUENCE ON THE HEART"

"ITS REFLECTION IN THE LIFE"



**"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST;
IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME:
AND THE LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH
I LIVE BY FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD,
WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.
I DO NOT SET ASIDE THE GRACE OF GOD..."**
Gal. 2:20-21

In its context, this reference of Paul, as not to have set aside the grace of God, certainly applies to more than having received forgiveness of sin. Paul is also speaking of "the life which I now live" as being an expression of faith in the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him. Paul speaks of a grace that produces a changed life! It is grace that has brought forth divine influence on the heart, but also a reflection in the life.



AM I BECOMING DOUBLE-CROSSED



EMBRACING
**THE
CROSS
OF
CHRIST**

**"...LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
THE AUTHOR AND
FINISHER OF OUR FAITH,
WHO FOR THE JOY THAT
WAS SET BEFORE HIM
ENDURED
THE CROSS..."**

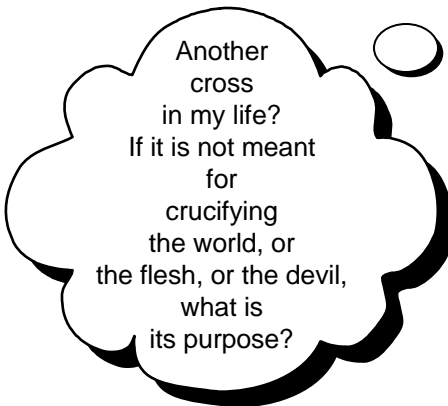
Heb. 12:2



EMBRACING
**THE
CROSS
OF A
CHRISTIAN**

**"IF ANYONE DESIRES
TO COME AFTER ME,
LET HIM DENY HIMSELF,
AND TAKE UP
HIS CROSS DAILY,
AND
FOLLOW ME."**

Luke 9:23

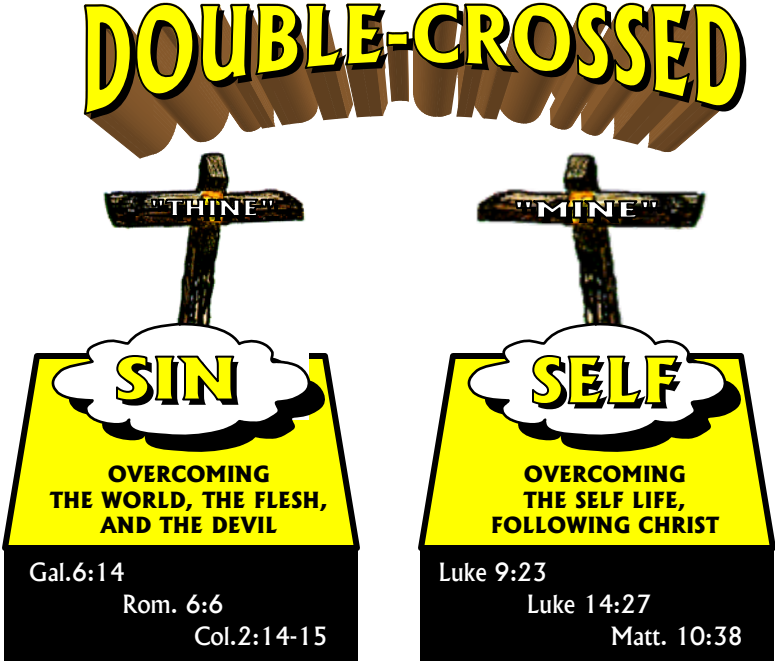


Another
cross
in my life?
If it is not meant
for
crucifying
the world, or
the flesh, or the devil,
what is
its purpose?



Having briefly pondered the cross of Christ, let us now consider the other half of being double-crossed, which is, the cross of a Christian. If indeed we overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil by means of faith in the finished work of the cross of Christ, what then can be the purpose for yet another cross in our life?

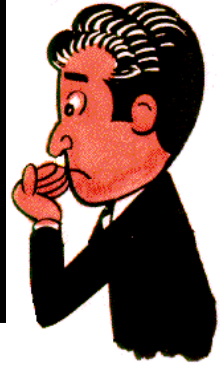
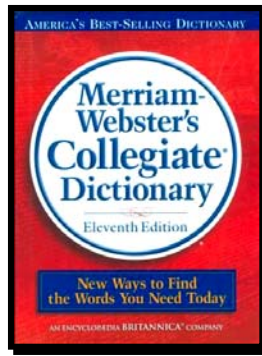
There are indeed two crosses in the life of a Christian. We are to be “double-crossed” living in a world under the domination of sin and self. Pictured below is a simplistic depiction of what it means to have a double-cross mentality. The cross of Christ is to be used to deal with the issue of sin. However, the cross of a Christian centers upon the crucifixion of the self-life.



We are constantly faced with choices in life. Not all of these choices stem from our three-fold enemy, the world, the flesh and the devil. Many are choices just to please self. Jesus has clearly stated that unless we deny self, we will not be able to become His disciples. To overcome self, we must maintain the concept of a daily cross life. This speaks of choosing a path of pain, suffering, and denial over self-indulgence, selfishness, and self-centeredness.

Perhaps you can testify that sin does not have dominion over you (Rom. 6:14), or that you do not let sin reign in your mortal body (Rom. 6:12). However, can you equally say that self does not reign over you either? It is quite easy to determine which cross you must apply in your life in any given situation. Just look to see whether one side of your choice is to practice what the Bible identifies as sin. It can stem from the world, the flesh or the devil. If you are dealing with sin, we must warfare with the finished work of the cross of Christ. However, when these choices are not sin, we must be aware of the danger of pleasing self. The mandate is that we are to become disciples. We can live above sin and still make self-pleasing choices which do not lead to becoming disciples.

SELF - SERVING
SELF - SUFFICIENT
SELF - INDULGENT
SELF - IMPORTANCE
SELF - INTERESTS
SELF - CENTERED
SELF - PLEASING
SELF - DEVOTION
SELF - PITY
SELF - CONFIDENT
SELF - PROMOTING
SELF - SEEKING
SELF - RELIANCE
SELF - CONSCIOUS
SELF - RIGHTEOUS
SELF - OPINIONATED
SELF - WILLED
SELF - GRATIFYING
SELF - DIRECTED



Lest we think that “self” as an enemy is no big thing, consider that Merriam-Webster’s dictionary lists four solid pages filled with various descriptions of “self” to ponder, some of which I have listed here to give you an idea of what a controlling force the self-life can be.

However,
know this:

**“...THE
 FRUIT
 OF
 THE SPIRIT
 IS...**



SELF-CONTROL

Gal. 5:22



The good news is that among the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians Chapter 5 is the fruit of self-control. That implies that the power to overcome the self-life is not left up to your own self.

**“...NOT BY MIGHT
 NOR BY POWER,
 BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAYS THE LORD...
 WITH SHOUTS OF
 GRACE, GRACE TO IT!”**

Zech. 4:6-7

**“THEREFORE
SINCE CHRIST
SUFFERED FOR US
IN THE FLESH,
ARM YOURSELVES ALSO
WITH THE SAME MIND,
FOR HE WHO HAS
SUFFERED IN THE FLESH
HAS CEASED FROM SIN...”**

1 Pet. 4:1

**“YOU HAVE
NOT YET
RESISTED TO
BLOODSHED
STRIVING AGAINST
SIN.”**

Heb. 12:4

Jesus has vividly portrayed to His disciples the cost of discipleship. He likened the normal Christian life to be that of experiencing a daily crucifixion.



**“FOR TO THIS
YOU WERE CALLED,
BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED
FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE,
THAT YOU SHOULD
FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS;
WHO COMMITTED NO SIN...”**

1 Pet. 2:21-22

Everyone knew what crucifixion was in Jesus' day. It was the means by which the Roman Empire kept the populous subdued by dreaded fear portrayed by the brutal act of crucifixion. It was indeed a dreaded terror to behold, let alone to personally experience. There could be no worse fate than that of the cross. In using this metaphor, Jesus is stating what mind-set it will take to overcome sin and self. It requires the embracing of the pain of change to become dead to sin, but alive unto God (Rom. 6:11). It requires a crucifixion of our own will in order that we may do the will of the Father. This was the battle cry of Jesus. Consider these passages in which He makes a proclamation concerning the will of God:



**“...BEHOLD, I HAVE COME...
TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.”**

Heb . 10:7

**“...NOT WHAT I WILL,
BUT WHAT YOU WILL.”**

Mark 14:36

**“...YOUR WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.”**

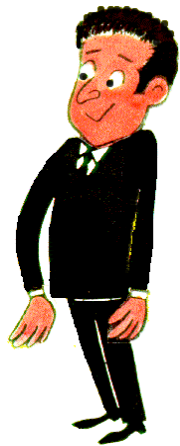
Matt. 6:10



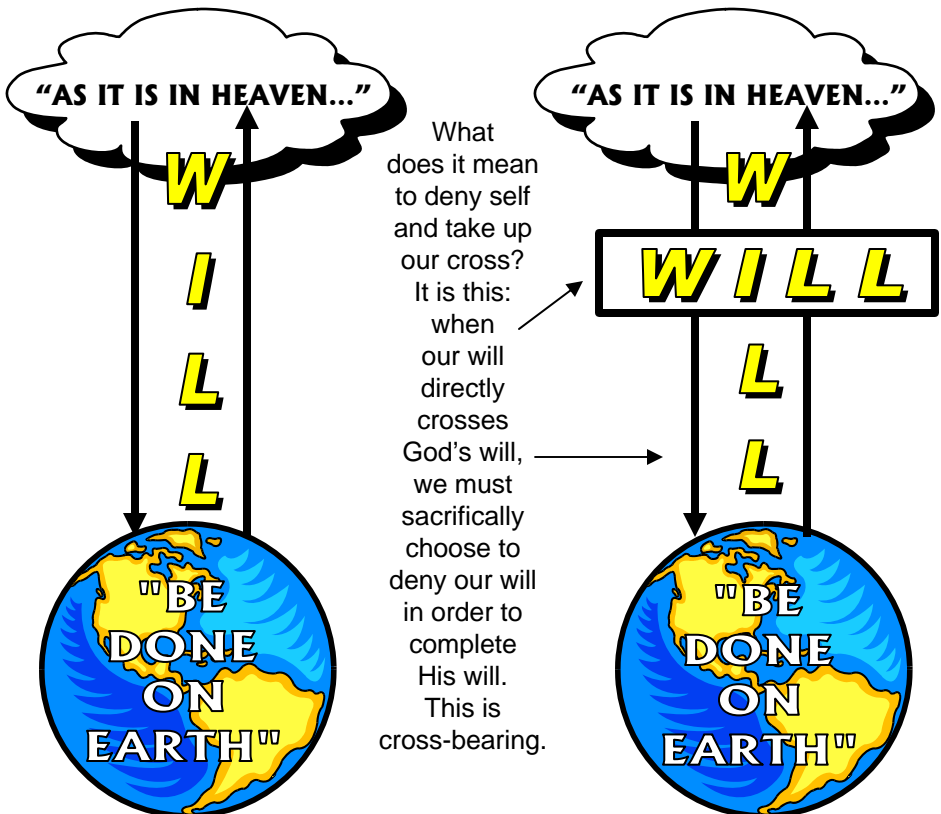
**"...BEHOLD, I HAVE COME...
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Heb . 10:7

**"...NOT WHAT I WILL,
BUT WHAT YOU WILL."**
Mark 14:36

**"...YOUR WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."**
Matt. 6:10



In order to follow Jesus we must first train our lips to say what He said. If our confession isn't the same, neither will our walk be like His. Jesus had His mind firmly set on doing the will of the Father. It was His motivation for life and His motivation in death. While on earth, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "...Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). It must become our confession as well.

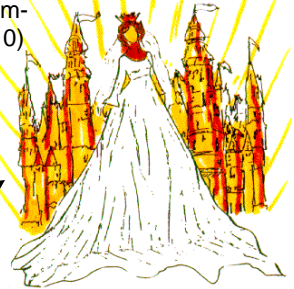


THE COST OF NON-DISCIPLESHIP:

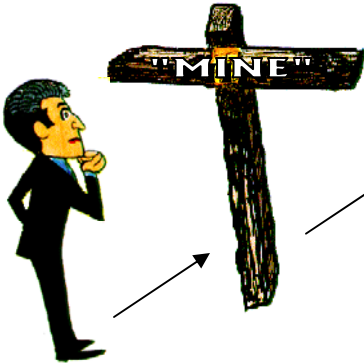
**...IS NOT
WORTHY OF ME."**
Matt. 10:38

**"HE WHO DOES NOT
TAKE UP HIS CROSS
AND FOLLOW
AFTER ME..."**

(the
Bridegroom-
Matt. 25:10)

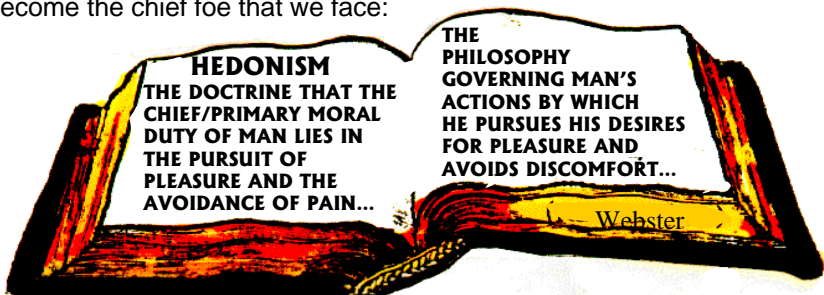


(the Bride of Christ- Eph. 5:25-27)



Not only must we count the cost of discipleship, but also the cost of non-discipleship. What does Jesus mean by His statement, "He who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of Me"?

It is not the aspect of eternal life, for no one is worthy. Jesus is speaking of what Paul would later identify as "a great mystery" (Eph. 5:32). It is the Bride of Christ. I believe non-discipleship will cost you the Bride of Christ in eternity. We will not be found worthy to be married to Christ because we have refused to deny self, take up our cross daily, and follow Him. Paul warns us about such things as philosophy being able to cheat us of things in Christ (Col. 2:8). The greatest philosophy governing America is hedonism. It is an anti-cross philosophy that is directly opposed to the mandate of denying self, taking up our cross daily, and following after Christ. Hedonistic philosophy is deeply rooted among God's people in America. Actually, the Constitution was written to support it's underlying basis of life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I believe it is also due to the erroneous preaching of one-cross theology in which God's people are willing to let Jesus do all the dying and suffering. This is only a half-truth. In prosperous America this hedonistic, self-centered philosophy has become the chief foe that we face:



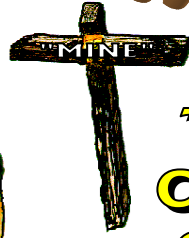
BECOMING

DOUBLE-CROSSED



**THE
CROSS
OF
CHRIST**

**MAKES YOU A
CHRISTIAN**



**THE
CROSS
OF A
CHRISTIAN**

**MAKES YOU
CHRIST-LIKE**



God not only calls all men to become Christians by means of reconciliation through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20), He also has predestined Christians to become Christ-like:

**"FOR WHOM
HE FOREKNEW,
HE ALSO PREDESTINED
TO BE CONFORMED
TO THE IMAGE OF
HIS SON,
THAT HE MIGHT BE
THE FIRSTBORN
AMONG MANY
BRETHREN."**

Rom. 8:29



**"BUT WE ALL...
BEHOLDING
AS IN A MIRROR
THE GLORY
OF THE LORD,
ARE BEING TRANSFORMED
INTO THE SAME IMAGE
FROM GLORY TO GLORY...
BY THE SPIRIT
OF THE LORD."**

2 Cor. 3:18

We can embrace half-the-truth and become Christians through the cross of Christ. Thereby we partake of the benefits of the suffering of Christ on our behalf. However great that is, God is calling us to embrace the whole truth pertaining to suffering:

**"FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED ON BEHALF OF CHRIST,
NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE."**

Phil. 1:29

As Christians, we are called to go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1). Jesus, the author of our salvation, was Himself made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). We are reminded that we are not greater than our Master, but that it is enough to be like the master (Jn. 13:16). Therefore we must also take up our cross in order to follow after Christ's sufferings. It is the pathway to perfection.

THE NEED TO BE DOUBLE-CROSSED

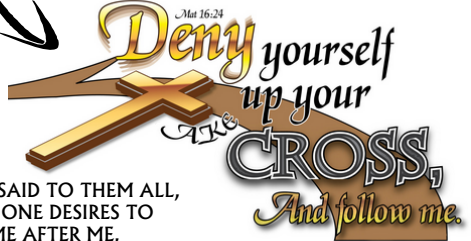
Let me give you a vivid illustration which may help you to see the clear distinction which must be made between our justification and our sanctification and also to see the impact sanctification has upon our glorification. There are actually two crosses in the life of every believer:

"HIS CROSS"



"HE HUMBLED HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS." Phil. 2:8

"OUR CROSS"



"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL, 'IF ANY ONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME,

LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME." Luke 9:23

THE CROSS OF OUR

JUSTIFICATION

"TO MAKE INNOCENT, TO MAKE RIGHTEOUS."

THE CROSS OF OUR

SANCTIFICATION

"TO SET APART, HOLY IN CONDUCT."

1. HIS CROSS WILL JUSTIFY US... MAKE US INNOCENT, AND RIGHTEOUS...

1. OUR CROSS WILL SANCTIFY US... MAKE US SET APART, CONSECRATED, HOLY PEOPLE UNTO GOD...

2. HIS CROSS PROVIDES FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS, EVEN AS BELIEVERS...

2. OUR CROSS PROVIDES VICTORY OVER SIN AS WE DENY THE SELFISH LUSTS OF OUR FLESH NATURE...

3. HIS CROSS PROVIDES ETERNAL LIFE TO EVERYONE WHO WILL EMBRACE IT...

3. OUR CROSS PROVIDES ETERNAL REWARDS FOR EVERYONE WHO WILL EMBRACE IT...

The contrasts depicted in the previous chart center upon “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” in the areas of justification and sanctification. The cross of Christ represents the essence of our justification (means by which we are made innocent). The cross of the Christian makes provision for our sanctification (“to be holy/separate”). Because of a failure to rightly divide justification and sanctification, many saints has only a “one-cross mentality” which results in Jesus doing all the suffering. It is true that we can add nothing to our justification for it is complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). However, concerning our sanctification Paul writes:

“BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHO BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST...”

Philippians 1:6

“FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, YOUR SANCTIFICATION... THAT EACH OF YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW TO POSSESS HIS OWN VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR... FOR GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNESS, BUT IN HOLINESS...”

1 Thess. 4:3,4,7

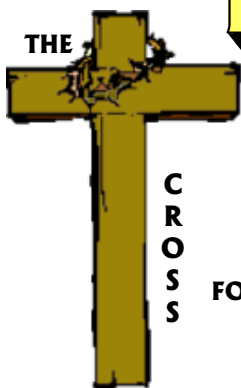
NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY; AND MAY YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE WHO CALLS YOU IS FAITHFUL, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT.”

1 Thress. 5:23-24

The argument that both justification and sanctification were complete at the moment of the new birth will not stand up to the light of such scriptures as those above. There are many more passages which show that our sanctification is an on-going process which will continue until the return of Christ. Certainly water baptism is an act of sanctification, but it is not the entirety of what God has in mind for our sanctification. It is by means of our cross and our suffering that our perfection will be completed. Like it or not, we are called to be perfect as our Father is perfect (see Matt. 5:48). We are exhorted to go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1). Perhaps we struggle with Jesus being perfected through His sufferings but that is what the scripture says (Heb. 5:8-9). We are called to the same pattern of perfection, the pattern of the cross. The old hymn, “The Old Rugged Cross” presents an erroneous concept:

WE SHALL

EXCHANGE



Yes, we will exchange a cross for a crown, but that famous old hymn has its crosses mixed up. We will not exchange His cross for a crown, but rather it will be our cross which, if embraced, will be exchanged for a crown!



**CROWNS IN HEAVEN
ARE THE RESULT
OF GOOD WORKS-GOOD DEEDS,
NOT GIFTS OF GOD'S GRACE**



1. **"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION;
FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVEN,
HE WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE..."**

James 1:12

**"I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,
I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE,
I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.
FINALLY, THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME
THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
WHICH THE LORD,
THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE,
WILL GIVE ME ON THAT DAY..."**

2 Tim. 4:7-8



- 2.

**"DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO
RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN,
BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE?
RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT.
AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE
IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS..."**

**WE (RUN) FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN...
I DISCIPLINE MY BODY AND BRING IT INTO
SUBJECTION, LEST, WHEN I HAVE PREACHED TO
OTHERS I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME DISQUALIFIED."**

1 Cor. 9:24-27



- 3.



- 4.

**"FOR WHAT IS OUR HOPE, OR JOY,
OR CROWN OF REJOICING?
IS IT NOT YOU...? THEREFORE MY BELOVED...
MY JOY AND MY CROWN... STAND FAST IN THE LORD..."**

2 Thess. 2:19-20 & Phil. 4:1



- 5.

**"BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE
YOU THE CROWN OF LIFE."**

Rev. 2:20

**"SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD... SERVING AS OVERSEERS,
NOT BY CONSTRAINT BUT WILLINGLY, NOT FOR
DISHONEST GAIN BUT EAGERLY, NOT AS BEING LORDS
OVER THOSE ENTRUSTED TO YOU,
BUT BEING EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK;
AND WHEN THE CHIEF SHEPHERD APPEARS, YOU WILL
RECEIVE THE CROWN OF GLORY..."**

1 Pet. 5:2-4



- 6.

**"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE,
THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN." Rev. 3:11**



...AND ON HIS HEAD WERE MANY CROWNS..."

Rev. 19:12

The crowns Jesus will wear at His Second Coming are the same ones He offers to His followers:

CROWN OF LIFE – to those who like Jesus and Paul, endure (suffer) temptation (suffer in resisting temptation).

CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – to those who, like Jesus and Paul, fought the good fight, ran the race, and kept the faith.

IMPERISHABLE CROWN– to those who, like Jesus and Paul, were temperate in all things and disciplined their own body bringing it into subjection.

CROWN OF REJOICING– to those like Jesus and Paul, a soul winners crown, for those who make disciples.

CROWN OF LIFE – to those like Jesus and Paul, who were called to be faithful unto death.

CROWN OF GLORY- like Jesus and Paul, faithful pastors and teachers that labored among God's people.

"THEREFORE, I TESTIFY TO YOU THIS DAY THAT I AM INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN. FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD."

Acts 20:26-27

Paul makes the above statement with boldness because he never shunned to preach the whole counsel of God to God's people. His epistles are laced equally with words that comfort and words that confront. The cross of Christ is a message of comfort which we all need to embrace, but the cross of a Christian is a message that confronts how we live. We need to be "double-crossed"!



**THE
CROSS
OF
CHRIST**

**THE
CROSS
OF A
CHRISTIAN**

MAKES YOU A

MAKES YOU

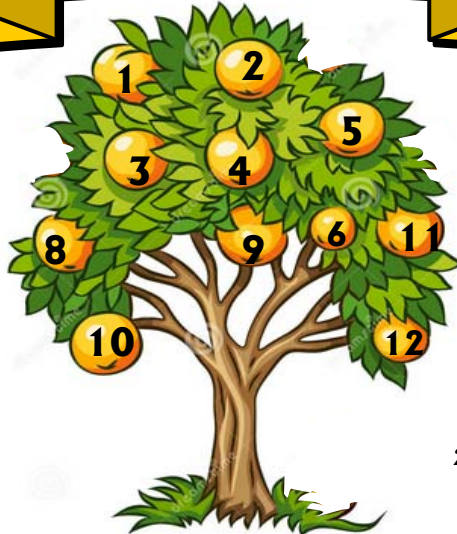
CHRISTIAN

CHRIST-LIKE

THE THIRD FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH GOD

**“...IF ANYONE DESIRES TO BE FIRST,
HE MUST BE LAST OF ALL
AND SERVANT OF ALL..”**

Mark 9:35 Amplified

**“...THE SON OF MAN
DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED,
BUT TO SERVE...”**

Mark 10:45

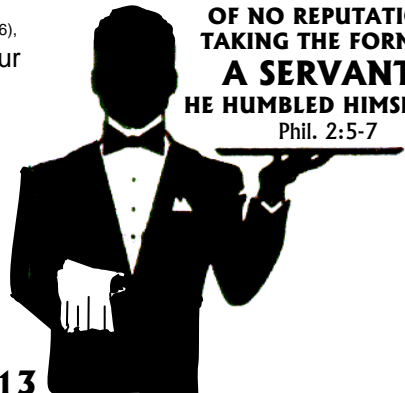


It is important to grasp that God never asks His people to do or be something that He has not demonstrated Himself.

In addition to Jesus coming to earth to inherit such lofty roles as “a Prophet like unto Moses” (Acts 3:22-26), as “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb. 3:1), as “the Chief Cornerstone of the Household of God” (Eph. 2:19-20), as “King of the Kingdom of God” (Jn. 18:36-37), as “Head of the Body, the Church” (Col. 1:18), He also came to assume the lowly office of a servant.

**“LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU
WHICH WAS ALSO
IN CHRIST JESUS,
WHO...MADE HIMSELF
OF NO REPUTATION,
TAKING THE FORM OF
A SERVANT...
HE HUMBLIED HIMSELF...”**

Phil. 2:5-7



Jesus must have taught His disciples well this principle of servanthood. Look carefully at how five of the New Testament writers identify themselves as they open their epistles. Although three of the five were definitely holding the highest office in the government of God's church, that of an Apostle, (Jude and Timothy are debatable) they listed themselves first and foremost as servants of Jesus Christ:



**"PETER,
A SERVANT
AND APOSTLE OF
JESUS CHRIST..."**

2 Pet. 1:1



**"JUDE,
A SERVANT
OF JESUS CHRIST..."**

Jude 1



**"JAMES,
A SERVANT
OF GOD AND THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST..."**

James 1:1

**"PAUL AND TIMOTHY,
SERVANTS
OF JESUS CHRIST..."**

Phil. 1:1



Unlike the above role models, segments of today's church leaders seem to cherish being introduced with lofty titles.

Some pastors prefer the more lofty title of "Reverend" when only God is worthy of reverence. Television personalities flash on the screen, "Apostle such and such" or "Prophet so and so." Not that these governmental gifts are not for today, but I don't believe they should be blatantly printed in large print on business cards or seminar brochures. If one is truly an Apostle or Prophet in God's church today, the people will know and recognize those gifts without personal promotion. I pastor a local church and have a calling to teach God's Word. I reluctantly accept the use of these titles (pastor and teacher) because they state what functions I do for God's Kingdom. However, I prefer to be known best as "a servant of the Most High God." It is very interesting to note that this phrase, "servants of the Most High God," appears only twice in Scripture, once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament.

It is most noteworthy that both of these references were spoken by the mouth of pagan unbelievers who recognized true servants of God when they saw them:

"SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD"

Dan. 3:26

“THEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR WENT NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE AND SPOKE, SAYING, “SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO,

SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD,

COME OUT, AND COME HERE.’ ”

Acts 16:16-17

“...A CERTAIN SLAVE GIRL POSSESSED WITH A SPIRIT OF DIVINATION... FOLLOWED PAUL AND US, AND CRIED OUT, SAYING, ‘THESE MEN ARE

THE SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD,

WHO PROCLAIM TO US THE WAY OF SALVATION.’ ”

I am reminded of the story of the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who attempted to cast out demons “in the name of Jesus that Paul preached.”

The demons replied,

“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” (Acts 19:14).

Jesus and Paul were servants of God, these men were not.



“LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, DID NOT CONSIDER IT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD, BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, TAKING THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND COMING IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN. AND BEING FOUND IN APPEARANCE AS A MAN, HE HUMBLD HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.

THEREFORE GOD ALSO HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM AND GIVEN HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THOSE IN HEAVEN, AND OF THOSE ON EARTH, AND OF THOSE UNDER THE EARTH, AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

THEREFORE MY BELOVED... WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING; FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE.”

Philippians 2:5-13

LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS:

1. NOT HIGH-MINDED IN BEING EQUAL WITH GOD...
2. HE MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION...
3. HE TOOK THE FORM OF A SERVANT...
4. IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN...
5. HE HUMBLD HIMSELF...
6. OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH...
7. EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS...



HE TOOK SEVEN STEPS DOWNWARD...



HE TOOK SEVEN STEPS UPWARD...

7. EVERY TONGUE CONFESSES JESUS IS LORD...
6. THOSE IN HEAVEN...
5. THOSE ON THE EARTH...
4. OF THOSE BELOW THE EARTH...
3. AT WHICH EVERY KNEE MUST BOW...
2. GIVEN HIM A NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME...
1. THEREFORE GOD HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM...

THEREFORE WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION...

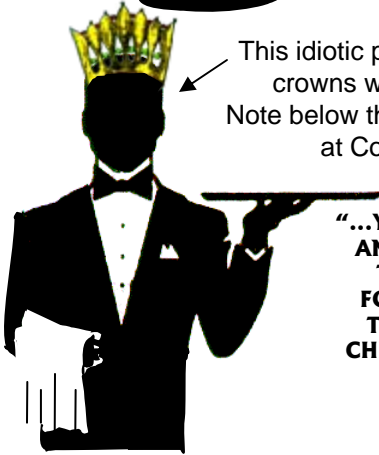
The mind-set that Paul urges us to adopt is this pattern which follows the steps of Jesus. Notice the seven steps downward lead to seven steps upward. Paul tells us to work out our own salvation in the same manner. The moral to the story is that to embrace a downward pattern of humility in this life leads to an upward path in eternity for us just as it did for Jesus. Taking the form of a servant is the key principle or mental attitude which enabled Jesus to also be obedient, humble, and to embrace even the death of self on the cross.

**"HE TOOK THE FORM
OF A SERVANT..."**



**"HUMBLED
HIMSELF..."**

**BECAME
OBEDIENT..."**



This idiotic picture is an oxymoron. Servants don't wear crowns while they serve. It is a conflict of interest. Note below that Paul brought strong reproof to the church at Corinth for it's brand of today's popular "King's Kids" theology.

**"...YOU HAVE REIGNED AS KINGS WITHOUT US—
AND INDEED I COULD WISH YOU DID REIGN,
THAT WE ALSO MIGHT REIGN WITH YOU!
FOR I THINK THAT GOD HAS DISPLAYED US,
THE APOSTLES, LAST... WE ARE FOOLS FOR
CHRIST'S SAKE, BUT YOU ARE WISE IN CHRIST!
WE ARE WEAK, BUT YOU ARE STRONG!
YOU ARE DISTINGUISHED,
BUT WE ARE DISHONORED!..."**

1 Cor. 4:8-10

Some of today's hype that is put forth as God's will for His people stands in direct opposition to Paul's words above. God does promise His overcoming saints that they shall have "power over the nations" and "rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27), but not now! Such reigning is reserved for the Millennial Kingdom to come. However, serving in God's present internal Kingdom is the key for the future. Serve now-reign later! Reign now-serve later! This is the clear teaching of Christ. Below is the story of two of Jesus' disciples who were having a discussion with Jesus about their desire to sit on His right hand and on His left in the Kingdom to come. Jesus gave a principle to them that governs who will and will not reign in the coming Kingdom:

**"...YOU KNOW THAT THOSE WHO ARE CONSIDERED RULERS OVER
THE GENTILES LORD IT OVER THEM, AND THEIR GREAT ONES
EXERCISE AUTHORITY OVER THEM. YET IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG
YOU; BUT WHOEVER DESIRES TO BECOME GREAT AMONG YOU
SHALL BE YOUR SERVANT. AND WHOEVER OF YOU DESIRES TO BE
FIRST SHALL BE SLAVE OF ALL.
FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME
TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE..."**

Mark 10:42-45

IT IS THE SERVANT THAT WILL RULE

Search the Scriptures and you will find this is the clear and often repeated teaching of Christ! An emphasis upon being a servant in this life leads to reigning in the life to come. Here are two more examples:



“...BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT WHOM HIS MASTER WILL FIND SO DOING WHEN HE COMES. TRULY, I SAY TO YOU THAT HE WILL MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HAS.”

Luke 12:43-44

“WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS.”

Matt. 25:23

The faithful servant will one day become ruler over all that the Master has. What is required? He must be found a faithful servant of God. We live in a culture dominated by the philosophy of the Gentiles which centers upon doing whatever is necessary to get to the top. To be in authority is the world's priority. As followers of Christ, we must cultivate the wiser counsel as stated above. Humility in this life as a servant of God leads to great authority in the life to come.

There are several governing principles we need to ponder that will determine whether God will indeed say to each of us, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:23). What is the criteria that determines whether our servanthood will be deemed

(1) “good” and (2) “faithful” in God's estimation?

Let me suggest seven for your consideration:



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

“... LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT, BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN HIMSELF... LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS... HE MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION... TAKING THE FORM OF A SERVANT... HE HUMBLED HIMSELF...”

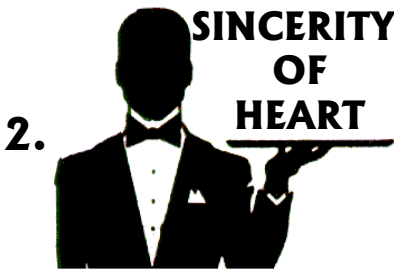
Phil.2:3-8 excerpts

In the natural realm we could picture a humble servant best with the illustration of a waiter. I must say that I have experienced some waiters who totally failed to bear any resemblance to what is described above in Phil. 2:5-8.

However, normally we find that waiters or waitresses know what they are supposed to do. They are to serve, and serve well, with a good attitude towards what they are doing. There is nothing more pleasant than a waiter or waitress who does all things well. Needless to say, (but I will) there is nothing worse than a high-minded, obnoxious person performing with a spirit of duty and drudgery. The same contrasts apply in the spiritual realm in our service to God. We are to bear the attitude of a servant who functions in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than himself, making himself of no reputation by humbling himself. Jesus taught by example in taking the lowly task of foot washing, thus teaching His disciples how to serve one another. I do not believe He intended for this to become a church ritual to be literally practiced. Perhaps in today's society we should wash one another's cars as fulfilling the mandate to assume the lowly task. It was an object lesson designed to convey the essence of servanthood. We should always be quick and ready to do what no one else really wants to do. This is humbleness of mind. This is esteeming others better than ourselves. It should be practiced in our homes, in our work places as well as in our churches. Paul states:

**"BE OF THE SAME MIND TOWARD ONE ANOTHER.
DO NOT SET YOUR MIND ON HIGH THINGS, BUT ASSOCIATE WITH
THE HUMBLE. DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION."**

Romans 12:16



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**"SERVANTS,
BE OBEDIENT
TO THOSE WHO ARE YOUR MASTERS
ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,
WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING,
IN SINCERITY OF HEART,
AS TO CHRIST,
NOT WITH EYE SERVICE,
AS MEN-PLEASERS,
BUT AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST,
DOING THE WILL OF GOD
FROM THE HEART,
WITH GOODWILL DOING SERVICE
AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT TO MEN,
KNOWING THAT WHATEVER GOOD ANYONE DOES,
HE WILL RECEIVE THE SAME FROM THE LORD..."**

Eph. 6:5-8

**"SERVANTS,
OBEY IN ALL THINGS YOUR MASTERS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,
NOT WITH EYESERVICE AS MEN-PLEASERS,
BUT IN SINCERITY OF HEART, FEARING GOD.
AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY,
AS TO THE LORD AND NOT TO MEN,
KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD YOU WILL RECEIVE
THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE;
FOR YOU SERVE THE LORD CHRIST. BUT HE WHO DOES WRONG WILL
BE REPAID FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HAS DONE..."**

Col. 3:22-25

Our society does not have a master-servant structure as it existed in Paul's day. However, the principle still can be applied. The closest relationship to which these principles apply is that of our work environment. Most of us are employees of an employer. This is today's master-servant relationship. God requires His people to have sincerity of heart in all that they do. We are to serve men understanding that we are really serving God Himself! If we cheat our employers, we cheat our God. Note that God will repay wrong as well as right service. God wants His people to be under authority in the workplace, in the church ("Obey those who rule over you"-Heb.13:7,17), and in society ("Let every soul be subject to governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God..." (Rom.13:1). God will repay for right and wrong done in all these areas of authority.

3.



USEFUL TO THE MASTER

**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**“...IN A GREAT HOUSE THERE
ARE NOT ONLY VESSELS OF
GOLD AND SILVER,
BUT ALSO OF WOOD AND
CLAY, SOME FOR HONOR AND
SOME FOR DISHONOR.
THEREFORE, IF ANYONE
CLEANSES HIMSELF FROM
THE LATTER,
HE WILL BE A VESSEL FOR HONOR,
SANCTIFIED
AND USEFUL FOR THE MASTER,
PREPARED FOR
EVERY GOOD WORK.”**
2 Tim.2:20-21

When an important person comes to your house for dinner, you will seek to put on the table all your vessels of honor. You will not serve his drink in a paper cup, or give him a plastic fork, will you? The verses above imply that God saves His vessels of honor for His good works. He wants sanctified saints who have cleansed themselves from all that would bring dishonor to His name. These are vessels considered to be useful for the Master.

When God had a message to impart which “in other ages was not made known to the sons of men”, He entrusted it to His holy apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5). When the early church had need of men even to wait on tables, God wanted men chosen with the criteria of being “of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:2-3). One of those men, Stephen, would go from the lowly task of waiting on tables to becoming “full of faith and power, doing great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8).

It certainly could be said of Stephen that he was faithful as a servant, and later on, as an evangelist, he was faithful also in much. (Luke 16:10). Read his story in Acts 6-8. The United States Marines are always advertising for a few good men, and so is God looking for a few good vessels of honor to carry out His good works. A good servant is one that is useful to the Master.

4. FAITHFUL TO THE MASTER



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**“MOREOVER IT IS
REQUIRED IN SERVANTS
THAT ONE BE FOUND
FAITHFUL.”**

1 Cor. 4:1

**“AND MOSES INDEED WAS
FAITHFUL
IN ALL HIS HOUSE
AS A SERVANT,
FOR A TESTIMONY...”**

Heb.3:5

God requires His servants to be found faithful. Moses was “faithful in all his house as a servant.” The very next verse states that Christ is “... over His own house, whose house we are...” (vs.6). The question is whether we, as the church (the house of Christ) will have a testimony like Moses of being found faithful as a servant.

“...WHO CAN FIND A FAITHFUL MAN?”

Proverbs 20:6

This verse from Proverbs implies that faithfulness is a rare quality. This is strange in light of the fact that faithfulness is listed as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22). Is it possible that this is the main area in which God’s people are “grieving the Holy Spirit by whom they were sealed for the day of redemption”? (Eph.4:30). The fact of the matter is that God asks His people to be available to Him. He takes the available and makes them capable. It was so with Moses, although he was slow of speech and not eloquent (Ex.4:10-12). In spite of his deficiencies, God sent him to speak on His behalf to Pharaoh. God told Moses, “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say” (Ex.4:12).

Our faithfulness as servants will determine our rewards in heaven. This is the clear teaching of Jesus in the parables of the talents and minas (Luke 19:11-27, Matt.25:14:-30). The unprofitable servant, however, was cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 25:30). Truly it is required in servants that one be found faithful.

5.

**GRACE,
REVERENCE
AND
GODLY FEAR**



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**“...LET US HAVE
GRACE,
BY WHICH WE MAY
SERVE GOD
ACCEPTABLY
WITH REVERENCE
AND GODLY FEAR.”**

Heb. 12:28

Our first thoughts might be that grace and fear don't mix together. However, we find this mix recorded of the early church:

**“AND GREAT GRACE WAS UPON THEM ALL... (Acts 4:33)
“THEN ALL THE CHURCHES THROUGHOUT ALL JUDEA,
GALILEE AND SAMARIA HAD PEACE AND WERE EDIFIED.
AND WALKING IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND IN THE COMFORT OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEY WERE MULTIPLIED.” (Acts 9: 31)**

The theology of the modern-day church emphasizes only the need to walk in the comfort of the Holy Spirit by means of the grace of God. The doctrine of the fear of the Lord is relegated to the God of the Old Testament, the law-giver. This cannot be substantiated, for the contents of the book of Acts refutes such nonsense. What about the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts Chapter Five? These were New Testament believers who lost their lives solely because they lied to the Holy Spirit. The God of the New Testament swiftly killed them resulting in great impact upon the church:

**“SO GREAT FEAR CAME UPON ALL THE CHURCH
AND UPON ALL WHO HEARD THESE THINGS.” Acts 5:11**

Then consider the contrast recorded just 15 verses prior to the “great fear” induced upon this early church:

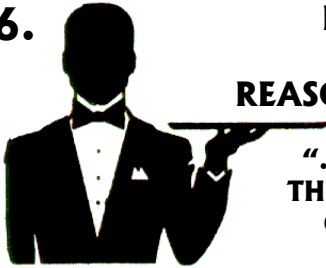
“...AND GREAT GRACE WAS UPON THEM ALL.” Acts 4:33

When God's people violate His great grace, then God may resort to a dose of great fear. A delicate balance of these two concepts needs to be restored to the theology of the church of today. Consider this principle from the Old Testament which easily can be seen as the moral to the story of Ananias and Sapphira. This passage easily could have been written as an epitaph on their tombstones:

**“FOR WHEN YOUR JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH,
THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.
LET GRACE BE SHOWN TO THE WICKED;
YET HE WILL NOT LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**

Isa. 26:9-10

6.



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

HIS LABORS ARE HIS REASONABLE SERVICE

**“...WHEN YOU HAVE DONE ALL
THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU WERE
COMMANDED, SAY, WE ARE
UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.
WE HAVE DONE WHAT WAS
OUR DUTY TO DO.”**

Luke 17:10

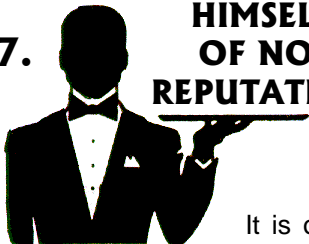
The above parable is warning about thinking too highly of ourselves as servants. There are things that God considers as our reasonable service. Paul taught this as well:

**“I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD,
THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE,
HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD,
WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.”**

Rom. 12:1

It would be easy to think that we have given God the greatest gift in the world when we offer our body as a living sacrifice. However, this is expected as part of our reasonable service. When a soldier shows up for battle, is this not his reasonable service? However, if he risks life and limb in battle, he may receive a commendation for service beyond the line of duty. Servants serve. This is their reasonable service. The servant who hears, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:23), will excel in his service to God. He will seek to do more than what is expected. When compelled to go one mile, he will volunteer to go two (Matt. 5:41). He will be like the good Samaritan who went far beyond what would be expected. Don't just be a servant of God. Be the best servant of God. It will be worth it!

7.



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

MAKES HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION

**“...BEING IN THE FORM
OF GOD,
HE MADE HIMSELF
OF NO REPUTATION,
TAKING THE FORM
OF A SERVANT...”**

Phil. 2:5-8

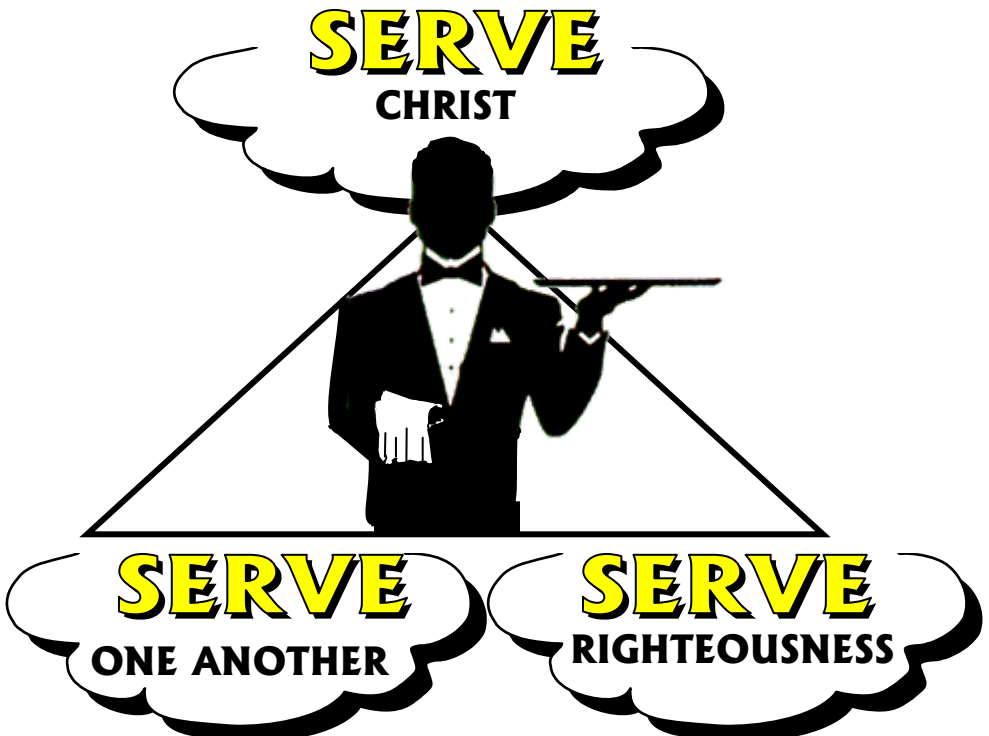
It is one thing to serve to be seen, but quite another to serve behind the scenes. An example of what I mean could be seen in the fact that many men would prefer to preach than to pray. One is visible to men, but the other invisible.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees who “loved to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men” (Matt. 6:5). However, God commended those who would go into their room, shut the door, and pray to their father in secret. (Matt. 6:6).

To pray in public may earn us the reputation before men as a man of prayer. However, when we pray in secret our reputation will only be known by God. If we will do one in public, but not the other in private, then we must weigh what our motives are. Are we, like the Pharisees, seeking a reputation before men? That is pride.

The servant is to make himself of no reputation. I believe it would require that we do far more behind the scenes than we do when we can be seen. Jesus taught this secret principle concerning not only praying, but in giving, and in fasting (Matt. 6:1-18). It is a difficult and delicate mandate to carry out. Paul said, “...we make it our aim...to be well-pleasing to Him” (2Cor.5:9). In another place he said, “... circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit...whose praise is not from men but from God” (Rom.2:29). John the Baptist summarizes the needed mentality that we must cultivate, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30).

If you are now convinced that you also should be taking the form of a servant, then here are three ways in which we are instructed to do so:





“AND WHATEVER YOU DO IN WORD OR DEED, DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER THROUGH HIM.... AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY, AS TO THE LORD AND NOT TO MEN, KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE; FOR YOU SERVE THE LORD CHRIST.”

Col. 3:17,23-24

Begin by cultivating the concept that Jesus is not only your Savior but also is your Master and Lord. We live in a self-serving society. By embracing the cross we learn to deny self, and through servanthood we are able to serve the Lord Christ. We must pay attention to what Jesus has promised concerning servanthood. In eternity there will come a day of accountability in which God is going to measure the degree of our willingness to serve.

“...WHO THEN IS THAT FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD (SERVANT), WHOM HIS MASTER WILL MAKE RULER OVER HIS HOUSEHOLD...? BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT WHOM HIS MASTER WILL FIND SO DOING WHEN HE COMES. TRULY, I SAY TO YOU THAT HE WILL MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HAS.”

“LET YOUR WAIST BE GIRDED... AND YOU YOURSELVES BE LIKE MEN WHO WAIT FOR THEIR MASTER... BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS WHOM THE MASTER, WHEN HE COMES, WILL FIND WATCHING. ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU THAT HE WILL GIRD HIMSELF AND HAVE THEM TO SIT DOWN TO EAT, AND WILL COME AND SERVE THEM.”

Luke 12:37-42 excerpts

“FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MAN TRAVELING TO A FAR COUNTRY, WHO CALLED HIS OWN SERVANTS AND DELIVERED HIS GOODS TO THEM.... AFTER A LONG TIME THE LORD OF THOSE SERVANTS CAME AND SETTLED ACCOUNTS WITH THEM.... ‘WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU WERE FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS...’”

Matthew 25:14-21 excerpts

Perhaps in this life, you may serve and find appreciation and recognition. However beware for at times, you may not receive recognition and appreciation for your labor:

“SERVANTS, BE SUBMISSIVE TO YOUR MASTERS WITH ALL FEAR IS COMMENDABLE, IF... ONE... SUFFERS WRONGFULLY... WHEN YOU DO GOOD AND SUFFER FOR IT, IF YOU TAKE IT PATIENTLY, THIS IS COMMENDABLE BEFORE GOD.” 1 Peter 2:18-20 excerpts

Often God will allow us to suffer for doing good as servants. His purpose is simply to reveal whom we are really serving. We will not be either offended or disappointed if we are truly serving Christ. However, when we react negatively, then it is a sign that we are seeking the approval of men. Our text scripture at the top of this page tells us to always remember that we serve Christ and not men. Paul also tells us to keep in mind that our reward will come from Christ as well. Take time to read Matthew Chapter Six. Jesus stresses that when we do things in secret that He will reward us openly. He contrasts it to those who do things to be seen of men, and He warns “they have their reward”. Are we going to serve for the glory and praise received from men or for the glory of Christ Himself?

**“...THROUGH LOVE
SERVE ONE ANOTHER.”**

Gal. 5:13

SERVE ONE ANOTHER

Gal. 5:13

The second area in which we can function as servants is to serve one another. Want a good definition of serving one another in love? Try this: “LOVE” is vividly portrayed in the contents of the twenty-six commandments found in the New Testament that use the phrase “one another”. Here is love defined from A to Z:

- a. **TO FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER** (1 Jn. 1:7 and Heb. 10:25)
- b. **TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER** (Jn. 13:34-35)
- c. **TO DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 12:5)
- d. **TO GIVE HONOR/AFFECTION TO ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 12:10)
- e. **TO BE OF THE SAME MIND ONE TO ANOTHER** (Rom. 12:16)
- f. **TO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 14:13)
- g. **TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 15:7)
- h. **TO GREET ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 16:16)
- i. **TO CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER** (I Cor. 12:25)
- j. **THROUGH LOVE, SERVE ONE ANOTHER** (Gal. 5:13)
- k. **TO BEAR THE BURDENS OF ONE ANOTHER** (Gal. 6:2)
- l. **TO BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER** (Eph. 4:32)
- m. **TO COMFORT AND EDIFY ONE ANOTHER** (I Thess. 5:11)
- n. **WITHOUT GRUMBLING TO ONE ANOTHER** (I Pet. 4:9)
- o. **TO HAVE FERVENT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER** (I Pet. 4:8)
- p. **TO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER** (Jm. 4:11)
- q. **TO NOT GRUMBLE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER** (Jm. 5:9)
- r. **TO CONFESS OUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER** (Jm. 5:16)
- s. **TO PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER** (Jm. 5:16)
- t. **TO BE SUBMISSIVE ONE TO ANOTHER** (I Pet. 5:6)
- u. **TO FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER** (Eph. 4:32)
- v. **TO ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 15:14)
- w. **TO WAIT FOR ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 11:33)
- x. **TO CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER** (Heb. 10:24)
- y. **TO STIR ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE/GOOD WORKS** (Heb. 10:24)
- z. **TO HAVE COMPASSION ON ONE ANOTHER** (I Pet. 3:8)

The second way in which we can serve is to

SERVE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Rom. 6:16-19

Since the printing of the New King James Bible, I do not often quote from the "Old King James" but here is an instance where I believe it is needful. Notice the call in the King James is to become "servants (not slaves) of righteousness" once having been "set free from sin". Willful servanthood is not the same as slavery.

"KNOW YE NOT, THAT TO WHOM YE YIELD YOURSELVES SERVANTS TO OBEY, HIS SERVANTS YE ARE TO WHOM YE OBEY; WHETHER OF SIN UNTO DEATH, OR OF OBEDIENCE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS?"... BEING THEN MADE FREE FROM SIN, YE BECAME THE SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS... SO NOW YIELD YOUR MEMBERS SERVANTS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO HOLINESS."

Rom. 6:16-19 KJ excerpts

Far too many of God's people only know about being set free from sin. That is only half the truth. Having served sin with our members, Paul urges us to now serve righteousness with the same intensity we served sin. Note what the result will be if we become servants of righteousness. It will lead to holiness ("hagiasmos-sanctification").

Some seem to think that holiness is a dirty word synonymous with legalism. However, Paul says that in becoming servants of righteousness, it should lead unto holiness. This word in the Greek is "hagiasmos" and is also translated as "sanctification". Its meaning is quite different from justification:



"BEING THEN MADE FREE FROM SIN... (JUSTIFICATION)

YE BECAME THE SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS... UNTO HOLINESS (SANCTIFICATION)."

Rom. 6:18-19 KJ excerpts

NEW BIRTH
WE ARE
MADE
RIGHTEOUS

NEW LIFE
WE
SERVE
RIGHTEOUSNESS

“RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH”

**“BEING THEN MADE FREE FROM SIN...
(JUSTIFICATION)**

**YE BECAME
THE SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...
UNTO HOLINESS (SANCTIFICATION).”**

Rom. 6:18-19 KJ excerpts



We live in times in which justification and sanctification have been twisted together resulting in the concept that it is enough just to be made righteous. However, we are called to also serve righteousness.

The point that I am after is that we realize that the new birth as revealed in the new covenant made provision to set us free from sin. However, it did not set us free from laws of obedience. We were made righteous in order that we could now be free to serve righteousness, not in the letter of the law but in the newness of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6). To think that the new covenant has grace but no law is error. Take a look at **ALL** the terms of the covenant:

**“...HE (JESUS) IS ALSO MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT,
WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON BETTER PROMISES.
FOR IF THAT FIRST COVENANT HAD BEEN FAULTLESS,
THEN NO PLACE WOULD HAVE BEEN SOUGHT FOR A SECOND...
‘FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE
OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS’, SAYS THE LORD:
‘I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM
ON THEIR HEARTS... FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS
I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.”**

Hebrews 8:6-12 excerpts

**“AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ALSO WITNESSES TO US; FOR AFTER HE
HAD SAID BEFORE, ‘THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE...
I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR HEARTS, AND IN THEIR MINDS
I WILL WRITE THEM’, THEN HE ADDS,
‘THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS
I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.”**

Hebrews 10:15-17

Do you see that the new covenant has both law and grace as its foundation contrary to what is commonly presented? Do you want the whole counsel of God or just half the truth? Clearly hear that I am not saying that law saves us. It is grace alone that saves. However, law has as its function to define how we, who have been justified, can now serve righteousness. The doctrine of grace goes beyond the concept of just providing forgiveness of sins. In addition to such saving grace from God, Paul speaks also of the need for enabling grace to sanctify the believer. Consider these two passages from Paul's theology pertaining to grace:

“WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND? CERTAINLY NOT!... FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER YOU, FOR YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE. WHAT THEN? SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE? CERTAINLY NOT!... AND HAVING BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN, YOU BECAME SLAVES (SERVANTS) OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Romans 6:1-2, 14-18 excerpts

“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED... TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE...” Titus 2:11-12

Obviously we can see that Paul has more in mind than just the ability of grace to forgive sins. James tells us that God “gives more grace” to the humble (James 4:6). Rather than having two tablets of stone bearing God's law, Paul tells us what the Spirit of God provides to those under the new covenant:



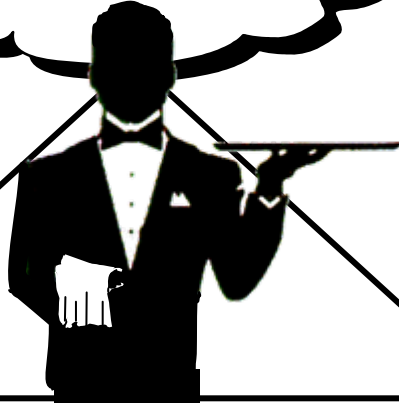
“YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE WRITTEN IN OUR HEARTS, KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN; YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AN EPISTLE OF CHRIST, MINISTERED BY US, WRITTEN NOT WITH INK BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS OF FLESH, THAT IS, OF THE HEART... OUR SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD, WHO ALSO MADE US SUFFICIENT AS MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT, NOT OF THE LETTER BUT OF THE SPIRIT; FOR THE LETTER KILLS, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE.”



2 Cor. 3:2-6

The kingdom of God, Paul tells us, consists of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). Paul goes on to say that if we serve Christ in these things that this is acceptable service to God (Rom. 14:18). May God help us to see the need of both, to be made righteous by the new birth, and also to become a servant of righteousness which brings peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!

DO YOU
SERVE
CHRIST?



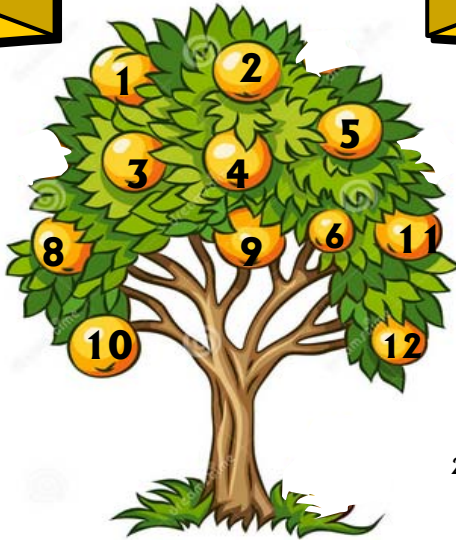
DO YOU
SERVE
ONE ANOTHER?

DO YOU
SERVE
RIGHTEOUSNESS?

THE FOURTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:

~ 12 ~
KINGDOM FRUIT

**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

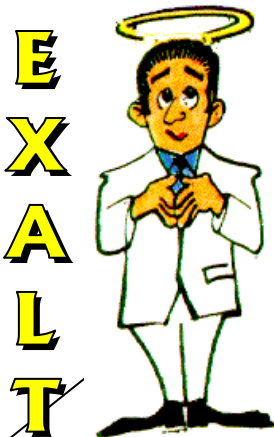
2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



HUMILITY

**“AND WHOEVER EXALTS HIMSELF
WILL BE ABASED,
AND HE WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF
WILL BE EXALTED.”**

Matt. 23:12



**S
E
L
F**

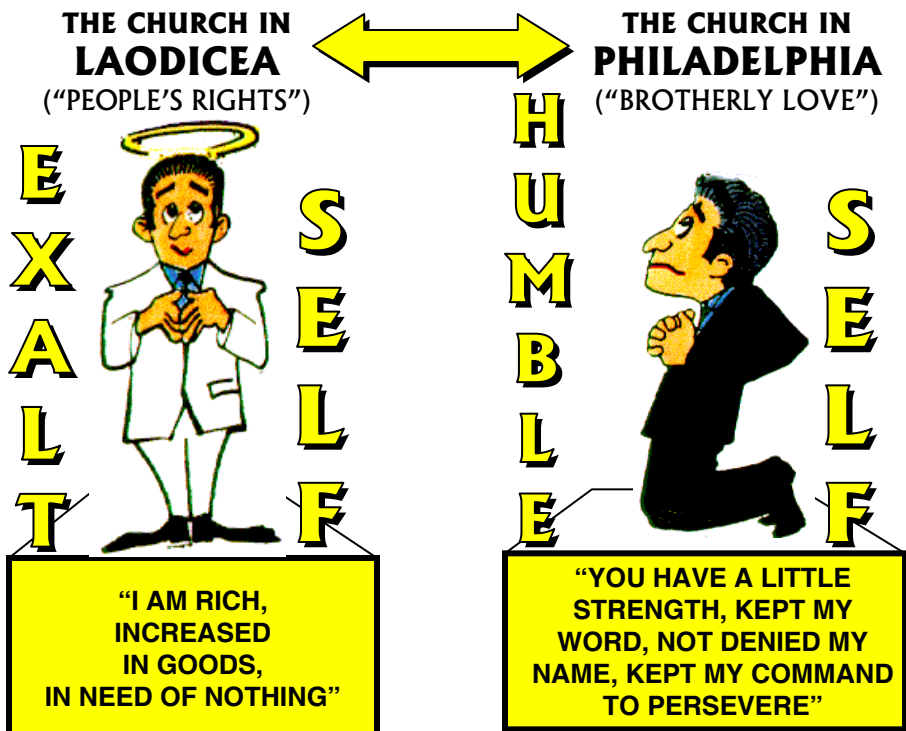
Either do it yourself or God will do it for you. That is the warning Jesus gives above.

**H
U
M
B
L
E**



EXALT- “to raise up or elevate in rank, power, position, honor. To praise, to magnify, give credit.”

HUMBLE- “modest, meek, submissive. To bring down, to lower, to reduce status.”

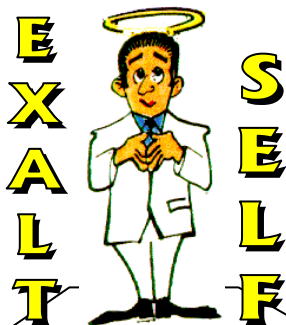


This is a prophetic comparison of two churches that Jesus addresses in Revelation Chapter Three. As mentioned previously, “Laodicea” means people’s rights. That philosophy breeds exaltation of self. It is their own evaluation of themselves that Jesus addresses. “Philadelphia” means brotherly love. Jesus commends this church because their priorities are focused upon the things of God. Laodicea speaks of the “self” trinity: I am... I have... I have...” That is self-centeredness personified. In contrast, Jesus states Philadelphia has kept “My Word... My name... My command”. That is selflessness personified. One church will be humbled by God at the rapture by being left behind (Rev. 3:17-22) The other church will be exalted in this life by being taken away from tribulation, and in the life to come, she will be highly exalted by God (Rev. 3:11-13). Philadelphia will be “kept from the hour of trial” (Rev. 3:10). That is exaltation by the hand of God. She will also be exalted in eternity as she will become the Bride of Christ (Rev. 3:11-12 and Rev. 21:2,9-11).

In contrast, Laodicea will face humiliation being rejected by Jesus Christ (Rev. 3:16 and Matt. 25:11-13). A further humiliation awaits Laodicea in eternity when the “shame of their nakedness is revealed” at the judgment seat of Christ (see Rev. 3:17-18 and 1 Cor. 3:13-15). “Saved but suffering loss of rewards” is how Paul pictures those Christians who fail to produce good works.

**“WHOEVER EXALTS HIMSELF WILL BE ABASED,
AND HE WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED.”**

**THE CHURCH IN
LAODICEA**
("PEOPLE'S RIGHTS")



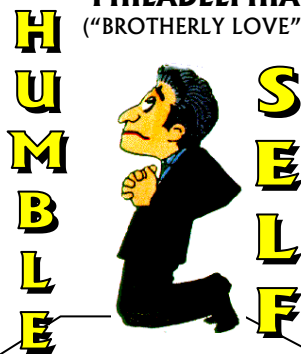
**SPEWED OUT OF
GOD'S MOUTH-
THE SHAME OF THEIR
NAKEDNESS REVEALED**

Not only does
Jesus teach this
kingdom principle
of pride vs. humility
but James speaks
of it as well:

**“...HE GIVES
MORE GRACE.
THEREFORE
HE SAYS:
'GOD RESISTS
THE PROUD,
BUT GIVES
GRACE TO
THE HUMBLE'...
HUMBLE
YOURSELVES IN
THE SIGHT OF
THE LORD,
AND HE WILL
LIFT YOU UP.”**

Jas. 4:6,10

**THE CHURCH IN
PHILADELPHIA**
("BROTHERLY LOVE")



**RAPTURED BY CHRIST-
GIVEN HIS NEW NAME-GIVEN
THE NAME OF THE CITY OF
GOD- CROWNED IN HEAVEN**

What James brings out concerning this kingdom principle is the following truth: Not all of the resistance we incur in life comes from evil “principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this world or spiritual wickedness in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). James is warning us that when pride is present in God’s people, that God Himself will resist the proud. We are told by Peter to “resist the devil steadfast in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:9), but we are unable to resist God Himself. He is able to stop us in our tracks if He so wills. Consider the Amplified version of James 4:5-10 for it contains a cure for much of what ails the body of Christ:

“OR DO YOU THINK THAT THE SCRIPTURE IS SPEAKING TO NO PURPOSE THAT THE SPIRIT WHOM HE HAS CAUSED TO DWELL IN US YEARNES OVER US-AND HE YEARNES FOR THE SPIRIT TO BE WELCOME-WITH A JEALOUS LOVE? BUT HE GIVES US MORE AND MORE GRACE [POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO MEET THIS EVIL TENDENCY AND ALL OTHERS FULLY]. THAT IS WHY HE SAYS, GOD SETS HIMSELF AGAINST THE PROUD AND HAUGHTY, BUT GIVES GRACE CONTINUALLY TO THE LOWLY-THOSE WHO ARE HUMBLE-MINDED [ENOUGH TO RECEIVE IT]. SO BE SUBJECT TO GOD.-STAND FIRM AGAINST THE DEVIL; RESIST HIM AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU. COME CLOSE TO GOD AND HE WILL COME CLOSE TO YOU. [RECOGNIZE THAT YOU ARE] SINNERS, GET YOUR SOILED HANDS CLEAN; [REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN DISLOYAL] WAVERING INDIVIDUALS WITH DIVIDED INTERESTS, AND PURIFY YOUR HEARS [OF YOUR SPIRITUAL ADULTERY]. [AS YOU DRAW NEAR TO GOD] BE DEEPLY PENITENT AND GRIEVE, EVEN WEEP [OVER YOUR DISLOYALTY]. LET YOUR LAUGHTER BE TURNED TO GRIEF AND YOUR MIRTH TO DEJECTION AND HEART-FELT SHAME [FOR YOUR SINS]. HUMBLE YOURSELVES-FEELING VERY INSIGNIFICANT-IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, AND HE WILL EXALT YOU.-HE WILL LIFT YOU UP AND MAKE YOUR LIVES SIGNIFICANT.”

James 4:5-10 Amplified

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

**“ ALSO HE SPOKE THIS PARABLE TO SOME WHO TRUSTED IN THEMSELVES THAT THEY WERE RIGHTEOUS, AND DESPISED OTHERS:
“TWO MEN WENT UP TO THE TEMPLE TO PRAY, ONE A PHARISEE AND THE OTHER A TAX COLLECTOR. THE PHARISEE STOOD AND PRAYED THUS WITH HIMSELF, ‘GOD, I THANK YOU THAT I AM NOT LIKE OTHER MEN—EXTORTIONERS, UNJUST, ADULTERERS, OR EVEN AS THIS TAX COLLECTOR. I FAST TWICE A WEEK; I GIVE TITHES OF ALL THAT I POSSESS.’ AND THE TAX COLLECTOR, STANDING AFAR OFF, WOULD NOT SO MUCH AS RAISE HIS EYES TO HEAVEN, BUT BEAT HIS BREST, SAYING, ‘GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER!’ I TELL YOU, THIS MAN WENT DOWN TO HIS HOUSE JUSTIFIED RATHER THAN THE OTHER; FOR EVERYONE WHO EXALTS HIMSELF WILL BE ABASED, AND HE WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED.”**

Luke 18:9-14

Religious pride is what Jesus addresses in this use of the kingdom principle that we are examining. Notice the fruit of religious pride manifests as despising others. I find it quite amusing that Jesus states that this Pharisee was “praying with himself”. Such self-righteous prayers never even reach the throne of God. It is the prayer of a righteous man that avails much (Jas. 5:16), but prideful prayers simply bounce off the ceiling.

God still blesses the confession of being a sinner saved by grace rather than the proud boasting of being the righteousness of God as proclaimed in the faith movement today.

“LET THIS SAME ATTITUDE AND PURPOSE AND HUMBLE MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS IN CHRIST JESUS. LET HIM BE YOUR EXAMPLE IN HUMILITY.”

Phil. 2:5 Amp.

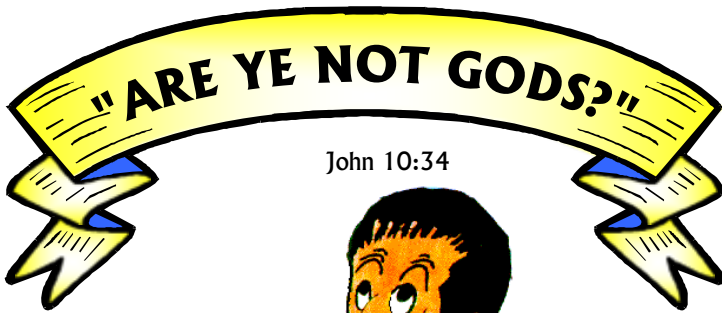
Paul tells us to “let Him be your example in humility”. Rather than being led in steps of humility, many are being led in steps of pride by leaders steeped in pride. Let me illustrate what I mean. Consider the first step Paul tells us we should follow that Jesus took:



“LET THIS SAME ATTITUDE AND PURPOSE AND (HUMBLE) MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS IN CHRIST JESUS-LET HIM BE YOUR EXAMPLE IN HUMILITY-WHO, ALTHOUGH BEING ESSENTIALLY ONE WITH GOD AND IN THE FORM OF GOD (POSSESSING THE FULLNESS OF THE ATTRIBUTES WHICH MAKE GOD GOD), (HE-JESUS) DID NOT THINK THIS EQUALITY WITH GOD WAS A THING TO BE EAGERLY GRASPED OR RETAINED; BUT STRIPPED HIMSELF (OF ALL PRIVILEGES AND RIGHTFUL DIGNITY), SO TO ASSUME THE GUISE OF A SERVANT...”

Phil. 2:5-7 Amplified

AN OFTEN MISS-APPLIED PRINCIPLE:



John 10:34

In the "faith for prosperity" movement and also in the "dominion theology" camp, emphasis centers upon such a rather high-minded doctrinal banner ("are ye not gods?") being waved before the people.

What follows this prideful concept is the call to visualization in which one is to speak into existence what is created in the mind. After all, that is how God does it, is it not? No, rather the humble attitude of Jesus is what we are to emulate:

"(HE-JESUS) DID NOT THINK THIS EQUALITY WITH GOD WAS A THING TO BE EAGERLY GRASPED OR RETAINED..."

Phil. 2:6 Amp.

The first step of humility that Paul presents as our example to follow is not to entertain a concept like "Are ye not gods?", but rather we are told not to eagerly grasp/retain such ideas. To follow such prideful theology prevents one from even getting to first base concerning the subject of humility. What was it that Satan kept saying to Jesus in the temptation in the wilderness? Was it not "If you are the Son of God..." (Matt. 4:6). The temptation that followed was an appeal to command or demand from His position of being the Son of God. Obviously, Satan is still using the same tactics today on Christians as he did on Christ. Here is the Christian mentality according to Paul, a mindset of humility:



"DO NOTHING... PROMPTED BY CONCEIT AND EMPTY ARROGANCE. INSTEAD, IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF HUMILITY (LOWLINESS OF MIND) LET EACH REGARD OTHERS AS BETTER THAN AND SUPERIOR TO HIMSELF-THINKING MORE HIGHLY OF ONE ANOTHER THAN YOU DO OF YOURSELVES. LET EACH ONE OF YOU ESTEEM AND LOOK UPON AND BE CONCERNED FOR NOT (MERELY) HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO EACH FOR THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. LET THIS SAME ATTITUDE AND PURPOSE AND (HUMBLE) MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS. LET HIM BE YOUR EXAMPLE IN HUMILITY..."

Phil. 2:3-5 Amp.

THE YOKE OF JESUS

"LEARN FROM ME"

MEEK

IN HEART

LOWLY

HUMILITY



**"COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE
HEAVY-LADEN AND OVERBURDENED,
AND I WILL CAUSE YOU TO REST.-
I WILL EASE AND RELIEVE AND
REFRESH YOUR SOULS.
TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN OF ME;
FOR I AM GENTLE (MEEK) AND HUMBLE
(LOWLY) IN HEART,
AND YOU WILL FIND REST-RELIEF,
EASE AND REFRESHMENT AND RECREATION
AND BLESSED QUIET-FOR YOUR SOULS.
FOR MY YOKE IS WHOLESOME
(USEFUL, GOOD)-NOT HARSH, HARD, SHARP,
OR PRESSING, BUT COMFORTABLE, GRACIOUS,
AND PLEASANT);
AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT
AND EASY TO BE BORNE."**

Matt. 11:28-30 Amplified

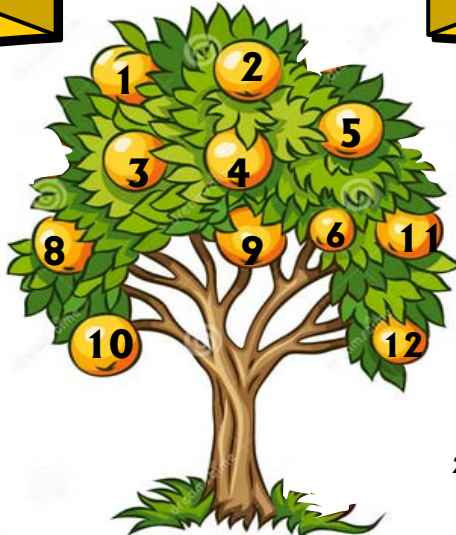
The only time that Jesus ever spoke of His personal character was here in Matthew 11. Of the many attributes of God, He singles out humility as His identifying mark to emulate.

Notice we are to "learn from Him" what will be good for us. It is the yoke of humility that will bring refreshment to our souls. It is humbleness of mind that will convert a heavy burden into a light and easy one. It is His yoke that will not be burdensome to bear.

THE FIFTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



OBEEDIENCE

**“WHOEVER THEREFORE BREAKS ONE OF THE
LEAST OF THESE COMMANDMENTS,
AND TEACHES MEN SO, SHALL BE CALLED
LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN;
BUT WHOEVER DOES AND TEACHES THEM,
HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT
IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”**

Matthew 5:19



Paul professed, “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31) In Philippians Chapter 2 we find that Jesus also was “obedient to the point of death” (Phil. 2:8). Perhaps it is significant that the word “obedience” has at its core a relationship to “death”. Look at the heart of the word “obedience”. Its very center contains the word **“DIE”**:

OBEEDIENCE

The apostle Paul speaks of such obedience that springs from death:

**“FOR HE WHO HAS DIED HAS BEEN FREED FROM SIN. NOW IF WE DIED WITH
CHRIST, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM, KNOWING THAT
CHRIST, HAVING BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, DIES NO MORE... FOR THE
DEATH THAT HE DIED, HE DIED TO SIN ONCE FOR ALL; BUT THE LIFE THAT HE
LIVES, HE LIVES TO GOD. LIKewise YOU ALSO, RECKON YOURSELVES TO BE
DEAD INDEED TO SIN, BUT ALIVE TO GOD IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.
THEREFORE DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY, THAT YOU SHOULD
OBEY IT IN ITS LUSTS... DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT TO WHOM YOU PRESENT
YOURSELVES SLAVES TO OBEY, YOU ARE THAT ONE’S SLAVES WHOM YOU OBEY,
WHETHER OF SIN TO DEATH, OR OF OBEEDIENCE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS?”**

In sharing with you the importance of obedience, we must also see how we can be obedient. It lies in the identification with the “death, burial, and resurrection” of Jesus. We were “crucified with Him” (Rom. 6:6), we were “buried with Him” (Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12), and we were “raised with Him” that we may also be in the “likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:5). The “just shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4), and not by his own might/power (Zech. 4:6). We must have faith in the finished work of Christ. That is how we “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). Either we maintain faith in the “death of our old man” and its “removal/replacement” (Rom. 6:6, Col. 2:11-13), or sin will reign in us.

Let us consider the importance of following the path of obedience that leads unto righteousness (Rom. 6:16). Consider again our opening text of this kingdom principle that God wants to govern our hearts:



“WHOEVER THEREFORE BREAKS ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE COMMANDMENTS, AND TEACHES MEN SO, SHALL BE CALLED LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT WHOEVER DOES AND TEACHES THEM, HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

Matthew 5:19



Several things are noteworthy in these passages from the mouth of Jesus. First of all, He tells us that not all the commandments are equal in stature. Some are considered to be “least” meaning others are “greater”. That tells us that the philosophy that “all sin is equal” is not true. Some sins, the Bible tells us, “lead to death” while others do not, Both John and Paul elaborate this distinction between sin for us:



“IF ANYONE SEES HIS BROTHER SINNING A SIN WHICH DOES NOT LEAD TO DEATH, HE WILL ASK, AND HE WILL GIVE HIM LIFE FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH. THERE IS SIN LEADING TO DEATH. I DO NOT SAY THAT HE SHOULD PRAY ABOUT THAT. ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS SIN, AND THERE IS SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH.”

1 John 5:16-17



“FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY. EVERY SIN THAT A MAN DOES IS OUTSIDE THE BODY, BUT HE WHO COMMITS SEXUAL IMMORALITY SINS AGAINST HIS OWN BODY. OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU, WHOM YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN?” “

1 Cor 6:18-20

Secondly, in Matthew 5:19, Jesus reveals that not all saints will be the same in heaven. He mentions that some will be called great in the kingdom while others will be considered to be least in the kingdom. Jesus also states what is it that makes this distinction. It depends upon the level of obedience or disobedience a believer shows toward His commandments while on earth.

If you don't think this subject of obedience is important to Jesus, just remember that as "Alpha (the 'beginning') and Omega" ('the end'), Jesus begins His teaching with these words from Matthew Chapter 5, and He ends His teachings with these words from Rev. 22:14:



“WHOEVER THEREFORE BREAKS ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE COMMANDMENTS, AND TEACHES MEN SO, SHALL BE CALLED LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT WHOEVER DOES AND TEACHES THEM, HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

Matthew 5:19

“HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME... HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS...”

John 14:20-24



“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY.”

Rev. 22:14

As further proof that Jesus is speaking of rewards for keeping His commandments, look at the context of Revelation 22:14. The subject matter is stated in verse 12:

“AND BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY, AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME, TO GIVE TO EVERY ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORK. I AM ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS...” Rev. 22:12-14

“BEHOLD I AM COMING SOON, AND I SHALL BRING MY WAGES AND REWARDS WITH ME, TO REPAY AND RENDER TO EACH ONE JUST WHAT HIS OWN ACTIONS AND HIS OWN WORK MERIT.”

Rev. 22:12 Amplified

The subject matter is eternal rewards and not eternal life. It is our works that Jesus is addressing, not His grace. It is the merited favor of God rather than the unmerited favor discussed here. Jesus begins and ends His teachings to us with an emphasis upon keeping His commandments and how it will affect us in the eternal kingdom. Those who keep His commandments and teach others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of God. How great can that be? Jesus says those who are keeping His commandments will have authority over the tree of life. We do not know what that implies in its fullness, but it certainly tells us there is a distinction being made in eternity.

Let us consider the context of Matthew Chapter 5:19. Consider the verses that are before and after our text:



“DO NOT THINK THAT I CAME TO DESTROY THE LAW... I DID NOT COME TO DESTROY BUT TO FULFILL... TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE WILL BY NO MEANS PASS FROM THE LAW TILL ALL IS FULFILLED. WHOEVER THEREFORE BREAKS ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE COMMANDMENTS, AND TEACHES MEN SO, SHALL BE CALLED LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT WHOEVER DOES AND TEACHES THEM, HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THOSE OF OLD, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MURDER’... BUT I SAY TO YOU...YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THOSE OF OLD, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’, BUT I SAY TO YOU...“FURTHERMORE IT HAS BEEN SAID, ‘WHOEVER DIVORCES HIS WIFE, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’. BUT I SAY TO YOU...AGAIN YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THOSE OF OLD, ‘YOU SHALL NOT SWEAR FALSELY’,... BUT I SAY TO YOU...YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH’, BUT I TELL YOU.....YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AND HATE YOUR ENEMY’. BUT I SAY TO YOU...”

In its context, Jesus speaks of the law which was given to those of old. Remember He said He came not to destroy but to fulfill both the law and the prophets. When Jesus refers to the least of these commandments it is inescapable to conclude that He speaks of anything but the moral commandments of the law. He quotes six commandments from the law as examples of what He means by keeping His commandments. What Jesus does now is simply to quote the letter of the law as it was given to “those of old”, but then He gives the Spirit of that law to “those of the new”. Remember, we learned earlier that we are to:“...serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Rom. 7:6)...who made us also... ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Cor. 3:6)

Today these truths have been twisted to mean “no law” rather than embracing the intended “spirit of the law”. Jesus is telling us that the spirit of the law is in reality much harder to obey than was the letter! Which is harder to obey, not to murder or not even to hate someone? Which is more difficult to avoid, the act of physical adultery or not even to practice secret mental adultery?

Jesus tells us we are not only to love our neighbors as it is written in the law, but also to love our enemies. Where oaths were allowed in the old covenant, in the new we are not to swear at all. In the old covenant they could practice divorce at will, but not so in the new! Jesus sums up His presentation with these confronting words:

**“THEREFORE
YOU SHALL BE PERFECT,
JUST AS YOUR FATHER
IN HEAVEN
IS PERFECT.”**

Matt. 5:48



Jesus is telling us that God wants His commandments to govern our hearts and not merely our outward appearance. Let us look at yet another verse in Matthew Chapter 5 which will prove this point:

**“FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT UNLESS YOUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEEDS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE
SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, YOU WILL BY NO MEANS
ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”**

Matt. 5:20

What was wrong with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? Jesus tells us:

**“WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES!
FOR YOU ARE LIKE WHITWASHED TOMBS WHICH
INDEED APPEAR BEAUTIFUL OUTWARDLY,
BUT INSIDE ARE FULL OF DEAD MEN’S BONES AND ALL
UNCLEANNESS. EVEN SO YOU ALSO OUTWARDLY
APPEAR RIGHTEOUS TO MEN, BUT INSIDE YOU ARE FULL
OF HYPOCRISY AND LAWLESSNESS.”**

Matt. 23:27-28

They only were keepers of the law in outward appearance. What was in their hearts was hypocrisy and lawlessness. What follows Jesus' charge to “exceed their righteousness” is His teachings upon keeping the law in the heart (Matt. 5:21-48) They were to fulfill the spirit of the law rather than the deadness of the letter.

What follows in Chapter Six of Matthew is a continuation of inward obedience rather than outward appearance. Jesus urges “secret prayer, fasting and giving” rather than doing those things for outward appearance like the scribes and Pharisees did to be seen by men. The contents of Matthew 5-7 reveal various kingdom principles designed to govern our hearts in this present manifestation of the inward kingdom of God.

THE MEANING OF OBEDIENCE



A.W. Tozer

“To obey, in New Testament usage, means to give earnest attention to the Word of God, to submit to its authority, and to carry out its instructions. Obedience in this sense is almost a dead letter in modern Christianity. The Church of our day has soft-pedaled the doctrine of obedience, either neglecting it altogether or mentioning it only apologetically and without urgency. This results form a fundamental confusion of obedience with works in the minds of preacher and people.

We find Christians who have lived so long in the rarified air of imagination that it seems next to impossible to relate them to reality. Non-obedience has paralyzed their moral legs and dissolved their backbones, and they slump down in a spongy heap of religious theory, believing everything ardently, but obeying nothing at all.

Indeed, they are deeply shocked at the very mention of the word “obey.” To them it smacks of heresy and self-righteousness and is the result of failure to rightly divide the word of truth. Their doctrine of supine inaction is their conception of New Testament religion—the truth for which the Reformers died! Everything else to them is legalism and the religion of Cain. So faith and obedience are forever joined and each one is without value when separated from the other. The trouble with many of us today is that we are trying to believe without intending to obey.

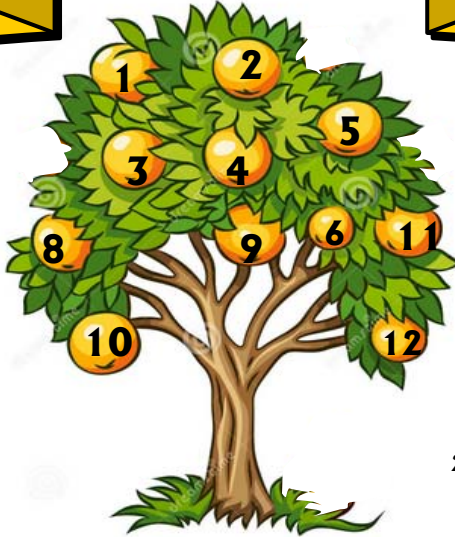
The weakness in our message today is our overemphasis on faith with a corresponding underemphasis on obedience. This has been carried so far that “believe” has been made to double for “obey” in the minds of millions of religious persons. Without doubt the popular misconception of the function of faith, and the failure of our teachers to insist upon obedience, have weakened the Church and retarded revival tragically in the last half-century. The only cure is to remove the cause. This will take some courage, but it will be worth the labor.

Indeed, disobedience to God is the sin of sins. It is self-idolatry, for to disregard what God commands is to imply that we know better than God what is for our good. That is to set ourselves up as greater than God, better and wiser than God. Obedience to Him is right by the very fact that it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. Obedience spares us from much harm and brings us great good, while by disobedience we hurt and destroy ourselves. For every Christian, obedience to God is most important because it is the chief proof of a genuine experience of salvation. Christ insists that it is useless to call Him, “Lord, Lord,” if we do not do the things He requires. “Ye are My friends,” He says, “if ye do whatsoever I command you.” As the disobedient life is the idolatry of self, so the obedient life is the proof that we truly worship and serve the Lord.”

THE SIXTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



ACCOUNTABILITY

**“FOR EVERYONE
TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN,
FROM HIM MUCH WILL BE REQUIRED;
AND TO WHOM MUCH HAS BEEN COMMITTED,
OF HIM THEY WILL ASK THE MORE.”**

Luke 12:48b



This principle is found in this parable in which Jesus describes three different servants reacting to His commandments:

**“BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT
WHOM HIS MASTER WILL FIND SO DOING WHEN HE COMES.
TRULY, I SAY TO YOU THAT HE WILL MAKE HIM
RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HAS. BUT IF THAT SERVANT SAYS IN HIS
HEART, ‘MY MASTER IS DELAYING HIS COMING,’ AND BEGINS TO BEAT
THE MENSERVANTS AND MAIDSERVANTS, AND TO EAT AND DRINK AND
BE DRUNK, THE MASTER OF THAT SERVANT WILL COME ON A DAY
WHEN HE IS NOT LOOKING FOR HIM, AND AT AN HOUR WHEN HE IS
NOT AWARE, AND WILL CUT HIM IN TWO AND APPOINT HIM HIS
PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS. AND THAT SERVANT WHO KNEW HIS
MASTER’S WILL, AND DID NOT PREPARE HIMSELF OR DO ACCORDING
TO HIS WILL, SHALL BE BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES. BUT HE WHO DID
NOT KNOW, YET COMMITTED THINGS WORTHY OF STRIPES, SHALL BE
BEATEN WITH FEW. FOR EVERYONE TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN,
FROM HIM MUCH WILL BE REQUIRED;
AND TO WHOM MUCH HAS BEEN COMMITTED,
OF HIM THEY WILL ASK THE MORE.”**

Luke 12:43-48

THE THREE SERVANTS OF THE MASTER

THE SERVANT WHO WAS
DOING HIS MASTER'S WILL
IN **OBEEDIENCE**
OBEYED...



"THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE,

THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER,

THE LORD IS OUR KING"

Isa. 33:22

THE SERVANT
WHO KNEW
HIS MASTER'S WILL
BUT IN REBELLION
DISOBEYED...

THE SERVANT WHO
DID NOT KNOW
HIS MASTER'S WILL
BUT IN IGNORANCE
DISOBEYED...

Anyone who has circulated among the professing body of Christ will recognize these three servants. Some people know God's will and are earnestly seeking to obey it. Others are totally ignorant of what the will of the Lord is and of such Paul says they are unwise (Eph. 5:17). The third class of people that comprise the Body of Christ are those who know God's will and walk in rebellion against it. This parable from Luke 12 reveals how God will deal with each one on the day of accountability.

**"THEREFORE WE MAKE IT OUR AIM, WHETHER PRESENT OR
ABSENT, TO BE WELL PLEASING TO HIM. FOR WE MUST ALL
APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, THAT EACH
ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY, ACCORDING
TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD.**

**KNOWING, THEREFORE,
THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN;
BUT WE ARE WELL KNOWN TO GOD, AND I ALSO TRUST ARE WELL
KNOWN IN YOUR CONSCIENCES."**

2 Cor 5:9-11

The Day of accountability is called:

"THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"

"...FOR WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. FOR AS IT IS WRITTEN: 'AS I LIVE SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD.' SO THEN EACH OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD."

Rom. 14:10-12



"...WE MAKE IT OUR AIM... TO BE WELL PLEASING TO HIM. FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. KNOWING, THEREFORE, THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN..."

2 Cor 5:9-11

"THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE,

THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER,

THE LORD IS OUR KING"

Isa. 33:22

Notice Paul's goal and purpose in this life was to be found well pleasing in God's sight. Paul had an eye upon the Day of Accountability. Therefore his motivation in this life was affected due to eternal vision of a day in which each one of us would give account of himself to God. There is something else stated by Paul that is foreign to today's theology. He "knew the terror of the Lord" and therefore he sought to persuade men to be well pleasing to God. Many of God's people walk in such a manner as if they are accountable to no one. They are ignorant of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul tells us that we will give an account for the good and the bad. Solomon was also of this understanding:

"...FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT, INCLUDING EVERY SECRET THING, WHETHER IT IS GOOD OR WHETHER IT IS EVIL."

Ecc. 12:13-14

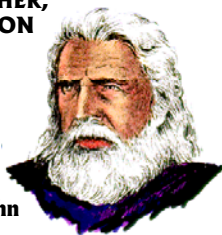


Perhaps it is needful to stress that we will not be required to give account to God for sins which are under the blood of Christ. Those things which were done when we were unsaved have been forgiven and forgotten by God (Heb. 8:12). Likewise, those things which we have done that were bad while we were saved also become forgiven/forgotten when we repent of them and confess those deeds before God and man (if need be).

**“BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT,
WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER,
AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON
CLEANSES US FROM ALL SIN...
IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS,
HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST
TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS
AND TO CLEANSE US FROM
ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

1 Jn 1:7,9

The
apostle John



Some prefer to teach that “every sin I ever have or ever will commit is already cleansed by the blood of Christ”. However, that is not what John says above. Listen carefully as he continues writing to the saints:

**“MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS I WRITE TO YOU,
THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN. AND IF ANYONE SINS,
WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER,
JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS.
AND HE HIMSELF IS THE PROPITIATION (MERCY SEAT)
FOR OUR SINS...”**

1 Jn 2:1-2

“If anyone sins,” states John, we have someone to whom we can appeal. It is Jesus Christ as our Advocate to the Father. Perhaps this verse from Hebrews will help clarify:

**“FOR WE DO NOT HAVE A HIGH PRIEST
WHO CANNOT SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR
WEAKNESSES, BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS
TEMPTED AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN.
LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY
TO THE THRONE OF GRACE,
THAT WE MAY OBTAIN MERCY
AND FIND GRACE TO HELP
IN TIME OF NEED.”**

Heb. 4:15-16



The Judgment Seat of Christ will deal with the good and the bad. The bad will center upon unrepentant and unconfessed sin. This is why Paul spoke of the “terror of the Lord” in context with the Judgment Seat of Christ. Listen to Paul again:

**“OF HOW MUCH WORSE PUNISHMENT, DO YOU
SUPPOSE, WILL HE BE THOUGHT WORTHY WHO HAS
TRAMPLED THE SON OF GOD UNDERFOOT, COUNTED
THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT BY WHICH HE WAS
SANCTIFIED A COMMON THING, AND INSULTED THE
SPIRIT OF GRACE? FOR WE KNOW HIM WHO SAID,
‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ SAYS THE
LORD. AND AGAIN, ‘THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS
PEOPLE’. IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE
HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD.”**

Heb. 10:29-31



Check the context of these verses, and you will see that Paul is addressing the people of God who are “willfully sinning” (vs. 26). Clearly, he is speaking to those that are “under the blood of the covenant” who, by practicing sin, are “insulting the Spirit of grace”. My counsel to you comes from the late A.W. Tozer who said God’s people need to “deal thoroughly with sin”. It is far better to be overly introspective in examining ourselves. Listen to Paul:



**“FOR IF
WE WOULD
JUDGE OURSELVES,
WE WOULD NOT BE JUDGED.”**
1 Cor. 11:31

Or consider David’s example:

**“SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART;
TRY ME, AND KNOW MY ANXIETIES;
AND SEE IF THERE IS ANY WICKED WAY IN ME,
AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.”**

Psalms 139:23-24



Paul spoke again and again concerning his day in court with the Righteous Judge. Since he had made it his aim to be well pleasing to God, here is what he expected to happen to him on Judgment Day:



**“I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,
I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE,
I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.
FINALLY, THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME
THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
WHICH THE LORD,
THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE,
WILL GIVE ME ON THAT DAY,
AND NOT TO ME ONLY
BUT ALSO TO ALL WHO HAVE
LOVED HIS APPEARING.”**

2 Tim. 4:7-8

Here we find a man who, although he knew the terror of the Lord that will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ, was personally looking forward to that day knowing quite well what he would receive from the Lord. Why so? Because he made it his aim to be well pleasing to his God.

Jesus taught two parables pertaining to the kingdom of God and the Day of Accountability. Take time to read them. They contain judgment for the good and the bad performed by God's servants.

This is not a message to unsaved people.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

(Matt. 25)

“FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MAN TRAVELING TO A FAR COUNTRY, WHO CALLED HIS OWN SERVANTS AND DELIVERED HIS GOODS TO THEM.

15 AND TO ONE HE GAVE FIVE TALENTS, TO ANOTHER TWO, AND TO ANOTHER ONE, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS OWN ABILITY; AND IMMEDIATELY HE WENT ON A JOURNEY.

16 THEN HE WHO HAD RECEIVED THE FIVE TALENTS WENT AND TRADED WITH THEM, AND MADE ANOTHER FIVE TALENTS.

17 AND LIKEWISE HE WHO HAD RECEIVED TWO GAINED TWO MORE ALSO.

18 BUT HE WHO HAD RECEIVED ONE WENT AND DUG IN THE GROUND, AND HID HIS LORD'S MONEY.

19 AFTER A LONG TIME THE LORD OF THOSE SERVANTS CAME AND SETTLED ACCOUNTS WITH THEM.

20 “SO HE WHO HAD RECEIVED FIVE TALENTS CAME AND BROUGHT FIVE OTHER TALENTS, SAYING, ‘LORD, YOU DELIVERED TO ME FIVE TALENTS; LOOK, I HAVE GAINED FIVE MORE TALENTS BESIDES THEM.’

21 HIS LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU WERE FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.’

22 HE ALSO WHO HAD RECEIVED TWO TALENTS CAME AND SAID, ‘LORD, YOU DELIVERED TO ME TWO TALENTS; LOOK, I HAVE GAINED TWO MORE TALENTS BESIDES THEM.’

23 HIS LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.’

24 “THEN HE WHO HAD RECEIVED THE ONE TALENT CAME AND SAID, ‘LORD, I KNEW YOU TO BE A HARD MAN, REAPING WHERE YOU HAVE NOT SOWN, AND GATHERING WHERE YOU HAVE NOT SCATTERED SEED.

25 AND I WAS AFRAID, AND WENT AND HID YOUR TALENT IN THE GROUND. LOOK, THERE YOU HAVE WHAT IS YOURS.’

26 “BUT HIS LORD ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, ‘YOU WICKED AND LAZY SERVANT, YOU KNEW THAT I REAP WHERE I HAVE NOT SOWN, AND GATHER WHERE I HAVE NOT SCATTERED SEED.

27 THEREFORE YOU OUGHT TO HAVE DEPOSITED MY MONEY WITH THE BANKERS, AND AT MY COMING I WOULD HAVE RECEIVED BACK MY OWN WITH INTEREST.

28 THEREFORE TAKE THE TALENT FROM HIM, AND GIVE IT TO HIM WHO HAS TEN TALENTS.

29 ‘FOR TO EVERYONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN, AND HE WILL HAVE ABUNDANCE; BUT FROM HIM WHO DOES NOT HAVE, EVEN WHAT HE HAS WILL BE TAKEN AWAY.

30 AND CAST THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT INTO THE OUTER DARKNESS. THERE WILL BE WEeping AND GNASHING OF TEETH.’

THE PARABLE OF THE MINAS

(Luke 19)

- 11 NOW AS THEY HEARD THESE THINGS, HE SPOKE ANOTHER PARABLE, BECAUSE HE WAS NEAR JERUSALEM AND BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD APPEAR IMMEDIATELY.**
- 12 THEREFORE HE SAID: "A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN WENT INTO A FAR COUNTRY TO RECEIVE FOR HIMSELF A KINGDOM AND TO RETURN.**
- 13 SO HE CALLED TEN OF HIS SERVANTS, DELIVERED TO THEM TEN MINAS, AND SAID TO THEM, 'DO BUSINESS TILL I COME.'**
- 14 BUT HIS CITIZENS HATED HIM, AND SENT A DELEGATION AFTER HIM, SAYING, 'WE WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN TO REIGN OVER US.'**
- 15 "AND SO IT WAS THAT WHEN HE RETURNED, HAVING RECEIVED THE KINGDOM, HE THEN COMMANDED THESE SERVANTS, TO WHOM HE HAD GIVEN THE MONEY, TO BE CALLED TO HIM, THAT HE MIGHT KNOW HOW MUCH EVERY MAN HAD GAINED BY TRADING.**
- 16 THEN CAME THE FIRST, SAYING, 'MASTER, YOUR MINA HAS EARNED TEN MINAS.'**
- 17 AND HE SAID TO HIM, 'WELL DONE, GOOD SERVANT; BECAUSE YOU WERE FAITHFUL IN A VERY LITTLE, HAVE AUTHORITY OVER TEN CITIES.'**
- 18 AND THE SECOND CAME, SAYING, 'MASTER, YOUR MINA HAS EARNED FIVE MINAS.'**
- 19 LIKEWISE HE SAID TO HIM, 'YOU ALSO BE OVER FIVE CITIES.'**
- 20 "AND ANOTHER CAME, SAYING, 'MASTER, HERE IS YOUR MINA, WHICH I HAVE KEPT PUT AWAY IN A HANDKERCHIEF.**
- 21 FOR I FEARED YOU, BECAUSE YOU ARE AN AUSTERE MAN. YOU COLLECT WHAT YOU DID NOT DEPOSIT, AND REAP WHAT YOU DID NOT SOW.'**
- 22 AND HE SAID TO HIM, 'OUT OF YOUR OWN MOUTH I WILL JUDGE YOU, YOU WICKED SERVANT. YOU KNEW THAT I WAS AN AUSTERE MAN, COLLECTING WHAT I DID NOT DEPOSIT AND REAPING WHAT I DID NOT SOW.**
- 23 WHY THEN DID YOU NOT PUT MY MONEY IN THE BANK, THAT AT MY COMING I MIGHT HAVE COLLECTED IT WITH INTEREST?'**
- 24 "AND HE SAID TO THOSE WHO STOOD BY, 'TAKE THE MINA FROM HIM, AND GIVE IT TO HIM WHO HAS TEN MINAS.'**
- 25 (BUT THEY SAID TO HIM, 'MASTER, HE HAS TEN MINAS.')**
- 26 'FOR I SAY TO YOU, THAT TO EVERYONE WHO HAS WILL BE GIVEN; AND FROM HIM WHO DOES NOT HAVE, EVEN WHAT HE HAS WILL BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM.**
- 27 BUT BRING HERE THOSE ENEMIES OF MINE, WHO DID NOT WANT ME TO REIGN OVER THEM, AND SLAY THEM BEFORE ME.'"**

At first these two parables appear to be one and the same. They are not. In one, each servant receives the same amount ("one Mina/pound). Note that their rewards are not the same but rather are proportional to the amount of increase they obtained. However, in the other account we find each servant given a different sum which was according to their abilities, but their rewards were exactly the same.

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

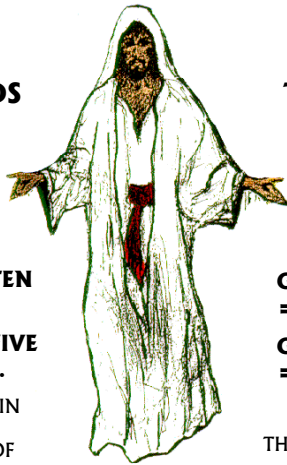
Matt. 25:14-30

“TO EACH
THE SAME
AMOUNT GIVEN”

**ONE BECAME TEN
= TEN CITIES...**

**ONE BECAME FIVE
= FIVE CITIES...**

(REWARDS ARE IN
PROPORTION
TO AMOUNT OF
INCREASE)



THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Matt. 25:14-30

“TO EACH
ACCORDING TO
HIS OWN ABILITY”

**GIVEN FIVE
= MADE FIVE MORE...**

**GIVEN TWO
= MADE TWO MORE...**

(REWARDS ARE
THE SAME FOR BOTH
SERVANTS)

These parables convey that on the Day of Accountability we will give account of ourselves in two areas. First of all, there are responsibilities that God has given to all His people that are equal. In these areas God is not a respecter of persons. The demand on all is the same.

We are all called to labor in prayer, fasting and in the Word of God as we studied previously. We are all called to be witnesses both in word and in deed. The reality is that some will excel, others will be average. Some will even ignore these areas of common responsibility.

However, on the Day of Accountability the rewards will be proportional to increase. Jesus says those rewards consist of ruling and reigning in eternity over cities. Please note, it is not because we are born again but because we gave faithful service to our Master. The “Bride of Christ” is not a gift of grace. It is a reward (Rev. 19:7-8, Rom. 8:17, Rev. 3:10-13). We will discuss this subject in Chapter Five.

The second area deals with special abilities. Jesus tells us that this judgment is each according to his own ability. This is the area of gift realms. God has given more to some than others. It also includes our covenant relationships. Some have wives/husbands, others have one or more children. All of these are areas of judgment that are not the same. For instance, the apostle James tells us that not many should become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment:

**“MY BRETHREN,
LET NOT MANY OF YOU
BECOME TEACHERS,
KNOWING THAT WE SHALL
RECEIVE A STRICTER JUDGMENT.”**

James 3:1-2



Over the years this admonition of the apostle James has been very meaningful to this teacher of God's Holy Word. Because of the stricter judgment principle, I have been very careful not to "peddle (adulterate for gain) the Word of God" (2 Cor. 2:17) or to "handle the Word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2) as Paul mentions they were doing in his day and certainly we can see it is being done in our day.

If we cultivate the Day of Accountability in our thinking, then we will be more sober toward our thoughts, deeds and actions in this life when it comes to handling the Word of God. The Day of Accountability can be a blessing, as it was for Paul, or it can become a "holy terror" as Paul often warned the careless.

Once your eyes are opened to this kingdom principle of accountability, it is not difficult to find it throughout the Word of God. Notice that Jesus Himself uses this principle in this letter to one of His churches. —————>

"BUT TO YOU I SAY, AND TO THE REST IN THYATIRA, AS MANY AS DO NOT HAVE THIS DOCTRINE, AND HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS OF SATAN, AS THEY CALL THEM, I WILL PUT ON YOU NO OTHER BURDEN."

Rev. 2:24



Nor is it unique to the New Testament for this kingdom principle of accountability to be given to God's people. Consider this passage from the Book of Hosea:

"...I WILL CHASTISE THEM ACCORDING TO WHAT THEIR CONGREGATION HAS HEARD."

Hosea 7:12

God has always held His people accountable according to the level of knowledge they had received. For instance, the sin of rebellion is considered greater by God than the sin of ignorance. We have seen this from Luke 12. Here it is from the Old Testament as well:



"YOU SHALL HAVE ONE LAW FOR HIM WHO SINS UNINTENTIONALLY...

BUT THE PERSON WHO DOES ANYTHING PRESUMPTUOUSLY (DEFIANTLY)... THAT ONE BRINGS REPROACH ON THE LORD, AND HE SHALL BE CUT OFF FROM AMONG HIS PEOPLE. BECAUSE HE HAS DESPISED THE WORD OF THE LORD, AND HAS BROKEN HIS COMMANDMENT, THAT PERSON SHALL BE COMPLETELY CUT OFF; HIS GUILT SHALL BE UPON HIM."

Numbers 15:29-31



In Luke 12 we saw how God deals with the person who knew God's will but did not prepare himself and did not do according to His will:

“THE MASTER OF THAT SERVANT WILL COME ON A DAY WHEN HE IS NOT LOOKING FOR HIM, AND AT AN HOUR WHEN HE IS NOT AWARE, AND WILL CUT HIM IN TWO AND APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS.” Luke 12:46

I am convinced that, in our day, this day of reckoning is going to take place at the Rapture. Jesus will come upon the foolish (rebels) as a thief in the night in a day and hour they are unaware. They will get their portion with the unbelievers. God has not changed His thinking pertaining to rebellion. What He states in Numbers 15 He has re-stated in Luke 12. If defiance is found in the heart, God will deal with it very severely under grace just as He has under law. God remains an unchanging God.



“COMPLETELY CUT OFF HIS GUILT SHALL BE UPON HIM”

Num. 15:31



“CUT HIM IN TWO AND APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS”

Luke 12:46

It is logical to assume that the level of accountability may even be greater under the new covenant because the level of knowledge has increased since the time of the old covenant.

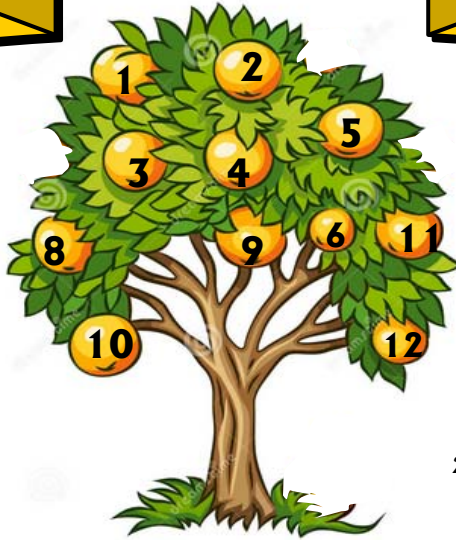
In returning to our opening text from Luke 12, let me pose this question to you. Which of these three servants describes your situation? Are you a servant who knows and does his Master's will? If so, He will make you “ruler over all that He has” or perhaps at least five or ten cities. However, you might be doing things worthy of stripes in your ignorance. In God's kingdom you will find that ignorance is not bliss. Rather it leads to suffering loss of rewards for all eternity.



THE SEVENTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

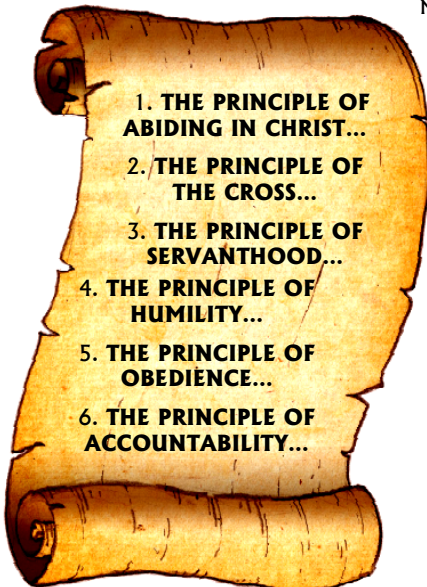
2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



FORGIVENESS

**“...IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST ANYONE,
FORGIVE HIM,
THAT YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN MAY ALSO
FORGIVE YOU YOUR TRESPASSES.
BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE,
NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN
FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES.”**

Mark 11:25-26



Take a moment to reflect on what we have studied so far concerning the inward kingdom of the heart.

We have examined six of the governing principles or bylaws of the kingdom of God.

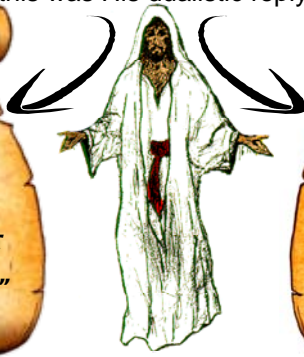
There is a common denominator to these first six principles. They all deal with our relationship to God, and are an expression of the level of our love for God.

There is another aspect that we must now bring into focus which is our relationship to others.

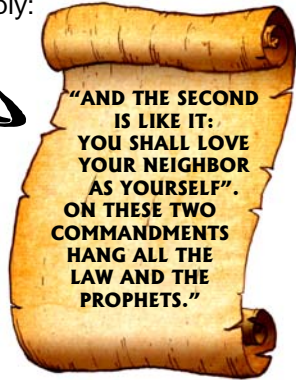
When Jesus was asked what is the greatest of the commandments, this was His dualistic reply:



"OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD"



(Matt. 22:37-40)



"OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS"

"...YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.

THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT."



1. **THE PRINCIPLE OF ABIDING IN CHRIST...**
2. **THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS...**
3. **THE PRINCIPLE OF SERVANTHOOD...**
4. **THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMILITY...**
5. **THE PRINCIPLE OF OBEDIENCE...**
6. **THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY...**

Can you see that these six governing principles enable us in a practical demonstration to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind"? In doing so, we fulfill the first and great commandment, and in essence, we are on a path of fulfilling the law and the prophets upon which these two commandments hang.

Let us now proceed to another group of kingdom principles. These additional principles will deal with the second great commandment which is to "love our neighbor as ourselves." The first one we shall examine deals with the subject of forgiveness:



"...IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST ANYONE, FORGIVE HIM, THAT YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN MAY ALSO FORGIVE YOU YOUR TRESPASSES. BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES."

Mark 11:25-26



Let us begin by stating that there are two aspects to forgiveness:





Let me be very blunt. If we fail to participate in either of these two types of forgiveness, the Bible says it will lead to hell-fire and damnation. Let me explain further. We all know that the Word of God teaches that if a person dies unforgiven in their sins they will inherit eternal damnation. Here are just two passages from the mouth of Jesus. There are many more:



“...I SAID TO YOU THAT YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS; IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THAT I AM HE, YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS.” John 8:24

“HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED; BUT HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.” John 3:18

The apostle John testified of Jesus as being the one “...who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5). Unless you have been washed from your sins by His blood through the new birth, then upon dying while still in your sins, you face eternal damnation in a place Jesus warned should be avoided at all cost:

“IF YOUR HAND MAKES YOU TO SIN, CUT IT OFF. IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER INTO LIFE MAIMED, THAN HAVING TWO HANDS, TO GO TO HELL, INTO THE FIRE THAT SHALL NEVER BE QUENCHED-WHERE THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.” Mark 9:43-44



Perhaps you may not realize it, but Jesus preached far more about hell than He did about heaven.

In light of that emphasis we can see the vital necessity of partaking of this first aspect of forgiveness. It is a matter of life or death. As I mentioned earlier, we must keep on partaking of forgiveness according to 1 John 1:7-9, 2:1-2. We are told “do not sin” (1 Jn. 2:1), but if we do sin we have an advocate with the Father (1 Jn. 2:2). These important aspects of this first type of forgiveness must ever be kept before us in order that we maintain a right relationship and fellowship with God. It is the essence of what it means to walk in the light:

“IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSSES 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.”

1 John 1:7-10

DEADLY SIN-NOT RECEIVING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

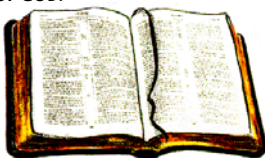
"HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED; BUT HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD."

John 3:18

"...I SAID TO YOU THAT YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS; IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THAT I AM HE, YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS."

John 8:24

**RECEIVING
FORGIVENESS**



**GIVING
FORGIVENESS**

"FOR IF YOU FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU. BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES."

Matt. 6:14-15

"...IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST ANYONE, FORGIVE HIM, THAT YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN MAY ALSO FORGIVE YOU YOUR TRESPASSES. BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES."

Mark 11:25-26

DEADLY SIN-NOT GIVING OUR FORGIVENESS

Modern-day theology stands at odds with these words of Jesus. Many would readily agree that if an unsaved person dies in their sins, they would go to hell. However, when it comes to saying the same thing about a saved person who "dies holding unforgiveness", the very same people would deny that hell is also that one's destiny. Holding to doctrines like "once saved, always saved", as well as "every sin I ever will commit is already forgiven", causes the rejection of these stern warnings of Jesus. How can it be true that God pre-forgives sin when He plainly states that unless "we forgive others, we shall not be forgiven"? Did not Jesus teach His disciples to pray, "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"? (Matt. 6:12)

The sober truth is that God's Word makes no distinction between a man who is saved or unsaved should he die in his sins. God will not allow anyone to receive His forgiveness and then permit that one not to be required to forgive as he has been forgiven. We cannot be a recipient of grace and then refuse to administer that same grace to others. There is no such thing as justifiable unforgiveness in God's economy. Jesus plainly said that if you have anything against anyone-forgive him, or God our Father will not forgive you. To hold on to that unforgiveness till death means that you will die in your sins. That does not lead to heaven, but to hell. Think about this: There are two ways to end up in Hell:

**1. TO DIE
IN A STATE
IN WHICH
MY SINS
HAVE NOT
BEEN
FORGIVEN...**



**2. TO DIE
IN A STATE
OF REFUSING
TO FORGIVE
OTHERS THEIR
SINS...**

**“FOR IF WE WOULD JUDGE OURSELVES, WE WOULD NOT BE JUDGED.
BUT WHEN WE ARE JUDGED, WE ARE CHASTENED BY THE LORD,
THAT WE MAY NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.”**

1 Cor. 11:31-32

Notice Paul says it is possible for a believer to be “condemned with the world”. How can this be? Simply by failing to judge ourselves. Let us go now to one of Jesus’ parables which teaches how God chastens His people when unforgiveness abides in their heart:



**“THEN PETER CAME TO HIM AND SAID,
‘LORD, HOW OFTEN SHALL MY BROTHER
SIN AGAINST ME, AND I FORGIVE HIM?
UP TO SEVEN TIMES?’**

**JESUS SAID TO HIM,
‘I DO NOT SAY TO YOU,
UP TO SEVEN TIMES,
BUT UP TO SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN.
‘THEREFORE THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS LIKE A CERTAIN KING WHO WANTED
TO SETTLE ACCOUNTS WITH HIS
SERVANTS. AND WHEN HE HAD BEGUN
TO SETTLE ACCOUNTS,**

**ONE WAS BROUGHT TO HIM WHO OWED HIM TEN THOUSAND
TALENTS. BUT AS HE WAS NOT ABLE TO PAY, HIS MASTER
COMMANDED THAT HE BE SOLD, WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN
AND ALL THAT HE HAD, AND THAT PAYMENT BE MADE.
THE SERVANT THEREFORE FELL DOWN BEFORE HIM, SAYING,
‘MASTER, HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME, AND I WILL PAY YOU ALL.’
THEN THE MASTER OF THAT SERVANT WAS MOVED WITH
COMPASSION, RELEASED HIM, AND FORGAVE HIM THE DEBT.**

**BUT THAT SERVANT WENT OUT AND FOUND ONE OF HIS FELLOW
SERVANTS WHO OWED HIM A HUNDRED DENARII; AND HE LAID
HANDS ON HIM AND TOOK HIM BY THE THROAT, SAYING, ‘PAY ME
WHAT YOU OWE!’ SO HIS FELLOW SERVANT FELL DOWN AT HIS
FEET AND BEGGED HIM, SAYING, ‘HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME,
AND I WILL PAY YOU ALL. AND HE WOULD NOT, BUT WENT AND
THREW HIM INTO PRISON TILL HE SHOULD PAY THE DEBT.**

**SO WHEN HIS FELLOW SERVANTS SAW WHAT HAD BEEN DONE,
THEY WERE VERY GRIEVED, AND CAME AND TOLD THEIR MASTER
ALL THAT HAD BEEN DONE. THEN HIS MASTER, AFTER HE HAD
CALLED HIM, SAID TO HIM, ‘YOU WICKED SERVANT! I FORGAVE
YOU ALL THAT DEBT BECAUSE YOU BEGGED ME. SHOULD YOU NOT
ALSO HAVE HAD COMPASSION ON YOUR FELLOW SERVANT,
JUST AS I HAD PITY ON YOU?’**

**AND HIS MASTER WAS ANGRY, AND DELIVERED HIM TO THE
TORTURERS UNTIL HE SHOULD PAY ALL THAT WAS DUE TO HIM.**

**‘SO MY HEAVENLY FATHER ALSO WILL DO TO YOU
IF EACH OF YOU, FROM HIS HEART,
DOES NOT FORGIVE HIS BROTHER HIS TRESPASSES.’**

Matt. 18:31-35

The parallels are great. Having received forgiveness of the enormous debt of our sins, shall we then refuse to forgive the little debt owed to us by someone else? Hear Jesus words of warning:



**“SHOULD YOU NOT ALSO
HAVE HAD COMPASSION ON
YOUR FELLOW SERVANT,
JUST AS I HAD PITY ON YOU?”
(vs. 33)**



Let us realize that this is not a story about finances. It is a parable generated by Peter's question about forgiveness. Notice this action of the servant angers the Master. How would we like to have God angry at us? The result is that the Master turns him over to the torturers (demon torment) until he pays all that is due.

I can tell you, as a pastor having seen people walking in unforgiveness, that the torturers are demon spirits. If you don't think God would do this, consider the sober account of King Saul and his unforgiveness of David:

**“BUT THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD DEPARTED FROM SAUL,
AND A DISTRESSING SPIRIT FROM THE LORD TROUBLED HIM.
AND SAUL'S SERVANTS SAID TO HIM,
‘SURELY, A DISTRESSING SPIRIT FROM GOD IS TROUBLING YOU....**

**... SO DAVID WENT OUT WHEREVER SAUL SENT HIM, AND BEHAVED
WISELY. AND SAUL SET HIM OVER THE MEN OF WAR, AND HE WAS
ACCEPTED IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE AND ALSO IN THE
SIGHT OF SAUL'S SERVANTS. NOW IT HAD HAPPENED AS THEY
WERE COMING HOME, WHEN DAVID WAS RETURNING FROM THE
SLAUGHTER OF THE PHILISTINE, THAT THE WOMEN HAD COME
OUT OF ALL THE CITIES OF ISRAEL, SINGING AND DANCING,
TO MEET KING SAUL, WITH TAMBOURINES, WITH JOY,
AND WITH MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.
SO THE WOMEN SANG AS THEY DANCED, AND SAID:**

**"SAUL HAS SLAIN HIS THOUSANDS,
AND DAVID HIS TEN THOUSANDS."**

**THEN SAUL WAS VERY ANGRY, AND THE SAYING DISPLEASED HIM;
AND HE SAID, ‘THEY HAVE ASCRIBED TO DAVID TEN THOUSANDS,
AND TO ME THEY HAVE ASCRIBED ONLY THOUSANDS. NOW WHAT
MORE CAN HE HAVE BUT THE KINGDOM?’ SO SAUL EYED DAVID
FROM THAT DAY FORWARD.”** 1 Samuel 16: excerpts

What God did to Saul he will do to anyone including New Testament born-again believers. This is what Jesus is warning Peter about. Is the pleasure of unforgiveness worth the cost? To be turned over to the torturers in this life until we repent, and if we do not repent in this life, then we remain in our sins and face an eternity of torture in hell. God will not allow us to reap the benefits of the kingdom of God, and then walk as if we were still part of the kingdom of this world.

Perhaps if we were in a face-to-face situation, you might say to me, "But Pastor Randy, you don't know what he/she did to me..." I understand very well the magnitude of what people can do to people. The ministry is full of such sensitive and pain-filled hurts. Even Jesus experienced such "hurts" and yet consider the words He uttered while being nailed to the cross:

**"THEN JESUS SAID,
'FATHER, FORGIVE THEM,
FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW
WHAT THEY DO...'"**

Luke 23:34

What did Stephen say as they were stoning him to death for preaching the Word of God?

"AND THEY STONED STEPHEN AS HE WAS CALLING ON GOD AND SAYING, 'LORD JESUS, RECEIVE MY SPIRIT.' THEN HE KNELT DOWN AND CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, 'LORD, DO NOT CHARGE THEM WITH THIS SIN...'" Acts 7:59-60

Or consider Paul's words in his moment of agony and despair:

"AT MY FIRST DEFENSE NO ONE STOOD WITH ME, BUT ALL FORSOOK ME. MAY IT NOT BE CHARGED AGAINST THEM."

2 Tim. 4:16

Dear saint, regardless of the magnitude of the injury or offense, we cannot justify unforgiveness. We have not suffered as did Jesus, Stephen or Paul. In their dying moments, they remembered to forgive. These things are recorded as examples for us to emulate. Consider Paul's great warning of what lies ahead for God's people:

"BUT UNDERSTAND THIS, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS THERE WILL SET IN PERILOUS TIMES OF GREAT STRESS AND TROUBLE-HARD TO DEAL WITH AND HARD TO BEAR. FOR PEOPLE WILL BE... UNTHANKFUL... UNHOLY... UNLOVING... UNFORGIVING..."

2 Tim. 3:1-3 Amp. excerpts



Among the many things Paul stresses in these passages are these four "UN's" that mark the character of people in the last days. Note that one of them is unforgiveness. We also see that these things create great stress, trouble hard to deal with and to bear.

Not all of these people that Paul describes are in the world. Some are within in the church that having a form of godliness but deny its power (1 Tim. 3:5). If we consider the parable of the sower, we find that there are some who are offended on account of the Word. That means whenever the Word is spoken, there will be plenty of potential situations for offenses to occur.

“THEN HE SAID TO THE DISCIPLES, ‘IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT NO OFFENSES SHOULD COME, BUT WOE TO HIM THROUGH WHOM THEY DO COME! IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HIM IF A MILLSTONE WERE HUNG AROUND HIS NECK, AND HE WERE THROWN INTO THE SEA, THAN THAT HE SHOULD OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES. TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES. IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU, REBUKE HIM; AND IF HE REPENTS, FORGIVE HIM. AND IF HE SINS AGAINST YOU SEVEN TIMES IN A DAY, AND SEVEN TIMES IN A DAY RETURNS TO YOU, SAYING, ‘I REPENT,’ YOU SHALL FORGIVE HIM.’ AND THE APOSTLES SAID TO THE LORD, ‘INCREASE OUR FAITH.’” Luke 17:1-5



Notice it is impossible that offenses will not come. The cure is not to go someplace else if an offense occurs in the church. God wants us to deal with them and not to flee from them. There are plenty more waiting down the street when you get there. There are no perfect churches. They are filled with imperfect people just like you and me.

Note that Jesus says we are to forgive, and forgive, and continue to forgive even up to seven times a day with the same person! The response of the disciples is amusing: “Lord, increase our faith.”

Most of us would admit that we have enough trouble forgiving once, let alone seven times in one day. What is Jesus teaching with this illustration of extreme hyperbole? It is simply that there is no such thing as justifiable unforgiveness. In the other account of this story you may remember that Peter thought seven times should be sufficient. What was Jesus’ answer to His own disciple?



“JESUS SAID TO HIM, ‘I DO NOT SAY TO YOU, UP TO SEVEN TIMES, BUT UP TO SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN.’”
Matt. 18:22

Forgiveness begins with our understanding the vital need to forgive. That is what I have been stressing so far. We cannot afford not to forgive. This fact must first be dealt with in our minds. We must fill our mind with the Word of God concerning the danger of unforgiveness. It alone will bring conviction that we are on a deadly path. Once we are convinced in our minds that we must forgive, then we need to choose to do so. This involves a deliberate choice of our will. It does not involve the emotions at this point. In the midst of all the hurt and emotional stress, we must make a choice to forgive in spite of what we feel emotionally.

The third area in this progression of forgiveness is the ability to forgive and forget. It now involves bringing our emotions under the process of forgiveness. Here is God's way to heal our emotions:

**“YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID,
‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AND
HATE YOUR ENEMY.’**

**BUT I SAY TO YOU,
‘LOVE YOUR ENEMIES,
BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU...
AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY
USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU...”**

Matt. 5:43-44

Here is God's plan for the healing of our emotions. We pray for, rather than pray against, our enemies. We bless them rather than curse them. We love them rather than hate them. In doing so, you will prevent a defiling root of bitterness from springing up in you (Heb. 12:15).



Certainly no one relishes the idea of having enemies. Jesus said that to follow Him would result in making enemies even in our own house:



**“DO NOT THINK THAT I CAME TO
BRING PEACE ON EARTH.
I DID NOT COME TO BRING PEACE
BUT A SWORD. FOR I HAVE COME
TO SET A MAN AGAINST HIS
FATHER, A DAUGHTER AGAINST
HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-
IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-
LAW. AND A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL
BE THOSE OF HIS OWN
HOUSEHOLD.”**

Matt. 10:34-36

The apostle Paul gave counsel in this area as well regarding what should be our action concerning our enemies:

**“REPAY NO ONE EVIL FOR EVIL... IF IT IS POSSIBLE,
AS MUCH AS DEPENDS ON YOU, LIVE PEACEABLY WITH ALL MEN.
BELOVED, DO NOT AVENGE YOURSELVES... IF YOUR ENEMY IS
HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTS, GIVE HIM A DRINK;
FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP COALS OF FIRE ON HIS HEAD...
DO NOT BE OVERCOME BY EVIL, BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.”**

Romans 12:17-21

What Jesus and Paul tell us about our responsibility to love, to pray for, to bless and even feed those who are our enemies are hard sayings-very hard! The Christian way is full of such difficult sayings. Some of Jesus' disciples followed Him no more because of such hard sayings (Jn. 6:66). The alternative is yielding to a life of bitterness, hate and revenge. This is the way of the kingdoms of this world, not the kingdom of God.

Not all our enemies will be found outside of the confines of Christianity. Perhaps it is true that there are more enemies within the camp than without. Jesus taught a step-by-step system to at least minimize the amount of enemies we would have within the camp. It is a plan for reconciliation. How would you complete this sentence:

“IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU GO AND...”

Your answer will determine how many enemies you will have. The vindictive world will tell you how to finish this sentence, but what does the Word tell us?



**“IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU,
GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT BETWEEN YOU
AND HIM ALONE”** Matt. 18:15

The wisdom of this world would counsel you to get even. Many a movie has been made with that intention in mind. The world thrives on a macho Clint Eastwood mentality that claims, “vengeance is mine, I will repay.” However, the counter-wisdom of God’s Word will tell you to seek reconciliation rather than such vengeance. The instruction of Jesus in Matthew 18 is clear:

GO AHEAD



MAKE MY DAY ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨



**“MOREOVER IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU,
GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT
BETWEEN YOU AND HIM ALONE.
IF HE HEARS YOU,
YOU HAVE GAINED
YOUR BROTHER.”**

Matthew 18:15

Notice we are not instructed to go and tell others but rather go tell your brother alone. If you can settle it between yourselves, then you have gained your brother. That is reconciliation.

Perhaps you have gone to your brother and told him his fault, and it didn’t go the way that you had hoped. Usually you can see in their face as whether you are getting through or not. We are not to end our efforts there according to what Jesus tells us in Matthew 18. We must then proceed to the second step which is:

**“BUT IF HE WILL NOT HEAR YOU,
TAKE WITH YOU ONE OR TWO MORE,
THAT BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES
EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.”**

Matt. 18:16

**“MOREOVER IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU,
GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT BETWEEN YOU AND HIM ALONE.
IF HE HEARS YOU, YOU HAVE GAINED YOUR BROTHER.
BUT IF HE WILL NOT HEAR YOU, TAKE WITH YOU ONE OR TWO MORE,
THAT BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE
ESTABLISHED. AND IF HE REFUSES TO HEAR THEM,
TELL IT TO THE CHURCH...”** Matt. 18:16-17

Not only does this action place two or more between the two of you but it brings into play the concept of “the multitude of counselors”. The book of Proverbs tells us that in the “multitude of counselors there is safety” (11:14). Also that “by wise counsel we wage war” (20:18). And again, “with the well-advised there is wisdom” (13:10).

The third step is stated above when the multitude of counselors fail to reconcile differences. That final step is specified as “tell it to the church”. That mandate does not mean to call everybody up or to write everyone a letter. It means take this unsolvable problem to those over you in the church, namely, your elders (pastor). Why so? Because if you are dealing with a brother/sister in the Lord, then they have the same obligation to submit to spiritual authority:

**“OBEY THOSE WHO RULE OVER YOU, AND BE SUBMISSIVE,
FOR THEY WATCH OUT FOR YOUR SOULS,
AS THOSE WHO MUST GIVE ACCOUNT.
LET THEM DO SO WITH JOY AND NOT WITH GRIEF,
FOR THAT WOULD BE UNPROFITABLE FOR YOU.”**

Hebrews 13:17

Jesus tells us that if they fail to heed authority, then we are to take this fourth and final step:

“...BUT LET HIM BE TO YOU LIKE A HEATHEN...” Matt. 18:17

This is a strong admonition. It means that as far as the church is concerned, this person is not to be considered a follower of Christ. Anyone who will not heed God’s under-shepherds in counsel which is in accordance with the Word of God is considered to be in rebellion to the Chief-Shepherd Himself. Listen to Paul:

**“...NOTE THOSE WHO CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES,
CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YOU LEARNED, AND AVOID THEM...
SUCH DO NOT SERVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...”**

Rom. 16:17-18

This “brother” is now to be unto you “as a heathen.” This is what he has become before God because of unforgiveness. Earlier I stated that unforgiveness is a deadly sin for believers or unbelievers and it leads to hell. Jesus pronounces that this brother is to be considered as a heathen. It is simply because he will die in his sins in the same state as does the heathen-unforgiven. Perhaps this one will go on professing to be a Christian, but Jesus says he is a heathen because:

**“FOR IF YOU FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER
WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU. BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE MEN THEIR
TRESPASSES, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES.”**

Matt. 6:14-15



DEADLY SIN-NOT RECEIVING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

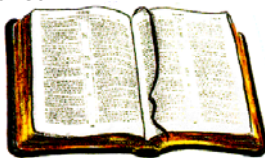
"HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED; BUT HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD."

John 3:18

"...I SAID TO YOU THAT YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS; IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THAT I AM HE, YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS."

John 8:24

**RECEIVING
FORGIVENESS**



**GIVING
FORGIVENESS**

"FOR IF YOU FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU. BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES."

Matt. 6:14-15

"...IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST ANYONE, FORGIVE HIM, THAT YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN MAY ALSO FORGIVE YOU YOUR TRESPASSES. BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES."

Mark 11:25-26

DEADLY SIN-NOT GIVING OUR FORGIVENESS



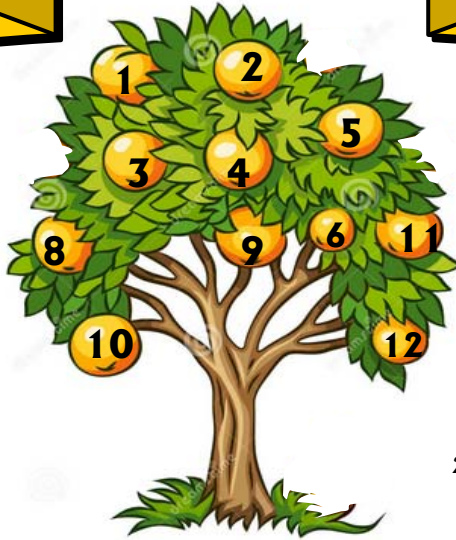
"EXAMINE AND TEST AND PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUIT OF IT. TEST AND PROVE YOUR SELVES."

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified

THE EIGHTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor.13:5 Amplified



**MAKING PROPER
JUDGMENTS**

**“JUDGE NOT, THAT YOU BE NOT JUDGED.
FOR WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YOU JUDGE,
YOU WILL BE JUDGED;
AND WITH THE SAME MEASURE YOU USE,
IT WILL BE MEASURED BACK TO YOU.”**

Matt. 7:1-2



**“FORGIVE AND YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN...
WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YOU JUDGE, YOU WILL BE JUDGED...
WITH THE SAME MEASURE YOU USE, IT WILL BE MEASURED BACK TO YOU”**

What is stated about unforgiveness in Matt. 6:14-15 and in Luke 6:37 is also said of “judgment” in Matt. 7:2. God will forgive in the measure we forgive and He will judge with the measure we judge. What is the foundation that God is establishing? It is this awesome truth:

**GOD ALLOWS US TO ESTABLISH THE STANDARDS
BY WHICH WE SHALL BE JUDGED.**

This is a principle found in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. It is a principle from an unchanging God. Here it is in the Old:

**“WITH THE MERCIFUL YOU WILL SHOW YOURSELF MERCIFUL...
WITH THE PURE YOU WILL SHOW YOURSELF PURE;
AND WITH THE DEVIOUS YOU WILL SHOW YOURSELF SHREWD.”**

Psalm 18:25-26

With the measure that we forgive, we shall be forgiven. With the measure that we judge, we shall be judged. We are setting the standards of our own judgment. That means we cannot revel in the wondrous mercy of God and then be unmerciful with others. If we are harsh, exacting and holding to the letter of the law with others, God says He will do the same to us when "our day in court" comes. Once you understand this kingdom principle, then it behooves us to become very merciful. Consider the warning of the apostle James:

**"FOR JUDGMENT IS WITHOUT MERCY
TO THE ONE WHO HAS SHOWN NO MERCY.
MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT."**

James 2:13

Let me use an illustration from the natural realm to get the point across concerning the spiritual. If today was your day in court for doing 65 in a 35 mile per hour zone, which of these two judges would you prefer to try your case?



Let me ask you another question and we will find out how much you have learned about forgiveness. Consider for a moment your worst enemy. Now answer impulsively, which judge would you like your enemy to face? Remember, we are to love our enemies, bless them and pray for them-not against them. If you are relishing the idea of God someday punishing your enemies for you, then you have not grasped the concept of loving, blessing and praying for them. We should be asking God to be merciful to them and to not charge them with sin as did Jesus and Stephen.

Let us begin to examine whether we should judge at all. Shakespeare said the dilemma of the hour was

In light of Jesus' teachings on judgment, the Christian might consider whether we are to

**"TO BE OR NOT TO BE,
THAT IS THE QUESTION!"**



**TO JUDGE OR NOT TO JUDGE,
THAT IS THE REAL QUESTION!"**





“JUDGE NOT, THAT YOU BE NOT JUDGED... AND WHY DO YOU LOOK AT THE SPECK IN YOUR BROTHER’S EYE, BUT DO NOT CONSIDER THE PLANK IN YOUR OWN EYE? OR HOW CAN YOU SAY TO YOUR BROTHER, ‘LET ME REMOVE THE SPECK OUT OF YOUR EYE’; AND LOOK, A PLANK IS IN YOUR OWN EYE? HYPOCRITE! FIRST REMOVE THE PLANK FROM YOUR OWN EYE, AND THEN YOU WILL SEE CLEARLY TO REMOVE THE SPECK OUT OF YOUR BROTHER’S EYE.”

Matt. 7:1-5

The popular view of this teaching is that Jesus is telling us “do not judge, period!” However, we will see that this conclusion will not harmonize with the rest of the scripture. Actually, Jesus is addressing the issue of judging from a position of hypocrisy. We are to judge, but not from a position of hypocrisy. As we shall come to see, we are to judge, but only with righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24)

In our text above, does Jesus forbid one brother to judge another? Does He say “Do not remove the speck in your brother’s eye”? No, He says “First deal with what is in your own eye” and then you will “see clearly” to deal with what troubles your brother. It is hypocrisy that Jesus is condemning, not judging.

A good natural illustration of the functioning of hypocrisy can be seen in the “pointing of the finger” at someone else.



Observe that in making the hand form with one-pointed finger at others, there are three fingers pointed back at yourself.

This illustrates the concept Jesus used of having a plank in your eye vs. the speck in your brother’s eye. You magnify one point at the expense of the other hidden three. Do you “get the point?”

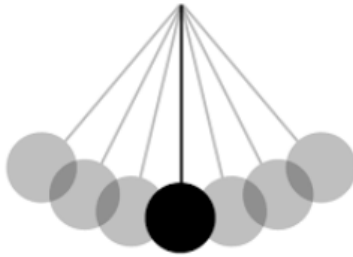
The apostle Paul amplifies the point Jesus makes concerning judging from a position of hypocrisy:

“THEREFORE YOU ARE INEXCUSABLE, O MAN, WHOEVER YOU ARE WHO JUDGE, FOR IN WHATEVER YOU JUDGE ANOTHER YOU CONDEMN YOURSELF; FOR YOU WHO JUDGE PRACTICE THE SAME THINGS... DO YOU THINK THIS... YOU WHO JUDGE THOSE PRACTICING SUCH THINGS, AND DOING THE SAME, THAT YOU WILL ESCAPE THE JUDGMENT OF GOD? YOU, THEREFORE, WHO TEACH ANOTHER, DO YOU NOT TEACH YOURSELF...”

Romans 2:1-3,21 excerpts



**DO NOT
JUDGE ANYTHING
OR ANYBODY**



**JUDGE
EVERYTHING
AND EVERYBODY**

Pendulum Swing

As with most Biblical truths, the doctrine of judging suffers from either of these two extremes. Both positions are “error by emphasis.” God has a balanced perspective concerning judgment. There are things we are to judge and things we are not to judge. Let the scriptures speak for themselves:

“I WROTE TO YOU IN MY EPISTLE NOT TO KEEP COMPANY WITH SEXUALLY IMMORAL PEOPLE. YET I CERTAINLY DID NOT MEAN WITH THE SEXUALLY IMMORAL PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD, OR WITH THE COVETOUS, OR EXTORTIONERS, OR IDOLATERS, SINCE THEN YOU WOULD NEED TO GO OUT OF THE WORLD. BUT NOW I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU NOT TO KEEP COMPANY WITH ANYONE NAMED A BROTHER, WHO IS A FORNICATOR, OR COVETOUS, OR AN IDOLATER, OR A REVILER, OR A DRUNKARD, OR AN EXTORTIONER—NOT EVEN TO EAT WITH SUCH A PERSON. FOR WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH JUDGING THOSE ALSO WHO ARE OUTSIDE? DO YOU NOT JUDGE THOSE WHO ARE INSIDE? BUT THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE GOD JUDGES. THEREFORE “PUT AWAY FROM YOURSELVES THAT WICKED PERSON.” DARE ANY OF YOU, HAVING A MATTER AGAINST ANOTHER, GO TO LAW BEFORE THE UNRIGHTEOUS, AND NOT BEFORE THE SAINTS? DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THE SAINTS WILL JUDGE THE WORLD? AND IF THE WORLD WILL BE JUDGED BY YOU, ARE YOU UNWORTHY TO JUDGE THE SMALLEST MATTERS? DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS? HOW MUCH MORE, THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO THIS LIFE? IF THEN YOU HAVE JUDGMENTS CONCERNING THINGS PERTAINING TO THIS LIFE, DO YOU APPOINT THOSE WHO ARE LEAST ESTEEMED BY THE CHURCH TO JUDGE? I SAY THIS TO YOUR SHAME. IS IT SO, THAT THERE IS NOT A WISE MAN AMONG YOU, NOT EVEN ONE, WHO WILL BE ABLE TO JUDGE BETWEEN HIS BRETHREN? BUT BROTHER GOES TO LAW AGAINST BROTHER, AND THAT BEFORE UNBELIEVERS! NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ALREADY AN UTTER FAILURE FOR YOU THAT YOU GO TO LAW AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. WHY DO YOU NOT RATHER ACCEPT WRONG? WHY DO YOU NOT RATHER LET YOURSELVES BE DEFRAUDED? NO, YOU YOURSELVES DO WRONG AND DEFAUD, AND YOU DO THESE THINGS TO YOUR BRETHREN!”

1 Cor. 5:9-13, 6:1-8

Compare what Paul teaches to what the church is doing today, and you will see that we have this doctrine of judging all topsy-turvy. The church today is busy judging those outside which Paul refutes as being the responsibility of the church (6:12). In light of the above instruction, why are God's people judging the world in areas of abortion, pornography, aids, etc.?

Paul does say that the church will judge the world as well as judging angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3). However, that is a different manifestation of the kingdom of God. It will take place in the yet-future millennial reign of Christ. In this present dispensation we are to be like Jesus who came to save the world rather than condemn the world. Note also that Paul says the church is to be judging the smallest matters that are inside the church (1 Cor. 6:2-5), but as soon as one attempts to do so today, the cry goes up, "you are judging me!" Yes, and we should be doing so, just as Paul passed judgment upon the sexual immorality that was being allowed in the church at Corinth.

Let us now consider some of what Paul said we are not to judge:

"RECEIVE ONE WHO IS WEAK IN THE FAITH, BUT NOT TO DISPUTES OVER DOUBTFUL THINGS. FOR ONE BELIEVES HE MAY EAT ALL THINGS, BUT HE WHO IS WEAK EATS ONLY VEGETABLES. LET NOT HIM WHO EATS DESPISE HIM WHO DOES NOT EAT, AND LET NOT HIM WHO DOES NOT EAT JUDGE HIM WHO EATS; FOR GOD HAS RECEIVED HIM. WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ANOTHER'S SERVANT? TO HIS OWN MASTER HE STANDS OR FALLS.

INDEED, HE WILL BE MADE TO STAND, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE HIM STAND. ONE PERSON ESTEEMS ONE DAY ABOVE ANOTHER; ANOTHER ESTEEMS EVERY DAY ALIKE. LET EACH BE FULLY CONVINCED IN HIS OWN MIND. HE WHO OBSERVES THE DAY, OBSERVES IT TO THE LORD; AND HE WHO DOES NOT OBSERVE THE DAY, TO THE LORD HE DOES NOT OBSERVE IT. HE WHO EATS, EATS TO THE LORD, FOR HE GIVES GOD THANKS; AND HE WHO DOES NOT EAT, TO THE LORD HE DOES NOT EAT, AND GIVES GOD THANKS. FOR NONE OF US LIVES TO HIMSELF, AND NO ONE DIES TO HIMSELF. FOR IF WE LIVE, WE LIVE TO THE LORD; AND IF WE DIE, WE DIE TO THE LORD. THEREFORE, WHETHER WE LIVE OR DIE, WE ARE THE

LORD'S. FOR TO THIS END CHRIST DIED AND ROSE AND LIVED AGAIN, THAT HE MIGHT BE LORD OF BOTH THE DEAD AND THE LIVING. BUT WHY DO YOU JUDGE YOUR BROTHER? OR WHY DO YOU SHOW CONTEMPT FOR YOUR BROTHER? FOR WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. FOR IT IS WRITTEN: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."

SO THEN EACH OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD.

THEREFORE LET US NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANYMORE, BUT RATHER RESOLVE THIS, NOT TO PUT A STUMBLING BLOCK OR A CAUSE TO FALL IN OUR BROTHER'S WAY. I KNOW AND AM CONVINCED BY THE LORD JESUS

THAT THERE IS NOTHING UNCLEAN OF ITSELF; BUT TO HIM WHO CONSIDERS ANYTHING TO BE UNCLEAN, TO HIM IT IS UNCLEAN. YET IF YOUR BROTHER IS GRIEVED BECAUSE OF YOUR FOOD, YOU ARE NO LONGER WALKING IN LOVE. DO NOT DESTROY WITH YOUR FOOD THE ONE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. THEREFORE DO NOT LET YOUR GOOD BE SPOKEN OF AS EVIL; FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK, BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

FOR HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AND APPROVED BY MEN. THEREFORE LET US PURSUE THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE AND THE THINGS BY WHICH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER.

DO NOT DESTROY THE WORK OF GOD FOR THE SAKE OF FOOD. ALL THINGS INDEED ARE PURE, BUT IT IS EVIL FOR THE MAN WHO EATS WITH OFFENSE. IT IS GOOD NEITHER TO EAT MEAT NOR DRINK WINE NOR DO ANYTHING BY WHICH YOUR BROTHER STUMBLES OR IS OFFENDED OR IS MADE WEAK. DO YOU HAVE FAITH? HAVE IT TO YOURSELF BEFORE GOD. HAPPY IS HE WHO DOES NOT CONDEMN HIMSELF IN WHAT HE APPROVES. BUT HE WHO DOUBTS IS CONDEMNED IF HE EATS, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT EAT FROM FAITH; FOR WHATEVER IS NOT FROM FAITH IS SIN."

Rom. 14:1-23

Paul tells us we should not dispute over doubtful things. In that category are “meats vs. vegetables” and “special days”. Whole denominations have been birthed out of disputes over the “seventh-day Sabbath” vs. the “eight-day Sabbath”. Paul says, “Let each be fully convinced in his own mind” (vs. 5). These are not areas in which we are to judge our brother. Let the Word of God be the source of our persuasion but let us walk in love toward those who don’t see it as we do.

There is a third area which needs to be addressed concerning judging. I believe it is the most wide-spread of all the judging that is taking place in the body of Christ. Listen to these words of Jesus whose title is “The Righteous Judge”:



**“DO NOT JUDGE
ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE,
BUT JUDGE
WITH
RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT.”**
John 7:24



It is enough to be judged for the things we really do, but this is an area of unrighteous judgment based upon someone’s perceptions and suspicions rather than hard facts.

Have you ever done what this man is doing? He passes judgment based upon what he suspects is going on. In other words, he is attempting to judge what is in someone’s heart. It is only God who is able to know what is in a man’s heart. We can only look at the outward appearance. It takes God to see the heart:



**“FOR THE LORD DOES NOT SEE AS MAN
SEES; FOR MAN LOOKS AT
THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE,
BUT THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART.”**
1 Samuel 16:7

**“DOES OUR LAW JUDGE A MAN
BEFORE
IT HEARS HIM AND KNOWS
WHAT HE IS DOING?”**
John 7:51

When we judge others by our perceptions or suspicions, we are attempting to do what only God can do, “examine a man’s heart.” No brother or sister is accountable for your perceptions. These are offenses of the imagination. Learn to deal carefully with your perceptions. If you feel something that strongly, then you must go to your brother. Present it meekly as a feeling rather than a statement of fact. If he/she corrects your perception, then apologize and learn from it. It is better to be embarrassed than to begin to treat another as if they had actually offended you.

The devil thrives on perceptions. We are never to judge in such a manner. As Sergeant Friday of the Dragnet Series used to say, “Just the facts, Ma’am, just the facts.” The Word of God also places emphasis on this as well:

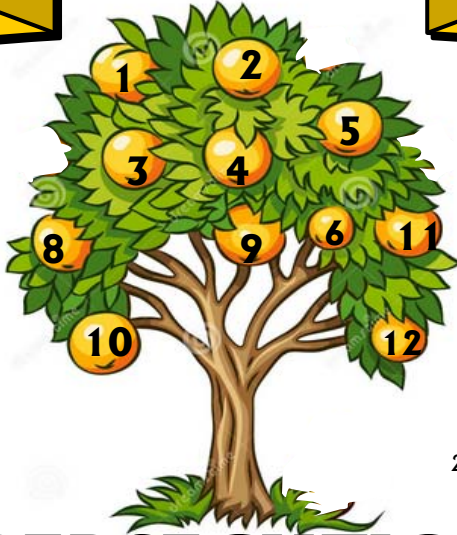
**“...BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES
EVERY WORD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED.”**

(Deut. 17:6, Matt. 18:16 and 2 Cor. 13:1)

THE NINTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor.13:5 Amplified



PERSECUTION

**“REMEMBER THE WORD THAT I SAID TO YOU,
'A SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER.'
IF THEY PERSECUTE ME,
THEY WILL ALSO PERSECUTE YOU...”**

John 15:20



We would not normally think of persecution as a fruit of the kingdom of God. However, it should be considered to be the expected result of being filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11). Let us ponder Paul's commendation to those at Thessalonica as an example:

**“...WE OURSELVES BOAST OF YOU AMONG THE CHURCHES OF GOD FOR
YOUR PATIENCE AND FAITH IN ALL YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND
TRIBULATIONS THAT YOU ENDURE, WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF THE
RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY OF
THE KINGDOM OF GOD, FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER...”**

2 Thess. 1:4-5

Notice that Paul commends this church for having “faith in all your persecutions.” If we would believe the faith-for-prosperity message as it is presented today, this church would need to be chastised for their lack of faith that resulted in persecutions. One faith teacher I heard said that if only Paul would have possessed enough faith, he would not have suffered such persecution as he did. However, Paul teaches that persecution is the manifest evidence that the recipient is worthy of the kingdom of God. To receive persecution is not a negative, but a very positive sign of being on the right track! Persecution is indeed among the fruits of righteousness which Paul encourages us to expect

“REMEMBER THE WORD THAT I SAID TO YOU, ‘A SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER.’ IF THEY PERSECUTED ME, THEY WILL ALSO PERSECUTE YOU...” John 15:20

“...WHAT PERSECUTIONS I ENDURED... YES, AND ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION.”
2 Tim. 3:11-12

Both Jesus and Paul encouraged the saints to embrace persecution. It is part of the normal Christian life incurred when kingdom principles govern our lives as they did in the lives of Jesus and Paul. We are not greater than Paul, and certainly we are not greater than our Master. If they persecuted the sinless, perfect Son of God, then we must understand that they will also persecute all those who follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

As it is often found in scripture, what Jesus states simplistically Paul follows with clarification. Above we see Jesus telling us that we will be persecuted and Paul tells us why it is so. All you need to do is desire to live godly in Christ Jesus.

If you pursue godliness, you will also find persecution. Where there is no godliness, there is no persecution. To be godly requires that we are not worldly. A worldly Christian qualifies as an oxymoron (contradictory terms). A Christian is to be like Christ. A worldly person follows after the world. If you follow after God, it will lead you in paths of godliness and will produce persecution from both the world and those worldly Christians of our modern-day theology. Let me prove that statement. Consider carefully what Jesus said will bring persecution from the world:

“IF THE WORLD HATES YOU, YOU KNOW THAT IT HATED ME BEFORE IT HATED YOU. IF YOU WERE OF THE WORLD, THE WORLD WOULD LOVE ITS OWN. YET BECAUSE... I CHOSE YOU OUT OF THE WORLD, THEREFORE THE WORLD HATES YOU.... ALL THESE THINGS THEY WILL DO TO YOU FOR MY NAME’S SAKE, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW HIM WHO SENT ME.” John 15:18-21

“...LIGHT HAS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL. FOR EVERYONE PRACTICING EVIL HATES THE LIGHT AND DOES NOT COME TO THE LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS SHOULD BE EXPOSED. BUT HE WHO DOES THE TRUTH COMES TO THE LIGHT, THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE CLEARLY SEEN, THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DONE IN GOD.”

John 3:19-21



I pray that you will take time to meditate on these words of Jesus for they contain the essence of what causes persecution from the world.

Let us consider a summarization of why the world will persecute a follower of Christ who understands he has been chosen to be called out of this world (Jn. 15:19). You will remember that Jesus said “My kingdom is not of this world...” (Jn. 18:36). The Greek word translated as “church” means “the called-out ones”. Here is the core-essence of persecution: being called-out from the world is a public rejection of its values and priorities.

PERSECUTION BY THE WORLD:



- BECAUSE THEY LOVE THIS PRESENT WORLD (LUST OF THE FLESH, LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE).
- BECAUSE THEY LOVE DARKNESS (DEEDS ARE EVIL) THEY HATE LIGHT.
- BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT THEIR DEEDS TO BE EXPOSED.
- BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW HIM WHO SENT JESUS.

Remember Jesus said the world loves its own (Jn. 15:19). A Christian who loves this present world as did Demas in Paul’s day (2 Tim. 4:10) will fit right in because he rejects the fact of being called out of this present world. His goals, priorities and even pleasures will be according to, rather than in opposition to, those of the world.

Consider what the apostle John tells us the world consists of that we as Christians are not to love:

“DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD. IF ANYONE LOVES THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM. FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD— THE LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE— IS NOT OF THE FATHER BUT IS OF THE WORLD. AND THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY, AND THE LUST OF IT; BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD ABIDES FOREVER.”

1 John 2:15-17

Let me state that when God speaks of the world, He refers to this present evil age re-created by Satan rather than the physical world which God originally created. What God makes is good. What Satan makes of it is bad. Consider these words of Watchman Nee from “Love Not The World”





"EVERY TIME YOU AND I TOUCH THE WORLD THROUGH THE THINGS OF THE WORLD (AND WE MUST DO SO REPEATEDLY), WE SHOULD FEEL AS MUCH ABOUT TAKING MORPHINE, FOR THERE ARE DEMONS AT THE BACK OF EVERYTHING THAT BELONGS TO THE WORLD.



Watchman Nee

BECAUSE I AM STILL IN THE WORLD, I HAVE TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE WORLD, FOLLOW SOME TRADE, EARN MY LIVELIHOOD. BUT HOW MUCH TREATMENT WITH DANGEROUS DRUGS CAN I SAFELY TAKE WITHOUT FALLING PREY TO THE CRAVING? HOW MANY THINGS CAN I BUY, OR HOW MUCH MONEY CAN I MAKE, OR HOW CLOSE CAN BE BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS BE WITHOUT MY BECOMING HOOKED? HOW VITAL IT IS FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN TO HAVE A CLEAR REVELATION OF THIS PRESENT WORLD THAT IS UNDER SATAN'S CONTROL...OH, THAT GOD WOULD OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE CLEARLY WHAT THE WORLD IS! NOT ONLY THE OBVIOUS EVIL THINGS THAT IT CONTAINS, BUT ALSO THE SUBTLE THINGS THAT CAN DRAW US AWAY FROM GOD, MAKING US MORE AND MORE ATTACHED TO THIS PRESENT WORLD...

OUR DELIVERANCE FROM THE WORLD BEGINS SEEING THE WORLD AS GOD SEES IT, A WORLD THAT IS UNDER THE SENTENCE OF DEATH. A PERSON UNDER THE SENTENCE OF DEATH HAS NO FUTURE BEYOND THE CELL THAT CONFINES HIM. HE AWAITS THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION. LIKEWISE THE WORLD, BEING UNDER GOD'S PRONOUNCED SENTENCE OF DEATH, HAS NO FUTURE. IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE TO US THAT WE SEE THIS...SEPARATION TO GOD, SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD, IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. JOHN, IN HIS REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WAS SHOWN TWO IRRECONCILABLE EXTREMES, TWO WORLDS THAT MORALLY WERE POLES APART. HE WAS FIRST CARRIED AWAY IN THE SPIRIT INTO A WILDERNESS TO SEE BABYLON, MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (17:3). THEN HE WAS CARRIED IN THE SAME SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, FROM WHENCE TO VIEW JERUSALEM, THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE (21:10). THE CONTRAST IS CLEAR AND COULD HARDLY BE MORE EXPLICITLY STATED... THE HARLOT BABYLON IS ALWAYS "THE GREAT CITY" (16:19, ETC.) WITH THE EMPHASIS ON HER ATTAINMENT OF GREATNESS. THE BRIDE JERUSALEM IS BY CONTRAST "THE HOLY CITY" (21:2,10) WITH THE ACCENT CORRESPONDINGLY ON HER SEPARATION TO GOD. SHE IS "FROM GOD," AND IS PREPARED "FOR HER HUSBAND." FOR THIS REASON SHE POSSESSES THE GLORY OF GOD. THIS IS A MATTER OF EXPERIENCE FOR US ALL. HOLINESS IN US IS WHAT IS OF GOD, WHAT IS WHOLLY SET APART TO CHRIST. ...ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, THE LUST OF THE FLESH, AND THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE VAINGLORY OF LIFE, IS NOT OF THE FATHER, BUT IS OF THE WORLD" (2:16) ...JOHN DEFINES THE THINGS OF THE WORLD. ALL THAT CAN BE INCLUDED UNDER LUST OR PRIMITIVE DESIRE, ALL THAT EXCITES GREEDY AMBITION, AND ALL THAT AROUSES IN US THE PRIDE OR GLAMOR OF LIFE, ALL SUCH THINGS ARE PART OF THE SATANIC SYSTEM...

...THE BOOK OF REVELATION REVEALS THAT SATAN WILL SET UP HIS FINAL KINGDOM UNDER ANTICHRIST IN THREE REALMS: THE POLITICAL WORLD, THE RELIGIOUS WORLD, AND THE WORLD OF COMMERCE. ON THIS THREEFOLD BASIS OF POLITICS, COMMERCE AND RELIGION, SATAN'S REIGN WILL FIND ITS LAST AND ULTIMATE VIOLENT EXPRESSION."

Sadly, all that is in the world is often loved by many Christians as well as non-Christians. The devil has sown a philosophy of “the best of both worlds” among Christendom. Many of God’s people have fallen into the same snare Satan laid for Israel:

“...THEY MINGLED WITH THE GENTILES AND LEARNED THEIR WORKS; THEY SERVED THEIR IDOLS, WHICH BECAME A SNARE TO THEM... THUS THEY WERE DEFILED BY THEIR OWN WORKS, AND PLAYED THE HARLOT BY THEIR OWN DEEDS. THEREFORE THE WRATH OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST HIS PEOPLE...” Psalm 106:35-36, 39-40 excerpts

One of the reasons stated before for persecution is “they do not know Him who sent Jesus.” Many of God’s people have created a God of their own imagination. What is stated above about the children of Israel facing the wrath of the Lord is rejected by today’s loose brand of Christianity. Nevertheless, Paul writes a whole chapter to emphasize this dire point:

“...THESE THINGS BECAME OUR EXAMPLES, TO THE INTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS AS THEY ALSO LUSTED... ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES... WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION...”

1 Cor. 10:6,11 excerpts

The truth of the matter is that God does not make Old Testament saints to be our examples unless it is possible for New Testament saints to inherit the same wrath! Not only do many of God’s people not know Him who sent Jesus, but they also are ignorant of what is in the Word of God spoken by Jesus. Instead of “mingling with the Gentiles and learning their works/serving their idols”, the Word of God gives this sober mandate in the New Testament:

“WHAT PART HAS A BELIEVER WITH AN UNBELIEVER? AND WHAT AGREEMENT HAS THE TEMPLE OF GOD WITH IDOLS? FOR YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD... THEREFORE ‘COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE’, SAYS THE LORD. ‘DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU. I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.’ THEREFORE, HAVING THESE PROMISES, BELOVED, LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.”

2 Cor. 6:15-18, 7:1 excerpts

That is certainly a message of separation given to New Testament believers, isn’t it? Consider the apostle Peter as well:

“AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, NOT CONFORMING YOURSELVES TO THE FORMER LUSTS... BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT, BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, “BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” 1 Pet. 1:14-16

Holiness is not sinless perfection. It is separation. The Greek word means “separate, different, other.” God is holy (separate, different, other). For instance, John describes God by saying “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5).

“...LIGHT HAS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL. FOR EVERYONE PRACTICING EVIL HATES THE LIGHT AND DOES NOT COME TO THE LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS BE EXPOSED. BUT HE WHO DOES THE TRUTH COMES TO THE LIGHT, THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE CLEARLY SEEN, THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DONE IN GOD.”

John 3:19-21

Here is the contrast between the set of beliefs of both darkness and light. They are the “basic principles of this world” vs. “the principles of the kingdom of God” which are not of this world:

PERSECUTION

“TO HARASS, TO ANNOY, TO AFFLICT, TO PUNISH FOR ADHERENCE TO A CREED OR A SET OF BELIEFS.”

Webster



Above are some of the kingdom principles which we have examined so far. Contrasted to them you will find the principles of this world taught to all the inhabitants of the earth as “the norm.” Now you can see where persecution stems from. Darkness and its worldly principles will hate the light for what it represents.

Notice above how Webster defines persecution. It comes from “adherence to a creed or a set of beliefs.” You are looking at two sets of creeds of beliefs which are totally opposite of one another, those of darkness and those of light. It is from this opposing view that harassment, annoyance, affliction and punishment flow to those who choose to be holy (“separate, different, other than”).

Earlier we learned that God designs “good things in threes” for our perfection. Jesus speaks of three forms of persecution designed to count us worthy of the kingdom of God.

First of all, we are called to endure persecution for bearing the name of Christ. It is a name that is blasphemed daily. It is commonly used in a cursive manner as we are well aware. Some people could not finish a sentence if their favorite curse words were removed. In some parts of the world there is persecution just for naming the name of Christ. To be called a Christian in Russia or China has brought immense persecution for the last century.

Secondly, we are called to endure persecution for righteousness sake. Listen of Jesus:

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN THEY REVILE AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SAY ALL KINDS OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY FOR MY SAKE. REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDINGLY GLAD, FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN, FOR SO THEY PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS WHO WERE BEFORE YOU.”

Matt. 5:10-12



It is needful to emphasize that persecution should be for those things said of us which are false. We have seen much persecution upon Christianity by the world lately which was not false. However, this is not persecution for righteousness sake, but for unrighteousness. This is merely the outworking of God’s principle of reaping what is sown (Gal. 6:7).

Let us remember that righteousness is the foundation of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Paul said, “The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). It is righteousness that brings persecution. As we are filled with fruits or righteousness (Phil. 1:11), we receive persecution not only from the unrighteous of the world but also from the so-called righteous in the church who are living unrighteously. I speak of the foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) who become deceived by Satan as was Eve:

“...I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, TO PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT NOW I AM FEARFUL, LEST THAT EVEN AS THE SERPENT BEGUILLED EVE BY HIS CUNNING, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED AND SEDUCED FROM WHOLEHEARTED AND SINCERE AND PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST.”

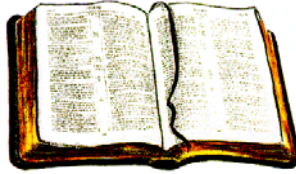
2 Cor. 11:2-3 Amplified

I can guarantee you that if you try to teach that there is more to righteousness than just forgiveness of sins by grace, you are going to receive persecution from the foolish virgins who love this present world as did Demas, a one-time disciple of Paul (2 Tim. 4:12)

The third area in which Jesus said we would receive persecution is “for the Word’s sake”:

“...AFTERWARD, WHEN TRIBULATION OR PERSECUTION ARISES FOR THE WORD’S SAKE, IMMEDIATELY THEY STUMBLE...”

Mark 4:17



“IT IS WRITTEN:”

“THEN WHEN TROUBLE OR PERSECUTION ARISES ON ACCOUNT OF THE WORD, THEY IMMEDIATELY ARE OFFENDED (BECOME DISPLEASED, INDIGNANT, RESENTFUL) AND THEY STUMBLE AND FALL AWAY.”

Mark 4:17 Amplified

“So, wise guy, we won’t all be the same in heaven, eh? The whole church won’t be the Bride of Christ, eh?”

“Oh, so there isn’t any unconditional eternal security, eh?”

“Whatta ya mean not every Christian will be raptured?”

“So, I can’t be a patriot and a Christian, eh?”

“So, America isn’t one nation under God, ‘Mystery Babylon,’ is it?”

“So, Christmas and Easter have pagan origins, do they?”



The preaching of the kingdom of God as it is revealed in the Word of God will produce a mixed reaction. When Stephen preached the Word of God, the reaction from the crowd was:

“WHEN THEY HEARD THESE THINGS THEY WERE CUT TO THE HEART (FURIOUS), AND THEY GNASHED AT HIM WITH THEIR TEETH... THEN THEY CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, STOPPED THEIR EARS, AND RAN AT HIM WITH ONE ACCORD... AND STONED HIM...” Acts 7:54-58 excerpts

At times they marveled at the things Jesus said that they liked:

“AND HE BEGAN TO SAY TO THEM, ‘TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE IS FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING.’ SO ALL BORE WITNESS TO HIM, AND MARVELED AT THE GRACIOUS WORDS WHICH PROCEEDED OUT OF HIS MOUTH.” Luke 4:20-21

However at times they didn’t like what Jesus quoted from the scriptures either. Just four verses later we find this reaction from the same people:

“SO ALL THOSE IN THE SYNAGOGUE, WHEN THEY HEARD THESE THINGS, WERE FILLED WITH WRATH, AND ROSE UP AND THRUST HIM OUT OF THE CITY; AND THEY LED HIM TO THE BROW OF THE HILL ON WHICH THEIR CITY WAS BUILT, THAT THEY MIGHT THROW HIM DOWN OVER THE CLIFF.” Luke 4:28-30

WORDS THAT COMFORT:

“AND HE BEGAN TO SAY TO THEM, ‘TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE IS FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING.’ SO ALL BORE WITNESS TO HIM, AND MARVELED AT THE GRACIOUS WORDS WHICH PROCEEDED OUT OF HIS MOUTH.”
Luke 4:20-21



WORDS THAT CONFRONT:

“...WHEN THEY HEARD THESE THINGS, THEY WERE FILLED WITH WRATH... THRUST HIM OUT OF THE CITY; AND THEY LED HIM TO THE HILL... THAT THEY MIGHT THROW HIM DOWN OVER THE CLIFF.”
Luke 4:28-30

Earlier I shared with you that the Word of God contains a balance between words that comfort and words that confront. To preach only words that comfort such as “grace/love” will not result in persecution. It takes the whole counsel of God which includes the words that confront to produce persecution. As already stated, persecution will come from both the unsaved and the saved who do not want to hear from a confronting God. The comforting God is much more palatable to a worldly lifestyle. However, the gospel of the kingdom of God is not of this world (Jn. 18:36). We are called to holiness (separation, different, other). Where today’s theology seeks to blend together concepts such as patriotism and Christianity, the Word of God will bring confrontation to that concept. The result will be persecution from those steeped in the religion of patriotism.

It is equally true concerning cherished holidays such as Christmas and Easter. To reveal the pagan origins of those things which have been blended into Christmas and Easter (such as “Santa/trees and eggs/bunnies”) will result in persecution from those who have justified the mixture rather than the call to separation.

Might I suggest this book for your consideration if you have not been illuminated to the paganism which lies underneath the religious covering of these holidays. It will either make you mad or glad depending upon how deeply you are entrenched in the “traditions of men” (Col. 2:8).

God has a better idea if you are interested. It centers upon exchanging our cherished holidays (Christmas and Easter) for God’s Holy Days (the seven feasts of Lev. 23).

THE SEVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD
AND THEIR PROPHETIC
RELATIONSHIP TO
THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

by Pastor Randy Shupe

PERSECUTION

"TO HARASS, TO ANNOY, TO AFFLICT,
TO PUNISH FOR ADHERENCE TO A CREED OR A SET OF BELIEFS."

Webster

THE WORLD SYSTEM
(CIVIL AUTHORITY)
IN CONTROL



THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM
(RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY)
IN CONTROL

How was Jesus persecuted? It erupted from civil authority (Rome) and from religious authority (Phariseeism). These authorities exist in our day as well. They are the establishments from which persecution comes upon the true church ("the called-out ones"). The civil authority in our day is the prophesied revived Roman Empire of which America is a part (see my previous book, "Is America Mystery Babylon the Great"). The religious authority can be labeled as a form of revived Phariseeism as well. It is religion with its roots firmly entrenched in this present world. It will persecute the remnant church whose mind is set upon being strangers and pilgrims in this life.



Funny perhaps,
but sad as well,
for if we know nothing of
persecution we may also
know nothing of godliness that
produces persecution:

**"YES, AND ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE
GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS WILL SUFFER
PERSECUTION."**

2 Timothy 3:12

Perhaps we all need to ponder this question. How much do we personally know of persecution? It is a fruit of the kingdom of God. It is among the measuring sticks of true Christianity. It is a test of whether we are preaching the whole counsel of God, both the words that comfort and those that confront.

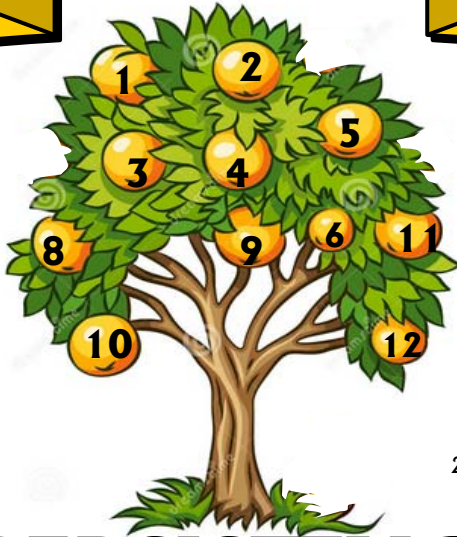
**"...WE OURSELVES BOAST OF YOU AMONG THE CHURCHES OF GOD FOR
YOUR PATIENCE AND FAITH IN ALL YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND
TRIBULATIONS THAT YOU ENDURE, WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF THE
RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY OF
THE KINGDOM OF GOD, FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER..."**

2 Thess. 1:4-5

THE TENTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:

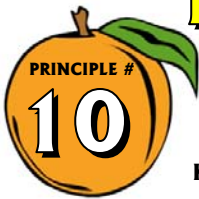


**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



PERSISTENCE **“ASK-SEEK-KNOCK”**

**“AND I SAY TO YOU,
ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU;
SEEK, AND YOU WILL FIND;
KNOCK, AND IT WILL BE OPENED TO YOU.
FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES,
AND HE WHO SEEKS FINDS,
AND TO HIM WHO KNOCKS IT WILL BE OPENED.”**

Luke 11:9-10



We have progressed far enough in our study of kingdom principles to grasp the whole concept. The first six principles dealt with our relationship to God. They enable us in a practical way to see if we are fulfilling the first great commandment to “love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind” (Matt. 22:37-38).

Presently, we are working our way down a second list of kingdom principles designed to govern our relationship to others. These are practical truths to reveal whether we are fulfilling the second great commandment to “love our neighbor as we love ourself” (see Matt. 22:39).

We have arrived at the principle of persistence which centers upon the subject of persistent prayer as we shall see. I will readily admit that this kingdom principle fits in either category, for prayer certainly has to do as much with our relationship to God as it does toward our relationship to others.

Our text is taken from Luke 11:1-10 in which we find Jesus giving admonition to “ask, seek and knock.” The context of the verses centers upon the subject of prayer in which we not only find the Lord’s Prayer but also a call to be persistent in prayer. Let us begin by reading these verses:

“AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HE WAS PRAYING IN A CERTAIN PLACE, WHEN HE CEASED, THAT ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID TO HIM, ‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY, AS JOHN ALSO TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES. SO HE SAID TO THEM, “WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY: ‘OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME. YOUR KINGDOM COME.YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US DAY BY DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. AND FORGIVE US OUR SINS, FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERYONE WHO IS INDEBTED TO US. AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.’ ”

AND HE SAID TO THEM, ‘WHICH OF YOU SHALL HAVE A FRIEND, AND GO TO HIM AT MIDNIGHT AND SAY TO HIM, ‘FRIEND, LEND ME THREE LOAVES; FOR A FRIEND OF MINE HAS COME TO ME ON HIS JOURNEY, AND I HAVE NOTHING TO SET BEFORE HIM’; AND HE WILL ANSWER FROM WITHIN AND SAY, ‘DO NOT TROUBLE ME; THE DOOR IS NOW SHUT, AND MY CHILDREN ARE WITH ME IN BED; I CANNOT RISE AND GIVE TO YOU?’ I SAY TO YOU, THOUGH HE WILL NOT RISE AND GIVE TO HIM BECAUSE HE IS HIS FRIEND, YET BECAUSE OF HIS PERSISTENCE HE WILL RISE AND GIVE HIM AS MANY AS HE NEEDS. AND I SAY TO YOU, ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK, AND YOU WILL FIND; KNOCK, AND IT WILL BE OPENED TO YOU. FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES, AND HE WHO SEEKS FINDS, AND TO HIM WHO KNOCKS IT WILL BE OPENED.”

Luke 11:1-10

By dividing these passages into two parts we can see Jesus is teaching not only about how to pray, but also that we learn the value of being persistent in prayer. Consider the Amplified version of these verses dealing with asking, seeking and knocking:

“SO I SAY TO YOU, ASK AND KEEP ON ASKING, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK AND KEEP ON SEEKING, AND YOU SHALL FIND; KNOCK AND KEEP ON KNOCKING, AND THE DOOR SHALL BE OPENED TO YOU. FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS AND KEEPS ON ASKING RECEIVES; AND HE WHO SEEKS AND KEEPS ON SEEKING FINDS; AND TO HIM WHO KNOCKS AND KEEPS ON KNOCKING, THE DOOR SHALL BE OPENED.”

Luke 11:9-10 Amplified Bible

Not only does Jesus use the word “persistence” in His example of the persistent friend, but the Greek language conveys the idea of persistence as well:

Williams: “This continuance is in the present imperative and present participles often repeated.”



“...ASK AND ***KEEP ON ASKING***,
AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU;
SEEK AND ***KEEP ON SEEKING***,
AND YOU SHALL FIND;
KNOCK AND ***KEEP ON KNOCKING***,
AND THE DOOR SHALL BE OPENED TO YOU.
FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS AND
KEEPS ON ASKING RECEIVES;
AND HE WHO SEEKS AND
KEEPS ON SEEKING FINDS;
AND TO HIM WHO KNOCKS AND
KEEPS ON KNOCKING,
THE DOOR SHALL BE OPENED.”
Luke 11:9-10 Amplified Bible



What is being taught as prayer today within the so-called “faith for prosperity” movement is **NOT** what Jesus taught His disciples, is it? Rather, we find a form of insistent commanding and demanding in prayer, boldly confessing, rather than the repeated “asking/keep on asking, seeking/keep on seeking, and knocking/keep on knocking” pattern taught by Jesus. In fact, this form of faith praying states that if you ask more than once for a thing, you are praying unbelief. Hogwash, I say! Such false concepts fall withing “the spirit of error” rather than “the Spirit of truth.” Effective prayer is dangerous to the kingdom of darkness and that is why Satan seeks to give a counterfeit to replace it. The scripture states it is only the “effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much” (Jam. 5:16).

To command and demand with insistence is what immature children do, is it not? They demand and command whatever their little hearts desire, but it falls on deaf ears, does it not? No parent worth their salt will reward such behavior, and neither will our heavenly Father. Don't they desire things which are even harmful to them? Don't we as loving parents choose to deny those things even though we love them dearly? Rather, a maturing child will learn to ask and then to submit to authority that is over them. That is exactly what God wants of us in the spiritual realm. When asked to “teach us to pray” by His disciples, why didn't Jesus teach the principles of “confess, command and demand” in this model prayer? Rather we find Jesus presents a very humble, submissive attitude of asking God for a multitude of different things:

**“IN THIS MANNER, THEREFORE PRAY:
OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN,
HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.
YOUR KINGDOM COME.
YOUR WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.
AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS,
AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.
AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.
FOR YOURS IT THE KINGDOM
AND THE POWER
AND THE GLORY
FOREVER. AMEN.”**



“TEACH US TO PRAY”

“THEN JESUS CAME WITH THEM TO A PLACE CALLED GETHSEMANE, AND SAID TO THE DISCIPLES, ‘SIT HERE WHILE I GO AND PRAY OVER THERE.’ AND HE TOOK WITH HIM PETER AND THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE, AND HE BEGAN TO BE SORROWFUL AND DEEPLY DISTRESSED. THEN HE SAID TO THEM, ‘MY SOUL IS EXCEEDINGLY SORROWFUL, EVEN TO DEATH. STAY HERE AND WATCH WITH ME.’ HE WENT A LITTLE FARTHER AND FELL ON HIS FACE, AND PRAYED, SAYING, ‘O MY FATHER, IF IT IS POSSIBLE, LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME; NEVERTHELESS, NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL.’ THEN HE CAME TO THE DISCIPLES AND FOUND THEM ASLEEP, AND SAID TO PETER, ‘WHAT, COULD YOU NOT WATCH WITH ME ONE HOUR? WATCH AND PRAY, LEST YOU ENTER INTO TEMPTATION. THE SPIRIT INDEED IS WILLING, BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK.’ HE WENT AWAY AGAIN A SECOND TIME AND PRAYED, SAYING, ‘O MY FATHER, IF THIS CUP CANNOT PASS AWAY FROM ME UNLESS I DRINK IT, YOUR WILL BE DONE.’ AND HE CAME AND FOUND THEM ASLEEP AGAIN, FOR THEIR EYES WERE HEAVY. SO HE LEFT THEM, WENT AWAY AGAIN, AND PRAYED THE THIRD TIME, SAYING THE SAME WORDS.” Matt. 26:36-46



Jesus taught His disciples to pray by His own personal example. In reading this account of the prayer in the garden we find two things are most noteworthy. First of all there is total submission to the will of the Father. No commanding and demanding. No insistence uttered from the lips of Jesus to His Father. Rather we find a submissive, humble attitude of petition. The second thing I want you to see is that Jesus refutes the idea of praying only once in faith:

“...HE PRAYED THE THIRD TIME, SAYING THE SAME WORDS.” vs. 44

This is totally opposite to the current faith teaching of: “If you ask more than once, you are praying unbelief.” The truth of the matter is that if you are praying more than once for the same thing, you are praying in the same manner as did Jesus! This is not unbelief, but persistence in asking!

Look at another example Jesus presents pertaining to prayer and faith:

“THEN HE SPOKE A PARABLE TO THEM, THAT MEN ALWAYS OUGHT TO PRAY AND NOT LOSE HEART, SAYING: ‘THERE WAS IN A CERTAIN CITY A JUDGE WHO DID NOT FEAR GOD NOR REGARD MAN. NOW THERE WAS A WIDOW IN THAT CITY; AND SHE CAME TO HIM, SAYING, ‘AVENGE ME OF MY ADVERSARY.’ AND HE WOULD NOT FOR A WHILE; BUT AFTERWARD HE SAID WITHIN HIMSELF, ‘THOUGH I DO NOT FEAR GOD NOR REGARD MAN, YET BECAUSE THIS WIDOW TROUBLES ME I WILL AVENGE HER, LEST BY HER CONTINUAL COMING SHE WEARY ME.’ THEN THE LORD SAID, ‘HEAR WHAT THE UNJUST JUDGE SAID. AND SHALL GOD NOT AVENGE HIS OWN ELECT WHO CRY OUT DAY AND NIGHT TO HIM, THOUGH HE BEARS LONG WITH THEM? I TELL YOU THAT HE WILL AVENGE THEM SPEEDILY. NEVERTHELESS, WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE REALLY FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?’” Luke 18:1-8

Jesus is commending persistent repetition as a sign of true faith. Note this is a parable about prayer (vs. 1) and about real faith (vs. 8).

“THEN HE SPOKE A PARABLE TO THEM, THAT MEN ALWAYS OUGHT TO PRAY AND NOT LOSE HEART, SAYING: ‘THERE WAS IN A CERTAIN CITY A JUDGE WHO DID NOT FEAR GOD NOR REGARD MAN. NOW THERE WAS A WIDOW IN THAT CITY; AND SHE CAME TO HIM, SAYING, ‘AVENGE ME OF MY ADVERSARY.’ AND HE WOULD NOT FOR A WHILE; BUT AFTERWARD HE SAID WITHIN HIMSELF, ‘THOUGH I DO NOT FEAR GOD NOR REGARD MAN, YET BECAUSE THIS WIDOW TROUBLES ME I WILL AVENGE HER, LEST BY HER CONTINUAL COMING SHE WEARY ME.’ THEN THE LORD SAID, ‘HEAR WHAT THE UNJUST JUDGE SAID. AND SHALL GOD NOT AVENGE HIS OWN ELECT WHO CRY OUT DAY AND NIGHT TO HIM, THOUGH HE BEARS LONG WITH THEM? I TELL YOU THAT HE WILL AVENGE THEM SPEEDILY. NEVERTHELESS, WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE REALLY FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?’”

Luke 18:1-8

We should also note what Jesus teaches in this parable that although God is a righteous judge, He bears long before He avenges His own elect (vs. 7). That is because God is more interested in developing persistent faith through unanswered prayer than immediately responding to our petitions. It is not “more faith” that is required to move the hand of God as some teach. It is more patience and more persistence.

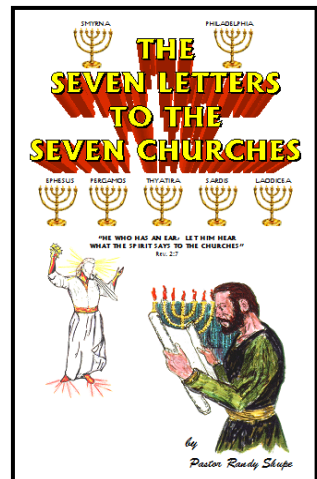
The real problem lies in our tendency to look only to this present life for answered prayer. God’s plan extends into the millennium and on into eternity to avenge His own elect. The fact is that some things will not be settled until the future Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul often alluded to the time in which God would avenge him against his adversaries (2 Tim. 4:14-15).

Some of the avenging of God’s elect will take place also at the Rapture when God will separate the wise/foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). He will rapture the church of Philadelphia (“brotherly love”) and spew out of His mouth the church of Laodicea (“people’s rights”). Nor does He intend to rapture those in the church of Sardis who have defiled their garments (Rev. 3:1-6). Neither will He rapture those in Thyatira who know the depths of Satan but will rather cast them into tribulation and kill their children with death! (Rev. 2:18-24). Are we really hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches?

If these thoughts are new to you, then I would recommend this book I wrote dealing with the prophetic warning Jesus gave to His churches in which He admonishes them seven times:



This book can be read free or purchased on my website: PastorRandyShupe.com



**"...FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?
IT IS EVEN A VAPOR
THAT APPEARS FOR
A LITTLE TIME
AND THEN VANISHES AWAY.**

James 4:14

**"...AND
THEY LIVED
AND REIGNED
WITH CHRIST FOR
A THOUSAND YEARS."**

Rev.29:4

Take time to ponder what is depicted above. What is 70-80 years compared to the Millennium? Even more so, what is 70-80 years compared to eternity? The problem lies in the failure of God's people to utilize these precious few years to prepare for the life to come. All crucial decisions are made in this vaporous life of 70-80 years which will affect our life in the Millennium as well as our life in eternity. We will ponder those thoughts later on in our concluding chapters. Both David and Paul give us wise counsel in this area:

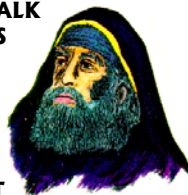


David

**"THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES
ARE SEVENTY YEARS;
AND IF BY REASON OF
STRENGTH THEY ARE
EIGHTY YEARS...
SO TEACH US
TO NUMBER OUR DAYS,
THAT WE MAY GAIN
A HEART OF WISDOM."**

Psalm 90:10,12

**"SEE THEN THAT YOU WALK
CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS
FOOLS BUT AS WISE,
REDEEMING THE TIME,
BECAUSE THE DAYS
ARE EVIL. THEREFORE
DO NOT BE UNWISE,
BUT UNDERSTAND WHAT
THE WILL OF THE LORD IS."**



Paul

Eph. 5:15-17

Since God has already told us what the destiny of the wise and foolish virgins will be (Matt. 25:1-13), we need to choose those things that will prepare us for eternity. One such priority is that of learning the skill of "asking, seeking and knocking." Let us consider what we should be "asking, seeking and knocking" for. Let us first consider the doctrine of "asking". Here is what the Word of God presents concerning the concept of asking:

**"...MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU,
WHATEVER YOU ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME HE WILL GIVE YOU...
ASK, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL."**

John 16:23-24

Although wonderful promises, these specific verses of Jesus do not convey the whole picture concerning the doctrine of asking. Paul tells us we should avoid being taught as "man's wisdom teaches" in favor of how the Holy Spirit teaches. He "compares spiritual to spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13). In order to get the whole counsel of God, let us add several more concepts which the Holy Spirit recorded through James and John:

**"AND WHATEVER WE ASK WE RECEIVE FROM HIM,
BECAUSE WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS
AND DO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT."**

1 John 3:22

The apostle John has just placed several conditions upon the promise Jesus gave, hasn't he? We are to keep His commandments and do what is pleasing in His sight. These are conditions based on great obedience, not merely on having great faith in God's promise. We sing it, we just don't believe it: "Trust and obey, there is no other way!"

We have established that it isn't solely "great faith" that is required to receive what we ask in prayer. We saw that the apostle John also states it requires "great obedience" to receive what we ask. James tells us it is the "effective fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much" (Jam. 5:16). The apostle James also warns us that our prayers can be ineffective and negated by "asking amiss":

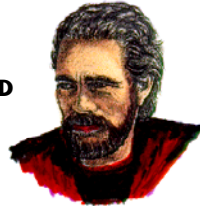
"YOU LUST AND DO NOT HAVE... YOU COVET AND CANNOT OBTAIN... YET YOU DO NOT HAVE BECAUSE YOU DO NOT ASK. YOU ASK AND DO NOT RECEIVE, BECAUSE YOU ASK AMISS, THAT YOU MAY SPEND IT UPON YOUR PLEASURES."

James 4:2-3

This admonition of James is sufficient reproof of the perversion of the "faith for prosperity gospel." We can be asking amiss for personal pleasures that are not in God's plan for us. Notice James says they "covet and cannot obtain." There are multitudes of God's people who are being taught to covet whatever faith can confess. James is telling us in advance they cannot obtain through this kind of self-serving, covetous asking. James also identifies another form of error. He says "you do not have because you do not ask." Let us ponder this for a moment. Are there are things in God's Word that we are specifically told to ask for? Here is one that James singles out:

"IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVES TO ALL LIBERALLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO HIM."

James 1:5



To ask wisdom from God is a sign of submission and humility. It is recognition that man is not an island to himself and at times needs direction from a source of wisdom higher than himself. The psalmist gives this wise counsel:



"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT YOUR PATHS. DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN EYES..."

Prov. 3:5-7

Are you beginning to see the value of "comparing spiritual to spiritual"? The doctrine of asking cannot be seen in its fullness by just picking out one verse spoken by Jesus. We must also consider what James and John have spoken concerning this doctrine. It is only by doing so that we can see the whole counsel of God expressed on any given subject.

Let us consider another stipulation that the apostle John places on the doctrine of asking:

“NOW THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE THAT WE HAVE IN HIM, THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US. AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US, WHATEVER WE ASK, WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE PETITIONS THAT WE HAVE ASKED OF HIM.”

John 5:14-15

Three times repeated is the word “ask.” We need to ask. However, John clarifies that our asking must meet the criteria of being for things “according to His will.” The tendency is to prefer the previous isolated promise of Jesus, “whatever we ask” will be fulfilled so that our joy may be full.

Have we indeed embraced the doctrine of “asking”? Here is a synopsis of what we have considered. It is the whole counsel of God concerning this subject:

1. **ASK THAT YOUR JOY BE FULL...** John 16:24
2. **ASK IN FAITH BELIEVING...** James 1:5-8
3. **ASK IN OBEDIENCE...** 1 John 3:22
4. **ASK NOT AMISS...** James 4:2-3
5. **ASK ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL...** 1 John 5:14
6. **ASK IN JESUS’ NAME...** John 14:13-14
7. **ASK AND KEEP ON ASKING...** Luke 11:9-10

If you don’t think this subject of asking is supreme in God’s thinking, look at the diagram that follows. The phrase, “ask, seek and knock” form an acrostic spelling in which the first letters of these three words spell “A-S-K”:

“TEACH US HOW TO PRAY”

ASK AND KEEP ON ASKING...

SEEK AND KEEP ON SEEKING...

KNOCK AND KEEP ON KNOCKING...

As we found that there were seven things that we are to be asking of God, would it surprise you that there are also seven things that we are to be seeking from God? Here they are:

1. **SEEK THE LORD YOUR GOD...** Deut. 4:29
2. **SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS...** Matt. 6:33
3. **SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HUMILITY...** Zeph. 2:3
4. **SEEK GOOD AND NOT EVIL...** Amos 5:14
5. **SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, NOT THINGS ON EARTH...** Col. 3:1
6. **SEEK THE HEAVENLY CITY, THE ONE WHICH IS TO COME...** Heb. 13:14
7. **SEEK PEACE WITH ALL MEN, AND HOLINESS...** Heb. 12:14



**“...BREAK UP
YOUR FALLOW GROUND,
FOR IT IS TIME
TO SEEK THE LORD”**

Hosea 10:12

These words from the prophet Hosea echo as a prophetic warning to the saints of our day. Perhaps I should say the “last days.” Listen carefully: “It is time to seek the Lord.” Somehow we always seem to think there is still plenty of time. We tend to relegate to tomorrow what should be done today. Compare what is contrasted below. There is coming a time when people will begin to “seek” but they will not be able to “find”. Proverbs Chapter 1 is a prophetic picture of the foolish virgins who will be left behind. Take time to consider why God will not answer nor will He be found in those days even though they are diligently seeking:

**“BECAUSE I HAVE CALLED AND YOU REFUSED,
I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HAND AND NO ONE REGARDED,
BECAUSE YOU DISDAINED ALL MY COUNSEL,
AND WOULD HAVE NONE OF MY REPROOF,
I ALSO WILL LAUGH AT YOUR CALAMITY;
I WILL MOCK WHEN YOUR TERROR COMES,
WHEN YOUR TERROR COMES LIKE A STORM,
AND YOUR DESTRUCTION COMES LIKE A WHIRLWIND,
WHEN DISTRESS AND ANGUISH COME UPON YOU.
THEN THEY WILL CALL ON ME, BUT I WILL NOT ANSWER;
THEY WILL SEEK ME DILIGENTLY, BUT THEY WILL NOT FIND ME.
BECAUSE THEY HATED KNOWLEDGE**

**AND DID NOT CHOOSE THE FEAR OF THE LORD,
THEY WOULD HAVE NONE OF MY COUNSEL AND DESPISED MY EVERY REBUKE.
THEREFORE THEY SHALL EAT THE FRUIT OF THEIR OWN WAY,
AND BE FILLED TO THE FULL WITH THEIR OWN FANCIES.
FOR THE TURNING AWAY OF THE SIMPLE WILL SLAY THEM,
AND THE COMPLACENCY OF FOOLS WILL DESTROY THEM.”**

Proverbs 1:24-32

No one wants to embrace this harsh picture of the judgment of God upon His own people. I believe this is a detailed explanation here in Proverbs 1 of why Jesus has rejected the foolish virgins of Matthew 25.



The footnote in the Amplified Bible says this of a fool:

“The word “fool” in the Old Testament, seldom, if ever, is used to describe an idiot, or moron. Rather it always has within its meaning that of a rebel...especially against God and the laws of order, decency and justice”

We must not relegate “seeking the Lord” as a one time act that was accomplished prior to becoming born-again. It certainly includes that action, but we must understand that seeking the Lord is an on-going way of life. The same is true for repentance. It is not just something we have done in the process of being saved. It is also to be a way of life.

Remember, we are examining kingdom principles to govern our lives. Part of “persistence in prayer” centers upon seeking more of God in a way that we have not already found Him. There are aspects of God that are hidden and are to be sought for as hidden treasure. In Proverbs God speaks of wisdom in such manner:



**“...INCLINE YOUR EAR TO WISDOM...
IF YOU CRY OUT FOR DISCERNMENT,
AND LIFT UP YOUR VOICE
FOR UNDERSTANDING,
IF YOU SEEK HER AS SILVER,
AND SEARCH FOR HER
AS FOR HIDDEN TREASURES;
THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND
THE FEAR OF THE LORD,
AND FIND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.”**

Prov. 2:2-5

**“...ATTAINING TO ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF
UNDERSTANDING, TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD,
BOTH OF THE FATHER AND OF CHRIST,
IN WHOM ARE HIDDEN ALL THE TREASURES
OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.”** Col.2:2-3

It is God’s intention that we seek the Lord that we may find all of the hidden treasures contained within the character of the Godhead. There are “hidden treasures” for those who will earnestly seek the Lord. Consider what Paul records from the 11th chapter of Hebrews concerning the benefit of “seeking the Lord”:

“HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.”

Heb. 11:6

Let us now consider the third and final area of persistent prayer as revealed in the three-fold mandate to ask, seek and to knock.

**“KNOCK AND KEEP ON KNOCKING,
AND THE DOOR SHALL BE OPENED TO YOU.”**

Luke 11:9-10 Amplified

If we are to grasp the significance of knocking, we must consider the importance of doors in the Word of God. We are familiar with the picture of Jesus standing outside the door of His own church in which He is knocking to enter (Rev. 3:20). This verse has been erroneously taken door to door as a word for the unsaved, but it is a sober warning written to the church. Jesus is outside one of His own churches knocking to be let in for fellowship! In this principle lies the great truth about the doctrine of knocking: Jesus will not violate a closed door. He asks permission to enter even though He is the Master.

Paul, as well as Jesus, is our example to follow. Consider Paul's continual references to "open doors": _____

**"BUT I WILL TARRY IN EPHEBUS UNTIL PENTECOST.
FOR A GREAT AND EFFECTIVE DOOR HAS OPENED TO ME..."** 1 Cor. 16:8-9

**"CONTINUE EARNESTLY IN PRAYER, BEING VIGILANT IN IT...
PRAYING FOR US, THAT GOD WOULD OPEN TO US A DOOR FOR THE WORD,
TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST... THAT I MAY MAKE IT MANIFEST,
AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK..."** Col. 4:2-4

**"...THEY REPORTED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE FOR THEM,
THAT HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH TO THE GENTILES."**
Acts 14:27

**"FURTHERMORE, WHEN I CAME TO TROAS TO PREACH CHRIST'S GOSPEL,
A DOOR WAS OPENED TO ME BY THE LORD..."**
2 Cor. 2:12

Lest we think Paul only faced open doors in his ministry, consider this:

**"NOW WHEN THEY HAD GONE THROUGH PHRYGIA AND THE REGION OF
GALATIA, THEY WERE FORBIDDEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PREACH THE
WORD IN ASIA. AFTER THEY HAD COME TO MYSIA,
THEY TRIED TO GO INTO BITHYNIA, BUT THE SPIRIT
DID NOT PERMIT THEM."** Acts 16:6-7

We know from the seven letters sent to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 1:11) that the gospel was eventually preached in Asia. The message contained in the above passages teaches us that it was a matter of timing. God simply was saying, "Not now!" The lesson is a crucial one for us as well. We must learn how to permit God to open or close doors in our lives if we want the perfect will of God to be accomplished at all times.

**"COME NOW, YOU WHO SAY, "TODAY OR TOMORROW WE WILL
GO TO SUCH AND SUCH A CITY, SPEND A YEAR THERE, BUY AND
SELL, AND MAKE A PROFIT... INSTEAD YOU OUGHT TO SAY,
'IF THE LORD WILLS, WE SHALL LIVE AND DO THIS OR THAT.'
BUT NOW YOU BOAST IN YOUR ARROGANCE.
ALL SUCH BOASTING IS EVIL."**

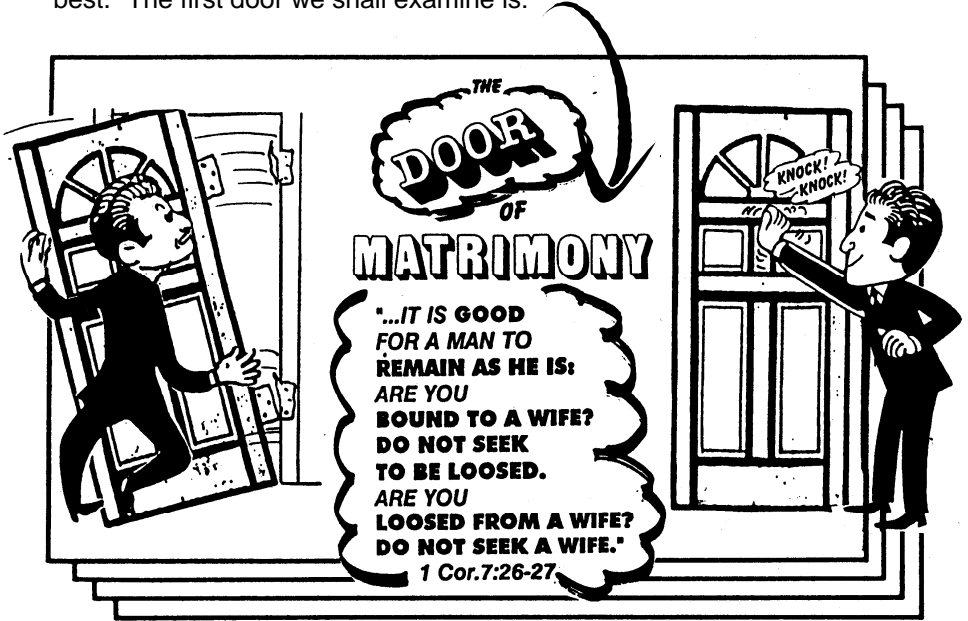
James 4:13-16

If we are going to do God's will at all times, it is imperative that we recognize there are gray areas in which we do not know what is the will of God. James addresses such in the verses above. It is in these areas in which we must "ask" God to either open or close the door before us. If we fail to practice what James presents as "if the Lord wills", then we cannot know whether an open or a closed door comes from God or the devil.

To be persistent does not mean we are to remove every obstacle that lies in the path of our own will. If that is our philosophy, then we are going to have to rip some doors off the hinges to get where we want to go. We need to decide which of these two philosophies will dictate our encounter with doors of opportunity. Either we knock for the door to be opened by God, or we just may in effect be just ripping the door off the hinges to gain access.

To do our own will is costly for rather than knocking, we will rip the door off and pass through many self-inflicted sorrows. There is also a cost to doing God's will. It is "the cost of the cross" in which we deny self and take up our cross.

Let me give you four (number of the world) examples of doors which are best left in the control of our Father in heaven. Remember, "Father knows best." The first door we shall examine is:



Seek the Lord rather than seek a wife. If that upsets you, it could be a sign that you intend to rip the door off the hinges in this area. Remember that a wife is to be a help-mate. If you force the issue, you may discover the reality of Solomon's Proverbs:

**"EVERY WISE WOMAN BUILDS HER HOUSE,
BUT THE FOOLISH PULLS IT DOWN WITH HER HANDS."**

Prov. 14:1

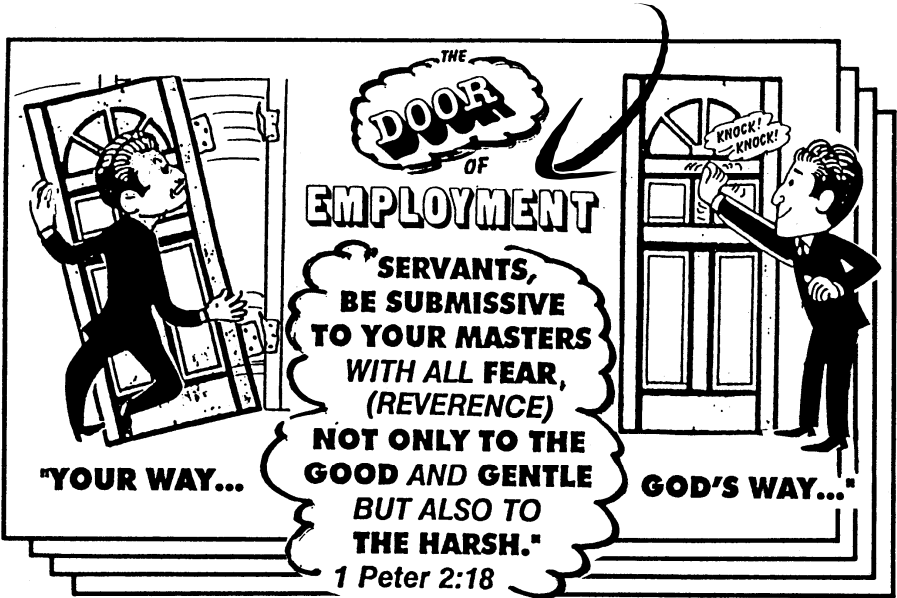
What is stated to men is equally applicable to women. Paul spoke often concerning marriage. Here is a warning to widows:

**"...WHEN THEY HAVE BEGUN TO GROW WANTON AGAINST CHRIST,
THEY DESIRE TO MARRY,
HAVING CONDEMNATION BECAUSE THEY HAVE
CAST OFF THEIR FIRST FAITH."**

1 Tim. 5:11-12

Marriage is a crucial decision. With the right mate that is ordained by God we can inherit the "grace of life together" (1 Pet. 3:7) and obtain the promise of "the two becoming one flesh" (Eph. 5:31). However, a word of warning: apart from God it can be your worst nightmare from which there is no escape.

The second door of opportunity we want to consider is:



Believe me, this is a door that you had better let God open and also shut it.

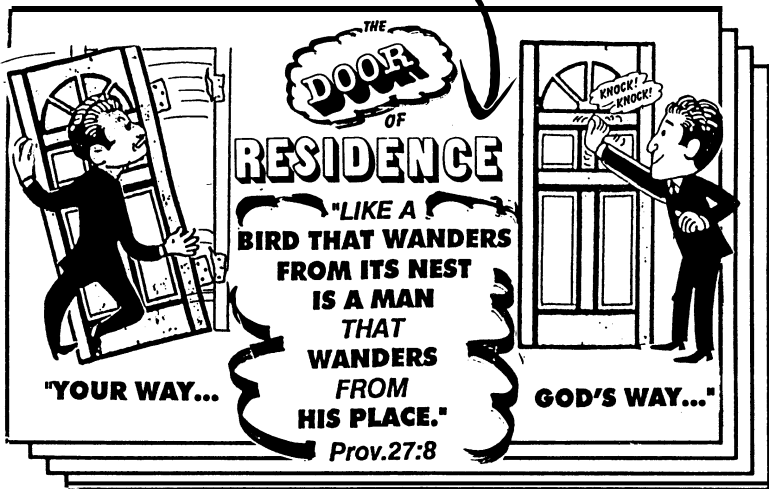
Incidentally, God does not slam doors and neither should we. By that I am simply addressing the proper way by which we are to terminate a place of employment. It is the world's philosophy which tells you to up and quit and go some place else when the going gets hard.

If you read what Peter says above, you will find that as Christians, we are to submit to both the good/gentle employers as well as to the harsh ones. I say that because God often uses our place of employment to bring forth our spiritual growth. We spend so much time there that God will certainly use it for our advantage in learning how to bear up under pressure. God calls the believer to grow up without blowing up. Next to the home, The workplace is the perfect environment for such spiritual lessons. Perhaps God wants to change something in you. He may use others to accomplish His purpose. Although not scripture, a phrase that has stuck with me over the years states this painful truth:

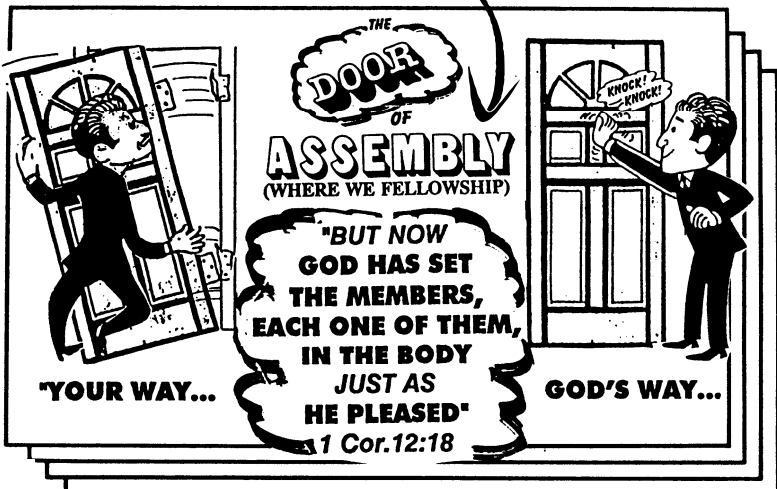
**"GOD WILL EITHER BLESS YOU OR CURSE YOU
WITH PEOPLE ACCORDING TO YOUR NEED."**

Don't be quick to change your place of employment. Satan is capable of offering you a deal you can't resist. If you are leaving in anger, then God is not in it. Remember God is "not the author of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33). Paul tells us "if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

The third and fourth door of opportunity on our list that we would want to consider carefully are these two:



And



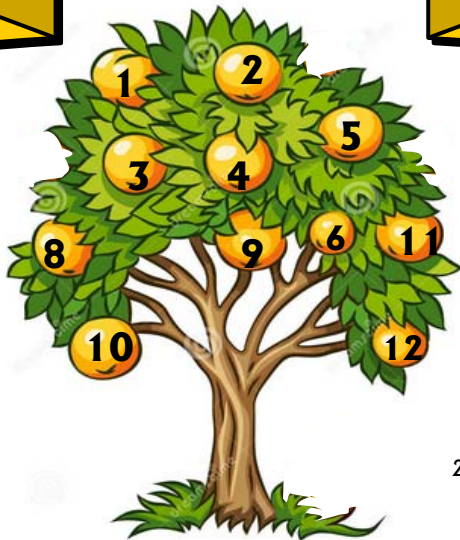
These are doors dealing with where it is that we live and where we worship. I am of the persuasion that God ordains them both. It is easy to see that even a change of employment can affect where we live and also where we worship. All of these factors need to be considered carefully knowing we have such a subtle enemy.

I have seen people come to our fellowship certain that God led them. I have also observed after a short period of time some of those same people express God is leading them elsewhere through a sudden change of employment or residence. I doubt God is so quick to change His mind. These are doors we must be careful not to open or close apart from God's clear leading. We should be able to analyze our reasons beyond a general impression attributed to God's Holy Spirit.

THE ELEVENTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:



**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



WARFARE

**“AND FROM THE DAYS OF
JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL NOW
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
SUFFERS VIOLENCE,
AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE.”**

Matt. 11:12

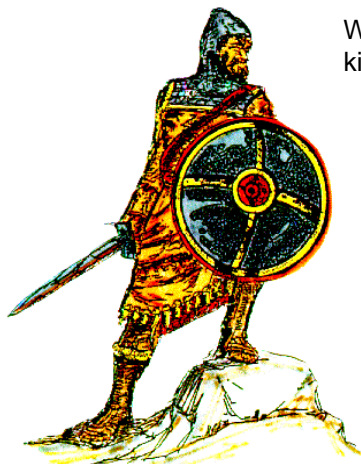


So far, we have only looked at the aspect of being “God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:9), laboring in the internal kingdom of the heart. There is another aspect of the kingdom of God. It is warfare.

We must not only be active in labor for the kingdom but also in warfare:

**“BUT YOU,
O MAN OF GOD,
...PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS,
GODLINESS, FAITH, LOVE,
PATIENCE, GENTLENESS.
FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH,
LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE,
TO WHICH YOU WERE ALSO CALLED
AND HAVE CONFESSED
THE GOOD CONFESION
IN THE PRESENCE OF MANY WITNESSES.”**

1 Tim 6:11-13



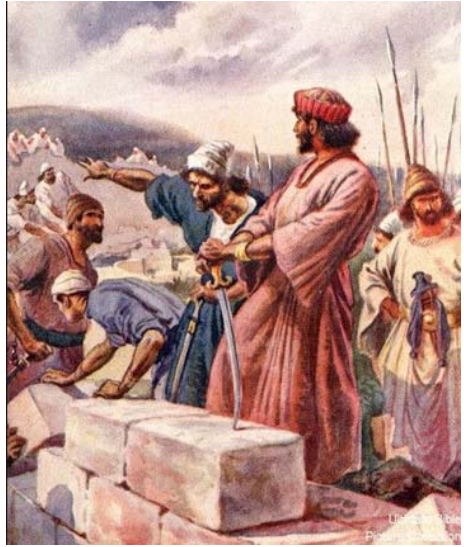
This is illustrated for us in the Old Testament in the Book of Nehemiah. The setting of the story is the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall. It depicts for us a type and shadow of the rebuilding of our lives from the rubble of sin. Here is what the Holy Spirit records:

**“SO WE BUILT THE WALL...
FOR THE PEOPLE
HAD A MIND TO WORK.”**

(Neh. 4:6)

**“THOSE WHO
BUILT ON THE WALL,
AND THOSE WHO CARRIED
BURDENS,
LOADED THEMSELVES SO THAT
WITH ONE HAND
THEY WORKED AT
CONSTRUCTION,
AND WITH THE OTHER
HELD A WEAPON.
EVERY ONE OF THE BUILDERS
HAD HIS SWORD GIRDED AT HIS
SIDE AS HE BUILT...”**

Nehemiah 4:17-18



The illustration is simple. We must be ready to fight while at the same time we are rebuilding the wall. We have an adversary (1 Pet. 5:8) who will not allow you to labor uninhibited. When he comes to hinder our labor we must resist him steadfast in the faith (1 Pet. 5:9). The dual picture of labor and warfare is carried over into the New Testament as well. Consider how Jesus depicted the cost involved of following Him:

**“AND WHOEVER DOES NOT BEAR HIS CROSS
AND COME AFTER ME CANNOT BE MY
DISCIPLE. FOR WHICH OF YOU, INTENDING
TO BUILD A TOWER, DOES NOT SIT DOWN
FIRST AND COUNT THE COST, WHETHER HE
HAS ENOUGH TO FINISH IT— LEST, AFTER
HE HAS LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND IS
NOT ABLE TO FINISH IT, ALL WHO SEE IT
BEGIN TO MOCK HIM, SAYING,
‘THIS MAN BEGAN TO BUILD AND WAS NOT
ABLE TO FINISH.’**

L
A
B
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R

**OR WHAT KING,
GOING TO MAKE WAR
AGAINST ANOTHER KING,
DOES NOT SIT DOWN FIRST
AND CONSIDER WHETHER HE IS ABLE
WITH TEN THOUSAND TO MEET HIM WHO
COMES AGAINST HIM WITH TWENTY
THOUSAND? OR ELSE, WHILE THE OTHER IS
STILL A GREAT WAY OFF, HE SENDS A
DELEGATION AND ASKS
CONDITIONS OF PEACE.”**

W
A
R



In depicting the cost of discipleship, Jesus speaks of both labor and warfare. In his illustration of labor He speaks of a “foundation laid” but then an inability to build on it resulting in a mocking by the people. Paul states the same view:

“...AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT... FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST... IF ANYONE’S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES, HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE’S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS; BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.” 1 Cor. 3:10-15 excerpts

From Paul’s amplification we can see more clearly what Jesus presented as the cost of being His disciple. The foundation is salvation in Christ Jesus. The building is our works placed upon that foundation. Jesus warns that having laid the foundation, and then being unable to finish it, the result would be mocking. May God help us to see how important is the doctrine of good works:

“...I WANT YOU TO AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS...” Titus 3:8

“AND LET OUR PEOPLE ALSO LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS... THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL.” Titus 3:14

“LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.” Matt. 5:16

Notice men are to glorify the Father rather than mock the Father. He is glorified when we build on the foundation with good works. He is mocked when all we have is a foundation, but are unable to build on it. If our lifestyle is not different than that of the world, then the foundation is of no value to the world. When Christians cannot have dominion over sin (Rom. 6:14) any more than the world does, then our witness is most ineffective. In passing, let me stress that good works are not an affront to the foundation of being saved by grace. Paul, in one-flowing sentence, begins with the Grace of God and ends with a people prepared for good works:

“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.” Titus 2:11-14

Remember that we first lay the foundation of Jesus Christ and then we are to take heed how we build on it (1 Cor. 3:10-11). It isn’t a matter of eternal life. It is our own eternal rewards that are at stake!

The second area Jesus depicts as the cost of discipleship is our subject matter for the moment. It deals with spiritual warfare. Either you count the cost of warfare with Satan or you will end up as a "P.O.W." (prisoner of war). God calls us to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). We are to use the weapons of our warfare which are mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4). Paul writes in the 6th chapter of Ephesians about the whole armor of God designed to enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10-18). Consider this admonition from Paul:



**"YOU THEREFORE MUST ENDURE
HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF
JESUS CHRIST.**

**NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE
ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE
AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE,
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO
ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."**

2 Timothy 2:3-4

**"FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD
AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT.
PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO
STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.
FOR WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD,
BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES... POWERS... RULERS OF THE DARKNESS
OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE
HEAVENLY PLACES. THEREFORE TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF
GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY,
AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND. STAND THEREFORE, HAVING
GIRDLED YOUR WAIST WITH TRUTH, HAVING PUT ON THE
BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HAVING SHOD YOUR FEET
WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ABOVE ALL,
TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO
QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE. AND TAKE THE
HELMET OF SALVATION, AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS
THE WORD OF GOD; PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND
SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, BEING WATCHFUL TO THIS END WITH
ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL THE SAINTS..."**

Ephesians 6:10-18

We could write a whole book on the armor of God Paul describes above. Rather I am going to speak to you of just one of the seven pieces of armor Paul mentions. Although it is last, it is certainly not least:

**"PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT,
BEING WATCHFUL TO THIS END WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND
SUPPLICATION FOR ALL THE SAINTS..."** Eph. 6:18

One of the weapons of our warfare which are mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4) is prayer. There are several types of prayer in the Word of God. The one I want to present to you is what Jesus identifies as "the keys to the kingdom." →

Scripture states that Jesus has three sets of keys in His possession, only one of which He has given authority to His church to use:



“THE KEYS OF HADES AND DEATH”

Rev. 1:18



“THE KEY OF DAVID TO OPEN AND SHUT DOORS”

Rev. 3:7



“THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matt. 16:19

“AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN.” Matt. 16:19

“ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN.” Matt. 18:18

The ability to bind and loosen is what Jesus calls the “keys to the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps you know someone who has received the keys to a city. We see this happening on behalf of some dignitary that visits New York or Chicago. They are given the symbolic keys to the city as a gesture of hospitality. The keys to the kingdom are not a symbolic gesture from God. They are keys of access or denial to the very power of God. Like the previous two sets of keys, these also have the power to either “lock out” or “open up”. Let us consider what the scriptures reveal concerning the use of these keys of the kingdom.

Let us begin by considering the context in which Jesus speaks of these keys of the kingdom. Initially Jesus commissions the use of the keys in Matthew 16:19. The context of that verse deals with Jesus’ comment pertaining to the building of His church (Matt. 16:18). The context of the second mentioning of the power to bind and loose is also the church (Matt. 18:17). Jesus is dealing with the procedure of dealing with offenses. The last step is to tell it to the church (vs. 17). If that person will not hear the church, then he/she is to be considered a heathen (vs. 17). The verse that follows is Jesus’ reaffirmation of the authority to bind and loose (vs. 18). Jesus is saying that the church has authority to bind one in their sins or to loose them from their sin. Jesus speaks of this even more plainly in John 20:

“IF YOU FORGIVE THE SINS OF ANY, THEY ARE FORGIVEN THEM; IF YOU RETAIN THE SINS OF ANY, THEY ARE RETAINED.” John 20:23

The Catholic perversion of these verses has resulted in the doctrine of priests being able to forgive man’s sins. God is not placing a man between Him and the sinner. Paul said there is “one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). What Jesus is saying is that the church has delegated authority to bind or loose a man from his sins. If he remains unrepentant, then the church is to bind him and count him as a heathen.

Earlier we considered John's words in this area of making intercession on behalf of a brother in sin. Listen to them again:

"IF ANYONE SEES HIS BROTHER SINNING A SIN WHICH DOES NOT LEAD TO DEATH, HE WILL ASK, AND HE WILL GIVE HIM LIFE FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH. THERE IS SIN LEADING TO DEATH. I DO NOT SAY THAT HE SHOULD PRAY ABOUT THAT. ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS SIN, AND THERE IS SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH." 1 John 5:16-17

These are clear passages revealing that we do not have power to forgive all sin. John makes a clear distinction that there are sins unto death and sins not unto death. We can pray for some but not for others. The point that we need to grasp is that John is speaking of a brother who can potentially commit sin unto death. That fact is deficient in our theology today. Paul himself practiced the essence of binding sins and loosening from sin. Here are some examples:

"ALEXANDER THE COPPERSMITH DID ME MUCH HARM. MAY THE LORD REPAY HIM ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS. YOU ALSO MUST BEWARE OF HIM, FOR HE HAS GREATLY RESISTED OUR WORDS. AT MY FIRST DEFENSE NO ONE STOOD WITH ME, BUT ALL FORSOOK ME. MAY IT NOT BE CHARGED AGAINST THEM."

2 Tim. 4:14-16

Here we see Paul binding Alexander in his sins by holding him accountable to the day of judgment. Then we find Paul speaking of those who forsook him, asking God to not lay this charge against them. In other words, he looses them from accountability to God. In another place we find Paul using his delegated authority in Christ to bind someone once again:

"IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHEN YOU ARE GATHERED TOGETHER, ALONG WITH MY SPIRIT, WITH THE POWER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, DELIVER SUCH A ONE TO SATAN FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH, THAT HIS SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS."

1 Cor. 5:4-5

It is interesting that Paul calls for this action to take place when "the Church is gathered together" (vs. 4). May we again consider the context of binding and loosening:

"...IF HE REFUSES EVEN TO HEAR THE CHURCH, LET HIM BE TO YOU LIKE A HEATHEN... WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH... AGAIN I SAY TO YOU THAT IF TWO OF YOU AGREE ON EARTH CONCERNING ANYTHING THAT THEY ASK, IT WILL BE DONE FOR THEM..."

Matt. 18:17-19 excerpts

Do you see the power of agreement in conjunction with binding and loosening? Paul said when you are "gathered together... with my spirit" then they are to "turn such a one over to Satan." For what purpose? For the destruction of the flesh in order that the spirit may be saved in the end. This is the chastening hand of God at work to make the rebel sick of his sin in order to bring him/her to their senses.

The rendering below of these words in the Amplified Bible certainly cast a new perspective on the limitations and protection God has placed on the believer practicing “binding and loosening”:

“I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU BIND-THAT IS, DECLARE TO BE IMPROPER AND UNLAWFUL-ON EARTH MUST BE ALREADY BOUND IN HEAVEN; AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH-DECLARE LAWFUL-MUST BE WHAT IS ALREADY LOOSED IN HEAVEN.” Matt. 16:19

“TRULY, I TELL YOU, WHATEVER YOU FORBID AND DECLARE TO BE IMPROPER AND UNLAWFUL ON EARTH MUST BE WHAT IS ALREADY FORBIDDEN IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU PERMIT AND DECLARE PROPER AND LAWFUL ON EARTH MUST BE ALREADY PERMITTED IN HEAVEN.” Matt. 18:18 Amplified Bible

This is certainly a different perspective on binding and loosening. God is not giving us unlimited power to bind or loosen as we see fit. It must be “already lawful/unlawful in heaven.” We are to always be in agreement with God and His Word. Paul told the church at Corinth to “gather together with my spirit” in the example we looked at earlier. We are to gather together in agreement with God’s Spirit to bind and loosen on earth what God states that He is in agreement with in Heaven.

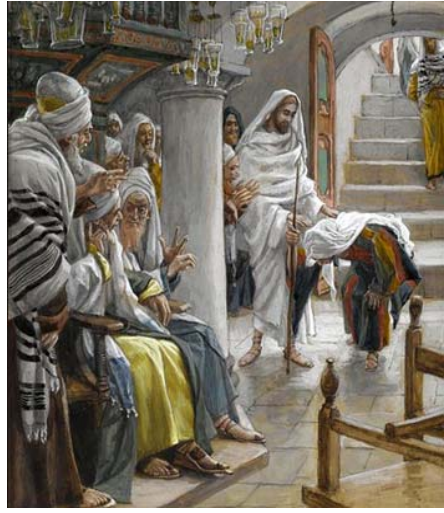
What happens when we bind what God does not want bound or we loose what God does not want loosed? The answer is nothing happens. God has placed a safe-guard over the power to bind/loosen.



It is a spiritual “two-key system” much like we find in a safety deposit box in a bank. It takes your key as well as their key to access the goods. This is exactly what God has done. The ability to bind and loose goes beyond the concept of sin. It includes our warfare with the forces behind sin. The Psalmist tells us “...this honor has all His saints” (Psalm 149:9). Paul said the “weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). That means to close down an abortion clinic we need a prayer rally rather than a protest rally. It is the “principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12) that are at work behind the scenes. Go after them rather than the blinded, humanistic, humanitarian doctor. If God intends it to be bound on earth, then He will do so! The problem is that the church is depending more and more upon its own wisdom rather than resting in the system God has instituted so we may know that we are working within His will for the times in which we live. There are things that God will allow on the face of the earth which have been foreordained for the times we live in. Jesus said one of those marks would be that lawlessness will abound (Matt. 24:12). If indeed these be those days of lawlessness, it is futile for the church to seek to legislate laws of righteousness and morality on the immoral.

Jesus was always “about His Father’s business” (Luke 2:49). what was it?
It was things like this story:

“NOW HE WAS TEACHING IN ONE OF THE SYNAGOGUES ON THE SABBATH. AND BEHOLD, THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO HAD A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY EIGHTEEN YEARS, AND WAS BENT OVER AND COULD IN NO WAY RAISE HERSELF UP. BUT WHEN JESUS SAW HER, HE CALLED HER TO HIM AND SAID TO HER, ‘WOMAN, YOU ARE LOOSED FROM YOUR INFIRMITY.’ AND HE LAID HIS HANDS ON HER, AND IMMEDIATELY SHE WAS MADE STRAIGHT, AND GLORIFIED GOD... SO OUGHT NOT THIS WOMAN, BEING A DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM, WHOM SATAN HAS BOUND -- THINK OF IT -- FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS, BE LOOSED FROM THIS BOND ON THE SABBATH?”



AND WHEN HE SAID THESE THINGS, ALL HIS ADVERSARIES WERE PUT TO SHAME; AND ALL THE MULTITUDE REJOICED FOR ALL THE GLORIOUS THINGS THAT WERE DONE BY HIM.”
Luke 13:10-17

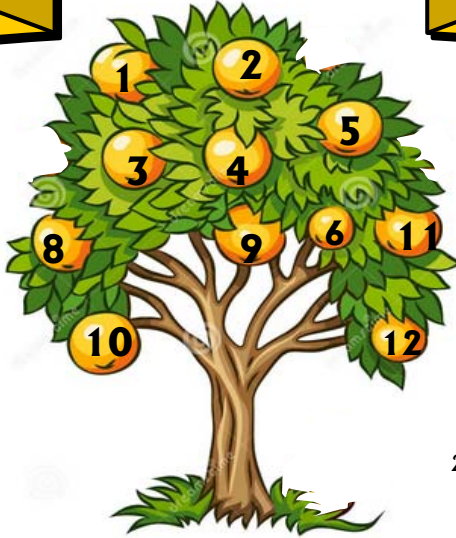


**“LET THE SAINTS
BE JOYFUL IN GLORY;
LET THEM SING ALOUD
ON THEIR BEDS.
LET THE HIGH PRAISES OF GOD
BE IN THEIR MOUTH,
AND A TWO-EDGED SWORD IN THEIR HAND,
TO EXECUTE VENGEANCE ON THE NATIONS,
AND PUNISHMENTS ON THE PEOPLES;
TO BIND THEIR KINGS WITH CHAINS,
AND THEIR NOBLES WITH FETTERS OF IRON;
TO EXECUTE ON THEM
THE WRITTEN JUDGMENT --
THIS HONOR HAVE ALL HIS SAINTS.”**
Psalm 149:5-9

THE TWELFTH FRUIT-BEARING KINGDOM PRINCIPLE:

~ 12 ~ KINGDOM FRUIT

**“EXAMINE
AND
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR OWN
SELVES
TO SEE
WHETHER
YOU ARE
HOLDING
TO YOUR
FAITH**



**AND
SHOWING
THE
PROPER
FRUIT
OF IT.
TEST
AND
PROVE
YOUR
SELVES.”**

2 Cor.13:5 Amplified



LOVE

**“A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU,
THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER;
AS I HAVE LOVED YOU,
THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.
BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW
THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES,
IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”**

John 13:34-35



Of all the kingdom principles we have looked at so far, this last one is the capstone which marks a man or a woman as a disciple of Christ. We have looked at kingdom principles designed to govern our relationship with others, such as forgiveness and being non-judgmental. We have seen that part of our relationship to others can bring persecution, which is also a mark of discipleship. All of these principles will mark us as disciples. But this last principle Jesus sets above all others. It is the greatest of all:

**“AND NOW ABIDE FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, THESE THREE;
BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.” 1 Cor.13:13**

In this segment we shall examine both “what is this thing called love” as well as how we obtain it. The Word of God is very clear in revealing both aspects to us. We do not lack instruction in this subject, we lack obedience to walk in love.

The apostle Paul was given the great revelation about the church. The apostle John was noted to be the apostle of love. In his First epistle, John makes forty references to love. His repetitious use of the word "love" cannot go unnoticed. It is the major theme of this little book. Let us consider some of the rather blunt statements that John makes concerning love:

"WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH TO LIFE, BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN. HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER ABIDES IN DEATH. WHOEVER HATES HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER, AND YOU KNOW THAT NO MURDERER HAS ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN HIM."

"BY THIS WE KNOW LOVE, BECAUSE HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US. AND WE ALSO OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN."

"...WHOEVER... SEES HIS BROTHER IN NEED, AND SHUTS UP HIS HEART FROM HIM, HOW DOES THE LOVE OF GOD ABIDE IN HIM? MY LITTLE CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE IN WORD OR IN TONGUE, BUT IN DEED AND IN TRUTH..."

"BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD. HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD, FOR GOD IS LOVE... BELOVED, IF GOD SO LOVED US, WE ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER..." GOD IS LOVE, AND HE WHO ABIDES IN LOVE ABIDES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM... WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US. IF SOMEONE SAYS, 'I LOVE GOD', AND HATES HIS BROTHER, HE IS A LIAR... AND THIS COMMANDMENT WE HAVE FROM HIM: THAT HE WHO LOVES GOD MUST LOVE HIS BROTHER ALSO."

Excerpts from 1 John 3 & 4



John

To say the least, some of John's statements are frightening as well as frank concerning our relationship to love. If John were to utter those words in Christian circles today, he could be branded as being judgmental and unloving.

True Biblical love is not left to our own interpretation. It is not the mystical sentiment as expressed by the songwriters who seek to define love. Love will both judge and correct as we see Jesus so doing with one of His own churches:



"...YOU ARE WRETCHED, MISERABLE, POOR, BLIND, AND NAKED... ANOINT YOUR EYES THAT YOU MAY SEE. AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN. THEREFORE BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT."

Rev. 3:17-19 excerpts

Rebuke and correction such as Jesus brings to the church of Laodicea is labeled today as being unloving and judgmental by those who do not understand this aspect of Biblical love. Consider the wisdom of Solomon in this area:

**“OPEN REBUKE IS BETTER THAN
LOVE CAREFULLY CONCEALED.
FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND,
BUT THE KISSES OF AN ENEMY ARE DECEITFUL.”**

Prov. 27:5-6

We not only need an understanding of what love is and how we get it, but we also need to comprehend the importance of love. There is one chapter in the Bible that will give us the answer to those objectives. It will tell us why love is important and also defines what love is:

**THE
IMPORTANCE OF LOVE:**

**“THOUGH I SPEAK WITH TONGUES...
BUT HAVE NOT LOVE,
I HAVE BECOME
AS SOUNDING BRASS
OR A CLANGING CYMBAL.
AND THOUGH I HAVE
THE GIFT OF PROPHECY,
AND UNDERSTAND ALL
MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE,
AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH,
SO THAT I COULD
REMOVE MOUNTAINS,
BUT HAVE NOT LOVE,
I AM NOTHING.
AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL
MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR,
AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY
TO BE BURNED,
BUT HAVE NOT LOVE,
IT PROFITS ME NOTHING.”**

1 Cor. 13:1-3

**THE
DEFINITION OF LOVE:**

**“LOVE
SUFFERS LONG
AND IS KIND;
LOVE
DOES NOT ENVY;
LOVE
DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF,
IS NOT PUFFED UP;
DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY,
DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN,
IS NOT PROVOKED,
THINKS NO EVIL;
DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY,
BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH;
BEARS ALL THINGS,
BELIEVES ALL THINGS,
HOPES ALL THINGS,
ENDURES ALL THINGS.
LOVE
NEVER FAILS...”**

1 Cor. 13:4-8

Let us ponder the importance of love. Look carefully above at what Paul lists as things which will profit nothing apart from love. “Tongues, prophecy, understanding all mysteries, knowledge, faith, feeding the poor and martyrdom” are all included in this list which will profit nothing apart from love. Listen now to this frightening scene which will take place some day in the future:



**“NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, ‘LORD, LORD,’
SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT HE
WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN.
MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, ‘LORD, LORD,
HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN YOUR NAME, CAST
OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND DONE MANY
WONDERS IN YOUR NAME?’ AND THEN I WILL
DECLARE TO THEM, ‘I NEVER KNEW YOU;
DEPART FROM ME,
YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!”**

Matt. 7:21-23

The lawlessness is not the act of prophesying, casting out demons or doing wonders in Jesus' name. All these things are part of the commission given to the church (Mark 16:17, 1 Cor. 14:1). Rather, Jesus charges them with lawless behavior. Note this carefully: lawlessness produces lovelessness:

**“AND BECAUSE LAWLESSNESS WILL ABOUND,
THE LOVE OF MANY WILL GROW COLD.”**

Matt. 24:12

**“AND THE LOVE OF THE GREAT BODY OF PEOPLE WILL GROW COLD,
BECAUSE OF THE MULTIPLIED LAWLESSNESS AND INIQUITY.”**

Matt. 24:12 Amplified

The point we need to grasp is that it is law that produces love while lawlessness breeds lovelessness. Paul the apostle amplifies this truth for us:

**“HE WHO LOVES ANOTHER HAS FULFILLED THE LAW.
FOR THE COMMANDMENTS, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY...
MURDER... STEAL... BEAR FALSE WITNESS... COVET...’
ARE ALL SUMMED UP IN THIS SAYING, NAMELY,
‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’
LOVE DOES NO HARM TO A NEIGHBOR;
THEREFORE LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW.”**

Rom. 8-10 excerpts

Frequently these passages are taught as love replacing the law. That is not what Paul says but rather love fulfills the law. One who loves does not commit adultery, murder, steal, bear false witness or covet against his neighbor. It is love that governs him from breaking those laws. He fulfills the law simply because his motivation is love! It is a lifestyle of law keeping that keeps him from being lawless. The underlying motivation for being a law-keeper is love rather than legality. That is the message of Paul in these passages. This is why he stresses that we can be moving in all the power gifts and yet have God label us as practicing lawlessness. Let us ever-remember what Jesus said is going to happen at the harvest time at the end of all things:

**“THE SON OF MAN WILL SEND OUT HIS ANGELS,
AND THEY WILL GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM
ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND,
AND THOSE WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS,
AND WILL CAST THEM INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE.
THERE WILL BE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.”**

Matt. 13:41-42

We have looked at the importance of love. We now understand why God says it is to be the underlying motivation from which we function. It is a choice of either lawlessness producing lovelessness or love which fulfills the righteous demands of the law.

Let us move on to the second area of our examination of this kingdom principle of love. May we consider the definition of love Paul gives by the anointing of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 13, “the love chapter.”

Examine this list carefully and you will find contained within this descriptive analysis of love are eight things which love is not and eight things which love is.

Paul perhaps was unaware of these two categories of eight which describe love. God is stating clearly what love is not and what love is.

Let us now take a look at those two categories that Paul records by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In doing so we will be able to analyze ourselves as to whether we are bearing the fruit of love.

**THE
DEFINITION OF LOVE:**

**“LOVE
SUFFERS LONG
AND IS KIND;
LOVE
DOES NOT ENVY;
LOVE
DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF,
IS NOT PUFFED UP;
DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY,
DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN,
IS NOT PROVOKED,
THINKS NO EVIL;
DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY,
BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH;
BEARS ALL THINGS,
BELIEVES ALL THINGS,
HOPES ALL THINGS,
ENDURES ALL THINGS.
LOVE
NEVER FAILS...”**

—1 Cor. 13:4-8—

8 THINGS LOVE IS NOT:

1. **LOVE DOES NOT ENVY...**
2. **LOVE DOES NOT PARADE...**
3. **LOVE IS NOT PUFFED UP...**
4. **LOVE IS NOT RUDE...**
5. **LOVE IS NOT SELFISH...**
6. **LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED...**
7. **LOVE DOES NOT THINK EVIL...**
8. **LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY...**

8 THINGS LOVE IS:

1. **LOVE SUFFERS LONG...**
2. **LOVE IS KIND...**
3. **LOVE REJOICES IN TRUTH...**
4. **LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS...**
5. **LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS...**
6. **LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS...**
7. **LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS...**
8. **LOVE NEVER FAILS...**

Take the time to carefully digest this chart. It will cause you to stand in awe at God's Word (Psm. 119:161).

What Paul has listed as “what love is not” and “what love is” can be placed under eight of the nine fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) the ninth fruit is love itself. It is revealing that all the remaining fruit of the Spirit excluding love are also descriptive of love.

In other words, using what Paul defines as love from 1 Corinthians 13, we find they fit under the various fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians Chapter Five.

We do not lack for a definition of love!

The fruit of the Spirit is simply another definition of what love really is. To say we love, but lack longsuffering is impossible for longsuffering is part of how we love. If we lack self-control, then we cannot say that we are loving for it is part of love.

Love becomes the capstone of the fruit of the Spirit encompassing all of the other eight fruits mentioned. Now we can begin to see why love is the greatest of all, for it includes all.

8 THINGS LOVE IS NOT:

1. **LOVE DOES NOT ENVY...**
2. **LOVE DOES NOT PARADE...**
3. **LOVE IS NOT PUFFED UP...**
4. **LOVE IS NOT RUDE...**
5. **LOVE IS NOT SELFISH...**
6. **LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED...**
7. **LOVE DOES NOT THINK EVIL...**
8. **LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY...**

8 THINGS LOVE IS:

1. **LOVE SUFFERS LONG...**
2. **LOVE IS KIND...**
3. **LOVE REJOICES IN TRUTH...**
4. **LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS...**
5. **LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS...**
6. **LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS...**
7. **LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS...**
8. **LOVE NEVER FAILS...**

To put on love as the bond of perfection (Col. 3:14), we must embrace the pursuit of all of the fruit of the Spirit. To fulfill the mandate of 1 Corinthians 13, we must measure ourselves against all the sixteen criteria listed defining what love is not and what love is. Love has become explicitly defined for us. It is not left to our own understanding as to what it means to be loving or unloving.

"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS

LOVE

JOY

LOVE REJOICES
IN TRUTH...

PEACE

LOVE DOES NOT ENVY
LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS

LONGSUFFERING

LOVE SUFFERS LONG,
LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS,
LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS

KINDNESS

LOVE IS KIND

GOODNESS

LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE
IN INIQUITY

FAITHFULNESS

LOVE NEVER FAILS

MEEKNESS

LOVE IS NOT PUFFED UP,
LOVE DOES NOT
PARADE ITSELF

SELF-CONTROL

LOVE IS NOT RUDE,
LOVE IS NOT SELFISH,
LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED

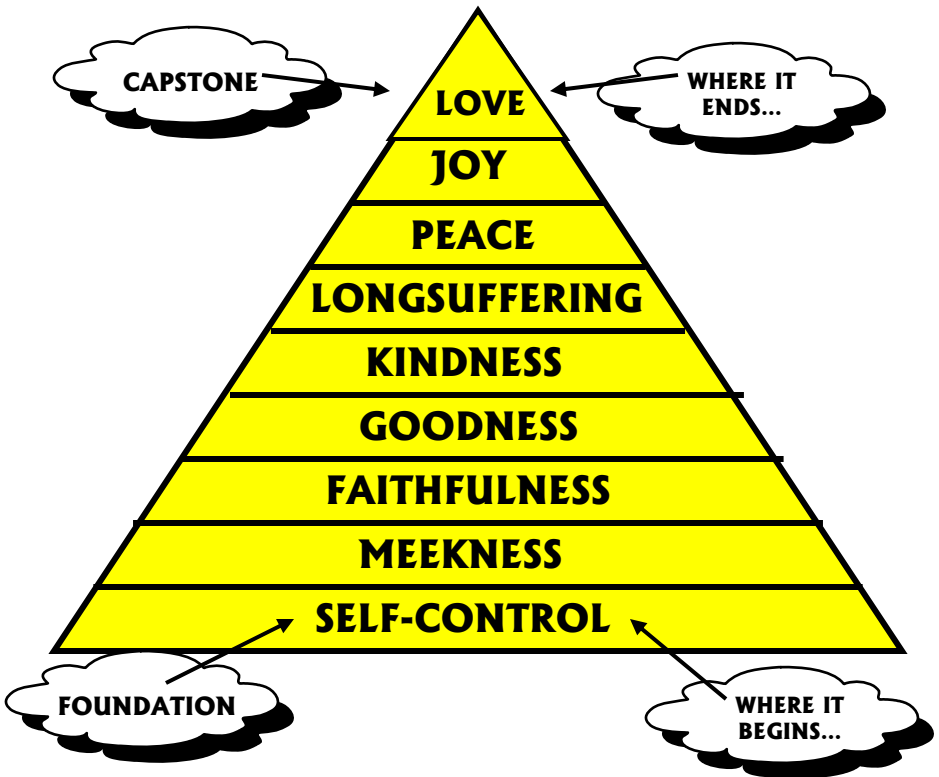
THE OBTAINING OF LOVE

We have looked at the importance of love, and now we have added a clear, biblical definition of love. Let us proceed to the third area of our triangle of love and consider how it is that we obtain love.

Just as there exists a wide-spread ignorance of what is biblical love, there is also a great lack of understanding pertaining to how we obtain love.

A superficial answer would be that we get it from the Holy Spirit because it is listed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. That is truth, but it is not the whole truth. We saw that although love is at the top of the list of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), it is not the first fruit obtained. We saw that love is on top because it is the capstone.

It would seem more likely that the fruit of the Spirit begins with the bottom of the list and works up to the top. On the bottom of the list is self-control. The list progresses upward step-by-step leading to peace, joy and eventually the capstone, love.



It would certainly seem logical that if we lack self-control, we certainly would be unable to avoid the pitfalls of being rude, provoked, and selfish, which are among those things Paul lists that love is not. If we lack self-control, we have not even made it to first-base concerning being a person of love.

Not only is there a progressive pattern in the fruit of the Spirit which begins with self-control and leads to love, but there is another systematic pattern given by the apostle Peter:

“...TO THOSE WHO HAVE OBTAINED LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH WITH US BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST... GIVING ALL DILIGENCE,

ADD TO YOUR FAITH

**VIRTUE, TO VIRTUE (ADD) KNOWLEDGE,
TO KNOWLEDGE (ADD) SELF-CONTROL,
TO SELF-CONTROL (ADD) PERSEVERANCE,
TO PERSEVERANCE (ADD) GODLINESS,
TO GODLINESS (ADD) BROTHERLY KINDNESS,
AND TO BROTHERLY KINDNESS (ADD) LOVE.”**

2 Peter 1:1,5-7

Forgive my added graphic emphasis above, but I wanted to make sure you didn't miss the point. We live in times when teachers are telling God's people just the opposite of what the Word of God says. Such is the case above. Notice we are to “add to our faith”. Peter is clear in verse 1 that he is addressing “born-again believers” like you and me. What are we to “add to our faith”? Peter lists seven (number of perfection) things that are required. Before we look at them, notice Peter contrasts the benefits of possessing them vs. lacking them:

“FOR HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS IS SHORTSIGHTED, EVEN TO BLINDNESS, AND HAS FORGOTTEN THAT HE WAS PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS.”

2 Peter 1:9

**VIRTUE...
KNOWLEDGE...
SELF-CONTROL...
PERSEVERANCE...
GODLINESS...
BROTHERLY
KINDNESS,
LOVE...**



If you don't think Peter's description can fit a born-again believer, then you better take another look at how Jesus describes His church, Laodicea. Those in the church of Laodicea thought they were “rich... wealthy... in need of nothing.” Perhaps they thought “I got it all when I got saved.” Jesus doesn't see them that way. He says they are “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (see Rev. 3:17-18). Peter tells us that if we lack these (seven) things we are spiritually blind and have forgotten (perhaps why) they were purged from their old sins” (2 Pet. 1:9). Simply stated, they lack vision. Note again that the list Peter provides is just like that of Paul in the love chapter. Both lists work from the bottom to the top.

Let us consider the contrast that Peter makes of the one who abounds in these things:

“IF THESE THINGS BE YOURS AND ABOUND”:

“YOU WILL BE NEITHER BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL...” (VS. 8)

“(YOU) WILL MAKE YOUR CALL AND ELECTION SURE...” (VS. 10)

“...YOU WILL NEVER STUMBLE...” (VS. 10)

“...AN ENTRANCE WILL BE SUPPLIED TO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM...” (VS. 11)

VIRTUE...

KNOWLEDGE...

SELF-CONTROL...

PERSEVERANCE...

GODLINESS...

BROTHERLY KINDNESS...

LOVE...

What the apostle Peter says is inherited by “adding to your faith” is presented in modern-day theology as an inheritance obtained simply by being born again.

“Once saved, always saved” as well as “I got it all when I got saved” is

replacement theology for what the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Peter to write you every born-again believer.

2 Peter 1:5-11

Peter states that true biblical eternal security comes by means of the believer adding seven things to faith in Christ. These things are designed to make our calling and election sure, not “Once saved, always saved.” These seven things will assure the believer that he/she never stumbles. In the life to come, it is these seven things that will assure us an abundance entrance into the everlasting kingdom

This First Chapter of Second Peter establishes that there are two kinds of Christians. One has vision for eternal rewards, but the other is nearly blind. Peter states the latter has even forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Both of these Christians have laid the same foundation which is “like precious faith by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:1). They both have been purged from their old sins (2 Pet. 1:9). What makes these two Christians different is caused by the “lack of these things” being added to their faith vs the believer possessing an “abundance of these things” as elaborated by Peter. There are two entrances available into heaven. Paul presents one and Peter presents the other:



**“IF ANYONE’S
WORK IS BURNED,
HE WILL SUFFER LOSS,
BUT HE HIMSELF WILL
BE SAVED,
YET SO AS
THROUGH FIRE.”**

1 Cor. 3:15

**“ ADD TO YOUR FAITH...
FOR SO AN ENTRANCE
WILL BE SUPPLIED TO YOU
ABUNDANTLY
INTO THE
EVERLASTING KINGDOM
OF OUR LORD AND
SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”**

2 Pet. 1:5-11



Peter begins with virtue. The Amplified Bible calls it “Christian energy”. The word translated as virtue means “moral excellence, valor and manliness”. Put that in street language and it would be one who has “guts”. It is “the world” that has all the crutches to lean on, not Christianity. It is the world that uses drugs, booze and fantasy entertainment to escape reality. God calls the Christian to face reality and call sin what it is. We are not to rationalize away our sin by saying we came from a dysfunctional family. Jesus calls us to “put our hands to the plow and not look back” (see Luke 9:62). This is virtue. It is moral excellence, valor and manliness.

The second thing that Peter lists in the pursuit of love is that we must “add to virtue, knowledge”. However, Paul warns:

“...WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE. KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP, BUT LOVE EDIFIES. AND IF ANYONE THINKS THAT HE KNOWS ANYTHING, HE KNOWS NOTHING YET AS HE OUGHT TO KNOW.”

1 Cor. 8:1-2

The kind of knowledge Paul speaks about centers upon the “knowledge of God” and the “knowledge of God’s will”:

“...THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING; THAT YOU MAY HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD, FULLY PLEASING HIM, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK AND INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD...”

Col.1:9-10

“...ATTAINING TO... THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD, BOTH OF THE FATHER AND OF CHRIST, IN WHOM ARE HIDDEN ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.”

Col. 2:2-3

From the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the will of God, we are to progress to self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and finally to love. This is the normal Christian life as the Word of God presents it. The new birth simply enables us to enter and see the kingdom of God. It places us upon the race track. It is up to us to run with endurance the race set before us.

Make love your aim, but make sure you have biblical love.

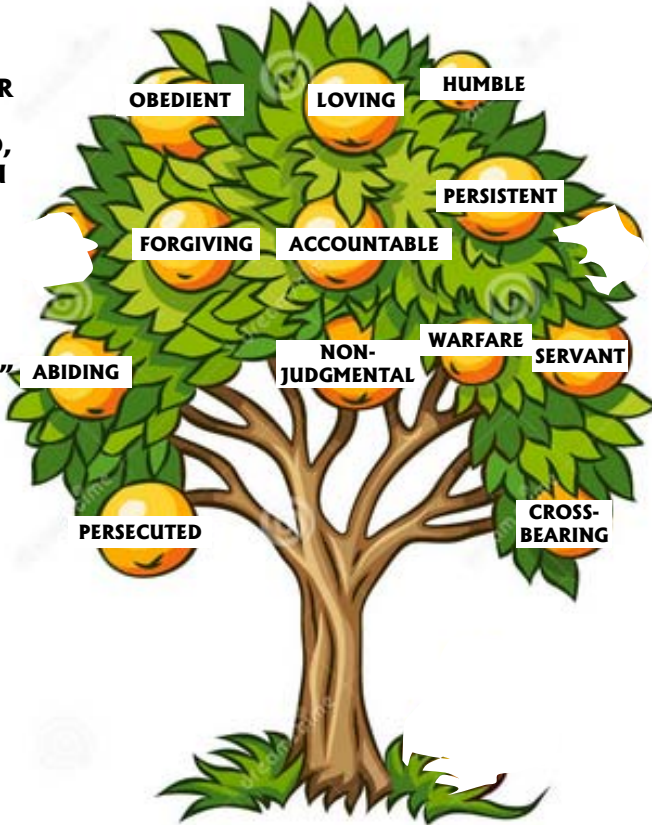


THE TREE OF LIFE

THE TWELVE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

“BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED, THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT; SO YOU WILL BE MY DISCIPLES.”

John 15:8



“I CHOOSE YOU AND APPOINTED YOU THAT YOU SHOULD BEAR FRUIT, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN...”

John 15:16

“...MAY (YOU) SURELY LEARN TO SENSE WHAT IS VITAL, AND APPROVE AND PRIZE WHAT IS EXCELLENT AND OF REAL VALUE... THAT YOU MAY BE UNTAINTED... PURE... UNERRING AND BLAMELESS... NOT STUMBLING NOR CAUSING OTHERS TO STUMBLE. MAY YOU ABOUND IN AND BE FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...”

Philippians 1:10-11 Amplified

Pictured above is a synopsis of the present manifestation of the kingdom of God. Its focal point is “fruit bearing” as both Jesus and Paul testify above. We have examined twelve (number of governmental perfection) kingdom fruits of righteousness. There are more in the writings of Jesus and His apostles than these twelve. As stated before, I believe that if we will allow these twelve to begin to “reign in our hearts”, then we will hear, from the lips of Jesus at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the words “Well done, good and faithful servant...” (Matt. 25:23)

**“...WE ALL... BEHOLDING AS IN A MIRROR THE GLORY OF THE LORD,
ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO
GLORY, JUST AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.”**

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

The mandate is to be conformed into the image of Jesus. Rather than believing that it takes place in some mystical transformation by faith, we need to see that God intended it to be a very practical application of spiritual truths in our lives. The mirror Paul speaks of above is the Word of God (Jam. 1:23-25). As we behold the glory of Christ Jesus, we are to allow the Spirit of the Lord to work in us to take us from glory to glory.

The fruits of righteousness which we have examined are the exact image of Jesus Christ. God never asks of us things that were not also present in Jesus. He is our example in whose steps we are to follow (1 Pet. 2:21). The apostle Paul says:

**“TILL WE ALL COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH
AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD,
TO A PERFECT MAN, TO THE MEASURE
OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST...”**

Ephesians 4:13



**UNDERSTANDING WHAT WILL BE
THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH
FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS**

PART FOUR
**“THE
MILLENNIAL
KINGDOM OF GOD”**



**“BEHOLD, THE DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING...
AND IN THAT DAY HIS FEET WILL STAND ON
THE MOUNT OF OLIVES...”**

**THUS THE LORD MY GOD WILL COME,
AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH YOU...
AND THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH.
IN THAT DAY IT SHALL BE...”**

Zech. 14:1-9 excerpts

**“AND HE WHO OVERCOMES,
AND KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE END,
TO HIM I WILL GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS-
HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON...”**

Rev. 2:26-27

**“...THEY SHALL BE PRIESTS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST,
AND SHALL REIGN WITH HIM
A THOUSAND YEARS.”**

Rev. 20:6

Leaving the present realities of the kingdom of God that abides in the heart of every born-again member of the church on earth, let us progress on to the second manifestation of the Kingdom of God which is the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth for a thousand year period.

TO ABIDE IN
THE NEW CREATION TO COME
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON THE NEW EARTH...

PHASE THREE:
THE ETERNAL
KINGDOM

**THE GOSPEL
OF
THE KINGDOM
OF GOD**

PHASE ONE:
THE INTERNAL
KINGDOM

ABIDING PRESENTLY
IN THE HEART OF
THE CHURCH
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON EARTH...

PHASE TWO:
THE EXTERNAL
KINGDOM

TO ABIDE IN ISRAEL
DURING
THE MILLENNIAL REIGN
OF JESUS CHRIST
ON EARTH...

This is phase two of the Kingdom of God on earth. This is to be a literal, physical, geographical manifestation of the Kingdom of God which will abide in Israel for a thousand year period. This is not a kingdom requiring invisible faith, but rather one of obvious fact. It does not require seeing Jesus as King over a spiritual, invisible Kingdom, but rather He will be visibly reigning on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

**“BEHOLD,
THE DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING...
AND IN THAT DAY HIS FEET WILL STAND
ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES...
THUS THE LORD MY GOD WILL COME,
AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH YOU...
AND THE LORD SHALL BE KING
OVER ALL THE EARTH.
IN THAT DAY IT SHALL BE...”**

Zech. 14:1-9 excerpts

His reign over the earth will be administered with “a rod of iron” because many citizens will not be happy that Jesus is now King over all the earth.

Much mystery surrounds this thousand year reign of Christ on earth. Actually, we have little detail in scripture describing this event. Some things to occur are quite supernatural phenomena hinted at with brief references in scripture. Although these events are beyond the scope of this book, I will list some of them for you as they are quite mind-boggling. Many of them are found under the banner of "In that day", an often repeated phrase uttered by the prophets of old describing the period known as the Millennial Reign of Christ. Here are a few:

RESTORATION OF A PURE LANGUAGE FOR ALL INHABITANTS:

"...MY DETERMINATION IS TO GATHER THE NATIONS TO MY ASSEMBLY OF KINGDOMS, TO POUR ON THEM MY INDIGNATION, ALL MY FIERCE ANGER; ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE DEVoured WITH THE FIRE OF MY JEALOUSY. FOR THEN I WILL RESTORE TO THE PEOPLES A PURE LANGUAGE, THAT THEY ALL MAY CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD, TO SERVE HIM WITH ONE ACCORD." Zeph 3:8-9

RESTORATION OF EGYPT, ASSYRIA AND ISRAEL AS ONE IN GOD:

"IN THAT DAY THERE WILL BE A HIGHWAY FROM EGYPT TO ASSYRIA, AND THE ASSYRIAN WILL COME INTO EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIAN INTO ASSYRIA, AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL SERVE WITH THE ASSYRIANS. IN THAT DAY ISRAEL WILL BE ONE OF THREE WITH EGYPT AND ASSYRIA -- A BLESSING IN THE MIDST OF THE LAND, WHOM THE LORD OF HOSTS SHALL BLESS, SAYING, 'BLESSED IS EGYPT MY PEOPLE, AND ASSYRIA THE WORK OF MY HANDS, AND ISRAEL MY INHERITANCE.'" Isa 19:23-25

RESTORATION OF THE THOUSAND YEAR LIFESPAN ON EARTH:

"NO MORE SHALL AN INFANT FROM THERE LIVE BUT A FEW DAYS, NOR AN OLD MAN WHO HAS NOT FULFILLED HIS DAYS; FOR THE CHILD SHALL DIE ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD, BUT THE SINNER BEING ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD SHALL BE ACCURSED. THEY SHALL BUILD HOUSES AND INHABIT THEM; THEY SHALL PLANT VINEYARDS AND EAT THEIR FRUIT. THEY SHALL NOT BUILD AND ANOTHER INHABIT; THEY SHALL NOT PLANT AND ANOTHER EAT; FOR AS THE DAYS OF A TREE, SO SHALL BE THE DAYS OF MY PEOPLE..." Isa 65:20-22

THE ANIMAL KINGDOM SHALL CO-EXIST TOGETHER IN PEACE

"THE WOLF AND THE LAMB SHALL FEED TOGETHER, THE LION SHALL EAT STRAW LIKE THE OX, AND DUST SHALL BE THE SERPENT'S FOOD. THEY SHALL NOT HURT NOR DESTROY IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, SAYS THE LORD."
Isa 65:25

"THE WOLF ALSO SHALL DWELL WITH THE LAMB, THE LEOPARD SHALL LIE DOWN WITH THE YOUNG GOAT, THE CALF AND THE YOUNG LION AND THE FATLING TOGETHER; AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM. THE COW AND THE BEAR SHALL GRAZE; THEIR YOUNG ONES SHALL LIE DOWN TOGETHER; AND THE LION SHALL EAT STRAW LIKE THE OX. THE NURSING CHILD SHALL PLAY BY THE COBRA'S HOLE, AND THE WEANED CHILD SHALL PUT HIS HAND IN THE VIPER'S DEN. THEY SHALL NOT HURT NOR DESTROY IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN." Isa 11:6-9

THE HUMAN RACE SHALL CO-EXIST IN PEACE-NO MORE WAR!

**“FOR OUT OF ZION THE LAW SHALL GO FORTH,
AND THE WORD OF THE LORD FROM JERUSALEM.
HE SHALL JUDGE BETWEEN MANY PEOPLES, AND REBUKE STRONG
NATIONS AFAR OFF; THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO
PLOWSHARES, AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS;
NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION,
NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANYMORE.”** Mic 4:2-3

THE FIRE OF GOD SHALL REST OVER EACH DWELLING PLACE:

**“AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT HE WHO IS LEFT IN ZION AND
REMAINS IN JERUSALEM WILL BE CALLED HOLY -- EVERYONE WHO IS
RECORDED AMONG THE LIVING IN JERUSALEM. WHEN THE LORD HAS
WASHED AWAY THE FILTH OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZION, AND PURGED
THE BLOOD OF JERUSALEM FROM HER MIDST, BY THE SPIRIT OF
JUDGMENT AND BY THE SPIRIT OF BURNING, THEN THE LORD WILL
CREATE ABOVE EVERY DWELLING PLACE OF MOUNT ZION,
AND ABOVE HER ASSEMBLIES, A CLOUD AND SMOKE BY DAY AND THE
SHINING OF A FLAMING FIRE BY NIGHT. FOR OVER ALL THE GLORY
THERE WILL BE A COVERING. AND THERE WILL BE A TABERNACLE FOR
SHADE IN THE DAYTIME FROM THE HEAT, FOR A PLACE OF REFUGE,
AND FOR A SHELTER FROM STORM AND RAIN.”** Isa 4:3-6

BINDING OF SATAN FOR THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN ON EARTH:

**“THEN I SAW AN ANGEL COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN, HAVING THE
KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT AND A GREAT CHAIN IN HIS HAND.
HE LAID HOLD OF THE DRAGON, THAT SERPENT OF OLD, WHO IS THE
DEVIL AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM FOR A THOUSAND YEARS; AND HE
CAST HIM INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND SHUT HIM UP, AND SET A
SEAL ON HIM, SO THAT HE SHOULD DECEIVE THE NATIONS NO MORE
TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED. BUT AFTER THESE THINGS
HE MUST BE RELEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE.”** Rev 20:1-3

ALL NATIONS MUST WORSHIP THE KING FOR A THOUSAND YEARS:

**“AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT EVERYONE WHO IS LEFT OF ALL THE
NATIONS WHICH CAME AGAINST JERUSALEM SHALL GO UP FROM YEAR TO
YEAR TO WORSHIP THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS, AND TO KEEP THE
FEAST OF TABERNACLES. AND IT SHALL BE THAT WHICHEVER OF THE
FAMILIES OF THE EARTH DO NOT COME UP TO JERUSALEM TO WORSHIP
THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS, ON THEM THERE WILL BE NO RAIN.
IF THE FAMILY OF EGYPT WILL NOT COME UP AND ENTER IN, THEY SHALL
HAVE NO RAIN; THEY SHALL RECEIVE THE PLAGUE WITH WHICH THE LORD
STRIKES THE NATIONS WHO DO NOT COME UP TO KEEP THE FEAST OF
TABERNACLES. THIS SHALL BE THE PUNISHMENT OF EGYPT AND THE
PUNISHMENT OF ALL THE NATIONS THAT DO NOT COME UP
TO KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. IN THAT DAY
‘HOLINESS TO THE LORD’ SHALL BE ENGRAVED ON THE BELLS OF THE
HORSES. THE POTS IN THE LORD’S HOUSE SHALL BE LIKE THE BOWLS
BEFORE THE ALTAR. YES, EVERY POT IN JERUSALEM AND JUDAH
SHALL BE HOLINESS TO THE LORD OF HOSTS.”** Zech 14:16-21



**“NOW OUT OF HIS MOUTH GOES A SHARP SWORD,
THAT WITH IT HE SHOULD STRIKE THE NATIONS.
AND HE HIMSELF WILL RULE THEM
WITH A ROD OF IRON.
HE HIMSELF TREADS THE WINEPRESS
OF THE FIERCENESS AND WRATH OF ALMIGHTY GOD.”**
Rev.19:15

We must also see that in “ruling with a rod of iron” over the nations, God will continue to administer His wrath when necessary. We looked earlier at the words of Zechariah the prophet as he depicted the outpouring of grace upon the “house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:10). We saw in Chapter 13 the coming of Messiah in which they would come to say “The Lord is my God” (Zech. 13:9).

Take time to read the whole 14th chapter of Zechariah. It is a gruesome picture of what is going to happen during “the day of the Lord.” Even though God manifests His terror in what should be an unforgettable experience, He still must rule with a rod of iron to get some of the nations to submit to His authority. In one of His parables, Jesus prophetically speaks of this rebelliousness:

**“BUT HIS CITIZENS HATED HIM,
SENT A DELEGATION AFTER HIM, SAYING,
‘WE WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN TO REIGN OVER US.’”**
Luke 19:14

However, look at the conclusion Jesus pronounces upon these rebels just a few verses later:

**“BUT BRING HERE THOSE ENEMIES OF MINE,
WHO DID NOT WANT ME TO REIGN OVER THEM,
AND SLAY THEM BEFORE ME.”**
Luke 19:27

We begin to see a glimpse of what is meant by Jesus ruling over the nations with a dreaded, “rod of iron.” To those of us whom “having not seen (Jesus) you love...” (1 Pet. 1:8), it seems incomprehensible that a people could see Him literally for a thousand years and yet still hate Him! Listen to the prophetic word as it reveals how the thousand year reign of Christ on earth will end:

**“NOW WHEN THE THOUSAND YEARS HAVE EXPIRED,
SATAN WILL BE RELEASED FROM HIS PRISON AND WILL GO OUT TO
DECEIVE THE NATIONS WHICH ARE IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE
EARTH... TO GATHER THEM TOGETHER TO BATTLE,
WHOSE NUMBER IS AS THE SAND OF THE SEA...
THEY... SURROUNDED THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS
AND THE BELOVED CITY.
AND FIRE CAME DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN
AND DEVoured THEM.”**
Rev. 20:7-9

Perhaps the point that we need to see is that there is still another thousand years of human history ahead in which God is going to test those who dwell on the earth. Amazingly, the prophetic word warns us that the majority will fail the test!

THE MILLENIAL REIGN

**“NOW OUT OF HIS MOUTH GOES A SHARP SWORD,
THAT WITH IT HE SHOULD STRIKE THE NATIONS...”**



SATAN BOUND...

“HAVING A GREAT CHAIN...HE LAID HOLD OF... THAT SERPENT OF OLD, WHO IS THE DEVIL AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM FOR A THOUSAND YEARS; AND HE CAST HIM INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND SHUT HIM UP, AND SET A SEAL ON HIM, SO THAT HE SHOULD DECEIVE THE NATIONS NO MORE TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED. BUT AFTER THESE THINGS HE MUST BE RELEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE.” Rev.. 20:2-3



“NOW IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LATTER DAYS THAT THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED ON THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS, AND SHALL BE EXALTED ABOVE THE HILLS; AND ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW TO IT. MANY PEOPLE SHALL COME AND SAY, "COME, AND LET US GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD, TO THE HOUSE OF THE GOD OF JACOB; HE WILL TEACH US HIS WAYS, AND WE SHALL WALK IN HIS PATHS.”

FOR OUT OF ZION SHALL GO FORTH THE LAW, AND THE WORD OF THE LORD FROM JERUSALEM. HE SHALL JUDGE BETWEEN THE NATIONS, AND REBUKE MANY PEOPLE; THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES, AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS; NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANYMORE.”

Isaiah Two

OF CHRIST ON THE EARTH

...AND HE HIMSELF WILL RULE THEM
WITH A ROD OF IRON..." Rev. 19:15



"WHY DO THE NATIONS RAGE,
AND THE PEOPLE PLOT A VAIN THING?
THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET
THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS TAKE
COUNSEL TOGETHER, AGAINST THE LORD
AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED, SAYING,
"LET US BREAK THEIR BONDS IN PIECES
AND CAST AWAY THEIR CORDS FROM US."

HE WHO SITS IN THE HEAVENS SHALL
LAUGH; THE LORD SHALL HOLD THEM IN
DERISION. THEN HE SHALL SPEAK TO THEM
IN HIS WRATH, AND DISTRESS THEM IN HIS
DEEP DISPLEASURE: "YET I HAVE SET MY
KING ON MY HOLY HILL OF ZION."

...ASK OF ME, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE
NATIONS FOR YOUR INHERITANCE,
AND THE ENDS OF THE EARTH FOR YOUR
POSSESSION. YOU SHALL BREAK THEM
WITH A ROD OF IRON; YOU SHALL DASH
THEM TO PIECES LIKE A POTTER'S VESSEL."

NOW THEREFORE, BE WISE, O KINGS;
BE INSTRUCTED, YOU JUDGES OF THE
EARTH. SERVE THE LORD WITH FEAR, AND
REJOICE WITH TREMBLING. KISS THE SON,
LEST HE BE ANGRY, AND YOU PERISH IN
THE WAY, WHEN HIS WRATH IS
KINDLED BUT A LITTLE..."

Psalm Two

...SATAN LOOSED

"NOW
WHEN
THE
THOUSAND
YEARS
HAVE EXPIRED,
SATAN WILL
BE RELEASED
FROM
HIS
PRISON
AND WILL
GO OUT TO
DECEIVE
THE NATIONS...
GATHER
THEM TOGETHER
TO BATTLE,
WHOSE
NUMBER IS AS
THE SAND OF
THE SEA..."

Rev. 20:7-8

God is a “just Judge” (Psm. 7:11). In the Millennial reign of Christ on earth He will establish His throne in Jerusalem and reign visibly on it for one thousand years. No longer will man be able to say “prove there is a God and I will believe.” God will prove Himself in many ways during that period of time.

We are living in times in which the church is being fed a diet of “dominion theology” founded upon the idea that we Christians have been commissioned to capture the kingdoms of this world and make them the kingdoms of Christ. It is not going to happen! What I have showed you so far illustrates that even when Jesus Christ Himself sits on the throne on this earth for a thousand years, He will of necessity have to rule with a rod of iron over many of these earthy kingdoms. How then shall the church without Jesus being visibly present accomplish what God Himself must do with force? If the nations do not submit to the Master, neither will they to His servants. Remember, “a servant is not greater than His Master” (John 15:20).

From the accounts of Isaiah the prophet and David the Psalmist as depicted on the two previous pages, we can see that the Millennium is a mixed-bag. Some of the nations are receptive to having God “teach them His ways” (Isa. 2:3), but other nations are busy “taking counsel together against the Lord” (Psm. 2:2). Let us keep in mind that this is going on without any Satanic activity for God has locked up Satan during this time frame. It is self-determination by those “citizens who hate Him” that “we will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14).

Think about this: Because there is no more war on earth and the thousand year lifespan is restored, mankind will once again fill the earth with billions of people. However, after the thousand years of being under God’s iron-rule authority, we find the prophetic word stressing that Satan, upon being loosed from prison, will still be able to gather multitudes of God-haters together to do his battle, and they will be as numerous as the sand of the sea! Mind-boggling, isn’t it?

Since God has supernatural foreknowledge, we might wonder why He allows the nations of the earth to re-populate only to be wiped-out again in the end? The answer is that God has always sought a remnant that will willingly serve Him. It was so with Israel. It is so with the church (even though the church thinks otherwise), and it will be so in the Millennium. God is an unchanging God. Man is given the choice to be among those of Isaiah Two that delight in God’s rule over them, or to be among those of Psalm Two who hate God’s rule and reign over them. He will allow them to coexist on earth for a thousand years and then He will destroy those who hate Him:

**“BUT BRING HERE THOSE ENEMIES OF MINE,
WHO DID NOT WANT ME TO REIGN OVER THEM,
AND SLAY THEM BEFORE ME.”**

Luke 19:27

**“JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER.
DO NOT BE CARRIED ABOUT WITH VARIOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES...”**

Hebrews 13:8-9

Think about it: In the Tribulation God will allow two-thirds of the Jews to perish in order to redeem the remaining one-third (Zech. 13:8-9). In the Millennium He will allow the nations to choose their own destiny. Apparently, He is willing to allow the multitude of the nations to perish in order to gather a remnant to Himself. It is folly to think that the church, being “grafted-in branches” into Israel’s new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:8-12), is immune from also ending up as a remnant. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), as well as the seven letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2-3), strongly depict there will be just a remnant that survives.

I stated earlier that there is much mystery (hidden truths) connected with the Millennium. One such mystery is found in Chapters 40-48 of the Book of Ezekiel where the re-constructed Millennial temple is painstakingly described in great detail. If you take time to read those chapters, you will be struck with the mystery pertaining to the restoration of animal sacrifices as atonement for sin. These pages read as if they came straight out of the Book of Leviticus. In addition to the restoration of such sacrifices, we find the restoration of new moons/Sabbath holy days. We read earlier from Zechariah that all the nations will be required to worship the Lord every year for a thousand years at the “Feast of Tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16-18). This is a Feast right out of Leviticus Chapter 23-the Mosaic Law! Why are all these things restored **AFTER** the death of Christ and the institution of the New Covenant having replaced the Old Covenant?

I do not have the answers to these things, but one thing I do know: the all too simplistic dichotomy of “law and grace” held by the church today is error. Both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant have as their foundation “law with grace” (see Heb. 8:10-12). The Millennium is heavily marked with what is found in “the law” of the Old Covenant. Our present theology prevents us from being able to understand what we read about the Millennium. Consider this additional passage from Isaiah:

“FOR BEHOLD, THE LORD WILL COME WITH FIRE AND WITH HIS CHARIOTS, LIKE A WHIRLWIND, TO RENDER HIS ANGER WITH FURY, AND HIS REBUKE WITH FLAMES OF FIRE. FOR BY FIRE AND BY HIS SWORD THE LORD SHALL JUDGE ALL FLESH: AND THE SLAIN OF THE LORD WILL BE MANY. THOSE WHO SANCTIFY THEMSELVES AND PURIFY THEMSELVES, TO GO TO THE GARDENS AFTER AN IDOL... EATING SWINE’S FLESH AND THE ABOMINATION AND THE MOUSE, SHALL BE CONSUMED TOGETHER, SAITH THE LORD... AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT FROM ONE NEW MOON TO ANOTHER, AND FROM ONE SABBATH TO ANOTHER, ALL FLESH SHALL COME TO WORSHIP BEFORE ME,” SAYS THE LORD.”

Isa. 66:15-17, 23

The context of these verses center on the return of Christ as you can easily see. The statements that follow should be disturbing to our theology. Jesus is upset that they are “eating swine flesh.” Where is it forbidden to do so? In the dietary law (Deut. 14:1-21). We also can see in verse 23 the restoration of “new moons and Sabbaths.” There is indeed a great cloud of mystery surrounding the future manifestation of the kingdom of God which takes place during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

Regardless of all the mystery that surrounds how the Millennial Reign of Christ will function, here is a vital truth that affects everyone who names the name of Christ as their Savior and Lord:

“AND HE WHO OVERCOMES, AND KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE END, TO HIM, I WILL GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS— HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON... AS I ALSO HAVE RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER; AND I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR. HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.”

Rev. 2:26-29

“BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE WHO HAS PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION. OVER SUCH THE SECOND DEATH HAS NO POWER, BUT THEY SHALL BE PRIESTS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST, AND SHALL REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS.”

Rev. 20:6

The scriptures above give the same promise unto two different peoples. The first as stated is a message to the overcomers in the church. They will have “power over the nations” to “rule with a rod of iron” which the heavenly Father will give to them, just as He gave to Christ. However, the promise is repeated to the overcoming saints that are birthed in the Tribulation period who:

“...HAD BEEN BEHEADED FOR THEIR WITNESS TO JESUS AND FOR THE WORD OF GOD, WHO HAD NOT WORSHIPED THE BEAST OR HIS IMAGE, AND HAD NOT RECEIVED HIS MARK ON THEIR FOREHEADS OR ON THEIR HANDS. AND THEY LIVED AND REIGNED WITH CHRIST FOR A THOUSAND YEARS... THEY SHALL BE PRIESTS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST, AND SHALL REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS.”

Rev.20:4,6

We can see that God is very specific as to why the Tribulation saints (those who find Christ as Savior in the 7 years of the Tribulation) will “reign with Him for a thousand years.” They were beheaded because of their witness for Christ. They refused to worship Antichrist or his image.

God is equally specific as to why He will rapture some of the saints:

“I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.... BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN.”

Rev. 3:8-11

This picture is the same as the overcomer of the Tribulation saint of Revelation 20:4,6. We, as Christians, will not be granted the right to rule with Christ simply because we are born-again. We must be overcomers of evil. Listen to Jesus exhort His church:

“HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS...”

Rev. 21:7

The new birth equips us to be able to overcome through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The call to overcome focuses our eyes upon eternity through the promise to inherit all things. Every born again believer should be setting his heart upon ruling and reigning with Christ. To do so we must develop spiritual vision as Paul urges us to do:

**“FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT,
IS WORKING FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND
ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY,
WHILE WE DO NOT LOOK AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN,
BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN.
FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORARY,
BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL.”**

2 Cor. 4:17-18

Notice the paradox. We must not look at things which we can see, but rather we are to look at the things which cannot be seen. God wants us to have spiritual eyes that are focusing upon the next manifestation of the kingdom of God, the Millennial Reign of Christ.

**“...BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE MYSTERY...
WHICH IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN TO THE SONS OF MEN,
AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT...
THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOW HEIRS OF THE SAME BODY,
AND PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL...”**

Eph. 3:3-6 excerpts

Read carefully what Paul is saying. It is “we Gentiles” that are joining the Jew as “fellow heirs of the same body.” Our modern-day theology has the picture turned around. However, the Jews are not joining us, we are joining them. Paul stresses that the Gentiles have become first partakers of the New Covenant in order to “provoke the Jew to jealousy” (Rom. 11:11). Unless we, in the church, develop right thinking pertaining to what God has in mind for the Jews we will continue to be wise in our own opinion as Paul warned Gentile converts in his day (Rom. 11:25). God offers to us to reign with Christ for a thousand years. However, this promise is not the exclusive property of the church. It also belongs to the natural branches (the Jew) as much as it does to the grafted-in branches (the church). Take time to read Romans Chapters 10-12. Paul gives a needful balanced perspective pertaining to God’s relationship to both Jew and Gentile.

When Jesus preached on the kingdom of God, He told two parables which depicts His relationship to the church and also to Israel. Those two parables are:

THE HID TREASURE



Matt. 13:44

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE



Matt. 13:45-46

THE HID TREASURE



“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE TREASURE HIDDEN IN A FIELD, WHICH A MAN FOUND AND HID; AND FOR JOY OVER IT HE GOES AND SELLS ALL THAT HE HAS AND BUYS THAT FIELD.”
Matt. 13:44

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE



“AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MERCHANT SEEKING BEAUTIFUL PEARLS, WHO, WHEN HE HAD FOUND ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, WENT AND SOLD ALL THAT HE HAD AND BOUGHT IT.”
Matt. 13:45-46



ISRAEL

THE CHURCH

The apostle John said of Jesus, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...” (John 1:11-12). Israel did not receive their Messiah at His first coming. In Exodus 19:5 Israel is called by God as a “special treasure unto Me.” Even though they rejected Jesus when He came to His own, God hid His treasure in the field, which is the world (Matt. 13:38). Israel is still in the world. It will be so until Jesus comes to establish His Millennial kingdom on this earth. Then Israel will be revealed as “His special treasure above all people” (Exodus 19:5).

When “His own received Him not” Jesus turned to “as many as would receive Him.” Salvation came to the Gentiles. This is the message of the pearl of great price. The apostle Paul tells us of that great cost:

“...YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH... SILVER OR GOLD... BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST...” 1 Peter 1:18-19

The need of the hour is to make a place in our understanding for the hid treasure which God is going to reveal in the Millennium. Although we, as the pearl of great price, have opportunity to reign with Christ for a thousand years in the next manifestation of the kingdom of God, we must see that primarily it is Israel’s dispensation:

“BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING,’ SAYS THE LORD, THAT I WILL RAISE TO DAVID A BRANCH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; A KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER, AND EXECUTE JUDGMENT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE EARTH. IN HIS DAYS JUDAH WILL BE SAVED, AND ISRAEL WILL DWELL SAFELY; NOW THIS IS HIS NAME BY WHICH HE WILL BE CALLED: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”

Jeremiah 23:5-6

**UNDERSTANDING WHAT WILL BE
THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH
FOR ALL ETERNITY**

PART FIVE
**"THE
ETERNAL
KINGDOM OF GOD"**

**"I SAW
A NEW HEAVEN
AND
A NEW EARTH,
FOR THE
FIRST HEAVEN
AND THE
FIRST EARTH
HAD PASSED
AWAY...
THEN I, JOHN,
SAW THE
HOLY CITY,
NEW JERUSALEM,
COMING DOWN
OUT OF HEAVEN
FROM GOD..."**

Rev.. 21:1-2



**"NEVERTHELESS WE
ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE,
LOOK FOR**

**NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH
IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS.**

**THEREFORE, BELOVED,
LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE THINGS,
BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND BY HIM IN PEACE,
WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS..."**

2 Peter 3:13-14

**"AND I SAW
A NEW HEAVEN
AND A NEW EARTH...
THEN I, JOHN,
SAW THE HOLY CITY,
NEW JERUSALEM,
COMING DOWN
OUT OF HEAVEN
FROM GOD,
PREPARED
AS A BRIDE
ADORNED FOR HER
HUSBAND...
'BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL
THINGS NEW...'.
HE WHO
OVERCOMES
SHALL INHERIT
ALL THINGS..."**

Revelation 21:1-7 excerpts

We now come to the third and final manifestation of the kingdom of God. It is to be the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior (2 Peter 1:11). God wants His people to have spiritual vision toward the everlasting kingdom which is to come because we must prepare now, in this temporal life, for all that it offers for all eternity. Jesus makes this simple, but profound statement containing a great promise of things to come:

**"AND HE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE SAID,
'BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW',
AND HE SAID TO ME,
'WRITE, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL...
HE WHO OVERCOMES
SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS..."**

Rev. 21:5-7

THE CLOSING OF THE FIRST CREATION

REVELATION CHAPTER 20

TEMPORAL

PURPOSES OF GOD IN THE FIRST CREATION

(THE JUDGMENT OF MEN AND ANGELS)

THE FIRST

C R E A T I O N

THE
ALPHA

THE
FIRST

THE
BEGINNING

“NOW WHEN THE THOUSAND YEARS HAVE EXPIRED, SATAN WILL BE RELEASED FROM HIS PRISON AND WILL GO OUT TO DECEIVE THE NATIONS WHICH ARE IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH, GOG AND MAGOG, TO GATHER THEM TOGETHER TO BATTLE, WHOSE NUMBER IS AS THE SAND OF THE SEA.

THEY WENT UP ON THE BREADTH OF THE EARTH AND SURROUNDED THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS AND THE BELOVED CITY. AND FIRE CAME DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN AND DEVoured THEM.

THE DEVIL, WHO DECEIVED THEM, WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE WHERE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE. AND THEY WILL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOREVER AND EVER.

THEN I SAW A GREAT WHITE THRONE AND HIM WHO SAT ON IT, FROM WHOSE FACE THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN FLED AWAY. AND THERE WAS FOUND NO PLACE FOR THEM. AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STANDING BEFORE GOD, AND BOOKS WERE OPENED. AND ANOTHER BOOK WAS OPENED, WHICH IS THE BOOK OF LIFE. AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS, BY THE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS. THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHO WERE IN IT, AND DEATH AND HADES DELIVERED UP THE DEAD WHO WERE IN THEM. AND THEY WERE JUDGED, EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS. THEN DEATH AND HADES WERE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH. AND ANYONE NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE.”

Rev. 20:7-10

Take a careful look at the above diagram. It is the closing out of the final stage of the first creation and the beginning of the new eternal creation. The first creation began in Genesis with the testing of Lucifer and the third of the angels that fell with him. The initial creation also marks the testing of man in Eden that was made in the image of God. The rest of the Bible records ages of mankind being tested by God. The first creation ends with the final judgment of Satan and all of mankind who have rejected God. Note well that it is God Himself who lets loose Satan from captivity having kept him locked up for the last 1,000 years. Why does God let him loose? So that He may test the hearts of all on the earth prior to proceeding with the creation of a new heavens and a new earth. Truly this is the age of the testing of men and angels.

THE OPENING OF THE NEW CREATION

REVELATION CHAPTER 21

ETERNAL

PURPOSES OF GOD IN THE NEW CREATION

(THE REWARDING OF MEN AND ANGELS)

**“NOW I SAW
A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH,
FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH
HAD PASSED AWAY...**

**THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY,
NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN
FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE
ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND...**

**‘BEHOLD, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN,
AND HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM,
AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE...
THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH,
NOR SORROW, NOR CRYING.**

**THERE SHALL BE NO MORE PAIN,
FOR THE FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY...’**

THEN HE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE SAID,

**‘BEHOLD, MAKE ALL THINGS NEW...
I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA,
THE BEGINNING AND THE END.**

**HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL
INHERIT ALL THINGS...**

**AND BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY,
AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME,
TO GIVE TO EVERY ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORK.**

**I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA,
THE BEGINNING AND THE END,
THE FIRST AND THE LAST.**

**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS,
THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT
TO THE TREE OF LIFE,**

AND MAY ENTER THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY...

**I, JESUS, HAVE SENT MY ANGEL TO TESTIFY TO YOU
THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES.”**

Rev. 21:1-16 excerpts

**THE
LAST**

C

R

E

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O

N

**THE
OMEGA**

**THE
LAST**

**THE
END**

Now opens a whole new creation! This new earth will be the eternal dwelling place of God's New Jerusalem and the habitation of the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife (Rev. 21:9-10). This is God's ultimate reward for faithful service rendered in this present nasty here and now.

Do you think that this eternal creation shall exceed the temporal creation in magnitude and beauty? We talk about a place called Heaven as if it is to be our home for eternity. However wonderful Heaven might be in its present manifestation, it is not our eternal place. It, too, is a temporal place that will be replaced by the second creation of a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness is going to dwell.

SALVATION IS NOT "PLAN B"

THE FIRST

THE LAST

THE ALPHA
THE FIRST
THE BEGINNING

**C
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A
T
I
O
N**

**C
R
E
A
T
I
O
N**

THE OMEGA
THE LAST
THE END

"HE INDEED WAS FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, BUT WAS MANIFEST IN THESE LAST TIMES FOR YOU..."
1 Pet. 1:20



"JUST AS HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME..."
Eph. 1:4

(Gen. 1)

(Rev. 21)

FIRST CREATION CREATED TO BE

TEMPORAL

"...THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."
Rev 13:8

LAST CREATION CREATED TO BE

ETERNAL

"...BOTH THE EARTH AND THE WORKS THAT ARE IN IT WILL BE BURNED UP." 2 Pet. 3:10

"...NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS." 2 Pet. 3:13

The above chart, as well as the two preceding pages, are worthy of much consideration for they depict the reasoning of God behind the temporal creation in which we now live and the eternal one that is yet to come. There is no such thing as a "plan B" in God's design. The first creation in Genesis was designed to be temporary from the start. It has been the testing of angels and men right from the start. Only those who pass the test will end up inheriting the new heavens and new earth God has in store. Consider these passages:

"FOR BEHOLD, I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH; AND THE FORMER SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED OR COME TO MIND. BUT BE GLAD AND REJOICE FOREVER IN WHAT I CREATE..." Isa. 65:17-18

"EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."
1 Cor. 2:9

The first creation has but one main purpose—the **TESTING, PROVING** and **PURGING** of God's created beings, both angels and mankind. There is no other purpose for the first creation. When the Righteous Judge has accomplished these goals, the temporal creation will be replaced by the eternal one. For this present time, Jesus functions as The Righteous Judge testing the hearts of all creatures (men and angels) that He has created:

"THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE, THE LORD'S THRONE IS IN HEAVEN; HIS EYES BEHOLD, HIS EYELIDS TEST THE SONS OF MEN. THE LORD TESTS THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT THE WICKED AND THE ONE WHO LOVES VIOLENCE HIS SOUL HATES. UPON THE WICKED HE WILL RAIN COALS; FIRE AND BRIMSTONE AND A BURNING WIND SHALL BE THE PORTION OF THEIR CUP. FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS, HE LOVES RIGHTEOUSNESS..." Ps. 11:4-7

"THE REFINING POT IS FOR SILVER AND THE FURNACE FOR GOLD, BUT THE LORD TESTS THE HEARTS."

Prov. 17:3

"I, THE LORD, SEARCH THE HEART, I TEST THE MIND, EVEN TO GIVE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WAYS, ACCORDING TO THE FRUIT OF HIS DOINGS."

Jer. 17:10

THE LORD SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLES... FOR THE RIGHTEOUS GOD TESTS THE HEARTS AND MINDS... GOD IS A JUST JUDGE..."
Ps. 7:8-11

TEMPORAL

PURPOSES OF GOD
IN THE FIRST CREATION

(THE TESTING OF MEN AND ANGELS)

ETERNAL

PURPOSES OF GOD
IN THE NEW CREATION

(THE REWARDING OF MEN AND ANGELS)

JESUS CHRIST AS THE

THE FIRST

C
R
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THE ALPHA

THE FIRST

THE BEGINNING

TO CREATE:
TESTING
PROVING
PURGING
OF MAN
AND ANGELS



RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

THE LAST

C
R
E
A
T
I
O
N

THE OMEGA

THE LAST

THE END

TO CREATE:
REWARDING
RULING
REIGNING
OF MAN
AND ANGELS

The second creation has a different purpose—the **REWARDING, RULING** and **REIGNING** of those of God’s created beings who have passed the test, both the host of faithful angels that remained with God from the first creation and the redeemed of mankind who have chosen God over the evil principalities and powers serving Satan, the prince and power of the air.

Temporally, God is allowing evil to exist and even triumph in this first creation. This is because it is not the appointed time for righteousness and justice to prevail. Only when we grasp this truth can we understand why God allows evil to continue to manifest itself in an increasing manner on earth. Consider even the time period of the millennial reign of Christ on earth. Wickedness is merely suppressed by Christ’s rod of iron with which He rules. What happens at the end of that thousand year reign? Satan will be loosed for a little while in order to round up the rebellious who hate the reign of Christ. Fire will come from Heaven and consume them all, and then, we shall enter the second creation in which righteousness dwells (Rev. 20:7-11 21:1-7).

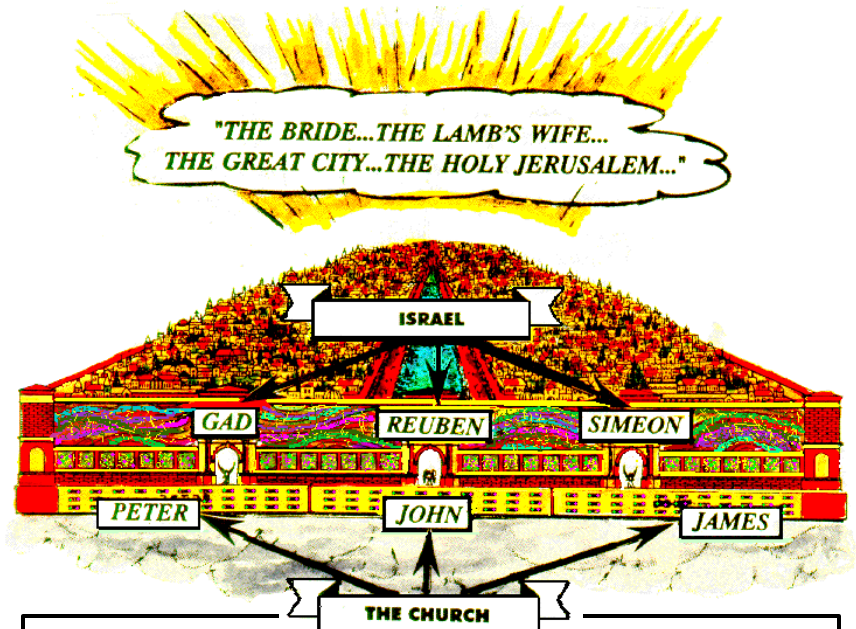
I doubt if there is to be found in scripture a greater visionary comparison between the temporal creation and the eternal creation than these passages from the apostle Peter:

“BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT, IN WHICH THE HEAVENS WILL PASS AWAY WITH A GREAT NOISE, AND THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT; BOTH THE EARTH AND THE WORKS THAT ARE IN IT WILL BE BURNED UP.

THEREFORE, SINCE ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE DISSOLVED, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YOU TO BE IN HOLY CONDUCT AND GODLINESS, LOOKING FOR AND HASTENING THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD, BECAUSE OF WHICH THE HEAVENS WILL BE DISSOLVED, BEING ON FIRE, AND THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT?

NEVERTHELESS WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS. THEREFORE, BELOVED, LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE THINGS, BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND BY HIM IN PEACE, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS...”

2 Peter 3:10-14



“NOW I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY... THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND... THEN HE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW... AND HE SAID TO ME, “WRITE, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL... ‘...COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.”

Rev. 21:1-10
 excerpts

Revelation Chapter 21 and 22 contain limited glimpses into what the eternal kingdom of God on earth will be like. I would have personally liked to have seen more detail given in these chapters because the brevity raises as many questions as are answered. However, this I know: whatever God has in store for His people will be far greater than what we can imagine.

Paul exclaimed:



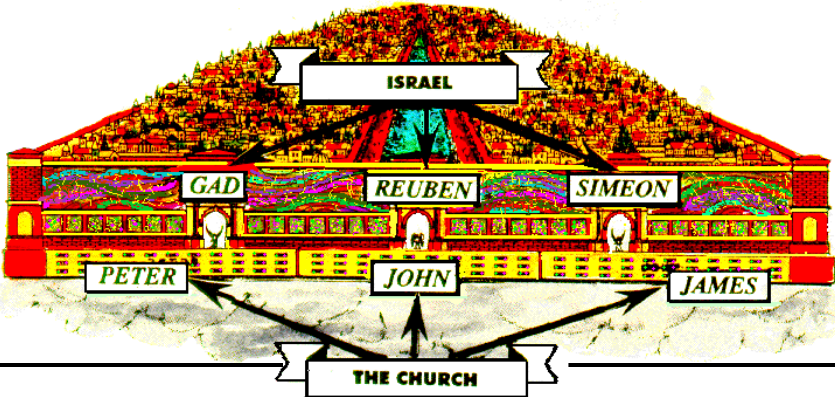
“NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKS IN US...”

Eph 3:20-21



Revelation 21 (above) begins with the Bride of Christ depicted as the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband. What we are shown about this Bride is quite mind-boggling although brief in detail. However, this we know: the Bride of Christ, not the Body of Christ, will be center-stage in God’s eternal kingdom to come!

**"THE BRIDE...THE LAMB'S WIFE...
THE GREAT CITY...THE HOLY JERUSALEM..."**



"AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD. HER LIGHT WAS LIKE A MOST PRECIOUS STONE, LIKE A JASPER STONE, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL. ALSO SHE HAD A GREAT AND HIGH WALL WITH TWELVE GATES, AND TWELVE ANGELS AT THE GATES, AND NAMES WRITTEN ON THEM, WHICH ARE THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL... NOW THE WALL OF THE CITY HAD TWELVE FOUNDATIONS, AND ON THEM WERE THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB."

Rev. 21:10-14

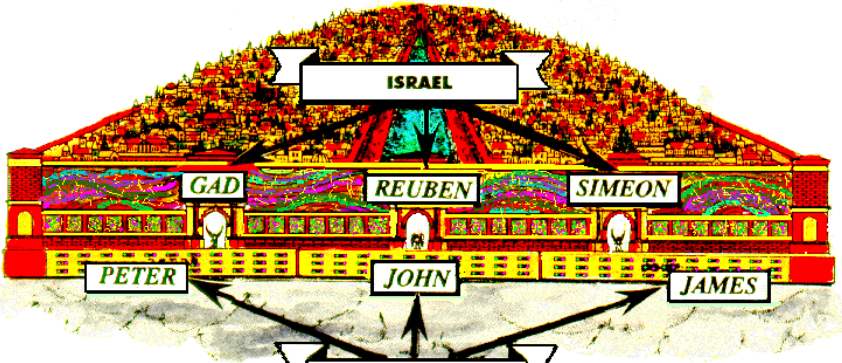
The above revelation is of the most importance. Remember, Revelation is a book steeped in symbolism. As we have seen, the New Jerusalem is a depiction of the Bride of Christ. However, the above passages of scripture reveal to us that in eternity the Bride of Christ is not limited to being the exclusive property of the church, but also includes Israel! This is revealed by "the twelve gates" and "the twelve foundations." The gates are stated to consist of the twelve tribes of Israel and the foundation stones are the twelve apostles of the lamb, the foundation upon which the church was built. The church does not replace Israel, but rather, as we can see, is joined together with Israel to become the Bride of Christ. Paul states this clearly to the church in Ephesus:

**"...WHO HAS MADE BOTH ONE...
SO AS TO CREATE IN HIMSELF ONE NEW MAN FROM THE TWO..."**

Eph. 2:14-15

**"WHICH IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN TO THE SONS OF MEN,
AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT
TO HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS:
THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOW HEIRS, OF THE SAME BODY,
AND PARTAKERS IN CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL."** Eph. 3:5-6

**"THE BRIDE...THE LAMB'S WIFE...
THE GREAT CITY...THE HOLY JERUSALEM..."**



**"THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS WALL WAS OF JASPER;
AND THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD, LIKE CLEAR GLASS.
THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WALL OF THE CITY WERE ADORNED
WITH ALL KINDS OF PRECIOUS STONE...
THE TWELVE GATES WERE TWELVE PEARLS:
EACH INDIVIDUAL GATE WAS OF ONE PEARL.
AND THE STREET OF THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD,
LIKE TRANSPARENT GLASS..."**

Rev. 21:18-21

The above symbolism of the gates is worthy of our consideration. It is where the term the "pearly gates" of heaven jokes originate, but they are no laughing matter. Rather, these gates, made of a single pearl, indicate a great level of suffering required to enter through them. As we all know, pearls are formed through a suffering process in which an agitating grain of sand forms a beautiful pearl over a great length of time.

Remember, we are looking at the formation of the Bride of Christ. Paul reminds the church:

**"...HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH
CHRIST, IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER.
FOR I CONSIDER THAT THE SUFFERINGS
OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE
COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH
SHALL BE REVEALED IN US."**

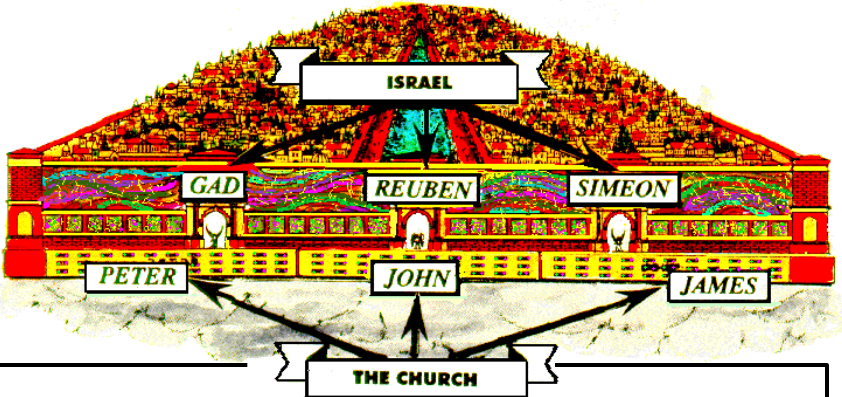
Rom 8:17-19

**"FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED
ON BEHALF OF CHRIST,
NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM,
BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE,
HAVING THE SAME CONFLICT WHICH YOU
SAW IN ME AND NOW HEAR IS IN ME."**

Phil 1:29-30



**"THE BRIDE...THE LAMB'S WIFE...
THE GREAT CITY...THE HOLY JERUSALEM..."**

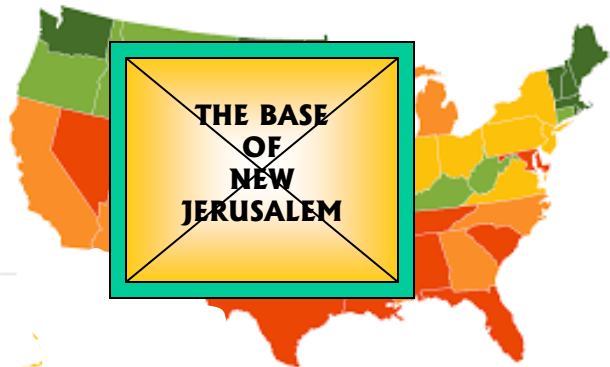


"AND HE WHO TALKED WITH ME HAD A GOLD REED TO MEASURE THE CITY, ITS GATES, AND ITS WALL. THE CITY IS LAID OUT AS A SQUARE; ITS LENGTH IS AS GREAT AS ITS BREADTH. AND HE MEASURED THE CITY WITH THE REED: TWELVE THOUSAND FURLONGS. ITS LENGTH, BREADTH, AND HEIGHT ARE EQUAL. THEN HE MEASURED ITS WALL: ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR CUBITS, ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF A MAN, THAT IS, OF AN ANGEL. THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS WALL WAS OF JASPER; AND THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD, LIKE CLEAR GLASS."

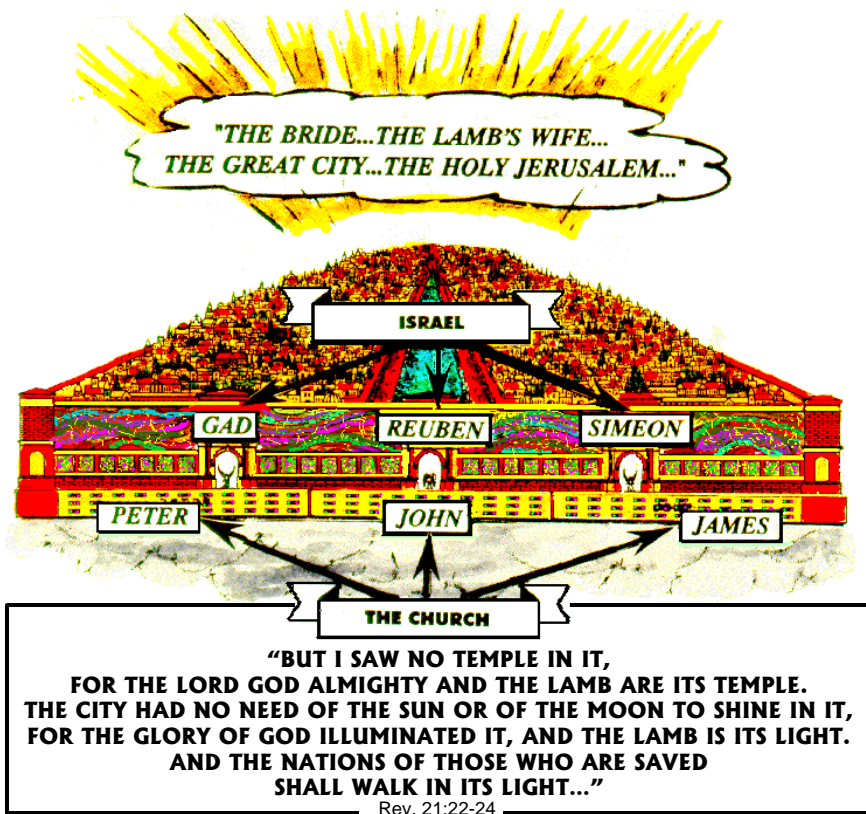
Rev 21:15-19

The magnitude of this city from which God shall rule and reign on earth is also given to us. "Twelve-thousand furlongs" is 1,377 miles in length as well as in width. That means it could sit on two-thirds of America's land mass! The city sits as a square at its base.

That is incredibly big, but note that it is also 1,377 miles in height! With these dimensions, it could be a square, but it is my suspicion that this city is shaped as a great pyramid!



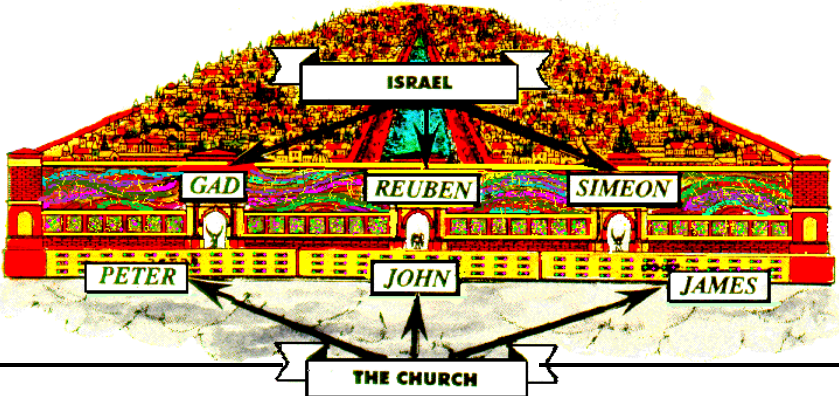
Think about this: Its wall is stated to be two-hundred and sixteen feet in height which is one-hundred feet taller than the Empire State building in New York City!



Note the brief statement above which reveals a startling fact: Not everyone that enters this city is considered to be part of the Bride of Christ. Yes, the city consists of both Jews and Gentiles as the gates and the foundations plainly state, but there are also "nations who are saved" that are allowed to "walk in the light" of the city. Their benefits are not the same. It is Paul that warns believers of becoming "saved, but suffer loss of reward" (1 Cor. 3:14-15). It was the apostle Peter that contrasted for us believers who had obtained "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10-11.) These saints were stated to be those who "added to their faith" seven character-traits that the apostle Peter reveals to be "virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love" (2 Pet. 1:5-8). The believer who "lacks these things" is "short-sighted, even to blindness" (2 Pet. 1:9). Simply put, there is no spiritual vision present.

The Bride of Christ is God's ultimate reward to all overcoming saints, both Jew and Gentile. He who overcomes shall inherit all things (Rev. 21:7), but not all saved people qualify as overcomers. We have already seen stated that "suffering saints" are those who are considered overcomers. Remember, symbolically the gates are single pearls, representing the suffering life it takes to someday enter through those gates of pearl. It is quite possible to remain a member of the Body of Christ via the new birth provided by the grace of God, but not go on to suffer with Him to qualify as the Bride of Christ (Rom. 8:17-18).

**"THE BRIDE...THE LAMB'S WIFE...
THE GREAT CITY...THE HOLY JERUSALEM..."**



**"AND HE SHOWED ME A PURE RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL, PROCEEDING FROM THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB. IN THE MIDDLE OF ITS STREET, AND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RIVER, WAS THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH BORE TWELVE FRUITS, EACH TREE YIELDING ITS FRUIT EVERY MONTH. THE LEAVES OF THE TREE WERE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS. AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE, BUT THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB SHALL BE IN IT, AND HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM. THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE, AND HIS NAME SHALL BE ON THEIR FOREHEADS. THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE: THEY NEED NO LAMP NOR LIGHT OF THE SUN, FOR THE LORD GOD GIVES THEM LIGHT. AND THEY SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER." "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY...
'I, JESUS, HAVE SENT MY ANGEL TO TESTIFY TO YOU THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES...
AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, 'COME!' "**

Rev 22:1-5, 14-17

Mystery galore surrounds the above statements that pertain to the Tree of Life in this glimpse into eternity. However, we can easily see that the account of the Tree of Life in Genesis had everything to do with possession of eternal life for the original Adam and Eve. When they sinned we find God making this statement pertaining to the Tree of Life:

**"THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, "BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, TO KNOW GOOD AND EVIL.
AND NOW, LEST HE PUT OUT HIS HAND AND TAKE ALSO OF THE TREE OF LIFE, AND EAT, AND LIVE FOREVER" –**

**THEREFORE THE LORD GOD SENT HIM OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN TO TILL THE GROUND FROM WHICH HE WAS TAKEN.
SO HE DROVE OUT THE MAN; AND HE PLACED CHERUBIM AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN, AND A FLAMING SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY, TO GUARD THE WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE."**

ALPHA (IN THE BEGINNING)

**"THEN THE LORD GOD SAID,
"BEHOLD,
THE MAN HAS
BECOME LIKE ONE OF US,
TO KNOW GOOD AND EVIL.
AND NOW, LEST HE PUT OUT
HIS HAND AND TAKE ALSO
OF THE TREE OF LIFE, AND
EAT, AND LIVE FOREVER" –
THEREFORE THE LORD GOD
SENT HIM OUT OF THE
GARDEN OF EDEN TO TILL
THE GROUND FROM WHICH
HE WAS TAKEN.
SO HE DROVE OUT THE MAN;
AND HE PLACED CHERUBIM
AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN
OF EDEN, AND A FLAMING
SWORD WHICH TURNED
EVERY WAY, TO GUARD THE
WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE."**

Gen 3:22-24



OMEGA (IN THE END)

**"...AND ON EITHER SIDE...
WAS THE TREE OF LIFE,
WHICH BORE TWELVE FRUITS,
EACH TREE YIELDING ITS FRUIT
EVERY MONTH. THE LEAVES OF
THE TREE WERE FOR THE HEALING
OF THE NATIONS. AND THERE
SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE,
BUT THE THRONE OF GOD AND
OF THE LAMB SHALL BE IN IT,
AND HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE
HIM. THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE,
AND HIS NAME SHALL BE ON
THEIR FOREHEADS. ...
AND THEY SHALL REIGN FOREVER
AND EVER." "BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS,
THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT
TO THE TREE OF LIFE,
AND MAY ENTER THROUGH THE
GATES INTO THE CITY..."**

Rev 22:1-5, 14-17

As for this teacher of God's Word, I must say that I do not fully understand the new depiction of what is stated in Revelation pertaining to the Tree of Life. However, we can see the great distinction between the account in Genesis and that in Revelation. In Genesis there were two trees in the Garden, now there is but one; the Tree of Life. The tree bearing temptation existed in Genesis, but is eliminated in Revelation. In Genesis there was instituted a curse due to sin, but in Revelation the curse ceases to exist. What existed in Genesis was Satan, sin and self. These three are no longer found in Revelation. God is finished with the testing of angels and men. His new creation is now focused upon the rewarding of faithful angels and men for all eternity.

**"FOR BEHOLD, I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH;
AND THE FORMER SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED OR COME TO MIND.
BUT BE GLAD AND REJOICE FOREVER IN WHAT I CREATE..."**

Isa. 65:17-18

**"AND HE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE SAID,
'BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW',
AND HE SAID TO ME,
'WRITE, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL...
HE WHO OVERCOMES
SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS..."**

Rev. 21:5-7

**"EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAVE ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN,
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."**

1 Cor. 2:9

RESTORING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We know the word “gospel” means “good news.” However, the message of Jesus and Paul centered upon the specific good news that belongs to the kingdom of God:

**“(Jesus) WENT THROUGH EVERY CITY AND VILLAGE,
PREACHING AND BRINGING THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”**

Luke 8:1

**“THEN PAUL SPENT TWO WHOLE YEARS...PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND
TEACHING THE THINGS WHICH CONCERN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.”**

Acts 28:30-31

Modern-day theology has divorced the good news message of the kingdom of God from its preferred condensed subtle substitute, “you must be born again.” However, Jesus Himself stressed the point that the initial act of the new birth is the means by which the convert is enabled to see and to enter into the kingdom of God. Sadly, only half the truth is being preached today, the good news of the new birth separated from the good news of the kingdom of God.

This book is dedicated to restoring the full gospel message preached by Jesus and Paul. Satan is busy setting before God’s people subtle substitutes for the kingdom of God. Take away the preaching of the real kingdom of God and the believer is left only with visible earthly kingdoms to pursue as potential manifestations of God’s kingdom.

Pastor Randy Shupe

the **WAY,** ^{the} **TRUTH,** ^{the} **LIFE**
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